

## The PRESERVATIONIST

Newsletter of  
the SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION TRUST

*Fall 1993*

### FUNDING FOR PRESERVATION UNDER CONSIDERATION

The Massachusetts General Court is considering a bill which would again fund the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund Program. This program, established nearly a decade ago, has been unfunded for the past several years due to state financial problems. In its heyday, the Fund provided assistance to properties owned by government agencies or non-profit groups which were listed on the National Register or within local historic districts. Several Springfield properties have been aided in the past through this fund. This year's bill requests an appropriation of \$5 million over three years.

Trust members are urged to write the House and Senate committee chairs to urge their support for House Bill 4390 - An Act to Fund Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund Program. The chairs are Rep. Christopher Hodgkins and Sen. Linda Melconian. Both can be written at the State House, Boston, MA 02133.



### WINTER LECTURE SERIES PLANNED

The possibility of another cooperative lecture series with the Library and Museums Association is under discussion. Last year's successful series entitled "Porches, Parlors, and Pergolas" presented speakers on Victorian architecture, Victorian interior design, and historic gardens. Another trio of lectures is being considered for early spring; it would focus on similar aspects of the early 20th century.



*A bronze plaque now marks Springfield's first historic district.*

### MATTOON AREA COMMEMORATED

Residents of Mattoon and Elliot Streets celebrated the creation of the Quadrangle-Mattoon Historic District by instituting a plaque program over the summer. This area was the first local historic district to be created by the City in 1972. The neighborhood association decided to commemorate that event by erecting a brownstone tablet with a bronze plaque in the the small park located by Grace Baptist Church. The plaque relates the history of the area. Mattoon and Elliot Streets were developed between 1870 and 1890 as the only area in Springfield to be lined with brick rowhouses.

Individual homeowners also purchased bronze plaques bearing the year their houses were built and the names of the first owners. Nearly all homes participated in the program.

**SPT CALENDAR**

Monthly meetings  
held at 7:30 P.M. in  
the **Memorial House at Mercy Hospital**  
Next meetings are  
*November 3, December 1 and January 5*

SPT Annual Meeting & Reception  
*Sunday, November 21st*

**ANNUAL PICNIC HELD**

The annual Preservation Pot-Luck Picnic was held Sunday, August 22nd. Trust members Ted Devanski, Bill Guzzy, Lynne Goldberg and Bob Wool hosted the event at their adjoining houses in the McKnight Historic District. Over 30 people attended and enjoyed an afternoon smorgasbord.

During the day, a man's ring was lost. Anyone who might have seen it, please contact Ted Devanski at 732-3033.

**TRUST HOLDS FALL "AT HOME" TOUR**

The Trust mounted an "At Home in Downtown" tour of private residences on September 26th. A series of these "At Home" tours were held in the mid-1980's, highlighting a different neighborhood each year. The Trust began the series in 1984 by featuring homes in the downtown area. The Board felt that revisiting the center city in 1993 would be appropriate.

Featured were two condominiums in the former 1897 Classical High School, two in an 1874 Temple Street row, two in the 1910 Hotel Kimball, and one in the 1913 McIntosh Building. Two apartments in the 1916 former YMCA and one in an 1873 Union Street rowhouse also participated.

One change to this year's tour was the addition of entertainment. Members of the Vintage Dance Society performed Victorian dances in the ornate lobby of the Kimball, and students from Community Music School of Springfield played in the Classical foyer.

