

The PRESERVATIONIST

Newsletter of
the SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST

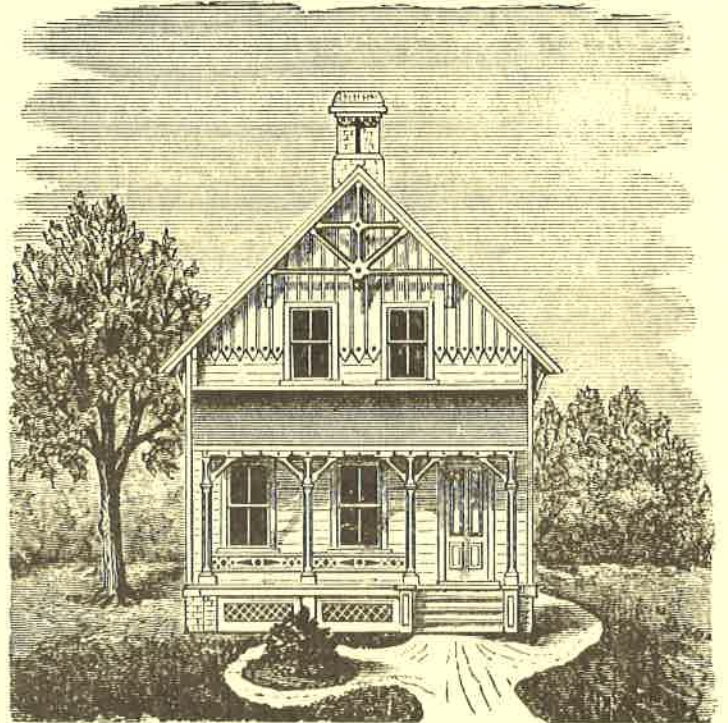
Fall 1994

CELEBRITY HOMES TOUR COMING UP

Your opportunity to tour the homes of local notables is on Sunday afternoon, October 16, 1994 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. The Trust's Fall Home Tour will feature a "Celebrity" theme this year. Included will be the elegant rectory of St. Michael's Cathedral and the lovely home of Judy Matt of Springfield Central, among others being finalized at press time. These are not only distinctive residences of area celebrities, but also homes of considerable historic note.

Tickets will be on sale in advance, as well as on October 16, the date of the tour. Tour-goers should arrive first at the rectory of St. Michael's Cathedral (corner of Elliott and State St.) to exchange their ticket for a brochure of the tour homes, complete with brief background sketches about each home. Tickets are \$10, with a \$2 discount for Springfield Preservation Trust members (patrons and sponsors get free tickets). Tickets are available at all locations of Longmeadow Flowers, at other locations to be announced, and through Trust members.

Don't miss this special tour. You'll be seeing the homes of people you've read about in our community, so don't miss the chance to get an "up close and personal" look at their fantastic homes!



SPT CALENDAR

Monthly meetings
held at 7:30 p.m.

Next meetings are

October 5, November 2, and December 7

(Location to be determined)

FALL HOUSE TOUR

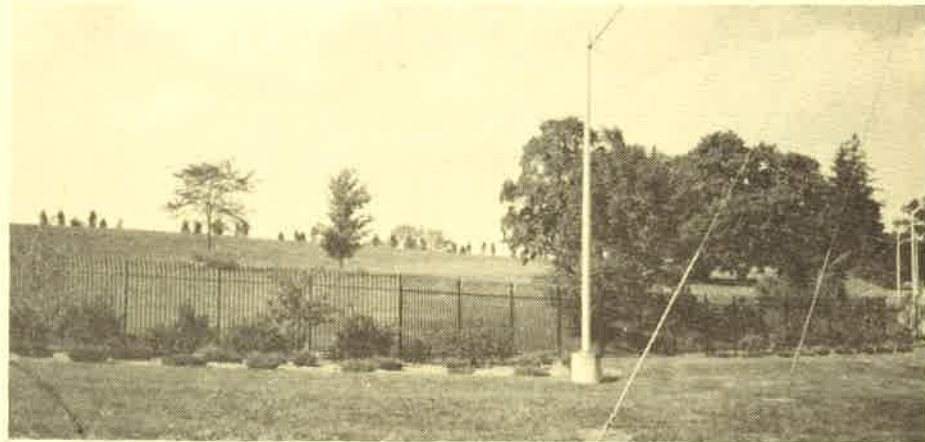
Sunday, October 16, 1994

11:00 - 4:00 p.m.

