

Proceedings
of the
Brookline
Historical Society
For 1979-1984



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Brookline, Massachusetts 02146
Published by the Society
1984

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Annual Meeting — January 24, 1982

The annual meeting of the Brookline Historical Society will be held in the Main Library, 361 Washington Street at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon.

S. Morton Vose II, former trustee and president of the Brookline Historical Society, and retired president of the Vose Galleries of Boston, Inc., will present a paper on a patriotic effort involving some Boston and Brookline people during the Civil War.

1982 Officers

PRESIDENT

Mrs. Robert Kramer

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dr. Gary Gross

TREASURER

Mr. Christopher Smith

CLERK

Miss Emily Schmidt

TRUSTEES

Mrs. Theresa A. Carroll, Mr. Edward Hartz, Mrs. James McIntosh,
Mr. Edward Ostrander, Mrs. George Peabody, Mrs. Kurt Schmidt,
Dr. Irvin Taube, and the officers, *ex-officio*

1984 Officers

PRESIDENT

Mrs. Robert Kramer

VICE-PRESIDENT

Mr. John Van Scoyoc

TREASURER

Mr. George Lezberg

CLERK

Miss Emily Schmidt

TRUSTEES

Mrs. Donald Carlson, Mrs. Theresa Carroll, Mr. Luster Delaney,
Mr. Edward Hartz, Mrs. James McIntosh, Mrs. George Peabody,
Mrs. Kurt Schmidt, and the officers, *ex-officio*.

Report of the President

Having scheduled this year's annual meeting for three days before the official arrival of spring, we have still been watching the local weather with some apprehension — justified, as it turns out — last week's meeting of the trustees was canceled by a snowstorm. Our caution arose from our experience of last winter, when the meeting planned for January 16 fell victim to the most severe blizzard of that season. The annual meeting was then rescheduled for February and was held in the Exhibition Hall of the Main Library, where slides taken from photographs of old Brookline were shown along with the presentation of committee reports.

The delightful meeting which we had hoped for in January at last took place on Sunday, April 17, 1983, at the Lenox Street home of former Ambassador and Mrs. William Shannon. Their house, which is now owned by Boston University where Mr. Shannon is a professor, is one of several built by the brothers Amos and William Lawrence in the 1850s when the Cottage Farm neighborhood was being laid out. Mr. William Selm of the National

Park Service, who had done research on the house as a student in the Boston University graduate program in Preservation Studies, presented a slide lecture on the history of the house and its adaptation to its present use, and the interest of his talk was enhanced by the charm of the rooms and the hospitality of the Shannons. The Society is grateful to them and to Ruth Dorfman, who made arrangements for the meeting.

The Society's fall meeting was held on October 30, 1983, at the Griggs Road home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kramer, where Lee Cooke Childs read a paper on the "Development of Griggs Park" which she had written for the Radcliffe Seminars Landscape Design program. Brookline's first Town Engineer, Alexis French, was very much the hero of Mrs. Childs' story, and the afternoon being a golden one, we were able to take a brief walk around the pleasant park which he had planned before we returned for some of Irene Hertz' delicious refreshments.

Inspired perhaps by our library's collection of old photographs, the trustees this year have turned their attention to the Society's 300 or so glass slides which have long lain dormant in the Brookline Room of the Main Library. Presented to the Historical Society early in this century, the slides, each of which measures approximately two by three inches, comprise a priceless photographic record of Brookline's appearance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unfortunately, it has been a somewhat inaccessible record because of the fragility of the glass and the lack of any contemporary method of showing them. After consultation with several experts on photographic processes, the Society engaged photographer Robert Alter of the New England Document Center in Andover to reproduce twenty-five of the glass slides in thirty-five millimeter slides which we will see today.

If we are to do the same for all the slides in the collection, it is necessary to have the permission of the general membership, and this is a course which the trustees recommend to you. Not only will it mean that we can use these slides for research, education and even postcard reproductions, but it assures a permanent record of them if the glass originals should break, crack or fade. (You may notice that the clarity and quality of some of the photographs shown today has already diminished.) I do urge your vote for their preservation.

Last November, Mr. William Burke, who has lived in the Widow Harris House on Newton Street for nearly ten years, informed us in a gracious letter that he and his wife would be moving out of the house in December. As you may know, the house is owned by the town of Brookline and overseen as a historic building by the Brookline Historical Society. (The Edward Devotion House and the Putterham School have similar status.) Its caretakers live in the house for a low rent in exchange for looking after maintenance and small repairs to the house and the nearby Putterham School, and cooperate with the Society and the selectmen in seeing that it is maintained in an historically appropriate manner.

