

## Don't Forget to Visit the Historical Society Museum Shop for your Holiday Gift Needs!

*Unique and affordable gifts, books and a vast selection of  
Christmas ornaments*

### NEW IN THE SHOP THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

- Beautiful mouth-blown glass by New England artist Daniel Read
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- Silk and woolen scarves hand-woven in India
- Unique Baltic amber-and-exotic-wood jewelry
- Hand-beaded Victorian-style purses
- Tooled leather stationery products
- A delicious line of chocolates perfect for holiday gift-giving, fresh "from Lizzie's kitchen"
- Jeweled Victorian-style picture frames
- Dale Tiffany lamps
- Hand-carved teak plant stands
- Wirework jardinières and tables
- An extensive selection of imported mouth-blown ornaments new this season
- An adorable line of "S'mores" ornaments that have to be seen to be believed  
...and much, much more arriving daily!

Join us on November 25, 2001, as we celebrate "S'mores Sunday"!



Enjoy a delicious cup of "Original S'mores" hot chocolate, see the beautiful decorations throughout the museum and be among the first to view the wonderful new line of holiday ornaments, "The Original S'mores"!

"The crunch of crispy graham crackers, the sticky-faced joy of melting chocolate stuck together with warm golden marshmallows brings the best of childhood memories to the tip of your tongue. Let those happy times bring a smile to your face as The Original S'mores ornaments come to life with a character all their own."

Fall 2001  
Volume 13, Number 1

# The Fall River Historical Society Report

## "THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME"

*Scanning Yesterday's Headlines*  
by Jeannette D. Denning

### Throwing Out Ballots Not Crossed "in the Appropriate Place."

In nearly all, if not all of the wards, many ballots were thrown out that were found to have been crossed on the lines between the names of the nominees and the designation of the party which they represented. A similar course, we observe, has been pursued in other cities. As it was clearly the intention of the voter to vote for the man against whose name he has placed the cross, it is believed that in an appeal to the courts on this point the voter's demand to have his ballot counted would be sustained, as other appeals have been sustained by the courts, which decided that the evident intent of the voter should always be regarded.

Does this sound familiar? Would you believe that it comes, not from a newspaper of last November, but from the *Fall River Weekly News* of Thursday, November 14, 1889?

It's fun to look at old newspapers - they mirror the life they are reporting, and it turns out that that life is similar to ours in some ways and different in others. Let's pick at random a paper from the past, specifically, the paper mentioned above, and see what the good people of Fall River were reading about on that day.

The opening quote is referring to a local election for representatives in Fall River and on the Friday after the election the main business of the board of aldermen was "the recount of ballots for representatives cast at the election on Tuesday." Fortunately for the citizens of 1889, "every one present expressed surprise and gratification at the good appearance of the ballots, and the intelligence with which our people had adopted the new method of voting."

### WAS YESTERDAY LESS VIOLENT?

In spite of the fact that our 1889 newspaper does not have the screaming headlines of contemporary papers, there is plenty of violence, blood and gore reported, sometimes in great detail. Where today, our news reporting is accompanied by photographs and film footage which bring the world into our homes, these newspapers had to rely on the written word to communicate their stories. Here are two tragic examples:

### SHE SHOT HER BETRAYER

Baltimore, Md., Nov. 11 - Stephen O. Bridge was shot in the neck, yesterday, by Miss Annie Konig, age 21. Miss Konig, who had started for a short walk, was suddenly confronted by Bridge, who had, two years ago, betrayed her. "You should be ashamed to look me in the face," Miss Konig exclaimed. "I thought you had left town, and you had better do so," she continued, as she stepped aside. "Well, I haven't left town, and I don't intend to," he replied, "until I kill somebody." "Do you mean that?" asked the girl. "I do," he answered. Without further warning she pulled out a 32-caliber revolver, which she had concealed in her dress, and began firing.

When Officer Cadden arrived at the scene, he found Miss Konig standing over the prostrate form of her victim, who was begging for mercy at her hands. Bridge and Miss Konig were taken to the police station. When searched a large revolver fully loaded was found in one of Bridge's pockets. Justice Sanner required Bridge to furnish \$3,000 bail on a charge of threatening the life of Miss Konig. It is thought Bridge's wound will prove fatal.

### HE SAWED HIMSELF UP The Sickening Suicide of a St. Louis Man

Edward Karltnner, a young man of 19 years of age, says a St. Louis dispatch, employed for several years in Liggett and Myer's box factory, committed suicide in a horrible and most unprecedented manner, Monday, by precipitating himself upon an upright saw, which was running rapidly. He placed his head where the saw would strike it, and in an instant the scalp and skull had been cut through on the right side of his head, the steel penetrating his brain.

The shock threw him upon his back and out of the way of the dancing blade, but he instantly raised up and presented the other side of his head to the steel, receiving a similar wound there. Again, he was thrown back, this time covered with blood and almost senseless, but he was determined still. He straightened up with an awful effort, and laid the under part of his left wrist at right angles

**MUSEUM SHOP HOURS:**  
Monday through Friday  
9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Special weekend hours between  
Thanksgiving and December 30th  
1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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across the saw. The blade instantly cut through flesh, tendons, nerves and blood vessels, penetrating to the bone. As the left arm fell paralyzed by the shock against the young man's side, he raised the other arm and placed the back of the wrist across the guide. This time the saw came down and severed the bone almost in twain, and he fell senseless to the floor. He still lives, but cannot recover. [!]

The horror of this account of Mr. Karlttner's suicide, describing each gruesome action, is so filled with graphic detail that we wonder whether there was someone witnessing the terrible event. It is this type of reporting, embellished by the reporter's descriptive talents, which compensated for the lack of the visual aspect of journalism, making this as gory as any story we might read today, if not more so.

### A TRIO OF ACCIDENTS

There are, of course, reports of accidents in our 1889 newspaper. Here are three examples:

#### A Little Boy's Fatal Fall

About 4 o'clock afternoon of 6th James Dyer, a boy but 8 years old, fell from the coal run of the Staples Coal Company, on Davol Street, and was fatally injured. The boy's father, Bernard Dyer, who is employed by the Staples Company, was not at work 6th inst., and the lad, who was a sprightly little fellow, had been sent to look for him. When at the coal run he stepped backward and fell a distance of 22 feet into the empty bin, crushing his skull and causing injuries from which he died about 11 o'clock. He did not regain consciousness and it is gratifying to know that he suffered probably but little. The lad's home was at No. 3 Cedar street.

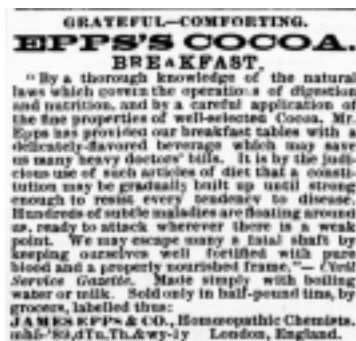
#### Kicked by a Horse

A few days ago a one-and-a-half-year-old child named Phillips was taken by an older child to see its mother who was washing in James Murphy's barn on Division street. The child strolled about the place and was kicked by a horse, receiving a wound on the side of its face that required several stitches. The infant had a narrow escape from fatal injuries.

It seems a bit unusual that Mrs. Phillips was doing her washing in James Murphy's barn. However, since city water did not come to Fall River until 1874, it is possible that, fifteen years later, Mrs. Phillips' house still had no running water, so she took her laundry to the barn where water was available.

#### Accident

Arthur Joslin, aged 15 years, while at his work in a weave room at the Union mills, Thursday, had his left hand caught in the gear of a loom and badly mangled. He was taken to Dr. Terry's office where the injured member was attended to.



