

The Historian

BURRILLVILLE HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2008

Clothing Collection Assessed by Expert

The Society has an interesting and substantial clothing collection, including ladies' dresses and undergarments, men's garments, children's clothes, a number of hats, quilts and costumes from the Levy collection. Until recently, it has been packed in boxes with little knowledge of what each item was or its significance. In May we were fortunate to learn about our collection through the expertise of Margaret T. Ordonez, Ph.D. Dr. Ordonez manages the Textile Conservation Laboratory and the Textile Gallery at URI. She spent a morning with us assessing our collection, identifying the fabric, type of weave, styles, time period, and value. She also gave us tips on making minor repairs, cleaning and storage. She



President Grover Cleveland and Vice President Thomas A. Hendricks on 1885 quilt

only had time to look at part of our collection and plans to return sometime during the summer. We learned that we have a valuable black mourning dress from the 1850s. The dress is long and made out of taffeta silk with pagoda sleeves and the buttons indicate that the dress was last worn during the second stage of mourning. Another interesting item is a blue dress with a label stating it is a Liberty Dress made in London or Paris, probably early 20th century. The Society has a

couple of interesting quilts. One was made around 1870 from Delaine fabric. According to an encyclopedia definition, the word Delaine refers to any high-grade woolen or worsted fabric made of fine combing wool. Delaine was originally a high-quality women's wear dress material. She suggested that this fabric was probably made in a local mill. The other quilt was made in 1885 and has a photo of U. S. President Grover Cleveland and Vice President Thomas A. Hendricks. It is a silk patchwork quilt with a Kate Greenaway photo on it. Kate Greenaway was a famous illustrator in that time period.

President's Message

Our next big event is the annual Footsteps in History weekend. This year we are planning to be open for two days. We are looking for volunteers to help answer questions and man the building as well as work at the yard sale and bake sale. We will be accepting donations of

yard sale items in September. This event is advertised to people all over New England. This is our chance to show off Burrillville's history.

Ashley Hopkins has volunteered to be in charge of the Sunshine Committee. If you know of anyone to whom we should send cards or flowers, please contact her at 568-8061.

We are discussing putting up a sign to identify the Bridgeton School. If you have ideas on this

or any other projects or programs for meetings, please contact one of the officers.

Betty Mencucci

Upcoming Meetings/Events

Footsteps in History weekend - Oct. 11th and 12th. Open house, exhibits, continuous showings of historic videos, yard sale and bake sale.

Regular monthly meetings, Aug. 26th and Sept. 23rd - TBA

Tour Rhode Island Visits the Bridgeton School

The bell in the tower was ringing heartily as a bus load of 50 guests arrived and poured into the Bridgeton School. Jan Richard was pulling on the rope inside, while outside Shirley Richard and Denice Mitchell greeted the people as they stepped off the bus. After they were seated, Betty Mencucci gave a brief history of the Bridgeton School and demonstrated butter-making in our Davis Swing Churn. While the butter was churning, Carlo Mencucci showed them farming segments from the video titled "Burrillville Celebrates 200 Years of History." After the demonstration, everyone got a chance to taste the fresh-churned butter on a sampling of home made breads and view the Indian Acres farming exhibits. A small gift was given to each person as they left; these were small hand-made baskets filled with candy prepared by Shirley and Jan. Being part of Tour Rhode Island is a great way to show off the Bridgeton School and our history, and we look forward to this event every year.



Guests from Tour Rhode Island fill the meeting room of the Bridgeton School while eating their lunch.



Home of Dewitt C. Remington with barn. Main Street, Harrisville, circa 1900. Courtesy of C. O. Remington III

Help Celebrate

Footsteps in History weekend

at the Bridgeton School

Sat. Oct 4th and Sun. Oct 5th

9 - 4 p.m.

Open House

Exhibits

Photos on display

Historic videos will be shown

Yard Sale and Bake Sale

Donations and volunteers needed

Family Fair

The theme of this year's Family Fair was "Pirates." To go along with this theme, Denice Mitchell researched and prepared an exhibit about Captain William Rhodes who was a privateer during the American Revolution. He later bought large tracts of land in Burrillville and was prominent in Burrillville's early history.

Building News

George Zifchock has taken on the job of taking care of the grounds at the Bridgeton School. The Society has purchased a small shed to house a donated lawn mower. Besides mowing the grass, he is also beautifying the school grounds and is asking members to contact him if you have flowers or shrubs that could be transplanted in the fall or next spring.

The Society would like to extend a big thank you to Paul Begin for donating a lawn mower to the Society.

Wanted

100 % white cotton sheets to be used to store our clothing collection.

Sheets can be used instead of purchasing tissue paper but they must be 100% cotton.

Have you forgotten to renew your membership?

Please send your dues in today.

Ask a friend to join!