1994 ANNUAL MEETING and AWARD RECEPTION

Sunday, November 20, 1994

4:00 p.m.



CAN YOU GUESS?

One would like to believe that these lovely rolling hills have always been here. One thinks about how wonderful it is that there still remains unspoiled, unbuilt land behind the Mass Mutual building on Wilbraham Road. One would be wrong! Turn to Page 7 and see what used to be here.

If you are considering marketing your property, Colleen Westberg is

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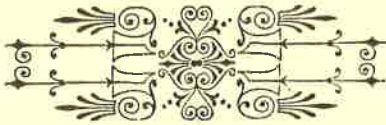
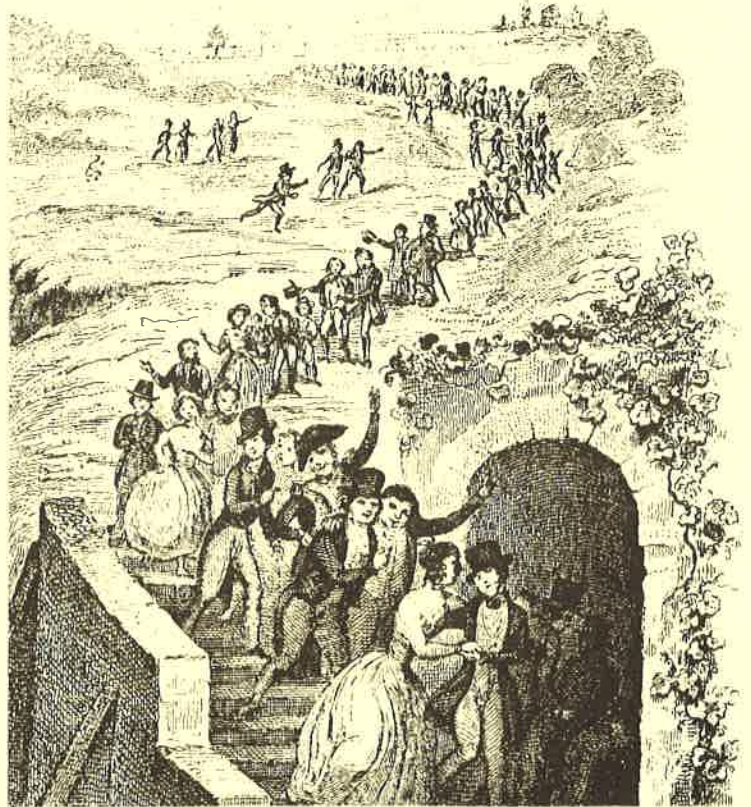
776 LONGMEADOW STREET
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ANNUAL PICNIC SERVES UP FUN

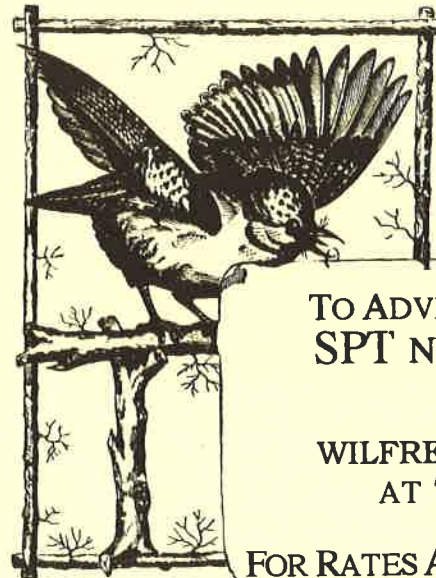
Wonderful food, good friends and lots of talk about historic preservation marked this year's Annual Picnic held at Ed Sims and Paul Kenney's home on Clarendon Street in the McKnight district. As usual, the picnic was a way to spend a few fun hours in a relaxed and casual atmosphere.

