



*Branford Historical Society
 Post Office Box 504
 Branford, Connecticut 06405*

October 1991

HARVEST FESTIVAL. The Harvest Festival, scheduled for Saturday, October 19, 10 am - 3 pm, (rain date, Sunday, October 20, noon - 4 pm) will be an event for the entire family.

Activities will take place around the side of the House and into the back yard as well as the front yard. The antique dealers will continue to occupy the front yard while the tag sale will take place near the back door.

Homemade gingerbread, decorated gingerbreadmen, cider, coffee and tea will be available along with other bake sale items.

Children will be encouraged to painlessly learn more about history by playing games, listening to stories and practicing crafts of 18th century America.

Guides will be available to bring visitors through the Harrison House and answer questions about customs of the 18th century.

Please bring items for the tag sale to Harrison House on Friday, October 18, between 10 am and 4 pm. This is a Society fundraiser and we need your contributions.

Surprises may be in store so don't miss the fun! MARLENE PALMQUIST & MICHAEL SYKES

PROGRAM. The program season started September 18th with a wonderful show about old Savin Rock. 120 of you were in attendance. Don't miss the next programs on October 17, Paul Mellon and the British Art Center at Yale, and November 21, The Story of the Farmington Canal. JANE BOULEY

THE HARRISON HOUSE & GROUNDS. Paul Dwyer has been busy this past year with all the routine maintenance at the house and on the grounds. Spring clean-up, sprinkler system repair, coordination of tree and shrub pruning, to mention a few tasks. He has also located and installed newer, more efficient kitchen appliances, including a new gas range more suited to our occasional needs. He is, as ever, in need of help to continue to maintain all areas of the Harrison House and the grounds. If you can help, please contact Paul at 488-6340.

The Branford Garden Club has been diligently caring for our garden behind the house and is in the process of some design changes to present a more traditional garden. We all appreciate the thought and effort that has been put into this wonderful yard. BILL JOHNSTON

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL. Another Great Year! THANK YOU ALL FOR THE GRAND EFFORT !!!

The 12th Annual Strawberry Festival this past June went perfectly and posted another record year for receipts. A hearty round of applause to the nearly 80 volunteers who make this event so successful every year. We sliced 325 quarts of berries, cut 107 dozen biscuits, whipped 75 quarts of cream and served over 1,200 short cakes. JANE BOULEY & BETTY LINSLEY

IN MEMORIAM. Several memorial donations were received in recent months in honor of Frank V. Bigelow and Louise L. Poole, both longtime residents who passed away this spring.

Frank Bigelow retired as a Vice President of the M.I.F. Co. and his picture and a brief biography are incorporated in our "M.I.F. - a Retrospective" exhibit. A graduate of Quinnipiac College, he served on its Board of Trustees. He also wrote the school song. He attended Harvard School of Business Administration. Mr. Bigelow was a member of many organizations and societies including fraternal, business, historical and religious. As a member of the Branford Historical Society, he was instrumental in reinitiating the annual Strawberry Festival.

Louise Poole graduated from Branford High School and the Stone Business School, working thereafter at the Tradesmans Bank, leaving to raise her family. Most recently she worked at the Connecticut Mental Health Center until health necessitated her retirement. She, too, was a member of several civic and educational organizations and an active member of the Branford Historical Society, including helping with the arrangement of the present M.I.F. exhibit.

We will miss both of these members and again thank their relatives and friends who made memorial gifts in their honor.

PRISCILLA OLIVER

MUSEUM/ACCESSIONS. As this is my first report to the Newsletter as the Chairman of the Museum/Accessions Committee, I feel a few introductory remarks are in order. I am very pleased to serve in this position so ably handled by Priscilla Oliver for the past four years. The results of her dedication to the job have been obvious to all. I was also delighted to learn that the expertise and work of two "pros" constituted a vital part of this Committee. This was great news to me. Betty Linsley evaluates and maintains the records for all books and documents while Jane Bouley handles photographs and post cards. With such help, I shall make every effort to continue the quality work of my predecessors.

I am most grateful to the members and friends of the Branford Historical Society who have made donations to us in 1991. (A full list of donors will appear in the January Newsletter.) Many of these gifts will be on display during our "Show & Tell" program on February 27th.

