



The Christmas Tea

The Christmas Tea

Hopewell Museum

60th Anniversary -- 1924-1984

A Community Center preserving the past.

In Memory Of:

Miss Sarah D. Stout whose
collection of antiques became
the nucleus of the present museum.

Dedicated To:

Miss Eleanor Weart for the
dedication to the Library, and
Miss Susan Weart for her devotion
to the Museum, for the Thursday
afternoon tea and whose wonderful
imagination gave us the Santa Claus
letters, and

"THE CHRISTMAS TEA"

FORWARD

The Misses Eleanor and Susan Weart, or the Weart Sisters, as they were fondly called, were born at Hilltop, the Joseph Stout Plantation of the 1700's, outside of Hopewell, and lived all their lives in this area. Miss Eleanor was the first librarian and Miss Susan the first curator of the Library Museum, and they were truly dedicated to their respective responsibilities.

Each month Miss Susan held a Tea at the museum and at Thanksgiving she posted in the hall a letter to Santa Claus, North Pole, U.S.A., and signed her pseudonym "The Little Listener" or "The Ladies on the Willow-Ware", (the tea was always served on the Willow Ware china). In her letter she asked Santa to bring her the household items she needed for the care and cleaning of the building and the operation of the museum. These requests included light bulbs, brooms, paint, furniture polish, mending tape, and always tea, cookies, sugar and napkins.

At the Christmas Tea, Miss Susan read a reply to Santa, thanking him for the many articles which had been sent to the museum. Over the years, from 1932-1949, most of these letters have been saved, and provide a very unique picture of the needs of the museum and the response of the public.

This booklet contains copies of these letters and has been compiled in honor of Miss Eleanor and Miss Susan for the enjoyment of their many friends and the friends of the Hopewell Museum. Illustrations in the booklet have been done by a local artist Mrs. Jan P. Piggott. .

Special thanks go to:

Mrs. Eileen Toth for typing the letters,
Mrs. Jan P. Piggott for her delightful drawings that have added such a special touch,
Mrs. Anne Sheier for her calligraphy on the cover, and to

The Garden Club for the wreaths which they have placed on the front doors each year.

Trustees
Hopewell Museum

November 1983

Prepared by: Janet Piggott



December 14th, 1933

Dear Santa:

I hope you saw the notice in the Hopewell Herald about our Christmas tea. It is to be next Thursday afternoon at four o'clock and I do hope you can come.

I have been looking around for picture wire but I can not find any, so many friends give things that must be hung on the third floor walls. I thought I would wash up a little but I am too nearly out of soap and when I thought I would make a list of things to get when I went to the store I gave up, for I could not find a pad or pencil. But I hope you will come on the 21st just the same.

Now I must get back on the willow ware.



December 22, 1933

Dear Museum Friends:

There is not a Museum any where
With a finer lot of girls, I declare,
Your letters full of joy and cheer
Are prized by me every year.

If I've omitted, please don't mind
I've brought the best I could find.

Sorry now, I must in a hurry be,
I'd like so much a cup of tea.

May the New Year be prosperous and bright
Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

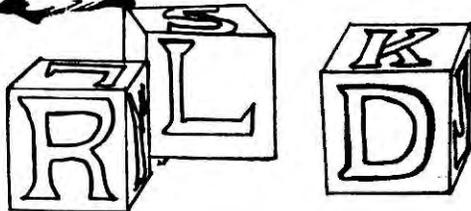
Santa Claus



December 20, 1934

Carefully I have watched you, my dears
For ten successful years,
And am I proud?
Well, don't say it out loud,
I'll just leave my pack
In another year I'll be back.
Too bad I can't stay
But that's always the way.

Merry Christmas to all
from
Santa



HOPEWELL LIBRARY-MUSEUM
December, 1935

To
Saint Nicholas
North Pole

Dear Saint:

I overheard the "LADIES-ON-THE-WILLOW-WARE"
talking, and they said "Nothing would make them
gladder than to have you come with a big step-
ladder".

