

NEWSLETTER

RICHMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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NEXT MEETING Wednesday, April 17

The Richmond Historical Society will conduct the April meeting at the Wood River Baptist Church on Route 3, Wyoming at 7:30 p.m.

The program, to follow a short business meeting, will be a presentation by Robert Ornstein who will show slides on "Old Houses in Richmond".

Several of the houses have been sketched by our artist member Roberta Whelan to be used in the History-Cookbook currently being assembled.

Mr. Ornstein, until recently a member of the Richmond Preservation Commission, about 10 years ago presented a similar program of slides on old houses at a meeting held in the Bell School.

Refreshments will be provided by members of the Executive Committee.

The public is invited to the meeting--- so members, how about inviting a neighbor, especially someone new to our area!

LAST MEETING

A dozen interested observers enjoyed Margaret Kenyon's showing of quilts in February at the Bell School.

In addition to quilts made in her classes, she exhibited a number of very old ones acquired for her collection, some quite pretty and others very plain or utilitarian and well worn. Some of the new quilts were of traditional patterns, including a log cabin and others of original and modern designs of wall hangings, crib quilts as well as larger ones.

Margaret teaches quilt-making at her West Kingston home class-room, primarily machine made projects. Prospective quilt learners may call for information at 789-5156.

DIRECTORY of members

A new feature for our society is the directory of members which is included with this Newsletter. This was requested by Eleanor H. Smith, and brought up and approved at the January Executive meeting, also at the regular meeting in February.

NEW MEMBERS

We have gained two new members since the February meeting. They are: Walter and Anne Atigian.

MEMBERSHIP

During April and May, a family membership in the Richmond Historical Society may be obtained at a reduced price of \$2.50. A regular family membership is \$5.00. Payment may be sent to: Carol Rupprecht, treasurer, P.O. Box 1116, Hope Valley, R.I. 02832.

VALENTINE FOR IDA

On Valentine's Day, a delegation, namely, Herbert & Virginia (Eleanor was too sick with a cold to go) delivered to the Bader home a basket arranged by Eleanor as a get well token to Ida from the Richmond Historical Society.

The basket was lined with red lace drooping all around the edge with carefully wrapped small gifts placed inside to include a spray of silk roses, a bud vase, note paper from the Meadowbrook Herb Garden Shop, a pink crocheted book mark, and a hand-crafted spectacle case.

Ida and Ray seemed pleased with the visit and it was hoped that Ida was not overtired from the experience.

Surprise! On February 20, the Baders arrived at the Bell School for the meeting. Ida thanked the members for her valentine and said, "I just loved it."

MAY HERITAGE EXHIBIT

Our annual historical exhibit in the Bell School Museum will be "Hats and Costumes".

The exhibit will be open May 1,2,3, to Richmond School classes, and open to the public on the following Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday, May 5 will be designated as open house to promote South County Tourism Week along with other museums in the area.

DENNISON HOMESTEAD TOUR

The tour of the Dennison Homestead in Mystic, Ct. was postponed. The new date is Sunday afternoon, May 19.

We are to meet members of the Hopkinton Association at their meeting house on Route 3 in Hopkinton City (across from the Hopkinton Town Hall) and leave for Mystic at 1:30 p.m.

The tour is scheduled to begin at 2 o'clock.

The admission price is \$2.50 per person.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Richmond Historical Society is planned to be at the Carolina Fire Station Wednesday, June 12.

Further details will be in the next Newsletter.

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NEXT MEETING, Wednesday, June 12

The annual DINNER meeting of the Richmond Historical Society will be at the Carolina Fire Station, Wednesday, June 12 at 6:30 p.m.

Hank Handell will be making his ever-famous JONNY CAKES ! Please bring your individual place setting of plate, cup, cutlery AND a favorite covered dish to share.

The BUSINESS session will include the election of officers, and the third annual History Award presentation to the outstanding fourth grade history student from Richmond Elementary School.