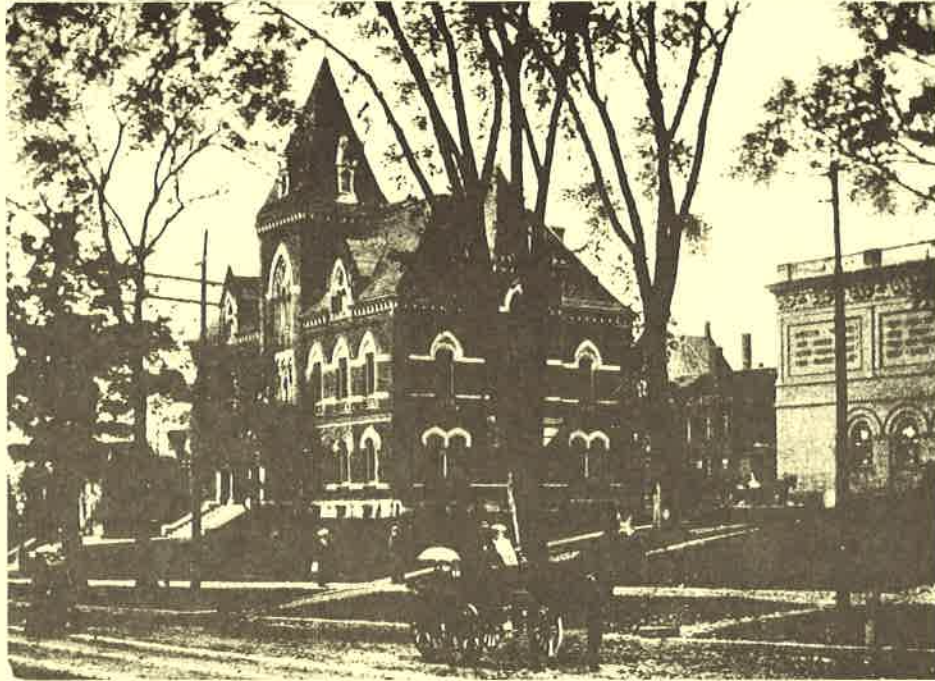
Unfortunately, rain kept attendance low. Nonetheless, both pre and post tour coverage of the event in local papers provided positive publicity for both the Trust and the Downtown area.



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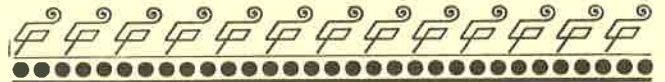




*Start for home on the 6.15 - Holy St.*

**CAN YOU GUESS?**

*This fabulous Victorian Gothic library was built in the 1870's. It reflected the pride Springfield had in its public buildings in general and reinforced the importance of Public Libraries in particular. When the time finally came for a new library to be built, this one was moved in its entirety to the rear of the site. When the new building was ready, all the books were moved out of the old building and this beauty was torn down. Turn to Page 7 and see what replaced it..*



**LOCAL PRESERVATIONIST HONORED**

Each year, the Massachusetts Historical Commission honors projects and individuals contributing to preservation efforts in the Commonwealth. This year Frances Gagnon of Springfield was one of the eleven honorees. Ms Gagnon, a long time resident of McKnight, was active with the Trust during the 1970's and has been a member of the Springfield Historical Commission since 1976, serving as its chair for many years. Congratulations, Fran! Other western Massachusetts projects honored were the French King Bridge in Erving/Gill, the Newtor School in Greenfield, and the First Congregational Church in Lee.

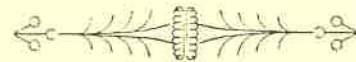


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**ENDANGERED PROPERTY LIST UPDATE**

The Trust is delighted to report that two of the structures on our previous "Top 10 Endangered Properties" list (which appeared in the Spring 1992 newsletter) are in the process of being rehabbed.

The Tapley School (#3 on that list) is currently being restored and adapted for use as thirty apartments. Several Trust members had inspected the building last year and had seen the major structural items which required repair.

Memorial Bridge (#9 on the list) had had work stopped due to severe structural deterioration discovered on the job. Work has now resumed on the northerly half of it, including removal of the light towers for restoration. The Springfield Historical Commission has approved the work.

While the York Street Jail (#8 on the previous list) has been cited as a candidate for several uses, especially as the first "branch" location for the Tower of London's Armories Museum, nothing solid seems to be in the works as yet.

