

The Salem Preservationist

Reporting historic preservation developments in the greater Salem area

"Looking backward and forward to a Greater Salem"

SALEM

Preservation Inc.

SPI awarded City contract to Restore, Repair and Manage Pioneer Village



Photo: Jim McAllister

Soon after Salem Preservation, Inc. announced its intent to support the restoration of Pioneer Village in September 2003, the City of Salem issued a Request For Proposals for repairing, restoring and managing Pioneer Village. SPI submitted the only proposal for restoring the Village on November 5th, and was awarded a contract to begin a repair and restoration process beginning in early December. Although horrific blizzards in December dropped over 30 inches of snow on all of Salem (and resulted in a flooded pond at Pioneer Village that remained frozen for months) SPI has been using the weeks since the award was announced to begin a much needed process of taking inventory of the Village's history, artifacts and condition, so that long term maintenance challenges can be identified, and a major campaign for Pioneer Village's repair be launched after the new study, or Historic Structures Report and Restoration Plan, is completed.

Salem Preservation, Inc. is exceedingly pleased to have such a worthwhile preservation project at this time that correlates to its Naumkeag and Salem First Families Initiative. Pioneer Village was built in 1930 as America's first living history museum. It was preserved as a "permanent exhibit" after 1931

because its high educational value was recognized to provide visitors, residents and school children with a portrayal of how the first Massachusetts Bay Colonists lived in the earliest days of the colony. The village was conceived to portray early Salem after Gov. John Winthrop arrived with the Massachusetts Colonial Charter aboard the ship ARBELLA, and several hundred new colonists needing immediate housing.



Photo: Jim McAllister

In the nearly 75 years that have passed since Pioneer Village was first built in 1930, it survived a series of earlier survival threats in the 1930s, 1970s and 1980s, when it was threatened with closure, damaged by vandals and arsons, and threatened with removal for new condominium construction. Designed mostly by the eminent New England antiquarian and historic house restorer George Francis Dow (1867-1936), Pioneer Village stands on a three acre parcel in Forest River Park near Salem State College. It was saved in 1931 by Dow and the Society For the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA); rebuilt after 1976 fires, and saved again from demolition by Mayor Anthony Salvo and the Pioneer Village Management Association, led by Peter LaChapelle and David Goss, in the 1980s. SPI is pleased to have both LaChapelle and Goss upon its Advisory Board, and to be entrusted with the latest effort to repair, and preserve this unique historical treasure.

Pioneer Village Listed as Salem Most Endangered Property for 2003

In December, 2003, Historic Salem, Inc. announced that Pioneer Village was one of three historic properties listed as "Most Endangered Historic Resources" for 2003. The other two properties were an 18th century house on Boston Street threatened

with demolition, and the St. Mary's Italian Church, recently closed by the Catholic Church. Pioneer Village was listed because approximately 50 percent of its historic features have been lost since they were introduced in the 1930s, including an 1870/ 1930 tall ship recreation of the ARBELLA, a pre-1651 Ruck House that was outfitted as an early maritime storehouse, a Gate House, 2 English wigwags, three dugouts, a brick works and a salt works. Salem Preservation appreciates the fact that the Most Endangered status underscores the wide variety of factors that historically have deteriorated the village as a whole, including inadequate maintenance, demolition by neglect, inadequate security, vandalism, arson, and structural decay as a function of periodic flooding and improper site drainage.

SPI Commences Historic Structure Report and Restoration Plan of Pioneer Village

Salem Preservation has engaged Historic Preservation & Design (HPD) to produce a new Historic Structures Report (HSR) and Restoration Plan for Pioneer Village. The document will outline the history and significance of the 3 acre waterfront property, identify repair needs of over 10 buildings and historic site features, and present a variety of restoration and adaptive re-use options. HPD is a Salem based preservation firm that formerly prepared HSRs for a variety of historic properties, including the Nathaniel Bowditch House in Salem. Sponsors of the Pioneer Village HSR are still needed. If you would like to help underwrite the production of this important blueprint for Pioneer Village's restoration and adaptive re-use, please contact: Salem Preservation, Inc., P.O Box 8655, Salem, MA 01971 : Attn: Pioneer Village study sponsors. Thank You.

Marblehead Maritime Warehouse... SAVED

The endangered 18th century Tucker's Wharf building in Marblehead, considered to be one of the last colonial warehouses surviving in North America, has been SAVED. The National Park Service, acting through the Salem Maritime National Historic Site, has been permitted to dismantle the timber framed structure, and study it prior to reconstructing it on Derby Wharf in Salem. There it will function both as an interpretive feature, and support structure for the replica East Indiaman FRIENDSHIP. SPI thanks and congratulates all persons involved with preserving such an important relic from our past. SPI campaigned for the building's preservation in the April, and June 2003 issues of The Salem Preservationist.

