

# The Historian

BURRILLVILLE HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SEPT 2003

On Sunday June 8th the Burrillville Historical & Preservation Society held its first Victorian Tea Party at our headquarters in Pascoag. There was also a late Victorian/turn-of-the-century clothing exhibit and a small collection of antique artifacts on display. Norma Sutcliffe of Round Top Road,

*Many people are asking when we are going to have another Victorian tea*

## Victorian Tea - Big Success

jam and ham sandwiches. Desserts included: violet sugar cookies, lavender cookies, lemon creme scones, lemon thyme bread,



**VICE PRESIDENT, DENICE MITCHELL SERVES TEA WITH A SMILE.**

Harrisville gave a talk on tea. Guests were treated to a wide variety of Victorian treats and English blend tea was served. Savories included: flower petal sandwiches, cream cheese and herb sandwiches, cucumber sandwiches, cream cheese apricot



**LIZ MORIN**

maid of honors, blackberry bars and stained glass cookies. The old schoolroom was elegantly decorated for the Victorian period. It was a successful event and we received many praises on how beautiful everything was, the amount of food that was served and how delicious it was. A special thanks to Liz Morin for organizing the event and to all the volunteers who helped.

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### President's Message

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You will notice that the newsletter has its old name back and has a new look. The job of creating this quarterly newsletter is now being done by a group of volunteers.

There have been some changes in our society over the summer. The Building Committee has abolished itself so the job to finish restoring the

building is in the hands of the executive committee. The first priority is to have the bell tower repaired before any structural damage occurs. We have written to the Champlin Foundation asking to redirect the money that was supposed to be used for vinyl siding. We have also written to Champlin for additional grant money and would like to have the bell tower repaired next summer.

The Society has been very active this spring sponsoring a number of events. More events are planned for the fall. We are always looking for new volunteers. If you would like to join the fun or can contribute in any way, please call me.

### Upcoming Events

Oct 4 - Open House - Yard Sale and Bake Sale

Nov 8 - Victorian Holiday

## *BH&PS Visits Lowell National Park*

On May 30th the Society sponsored a bus trip to Lowell National Park. About 30 people participated in the trip which included a 90 minute canal tour and a chance to visit the Boott Cotton Mill with 88 looms running. Everybody had a good time. A special thanks to Shirley Richard for organizing this trip and making it a success.



Denice Mitchell and Linda Straube stepping off the trolley at Lowell National Park

## **200 Year Old Barn Lost**



On Sweet's Hill, a 200 year old barn was demolished this summer. It had fallen into disrepair, and was too expensive to

fix. The owner had to have it demolished for insurance reasons, but contacted the Society so that we could take pictures of it first. In the upper part of the barn, there was a giant wheel used to hoist

there was a giant wheel used to hoist cattle for butchering.



**GIANT WHEEL IN 200 YR OLD BARN**

## *Burrill Monument Dedication*

On May 10th the Society held a formal dedication ceremony for the Burrill monument in Harrisville. This newly erected monumnet is located opposite the post office near the Universalist Church. The Society strives to interpret, promote and preserve the history of Burrillville. We have felt for a long time that James Burrill, Jr., the person for whom Burrillville gets its name remains unknown to most of the people in this town and elsewhere so we decided to change that. Last year our former president, Mark St. Pierre took the initiative to obtain this monument and with the help of the Harrisville



**MEMBERS OF THE UXBRIDGE FIFE AND DRUM CORP HELP US CELEBRATE THE DAY.**

firefighters had it erected last December. Because of all the snow and bad weather, we decided to hold the dedication in the spring. At 2:00 pm at the conclusion of the family fair, the Gloucester Light Infantry led us in a parade across the road from the town common to the dedication site. Members of the Uxbridge Fife and Drum played a medley of songs and eight BH&PS members dressed in Victorian costume to add pageantry to this historic event. President, Betty Mencucci gave a speech about Mr. Burrill and his accomplishments. Thanks to Rose Shaw, Liz Morin and

The Burrillville Historical & Preservation Society is publishing a 2004 historic calendar. Each month features a picture of historic significance in the town.

Calendars will be available for sale in September or October.

Proceeds from sales will be used in our continued effort to protect and preserve Burrillville history.

Supply is limited.