You know as well as I do, those ladies are
great managers and they use every thing from
your pack down to the very last tack.

Have you any white crepe paper this year
from Denison's for the shelves in the G.A.R.
room?

Be sure to come for the Tea next Thursday
the 19th. They will be pleased with anything,

"I'm tellin' you"

Little Listener

P.S. You said last year you would try to come
again this year, don't forget.

L.L.

December 10, 1936

Dear Santa:

I hear you are coming down this chimney next Thursday the 17th.

The lady on the sugar bowl complains she has been neglected, so I hope you will remember her.

Last year you brought a step ladder, oh, how I wish you would bring a very long handled brush for washing the windows on the outside.

I know I should not say anything for you are so good to us.



December 16, 1937

Dear Santa Claus:

I hear you are asking some of the stand-bys to meet you at this Museum next Thursday at four o'clock. Now, I have been wishing I could see you and I hope I will get one of the invitations.

Your pack so filled with good things, has been the talk of friends for several years. I wonder if you are going to bring the usual supply of tea, crackers, sugar, soap, Bon Ami, picture hooks, pencils, butcher's cord, picture wire, I hope so,

Little Listener.

December 8, 1938

Dear Santa:

I hope you have received one of our postals saying the Christmas tea will be December 22, at four o'clock.

The lady on the sugar bowl is disconsolate; hope you will remember her.

You are always just too good to us so I will not let on that we are nearly out of tea. Our birthday candles should be yellow to match the little holders we have.

There are only a few paper napkins left and we are all out of common post cards.

The "ladies on the willow ware" suggest you bring some stamps, but I would not presume to be so fresh. A box of safety matches would be more in my line to say.

Remember, you said you would come. I will be watching for you.

As ever

Little Listener

Dear Santa:

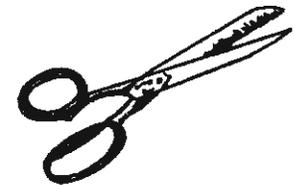
Only at Christmas time you come
White with snow and from the north
When the spirit of giving is in the air.
We write at night
Then we are sure to find you there,
Far in the frozen north,
Always anxious to hear
Of the things we have wanted
All through the year;
Scissors and glue and a bulb or two
Some heavy cord and plenty of tea,
It is all for fun around the Christmas tree,
On Thursday December the twenty-first.

Yours in trust

The Ladies on the Willow Ware

Per-"Tit Willow"

Hopewell Library-Museum
December 7, 1939



Hopewell Library-Museum
December 12, 1940

December 17, 1940

Dear Santa:

Another Christmas is just about here, our napkins, tea, sugar and cookies from last year have I know been enjoyed and enjoyed every Thursday by all.

The ladies on the willow ware could be made very happy by an avalanche of turpentine, brass polish, picture wire, celephane tape, baggage tags, dish mops, electric light bulbs, brooms, paper dusters, ink, napkins, tea, sugar, cookies, birthday candles, and anything good from the North Pole.

We will all be depending upon and looking for you next Thursday.

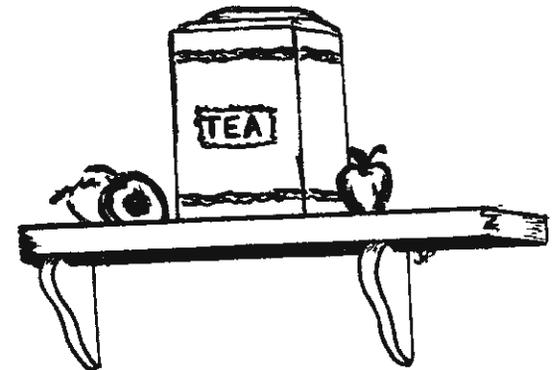
Hopefully
Little Listener

Dear Museum Friends:

I'd like so much a cup of tea.
There is nowhere I'd rather be.
Than with the old Willow Ware.
But my sleigh is waiting to take me elsewhere.

