

THE JONATHAN DICKERMAN HOUSE

THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INCORPORATED
P. O. BOX 5512 — HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518

*THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER*

WINTER 1999

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN GENERAL AND THE RECTORY SCHOOL BARN



A new state law holds some interesting possibilities for the future of preservation in our state. It was passed last year and is called the "Connecticut Village Districts Act". Since zoning is often the key to success or failure of preservation, we note that this new law is appended to state zoning statutes. Now local planning commissions are empowered to establish districts anywhere they deem it appropriate to preserve a neighborhood's character. A N. Y. Times article implies that the law was in response to the 1990s practice of altering existing 20th century homes in established neighborhoods with modest yards. That 1990s practice is to replace a modest home with a huge "trophy" home which looms out of all proportion to the surrounding houses. This law provides legal muscle to local planning and zoning boards to reject proposals which are deemed destructive of the integrity of a neighborhood. It is revealing to see that support for the law comes from Connecticut communities as dispersed as Greenwich in the southwest and Brooklyn in the northeast. In Hamden, the endangered neighborhoods of upper Whitney Avenue and lower State Street immediately come to mind.

Thanks to King Features Syndicate, Inc. for use of the comic strip *HAGAR*.

THE SOCIETY STORE

The Society published its popular book, *Hamden Our Architectural Heritage* over 10 years ago. We have sold almost 1,500 of them over the years. Authored by Martha May Becker and Nancy Davis Sachse of Hamden, they are still available for \$12.00 a copy. A copy can be picked up at the office of Brian Poirier. Call 248-8001 to assure availability before traveling to the office.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY

Our History Library is again open on very limited basis, Tuesdays 10:00 to 1:00 and Thursdays 1:00 to 4:00, at 2901 Dixwell Avenue, Hamden (Miller Memorial Library). Anne Reddington is in charge. Her salary is paid by a generous gift from the farsighted and now disbanded Mt. Carmel Library Association. This is no phone in the room and hours of public operation are subject to unanticipated cancellation.

JONATHAN DICKERMAN HOUSE

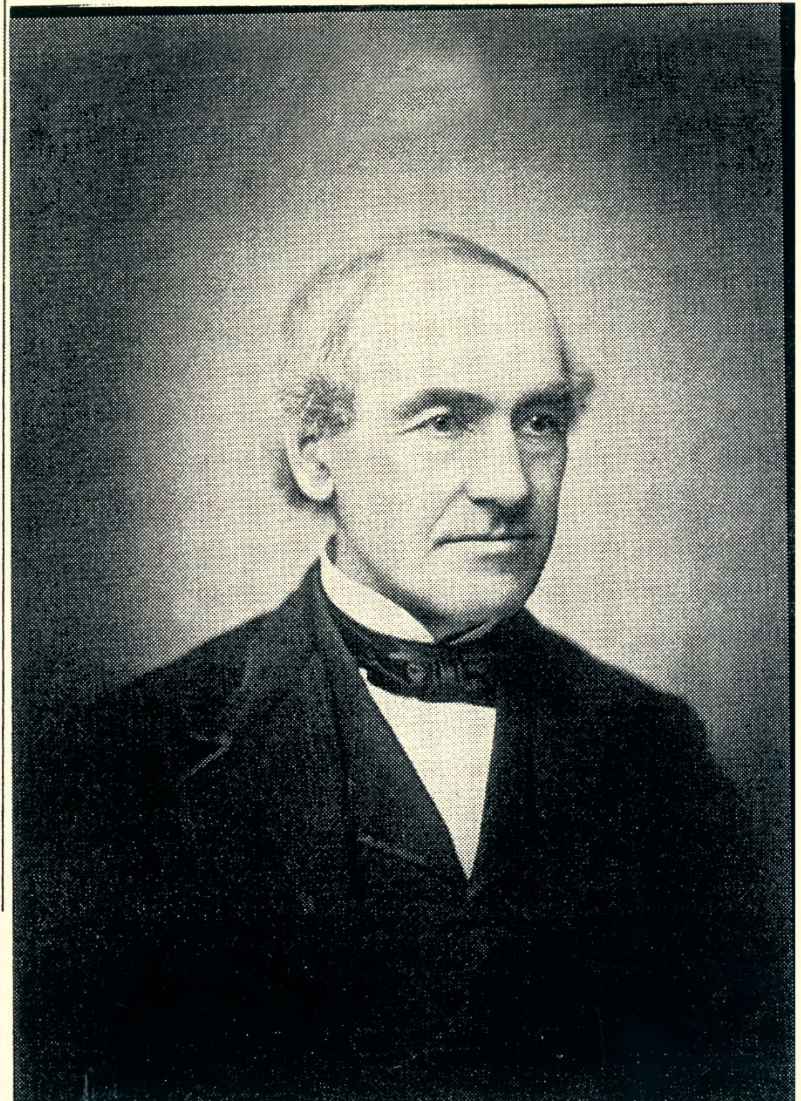
The Stone (aged) Men They sacrificed a Saturday - anything to escape leaf raking - and gave a mighty effort working at the Society's Cider Mill/Barn. Large, gracious stone steps now welcome visitors into the Barn at the back. On the street side, stone steps were also put into place. We have solid, secure and attractive steps that fit well and ground-leveling was accomplished that will make our Spring wall construction easier. The Society appreciates the Stone Men: foreman & tractor driver Bill Doheny, assistants Mitch Morse and Peter Morse, Bob Zoni, Brian Poirier and Al Gorman.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In a recent Newsletter, we chronicled the plight of the Rectory School Barn at 2308 Whitney Avenue, pictured at page 123 of *Hamden Our Architectural Heritage*. Al Gorman and Bill Doheny are pursuing options for saving the barn by moving it to town property. Quotes for moving it are not encouraging. Anyone interested in helping with this project should contact Al at 288-0017 or Bill at 288-1831.

