



# Stony Brook CURRENTS

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The Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society

April 2018

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.

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## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

by Anne Borg

Begin looking at street names and you'll immediately be drawn into the past history of a town. *Hatheway Farms*, behind the post office, is a good example. All the streets in the development relate to the past of the Hatheway House, also known as the Burbank, Phelps, Hatheway House.

Let's begin with **Abraham Terrace**, named for Abraham Burbank who bought the property in 1736. He – or more likely his son Shem – built the original part of the house.

Oliver Phelps, remembered with **Oliver Trail**, purchased the house in 1788 with money made investing in and selling land in New York State. He proceeded to add on and to upgrade the interior, making it the finest in Suffield. When Phelps suffered financial reverses, the house came into the Hatheway family.

Asahel Hatheway purchased the property in 1810, thus **Hatheway Drive** as well as the development's moniker *Hatheway Farms*. The farm stayed in the immediate family for 100 years, until the death of Asahel's granddaughter in 1910 when it passed to the heirs of a cousin.

Daniel Carrington bought out the heirs and moved to Suffield in 1914. He and his family lived in the house for ten years, earning the name for **Daniel Circle**. In 1924, Daniel moved to California and sold to Sumner F. Fuller, his neighbor across Main Street.

Sumner began doing much-needed renovations but contracted pneumonia, apparently from stripping paint in the cold house, and died in 1928 at age 35. It seems unfair that Sumner, who poured his energies into the house, gets no street named for him. He left the house to his young nephew, Charles S. Fuller II, but life use to his mother Emma who long outlived her grandson, Charles. Emma continued the renovations Sumner had begun, living in her own house during the winters and moving across the street for summers until her death in 1956. Thus **Emma Place**.

I'm told that **Charles Court** honors Charles S. Fuller, Sumner's father. Although a prominent citizen, this Charles had nothing to do with the Hatheway House. Charles II owned the house from 1929-41, and though he never lived in it, I'd like to think that Charles Court honors him as well as his grandfather. At Charles's

death in 1941, the house was left to his sisters. One of them, Elizabeth “Betty” Fuller, who married to the Reverend Richard Carter of First Congregational Church, was instrumental in persuading her sisters to eventually give the house to the Antiquarian & Landmarks Society, now Connecticut Landmarks. She is remembered by **Elizabeth Lane**.

This is a very brief summary of the long and complex history of one of our most beautiful Suffield homes. *Hatheway Farms* is sited on part of the extensive property which once belonged with the house.

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Information for this story was taken from an article written by Karin Peterson when she was Assistant Director at the Antiquarian & Landmarks Society. (*Connecticut Antiquarian*, Summer 1988). Laura Dillman and Jack Cown also helped in the preparation of this article.

## SUFFIELD PROPRIETOR THOMAS COPLEY

*by Edward Chase*

Thomas Copley was born in England in 1643. He and his sister, Elizabeth, emigrated to the American colonies as young siblings. Elizabeth married Nathaniel Phelps in Windsor and, in 1656, removed to Northampton as one of its first settlers. Five years later, Thomas took the oath of fidelity in Northampton at the age of 18, but settled in Westfield after his marriage to Ruth Denslow<sup>1</sup> in 1672.

The following year was filled with tragedies for the family. Ruth’s father, Henry Denslow, had built the first house in Pine Meadow (now Windsor Locks) and became its first settler. On the 4th of April 1673, during King Philip’s War, Henry was attacked and killed by Indians near this home.

Twenty-year-old Ruth was pregnant with her first child at the time of her father’s death. Thomas and Ruth would soon celebrate the birth of their first born, Matthew. But any joy was short lived, as their young son survived just a few short months.

In 1675, a son Thomas Jr. was born. This child soon moved to Suffield with his parents as Thomas, the father, had received a 60-acre land grant in Suffield at the October 30, 1677 meeting of the Committee for Suffield. Imagine the courage of this young family moving to a community that was trying to rebuild after being burned during the same conflict that had killed Ruth’s father!

The Copley home lot was on the west side of South Main Street (then called High Street) where the road

turns west and becomes South Street. The deep lot ran all the way the the banks of Stony Brook and Muddy Brook.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas was one of the elite 34 inhabitants allowed to vote in the first Suffield Town Meeting of 1782. Over his lifetime, this freeman was elected Fence Viewer, Tythingman, Constable and finally Selectman. Thomas maintained a sawmill and a cider mill on Stony Brooke.

He and Ruth had two more sons<sup>3</sup> born in Suffield before her death at the age of 39.

Seven months after her death, Thomas married Ruth Cogan, the widow of Samuel Taylor of Springfield. Ruth joined her new husband with six daughters from her first marriage. Ten children would be the final total, as Thomas and his second wife never had additional offspring.

Curiously, Thomas would return to Northampton in his final years. There he and his sister Elizabeth died on the same day, December 3, 1712.

Thomas’s sons followed in their father’s footsteps as industrious and civic-minded Suffield citizens. They held Town offices and often appear in Town records, but – despite the fact of 17 grandchildren – the Copley name seems to disappear after 1870 and the election of Edwin Copley as a Selectman. Thomas’s female descendants married men with well-known Suffield surnames, such as Spencer, Kent, Halladay, Blakesley, Holcomb and Rising. Thus no doubt the Copley bloodline still courses through our community.

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NOTE: I found no connection between Thomas Copley, original Suffield proprietor, and the famous portrait artist John Singleton Copley. However, family trees of Thomas’s sister Elizabeth Copley Phelps claim a connection!

