

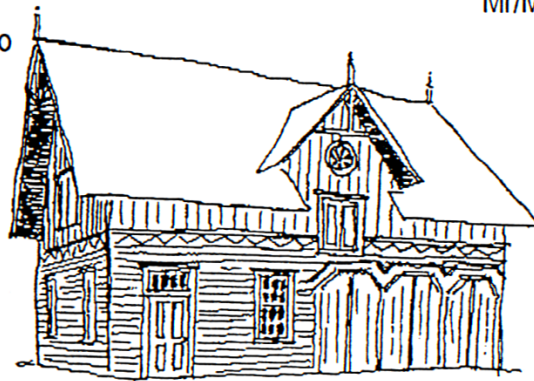


*THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER*

WINTER 2000

BARN AGAIN is a small title we use to introduce the huge job of saving the Rectory School Barn which still sits on the property of Centerville Lumber at 2308 Whitney Avenue. *BARN AGAIN* is a phrase supplied by our friends at the National Trust For Historic Preservation. With the use of *BARN AGAIN*, we blend a symbol of preservation with the metaphor of rebirth to convey to you the excitement of this project and request your support. Though we have more funds to raise before the dream is put on wheels, we take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge the generous support from the following Friends Of The Rectory School Barn:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pauline Doheny | Lois Casey |
| Victor Ehrlich | Mr/Mrs Alfred Kuehl |
| Mr/Mrs Christian Rendeiro | Stephen Mayer |
| Mr./Mrs John Hogan | Jack O'Donnell, Esq |
| Nancy Faughnan | Mr/Mrs Pete Rae |
| Mr/Mrs Sam Becker | Burton Simons |
| Rosa Jones | Mr/Mrs Werner Zukunft |
| Shirley Keenan | Ned M. Leginsky, Esq |
| Mr/Mrs Anthony Esposito | John E. Warner |
| Elizabeth Gilson, Esq | Dr. Russell Spicer |
| Brendan Sharkey, Esq | Mr/Mrs Al Gorman |
| Brian Poirier, Esq | Joseph Chiarelli, Esq |
| New Haven Savings Bank | Friends For Vera Morrison |
| S. B. Giamo | Mr/Mrs Charlton Gilbert |
| Press-Cuozzo Realtors | Spring Glen Civic Assn. |



(drawing by Christopher Wigren)

From The President,

I write to express warmest and deepest thanks to our officers, members and volunteers for their wonderful support. Your enthusiasm, spirit and dedication helped make 1999 a good year for the Society. Volunteers provide the life force for our activities and progress. Looking forward to the New Year, I wish you good health and happiness.

With gratitude and warmest regards, Al Gorman

HISTORICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY

ITEM Do not fault your Society Library for being behind the times, especially when compared to other local history libraries around the state and nation. From its beginning, we have worked to computerize the collection and put it on nationwide data bases far and wide. Among other inquiries, we have received an information request and a visit from an author who then published through Southern Methodist University Press a marvelous book on the Sante-Fe-Trade correspondence of Hamden's J. J. Webb. Last year, archivist Ann, among other activities, corresponded with The Library of Congress regarding a data base known as NUCMC/RLIN and the revision of that library's Italian-American collection.

Now comes the New Millennium. Through the prodding of President Al, we applied for a \$1,000 SNET Links to Learning Museums for the Millennium Grant. Aimed at internet connectivity, it is intended to encourage local learning museums to use and profit from the new, new world of the internet. On January 21, 2000, we received notice that we won the funds. The History Library goes forward into this fast-paced, information-age with established technology credentials and a small amount of trepidation.

ITEM Requests for access to our Library's unique collection still come from far away. Last year, archivist Ann Reddington helped Van Ness Films do their research for a show entitled "Ernest Bornine: Hollywood's Uncommon Character". By letter, researcher Colin Powers thanked Ann for photos used by the producer and script writer. The show aired Jan. 26, 2000 on Mr. Bognine's birthday. Some of our readers may know and remember Hamden native Ernie and his family. His father reportedly worked at

Safety Car Heating & Lighting on Dixwell Avenue in the 1950s.

RECTORY SCHOOL BARN

Credit to the Library one more time. Last Summer when saving the Rectory School Barn left from failure to promise due to a State grant, we went to the Rectory School collection at the Society Library. As stated before in this newsletter, it is a remarkable collection of documents. Spanning decades, it includes student lists, diaries, invoices and canceled checks. Needing something new to flesh out our publicity and our fund-raising requests, we plunged into the collection not quite knowing what to expect. We were not disappointed.

We found the identity of the man who provided the "drawings and specifications". He was a leading architect in the mid 19th century. Born in Hamden, his buildings can still be found on Wooster Square and Prospect Street in New Haven, Waterbury, Portland, Maine and Rhode Island among other locations. His work can be seen in pictures of his long-gone, mid-19th century New Haven train station, the gate to Grove Street Cemetery, the Yale College Library of 1842, New Haven's City Hall and the Davies mansion. For those who haven't guessed, his name is Henry Austin.

We should have known. We knew he designed the fanciful "Play House" at the Rectory School. The School in the 1860s embarked upon an ambitious building plan that emphasized an impression of success and prestige. Our own examination of this 1869 agricultural structure revealed a barn with unusual windows and elaborate design. How much Victorian eye-candy does a horse need?, we should have asked ourselves. The barn now has an authentic pedigree to complement its unique status in our Town.

J D HOUSE & ANTIQUES SHOW OF 1999

As winter comes to a close, we think about staffing the J D House for the Summer months of year 2000. It is opened to the public free of charge from 1:00 to 4:00 PM

The silhouettes on the right are copied from a 1914 post card to Rosa Thompson from Grandma Jorgensen found in an 18th century Hamden home. It is intended to get your volunteer juices flowing even before the maple sap of March. We need volunteers so please call Lois Casey at 248-6030.