I'll be back in another year.
Merry Christmas to each and every Dear.

Santa Claus



Hopewell Museum
December 11, 1941

Dear Santa Claus:

This year with the whole world at odds everyone needs you more than ever. We are sure you realize this must be a gay Christmas.

Our needs are not as great in some ways but we are always out of tea, sugar, cookies, dish mops, Dutch cleanser, picture wire and picture hooks and heavy cord, paper napkins, thumb tacks and pins.

We hope you will have some of these things for us and come for tea December 18th at four o'clock.

Yours until then
The Little Listener
for
The Ladies on the
Willow Ware



North Pole
December 18, 1941

Dear Museum Friends:

There is not a Museum anywhere
With a finer lot of girls, I declare.
Your letters full of joy and cheer
Are prized by me every year.
If I've omitted, please don't mind
I've brought the best I could find.
Sorry now I must in a hurry be,
I'd like so much a cup of tea.
May the New Year be prosperous and bright
Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

Santa Claus.



Library-Museum
Hopewell, N.J. U.S.A.
December 3, 1942

Dear Santa:

We have been enjoying your generous gifts for a whole year, and wondering how you know our needs so well.

You always know when there is need for fresh candles, a reading glass, a new square for the tea table, a chamois for cleaning the windows or a new door mat.

You know too we may be cold this winter and any small gift of wood for the "Humdinger" will be just fine.

The Christmas tea will be on Thursday, December 17th just two weeks from today and the "Ladies on the Willow Ware" with their friends will be expecting you here. Do not disappoint us. Merry Christmas to all at the North Pole.

From
The Little Listener

North Pole
Dec. 17, 1942

Carefully I have watched you, my dears
For twenty successful years,
Indeed I am proud
Well, don't say it out loud
I'll just leave my pack.
In another year I'll be back.
Too bad I can't stay
But that is always the way.

Merry Christmas to all
from
Santa.



Hopewell Library-Museum
December 9, 1943

Dear Santa:

I hope you have seen the poster hanging in the hall announcing the Christmas Tea December twenty-three.

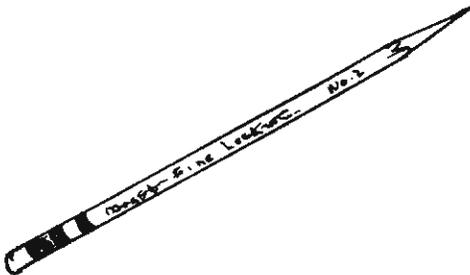
"The Ladies on the Willow Ware" have been over-heard saying there were very few safety matches and several other things.

Without being too forward I would like to tell you we are nearly out of tea, sugar, crackers, napkins, lead pencils, light bulbs, and birthday candles.

I beg of you do not let on I told you what I over-heard.

Do try and surprise us this year and stop in for tea.

As ever
"The Little Listener"



North Pole
December 23, 1943

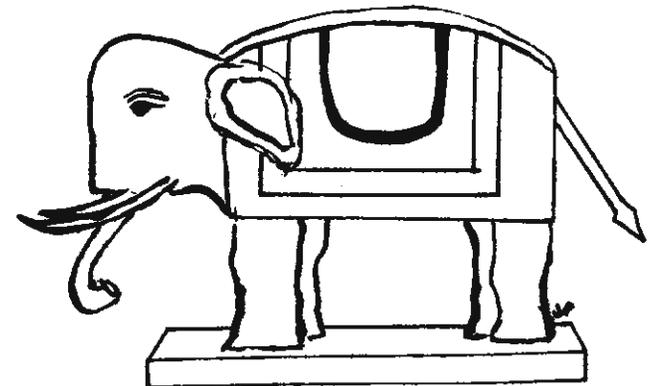
Dear Museum Girls:

T'is two nights before Christmas
and all through the land, every creature
is stirring and striving

With a Christmas demand.