Advertisement for "therapeutic" cocoa in 1889.

Here we have a 15-year-old boy working in a mill at a job involving machinery and we realize that at that time child labor laws prohibiting this were not in effect.

### A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS

There is also in this paper a whole column headlined "A Chapter of Accidents." These include a boiler in a coal mine exploding, killing three men; a man falling from a staging into a river and drowning; the boiler on a tugboat exploding, severely injuring the boat's engineer; a little girl instantly killed when she ran in front of an American Express company team and was knocked down by the horse, with a wheel passing over her neck; and a freight train derailed, with the brakeman killed instantly and the engineer having both legs broken and being "terribly crushed and mangled" and subsequently dying.

### NATURAL DISASTERS

Today, we see pictures of floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and blizzards, brought into our homes not only through periodicals but also through televised world news. In 1889, the people of Fall River had only newspapers, but they did learn about severe weather in other parts of the country.

#### THE COLORADO BLIZZARD Sad Story of Suffering During the Recent Storm in the West - 2,500 Cattle Lost.

Trinidad, Col., Nov. 10 - The bodies of John Martin and Henry Miller, the cowboys who were frozen to death near Sierra Grande, in last week's blizzard, were brought to Folsom for burial. Four other men belonging to the same party are missing, and it is feared that they are dead. It is reported by parties who know that at least 20 men are missing from this range and it is feared many of them will never be found.

Many details about the storm follow. The force of nature in the winter was just as destructive in 1889 as it is in 2001.

### THE DOLLAR AND ITS VALUE

There are a few items in this newspaper that give an idea of prices in 1889. The principal one is an ad announcing that fares on the Fall River Line (the steamers going between Fall River and New York) have been reduced. According to the ad, the fare is now "2.00 to New York for special limited tickets" on the steamers Puritan and Pilgrim. The ad also mentions "Steam Heat in State Rooms. An Orchestra on Each Steamer Throughout the Year." - all this for \$2.00!

Another such item is headlined "\$8,000 for the Loss of his Leg." This tells about a freight brakeman who worked for the Providence and Worcester Railroad Company. Because of a defective brake, he fell under the train, his right leg being crushed so that it had to be amputated. The \$8,000 awarded to him by a jury is termed a "heavy verdict." Today it seems like a rather small amount for the loss of a leg.

Thirdly, there is a short paragraph about a new bridge over the Charles River between Boston and Cambridge, which is nearly completed with a cost so far of \$500,000! Of course, this is a small project compared to the "Big Dig", but what a difference between thousands of dollars and billions.

### TALES OF TWO LADIES

Also in the newspaper of November 14, 1889, are two "human interest" stories. The first, under the headline "Died of a Broken Heart," tells the sad story of a "nice, pretty little girl," who left her native village in Maine and went to work in the city. She had no home and few friends, but through her attendance at church became acquainted with a young man and in due course of time became engaged. However, he went away to college, met another girl and broke off his engagement to the first young

dress like that or brush my hair a million times a day. I wouldn't have any time to play out side. Another thing I wouldn't do is wear my hair straight up and then put a hat on with a pin through it. But it was very interesting hearing how they use them."

On the other side of the coin, one of Courtney's classmates, Troy, wrote to say "thank you for letting us in the museum today. P.S. I thought it was really boring and lame." One has to appreciate his honesty as we discover that, once again, the old adage is proven true - you really cannot please all of the people all of the time!



Students of society member Ellen Shea's fifth grade class at Highland School tour the future site of the outdoor terraced classroom space with curator Michael Martins. Currently under construction, this area will be a tremendous asset as we continue into the future with our educational programs. The development of this area is being made possible through the generosity of the Earle P. Charlton, Jr. Fund.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### NOVEMBER

Friday, November 23, 2001

VICTORIAN HOLIDAY

DISPLAY OPENS FOR THE SEASON

Sunday, November 25, 2001

"S'MORE SUNDAY"

IN THE MUSEUM SHOP

1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

### DECEMBER

Saturday, December 8, 2001

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE PARTY  
FOR MEMBERS

451 Rock Street

Fall River, MA

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Norberta Abisla; Edward M. Ahearn; Juliette Almeida; Dr. Odete Amarelo; Cindy & Gary Audette; Cathie Avery; Rita E. Beaumier; Antone Beiroli, Jr.; Georgette Blanchette; Brenda Bouchard; Brian G. Boucher; Barbara Brandes; Dr. & Mrs. Robert Brayton; Kathleen Breen; Mr. & Mrs. Richard Brigham; Robert D. Buker; David Campbell; William Carroll; Dr. & Mrs. Robert H. Clifton; Jose Costa; Christopher Costello; Jonathan Cottrell; Susan Crosson-Natale; Carl Cruz; Cecille Cummings; Mr. & Mrs. David C. Cummings; Mr. & Mrs. John B. Cummings III; Mr. & Mrs. Joseph W. Cummings; Jonathan J. Davol; S. Adam Deery; Mr. & Mrs. E.W. Devlin; Mary E. Dewaele; Paul & Cynthia Donnelly; Sr. Grace Donovan; Jim Dowd; Dr. & Mrs. Paul Dunn; Robert S. Dyer; Anthony Ferreira; Arminda Ferreira; Rebecca Ferreira; Daniel Fournier; Gerald Friedman; Nancy Gagnon; Mrs. Jerry Garrett; John Gootee; Paul Grant-Costa; Carolyn Gee Griffin; Mr. & Mrs. Frank Hadley; James R. Hagerstrom; O. Kingsley Hawes; Raymond P. Hopkins; Maria L. Hotte; Merry Lee Hritsuk; Mr. & Mrs. Irving D. Humphrey III; Mr. & Mrs. Dunning Idle IV; Allen & Bethany Jarabek; Barbara Jarabek; James J. Jason; Connie Jordan; Mr. & Mrs. Elie Karam; Dr. Foster Kay; Jean K. Kay; Joan & William R. Keogh, Jr.; Jacqueline Lage; Stella Lakidis; Cynthia Lemaire; Suzanne Lentinni; Donald & Cynthia Levesque; Dawn Lewis; Mr. & Mrs. B. Robert Lewis; Christine Lundy; Michael J. Maddigan; Claire Margeth; Frank Martins; Victoria Mathieson; Dr. & Mrs. Joseph C. McGuill; Cecilia Medeiros; Clarion Mendes; Gloria V. Mercado; Jeffrey & Catherine Messier; Wilfrid J. Michaud, Jr.; Angela Monsour; Mr. & Mrs. John G. Munro; Barbara Nataly; Jody & Curt Oliveira; Barbara L. Owen; Elizabeth A. Paiva; Liz Palter; Mr. & Mrs. James S. Panos; Carol Pedersen; Eleanor A. Perry; Alphonso Petrasso; Carla Phillips; Paul J. Pietraszek; Virginia R. Powers; Rita M. Provost; Sr. Celine Rainville; Joyce Raposa; Julie Raposa; Barbara A. Rapoza; Donald A. Rapoza; William Ready; Frederick E. Ricketts; Carol Roberts; Nancy C. Roberts; Anthony Robinson; Rebecca J. Robinson; Adrianna Rodrigues; Joan Rosario; Barry Ross; Agatha St. Amour; Mary Santos; Robert & Deborah Santos; Rachel Saraiva; Teresa E. Sardinha; Megan & Richard Secatore; Eileen Wheeler Sheehan; Susan Shephardson; Mr. & Mrs. George Sherman; J. Gilmour Sherman; Marylu Silva; Alice Silvia; Linda Silvia; Robert Singleton; James Smith; Richard Douglas Smith; Ronald Soifert; John Souza; Marilyn Souza; Jane Stebben; Paul & Bette Steger; David & Susan Steinhoff; Patricia Stevens; Domka Stys; Anne M. Sullivan; Law offices of Jane E. Sullivan; Joel Sutherland; Adam Tavares; Juliette Tavares; Marilyn Thielman; Marilyn Boyd Thomson; Doris M. Thornton; Helene Travis; Derek Tremblay; German Villegas; Ella W. Whelan; Ethel Winokoor; Anne E. Woods; Marie A. Wong; William F. Wyatt

## VOICES THROUGH THE MAIL

The wide range of individuals interested in the Historical Society is obvious when reading the correspondence received at the museum. In reviewing some from the past year, it is evident that people of all ages and all walks of life find something of interest that the museum has to offer.

