



Boothe Memorial Park & Museum

March 2026

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www.boothememorialpark.com

Welcome Spring!

Boothe Park has weathered this very tough winter unscathed. This is always cause for celebration as our wonderful buildings in past years have fallen victim to ice dams, pipe leaks and even a small electrical fire. We thank the Town of Stratford and especially the Public Works Department for the care and quick help they have given and continue to give the park.

As we celebrate this transition, we also have more wonderful leadership news to share.

Congratulations to our newly appointed Boothe Park Commissioners! We're delighted to share that Doreen Jaekle and Blake Powers, along with current Commission member Ann Minton, have been officially appointed to the Boothe Park Commission by Mayor Chess. Each of them brings deep commitment, valuable experience, and a genuine love for Boothe Park and its history. Their leadership on the Friends of Boothe Park Board has already strengthened our programs, social media, and preservation efforts. We are excited to see their impact grow even further in these new roles.

Please join us in congratulating Alex, Doreen, Blake, and Ann on these meaningful milestones and in thanking them for their continued service to the park we all cherish.



We are very pleased to announce that Alex Dragone has been unanimously elected by the Board of the Friends of Boothe Park as our new President! Alex brings leadership, knowledge, a collaborative spirit, and a deep appreciation for the history and future of Boothe Park. We're excited for the vision and energy he brings to this role. You can read more about Alex further in this newsletter.





Welcome Our New President: Alex Dragone

As the new President of the Friends of Boothe, I'd like to take a moment to introduce myself and begin getting to know more of you. At 35, I've been fortunate to have personal and professional experiences that have shaped my appreciation for history, preservation, and community. I look forward to bringing that perspective to our shared work at Boothe Memorial Park.

For those who may not know me, I am a historian, antique car expert, and columnist. My interest in historic artifacts and antique automobiles comes from a lifelong family involvement in the field. Growing up in Stratford, first in a historic Georgian home on Elm Street and later in the Wheeler Homestead on Whippoorwill Lane, I developed a deep respect for the stories our buildings and objects carry. My education at Fairfield Country Day School, Kent School, and Fairfield University helped reinforce the values of teamwork, responsibility, and stewardship that guide me today.

Much of my understanding of preservation comes from years spent alongside my father and uncle, whose work with significant automobiles and museums introduced me to remarkable collections and the people who care for them. Those experiences taught me how important it is to protect and share history, and I'm grateful for the chance to support that mission here at Boothe.

I am looking forward to working with the Board members of the Friends of Boothe Park, as well as our wonderful volunteers, to preserve and advance this special place.

Red, White & Boothe

Boothe Memorial Park & Museum is proud to host a special spring program.



On Saturday, April 18, at 1:00pm, we welcome Town Historian David Wright to the Visitor Center for an engaging presentation on Stratford's role in the Revolutionary War.

This free event invites residents and history

enthusiasts alike to explore the local stories that shaped our nation's fight for independence.

David Wright is known for bringing history to life with clarity, humor, and a deep respect for the people who came before us. His talk will offer both well-researched insight and memorable stories—perfect for anyone curious about how national history intersects with our own backyard.

The Visitor Center provides an intimate setting for this program, allowing guests to enjoy a relaxed, conversational atmosphere. Whether you're a longtime Stratford resident, a student of history, or simply someone who enjoys learning something new, this event offers a meaningful way to connect with our shared past.

To make this day even more special, all the buildings will be open for viewing. Our blacksmith will be demonstrating her skill in the Blacksmith Shop. Volunteers will be demonstrating weaving in the Americana Barn. Volunteers will be bringing the Boothe family to life in the Homestead - David, and his mother Betsey will be pleased to speak with you and tell you about their lives.

Please join us for this very special day!

April 18, 2026

The grounds will be open from 1pm - 4pm

This is a FREE family event.

Rain or shine

BOOTHE MEMORIAL PARK & MUSEUM
CELEBRATES OUR PAST WITH

RED, WHITE,
AND BOOTHE

WHEN: April 18, 2026 | TIME: 1-4 pm | RAIN OR SHINE

David Wright, Stratford's Town Historian
FEATURED "STRATFORD'S PARTICIPATION
SPEAKER IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR"
Will speak in our Visitor's Center



BLACKSMITH SHOP:
Our blacksmith
working the iron



AMERICANA BARN:
Weavers display
their craft



TOUR THE PARK:
See all historical sites



THE HOMESTEAD:
Visit with David
and Betsy Boothe

Refreshments will be served

THIS IS A FREE EVENT

*In conjunction with
Stratford celebrates the 250th Anniversary of America*



Opening Day at Boothe Park: May 17, 2026

Boothe Park will officially open for the 2026 season on Sunday, May 17, and we're looking forward to welcoming the community back for one of our most anticipated annual events. As spring settles in and the park comes alive with color, Opening Day offers a wonderful opportunity for families, friends, and neighbors to gather, explore, and celebrate everything that makes Boothe Park special.

