

Branford Historical Society Post Office Box 504 Branford, Connecticut 06405

October 1992

HARVEST FESTIVAL. The Harvest Festival, an exciting day for the entire family, is scheduled for Saturday, 17. October from 9 am to 3

pm with the rain date Sunday, 18 October.

The Committee has plans this year to expand the festival around the side of Harrison House to the back yard where a variety of events can be held. The antique dealers will continue to occupy the front yard while the tag sale will be moved towards the back door of the building. Tour guides will be available to take visitors through our 18th century house and answer questions about customs of that time. Homemade gingerbread, decorated gingerbread men, coffee, cider, soda and sandwiches will be offered for purchase along with other bake sale items. This year, plans have been made to encourage the children to learn more about history in a totally painless manner by playing games, listening to stories and practicing crafts from 18th century America.

Please bring tag sale items to the Harrison House on Saturday,

10 October or Friday, 16 October from 10 am to 3 pm.,

PROGRAM. Forty-five people braved the threat of rain to attend the 7th annual walking tour on September 27th. The tour of Averill Place was enjoyed by all and many old stories were exchanged by former residents.

Lisa Quintana, Curator at the New Haven Colony Historical Society, will be our speaker on October 22 at the Community House. She will speak on family life in Connecticut after the Revolution.

The November 19th program is "Nostalgia through the Mail - the history of the picture postcard." For details, see your schedule.

JANE BOULEY

CHRISTMAS PARTY PLANS AND PREPARATIONS. Additional volunteers will be welcome to prepare for our Christmas Party to be held Sunday, 6 December from 3 - 5 pm at the Harrison House. Our decorations will include candles, fresh greens and holly. Refreshments will be served. We look forward to hearing the Branford High School Ensemble Singers led by Cathyann Rothermel. Volunteers for decorating or refreshments, please call either:

MICHAEL (488-3270) OR MARLENE (488-1441.)

MUSEUM/ACUISITIONS. It is really hard to believe that the 1992 season of "Open House" at the Harrison House is over. We took down our MIF display in May. In packing things away, I was amazed at the number of persons who had contributed to it. The Indian display is now the major one and will be added to and left up in 1993. Several other contemporary displays will be replaced. We hope to have "A History of the Lock Works" and a display on the history, construction details, occupants and restoration of the Harrison House completed for the opening of the house next year.

As customary, there will be a list of all 1992 donors to the Branford Historical Society in the first 1993 newsletter. I do want to thank one donor at this time for an outstanding contribution. Eleanor Scherer presented us with a handsome pair of pewter candlesticks which had come from the home of Orin Squire, a prominent businessman and public official in Branford in the early 1800's. These candlesticks are now displayed with pride in our Hall below a portrait of Orin Squire painted when he was a young man.

We sincerely appreciate all donations. I also want to express my thanks to Marlene Palmquist and the Blackstone Library for the loan of many artifacts and to Priscilla Oliver for furnishing literature and information for our Indian display. NANCY HENDRICKS

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS. The rainy summer contributed to the healthy growth of hedges and bushes. It took a good deal of attention to keep them in shape. Fast and heavy growth of vines covering and invading the outhouse also had to be stopped by heavy pruning.

The area behind the House is a natural background for our activities and is in need of care. Our fall plans include professional removal of dead trees and limbs in the back yard.

The Garden Club members - both men and women - have done a wonderful job renovating, planting and maintaining the new memorial garden. It has been greatly admired by members and visitors alike.

You would not recognize the kitchen if you haven't seen it since last spring. It had been fully remodeled into a very efficient and good looking area. After the Society purchased a compact refrigerator and stove, our generous members, Peg and Harry Hampton gave both time, labor and materials and not only painted the cabinets but installed a new vinyl floor. Their efforts are most appreciated by the Board and members, especially those who have "kitchen duties."

GUIDES. This past season our regular guides were augmented by four "Junior Guides," all high school students. Our appreciaton to Denise Rock, Jeri Neely, Patty Wells and Rachael Sunny. Their presence and willingness to learn and help was enjoyed by both the Senior Guides and the visitors.

Among guests from out of state were two families related to the Harrison House family. One from California, the other from Maryland.

We are anxious to recruit more guides for next season. Training classes will be held in the spring. It is an opportunity to learn of Branford's history while helping the Society. If you or a friend are interested, please call me at 488-1258.

ELINOR KING

IN MEMORIAM. This past summer many memorial donations were received in honor of Dorothy Beach who passed away in June of this year. Miss Beach was born in Branford in February 1897, lived many years in New York City and returned to Branford several years ago.

Miss Beach was employed by the Branford Savings Bank and, following her retirement, by the Branford Senior Center. She was a member of several organizations and societies, an avid reader and actively working on a family genealogy.

I personally met Miss Beach when I was Accessions Chairperson and spent a few very pleasant afternoons with her discussing a multitude of subjects including needlework, Native Americans, genealogy, flowers and current events.

When the Society did an exhibit, "Textiles and More," in 1989, Miss Beach loaned us a lovely Victorian crazy quilt made by her aunt, Isabel Beach (b. 1850) and also some additional matching panels depicting flowers and plants of the four seasons which she had done herself. She was well known for her excellent needlework.

HARRISON HOUSE UPDATES. Have you been going by the Harrison House lately and wondering what is going on behind the blue tarp?

For some time now we have had problems with the front door operating properly due to a deteriorating sill and studs framing the opening. A structural survey completed in 1990 indicated that an extensive repair project was necessary to fix this problem, as the door was really only supported by the trim and not structural members.

In removing the interior and exterior trim to proceed with the repair work, evidence was found that indicated that an earlier, much shorter door was in this opening at one time. This shorter door probably had a transom window above it, that would allow daylight in to the entry porch and onto the lower staircase. Of course there is little left behind — some markings on the frame, one trim piece on the top of the opening and some early wallpaper on the interior — so that one can only guess at what may have been there before our present day door.

We plan to have everything reassembled and back in working condition for our upcoming Harvest Festival on October 17, and also in preparation for a new paint job to be given to the front of the house before the end of October.

We do plan to hinge two areas of interior trim, so in touring the house all members and visitors may take a peek at some early details of the Harrison House. BILL JOHNSTON

HARRISON HOUSE, 17 OCTOBER, 9 am - 3 pm



Branford Historical Society Post Office Box 504 Branford, Connecticut 06405

NON-PROFT ORG. US POSTAGE PAID **PERMIT NO. 24** BRANFORD, CT

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

D CR- 31 Ms. Betty M. Linsley 93 Cedar Street Branford CT 06405

OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS OF THE BRANFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President Bill Johnston Vice-President Betty Linsley Treasurer Bob Sherwood Secretary Jean Szeifert Asst Sec/Treas Priscilla Oliver Program Jane Bouley Members-at-Large John Loeb & Michael Syskes

Hospitality Guides Bldg & Grnds Publicity Jackie Ulrich Membership Alice Lambert

Marlene Palmquist Elinor King Paul Dwyer Museum/Acquis Nancy Hendricks