Of the many groups which visited during the holiday open house, one in particular stands out as being especially enthralled by the beautifully decorated museum, the students of the third grade (TBE) at the Harriet T. Healy school. Their teacher, Melissa Homol, wrote: "Michael, I am so grateful for the tour you provided for me and my third grade class. They were thrilled with their gifts. Enclosed you will find a donation to the Historical Society. My students have worked to raise money and decided to donate a portion of their earnings to what they felt was a beautiful, interesting and very educational place. Thank you again. Your kindness is always appreciated."

Lizzie Borden, of course, continues to attract many visitors to the museum, among them Diane Masek from Hammelstown, Pennsylvania, who wrote: "Dear Michael, My family and I visited Fall River Historical Society in July of this year and truly enjoyed the tour you provided for us, as well as a woman, whose name I don't recall, who showed us the upstairs. Some man was really rude to her, as she asked him not to wander and stay with the tour group - he stormed off! He was so rude and impetuous, but she remained calm, cool and professional.

"You may remember me - I'm the woman who grew up in Houston & talked to you about the Rothko Chapel. I saw you on the History Channel on Aug. 2nd and was a bit disappointed - not in you, but in the fact that Lizzie Borden was so glamorized. If DNA science were present then, she would have been convicted - doesn't take a rocket scientist! I read the book you recommended to me - *Lizzie Borden: A Casebook of Family & Crime in the 1890's*. I truly enjoyed it and am passing it on to friends. I truly admire you for remaining professionally objective where Miss Borden's guilt or innocence is concerned. After taking the tour and reading the aforementioned book, I'm convinced she's guilty. I think you probably feel the same way." Yet another voice heard from regarding Lizzie Borden.

Year after year, visitors come to the Historical Society from other parts of the country (or world) and, surprisingly, many of them reply when asked where they are from, "Well, I used to live in Fall River, but now I live in...." In many cases, their first visit to the Society was as a tourist, after they had moved from the city. Now, with our web site, there is a whole new avenue for communicating with these "transplants." A great deal of correspondence comes in with a similar flavor. Carla (France) Phillips of Perris, California, wrote that "though now a Californian, my heart, my roots and my memories are in Fall River. Born and married in Fall River, raised in Somerset. Since membership starts on May 1st, please accept mine a little early, for the coming year. Your web site is wonderful. Only one problem, there just wasn't enough of it. I read every word and seemed to want more. You're doing a great job. Keep up the good work, and thank you so much."

The Society's archive has become a very busy place as well. Requests are received daily, from individuals doing genealogical research to production companies preparing documentary programs for network broadcast. This past year saw requests not just for photographs related to the Lizzie Borden case, but also for documentary pieces being done on other notables from Fall River. The Society provided images to A&E once again, this time for their *Biography* segment on Emeril Lagasse. A

segment detailing the life of Merideth Vieira was done for ABC Television's *The View*, and, after completing production, Production Assistant Jason Kornblatt wrote to the curator with his thanks and stated that "in a vast desert of non-existent pictures, you and your historical society were a much needed oasis of images." The Society's photographic archive, numbering nearly 20,000 images and ever-growing, is a tremendous resource, capturing the history of Fall River visually as it changes throughout the centuries.

With the arrival of spring, the Society's Victorian garden began to resurface after winter's freeze and, once again, visitors spent time enjoying the peaceful tranquility of its lush atmosphere. Tourists have made the garden a favorite stop following their museum tour, visiting school children gather with their teachers and examine the various plants, and wedding couples spend their first hour as husband and wife there being photographed on their "special day."

Recently, the Society's garden was the site of a reception, held by Mayor Edward M. Lambert, Jr. in honor of President Carlos Cesar of the Azores on June 3, 2001. Inclement weather the morning of the event called for a last-minute reorganization, with food and beverage service being moved inside the Society. But by the scheduled time of the arrival of the president's contingent, the rain had subsided enough so that guests could stroll in the garden and enjoy the strains of the string quartet filtering out from the twenty-by-forty foot tent. Over 125 people were in attendance, with nearly seventy making up the Azorean group.

In spite of the weather, all involved were extremely pleased with how the event transpired. "Dear Michael," wrote Mayor Lambert, "I wanted to personally thank you for hosting some of the events that took place on Sunday. You were a very gracious host and the house and grounds at the Fall River Historical Society were impeccably well kept. As Mayor of the City, I was incredibly proud to showcase the Historical Society to our guests. It is abundantly clear to me that a lot of hard work and preparation went into assuring that the house and grounds were in pristine condition. Again, I thank you for all of your help. The occasion was indeed made more enjoyable through your fine efforts. Very truly yours, Ed."

Alzira Maria Serpa Silva of the Azorean Consulate, wrote to "take this opportunity to let you know how thankful and appreciative we are for all your kindness in seeing that the celebration of the "Day of the Azores" went as well as it did....Our visit to the Historical Society Museum is one that we shall remember for a long time, and in no way will we ever forget all the kindness and the scenery surrounding the Museum. Indeed, we all had a great and memorable time."

As can be seen from the preceding, the day-to-day operations of the Historical Society offer a wide breadth of activities, from big to small. Many of the students that visited as part of the school program sent notes of thanks for their visit. One young girl, Courtney, wrote to say "thank you for your guidance through the museum. I liked the Lizzie Borden room best. All the other stuff was cool too. I really had a good time at the Historical House. Another thing I liked about the house is the garden, it is so beautiful. My classmate and I also want to thank you for sending Mrs. Pacheco, she was very nice [Society director Tina Pacheco is one of the volunteers, along with directors Bob Kitchen and Kathy Carey, who has conducted in-class visits for the fifth grade school program]. She showed us all kinds of cool stuff and the slide show was cool. Mrs. Pacheco stopped at every picture and told us about it. I was really surprised when I heard how people act and dress. I could never

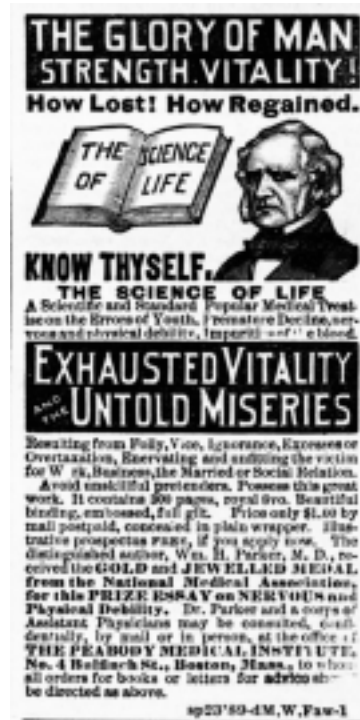
lady. This was a bitter blow to her, for she had been looking forward to having a home of her own. She "fell into a decline," returned to her native village, "took to her bed and died."

