

January 2010



A Newsletter for the Volunteers of the 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House

The Volunteer

RoxAnn Reisner, Director

Winter Dinner and Auction

December 20, 2009

Dear Stephenson House Volunteers,

We are only one month away from our BIG Winter Dinner and Auction. Here is a brief update and a few ideas of ways you can help.

Date: January 21, 2010 beginning with registration at 5:30, dinner at 6:30

Location: LeClaire Room – Lewis and Clark Community College, Edwardsville Campus

Menu:

Milano House Salad
Chicken Milano – Prime Rib
Italian Zucchini – Green Bean Almandine
Roasted Red Potatoes– Rice Pilaf
Gourmet Cookie Tray

Cost: \$35.00 per person

First Reservation Deadline 1/16/10

For the last several months we have been contacting large national corporations, as well as regional businesses, for donations to our upcoming Winter Dinner and Auction. We have acquired some excitingly large donations (American Girl, Southwest Airlines, Walt Disney World, Schlafly Beer, AirTran Airways). We have also requested autographed items from many celebrities, concentrating our efforts on authors of children's books. We are fortunate to have autographed children's books from President Jimmy Carter, Peter Yarrow, Julie Andrews Edwards, Bill Cosby, Whoopi Goldberg, John Lithgow, and many others. Our list grows every day.

During the month of December we have writ-

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By Her Needle: Girls' Education in 18th Century America

By Diane Schrader



Ceremonial at a young ladies seminary, c. 1810, United States

In a letter written by Lucy Stephenson in June of 1832, she advises a young friend on the art of being a "young lady who expects to live by her needle." While this advice may sound quaint and a bit cryptic to our modern ears, it offers a peek into the world of women's education in the early days of our country. Many are under the impression that girls received virtually no education during

the Colonial and Federal period of our nation's history. The fact is that a growing number of girls were educated in what, by today's standards would appear limited, was for its day relatively progressive.

While little is known about Lucy's early years, it's assumed that she may have received a formal education, as directed in her father's will dated November 1793. The fact that he provided for her education is not necessarily an unusual or unorthodox idea for the time. However, the specific nature of that education remains a mystery. Yet a closer look at the types of schooling available to young girls of the late 18th century may offer some insight



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SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 House Closed	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Sewing Circle	11	12	13	14	15 School Tour 2 p.m.	16
17	18	19	20	21 Annual Dinner & Auction	22	23
24 Sewing Circle	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

During January and February, the house will be closed on week-days except by appointment. Regular hours of operation will be maintained on weekends (Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sunday 12-4 p.m.).

- January 10 & 24, Sewing Circle, 1-3 p.m. Bring any period sewing or needlecraft project to share and/or work on in a relaxed setting. Period sewing instruction and help are available to those wanting to advance their skills in the production of period garments. Both ladies and gentlemen are welcome to participate. The sewing circle will meet second and fourth Sundays (schedule may change due to holidays or special events). This is an informal gathering to share skills, ideas, and new information.
- January 15, Home School Group, 2-4 p.m., 20+/- children and parents.
- January 21, Annual Dinner and Auction, Join the Friends of Stephenson House in celebrating another successful year of operation. Your participation in a silent as well as an oral auction will help support the Stephenson House to have another

successful year. For information about location, menu, and auction items, contact RoxAnn or Kevin at 618-692-1818.



Rupert (Bob Jurgena) and Father Christmas (George Edwards) greet a family of visitors during the Candlelight Tours in November.

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ten to many local businesses for their support. The new-format invitations will be mailed between Christmas and New Year's.

Even with all of the wonderful donations and work already accomplished, WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP. This is no longer a small gathering of Friends, but a major fundraiser open to the public.

We feel that we should personally contact many of our Friends to encourage them to attend – about one week after the invitations are mailed. We need volunteers to contact a list of Friends.

Mailing a letter for a donation is usually only the first step. We now must start contacting local businesses by phone or visit. Asking if they have received our request and if they need any additional information may lead to a donation. We can also thank them for their past support of the House. Can you take a list and make the contacts?

Attached is a list of donations already received. Please ask friends, relatives, and business associates for auction items or to please attend our event.

If you have any questions, concerns, or wish to volunteer, please contact us.

Kevin Wendel, kdwendel@charter.net, 288-4485

RoxAnn Raisner, stephensonhouse@sbcglobal.net, 692-1818 (during office hours)

Amy Mullane, AmyMullane@charter.net, 692-6066

FEATURED AUCTION ITEMS

(received by December 21)

PLAN AHEAD FOR COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Stephenson House candlelight tour for 12 complete with wine and hors d'oeuvres

Donated by the Stephenson House Board of Directors

American Girl package

Felicity and her cookbook and hand-made outfits

Donated by American Girl and Kevin and Donna Wendel

Two sets of two round-trip airfares in continental U.S.