It was decided to keep our M.I.F. exhibit up for the remainder of the year as it has been so well received. Two displays that are under serious consideration for the future are a maritime history of Branford and the place Indians occupied in the early history of our town.

I recently received a letter from a lady after her visit to the Harrison House. She described so well the importance of donations when she wrote, "How good it is that there is a place for family heirlooms, a place where history still lives for the benefit of future generations."

Please call me at 488-7411 if you can contribute to our collections.

NANCY HENDRICKS

MUSEUM (con't) During the year, members of the museum committee work at cataloging, storing and preserving archival donations such as old deeds, maps, photographs and diaries. All photographs are placed in acid free sleeves and stored by subject in acid free boxes. Recent donations by Norman Plant and Pearl Blackstone Milne are being added to the collection. Work continues on the wonderful collection of photographs donated by Earl Colter.

All gifts, both large and small, help the Society to preserve Branford's historical past and share its story with our citizens. If you have old photos that you would be willing to share but not donate to the Society, please know that we would treat them with care, make a copy and return the original to you.

JANE BOULEY

GUIDES. As another season comes to a close, it is time to give thanks to all those who have made it so very successful. Our gratitude goes to Laura Adamson, Linda Bassetti Ross, Yvonne Brandt, Jane Cheek, Martha Clark, Richard and Theresa Hammond, Peg Hampton, Nancy Hendricks, Eunice Jones, Elinor King, Doris Marquis, Betty Mount, Frances Skelton and Jean Sunny. Without their time and energy, the Harrison House could not be shared with so many.

This season, many classes from Branford schools toured the House. In addition to Branford and other Connecticut towns, we have had visitors from not only Virginia, Florida and Indiana, but also from Germany, Italy, Canada and France. A group of women exchange students from France was guided through IN FRENCH by our own Jean Sunny!

INEZ BURNE

MEMBERSHIP. As of publication date, we have received 11 responses to our invitation to join the Society. Welcome to our new members. We also have 141 renewed members. Welcome back. Dues envelopes are still sitting on the desks of 173 members who last paid in 1990. We know how busy our members can be and we know they'll be sending checks soon.

ALICE LAMBERT

THE LEGEND OF LAKE SALTONSTALL

by Lyent W. Russell, Historian, Connecticut River Powwow Society

Native Americans first came into this area, now known as Connecticut, more than 10,000 years ago, as has recently been proven. Probably this legend was passed down from generation to generation by the ancestors of the Quinnipiac Indians who occupied the New Haven area when the English landed in 1638. The following is the Indian legend of the origin of the lake as I recall it from my youth.

Near a very large boulder deposited by a glacier (located on private property on the east side of Woodward Avenue in New Haven,) the ancestors of the Quinnipiac Indians were said to have held some of their feasts and ceremonies, some of which are known today as powwows. During a great feast held there a stranger came to visit them. As this stranger was disguised, no one knew that he was Kiehtan, the Great Spirit of the Algonquian people. These hospitable Indians invited the stranger to participate in the feast.

After Kiehtan had eaten, he continued his journey toward the east along the Great Trail (Mishamayagat.) The route was poorly illuminated for it was a night of a total eclipse and the moon was already in partial eclipse. One can imagine the consternation of the Native people in their observance of this unusual phenomenon.

In the partial moonlight the Great Spirit was able to follow the trail through the forest. Finally he arrived at the base of a high hill which is the south end of a ridge extending north and east for several miles. He ascended the hill and when he reached the summit the eclipse ended and the countryside was illuminated by a beautiful full moon in a cloudless sky. From this elevation on the southeast side of the ridge Kiehtan had an excellent view of Long Island Sound.

As Kiehtan looked out over the water a vision came to him in the form of ships approaching the land. He felt very compassionate when he realized that a strange people were coming to take the land from his kindred. As he mourned for his people, tears rolled down his cheeks. One of his large tears flowed into the valley below, forming a lake known as "Lonotonoquet," the "Tear of the Great Spirit."

The lake was renamed for the Reverend Gurdon Saltonstall, colonial governor of Connecticut from 1708 to 1724.