Thirty-five Trust members gathered at the beautiful Shingle-style home. This historic building was designed by and lived in by G. Wood Taylor, who was not only the McKnight Brothers' architect, but had the good sense to marry a McKnight daughter.

The Trust would like to thank Ed and Paul for hosting this enjoyable afternoon.



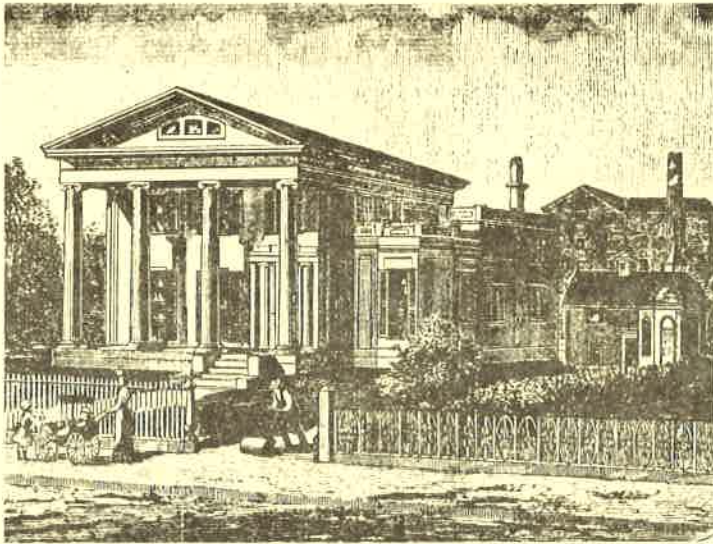
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ALEXANDER HOUSE EVENT DRAWS BIG TURNOUT

This year's Spring House Tour centered around a single historic building, the Alexander House at 284 State Street. Over 150 visitors toured Springfield's oldest private residence, a Federal/Greek Revival-style mansion located on what has been one of Springfield's busiest thoroughfares since the days of the West India trade. Among the guests were descendants of Henry Alexander himself, Springfield's Civil War-era Mayor who purchased the house in 1858.

Besides the great turnout of Trust members, visitors traveled from as far away as Vermont and Boston to view this exceptional piece of architecture which has been closed to the general public for many years. Guests Dee and Robin Provost and Jim Boone, with his sons Gage and Wilson, were among those who arrived dressed in full period costume.

Wayne Phaneuf, managing editor of the Springfield Newspapers, lectured to the audience on the history of the house and the several families that have occupied it since 1811. Local historian Francis Gagnon spoke about the history of State Street and the significance of the Alexander House as a symbol of a Springfield that has all but vanished. Students of the Community Music School entertained between lectures while guests toured the main rooms and "public spaces" of the mansion while snacking on "Whistler's Mother's Sugar Cakes".

While this open house was not the "typical" Trust tour, it did succeed in bringing one of Springfield's neglected treasures into the public limelight. The current owner of the structure, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, is searching for an occupant for the Alexander House at this time. Ideas and suggestions may be forwarded to Mr. Brian Pfeiffer, Director of Stewardship, SPNEA, 141 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA (Phone: 617-227-3956).



BEES TAKE THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY

If you have ever walked past the Alexander House at 284 State Street on a warm summer day you might possibly have noticed a hive of bees dwelling atop one of the capitals of the mansion's front portico. In several records kept of the Alexander House there is mention of a "colony of bees" that lived on the property. During recent inspection of the house by the city's beekeeper, it has been certified that these bees are indeed direct descendents of the original and historic bee colony.



WHISTLER'S MOTHER'S SUGAR CAKES

For those of you who enjoyed these treats during the Alexander House tour, we reprint the following sugar cake recipe from a book of recipes kept by Anna McNeill Whistler, the mother of famous American painter James McNeill Whistler. During the late 1830's, the Whistler family lived in Springfield for a short time while James' father, George McNeill, worked as a consultant on the new railroad line being constructed between Boston and Albany. Anna Whistler enjoyed entertaining and was often called upon to serve large numbers of guests. The following recipe makes about 100 sugar cakes.