PROGRAM: Stevens and Jan Bertwell of Richmond will tell of the origin and progress of their successful business venture "Finishing Touches." Also, they will show a collection of works from their shop.

LAST MEETING

Twenty two members and guests attended the regular meeting of the Richmond Historical Society at the Wood River Baptist Church.

Robert Ornstein, an architect who lives in Richmond, presented a slide program and lecture on the architecture of Richmond and nearby area.

NEW MEMBERS

David and Vera Robinson of Wyoming joined our society while at the April 17 meeting at the Wood River Baptist Church.

TOUR OF DENISON HOMESTEAD

Nine members of the Richmond Historical Society journeyed to Mystic on Sunday afternoon, May 19. The weather was ideal, cool in the shade and warm in the sun.

The old Denison Homestead, Pequot-sepos Manor, built in 1717 by George Denison 3rd on the site where his grandfather built his original home in 1663, has never been out of the family. Authentically restored and furnished with Denison antiques of 11 generations, it is maintained by the Denison Society, Inc.

The dining-living-kitchen with its 9 foot stone fireplace is where one finds black iron pots and skillets, molds for making candles and bullets, also, a wooden mortar and pestle for grinding corn. Rooms are restored in the style of five eras.

Bedrooms are well furnished with handsome highboys, one has sleigh bed, another a maple four-poster, and a most interesting trunk made of camphor wood. It is all so very interesting to

DENISON cont'd

anyone who appreciates authentic antique furnishings.

The Denison Society was formed by Mrs. Ann Borodell Denison Gates in 1930, the last Denison resident of the house and in 1941 she bequeathed it and its contents to the Denison family association.

EXECUTIVE TOUR AND MEETING AT CHURCH

As a result of the Executive Committee tour and meeting on May 7, the seven members who attended agreed unanimously to recommend that the Richmond Historical Society go further to acquire the Wood River Baptist Church building.

The tour of the church building led by the pastor, Rev. Robert Bell was followed by the Executive meeting.

During the meeting, careful consideration was given to the merit and possibilities to promote cultural programs and exhibits there. The Grant Committee is presently preparing the 501-C application papers.

The members present considered the church building as structurally sound. There are two, the old front and the new rear, stairways to the several basement rooms, each of which are heated by electricity.

There are two rest rooms on the main floor. The main building is heated by forced hot air. The heating system is not new, but wiring was changed a few years ago, according to Rev. Bell.

The building has recently been connected to the Richmond water supply, and a septic system and leach field had been installed previously.

The balcony section in the audience room, not used in recent years, but safe for use, has 3 rows of seats. There is a nice kitchen, and a good sized social room with outside entrance. There are 5 outside entrances to the building. An office area connects the audience room to the kitchen-social room. Rev. Bell noted that he believed most of the furniture would stay in the building when the church moves to new facilities.

RICHMOND'S 1870 MAPS PRINTED

The Executive Committee voted May 7 to have 250 copies of Richmond's 1870 map printed. They are now ready and for sale to anyone interested at \$2.00 each.

HERITAGE MONTH EXHIBIT

1991

ELEANOR H. SMITH

In previous years, our society has presented this annual exhibit in Bell School in mid-to-late May. Before our plans were completed for this year's exhibit, we learned that May 5 was the opening day of National Tourism Week, to be observed through May 12.

Southern Rhode Island Tourism Council suggested that Bell School Museum, along with other museums in the area, maintain open house on that date. May 1 through 5 seemed agreeable dates to most members and complied with the suggestion of the Tourism Council.

Advancing our schedule meant scurrying around, even more than usual. The theme was chosen but the title "Fashions of Other Times", didn't surface until the night before news items were to be mailed to papers and radio stations. Invitations were also hand-delivered to Richmond Elementary School, Chariho Middle School and Chariho Regional High School.

EXHIBIT cont'd

The lawn was mowed, flower gardens weeded, the building dusted and vacuumed and windows were washed.