Meanwhile, demolition by permit, fire, neglect, etc. proceeds apace in the City, and too many other buildings are being abandoned, boarded-up, or trashed as crack houses. We still have a wonderful building stock which cries out for some TLC. The following is an updated list of the Top 10 currently most endangered properties:

<u>Property</u>	<u>Owner</u>
(1) Hotel Charles	SRA
(2) Technical High School	City
(3) Carew Street School	City
(4) Union Station	SRA
(5) Winchester Square Fire Station	City
(6) Temple Street Carriage House	Private
(7) York Street Jail	County
(8) 415 Belmont Ave.	Private
(9) St. George's Old Parish House	Private
(10) 30 High Street	Private



**NEWS FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Preservation Action, the national preservation lobby, reports that historic preservation will continue to receive federal support. President Clinton had proposed providing 31 million dollars to all state preservation offices, 7 million dollars to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and 2 million dollars to Indian Tribal programs. The House of Representatives approved these amounts and the Senate is expected to act positively as well.

During debate in the House, funding of historic preservation became an issue. Congressman DeLay (R-Texas) attempted to eliminate the proposed 7 million dollars for the National Trust, the national non-profit preservation organization. After lively debate, the amendment was defeated 316 to 115. Representatives Neal and Olver voted against that amendment.



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### ANNUAL RECEPTION SCHEDULED

The annual meeting and recognition reception has been scheduled for Sunday, November 21 from 4 to 6 p.m. Members should have already received invitations for this event. Please join us for this afternoon reception to honor those who have contributed to preservation in Springfield and to elect the Trust leadership for the coming year.



### NATIONAL CONFERENCE RETURNS TO NEW ENGLAND

Circle October 26-30 on your new 1994 calendars. These are the dates that the National Preservation Conference will be held in Boston. It was in 1976 when the National Trust last held its annual conference in New England.



### DEGREES IN PRESERVATION

The National Trust has just issued its annual list of colleges and universities offering degrees in historic preservation. Of the 50 schools listed, only three are located in the New England area. Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. offers an undergraduate program. Boston University and the University of Vermont both offer graduate programs and some undergraduate courses.

If you are interested in a copy of this list, please contact the Springfield Preservation Trust.



### STCC OFFERS NEW PROGRAM

Springfield Technical Community College is creating a new department called Arts and Technology. This integrated program will provide students with an opportunity to combine the aesthetic qualities of fine arts with the development of strong technical skills. Architectural preservation, visual and performing arts, and music and will be taught with an emphasis on analysis and technology strengthened by community participation. Two pilot courses are being offered in the Spring of 1994. The Springfield Preservation Trust looks forward to its involvement with this new and exciting program.



