



Perry House Telegram

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The Perry House Foundation, Inc. • 1128 West Broad Street, Stratford, CT 06615 • 203-377-3779 • www.perryhousestratford.com

A Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends of the Perry House:

The longer I am involved in the activities of the Perry House, the more convinced I am of its importance to the future of Stratford, and how well the Foundation is doing in using limited resources to promote the assets of the Town and making it a fun experience all at the same time.

As we moved into 2011, we began to wonder how to create new opportunities for raising funds (and fun) this year after the success of last year's Perry Stroika Ball. We were blessed when Executive Director Carole Adzima encouraged us to repeat an event that had been successful on a different scale a couple years ago, Irish Night -- but to hold it directly on St. Patrick's Day! While we entered this event with a degree of caution, we were pleased to learn that there is a large group of Perry House supporters who also welcomed the idea of partying with us that night. Irish Night was a great social success -- and raised over \$2,500 to help with Perry House programs over the coming year!

Through our educational programs, the eyes of 3rd grade and 5th grade students (over 850 last year!) are being opened to what it was like to live in colonial Stratford, under the direction of Board Member Alix Semanchik. The curriculum is being coordinated closely with the Board of Education and the Stratford Historical Society, and the results are inspiring.

As we move forward, I hope you will let us know what you like -- and don't like -- about our programs; that you will support as when you can; and that you will make suggestions for future programs that will help keep the Perry House a vibrant place for the community to gather.

Sincerely,
David Killeen
Chairman of the Board

Fifth Graders Visit Homestead in Spring



Docent orientation: L-R Joan Marron, Cary Ericson, Pam Hutchinson, Carol Feduick, Alix Semanchik, Education Chairperson, Frank DiMauro and Nichole Doolittle. Missing: Jamie Johnson, Diane Stackpole and Carole Adzima

On a dreary winter's day, the Perry House Education Committee met to start planning an exciting new project--Starting in the middle of April, every 5th grade class in the Town of Stratford will come to the Perry House on a field trip. The committee's important task that day was to begin developing a new curriculum for the fifth grades highlighting Colonial Stratford in the 1770's. After working about 6 weeks, it was time to present the new curriculum to the Docents.

In early March, a meeting was held for all fifth grade teachers at the Stratford Historic Society, at which time we explained a little about our program and distributed a "teachers' packet" with ideas for possible "projects" prior to their visit and after their fieldtrip.

Alix Semanchik, Education Committee Chairman, said, "What a stimulating program the committee has designed."

In addition to a little history about the house, we bring the 1770's alive through the children. We ask them to close their eyes and pretend they are living in this house on the Kings Highway. Can you see the sheep grazing on the green, the Post rider on his horse

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Fifth Grade Program continued

clip-clopping by, and the pageantry of George Washington's cortège entering the Benjamin Tavern across the street from the Perry House? Isaiah Brown, an officer in the militia, was living in the Homestead in the 1770's with his wife, Ann Brinsmaid Brown, and their large family. Soon after the Brown family moved in, he added on the keeping room to the back of the house making its shape, a saltbox.

Surprising to the committee, was that most every home in Stratford had at least one slave. These slaves were very important especially when the men went off to war. Most of these slaves were treated as household help, unlike those in the South. Did you know that Captain John Selby was a "pirate". He was collared for smuggling and received an enormous fine for shifting contraband between two ships owned by a rich slave-trading neighbor. He later moved to the Caribbean to try his luck as a full-time pirate.

The 1770's also comes alive through the "mock" demonstration of colonial cooking using our beehive oven and 9' fireplace. This is only one of 10 stations that the children will have the opportunity for hands-on activities. These stations include needlepoint, rope tying, stenciling, tavern puzzles, Herbs, Historical maps, colonial games, weaving, and beginning a colonial sampler.

By the end of May, well over 500 fifth-grade students will come through the halls of the Perry Homestead. And then, in the fall, as part of the third grade curriculum, all of the over 600 third-grade students will be visiting the Perry House.

Special Thanks to Tory Florek, Elementary Education Coordinator, for helping to move these programs forward. This educational program is

sponsored by:  **GRAINGER**
FOR THE ONES WHO GET IT DONE

The Perry House Foundation would like to extend a special thank you to Marti of Simple Gifts Farm on 1135 James Farm Road in Stratford for donating roving and natural yarn along with a hand spinner for our Educational Tours. With these additions to our new loom and needlecraft area, we are able to show the children how textiles were made in Colonial New England, from start to finish. .

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Simple Gifts Farm is open several weekends in September for tours where the public can meet her Olde English Babydoll Sheep and alpacas as well as see spinning demonstrations. Her website is <http://simplegiftoffiber.blogspot.com/>

Dig This!

Hello, this is an update to our foundation members and supporters on the Phase II archaeological survey in the area of the proposed kitchen addition at Perry House.

Last December, the AHS ([Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc.](#)) Team, led by Mary and Ross Harper, conducted a survey in this important area. The Town Planner received a draft of their findings on March 18, 2011, which will be summarized in this article.

When you passed by the Perry House last December, did you see stakes in the ground, people writing on clipboards, or see shoveling in action? What were they looking for? Hadn't there already been archaeologists at the Perry House? Yes, in fact there had been two sets prior to AHS setting up their test pits. One was done by Professor Gerald Sawyer along with his Central Connecticut State University students several years ago in the footprint of the house as well as on the west side of the building. These items are in possession of the Perry House, which included mostly household materials.

