



# *Stony Brook* **CURRENTS**

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*The Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society*

January 2020

**The mission of the Suffield Historical Society is to collect, preserve and stimulate interest in the history of Suffield and the region and to actively share it. The Society hopes to inspire a sense of community, as well as to provide an understanding and appreciation of Suffield's past.**

## **Suffield Historical Society**

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## **THE TERRETT HOUSE**

*by Dianne Seaman*

When the original house on the corner of Mountain Road and South Grand Street in West Suffield was built is not exactly known, although the "1970 Survey of Old Homes in Suffield" listed it as being built by Victory Sykes in 1728. This original section of what became the Terrett House hotel (demolished in 1970) faced Mountain Road and was the home of Victory's son, Titus Sykes, his wife Rhoda Miller and their 16 children.



*Facing South Grand Street are the two remaining sections of the old Terrett House hotel.*

After the Sykes family relocated to Dorset, Vermont, a larger addition was added in the early 1800s. By 1837, the first post office in West Suffield was operated out of the hotel, which then included a tavern. Erastus H. Weed of Stamford, Connecticut, was named the first postmaster in 1837 and he was also the tavern-keeper.

Following Erastus Weed's death in 1844, Gustave and Herman Gruendler, proprietors of Gruendler's Hotel in Springfield, Massachusetts, bought the buildings and called it Gruendler Hotel. Later on the third section of the hotel, that extended down South Grand Street, was built with a grand ballroom on the second floor.

In 1862, the *Hartford Courant* reported a murder at the hotel: "James Drake, keeper of a hotel at West Suffield, was shot dead on Saturday afternoon by a man named Cullen, a cigar maker, who works at Westfield, but whose family resides at West Suffield... Saturday afternoon he [Cullen] came home, and with a loaded revolver went directly to the hotel of Drake, for the purpose of shooting him. He fired two shots into Drake while he was behind the bar, but neither of them proved serious; the latter then ran out of doors and around the house, pursued by Cullen; and as he was again entering the door, a third shot entered his heart, proving fatal."



In 1869, Benjamin Franklin Terrett bought the hotel from the Gruendler brothers. Benjamin Terrett died in 1881. Terrett's widow, Charlotte (Pease) Terrett, and Terrett's namesake son sold the hotel in 1893, according to genealogist Eugene Zubrinsky.

Around the turn of the 20th century, the hotel was the social center of West Suffield. The West Suffield railroad depot was located just east of the current West Suffield Post Office. Much of the hotel's trade came from the depot traffic, but – according to Lester Smith – annual “Coon Suppers” were a big draw. Actual raccoon dinners were served!

More changes were noted by the *Courant* in April 1904: “*The West Suffield hotel, better known as the Terrett House, has again changed hands, Alanson Hoffman having sold his interests to Landlord F. Hart of North Bloomfield. A telephone service has been added and other improvements have been made.*” On March 8, 1910, the *Courant* reported another sale, by Patrick J. Murphy to Charles C. Anderson.\*

By the mid-1950s, owned by Art Romano, the building was an apartment house not a hotel. A gas station was located on Mountain Road just east of the hotel; a repair shop – with a big oil company sign – was attached to the south end of the South Grand Street wing. Vic's Package Store was in the corner. Poppy's Antiques was on the first floor where the tavern had once been. Its original bar was salvaged by the Potter family. That bar now resides at Academy Hall, the old schoolhouse across from Ratley Road. It was a gift from the Potters to the West Suffield Village Improvement Society.

In the 1990s, there was an effort to recreate Terrett House as an arts and crafts mall.

The owner, Ron Fitch, frustrated by bureaucratic red tape, spray painted the building bright colors. (Lester Smith recalls that there was a serious space issue for a septic dispersal field.) Fitch ultimately sold the property to Falcor Homes whose principals, Matt Falkowski and Jonathan Stearns, transformed it into the apartment building it is today.

\*In 1915, Anderson and James Mitchell, proprietor of the Suffield House, a tavern in Suffield center, were fined \$150 each for selling liquor to 20-year-old William A. Coulson, who later that same night killed John Wardosky with his automobile while under the influence of liquor. By 1920 Anderson must have sold the hotel because the 1920 Census shows him no longer as a hotel keeper but as a watchman in a tobacco warehouse.

SOURCES: Art Sikes, Anne Borg, Lester Smith, Hawley Rising, Suffield Land Records, Daniel Sterner's *Historic Buildings of Connecticut*, December 2013 (which includes the *Hartford Courant* quotes and the response from Eugene Zubrinsky, a southern New England genealogist, dated June 17, 2018, as well as <http://historicbuildingsct.com/terrett-house-1750/>. Photograph from Kaitlyn Nigro.

## DELPHINA CLARK'S PHOTO ALBUMS

Art Sikes (860-668-0414) is looking for help to index the photos of old homes in Suffield. Specifically he needs help with some of our major roads through town: Boston Neck Rd., Mapleton Ave., North St., North Main St. and Sheldon St. If you are interested in a shorter, easy project that includes one to three pages of pictures, how about volunteering to help with some of the shorter streets which also need indexing: Blossom St., Kent Ave., Branch Rd., Day Ave., Hale St., Mather St., Paper St., Prospect St., Spencer St. or Spruce St.? Great way to find out about your own little neighborhood in Suffield!