Donated by Southwest Airlines and AirTran Airways

Tickets for two at the Fox Theatre for the February 4, 2010 performance of "The Color Purple"

Donated by TheBank of Edwardsville

Private brewery tour and tasting for 10

Donated by Schlafly Bottleworks/St. Louis Brewery

Themed dinner for eight

Choose from Brenan's, The Lady and Sons, Titanic, or The Hill

Donated by Kevin and Donna Wendel

Basket of specialty canned goodies

Donated by Liz and George Edwards

Autographed book – The Little Baby Snoogle- Fleejar

Donated by President Jimmy Carter

Custom-framed Route 66 poster/print

Donated by Bob and Carol Wetzel

Custom-framed print Old Madison County Jail

Donated by John and Carol Fruit

Autographed book version Puff the Magic Dragon

Donated by Peter Yarrow

Sports tickets and memorabilia

Gateway Grizzlies, Chicago Blackhawks, St. Louis Cardinals, St. Louis Rams, Chicago Bulls, Chicago Bears

Autographed Books and Photos

Kirk Douglas, John Travolta, Gloria Steinem, Jay Leno, John Lithgow, Paula Deen, Henry Winkler, Lois Lowry, Katherine Paterson, Julie Andrews Edwards, senators Bob and Elizabeth Dole, Bill Cosby, Whoopi Goldberg, Bill Nunes

Merchandise and Gift Certificates

Doubletree Hotels and Porter's Steakhouse, Walt Disney World Resorts, Dairy Queen, Shedd Aquarium, Drury Hotels, Missouri Botanical Garden, Walmart, Bella Milano, Irwin Chapel Funeral Homes, McGurk's Irish Pub, August Garden, Jim Stafford Theatre, Buhrmester Paint & Wallpaper, St. Louis Bread Co., "Wheel of Fortune," Edwardsville Frozen Foods, Once Upon a Toy, Fitz's American Grill & Bottling Works, Springers Creek Winery

This list will be updated on 12/21/09 after the mail is opened. Also, Meg has a list of artists who are donating art-work that needs to be added as a separate category.

THE SPECTATOR,

January 1, 1820

EDWARDSVILLE, JANUARY 1, 1820

TO THE EDITOR.
Shawneetown, 22d Dec. 1819

DEAR SIR,

I write that the people of the west may be put upon their guard against a gang of counterfeiters and swindlers, who are making tat way from this place.

The head men of the gang, as we conceive, are, a Mr. J. C. Johnson and a Mr. Thomas Foster. Johnson is styled by his associates, Colonel, and say he has been such in the U.S. service. He is a man of decent appearance, rather dark complexion, about six feet high, and travels in a handsome little wagon, with a cover to the back seat—has a pair of handsome match sorrel horses. He has a scar across his face on both sides of his nose. He has in company with him a Mr. John Dailey, who is a short, thick set fellow, and a Mr. Nicholas Cassleman on horse back. He is a flat faced, flat nosed, thick lipped, dark looking fellow, five feet 7 or 8 inches high; rides a black horse. This Mr. Johnson and Mr. Foster came here in the wagon, and were soon acquainted with all the low and trifling fellows of the place.—Johnson, Dailey, Cassleman, and a Mr. Hagerman, left this on Thursday last.—I pursued them alone that I might know if they were villains. I went under the pretence of going to Vandalia, where I had some business, and where I expected to be. But I overtook them sooner than I expected; they had passed a considerable quantity of paper, some on Huntsville, the rest on the different backs of Indiana, changed from ones to twenty dollars. I raised some men and went to take them. They had got information of my design, and Mr. Cassleman made his escape on horse back, carrying off the counterfeit money. I took possession of the rest, but being unable to prove enough to commit, I was forced to let them go. I returned to this place and took some of the gang still remaining. A Mr. Potter we have in jail.—Mr. Foster was discharged by the justices. We found with Foster two hundred dollar bills on the Patriotic Back of Washington. They are counterfeits in imitation of Murray, Draper, Fairman, & Co's plate, pretty well executed. What further success we will have, or whether we will have to resort to Lynch's law, is uncertain: but will be found laboring in the cause.

Yours, & c.



News & Needful Things

FOUND:

- aluminum cookie sheet
- green insulated jacket, adult size (may belong to one of the master gardeners)

THANK YOU:

- Thank you, Dottie Vaughn, for the donation of candles.

WANTED:

- flour (all purpose or whole wheat)
- yeast
- medium-weight linen for ladies' mitts
- seamstresses to sew men's aprons and trousers and ladies' shifts for the wardrobe
- seamstresses to work on summer bed linens and draperies
- monetary donations to buy two period men's coats.
- cutting knives with wooden handles (no serrated edges)
- period silverware for the dining room
- old wool clothing with a 95% or greater wool content for use in a rug-hooking class
- child's and male dress forms (torsos)
- period forks and knives
- tin plates
- straw brooms (historical construction)

NOTICE:

- Interpretive training booklets are available for volunteers to sign out and study the basic history of the house. The booklets contain the basic house tour and various information from the interpretive tour conducted at the house on a daily basis. Anyone interested in becoming a historical interpreter or in reviewing the tour information, may contact RoxAnn to check out a booklet.



into just what kind of education Lucy may have received.