If I've omitted please don't mind
I've brought the best I could find.
I'd like so much a cup of tea, and I'd like
to be here,
But I have to be there, so good bye
'til next year.

Merry Christmas to all;
Santa.



North Pole
Dec. 18, 1945

Dear Friends:

I did not receive your letter in time to get all the articles you need.

Next year I shall have to begin in the early fall, because there are so many people who believe in me.

The heater chimney looks pretty bad but I always prefer the old kitchen chimney, there is always more going on in the kitchen.

Sorry I can not stay for tea.
Merry Christmas to all,

Your friend,
Santa



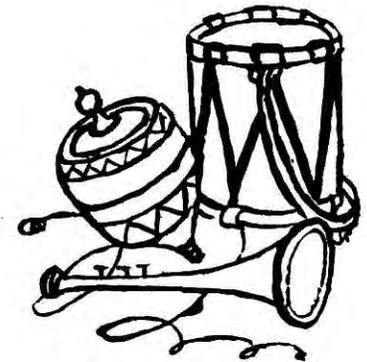
Library-Museum
December 11, 1947

My dear Santa:

Did you see our poster? I hope so, it is in the front hall and tells the world there will be a Christmas Tea here on Thursday, December 21st at four o'clock. You must be sure to come.

Last year you asked what we needed most. Birthday candles, soap, napkins, light bulbs, crackers, tea and of course sugar. Safety matches, lead pencils in fact you really know better than I can tell you.

We will be looking for you next Thursday.



Library-Museum
Hopewell N.J. U.S.A.
Dec. 14, 1949

Dear Santa:

We have been enjoying your generous gifts for twenty five years and wondering how you know our needs from year to year so well.

You always know when we are out of soap or when we need a couple of towels, a new square for the table or a chamois for cleaning the windows.

I do hope you saw the poster in the hall advertising the Christmas tea, the "Ladies on the Willow Ware" will be expecting you here. So do not disappoint us.

Merry Christmas to all at the North Pole.

From
The Little Listener

Dear Friends:

For tea I fully meant to stay
but deep snow is threatening and
I must be on my way
Merry Christmas to all

Santa



Dear Santa:

You said "write again next year", so we take you at your word. We are so glad to have the things you brought last year. Now we hope you will be just as good again this year.

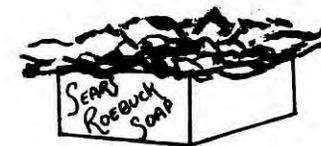
We need light bulbs and lead pencils, Thumb tacks and utensils, Sugar and tea for our company, Picture wires and hooks and Dusters for the books, Pens and ink and whatever you think.

Hoping you will come by the 21st.

We are the
Ladies on the Willow Ware.

You always seem to know just what to put in your pack, so I will not let on how much need we have for tea, tags, thumb tacks, ink, paper napkins, pencils, dusters and soap.
I will be watching for you.

Faithfully your
Little Listener



Dear Santa:

You said "write again next year", so we take you at your word. We were so glad to have the things you brought last year. Now we hope you will be just as good again. We need light bulbs and lead pencils, tack claws and utensils, sugar and tea for our company. Picture wires and hooks and dusters for the books. Pens and ink and whatever you think.

Hoping you will come by the 22nd,

We are the
Ladies on the Willow Ware



Hopewell, N.J.

Dear Santa:

Last year you wrote "believe in me", I do and so do the "Ladies on the Willow Ware". You are very important around here, and we do believe in you and appreciate all you do.

I overheard those "Ladies on the Willow Ware" saying we needed tea, sugar, cookies, paper napkins, birthday candles, safety matches, and they even said we needed a broom, imagine such a thing.

The Holiday tea will be at four o'clock on Thursday afternoon December the 23rd. I do hope you can come again this year.

Merry Christmas to all in your shop at the North Pole.

Best wishes from

THE LITTLE LISTENER

