

December 2021



MANSION HOUSE NEWS

WESTPORT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



MERRY CHRISTMAS!



Holiday Open House

'Tis the season
to mix and mingle as
Christmas Bells soon will jingle.
Celebrate the Warmth
of the Season with Friends and
19th Century Music and Fare
at the dressed for Christmas
1855 Harris-Kearney House.

Sunday, December 12

2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

4000 Baltimore

Kansas City, MO

Resp: requested, by not required

westporthistorical@gmail.com

no admission fee

'Tis the season to be jolly and we've made the most of it by decking the halls of the Mansion House, hanging the garland and the mistletoe, placing the wreaths and candles in the windows, baking the cookies, and wrapping the presents. It is a time of good cheer all around the world and a season of old-fashion traditions, customs, and rituals.

The Staff, Board of Directors, and the Executive Board of the Westport Historical Society and the 1855 Harris-Kearney House wish you, your family, and friends a cherished season of Christmastide.

To our friends who celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or another year-end holiday, we send you greetings for a happy, joyous season!

The Christmas Gift of Knowing You

The Christmas season fills our hearts with joy;
Bright, happy days bring special kinds of pleasure.

We're wrapped in the excitement of it all,
The sights, the sounds, the smells, the tastes we treasure.

Yet when we have some quiet time to think
About our finest blessings all year through,
We focus on our family and our friends,
And appreciate the gift of knowing you!

~Joanna Fuchs

Quote of the Month: "We rise by lifting others." ~Robert Ingersoll

Aunt Minerva's Kitchen

Creamy Pralines

Homemade food gifts tell special people that you really care. Homemade goodies can be a selection of relishes, pickles, jellies, jams, breads, coffee cakes, and cookies to name a few. Some favorite treats are all sorts of candies. Try the following treat to include in your basket of homemade food gifts.

2 cups white sugar	1 ½ butter
¾ tsp. baking soda	2 C. pecan halves
1 C. light cream	

In a heavy saucepan combine sugar and baking soda; mix well. Stir in cream. Bring to boiling over medium heat, stirring constantly. Reduce heat. Cook and stir until mixture reaches the soft-ball stage (*the point when a drop of boiling syrup is dropped into cold water and forms a soft ball which will flatten on its own when removed*). Mixture will caramelize slightly. Remove from heat and add the butter. Stir in the pecans, then beat 2 to 3 minutes or until thick. Drop mixture from a tablespoon onto parchment paper. If candy becomes too stiff to drop, add a tablespoon of HOT WATER. Let stand until cool. Makes 30 Pralines.

Cookie Swaps

For more than 100 years, Americans have spent time baking up a storm to exchange cookies at a cookie swap. Friends take a dozen or so of their favorite cookies to a cookie event and present the cookies to trade. Happy people then go home with a festive array of marvelous goodies. In many family stories, there are references to “cookie parties” dating back to the late 1800s, and that they began to be called “cookie exchanges” by the 1930s, and “cookie swaps” in the '50s. Historically, cookie exchange parties have been a ladies-only event. Exchanges were hosted by friends, relatives, neighbors, and social groups, clubs, office co-workers, teams, schools, and churches. Today, many cookie swaps involve parents and children, aunts, cousins, and grandma all making cookies, but instead of each family making cookies, it has become increasingly popular for families and friends to gather in one home, and everyone spends the day making cookies. Great fun as there can be many varieties of delicious treats for everyone to take home. This may be the perfect Christmas tradition to begin with your family.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Kitchens and dining rooms are busy places during the holidays as lots of Christmastime fun is tied to cooking, eating, and visiting. When arranging all the Christmas goodies, leave a little room on the table, counter, sideboard, or buffet for mood setting decorations for holiday entertaining.

A fun, wonderful smelling center piece can set the mood for traditional holiday foods. Find a tiny Christmas tree about 12-18 inches. Trim tree with spices and herbs for a potpourri of fragrance on your table or counter. Some suggested smells are anise, nutmeg, cinnamon sticks, cardamom, coriander, gingerroot, allspice, juniper berries, cloves, fennel and caraway seeds, coffee beans and vanilla. Use clusters of these spices and tiny bags of the herbs. Tie them to the tree with thread or fine wire. The spicy scent will last long after the holidays are over.

Additionally, try teaming the spices with a variety of sweet treats such as sugar cubes, gumdrops, popcorn, assorted soft candies, and whole walnuts. You can snip these off the tree to give to guests when they arrive. To add color to the tree, arrange plaid ribbon bows at different points on the tree. Use bows in a variety of sizes from solid colored ribbon. Bright red holly berries are a brilliant touch of color.

Artificial trees work well for this Christmas decoration, but if you use a real tree, but sure to water it regularly throughout the season.

~All Around the House; author unknown



UNCLE MARKS CORNER

Want to Predict the Weather? Watch the Animals!

