

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  
19<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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."

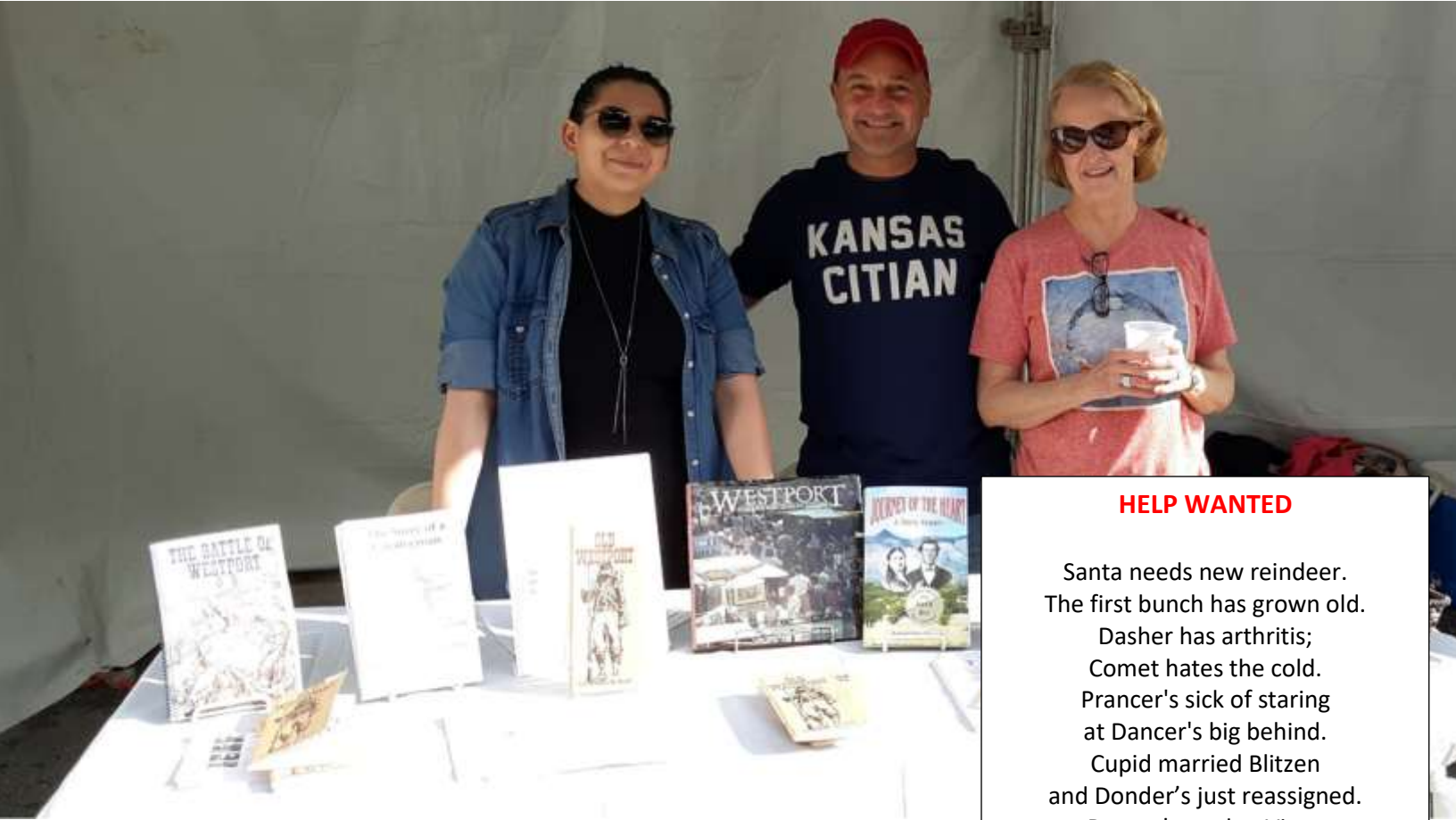
The one below is by John Dawson on his Facebook group "Old Town Kansas City 1850s-1900s"



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.







### 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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