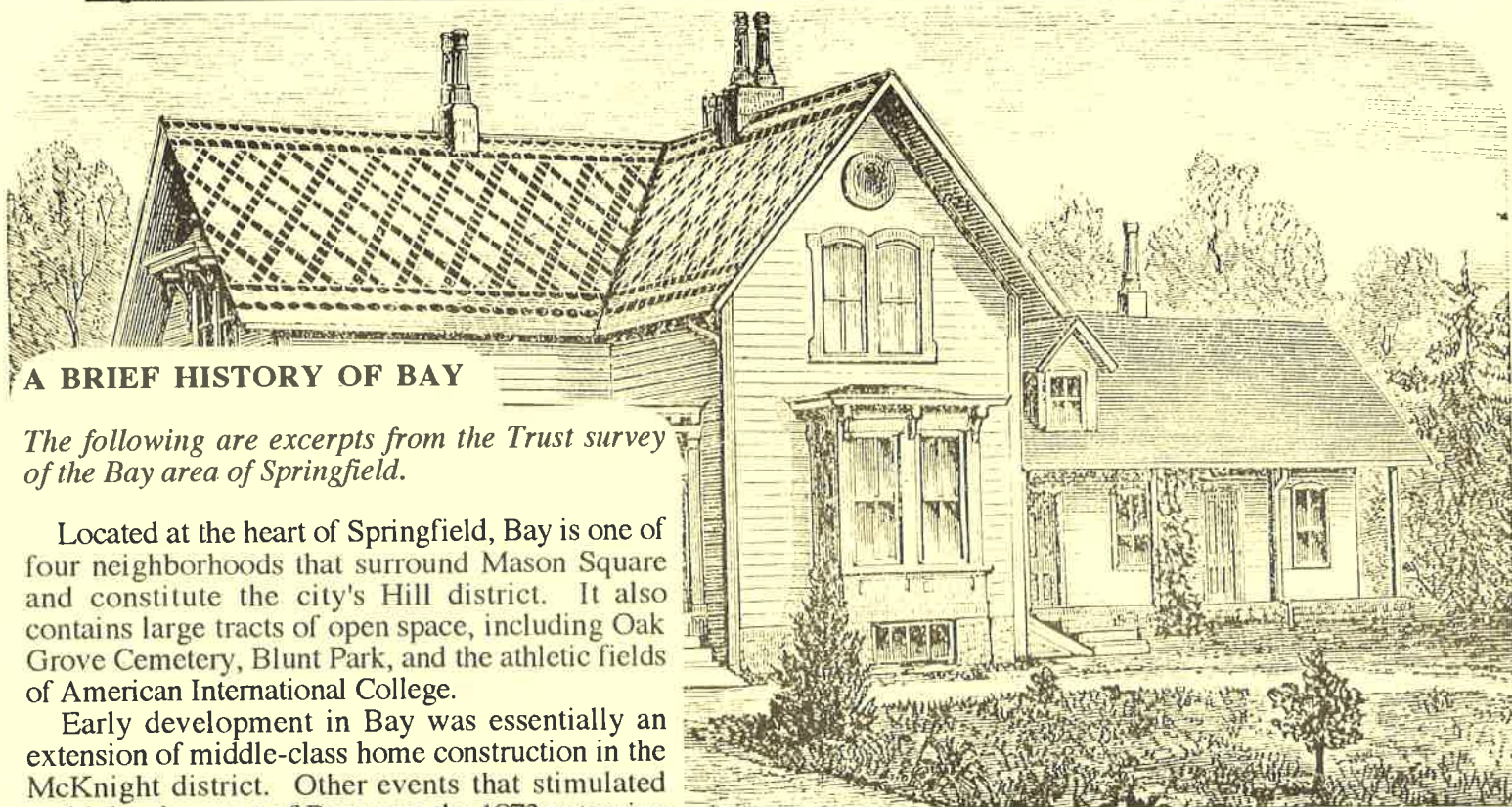
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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF BAY

*The following are excerpts from the Trust survey of the Bay area of Springfield.*

Located at the heart of Springfield, Bay is one of four neighborhoods that surround Mason Square and constitute the city's Hill district. It also contains large tracts of open space, including Oak Grove Cemetery, Blunt Park, and the athletic fields of American International College.

Early development in Bay was essentially an extension of middle-class home construction in the McKnight district. Other events that stimulated rapid development of Bay were the 1873 extension of the street railway from downtown to Winchester (now Mason) Square via State Street, expansion of industrial and commercial interests in the Mason Square area in the 1880's and 1890's, and the 1888 relocation of the French Protestant College (now American International College) from Lowell, Mass. to its present location south of State Street.

The Bay area was marketed as a middle-class district of single and two-family homes. Many 19th century residents were employed at the U.S. Armory, worked as craftsmen or were associated with downtown businesses. Residential development began in earnest in the 1890's, with the building of several subdivisions. One early resident was J. Frank Duryea who achieved national acclaim as the builder of the first American car.

In the mid 1880's, the proprietors of Oak Grove Cemetery planned to open as a public park a tract of heavily forested land on the south side of Bay Street. Whether or not the park scheme materialized is unclear, although the tract formed the nucleus of Edgewood Farm, later known as Edgewood Gardens. The Farm at one time extended from Shattuck Street to Bay Street and from the present Maynard Street to the City Almshouse (now the site of Municipal Hospital at Pine Point).

A second wave of residential construction hit Bay in the early 1910's with infill construction on older streets and two new subdivisions. Three-deckers, or three-story multi-family houses of wood-frame construction were introduced in Bay at this time. The three-decker was outlawed by a city ordinance in 1915, due to its associations at the time with cheap and unsafe construction. Consequently, Springfield includes few examples of three-deckers compared with other urban areas in the state.