- 1 Ruth Denslow was the daughter of Henry and Susanna Denslow, the first settlers of Windsor Locks.
- 2 In the late 1700’s this property was owned by David Tod, a wealthy entrepreneur with interests in the mills along Stony Brook. The rather mundane house on the property was moved from the road in 1788 and turned 90 degrees. David Tod then built a mansion on the corner of South Main and South Streets (on the market today for \$1.9 million). After the Tod family moved to Ohio, where its descendants would develop great political and judicial prominence, the property on this corner was bought by Martin Sheldon. Martin was the brother of historian Hezekiah Sheldon, referenced below through his book, *Documentary History of Suffield*.
- 3 The sons of Thomas Copley and Ruth Denslow were Matthew b. 11 Nov 1673, Westfield, d. 28 May 1678; Thomas<sup>2</sup> b. 28 July 1675, Westfield; Matthew, b. 14 April 1679, Suffield, d. 18 February 1763; and Samuel, b. 20 September 1682, Suffield.

References:

*Documentary History of Suffield*, Hezekiah S. Sheldon, 1879.  
*Biography of a Town*, Robert H. Alcorn, 1970.  
*The Pyncheon Papers, Vols I and II*, Bridenbaugh & Tomlinson, 1982.  
 Various genealogies, including from the internet.

## KING HOUSE SUMMER EXHIBIT

This summer's exhibit will be mounted by the Friends of the Farm at Hilltop (FOFAH). The display will outline the rich history of the farm and its owners.

Artifacts and photographs from days past contrast with contemporary pictures showing the progress made by FOFAH in restoring the property and providing a wide range of programming for town residents.

Come and visit from May through September and reminisce about the old days of Hilltop. The King House Museum will open for the season on May 2. Following that it will be open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free.

## BIRTHDAY CARD TO THE U.S.A.

In 1926, Poland delivered a "Birthday Card" to the United States in late recognition of our 150th anniversary of independence and in their appreciation for U.S. support during Poland's fight for independence. The 111-volume document was signed by over five-million school students and their teachers, as well as political and cultural leaders, is now held in the Library of Congress. In 2017, this document was made available to the public in digitized form.

Sara Zak will talk about the document and how it connects to Polish ancestral research at the June meeting of the Polish Heritage Society. The program is listed on page 4 under Upcoming Events.

## SUFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL FIELD TRIP

This year's field trip will be close to home and focus on several notable sites in Hartford. The trip will depart King House on Friday, June 8 at 8:00 AM. We will be traveling via school bus since the sites are close together and travel times are short. Cost of the trip is \$45 per person and includes soft drinks on the bus and tips.

The tour includes a guided tour visit to the Church of the Good Shepherd, in Coltsville. This church was commissioned by Elizabeth Jarvis Colt, the widow of Samuel Colt, and completed in 1867. The architecture is Gothic Revival and features gun parts carved into supporting components of the church. The church and its associated parish house serve as a memorial to Samuel Colt and members of his family.

Other sites on the tour include the State Capitol, which features French and Gothic Revival styled elements. Construction of the building began in 1871.



It opened for the session of the General Assembly in January 1879.

Across Capitol Avenue, we will visit the Connecticut State Museum, Library and Supreme Court. The Museum features the Colt Gun Collection and displays many of the products made in the "Nutmeg" State.

Lunch will be "on-your-own" at the Polish National Home. It features a variety of traditional Polish dishes on the menu. Two items can be purchased for around \$10. After lunch, we will tour the Polish National Home, which features an authentic reproduction of a Polish Bar of 1930s vintage.

We plan to return to Suffield no later than 6:00 PM. Use the coupon below to sign up for the event by June 1, 2018. For additional information call Bob Stewart (860) 668-2928 or (860) 729-6429.



Count me (us) in! Cut or copy the form. Fill it out. Enclose a check for \$45.00 per person made out to the *Suffield Historical Society*. Send them to *Ed Chase, 33 Abraham Terrace, Suffield, CT 06078*

Names(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_



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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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SUFFIELD'S WWI HOMEFRONT

Tuesday, April 24

Suffield Senior Center 7:00 p.m.  
*Bill Sullivan's American Studies class shares its findings about daily life in Suffield during WWI. This multi-media presentation exhibits the events that propelled our community into the modern era.*

### ST. JOSEPH CHURCH HISTORY

Wednesday, May 2

Suffield Ambulance Center 10:00 a.m.  
*Recently discovered history of the church revealed by Jim Turek. (Postponed from March 7 because of weather.)*

### 1818 CONNECTICUT STATE CONVENTION

Wednesday, May 16

Suffield Senior Center 7:00 p.m.  
*Angry, war weary and talking about seceding from the Union! No, not today's headlines! It is the early 1800s in Connecticut. State Historian Walt Woodward describes the treasonous times, the political spin, and the constitutional convention that changed Connecticut's Standing Order.*

### ANNUAL SPRING FIELD TRIP

Friday, June 8 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

*Read the itinerary on page 3.*

### HISTORY'S GREATEST BIRTHDAY CARD

Wednesday, June 6

Suffield Ambulance Center 10:00 a.m.  
*See more on page 3.*

### SUFFIELD'S PAST IN PHOTOGRAPHS

Wednesday, June 13

Suffield Senior Center 7:00 p.m.  
*Historian Lester Smith and Trustee Anne Borg continue the theme of the 100th anniversary of WWI with the inclusion of a collection from that time period: early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Suffield with a contemporary historical perspective.*

### ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Tuesday, July 10

King Museum Lawn 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
*Bring friends and family to an old-fashioned ice cream social. Pack a picnic and bring lawn chairs to enjoy an evening of neighborly visiting. Ice cream and entertainment provided by SHS. Raindate: Thursday, July 12*