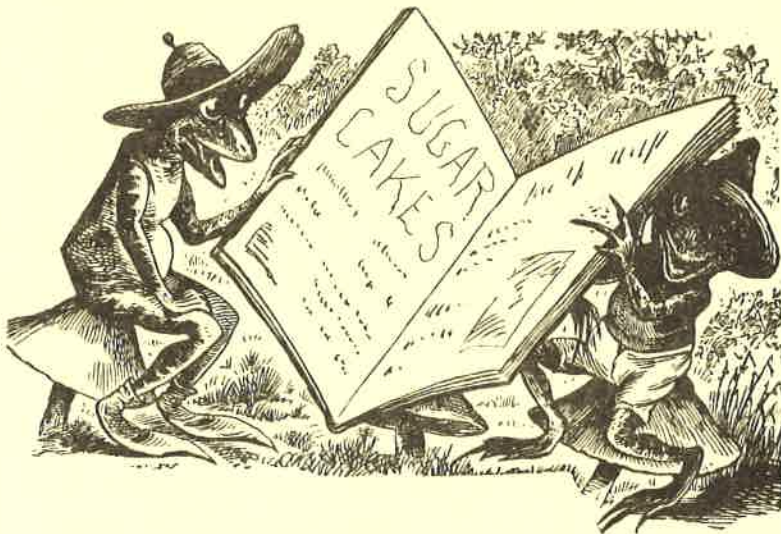
Original Recipe

4 cups sugar, 2 cups butter, 4 eggs, and as much flour as will make them stiff enough to roll.

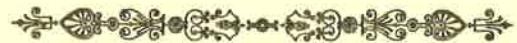
Recipe as edited by Margaret MacDonald in Whistler's Mother's Cook Book, Paul Elek, London, 1979:

4 cups sugar 4 eggs, beaten
2 cups butter 5 cups flour
oven at 375 F.

Beat sugar and butter together until creamy. Beat in the eggs alternately with the flour to make a light dough. Roll it out on a floured board and cut it into shapes with a biscuit cutter. Put the shapes on greased baking sheets and bake for 15 minutes. Cool immediately on wire rack.



Trust members Michael Plumly and Jo Sarnelli don period costumes for the opening of the Alexander House.