The second of these stories is headlined "A Millionaire Heiress Takes the White Veil." This tells about Miss Kate Drexel, one of three daughters of the wealthy F.A. Drexel of Philadelphia. Her father gave outright \$1,500,000 to the Roman Catholic charities and left the rest of his estate amounting to over \$13,000,000 to his three daughters, share and share alike. On November 7, 1889, Kate Drexel took the white veil of the novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy. Until she takes her final vows in three years, she is in control of her affairs and has given generously to the work of Christianizing the Indians, one check being in the amount of \$150,000. When, at the end of three years, she takes the black veil and her final vows, she will be "dead to the world" and her property will be turned over to the church.

## A TALE OF A RACCOON'S DEMISE

This newspaper also contains a bit of humor of sorts, headlined "An Exciting Coon Hunt." It starts out as follows: "Mr. Coon, an old settler of North Swansea and South Dighton, a resident of considerable local celebrity, is dead. He was known of by many, but being of retiring disposition he avoided meeting strangers if he possibly could." It continues with an account of how this raccoon had killed a terrier and a bulldog, but was finally tracked down by a hound and a bird dog. The coon had the hound down in the water when the hunter arrived and shot him. The tale ends with the following paragraph: "The coon was a big fellow, fat and in prime condition for eating. He weighed 27 1/2 pounds. On Sunday, dressed as he was never dressed before, Mr. Coon was presented, at the dinner hour, to the guests of the Mellen House, in this city." Do you wish you had been there?

This is just a sampling of the contents of the *Fall River Weekly News* for November 14, 1889. Violent deaths, bloody accidents, vote recounts, reports of severe weather, human interest stories - they were all there in 1889 - differently expressed, it's true, but still all part of life on that Thursday as they are part of our life today in 2001. The old saying is true that "The more things change, the more they stay the same."



## Acquisitions

### FLINT DESSERT SERVICE

A beautiful Davenport china dessert service has recently been acquired by the Society. Once owned by Mr. & Mrs. John Dexter Flint, the service descended in their family for three generations until its recent gift to the museum by their great-granddaughter.

Comprising fifty-three pieces, the service includes a tea pot, covered sugar bowl, creamer, waste bowl, cups for both coffee and tea, saucers, dessert plates and two serving plates. It is likely that the original service was somewhat larger, as sets of this type usually included additional serving pieces.

Established at Longport, a suburb of Burslem, England by James Davenport, circa 1793, the Davenport factory was to become noted for excellence in the quality of its workmanship and materials. Employing the best artisans available to decorate its wares, the firm specialized in elegant forms with rich ground colors and elaborate ornamentation. Recognition and, subsequently, commissions from the aristocracy came following an 1806 visit to the Davenport works by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence. The former displayed his pleasure with the quality of the Davenport wares when he ordered the magnificent dinner service used at the coronation banquet to celebrate his ascension to the British throne as William IV in 1830. The firm was honored with royal patronage again seven years later when it was chosen to create the service used at the Civic Banquet to celebrate the coronation of William's niece and successor, the eighteen-year-old Victoria. The company was to receive its greatest recognition over the next several decades through its manufacture of the elaborate and richly decorated tea, coffee, dinner and dessert services so coveted by affluent Victorian hostesses.

The Flint service epitomizes the high level of quality, in both form and decoration, achieved by the Davenport works by the middle of the nineteenth century. The individual pieces of the service were cast in elaborately shaped molds, the cups and serving pieces being finished with the hand application of open-work handles and finials. Following firing, the pieces would have been delivered to the decorator's workroom where they were transformed by talented artisans into the epitome of Victorian elegance. Borders and panels of rich custard-like yellow were applied to each piece before delivery to the enameler, who hand-painted elaborate floral bouquets in vivid polychrome. It was then that the gilder, like the legendary King Midas, worked magic with gold. Elaborate ornamental rococo devices entwined with meandering foliate vines bearing clusters of grapes and trailing tendrils were heavily applied to each piece. A touch of whimsy was added when the serpentine-shaped spout, which terminates in an ornithological form, was finished with a gilded beak and feather-like strokes of the brush.

Identification of the company that manufactured the service was aided by the Davenport mark that was faintly impressed into several pieces before firing.

It is interesting to note that John Dexter Flint (1826-1907), a prominent Fall River businessman, was no stranger to fine china. In addition to his numerous business ventures, he can be found listed in the Fall River City Directories for the mid-nineteenth century as an Importer of Earthenware. Without doubt his wife, Clarissa Curtis (Waterman) Flint (1830-1922), was the envy of her Fall River friends when she entertained using this magnificent service in her elegant Rock Street residence. In a fine state of preservation, this dessert service is a welcome addition to the Society's collection of Victorian decorative arts.



An aerial view of Sandy Beach circa 1925.

### SANDY BEACH

An important collection of material pertaining to Sandy Beach has been recently contributed to the Society by a descendant of the Dubois family. These fascinating items offer an intriguing insight into what was once billed as Fall River's Most Popular Summer Resort.

Owned and operated by Alvaro V. Dubois (1860-1935) and his family from the early twentieth century until 1938, the park was located on property off of Bay Street, not far from the Tiverton, Rhode Island, line. Featuring a hotel, amusement park rides, bathhouses and a dancing pavilion that was "...the largest around this part of the country," the park was a popular destination for city dwellers looking for a relaxing day of fun in the sun. In 1931 a fire, which started in the dancing pavilion and quickly spread to the other buildings, destroyed the park. Following the conflagration, the facility was partially rebuilt but never reestablished its former popularity. The final blow came on September 21, 1938, when a devastating hurricane totally destroyed what was, in its heyday, an "Ideal Family Pleasure Park."

The collection comprises an assortment of memorabilia including postcards, tickets and photographs that offer us a rare glimpse into a popular amusement of another era. An advertising broadside, printed in Fall River by Alt-Win Printing Company and dating to circa 1918, is in a remarkable state of preservation and is a great rarity due to its ephemeral nature.

The gem of the collection is a fragmentary horse which was the only trace of the grand 1914 Stein & Goldstein carousel found by the Dubois family in the wreckage following the devastation of 1938. Only the upper section of the horse remains with portions of its back, saddle and head intact, all of which retain traces of the original polychrome finish. With its mane and forelock billowing in the wind, the carving is made all the more impressive by its fragmentary condition, appearing more like a rare piece of ancient sculpture than a piece conceived to be ridden for amusement.

The Society is fortunate to add this collection of artifacts pertaining to an amusing bit of Fall River history to its holdings.

### CALLING CARD RECEIVER

A magnificent visiting-card receiver, dating to the third quarter of the nineteenth century, has recently been acquired by the Society through the estate of the late Edmund Farinha. It is an important addition to the Society's holdings as, previously, only one example was represented in the collection.

Manufactured by an unidentified foundry and probably French in origin, the ormolu mount is designed in an oceanic theme incorporating decorative devices often associated with mythological sea gods. Perched on a base of ormolu-mounted variegated agate in a pale shade of jade rests a stylized cetacean creature, its erect body and tail forming a standard on which is

balanced the card receptacle. Cut from the inner layer of a large mollusk shell, the mother-of-pearl tray exhibits a pearly iridescence with golden highlights that beautifully enhances the rich gilt mount. The tray is ornamented further by a dragonfly which has been inlaid into the surface, set with mother-of-pearl wings and an articulated body of abalone, its extremities incised into the shell and heightened in black. The handle features a convoluted scroll pierced with a trident, its gilded prongs polished to a brilliant gloss creating a sharp contrast with the matte-finished ormolu. The whole is wound with a sprig of lush sea vegetation which drapes onto the mother-of-pearl tray, fastening it to the base.

