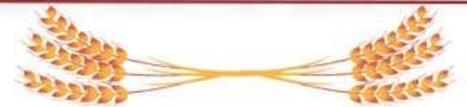


March 2021



# MANSION HOUSE NEWS

WESTPORT  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Open for the Season

On Saturday, March 6, the 1855 Harris-Kearney House will open for the 2021 season.

We welcome visitors to step-back-in-time with an informative, fascinating tour of the beautiful Mansion House. The tour invites you to hear stories and get up close and personal with various objects and historical documents. So, take a break from the confines of your four walls and delight in interiors that are steeped in early Kansas City history.

Due to the ongoing concern of COVID, the Mansion House hours will be Friday and Saturday from 1 to 5 until further notice.

If your group would like to book a group tour, or book a private event or celebration, call 816-561-1821 or 913-231-6749. Written requests may also be sent to [westporthistorical@gmail.com](mailto:westporthistorical@gmail.com).

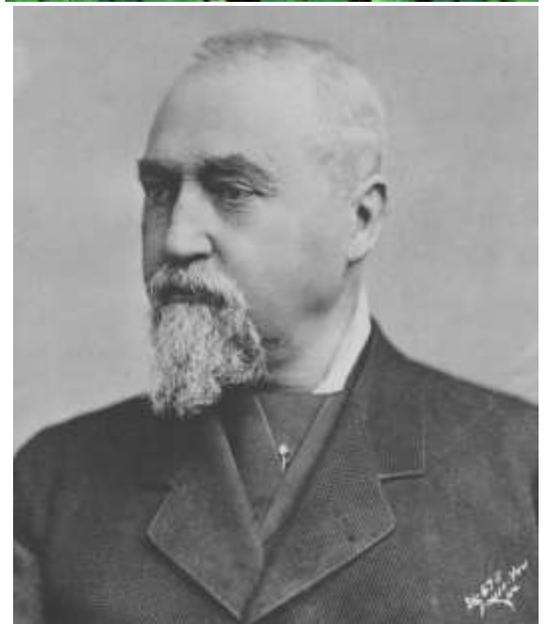
## Happy 201<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Col. Kearney

Col. Charles Esmonde Kearney, "Father of Kansas City's Railroads," was born on March 8, 1820!

*Each petal on the Shamrock  
Brings birthday wishes your way:  
Good health, good luck, much happiness  
For today and every day!  
Happy, happy celebration~*

## Happy Spring

The third month of the year, March is named after Mars and is the second of seven months to have 31 days. In the Northern Hemisphere, the meteorological beginning of spring occurs on March 1.



## *Aunt Minerva's Kitchen*

### Irish Potato Pie

It's March and time to celebrate Col. Kearney's birthday. One of our favorite Irish dishes to serve at a birthday dinner is Irish Potato Pie.

One pastry dough

4 T. butter

5 potatoes, peeled, sliced thin

1 T. fresh dill

½ tsp. Salt

Chives for garnish

7 thick-cut bacon slices, chopped

1 onion, peeled, and sliced thin

½ cup heavy cream

¼ tsp. pepper

Place the butter and bacon in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté until the bacon is crispy then toss in the onions, followed by the potatoes and dill. Season with salt and pepper. Gently stir 3-5 minutes, to mix the onions and potatoes and coat in bacon grease. (The potatoes don't need to be cooked through.) Then spoon the mixture into the crust and drizzle with heavy cream.

Bake on the low rack in the oven for 35-45 minutes, until the potatoes are fork-tender, and the crust is golden. Rest for 10 minutes, then sprinkle with chopped chives, cut, and serve.

### Pastry dough

2 ½ cup flour

1 tsp. sugar

4 to 8 T. ice water

1 tsp. salt

1 cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces

Mix flour, salt, and sugar in a medium-size bowl. With a pastry blender, cut in butter, working until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add 4 tablespoons ice water; work with hands until dough comes together. If dough is crumbly, add more ice water a tablespoon at a time (up to 4 more T.). Do not overwork. Divide dough in half, wrap and refrigerate at least 1 hour.

Roll out the dough on a floured surface. Transfer to pie plate. (makes two pie crusts)

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### PLEASE TAKE CARE

With the continued spread of COVID-19, the Staff, Board of Directors, and Executive Board of the Westport Historical Society and the Mansion House, hope our members, friends, and neighbors will remain well and safe. Please take good care by continuing to follow the guidelines which are noted to help stop the spread of this horrid virus. Staying out of large crowds and social distancing should be practiced in combination with other everyday preventive actions, including wearing masks and avoiding touching the face with unwashed hands. Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is especially important after having been in a public place or after blowing the nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer which contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of the hands and rub them together until they feel dry. If you find that you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider.

### EVENT SPACE RENTAL

The upper and lower galleries of the 1855 Harris-Kearney House Museum may be rented for luncheons, parties, celebrations, receptions or meetings. The parlor or dining room may be rented for small weddings, and the Mansion House grounds may be rented for outdoor events.