This year's festivities will once again feature the popular Port Five Car Show, running from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The show brings an impressive lineup of classic, antique, and specialty vehicles to the park grounds, drawing enthusiasts from across the region. Whether you're a longtime car lover or simply enjoy seeing unique vehicles up close, it's a highlight you won't want to miss.

At noon, the annual flag raising will take place—a tradition that brings the community together in a moment of reflection and pride. The ceremony honors both the history of the park and the service of local veterans, setting a meaningful tone for the day's celebrations.

Throughout the afternoon, many of Boothe Park's historic buildings will be open for viewing, including the Veterans Museum, the Railroad Society, and additional sites that showcase the rich heritage of the property. Volunteers and members of our partner organizations will be on hand to welcome visitors and share stories about the collections and exhibits.

Food vendors will be available on the grounds, offering a variety of options for guests to enjoy as they explore the park and take part in the day's activities.

More details about Opening Day will be shared in the coming weeks, but for now, mark your calendars for **May 17** and plan to join us for a day filled with history, community, and celebration.

May 17, 2026

Car show
9am - 3pm

Buildings Open
10am - 2pm

Flag raising
12:00pm

Winter Work in the Coliseum: Volunteers Bring New Stories to Life

While Boothe Park rests quietly under winter skies, the work behind the scenes never stops. Much of this winter's effort has been concentrated upstairs in the Coliseum, where volunteers have been creating a new series of wall displays. The exhibit will present photographs and information in chronological order, tracing how each structure came to be and how it reflects David and Stephen Boothe's shared vision for the property. This timeline-style approach helps visitors see the park not just as a collection of buildings, but as a thoughtfully shaped legacy built over decades of curiosity, creativity, and stewardship.

Another new exhibit will shine a light on Stephen Boothe's lifelong passion for travel, especially by ocean voyage. A curiosity that took him far beyond Stratford and deeply influenced the collections we enjoy today. Stephen's travels resulted in his bringing home to Stratford much of the furnishings and artifacts that are displayed in the Homestead. This display invites visitors to see Stephen not only as a caretaker of the property, but as an explorer whose sense of wonder helped define the character of Boothe Park.

Together, the new chronological building displays and the travel-focused exhibit create a richer, more connected experience for anyone exploring the Coliseum. Visitors will be able to follow the evolution of Boothe Park through David and Stephen's eyes, then step into Stephen's journeys and see how his curiosity shaped the collections that make the park so distinctive. These additions offer a deeper understanding of the brothers' legacy and invite guests to appreciate the park not just as a place, but as a story still unfolding.



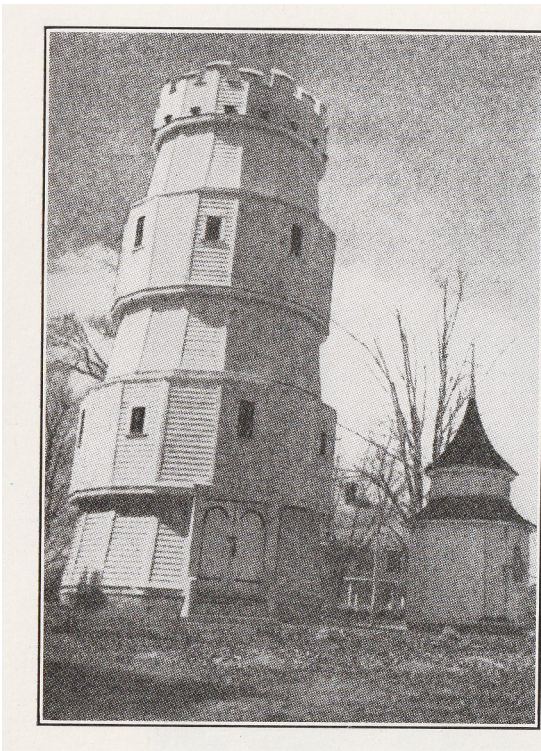
“Together, the new chronological building displays and the travel-focused exhibit create a richer, more connected experience for anyone exploring the Coliseum.”

The Silent Bell

By Stephen M. Korosh, Former Clock-Keeper

Visitors to Boothe Park often notice the large, silent bell sitting next to the Clock Tower's entry portico and wonder why it isn't hanging with the others. While it was cast by the same renowned Meneely Company of West Troy, NY, this bell was actually intended for the long-vanished, sixteen-sided Bell Tower built around 1936.

That unusual six-story structure was once featured in Ripley's "Believe It or Not" for its unique architecture. Although the tower was torn down in 1971, its concrete foundation remains adjacent to the Trolley Station. The bell's history remains a bit of a mystery, as records suggest it may never have been installed in its original home. Today, it sits quietly by the Clock Tower. Interestingly, the Clock Tower also houses a second silent bell; while the Howard clock only utilizes four of the five bells for timekeeping, all five can still be rung manually to play tunes.



A SIX-STORY BELL TOWER

neither Round, Square nor Plumb, and which survived the 1938 Hurricane for over ONE TON of ten penny nails were used in its construction.

Bell Tower, circa 1930s