18 Crombie Street to be Restored



Ending a 15-year Salem struggle to save a late 18th century Georgian Style timber framed house on Crombie Street, the Salem Redevelopment Authority (SRA) recently acquired title to the Wendt House at 18 Crombie Street and transferred both title and redevelopment rights to Habitat For Humanity-North Shore. Habitat For Humanity will restore the 2-1/2 story gambrel roof house to its Federal Era appearance, and preserve the property as affordable housing. A wood shingle roof, painted wood clapboard siding, and painted wood blinds are to be restored to the house. A grassy rear lawn and wood property fence are proposed where now there is paved asphalt parking, and a metal chain link fence. 18 Crombie Street is a State's Most Endangered Historic Resource, and Salem Preservation thanks all parties and people who worked in so many ways over so many years to prevent this property from being demolished for a small parking lot.

6 Federal Court Carriage House Future in Question

Parties in Salem are currently fighting over the future of a rare ca. 1860 French Second Empire Style carriage house at 6 Federal Court. Underutilized for many years, the carriage house has some major repair needs, but projects a handsome image both on Federal Street and to Essex Street and to the magnificent Ropes Memorial Garden in Salem's McIntire Historic District. The 6 Federal Court carriage house is believed to be the only structure of its type and style in Salem, and is tentatively attributed to Ryder & Fuller, the 19th century architectural firm supported by Salem's own Enoch Fuller that played a major role in popularizing both the Italianate and Second Empire Styles. (Other Salem landmarks designed by Enoch Fuller include Plummer Hall at the Peabody Essex Museum, the Downing Block at 175 Essex Street, and Fuller's own house, a handsome Second Empire Style landmark off Essex Street on South Pine Street.) While Salem Preservation does not keep the list of "Most

Endangered” Historic properties in Salem, it would appear by all indications that the French Second Empire style carriage house at 6 Federal Court is now actively endangered, and may soon come down. Salem Preservation encourages a new adaptive re-use that can allow the carriage house to be preserved, in new storage, residential or office use. Perhaps a new adaptive re-use as a Salem Preservation Resource Center (library) with antique architectural parts storage and preservation?

SPI President John Goff speaks about Salem Preservationist Mary Hemenway

In recognition of March being Women’s History Month, SPI President John Goff spoke on “Preservationist with a Purpose: The Legacies of Mrs. Mary Hemenway” on March 31st at the NPS Visitor’s Center on New Liberty Street, Salem. Mrs. Mary Hemenway, described as “the richest woman in Boston” at the time of her death in the late 19th century, was a New York native who married Augustus Hemenway of Boston and Salem. Between the 1870s and 1890s, Mrs. Hemenway worked as a significant sponsor of preservation and education projects in Boston, Salem, and across the U.S. Almost single handedly credited with saving the Old South Meeting House in Boston, Mary Hemenway also supported public education and the Hemenway Expedition, that conducted archaeological digs of Native American sites in the American Southwest. In Salem, Mrs. Mary Hemenway owned all of Forest River Park (where Salem 1630: Pioneer Village is located) and introduced museum use on the property, erecting the Hemenway Museum there before the Derby-Hemenway-Forest River Park (or Forest River Park) was created in 1907. All readers of The Salem Preservationist are encouraged to learn more about Mrs. Mary Hemenway, an important Massachusetts leader in the 19th century.

Historical Plants and Gardens at Salem’s 1630 Pioneer Village

A Historical Plants and Gardens Committee is forming! Anyone wishing to join the committee should contact kmason@northshore.edu. We’d like to organize a meeting to plan inventorying plants already existing on the Pioneer Village site, surveying available planting areas and choosing native and European plant species representative of the time period. We also hope to create small, movable, raised boxes in which to display selected plants this summer. Future objectives include developing projects for the local grade schools combining history with science - students would become involved in producing and planting some of the medicinal/culinary herb, food crop and fiber crop

plants used in a 17th century village. Hope you can join us!

St. Joseph Hall Restoration



Photo courtesy of National Park Service

St. Joseph Hall, also known as the Polish Club, is being rehabilitated in a major project. Built in 1909 to serve the immigrant Polish community of Salem, the building will serve multiple park purposes: Maintenance facility in the basement and first floor, education programs and community meetings on the second, and park offices on the third. The project is expected to be completed in the summer of 2004. Park offices will then move out of the 1780 Hawkes House, which will be prepared for opening to the public.

The Custom House Eagle

The carved wooden eagle on the roof of the Custom House was added in 1826. It was carved by Salem craftsman Joseph True, and its original cost was \$50.00.



Photo courtesy of National Park Service

In 2004, the original eagle was replaced with a fiberglass replica. After restoration work is completed, the original eagle will be displayed in the Custom House. Visit www.nps.gov/sama for more information about the Salem Maritime National Historic Site.