## PHONE NUMBERS

If you have changed from a land line to a cell phone, please be sure we have your new number. Up-to-date emails are needed as well. You can email changes or corrections to Art ([artsikes@aol.com](mailto:artsikes@aol.com)) or call him at 860-668-0414.



## SUFFIELD ORIGINS

by Ed Chase

While many Connecticut River Valley towns have recorded deeds from Indian chiefs, Suffield does not. According to John Pynchon, its lands were included as a part of "Woronoco" in 1647 when the general court in Boston ordered "that Woronoco upon the west side of the Connecticut River should be part of Springfield."

He further claimed the Indian title was obtained in separate parts and from different chiefs. The northerly portion was bought from Pampunkshat and was included in his deed of Woronoco to Pynchon. This strip of land extended southerly from the Agawam line to the "Falls" (rapids) between what is now Enfield on the east bank of the river and Suffield. Major Pynchon purchased the southerly part from a female chief known as Misnouasques. This purchase included much more land, covering parts of what is now Windsor Locks, East Granby, and Granby. The "Southwick Notch" problem was settled much later.

Pynchon purchased the whole tract for 30 pounds.

Reference: The Documentary History of Suffield 1670-1749, by H.S. Sheldon

## NEW DISCOVERY!

by Art Sikes

A doctor's day book at Old Sturbridge Village has come to our attention. It dates from 1824 through 1828, and most of the patients are Suffield names. The book lists names, dates, treatments and fees ... but no name for the doctor, who we believe was a Suffield doctor. According to a book celebrating Suffield's 250th Anniversary in 1920, Suffield had six doctors during those years: Howard Alden, Oliver Pease, Enoch Leavitt, Sumner Ives, Asaph Bissell and Aretas Rising. We have reached an agreement with Sturbridge Village to allow someone into their research library to transcribe the pages. We believe that with the transcription of some selected pages, the town and our Society might find keys to determine the original owner of this book. Would you be willing to help with this transcription? Call Art Sikes at 860-668-0414.

## HOLIDAYFEST 2019

Our open house and exhibit for December's Holidayfest was a big success with more visitors than usual, thanks to the Garden Club's Holiday House Tour, of which we were a part. Guests loved our exhibit of Fashion Accessories which included many hats and pocketbooks, jewelry, fans, walking sticks, compacts, collars and muffs. John Quenneville's "Tree of Purses" was especially remarked upon. A big thank-you to all of you who made the weekend possible – lenders, docents, decorators and bakers and to Florence Noble for her beautiful arrangement of red roses for the refreshment table.

If you have an idea for a 2020 Holidayfest theme, please let Anne (860-668-7841) know.

*The surrounding scenes are from Holidayfest with Carolyn Blighton (upper left) and her collection of antique purses; Anne Borg (lower left) beside the mannequin tree she made for the show; and guests enjoying the warmth of the keeping room hearth (lower right).*



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King House Museum  
232 South Main Street

Open to the Public, Free  
Wednesdays and Saturdays  
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
May through September

Newsletter  
Maggie Philippon, Editor  
Anne Borg, Compiler

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Annual Ice Harvest**

**Saturday, February 1**

Noble and Cooley Pond

Granville, Mass Noon - 3 p.m.

*Co-sponsored with the Suffield Land Conservancy and the Noble & Cooley Museum. Don't let the draft horses do all the work! Wear grips on your boots and help cut the ice with antique tools. Dependent on weather conditions. Museum open.*

Stormdate: February 2

### **Polish Heritage Society**

**Wednesday, February 5, Suffield Ambulance, 10 a.m.**

### **WORKSHOP:**

#### **Preservation Techniques and Advice**

**Wednesday, February 19**

Kent Memorial Library 7 p.m.

*SHS Trustees Nancy Noble and Anne Borg, along with our Museum Curator Lester Smith, will demonstrate and explain techniques and products available to safely preserve your family treasures and investment collections.*

### **Polish Heritage Society**

**Wednesday, March 4 Suffield Ambulance, 10 a.m.**

### **SHOW & TELL NIGHT:**

#### **How Did Suffield Celebrate?**

**Wednesday, March 18**

Kent Memorial Library 7 p.m.

*Presentations will focus on celebrations in Suffield's past.*

*Family stories, photographs, and mementos of anniversaries of our town's settlement, the centennial extravaganzas of the United States, or perhaps the joys expressed at the end of the World Wars or the Civil War are most welcome.*

*Sign up with Art Sikes (860-668-0414) by March 1.*

### **Polish Heritage Society**

**Wednesday, April 1 Suffield Ambulance, 10 a.m.**

### **Academy Students Focus on**

#### **350th Celebration of Suffield**

**Tuesday, April 14**

Kent Memorial Library 7 p.m.

*After much research relevant to Suffield's 350th anniversary, students will discuss effective and meaningful ways to celebrate our community's milestone.*

### **Polish Heritage Society**

**Wednesday, May 6 Suffield Ambulance, 10 a.m.**