
Old Town Museum Notes

December 2, 1996

Old Town, Maine

Chair Magic

The recent transformation that took place with two of the Museum's newest acquisitions is nothing less than magic. When Lorraine Dunn approached the Museum to see if we would be interested in two children's high chairs, she warned us that they were in poor condition. But, they sounded like unique items so we said yes.

Lorraine delivered two lovely antique high chairs, one with cast iron wheels that had the capability to collapse down into a rocking chair with tray, but they were in pieces. The Museum has the good fortune to have Virginia Fortier working as a volunteer and she came into the Museum soon after the arrival of the chairs. She took one look at the pile of partially assembled chairs and pieces and told us that her husband, Louis, could fix them. Although it seemed like a tall order, we were delighted with the offer of help and accepted it.

Barely a week had passed since Louis Fortier had collected the pile when he appeared at the Museum's doorstep with two completely assembled and restored beautiful high chairs, with the exception of one missing cast iron wheel. The restoration involved a fine craftsman's touch and ingenuity because he had repaired pieces, created some missing wooden pieces and fabricated missing metal. Louis must also belong to some renovator's network because a few days later he reappeared at

the Museum with an exact match to the missing cast iron wheel.

Everyone who witnessed the "before" condition of the chairs and then the "after" state were truly amazed at a restoration that really was a feat of magic.

The chairs are currently on display in one of our tall black cube cases along with other children's items thanks to Lorraine, Virginia and Louis. Come in and see the fruits of their labors and their generosity.

Bucks Honored

Charles and Elizabeth Buck were honored with a recognition reception at the Museum on Saturday evening, November 4. It was a gala event to rival our grand opening celebration.

Over forty faithful museum supporters gathered to pay tribute to the two people who have done the lion's share of the work involved with keeping the Museum operational for the last 15 years. The evening was one of thanks, fellowship and refreshments.

Charles and Elizabeth were presented with a plaque identical to the one that now hangs in the front lobby.

The Museum would not be in existence today had it not been for the long hours of service and vigilant efforts of Charles and Elizabeth. They have our deepest gratitude and thanks.

Museum & School Improvements

Just as the snow was about to start flying, the Museum had some sawdust flying. Early concerns the board of directors had about the condition of the flat roof over the storage/work room proved to be well founded. In October and November there was some serious leaking in that room. In a closet, a window and along the wall where the sloped roof and flat roof meet. Bill tried several applications of roofing tar to patch these areas, but it soon became apparent that this wasn't going to work as the leaking persisted.

A reasonable bid was received to

Volunteers

The Museum has been most fortunate in the number of people who have graciously volunteered their time and talents to assist with the Museum's operations. Since we opened on June 26 there have been over 20 different people who have worked at the Museum as volunteers. It is wonderful to have this kind of community support and we are most thankful for it.

Increasing our core of volunteer workers is critical to our success. A five day, four hour operating schedule of twenty hours requires ten volunteers working two hour shifts or five people working four hours. In a reduced, three day week we still need six volunteers for two hours or three people for four hour shifts. If we could build our volunteer list to fifty or sixty people, each would only have to work one two hour shift a month. So the bottom line is that we are always looking for volunteers.

Volunteering at the Museum requires no special expertise. The duties are primarily to greet people and be an extra pair of hands when our staff person, Peggy Roy, is busy giving a tour. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer call Peggy Manzer at 827-3847 or the Museum, 827-7256.

install a completely new, sloped roof to cover the flat roof. So the saw dust flew and in a matter of days the new roof was on and the leaks are gone.

The old, flat roof also had an insufficient overhang that allowed run-off to cascade down the exterior brick walls and deteriorate mortar. The new roof overhangs enough to eliminate that problem.

The school building also had some sorely needed work completed. The entrance to the basement area has had no bulkhead or any type of covering, except for a loose sheet of plywood, since we acquired the buildings. This has now been corrected. The builder refers to the entrance as a "dog house". If you drive around the Museum to look at it, you'll see that his description is rather accurate.

The school had also been experiencing some pretty severe leaking around one of the window frames. This too has been fixed. The large old window was removed and replaced with two, new, smaller ones. Hopefully the leaking problem is solved as we have not yet had complaints from school personnel.

Capital Campaign

The Museum launched its capital campaign on January 1, 1996, to raise \$200,000 to purchase the former St. Mary's church-school complex. As we are about to begin the second year of the campaign over half of our goal, \$120,000 has been raised. The Museum is hopeful that 1997 will bring a successful completion to our campaign by raising the remaining \$80,000.

We still have some more fund raising to accomplish to ensure our financial security. Please remind your friends and any interested parties that it is not too late to make a campaign contribution or pledge.