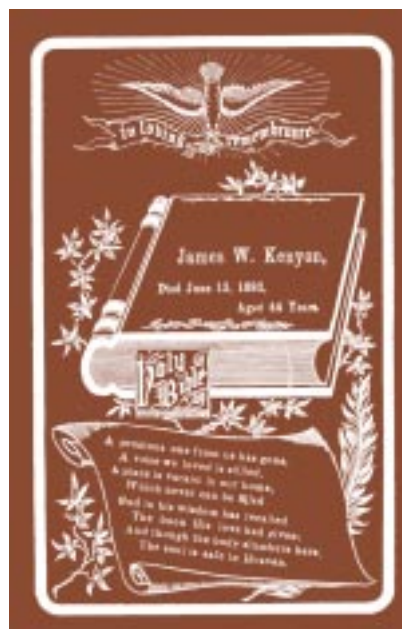
The genteel custom of "dropping cards" on one's friends waned with the advent of the telephone, rendering these objets d'art, once de rigueur in every well-appointed Victorian parlor, obsolete.

### MOURNING CARDS

An interesting grouping of memorial cards, dating from 1890 to 1901, have been acquired by the Society and are fascinating additions to the collection of mourning materials.

It is difficult for the contemporary observer to understand the importance of funereal souvenirs to our Victorian ancestors. Due to the high mortality rate which prevailed throughout most of the nineteenth century, death was commonplace, sometimes spiriting away entire families in a few short years. In order to memorialize the dead and to serve as an antidote for the loss suffered by the grief-stricken, a "cult of mourning" was established. Exercising rigid control over the bereaved, every detail of daily existence was regulated. Black, white and shades of violet were the only colors permissible at Victorian funerals, crepe being the preferred material for weeds and draperies. A period of "deep mourning," much of which was spent in seclusion, was followed by "second" and "half mourning," after which one could emerge into the world of color again. No area of day-to-day life was left untouched. Stationery and calling cards with black borders printed in various widths corresponding to the three periods of mourning were ordered en masse from emporiums dealing strictly in mourning goods. Among the most popular of the plethora of funereal souvenirs available were the memorial cards distributed to the friends and relations of the deceased. Usually printed in the then-popular cabinet card size, roughly 4 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches, the cards fit perfectly into the plush, gilt-mounted photograph albums fashionable during the period. There, as constant reminders, they could be lovingly displayed alongside portrait photographs depicting the deceased in happier times, before being called by death.

The examples acquired by the Society are typical of the period, perfectly illustrating the Victorian penchant for morbid sentimentality. Doves and sparrows bearing in their beaks banners emblazoned "In Loving Remembrance" flutter among sprays of rose and lily, the sweetness of the blossoms offsetting the bitterness of death. Bibles engraved with the name of the deceased are bordered with ivy,



*Unsolved Mysteries*. Robert Rose, Director of Special Projects for WJAR television, worked at preparing his segment for that station's program, *Biography*, in the archive last fall.

### WHAT'S NEW IN THE GARDEN?

The Society's grounds have taken on a new look as the Victorian gardens have developed over the past few years. But anyone traveling Rock or Maple Streets can see that, although a great deal of work has been accomplished, there is still a good amount still to be done. This is evidenced by the heap of dirt standing so high on the north side of the Society building that the gazebo is barely visible.

The garden project is progressing, with the areas between the museum building and the annex building in the process of being developed. The terraced outdoor classroom space, made possible through the generosity of Earle P. Charlton, Jr., is being constructed using granite salvaged from the wreckage of the Notre Dame Church. Around the gazebo are to be four parterres, three of which have been subscribed for: Miss Yvonne Farinha, in memory of her brother, the late Edmund Farinha; "The Sisters Garden," given by Miss Alma Foley, the sisters being the Misses Valerie Annette, Bernadette M. and Alma E. Foley; and the third, the gift of Betty Welch. The fourth parterre is still available. On a level below the gazebo terrace is a garden in memory of the late Jack Brennan, made possible through the gift of Mrs. Brennan.

It is hoped that these areas will be completed for dedication soon.

### A SPECIAL THANKS

To those who have made recent contributions, the Historical Society is extremely grateful.

#### Contributions

\$12,480	Earle P. Charlton, Jr. Charitable Fund
\$10,000	Grimshaw-Gudewicz Charitable Foundation Betty M. Welch
\$5,037	Dr. & Mrs. Paul Dunn
\$5,000	Mrs. Jack Brennan
\$3,000	Estate of Ruth Potter, in memory of John P. Mendes
\$2,000	Anonymous
\$1,500	Ruth Brown
\$1,000	Ronald Ferris
\$500	Charlotte Brayton Underwood
\$200	Marion Munro

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- ❖ **Jim Souza** of New Boston Bakery, for once again providing us with a confectionary masterpiece, the beautiful cake which was the focal point of the dining room table during the Holiday Open House. Thanks, too, for the beautiful cake in celebration of the Society's eightieth birthday, which Jim graciously donated for the festivities.
- ❖ **Mary Ann Wordell**, for donating the two beautiful "Climbing Eden" rose bushes and clematis growing near the arbor in the garden. Mrs. Wordell carefully chose just the right plants, then oversaw the installation of them this past spring. Many thanks for your contribution, as well as all of your efforts!
- ❖ Society director **Bob Kitchen**, for coordinating all of the pre-visits for the fifth grade school program. As always, your help is greatly appreciated.
- ❖ Society director **Tina Pacheco**, for arranging for **Arminda Ferreira**, **Bill Almeida** and **Juliette Almeida** to assist her in acting as guides and interpreters at the reception for the president of the Azores. Their assistance helped to make the day the great success it was.
- ❖ **Citizens-Union Savings Bank** for their generous contribution of \$1000, which covered the expense of the Appraisal Fair. Their assistance allowed all of the proceeds to benefit the museum. Also, thanks to Society director and Citizens-Union vice president **Julie Raposa** for all of her assistance.
- ❖ **Bay View**, for allowing the Historical Society use of its Clubhouse for various functions, including The Way of Tea and the Appraisal Fair. The space has worked out perfectly for our needs and has offered a comfortable atmosphere for member events. Our thanks also go to **Sally Westgate** and **Veronica Pietraszek**, both of Bay View, for their kind assistance in the coordination of the events held at their facility. Their help the day of the Appraisal Fair, and the great lunch provided by Bay View for the volunteers, staff and appraisers that day, were greatly appreciated by all involved.
- ❖ The volunteers who offered their services to make the Appraisal Fair the success that it was: **Kathy Carey**, **Therese Chicca**, **Janice E.G. Curry**, **Cindy Harrington**, **Bob Kitchen**, **Cathy Kitchen**, **Connie Mendes**, **Tina Pacheco**, **Polly Phenix**, **Ann Rockett-Sperling**, **Patty Taylor**, **Betty Welch** and **Fern White**. Their efforts contributed to make the day run smoothly from start to finish. Thanks, too, to Mary DeWaele for thoughtfully arriving with a care package of pizza and spinach pies to keep everyone's energy up.
- ❖ **ABC Fire Protection Company**, for donating their services in providing the annual inspection of the Society's fire extinguishers.
- ❖ **Jeannette Denning**, for offering her assistance to Mary Webster, the artist who completed the mural in the Underground Railroad bookcase.