Then in 2009, the Perry House decided to make a kitchen addition off of the existing newer part of the house, on the back of the East Parlor (Stratford Visitors Center), but in order to do that, the Perry House had to do have the land surveyed. In November of that year, a firm called [Heritage Consultants, LLC](#), did a Phase I survey. They came to believe, through soil studies on the eastern side of the house, that a stone feature may be intact beneath. Could it be a blacksmith's shop (or evidence of one)? It would be worthy of further investigation. This was critical to the planning of the addition's future, since, in effect; it would be built directly on top of this.

So what did we do? Our addition had received some state funding, but didn't we already do the Phase I survey conducted by the Heritage Firm?

Dig This! continued

Yes, we did. However, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) recommended that another Phase II survey be done to examine the Areas of Potential Effect, or APE. They made this recommendation based on the results of the Phase I survey. The Perry House Foundation agreed.

What's the difference between a Phase I and a Phase II survey? There are many differences, but for the purposes of this newsletter, a Phase II is where you investigate, study your findings, and conclude whether the APE could be historically significant.

Here comes the news: The AHS team found 5,605 artifacts last December-most from the late 17th through to the 20th century. Some of those artifacts may be small, but are important in matching the records of the house and its occupants over the course of its history. For example, many kinds of pottery fragments were found, as some of you have found in your own yards. However, the type of pottery found in different layers – in what they call stratigraphy – can match the types of plates and jars and other food-based items to each family who occupied this house. That's pretty interesting, indeed, but what does that mean? Sections of Stratford itself are already on the National Register of Historic Places, so what's new here? The Perry House building is a part of this Registry, but not the whole site in and of itself. In order to qualify for that, you have to submit findings from Phase II surveys that meet these criteria (paraphrased from the AHS report below:

- A. Association with events that may have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- B. Association with lives of persons significant in our past
- C. Distinctive design or physical characteristics including representation of a significant entity
- D. Demonstrate ability, or potential to yield important information about history or pre-history

Most of the AHS survey information was geared toward number D in this listing. So, was there a blacksmith's shop after all? What was in those middens, or trash heaps, of household refuse? What was that stone feature; and what did it mean to the Perry House?

The stone feature did not, after all, reveal itself as a blacksmith's stone oven. It was simply a privy, or an outside toilet. Was this a letdown for the history buffs? No, because many artifacts and even ecofacts (things found that were not made by man, such as bones, shells, etc) were found in the layers nearby.

There were many layers studied in at least 6 pits by AHS. The deepest layer, labeled the "C Horizon" is still intact and preserved. This layer yielded some very interesting artifacts, which will get the attention of the history buffs, such as "grapeshot", or ammunition, probably dating from the Revolutionary War when the town needed to protect themselves from British Raids.

AHS wants to go back and investigate this intact layer. It was actually protected by a "roof" of shells, most likely tossed into the midden on top of the lower, earlier layers. AHS feels that mapping the lifeways and foodways from these middens would be important to the planning of the addition and whether the entire Perry House Site (not just the physical structure) would qualify for the National Register of Historic Places.

In sum, the Perry House Foundation is working with the consultants at AHS to determine what funds might be available to undertake a more involved dig that can unearth remaining important artifacts and help us move forward with the construction of the addition.

Volunteers Needed

The Perry House is in need of Volunteers! Would you like to man the Visitors' Center a couple of hours a week? How about becoming a Docent for our educational programs? If you think you may be interested, call 203-377-3779.

Board “Spotlight of the Month” Evelyn Clough



Evelyn Clough is a native of Stratford. Her Dad was a fireman for 37 years, and it was he who instilled in her that it was extremely important to give back to your community. She has been married to her husband, Ron, for over 50 years; and has 2 sons, Ron and Tim, and one grandson, Benjamin-- the apple of her eye-- and another grandson soon to be born. Her father-in-law started **Clough’s Hardware** in 1933, and she and her husband have been managing it for over 50 years.

Evelyn was a den mother, served on PTA Boards, and was nominated for President Reagan’s Volunteer Award for a project she started with a friend at Bridgeport Hospital. Evelyn has served on the Town of Stratford’s Beautification Committee for 15 years where she started the “Daffodil Project”. She and Ron were presented with the prestigious Stratford Community Fund Lighthouse Award last year.

Kay O’Connor, a PHF Board member asked her to serve on the Board soon after the House was opened to the Public. Evelyn felt that it would be a great stop for tourists because of its easy access to highway and rail. She said, “Ron and I had stopped at a Historical “Visitors Center” in Massachusetts that was very similar to the Perry House. Dressed in their period clothing, they helped us find a place to stay and referred us to delicious restaurants”.

“I have been very pleased at the direction the Foundation has taken, and the educational value that it has added in the past couple of years. We also, all anxiously await our kitchen addition, hopefully to be added next year.”

Irish Night - a “Fun” “Fun”draiser



Dave Killeen, Chair of Perry House Foundation, with Michael and Karen Dorney



Our terrific bartenders, Michael Caruso and Joe Horne



Selling Raffle Tickets !Christine Doolan, Patty Gallagher and Evelyn Clough