

PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 1729, PATERSON, NEW JERSEY 07509

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Message from the President - Jerome Nathans

On January 4, 1977, Miss Helen D. Hamilton officially assumed her duties as Director of the Passaic County Historical Society at Lambert Castle. Thus began the fifty-first year in the history of the Society, and thus begins a new era. This is a time of rededication to the principles upon which the Society was founded and to reaffirm the beliefs of those who preceded us. The twenty founding members who joined together had one purpose--to diligently strive to preserve a small part of yesterday that we today might pass it on to the children of tomorrow.

In an effort to share our heritage with area museums, items from the Society's collections are being dusted off and placed on loan for exhibition purposes. Both the Hamilton-Van Wagoner House (Clifton) and Van Riper-Hopper House (Wayne) have furniture from the Passaic County Historical Society. Obsolete display cases have been dismantled, removing the cluttered look in some of the rooms. Static displays are being changed to

provide educational exhibits that will inspire visitors to return more frequently to the museum. Programs of interest to the general membership are being planned. A new brochure on the Society is being printed. Next on the agenda is to organize the library so we will have a proper facility available for scholars and researchers.

The Board of Trustees' goal is to make the Passaic County Historical Society an educational and service organization for the county, but to do this we need your help.

If you believe in the Society, if you believe in what the Board of Trustees is doing, if you believe that we have finally come of age, and must orient our programs toward the community, then we ask that you show your support in any way possible, be it financial, volunteer time, knowledge, or equipment (tax deductible).

Despite the energy crunch, the gas shortage, sky-rocketing oil and coffee prices, and more taxation, 1977 cannot help but be a banner year for the Passaic County Historical Society.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT -
Helen D. Hamilton

It's been a busy time at Lambert Castle the past few months and I'd like to focus on some of the things that have been going on. The first project has been to get the office in working order. It had become a veritable "dump-junk" room so there was a lot of clearing out to do -- nothing has been thrown out, just merely put in storage. Although the office is now tidy it looks a bit sad for it needs some plaster work, several good coats of paint, and carpeting to cover the badly cracked and missing-tile flooring. All this will come in time and then it will be a pleasant room in which to work and receive visitors -- a real credit to the Historical Society.

One of the fortunate things that has happened to me since I began working at the Castle has been to obtain a marvelous secretary. She is Barbara Botel, a student at William Paterson College, majoring in Elementary Education. Barbara is in the office on Mondays and Fridays and puts in a few hours on Saturdays when needed. In addition to doing the secretarial work, she is establishing a resource file and handling the membership list. Barbara started working for the Society when I did, so she has been an imaginative helper in organizing the office. I don't think I could have achieved what I have without her.

Shortly after Barbara and I began work, we were fortunate to obtain two excellent volunteers, who are practically full-time workers, Sandra Otto and Virginia Reid. Sandra is supervising the installation of the new exhibit in the McKinley - Hobart Room.

(For details on the exhibit see page 3, col. 1.) Also, she and I are trying to organize a museum intern program for students who will help us catalogue and inventory the Society's collections and do exhibits. Complementing these efforts, Virginia has been concentrating on arranging a lecture series, some concerts, possible tours for the members and other cultural events.

For those of you interested in genealogy, please note that John Lord, a student at Fairleigh Dickinson, is hard at work in the second floor genealogy room on Saturdays, Sundays, and some Thursday evenings answering the mail we receive requesting genealogy information. By appointment, he is available to assist anyone who wishes to use this valuable resource of the Society. John is so committed to this volunteer position that he even made a special trip to New York City to follow up on a family name he couldn't locate in our files.

Our regular Lambert Castle guides: Virginia Peterson, Marie Smith, Josephine Vecchione, and Mr. and Mrs. Frederickson have been on duty as usual greeting visitors and seeing that all runs smoothly when the museum is open. Sunday is a very busy day with close to 400 visitors coming to the museum one balmy Sunday several weeks ago. With this many people coming in and out its hard to keep track of everyone but with Donald Lotz, a new volunteer, lending a hand everything is well under control when the crowds arrive. Donald is particularly interested in history, and was a frequent visitor to the Castle before he began as a volunteer.

It is grand to have the volunteers we do but we can always

use more assistance. Therefore, included with this issue of Castle Lite is a questionnaire to which we hope every member will give thoughtful consideration and return to us. It is only by letting us know of your special interests and talents that we can have a better Society for all the members.

I am in the office Monday - Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and I sincerely hope that many of you will come to the Castle to say "hello". If I can be of assistance to you in any way please do not hesitate to call, and do remember that your ideas and suggestions are always welcome and needed. This is your Society and I hope you will make it a vital organization through your active participation in all aspects of its programs and events.

VICTORIAN VIGNETTES - A New Exhibit at Lambert Castle

"Victorian Vignettes" is the title of a new exhibit to open in the McKinley-Hobart Room at the time of the Society's annual meeting, Wednesday, April 27. In an effort to display many of the Society's artifacts that have been in storage, the exhibit will consist of four small scenes representing life at the turn of the century. These vignettes, centered on the daily life of a man, woman, child, and servant in the late 1800's - early 1900's, will depict the era in which the Castle was built and the period of its use as a home.

The exhibit is being arranged by nine Montclair State College students who will receive course

credit for their work. They are being supervised by volunteers, Sandra Otto and Virginia Reid.

Envisioned as the first of many changing exhibits to be installed in the McKinley-Hobart Room, "Victorian Vignettes" represents an effort by the Society to create vital and educational displays in the museum for the people of Passaic County. The exhibit will be up for about six months so to recapture the life of a by-gone era. Bring your family and friends to the Castle and see the changes that are taking place.

Sandra Otto

UKRAINIAN EASTER TRADITIONS

A special Easter display of artifacts associated with Ukrainian Easter customs will be on view until April 30. The exhibit has been planned by the Passaic and Bergen County Branch 18 of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America.

On the Sundays before and after Easter there were demonstrations of the technique of painting the Easter eggs.

This exhibit may be seen during regular museum hours.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Members who have not renewed their membership for 1977 will be taken off the membership list in June if their dues are not received by June 1. If the Passaic County Historical Society is to function as a financially sound business then we cannot afford to send mailings to those who do

not pay dues. Enclosed with this copy of Castle Lite is a dues notice if you are not paid up to date. Starting this year membership will be valid for one year from the month you joined. Please call the Director if you have any questions.

Membership Categories:

Regular	\$ 5.00
Family	7.50
Sustaining	10.00
Contributing	25.00

Museum Hours: Wed. - Fri. 1:00 - 4:45
Sat. & Sun. 11:00 - 4:45

The Castlelite is published Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter for members of the Society.

LECTURES SERIES ON AMERICAN CULTURE
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In conjunction with the Society's new exhibit "Victorian Vignettes", a series of slide lectures are planned for alternating Wednesday evenings in May and June. The programs will be held at 8:00 p.m. in the Ballroom of Lambert Castle. The topics, speakers and dates are:

Wednesday, May 4 - Victorian Interiors and Restoration by Lucy Fleming.

Wednesday, May 18 - Popular Music of the 19th Century: Stephen Foster to Scott Joplin by Marjorie O'Shaughnessy and Fred Branch.

Wednesday, June 1 - American Painting of the 19th Century by Marion Schiebel.

The program on May 4 will include tape recorded music of the period. The lectures are free and open to the public. There is ample parking, good lighting, and police protection so venturing out to the Castle on a warm spring evening should not deter anyone.



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