For generations, our ancestors watched the behavior of all sorts of animals to determine what weather could be expected. The result? Colorful weather folklore that has been passed down through the years. Are the predictors accurate? Depends . . .

1. Wolves always howl louder and more than usual before a storm.
2. When cows try to scratch their ears, you know rain is near.
3. When wild geese fly to the sea, the weather will be fine, but if they fly towards the hills, it will rain.
4. Deer and Elk come down from the mountains at least two days before a storm.
5. If deer have gray coats in October, you can expect a severe winter.
6. When squirrels eat their nuts in trees, the weather will be very warm.
7. If a cat sits with its back to the fire, you can expect frost and a hard winter.
8. If the rooster crows at bedtime, you can be sure of morning rain.
9. When swallows build their nests high, you can count on a very dry summer.
10. When owls call late into the night, which signals a rough winter.



A Bit of Missouri in New York City

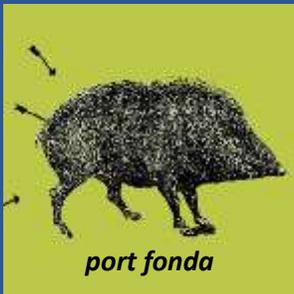
Since 1925, first known as the Missouri Rockets, this iconic dance troupe has been kicking up its heels, officially becoming the Radio City Music Hall Rockets in 1934. From performing at movie openings to entertaining troops to making TV appearances, they are best-known for performing at the *Macy's Thanksgiving Day*.

Here's another Missouri connection to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade...a BIG little mouse born in Kansas City.

MUSEUM CLOSING FOR THE WINTER SEASON

The 1855 Harris-Kearney House will close for the winter season from December 18 at 5:00 pm to March 2 at 11:00 am when the museum will open for CIVIL WAR WEDNESDAY. The closure will allow for yearly maintenance, and exhibit rotation. We, however, will be open for scheduled group tours, private events, and weddings during that period. To schedule an event or tour, please call 913-231-6749, or send an email message to westporthistorical@gmail.com





Your Business Logo Nested Here !



Lots of great Kansas City memories are recounted on Facebook group pages. Above is one posted by John Fulmer. Below by Arnie Diaz. Both are on the Facebook group "Kansas City Memories...Vintage Photos, Places and Things Remembered."

The one below is by John Dawson on his Facebook group "Old Town Kansas City 1850s-1900s"



At the right is by Greg Summers on the Facebook group "Things and places we loved in Greater KC when we were much younger!" Watch for more about Greg here in 2022.

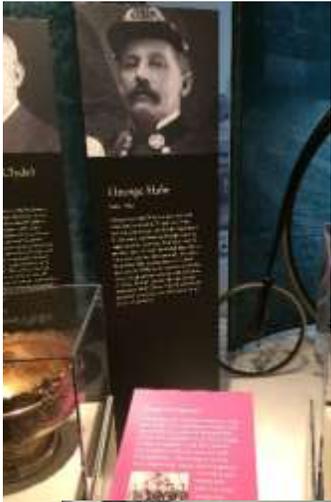


For proper storage, antiques should be kept in a temperature and humidity-controlled location such as a climate-controlled storage unit or within your home. You also want to make sure that the location is protected from pests such as moths, cockroaches, or mice.

Protect your antiques from direct sunlight – the sun will fade, dry, or even make the finish crack on your favorite antique. To avoid such damage, keep the curtains closed, especially when you are not using the room and rotate your furniture, so each side gets the same amount of sun. Before storing antiques, it is a good idea to clean everything first. A good cleaning can ensure your antiques enter storage in tip-top condition and stay that way until they are unpacked once again.

Your hands and skin contain oil and dirt that can cause damage to your belongings, especially when they go too long between cleanings. To avoid harming your antiques, minimize contact with your hands; consider cotton or latex gloves.

Take exceptionally diligent care of your antiques, and they will retain their value and beauty as they are passed from generation to generation.



MIRROR BALL

First referenced in 1897, mirror balls were popular ballroom features in the 1920s. In the 1970s and 1980s, they were so closely linked to discos that they were called disco balls. This mirror ball from the El Torreon Ballroom was installed when the building opened in 1927 and was donated to the museum in 1976. It appeared briefly in the prom night scene in the 1990 film *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge*, filmed at Drexel Hall.