While education for girls in 18th century America was limited, it was, nonetheless, available and relatively progressive for its day. The primary focus was first and foremost on the stitchery arts, which began for girls as young as three or four years of age while still at their mother's knee. Later, both boys and girls were often sent to dame schools run out of

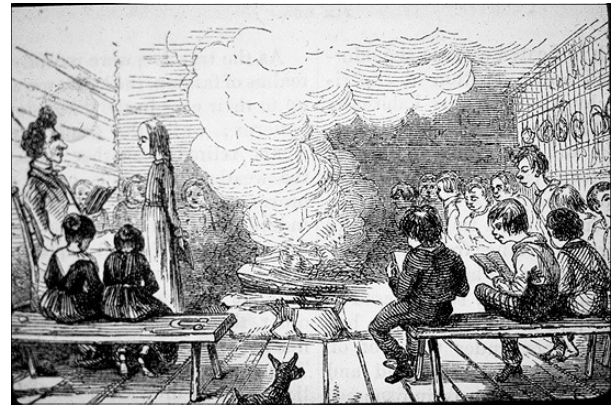
the homes of widows of reduced means. These could be day schools within a local community or boarding schools in larger urban areas. Although the curriculum differed somewhat between girls' and boys' education, often both sexes were schooled in stitching samplers, a useful skill for later making household linens. In addition, girls received a rudimentary education in reading, writing, geography, and arithmetic. However basic, this education was only available to the fortunate few whose families could afford it. At least fifty percent of the population remained illiterate at the time.

Beyond the dame schools, larger stitching academies, often run as boarding schools, began to appear just after the Revolution and continued to flourish well into the early nineteenth century. Susanna Rowson, a former actress and popular author of the day, established an academy in Boston around 1797. Around 1785, Mary Balch opened the first female academy in Providence, Rhode Island, after the death of her tailor husband. The Balch school,



highly revered for its fine examples of stitching, produced one of the largest groups of schoolgirl samplers of the period, in addition to offering a basic academic course of study in reading, writing, geography, and arithmetic.

In Pennsylvania, stitching academies also set the standard for girls' education through the influences of the Moravians and Quakers. The Moravian School in Bethlehem was first established in the 1740's. It offered not only the art of needlework, housekeeping, spinning, and weaving for girls, but also many of the subjects taught in the boys' schools. The Philadelphia Society of Friends opened the Westtown Boarding School in 1799 for both boys and girls which is still in existence today. Progressive in their ideas of education for all, this Quaker-run school differed little in its curriculum between the sexes, with emphasis on stitching being set apart for the girls. Other subjects included reading, writing, arith-



metic, geography, natural philosophy, and sometimes French and music. It is interesting to note that Lucy's older half-sister, Drusilla, may have attended such a school in Philadelphia as noted in "That Dark and Bloody River" by Allan Eckert, which recounts the lives of some of Lucy's close relatives. Is it possible that Lucy attended the same school, thus learning not only the art of needlework she so highly prized, but also a progressive girl's education at the hands of the Quakers?

Unfortunately, we may never know the exact means or details of Lucy Stephenson's early education. Yet it cannot be overlooked that girls—like Lucy—of privilege and means were allowed access to formal learning, paving the way for women's education into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The few letters she left behind offer a glimpse of a woman of eloquence, grace and a reverence not only for the art of the needle, but possibly the product of a lifelong education as well.



Portrait of a lady with a sewing basket. American, c. early 19th century.

From the Hearth

The following recipes were originally published in 1839 by Mrs. Lettice Bryan in her recipe book entitled "Kentucky Housewife".

LIP SALVE.

Take four ounces of white wax, five of olive oil, four drachms of spermaceti, twenty drops oil of lavender, and two ounces powdered alkanet root; put the whole in a porcelain skillet or jar, melt, strain, and then simmer with a slow heat till it forms a good salve, stirring it hard.

SECOND MODE.-Best olive oil two ounces, white wax and spermaceti each three ounces, and six drachms alkanet root: melt these ingredients together, stirring them all the time; strain and add oil of rhododendron three drops.

THIRD.-Oil almonds six ounces, spermaceti three ounces, white wax two ounces, alkanet root one ounce,

and Peruvian balsam two drachms. Melt slowly and strain. These salves are all red.

LAVENDER BRANDY.

Put a quart of lavender flowers in a pitcher; fill it up with white brandy, and let it steep till next day; then squeeze them out. Fill up the pitcher with fresh flowers, and repeat the process till you have a strong infusion of flowers: then strain and cork it up in a bottle.

WHITE WASH BALLS

Cut up a pound of white Castile soap, mix with it three pints of rose water, one ounce solution of salts of tartar, and the whites of two eggs; boil them together in a porcelain skillet till hard, stirring it very often, add one scruple oil of rhododendron, one drachm essence of jasmine, half a drachm essence nerali, and ten drops oil of cloves. Make it into two ounce balls.

The Volunteer

The 1820 Col. Benjamin
Stephenson House
P.O. Box 754
409 S. Buchanan
Edwardsville, IL 62025



Phone: 618-692-1818

Fax: 618-692-6418

E-mail:

stephensonhouse@sbcglobal.net

www.stephensonhouse.org