New York and Paris. It is composed of seven leaf-shaped petals of light brown plush covered in mink, forming the base for a blossom of multiple petals of the same fur. Finished with a nose-length veil in a pale brown shade, it was retailed as part of Mr. John's "Caprice" line. It would have served as a stunning "crowning glory" to a stylish 1950's fall or winter outfit.

The son of a milliner, John Piocelle was born in Munich, Germany, in 1906. He pursued his career in millinery at the advice of his mother who encouraged and cultivated his natural talent. He undertook his artistic studies at the exclusive Sorbonne and École des Beaux Arts in Paris and, following his graduation, was ready to begin his career.

By 1929, he was styling himself John P. John, at which time he formed a partnership with Frederick Hirst forming John-Frederics, Inc. with offices on Madison Avenue in New York. The firm was to do a great deal of millinery work for major Hollywood film studios, most notably for the 1937 classic, *Gone with the Wind*. The leghorn straw cartwheel hat with green velvet ribbons worn by Scarlett to the Twelve Oaks barbecue and the lovely green bonnet brought by Rhett from Paris for the same tempestuous heroine were from the John-Frederics salon. The firm also designed the slouch hat made famous by the legendary Greta Garbo, who wore their creations both on and off the silver screen.

The partnership was dissolved in 1947 following several years of success which saw both partners recognized as leading millinery designers.

Within the next few years, the Mr. John label was formed, achieving immediate success with film studios, Hollywood celebrities and socialites as clients. Mr. John was to become a celebrity in his own right due to his outrageous and extravagant behavior. Proclaiming himself a "fashion dictator," he ruled from his Louis XVI gilt salon on West 57th Street dressed in Napoleonic costume. His creations were wildly popular due to their sophisticated style and exuberant, often witty design. At its peak, the Mr. John label produced 16,000 hats each year which were sold to an enthusiastic audience, worldwide. He also executed original designs for a very select clientele, custom-ordered through his lavishly decorated atelier at prices which were among the highest in the industry. He retired in 1970 at a time when changing styles ushered in the decline of the millinery trade. He refused to accept this decline with grace and in classic Mr. John style proclaimed that "Women no longer have character or chic."

These additions to the Society's collection of twentieth century costume attest to the popularity of furs in the 1950's and 1960's, a time when dame fashion dictated that stylish ladies should "think mink."

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## CURRENT QUESTION

Q: What section of Fall River was known as "Farmville" during the last half of the nineteenth century?

A: The area west of North Main Street from President Avenue to George Street. It was following the construction of the Mechanics Mill that this area became known as "Mechanicsville."

## On Miss Borden

### NEW ADDITION TO BORDEN COLLECTION

In a collection of items recently donated to the Historical Society was a small volume which, despite its size, ranks as a very important addition to the collection of artifacts and manuscripts relating to Miss Lizzie A. Borden.

In 1893, *The Fall River Tragedy* by Edwin H. Porter (1864-1904) was published, with copies being sold by subscription. The Historical Society, already in possession of the subscription sample owned by Porter, which was believed to be the only one extant, was pleased to discover this, a second copy, once the property of George Robert Hume Buffinton (1896-1917). Buffinton, a Fall River, Massachusetts, native, had worked for the *Fall River Daily Globe* as business manager for a time during Porter's tenure there, leaving the paper in 1893 to enter the employ of a competitor. That same year, Buffinton served as publisher for Porter's controversial work.

This volume, bound in hunter green cloth, bears the title "HISTORY OF THE BORDEN MURDERS. ILLUSTRATED." stamped in gilt on the front cover. On the reverse side, interestingly enough, is a gilt-stamped facsimile of what was intended to appear on the spine: the title and author's name, with Greek key ornamentations at the top and bottom, the latter of which are absent in the finished work. Upon first examining the contents, one would suppose that this volume was defective, it containing only forty-eight pages and ending mid-way through "Chapter IX." But, at the rear of the book can be found the subscription sheets intended for listing pre-publication orders. As salesmen's samples are often diminutive versions of the actual product, so, too, is this abbreviated "*Tragedy*."

There are some differences between the subscription copy and the complete book, one being the presence of a portrait of Andrew J. Borden as the frontispiece in the former where, in the latter, this image appears much later in the volume, following page fifty-one. In the complete work, no illustration appears opposite the title page but, instead, the two pages following it bear photographs of the interior and exterior of the courthouse at New Bedford, Massachusetts, scene of the trial. James A. Walsh's postmortem views of the Bordens are also included in the early pages of the sample, when they actually occur later in the full-length work. It is likely that, since the smaller volume was intended to sell copies of the larger, the more sensational images were moved "up front" so as to be included.

It seems ironic that today, one-hundred-and-eight years after its publication, the salesman's copy belonging to the publisher has now joined that of the author in the Historical Society's collection. Easily taken to be defective because of its incompleteness, this piece of history was not discarded. Interestingly, a note from the donor was tucked inside the volume which read: "Do you know why this stops here? Could it be faulty binding and G.R.H. Buffinton just kept it?" But it was much more than the curiosity of a "faulty binding" that caused this small book to survive the years and, fortunately, it will now be preserved as a part of the Society's ever-growing Borden archive.

### MORE MEDIA EXPOSURE

Interest in the Borden case never seems to wane, and steadily requests are received in the archive for materials to be used for various programs. Most recently, The History Channel has worked with the Society preparing for a segment of *This Week in History* which will deal with the Borden murders. Cosgrove/Meurer Productions, Inc. has also made use of photographs from the Borden archive in preparing a segment of their series,

symbolic of the persistence of life in the midst of death. In one example a cherub, the guardian of slumber, hovers in the center of a decorative device entwined with ivy and floral sprigs above the printed name of the deceased, beneath which is a dove carrying an olive branch, representing eternal life. Scrolls and banners carry sentimental poetry intended to lend comforting words to the bereaved, assuring them that their loved ones are only sleeping.

When Benjamin Wells died at the age of 77 on January 31st, 1890, his family chose a card copyrighted by the Memorial Card Company of Philadelphia and was comforted by the following:

*Farewell dear, but not forever,  
There will be a glorious dawn;  
We shall meet to part, no, never,  
On the resurrection morn.  
Thou' thy darling form lies sleeping  
In the cold and silent tomb,  
Thou shalt have a glorious waking  
When the blessed Lord doth come.*

A Rhode Island native, Benjamin Wells was employed as a schoolteacher, later engaging in martial duties. The father of seven children, he had two sons, Benjamin and J. Henry, who became residents of the city of Fall River. Benjamin Edward Wells was a Fall River businessman and, from 1884 to 1917, sexton of the First Congregational Church. J. Henry Wells came to Fall River to assume the position of treasurer of the Fall River Spool and Bobbin Factory. On August 6, 1892, he served as a pallbearer for the murdered Mrs. Andrew J. Borden. Benjamin and his wife, Nancy Dyer (Slocum) Wells, were likely frequent visitors to Fall River and are known to have spent the winter of 1887 in that city with their two sons. The couple celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on February 25th of the following year.

Along with the memorial card for Benjamin Wells are two for members of the Kenyon family. It is likely that the two families were related by marriage, Mrs. Benjamin Edward Wells being Sarah Louisa Kenyon.