Mattie Livingston

1824 - 1892

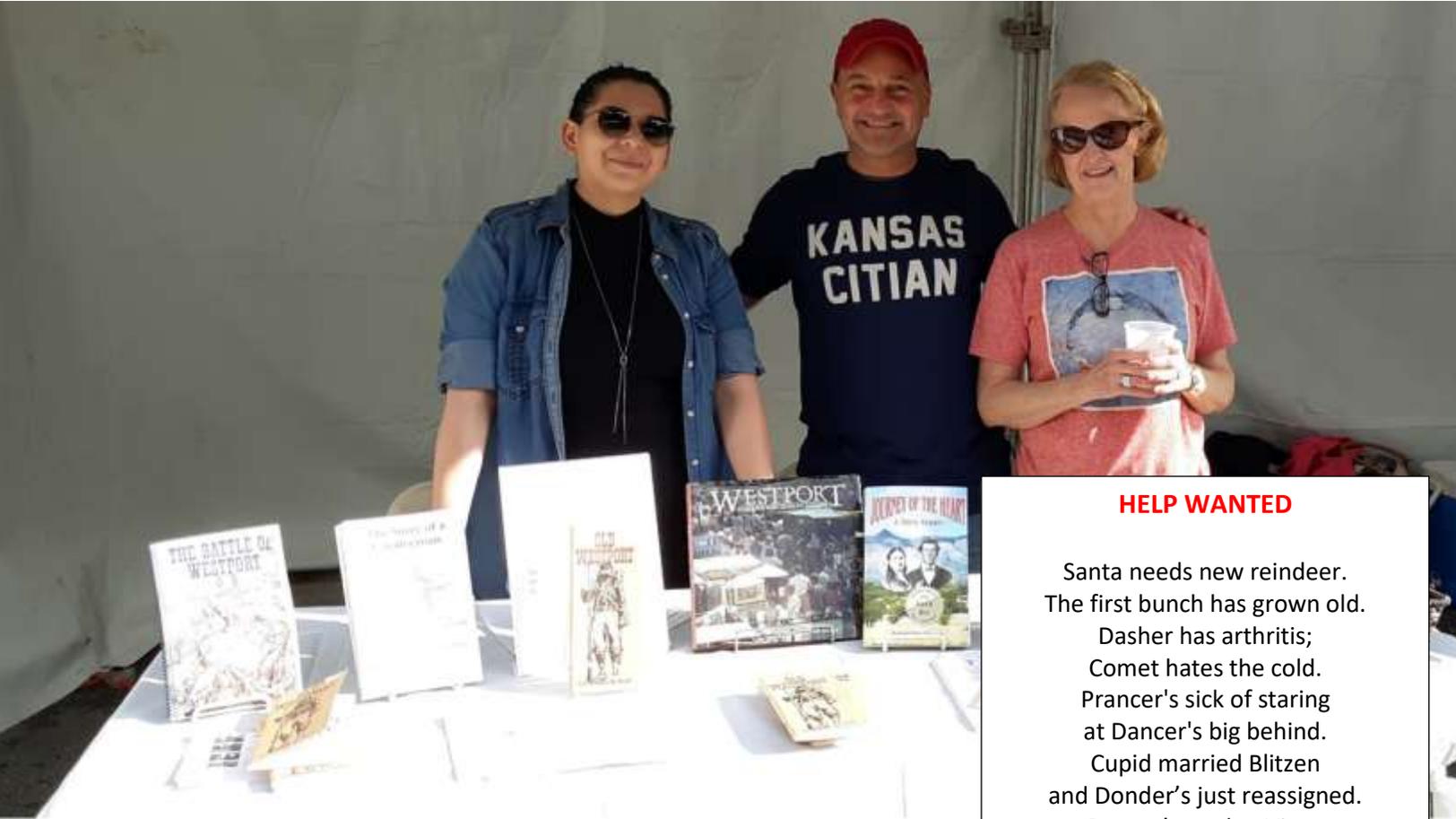
Having Her Hair & Wax Made "Matted"

Livingston was a Cincinnati abolitionist. In 1853, she traveled to Philadelphia to the house and was arrested from the west. Her husband, William, had been arrested before. She traveled to New York in 1854, and returned to Cincinnati in 1855. Livingston married John George Clark Brigham, a Union supporter and lawyer who was arrested by the military government in the Confederacy and was a captain of the Louisiana 24th Infantry. He was killed in the Battle of Gettysburg.

An Omen of Liberty

In 1853, Brigham had a peculiar dream in which he saw a man in a top hat and a woman in a bonnet. The man was wearing a top hat and the woman was wearing a bonnet. The man was wearing a top hat and the woman was wearing a bonnet. The man was wearing a top hat and the woman was wearing a bonnet.





HELP WANTED

Santa needs new reindeer.
The first bunch has grown old.
Dasher has arthritis;
Comet hates the cold.
Prancer's sick of staring
at Dancer's big behind.
Cupid married Blitzen
and Donder's just reassigned.
Dancer's mad at Vixen
for stepping on his toes.
Vixen's being thrown out—
she laughed at Rudolph's nose.
If you are a reindeer
we hope you will apply.
There is just one tricky part:
You must know how to fly.

~Timothy Torcher



Help Wanted at the Westport Historical Society:

--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, or call (913) 648-0952**



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