Donations

Clinton O. Remington III gave a substantial donation of maps, booklets and account books. The items are listed below:

- Town Treasurer's report 1938
- Dedication of Harrisville Field booklet 1937
- School Committee Reports 1929, 1934, 1941
- Tax book 1931
- BHS Gossip 1913 (yearbook)
- WWII papers belonging to Earl Robinson
- Burrillville map by Turner - Nov. 1954
- 1923 blueprint map of Craigleith Mills, Inc. situated in the village of Whipple
- North Smithfield map
- Meadow View plat map of Oakland by Frank E. Waterman, August 1909
- Map of Salisbury Park, Oakland by Frank E. Waterman, January 1906
- Burrillville map showing voting districts
- Expense account booklet for Remington Livery 1906
- 1895 map of Pascoag and Harrisville, framed
- two large framed Matteson maps of Burrillville and Glocester. They used to hang in Remington Lumber and were used to aid in deliveries.
- two issues of the Pascoag Herald framed, 1904
- Day books which once belonged to Joseph O. Clark 1860, 1861, 1862, 1864
- He let us scan 7 photos of the D. C. Remington mansion in Harrisville and a photo of Ernest Tinkham driving a horse and wagon.

Charles Lyons of Connecticut donated two first grade Nasonville School desks



The D. C. Remington Mansion once stood on Main Street in Harrisville where the post office is today.
Photo courtesy of C. O Remington III

Support your local markets!
Save **Dino's** and **IGA** sales slips! We are receiving a percentage of the total when we turn in these slips. Ask your friends and neighbors to save them, too!

Girl Scout Visit - May 2

A group of about a dozen Girl Scouts came to the Bridgeton School to learn some Burrillville history. After presenting a slideshow of old photos of the town's many villages, Betty Mencucci showed the scouts some farming artifacts from Indian Acres Dairy. The scouts expressed an interest in either doing an oral history project or a cemetery project in the fall.



Millie Legg, age 10, is riding in a wagon pulled by her pony "Babe." Millie Legg was a prominent woman in Burrillville's history and operated a store in Pascoag.



Group of Girl Scouts in the research room at the Bridgeton School

Abby Sweet's Diaries - Part III

Below are entries from the diaries of Abby Sweet, courtesy of Pamela Cardin. Abby Sweet was the sister of Thomas and Albert Sweet who began the enterprises which later became Indian Acres. Some of these entries were read by Pam in the video titled "Burrillville Celebrates 200 Years of History."

Thursday June 27, 1878. Pleasant but very hot, all day are getting ready for a wedding. Rev. Spink is here today and friends of ours. The house is full and quite a confusion prevails. Mother is better and is going to the wedding for brother is to be married tonight. Ceremony at 8:00 o'clock. Albert E. Sweet married to Mary E. Inman this eve at 8:00 o'clock in the presence of a large circle of friends and relatives. A fine collection of refreshments was served to the guests and then the company accompanied the new married pair to the city of Providence by a special train where we bid them goodbye for the present. They took the train to New York at half past 11 o'clock and then we all returned home sad at heart.*

Sat. May 15, 1886. Cloudy today, general housework today. I have a headache today. We skimmed all the milk and Thomas washed the creamer this afternoon. Thomas churned for the first time this forenoon 10 lb. of butter. Dr. Wilcox came. Mr. Goodrich came tonight. Rains hard.

Sun. Oct 3, 1886. Very cool but pleasant. Albert, Ellen and Irving went to church. Rev. Maseena Goodrich preached. They all went into the new church. Mother is no better but grows very weak. Dr. Wilcox came twice. Aunt Hulda came.

Friday Oct 15, 1886. Warm as a summer day today but our house is saddened by deep grief. Dear mother has gone home to die, no more. Her suffering was more than she could bear. Mother died this morning at 4 o'clock am. No mother. Now the house is desolate and lonely this morning. Albert went to friends this morning.

Thursday July 4, 1901. 90 degrees. Today is Independence Day and thanks be to our creator that we are all at home and well and today is a beautiful day as the heat has abated somewhat. Each family enjoyed their dinner at home. In the evening Irving put up a balloon and fired a few rockets and burned some colored fire. This morning I finished cleaning in the basement.

Friday Sept. 6, 1901. Fair and very hot today. I washed my waists and handkerchiefs this morning. I feel about sick today and have not worked much. Mr. Eaton here to dinner. Pres. McKinley shot this pm at 4:00 o'clock at Buffalo Exposition.

Sat. Sept. 14, 1901. Fair and very warm today. Cousin Sarah and Horace Bellnap came to dinner today and both left for their homes this pm on the 1 o'clock train. This afternoon I have done all my sweeping and dusting. Mrs. Eaton and Minnie came home this afternoon. The president died this morning. William McKinley died by the hand of an assassin.

Friday July 4, 1902 One of the most beautiful summer days. The clam bake at Munroe Inman's was a success both socially and financially. The dinner was very appetizing and was done ample justice by all. Dinner consisted of baked clams, clam chowder, clam cakes, cucumbers, onions, white bread, brown bread, Indian pudding, and watermelon. About 200 people, adults and children partook of the dinner. The day was a true Universalist day as well as Independence day.

Wed May 4, 1910. All went to the church to clean up today. The audience room was cleaned with a vacuum cleaner.

** After the wedding Albert and his new bride traveled by train to New York where they boarded the steamer Devonia and traveled to Europe, where they purchased some of the furnishings for their new house. Before the wedding, construction began on the house and was finished for their return. David Mathewson oversaw the construction. Albert hired an artist from Italy to paint the artwork on the panels in the dining room and library as well as the frescoes on the ceiling.*

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