Blunt Park on Roosevelt Avenue occupies roughly 165 acres. It was created to serve the Hill section of the city. Included within the park boundaries is the old Potter's Field (1874), a cemetery associated with the 19th century almshouse on State Street.

Bay has sustained considerable building demolition and inappropriate commercial redevelopment along the State Street corridor in recent decades. Many houses have been altered, primarily by artificial siding, porch enclosures and replacement of original sash. However, rehabilitation of historic houses is evident throughout the neighborhood.



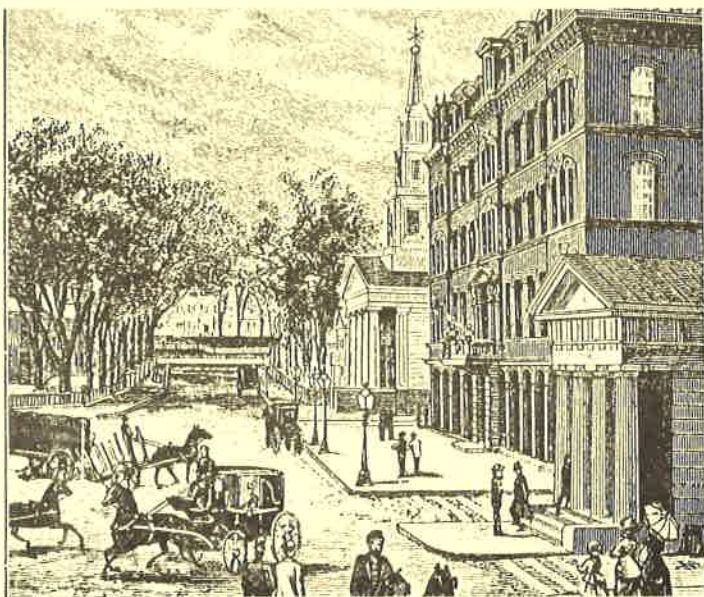


New City Library, Springfield, Mass.



**CAN YOU GUESS?** Continued from page 3.

Rarely do we lose a fine building and still have something fantastic take its place. The new library was built in the Beaux Arts style and is today an important anchor of the Quadrangle. It remains one of the finest edifices on State Street, where a recent restoration has left it looking absolutely wonderful.



**SPT HONORED WITH AWARD**

The Trust was honored with an award from Historic Massachusetts, Inc. at a ceremony in Boston on September 9. A program entitled "Massachusetts People, Parks, and Places: Celebrating Volunteers in Historic Preservation" took place in the courtyard of the Old City Hall in Boston. Other recipients of awards were: the Dorchester Park Association, Elm Hill Park Improvement Association, Friends of the Public Garden, Common & Commonwealth Avenue Mall, and the Waterfront Historic Area League. The Springfield Preservation Trust was the only organization from Western Mass to be recognized.

Paul Faraca, a board member of Historic Massachusetts, acted as master-of-ceremonies and presented the award to the SPT. He noted that while the Trust's first battles for preservation ended with demolitions, these efforts eventually led to the amendment of State laws which have saved many other structures in the years since. The Trust was also recognized for its contribution to public education through a series of house tours and lecture programs. The award was accepted on behalf of the SPT Board of Directors by board member Wilfred Stebbins.

**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.



*Massachusetts People, Parks and Places:  
Celebrating Volunteers in Historic Preservation  
September 9, 1993*

*Historic Massachusetts Inc.*

*is pleased to honor the volunteer members of the*

*Springfield Preservation Trust*

*The Springfield Preservation Trust was established in 1972 when the city's first historic district was formed. Since then it has grown and prospered while remaining a totally voluntary effort. In the early 1980s the Trust restored five seriously deteriorated houses and relocated another. The Trust also serves the Springfield community through heritage education programs and through its annual awards program which recognizes the preservation and stewardship efforts of others.*

*Text of an award presented to the Trust. See the story on Page 7.*



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