Little is known about James W. Kenyon, a hostler in Fall River, who died on June 13, 1892, at the age of 44. It was likely his widow, Sarah, who chose his memorial card from G. S. Utter & Company of Chicago, Illinois. The following stanzas were on the card chosen by the grieving widow:

*One precious to our hearts has gone,  
The voice we loved is stilled,  
The place made vacant in our home  
Can never more be filled.  
Our Father in his wisdom called  
The boon His love has given;  
And though on earth the body lies,  
The soul is safe in heaven.*

Nine years later, on April 1, 1901, Sarah A. Kenyon followed her husband to the grave, passing away at the age of 52. A card by an unidentified manufacturer was selected for her that bore a poem nearly identical to that which she chose for her husband. Was this coincidence or did the poem indeed lend comfort to some griefstricken individual who chose a similar poem for Sarah:

*A precious one from us has gone,  
A voice we loved is stilled,  
A place is vacant in our home,  
Which never can be filled.  
God in his wisdom has recalled,  
The boon His love has given;  
And though the body slumbers here,  
The soul is safe in Heaven.*

These memorial cards, steeped with morbid sentimentality, offer fascinating insight into the mores of another age.

## The Year in Review

### ANOTHER ENJOYABLE VOLUNTEER LUNCHEON

Saturday, October 21, 2000, was the date on which, once again, the Society held its annual Volunteer Luncheon as a way of saying "Thanks" to this very dedicated group for their hours of service donated throughout the year. Joining the volunteers were the Society's staff as well as members of the Board of Directors. Held at the Wharf Tavern in a room with a beautiful water view, the event began with a cocktail hour at which both hot and cold hors d'oeuvres were served, followed by the buffet luncheon. The open bar, appetizers, luncheon and a complimentary coffee mug for each attendee were kindly donated by the late David A. Brayton, Jr., and all were extremely grateful for his generosity.

### STUDENTS HELP IN PLANTING

Last June, students of the James M. Morton Junior High School Environmental Club had the opportunity to provide some hands-on assistance in the Society's garden. Plantings were purchased with funds obtained through a grant which the students were awarded from the Greater Fall River School-to-Work and Career Partnership. Members of the club donated after-school time and worked with Terry Hague of Charlie's Landscaping installing the plants in beds on the north side of the Society's grounds.

### GARDEN OPENS IN FULL BLOOM

The Historical Society's garden had its official opening on September 16, 2000, at 7:00 p.m. The weather for the event could not have been better as over 200 members, donors and friends enjoyed the evening in this beautiful environment. Opening remarks were delivered by Society President Elizabeth Wells Denning, followed by Hon. Edward M. Lambert, Jr. and Rev. Dr. Robert P. Lawrence of the First Congregational Church. As water trickled over the three tiers of the impressive twelve-foot fountain, guests enjoyed wine, punch and a variety of hors d'oeuvres as the B.M.C. Durfee High School String Quartet played beneath the forty-foot striped canvas tent. The following day, the Society held an open house in the garden for the general public, with ginger snaps and lemonade serving as the perfect antidote for the September afternoon's heat.

### FIFTH ANNIVERSARY FOR SCHOOL PROGRAM

This past spring, the Society completed its fifth year of the program conducted with the fifth graders of the Fall River Public School system. For the 2000-2001 school year, the groups were divided between the fall and spring semesters, with twenty classes in each session receiving a classroom pre-visit, followed by a tour of the museum. Many thanks go to Society directors Robert Kitchen, Kathy Carey and Tina Pacheco, who donated their time by conducting in-class visits for all of the fifth graders in preparation for their attending the museum. Once again, the response from all involved was extremely positive. Special thanks, also, to bank president Barry Bibeau and Lafayette Federal Savings Bank for generously providing the student workbooks used. As this newsletter goes to press, the Society is in the process of conducting the Fall 2001 session of the program.

## Curator's Corner

### PORTRAITS BY DUNNING

Currently on view in the painting gallery is an Exhibition of the Portraiture of Robert Spear Dunning (1829-1905), which will remain on exhibit through December. A master of the still-life form, Dunning began his career as a portraitist, receiving a number of commissions from prominent area residents. Included among the sixteen pieces on display is *Nathan's Reproof to David*, the earliest known example of the artist's work, painted when Dunning was eighteen years old and had yet to receive any academic training. The artist's *Noah*, of 1850, painted in New York under the tutelage of Daniel Huntington, is an important example which displays the high level of skill he developed after only one year of study in the Huntington atelier. Of the portrait commissions on exhibit, that of Ella Eliza (Valentine) Greene, painted circa 1877, is an outstanding example in which the artist brilliantly captures the beauty and aloof expression of the subject. Dunning, who was childless, had many successes painting the likenesses of children, and his circa 1860 portrait of his beloved niece, Emma Matilda Dunning, is a masterpiece, which the artist Bryant Chapin referred to as "...the most charming bit of color that Mr. Dunning ever painted." The exhibit contains paintings from the collection of the Fall River Historical Society as well as several pieces on loan from private collections, rarely accessible for public viewing. A detailed guide to the exhibit is available, which allows the viewer to follow the artist throughout the various stages of his career: the earliest years when, fresh from studies in New York, he had much to prove; the middle period when, confident from his many successes, he produced magnificent examples of portraiture; and the later years when, tired of the genre, he concentrated on still life and landscapes. The exhibit is a real "must see" for anyone interested in the art of Robert Spear Dunning.

### TWENTIETH CENTURY CLOTHING

On display in the costume room is an exhibit entitled *Recent Acquisitions in Twentieth Century Clothing*, covering the years from 1925 through 1970. As the Historical Society enters its eightieth year, it seems a fitting time to showcase a collection of costumes spanning the years since its incorporation. At the beginning of a new century, the Society has begun to actively collect garments from the latter half of the last century and this exhibit features some of the more recent acquisitions. Six pieces, some complete with accessories, were worn by the late Mrs. Charles Manus Moran, with one article being featured from each decade from the 1920's to 1970. They were chosen from a large collection of clothing and accessories donated to the Society by Mrs. Moran from her personal wardrobe. Among the most important pieces from the Moran collection is an elegantly simple 1950's cocktail dress in café-au-lait silk faille by Pauline Trigère and a stunning circa 1970 coat dress in brandy-wine silk panne velvet ornamented with jet by Oscar de la Renta. Included in the exhibit is a magnificent circa 1959 suit in olive, black and bronze silk satin brocade by Traina-Norell, having been worn by Society member Miss Helen Klimka. Also from the Klimka collection is a chic black wool jersey and silk satin sheath by Galanos worn under a magnificent claret silk coat by Ferro, both circa 1960. Mrs. Manuel Mello's wedding dress ensemble, worn November 30, 1940, is of white satin with a flocked lily-of-the-valley pattern and is displayed with its original veil and orange blossoms. From the fur collection comes a lustrous sable stole retailed by Boston's C. Crawford Hollidge and worn by Mrs. Abraham Horvitz, circa 1945. A detailed brochure has been prepared which provides the visitor with a description of each piece including pertinent information on the designers. The collection will remain on view through December.

### ARTIST IDENTIFIED

In a past issue of this newsletter there appeared an article on the full-length portrait of textile magnate Matthew Chaloner Durfee Borden that had been acquired by the Society, the gift of the Thomas Chew Memorial Boys and Girls Club. The unrestored portrait was painted in New York in 1901 and bore the rather illegible signature of the artist. It was hoped that a careful restoration of the torn and heavily soiled canvas would aid in uncovering the identity of the portraitist. Following months with a painting conservator in Arlington, Massachusetts, the portrait was returned to the Society beautifully restored to its former magnificence, its signature clean and fresh, but still illegible.

It is said that things often happen by chance and such was the case only a few weeks ago when Dennis Binette was scanning a copy of the *Fall River Evening News* looking for an obituary. In the April 2, 1901, issue he happened to glance at the following headline "Fine Portrait of M. C. D. Borden" and read the following:

Mr. M. C. D. Borden has presented the Boys' Club with an excellent full-length painting of himself. The gift was received at the club this morning and came as a surprise. It has been hung on the east wall of the club library. The artist is Chartran, of New York city. Mr. Borden is portrayed standing at a desk near an office window which overlooks the Print Works plant. The painting is 5 by 8 feet.