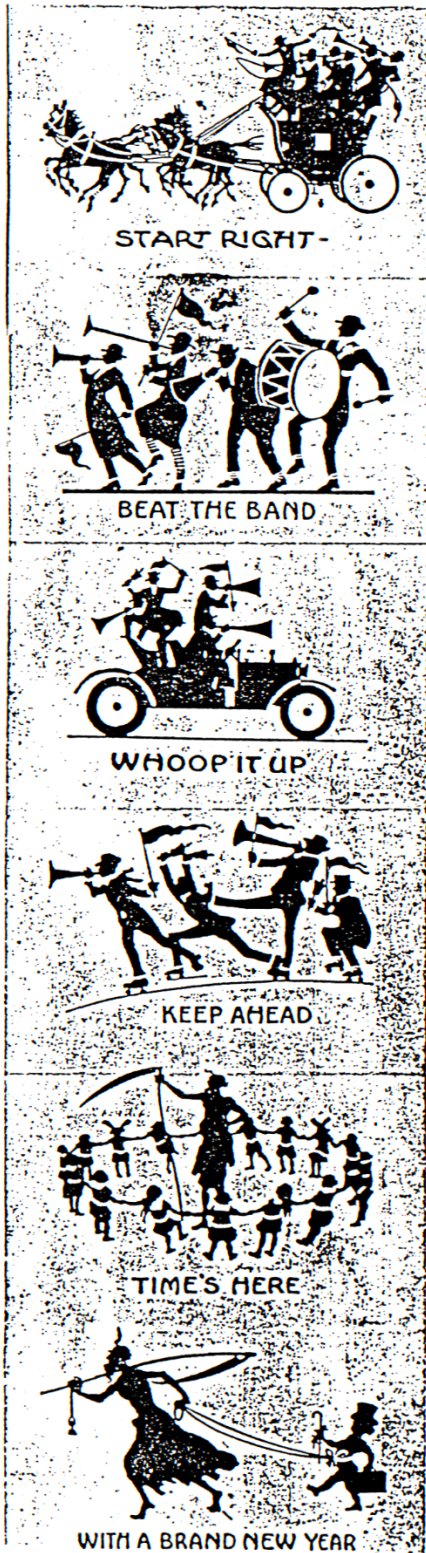
We thank the weekend volunteers of 1999: Al Gorman & Brian Poirier July 4th, Betty Osgood July 10, Ginny Zukunft July 11, Barbara Hogan & Connie Whalen July 17, Pam Rendeiro July 18, John & Marlene Carolla July 24, Jack & Lucille Connolly July 25, Charles Kortsep July 31, Brian Aug 1, Pam Rendeiro Aug. 7, Jane Bonyai Aug 8, Al Gorman Aug 14, John & Marlene Carolla Aug 15, Charles Korsep Aug 21, Susan Colasanto Aug 22, Barbara Hogan & Connie Whalen Aug 28 and Jack & Lucille Connolly Aug 29.

While we are at it, read on: "Mayo or mustard?" "Its 2% milk." "Diet or regular?" "No, we have no non-fat donuts." "Ice cream with that?" "The chili is good!"

The buzz and hum of another kitchen year. Satisfied patrons with full stomachs and the sound of compliments were due to the kitchen volunteers who earned an A+.

1999 was the 19th year our Society has operated a kitchen at the Giant Valley Antique Dealer's Show at the Miller Cultural Complex. We hope we have served the dealers, customers and our members well over the years. We have benefited by being visible, having the opportunity to socialize and of course the good fortune to also make a profit. \$777.00 this year!

We thank the helpful kitchen staff for their cheer and efficiency, their willingness to stand and serve, bake and booth sit and give generously of their time. We welcome and are grateful to the new helpers as well as the stalwart veterans. We want to thank the Sunday night crew who took the tables down and Martha Becker who is the Society's liason to the Dealer's Association and all the dealers for their patronage and generosity. Thanks also to "cousin Jimmy" for the clam chowder! It was a pleasure to serve with you. Al & Betsy



NEWSLETTER

THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 5512 - HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518

THE TREASURY OF MEMORIES: A Special Time In A Special Place Consider the following:

“Saint Chamas....Now at least they had a Catholic church that we could attend even though most of us could not understand French....Two or three of us were walking down the hill and we saw this big fig tree just behind the farmhouse. This little old lady came out of the house and I told these guys that I would use some of the 3 years of French that I was taught in high school. I said in French, how do you do and she responded, very well and that's all I understood until out of the clear blue sky I happened to say that I was of Italian extraction. Well! She spoke very well in Italian and boy we got into a conversation. However my eyes and mind were on those ripe figs.”
Excerpt from Autobiography Of Staff Sergeant Domenic Gaudio's Military Life 1941 to 1945.

“11 Nov. 1942 We pushed on into Casablanca, not without caution, snipers were pretty bad but did little damage. I heard from a radioman that the transports USS Bliss, USS Scott and USS Rutledge all had been torpedoed and sunk. I had some time to wander around town and see what a nice city Casablanca had been before it was destroyed by heavy artillery fire from sea and land.. .What was left of the German troops surrendered today, 'Armistice Day' from WWI.”
Excerpt from ONE AMONG MANY The Memories of Douglas M. Pierpont, Jr. 1941 - 1947

Thanks to the family of Domenic Gaudio and to Joan & Norman Pierpont for thoughtfully passing those memoirs on to the Hamden Historical Society's History Library. Treasures indeed.