When we learned that the house would be available, a committee composed of Mrs. Carroll, Mr. Hertz, Mrs. Larkin, Mrs. McIntosh, Mrs. Peabody and me, met with Mr. Leary to discuss finding a new caretaker. The position was advertised and several good candidates were interviewed. In December, the committee recommended that Glen Tanck and his family be made caretakers of the Widow Harris House and the selectmen concurred. Mr. Tanck is well known in Brookline as the driver of the town's Elderbus, and we are delighted to have him occupying the house with his wife and their two children.

During the year, the Society has had the usual correspondence; requests from other parts of the country about Brookline families or history have been ably answered for the most part by Leslie Larkin and Helen McIntosh. We have also had inquiries about historic buildings suitable for weddings or receptions; these were referred to other sites in the Boston area, such as The Vale or the Robert Treat Paine House in Waltham. As always, several people have written to ask for photographs of the Devotion and Seaver portraits, among them a rare-book dealer in California interested in the titles on Ebenezer Devotion's painted bookshelves.

Mr. Morton Vose, who is writing a book on American paintings, has asked to be relieved of his responsibilities for the Putterham School, so well carried out for so long, and we have been fortunate in having Mrs. Owen Carle agree to assume these. Society trustee Theresa Carroll retired this month after twenty years of serving as director of the Brookline Public Library. The Historical Society joins many other Brookline citizens in thanking Mrs. Carroll for her unflinching generosity to us in both her official and private capacities and wishes her well in a future which we hope will include continuing interest in Brookline's history.

Several of the Society's members and friends deserve particular notice for their efforts this year. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hertz have given much of their time and talents: Ed his patience and persistence as chairman of the nominating committee and Irene her delicious and much counted-on refreshments. Mrs. Barbara Lewis of the library staff has been marvelously helpful and cheerful and, as ever, Helen McIntosh has been a bedrock of the organization. As an acquaintance once remarked of her, "There aren't many saints around nowadays, but Helen certainly has to be one of them." I couldn't agree more.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Kramer

Treasurer's Annual Report, 1983

Cash on hand, January 1, 1983	
Brookline Savings Bank	
Money Market term deposits	\$22,199.80
Regular savings account	62.47
Investaccount (Money Market)	7,000.00
Charles B. Blanchard Memorial Permanent Fund	1,020.14
Patriot Bank	
NOW account	<u>474.83</u>
	\$30,757.24

Income during 1983	
Membership dues	\$770.00
David Wallace Trust disbursements	1,892.79
Interest income	
Charles B. Blanchard Memorial Permanent Fund	58.45
Other Brookline Savings Bank accounts	2,726.95
Patriot Bank NOW account	<u>22.19</u>
	\$5,470.38

\$36,227.62

Payments during 1983	
Insurance	\$968.00
Meetings and mailings	501.21
Cleaning Devotion portraits	480.00
Mailing lists	180.00
Librarian fees	100.00
Putterham School security	82.50
Speaker's honorarium	75.00
Safe deposit box rental	65.00
Bank charges and miscellaneous	61.75
Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks contribution	50.00
Commonwealth of Massachusetts filing fee	25.00
Book for Devotion House	<u>20.48</u>
	\$2,608.94

Cash on hand, December 31, 1983	
Brookline Savings Bank	\$22,199.80
Regular savings account	189.76
Investaccount (Money Market)	9,999.66
Charles B. Blanchard Memorial Permanent Fund	1,078.59
Patriot Bank NOW account	<u>150.87</u>
	\$33,618.68

\$36,227.62

Respectfully submitted,
Christopher E. Smith, treasurer
January 1, 1984

Report of the Committee on Rooms

Patriots Day is still the most exciting day of the year for the Edward Devotion house. Selectman Edward Novakoff received the proclamation from William Dawes amid the cheers of the bystanders.

We had visitors this year from the public and private schools in the area, from seven different states, the Marblehead Garden Club, and a senior citizen group from the Edward Devotion school who came for a Christmas tea.

I do hate to end my report on a sad note, but the Devotion House needs attention. The rear wall is continually damp and affects four rooms. The window in the bedroom has had no attention from a carpenter, so the window frame is disintegrating. Masking tape is holding the window in place.

This summer the fence was painted and it looks lovely. Nevertheless, the paint was put on rotten posts. They were neither repaired nor replaced before they were painted.

The little house is a busy place, and it is fun to look out the window at people taking pictures of the house. I appreciate all the work and thoughtfulness that our president gives to the little house and the Society.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen C. McIntosh