Then came the fun of choosing garments appropriate to the exhibit theme. A number of items were chosen from the Society's own collection, other pieces were loaned by members.

The clothing selected was representative of several eras.

Once inside the school, items were placed, arranged and rearranged until the exhibit looked satisfactory in the small space and the pieces accompanied by little dated placards.

Richmond Elementary School now serves students through grades 4, only. Nevertheless, from 9:00-2:00, Wednesday through Friday of Exhibit Week, those students filled Bell School with enthusiasm. The young people were aligned around the exhibit area and listened attentively (mostly) as the historian moved through the men's, women's and children's garments, describing how and when and where they were made and worn. Abundant questions were asked and much appreciation was expressed as the groups left the building.

School bell ringers, this year, were youngsters who had January birthdays. One young man, who missed out, really had wanted to ring the bell. He asked thoughtfully, if next year's bell-ringers would have February birthdays. It was explained that the birth months were chosen at random. He then stated very firmly, "My birthdays in September!" Then, as he left, he said, "Remember!"

Passage across rte 138 was accomplished safely with the help of Richmond Police, the principal, teachers and aides of Richmond Elementary School.

Late afternoons and weekend days of Exhibit Week were sprinkled with a few local people and interested passersby.

The experience was rewarding to all concerned and ideas are already generating for the 1992 exhibit.

(Editor's note)

A photographer from the local daily newspaper was on hand at the exhibit and caught the archivist, Eleanor Smith with a gentleman's broad-brimmed hat hoisted up on one hand, and flanked by two studious youngsters.

Oblivious to the camera, six eyes were transfixed by some particular feature on the hat.

With the American Flag in the background, and an antique wedding gown with mutton leg sleeves and covered buttons from neck to waist in the foreground -----it makes an interesting picture.

FLOWERS

The doorstep gardens at Bell School are bright today with yellow primroses, blue iris, and golden coreopsis.

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REPORT OF ANNUAL MEETING, June 12, 1991

Thirty four members and guests of the Richmond Historical Society gathered at about 6:30 p.m. at the Carolina Fire Station for the twenty-third annual meeting on June 12. Hank and Jean Handell had arrived early to start the JOHNNY CAKES and several other members had arranged tables and chairs and prepared the coffee.

The Blessing was offered by Ray Bader and the covered dish dinner followed which consisted of assorted casseroles, etc. and a nice variety of desserts. During dinner, Herbert and Virginia Arnold were pleasantly surprised when the secretary Gladys Burgert announced that the Arnolds had recently observed their 49th wedding anniversary, and promptly displayed a very large and handsomely decorated anniversary cake (chocolate, too.) Also, Roberta Whelan, quietly and without fanfare, presented a bouquet of assorted, beautiful tea roses from the garden where she and husband Bryan obviously spend many hours.

At the business session under committee reports, a "THANK YOU" was extended to Vice-president Virginia Williams, the faithful "greenskeeper" at Bell School, for her lawn mowing and trimming. For most of July this area has been effected by drought and hot weather and lawns turned brown. Recently, we have had rain, down-pours at times and the grass has grown "something wonderful", and Virginia has mowed again at Bell School!

FROM THE GRANT COMMITTEE: Following a discussion as to whether or not to take the next step to acquire the Wood River Baptist Church property, a motion was made and seconded to proceed with the proposal as recommended by the Executive Committee. Herbert Arnold of the Grant Committee has been informed that the Sec. of State requires a \$7.00 fee to verify the Historical Society as a non-profit organization and he will go to Prov. to apply for the certification. (He went, and has since received the certificate and sent it to the Internal Revenue and is now awaiting a reply.)

THE HISTORY-COOKBOOK Editor Patty Millar was not at the meeting as she and husband Dick were away on an extended vacation. Needless to say the committee has not met for a while and we are not quite sure where we are at right at this time - book is pending!

ELEANOR SMITH REPORTS: She recently joined with several members of the North Stonington Historical Society in a recent "dig" in their area. She showed samples of bottles, and fragments called shards of pottery and dishes which were found in an old household dump. The pieces were cleaned and polished and Eleanor explained the possible dates and uses of the items.