For more information pricing, and availability, please send an email of inquiry to:  
[westporthistorical@gmail.com](mailto:westporthistorical@gmail.com)

## UNCLE MARKS CORNER

It is time to start your vegetable seeds for the spring planting. If you start now, you will gain a few precious weeks of growing time, which can really make a difference when frost still looms in the spring. To ensure healthy growth some of the vegetables that should be started inside are tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, celery, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes, and brussels sprouts.

If you follow the tips listed below, you are sure to have success in starting your seeds:

- Purchase your seeds from a trusted source. Fresh, high quality seeds have a higher germination rate.
- Pot with seed-starting mix. This mix provides a good balance of drainage and water-holding capacity, and it minimizes problems with disease on vulnerable seedlings. If possible, don't use garden soil to start seeds as it doesn't drain well and may contain plant disease spores.
- Make sure your containers have drainage holes so that your seeds are not over-watered. Biodegradable pots are a good choice.
- Plant seeds at the proper depth. The rule of thumb is to plant the seed two-to-three times as deep as the seed is wide. If you plant the seeds too deeply, they won't have enough stored energy to make it to the surface. Plant extra seeds because it's likely not all of them will germinate.
- After sowing, set the containers in a warm location. On top of the refrigerator or near a radiator are good choices.
- Keep seed-starting mix moist but not saturated with water.
- As soon as seedlings emerge, place pots in a bright location. A sunny window will do but adding consistent light from a supplemental fluorescent light will provide the best results. Suspend the lights just an inch or two over the tops of the plants.
- Cool room temperature is best for seedlings. Sturdier, stockier seedlings grow at temperatures in the high 60s.
- Begin fertilizing weekly. Use a half-strength fertilizer once your seedlings have one or two sets of leaves. Organic fertilizers are a good choice, since they provide a range of nutrients, including micronutrients.
- Once seedlings have two sets of leaves, it's time to thin. You want one seedling per pot, so choose the healthiest, strongest-looking seedling to keep. Snip the other seedlings off at the soil line and discard them.

~Growing Early Seeds, P. J. Mellven



## The Voice of Winter

I'm bored! Being stuck indoors all winter because of the weather and COVID can make everyone a bit antsy and stir crazy. To make the days a little more fun, and to get you through until circumstances change, try some fun activities to do as a family. Some of the activities were done and carried out by the Kearney daughters: Mary, Julia, and Elizabeth (Lizzy), and their children.

### Crafts

- Make paper snowflakes and paper flowers, then hang them up in unexpected places around the house .
- Make a pinecone bird feeder using peanut butter and birdseed. Find a place to hang it near a window so everyone can watch the birds enjoy their treat.
- Draw and color a mural showing a winter scene. Then hang it up or mail it to a family member who lives in an area of the country unaccustomed to snow.
- Go outside and make a snowman and/or snow fort.
- Learn to knit, crochet, or embroidery.

### Cooking and Baking

- Make homemade hot cocoa with marshmallows.
- Make ice cream using snow. All you need is milk or cream, vanilla, sugar, flavored syrup, and snow.
- Make cupcakes or cookies and have fun decorating with colorful frostings and toppings.
- Take plates of goodies to retirement centers or nursing homes.

### Games

- Play board games, introducing the kids to some of your favorites!
- Play some well-loved card games and learn some new ones.
- Have everyone guess how much snow is on the ground. Then grab a ruler and go measure it to see how who is closest to the exact amount.

### Physical Activities

Winter doesn't have to mean a sedentary lifestyle. Stay active with fun, family-friendly activities.

- Gather everyone together and go sledding. Don't forget to bundle up and take the bike helmets for added safety!
- Pick sides and have a snowball fight.
- Make snow angels in your yard.
- Buy a kid-sized shovel and shovel the driveway or sidewalk, together.
- Build a snow fort.
- Have everyone build a snowman and dress them for a "best dressed" contest.

### Educational

Use your time to do fun things as a family.

- Make a graph showing each day's high and low temperatures for the week. Then make predictions about next week and see who's closest to each day's actual temperature.
- Show your kids how to use a phone camera to make a slow-motion video of the snow accumulating outside your window. Then send it to family members via email to show them how deep the snow really is!
- Fill a spray bottle with colored water and write words in the snow. This is a fun way for young kids to practice their letters.
- Have family movie night with hot cocoa, popcorn, pjs, and lots of blankets by the fire.

### Give Back

Use the time as a family to help those in need.

- Make greeting cards for residents of a local nursing home and deliver them.
- Collect old winter coats from family members and friends. Then donate them to a local charity.
- Set boxes at the end of your driveway and invite neighbors and friends to donate to a food drive. Take food to a local food pantry.
- Collect toys, clothing, games, and CD's to take to a children's center or children's hospital.
- Collect toiletries and towels and take to a shelter.



Westport Historical Society seeks volunteers:

- Treasurer
- Board member
- Executive Director

-Docents and other volunteers **FOUR HOURS A WEEK;**  
we practice safe social distancing 😊  
(Th, F, or Sat, 1-5 p.m.)

If you are interested, or you would like more information, e-mail Alana Smith  
[westporthistorical@gmail.com](mailto:westporthistorical@gmail.com), or call (913) 648-0952



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