SOCIETY LIBRARY COLLECTION

The Library continues to grow, often from sources and through means which cannot be predicted. From the home of the late Elinor Shelomis, we have received several items of interest concerning Ives Street and the Ives family that was so important in the 19th century industrial development of Hamden.



The collection of materials includes a late 19th century portrait of James Ives to the left. James Ives was the namesake for the failed Historic District proposed for the Ives Street area a few years ago. Included are several booklets setting forth the activities of the Mount Carmel Women's Club from 1940s to 1970s. Also included are some fifty-year old Hamden newspapers and of special interest are several 19th century photos of members of the Ives family. Most intriguing is what seems to be a mid-19th century, photo-like picture of a married couple labeled Elam Ives and Thankful Cooper Ives.

Society member Franz Douskey noticed that these items were in danger of being lost from the historic Elam Ives House and he arranged their donation to the Society. Thank you Franz and to the heirs of Elinor Shelomis. We also gratefully acknowledge a generous contribution from Susan J. Moore, her mother Ann Cassidy and her sister Denise Mustico in memory of Ms. Shelomis.

ANTIQUÉ SHOW KITCHEN REPORT

Since 1981, our Society has offered its kitchen specialties at the Giant Valley Antique Show at the Miller Cultural Center. Each year it has been a pleasure to work with our members at this annual fund raising effort. Our profits-as with the show's attendance-remain fairly constant, but we benefit in other ways. It is a public event where the Society has a high profile, the dealers are happy with our food, service, prices and smiles, and especially the kitchen volunteers have a chance to socialize, mix and enjoy each others company. This is what a Society is about-people working together.

Our society is blessed with great volunteers! We appreciate the hours spent on your feet, the time spent on your seat (booth sitting and

bake-table selling), the extra effort in baking, preparing and caring enough to stay involved. 1998 kitchen net profit is \$643.00.

We also thank the night crew who take down tables, Martha Becker the Society's liaison with the dealers Association, all the dealers for their patronage and generosity, and for Great Granny's "secret down-east" chowder recipe.

RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

MARTHA BECKER DAY. Our historian was honored by Mayor Barbara DeNicola who proclaimed November 23, 1998 as Martha Becker Day at Hamden's Festive Town Meeting and Thanksgiving Celebration. Noted as the Society's historian and Hamden's municipal historian since 1987 and for her participation on numerous community and civic boards, the Mayor presented Martha with a proclamation and a red apple in gratitude for her services. Congratulations Martha!

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome new Historical Society members: Greg Nutcher, Mr. & Mrs. William White, Mary Thetford, Judy Newman, Alvis Dickerman and Mr. & Mrs. John Deming.

NEWSLETTER

THE HAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 5512 - HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT 06518