SUSAN DAWSON AND ERIC PAULSON , fourth graders at Richmond Elementary School, who won by a tie, were honored for highest achievement in history, during the Society's annual meeting.

The students were each decorated with a bronze medal on a gold ribbon by Virginia Williams, chairperson of the Scholarship Committee. Attorney Frank Williams presented them with "some summer reading on Abraham Lincoln." Mr. and Mrs. Williams spoke briefly during the award ceremony praising the honored students and encouraged them to continue their interest in history.

OFFICERS elected at the meeting to serve for the following year are: Virginia Arnold, president; Virginia Williams, vice-president; Gladys Burgert, secretary; Herbert Arnold, treasurer; and Jean Handell, member-at-large for a three year term. Other members at large are Earl Brynskill, one year; Harold Burgert, two years.

PROGRAM SPEAKER was Jan Bertwell of Richmond who told of the origin and progress of "Finishing Touches" operated by Jan and her husband, Steve at the Richmond Plaza. She showed a sample collection of their work while explaining details of each separate procedure. Jan displayed hand-made lace or embroidery mounted on pillows and finished with ruffles or braid, also custom framed paintings and samples of materials used in framing and sewing.

IN MEMORY

Bruce L. Whitt of Hillsdale Road, Richmond died Thursday, August 1, 1991 at his home. He was the husband of Peggy Sue (Hunt) Whitt and was a pilot for U.S. Air.

Born in Niagara Falls, N.Y., Mr. Whitt was a son of Lawrence R. Whitt and Marjorie (Andrews) Whitt of Richmond.

Besides his wife and parents he leaves two brothers, David Whitt of Fenley, Ohio and Mark Whitt of N.J.; a step-daughter, Denice Cluche of Weare, N.H. and three step-children.

Donations in Mr. Whitt's memory may be made to the Clark Library, P.O. Box 8, Carolina, or to the Southern Rhode Island Animal Rescue League.

BELL SCHOOL NOTES & MAPS

A new supply of NOTEPAPER with sketch of the Bell School, with envelopes, have been printed and are now for sale at the Bell School.

Richmond's 1870 MAPS were ready at the June 12 meeting at \$2.00 each and six were sold at that time.

Notepaper or maps may be obtained by calling the society's archivist or the president.

1 found we sent ck?

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Members are reminded that now is the time to pay dues.

Interested persons are invited to join, or rejoin the Richmond Historical Society.

Dues of \$5.00 per year for a family membership may be sent to:

Herbert L. Arnold, treasurer, Usquepaugh Box 72, RFD West Kingston, R.I. 02892.

Membership entitles one to each issue of the Newsletter, a copy of the members' directory to be printed in the Fall, a copy of the by-laws, and a voice in planning projects and activities of the society.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Ray and Ida (Card) Bader have returned to their home in Woodville after a trip to Florida where they attended the Lillibridge Reunion. Ida is descended from the Lillibridge family of Richmond.

Dick and Patty (Smith) Millar have recently returned to their Hillsdale Road home after a trip to northwestern U.S. and Alaska. They traveled by motor home.

David and Vera Robinson of Wyoming spent some time this summer at the home of their son and family in Vermont.

Frank and Virginia (Miller) Williams have summer guests at their Woodville home including Virginia's sister and their mother from Texas. Mrs. Miller has attended several of our meetings during the past year.

Sally Hoyle was selling raffle tickets to benefit the Curtis Corner Animal Rescue League last Saturday near the Wyoming A&P entrance. She was with her sister-in-law Rosalind (Hoyle) Haring who has moved back to Rhode Island to a new home on Beaver River Road.

Washington County Fair is gearing up for its 25th annual exhibit making it difficult to find anyone at home these days. R.I.'s largest Fair runs from Wednesday, August 14 through Sunday, the 18th.

Patty - wasn't she in C