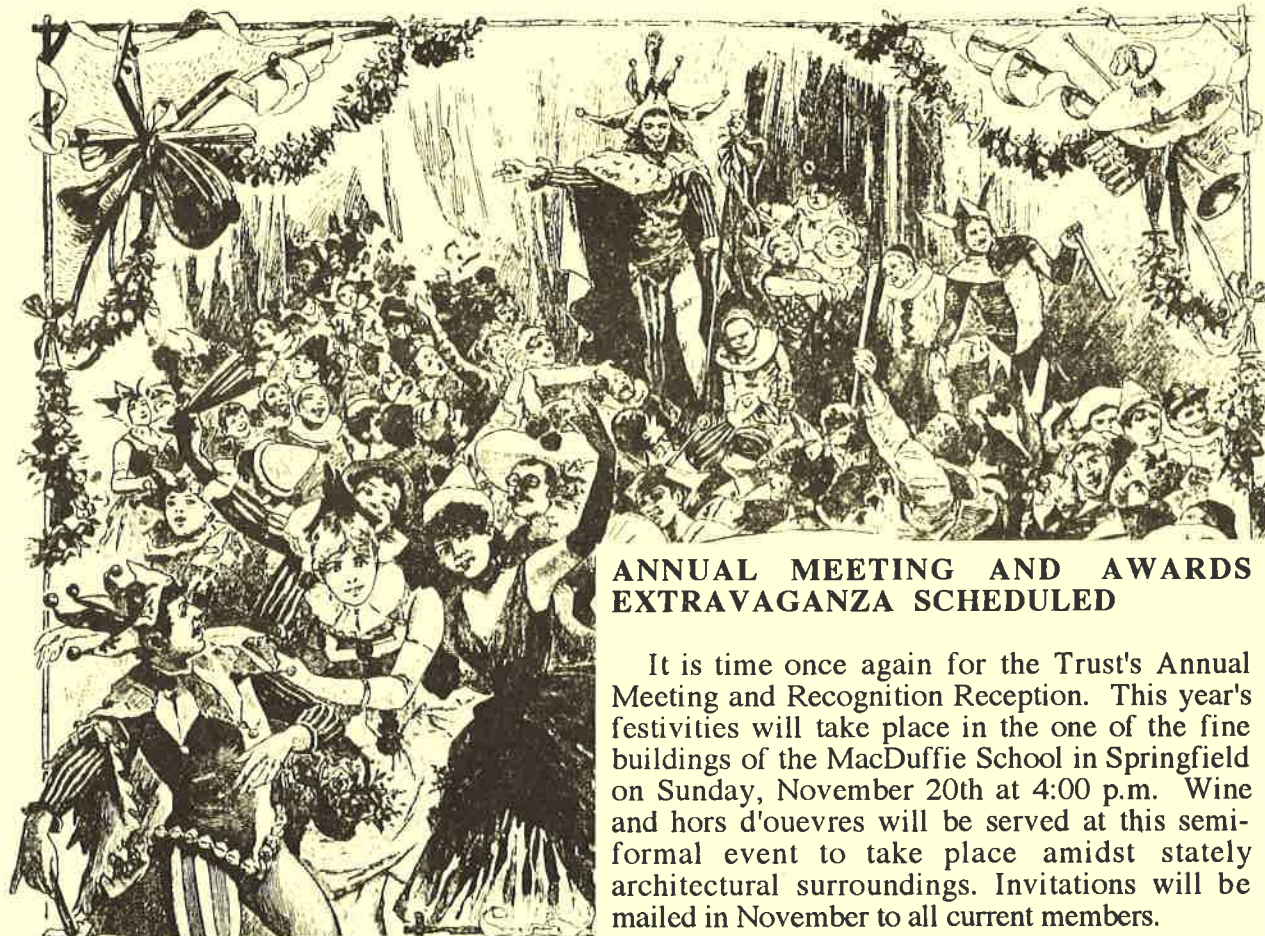


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**ANNUAL MEETING AND AWARDS
EXTRAVAGANZA SCHEDULED**

It is time once again for the Trust's Annual Meeting and Recognition Reception. This year's festivities will take place in the one of the fine buildings of the MacDuffie School in Springfield on Sunday, November 20th at 4:00 p.m. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served at this semi-formal event to take place amidst stately architectural surroundings. Invitations will be mailed in November to all current members.



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CAN YOU GUESS? Continued from page 2.

For all of those who bemoan the loss of society's moral fabric and abhor the promiscuous behavior of today's youth...gaze upon this huge edifice that was built to house unwed mothers (gasp!) during the 19th century. This structure was known as the House of the Good Shepherd.



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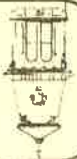
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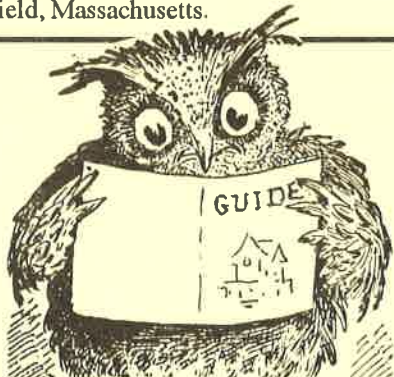


The Springfield Preservation Trust

This newsletter is published quarterly for the members of the Springfield Preservation Trust, Inc., 979 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103

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Springfield Preservation Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of historic structures in the City of Springfield, Massachusetts.



GUIDE TO RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE *IN SPRINGFIELD*

Now in its second printing, the Springfield Preservation Trust's booklet will guide you to many fine examples of the various styles of residential architecture in Springfield. This 34-page paperback includes photos of distinctive city homes, as well as detailed drawings to accompany each architectural "style" section.

Price: \$5 plus \$1 shipping and handling. Please mail your check to: The Springfield Preservation Trust, 979 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103.