So there it was - "Chartran," mystery solved!

Theobald Chartran was born in Besançon, France on July 20, 1849. A student of Alexandre Cabanal at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, he was later to become a distinguished member of the French academy. A portraitist and painter of genre scenes, he exhibited his first piece in 1872 with a successful career soon following. In 1877 he was awarded the Grand Prix de Rome and soon became recognized as important among the portrait artists "à la mode." He began exhibiting at London's prestigious Royal Academy in 1881, displaying works at the Grafton Gallery that same year. He was the recipient of a number of important portrait commissions including that of the "Divine" Sarah Bernhardt, in the role of Gismonda, and prominent members of the Parisian haute monde. On several occasions, he visited the United States to execute portrait commissions. A Knight of the Legion d'honneur, he was the recipient of several prestigious awards during his lifetime. He died at Neuilly-sur-Seine on July 18, 1907.

Works by Theobald Chartran hang in important museum collections and galleries world-wide and are actively sought after by private collectors. The Society is indeed fortunate to have this large-scale work by this important nineteenth-century portraitist. It is fitting that the piece has come to hang in a collection that already includes a piece by Chartran's teacher, Alexandre Cabanal. It is a postmortem portrait of Bradford Matthew Chaloner Durfee commissioned by his mother and painted in Paris in 1875, three years after the death of the subject. It is interesting that both student and teacher came to paint two men from Fall River, cousins with uncannily similar names, and that the finished portraits would come to hang together in the same collection decades later.

### APPRAISAL FAIR A SUCCESS

The appraisal day held on Saturday, July 21st was a great success with 187 people bringing in a total of 356 items to be appraised. Thanks to a generous contribution of \$1,000 from Citizens-Union Savings Bank, underwriting the event, the Society realized a total of \$2,500 from the fundraiser. A wide range of

antiques and curiosities was examined by Colleene Fesko and James Callahan of Skinner, Inc. in Bolton and Boston, Massachusetts. Special thanks are due to our friends at Bay View who provided the perfect setting for the event and assisted in so many ways.

### UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BOOKCASE RESTORED

The restoration of the false bookcase, originally used to conceal a hidden passageway in the Society's building when located on Columbia Street, has been completed. The frame for the case itself was installed in the southeast corner of the front parlor, with the door mounted to open inward, revealing the space beyond it. Unfortunately, age had rendered the leather spines of the "books" dry and brittle, with many cracks and losses evident. In order to preserve the original bindings, it was necessary to archivally store them, replacing them with exact reproductions on the mock shelves of the door panel. The forms for the spines were created by carpenter Joe Valley, identical in size and shape to the originals. Meticulous descriptions were given to bookbinder Dan Knowlton of Longview Studios in Bristol, Rhode Island, who proceeded to painstakingly create replicas of the aged leather spines, hand-tooling them, stamping them with gilt and mounting them on the wooden forms. Once they were installed on the door, the question of how best to deal with the space beyond the door, intended to represent the passageway, had to be addressed. Artist Mary Webster was enlisted to paint a mural on the prepared wall; the decision was made that the design would include not only the beginning of the passage wall, but also the shadow of a figure standing beyond the door. Reinstalled, the door now opens to reveal this shadow, representative of the hopeful many who crossed through this doorway in search of freedom. With this long-awaited restoration completed, this important piece of the history of the stone house has been preserved for generations to come.

### IN MEMORIAM DAVID A. BRAYTON, JR. 1935 - 2001

A telephone call on a Monday morning brought the sad news that David Anthony Brayton, Jr. had passed away on Sunday, May 6, 2001 - the Fall River Historical Society lost a long-time Director, benefactor and a very good friend. Comfort came to his family and many friends with the knowledge that this man, who had lived life by his own rules, had bravely died the same way and was finally free. His generosity was as great and sincere as he was, done always in the truest spirit of noblesse oblige and always anonymous, a simple note of thanks the only recognition necessary. He once told the curator that he was a supporter of the Society because he believed in, and was proud of, the work that was being done here, that Fall River was important to him, and because "it is what my father would have wanted me to do" - the last of which says much for his love of family and his respect for their legacy of philanthropy. He will be missed by many.

## Fashion Plate

Over the past few months several interesting fur pieces have been accepted into the costume collection. Of special interest are two examples, a toque and a stole, from the well-known Fall River furrier, Robert's Furs.

A lovely Russian-style toque in umber-tipped white Norwegian fox exhibits all the luscious qualities of that soft, glossy, long-haired fur. Lined in brown wool jersey, it is contained in its original hatbox. Hats of this type were often referred to as "Dr. Zhivagos," becoming popular after the premier of that classic romantic epic in 1964. Purchased at Robert's the following year by Miss Alma E. Foley, it was worn with a coat that had a "gorgeous Norwegian fox collar"; the donor remembers that she "felt pretty elegant" when wearing the ensemble to a wedding in Washington, D.C.

That Robert's sold a wide range of furs of various qualities to a varied clientele is evidenced by a stole, purchased at that furrier's by an unidentified individual, circa 1955. The stole was assembled using four full pelts of stone marten, a somewhat coarse fur from a weasel-like animal of European or Asian origin. Although not an expensive fur piece, no doubt its owner felt just as chic as if she were clad in mink or sable and that she cut a smart figure wearing it. Clipped to the mouth of one of the pelts is the original leather tag designed to fit over a hanger for easy storage, stamped in gilt with "Robert's Furs, Fall River, Mass."

Robert John Morelli was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts on March 1, 1908, the son of Luigi and Josephine (Orsi) Morelli. Educated in the public school system, he was a graduate of New Bedford High School. He entered the fur trade as a clerk at the Fur House of Sidney, founded in New Bedford by Sidney Bogorad in 1914. Working with Mr. Bogorad over the next several years, he was to immerse himself in all aspects of the furrier's trade. In 1941, he formed a partnership with his employer and began Sidney-Roberts, a firm specializing in the rental of dress suits, operating that business at 398 Spring Street in Fall River, sharing the address with Bogorad's Fur House of Sidney.

In 1946, he opened, independent of Mr. Bogorad, Robert's Fur and Formal Shop at 398 Spring Street, which he was to operate successfully for the next thirty-eight years, assisted by his wife, the former Marion M. D'Ambrosio. The shop relocated across the street to 383 Spring Street in 1957, later becoming known as Robert's Fur Salon. A purveyor of all varieties of fur from inexpensive rabbit to valuable sable, the full-service shop also offered cleaning and fur storage. In addition to making over old furs, Mr. Morelli also executed original designs which he began by creating a fabric toile before working in the pelts chosen by his client. Robert's enjoyed a wide clientele in Fall River and New Bedford and was noted for customer service. Mr. Morelli often accompanied clients to Boston or New York to assist them in the selection of articles of clothing made from fine furs. He is remembered by Miss Foley as "a very nice guy who dolled me up." Mr. Morelli closed his shop upon his retirement in 1984.

A veteran of World War II, he served with the United States Army in Italy. An active member of New Bedford's St. Francis Assisi Parish, he was a recipient of the Marian Medal presented to him by Bishop Daniel F. Cronin for his dedication and many years of service to that church. An antique automobile enthusiast, he was an avid collector, a favorite pastime being visiting other collections.

He died in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on February 5, 1989, at the age of eighty, having been a life-long resident of that city. Purchased from the millinery department of an unidentified store comes a whimsey in honey mink and veiling by Mr. John of