I'd like to tell you a little bit about James Burrill's past and his

accomplishments. He was born in Providence on April 25, 1772. He graduated from Brown University where he studied law. He served as Attorney General for RI from 1797 - 1814 and was a member of the State House of Representatives from 1813 - 1816. He was chief justice of the state supreme court in 1816. And finally, he served as a US Senator for the state of RI from March 11, 1817 until his death on December 25, 1820.

He died at the age of 49 of a pulmonary condition which afflicted him for many years. It was a shock to the Senate when he died and it was a great loss for the State of RI that he so faithfully represented. He is buried in Washington, DC.

When James Burrill was Senator, our nation was confronting the issue of slavery. When a bill was brought before the Senate allowing Missouri to become a state, it included a clause that prohibited the introduction of

# James Burrill

Dedication speech by Betty Mencucci

slaves. Mr. Burrill made an impressive speech supporting this clause against slavery in Missouri. He was highly regarded by those who agreed and disagreed with his political opinions and everyone lamented his death. He was a good legislator, a statesman, an able scholar and wise judge.

Many people ask if he lived in town. No, Mr. Burrill never lived in Burrillville. When Burrillville separated from Glocester in 1806, James Burrill gave the new town a set of books to begin record keeping. The town thought enough of James Burrill, his principles, his dedication and leadership and decided to name the town after him.

So on this date, May 10, 2003 - 183 years after Mr. Burrill's death and 197 years after the town of Burrillville was formed and named after him,



the Burrillville Historical & Preservation Society would like to dedicate this monument to honor the memory of James Burrill Jr. We hope that the monument will serve as an everlasting reminder of the man for whom our town was named.

## Donations

Thanks to Barton St. Amand for many donated items including the Gauvin Collection.

Thanks to Russell Lacey and Lennie Bailey for Boy



**The BH&PS meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month.**

**All programs are free and open to the public.**



## *Babe Mousseau - Legendary Burrillville Hockey Coach*

### **next meeting for the holiday raffle.**

William "Babe" Mousseau, educator and coach died on June 30, 2003. He was born in Bridgeton and attended Burrillville High School and became a star of the football team. He was Burrillville's first all-state athlete in football in 1937 and again in 1938. He was a principal at the Austin T. Levy School and the Callahan School retiring in 1985.

Babe Mousseau began coaching hockey during the 1956-1957 season when Thomas Eccleston left Burrillville to coach at Providence College.

Last year the Society asked people to write their stories of the 1938 hurricane. This is the story that Babe Mousseau related to us.

I was at football practice after school at the Bridgeton Field (now called Hauser Field). At the time I was 14 years old. Mr. Eccleston

was the coach. Back then we had players from Greenville and Glocester. Since there was no high school in their community they could choose to go to any high school they wanted and these players had chosen Burrillville as their high school.

The wind that afternoon was very powerful during the practice. Dick Raithier, from Greenville was a good kicker. He was kicking the ball and it would sail forward in the air and then fly back. He did this several times and the ball kept flying back because of the powerful wind. Mr. Eccleston was very involved in the practice told his team. "You're going to encounter things like this, we've got to be ready for it. At about 3:30 pm the steeple blew off the Methodist Church on Howard Avenue. I yelled to the coach. "Coach, look! the steeple just blew off the Methodist Church." Mr. Eccleston yelled to his players. "Practice is off." "Get home as fast as you can!"

The players walked home. The boys who lived in Glocester and Greenville had to walk all the way home because none of the buses were running. They all arrived home safely but it took them quite a few hours and it wasn't until about 8:00 pm that some of them got home.

### **OPEN HOUSE**

Saturday, October 4, 2003  
from 9 - 4 p.m.  
Second annual open house.

The public will be invited to come to the school to view exhibits, research materials and archives.  
We are also planning a yard sale and bake sale that day.

**If you have yard sale items that you would like to donate, or if you would like to bake for the sale, please call.**

### **VICTORIAN HOLIDAY BAZAAR**

Saturday, November 8, 2003  
from 9 - 4 p.m.

Join us for the holidays. You will find an interesting variety of Christmas gifts in a Victorian atmosphere.

**The Society is looking for donations from businesses and individuals for our raffle and penny social.**

**We are also asking members to bring a paper goods item to the**

### **BH&PS Officers**

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