

THE WHITE SISTERS



The White Sisters: Ella, Edith, Helen, and Mary on their front porch

BICENTENNIAL HIGH TEA

MAY 10, 1997

The White Sisters

The lives of Ella, Edith, Mary and Helen White will be celebrated at a Bicentennial High Tea this Saturday, May 10, 1997, from 2:00 to 4:00 at First Parish Unitarian Universalist, Washington Street, Canton. All are welcome.

The White Sisters, as members of First Parish for many years, paid a pew tax of \$13.70 to assure their seating in their own pew for Sunday services. Ella, looking like she stepped from a band box; Mary, always the lady; Edith, the mistress of the house; and Helen, chauffeur, arrived at church in a Chrysler after which "the ladies" would take their places in the second pew on the left front of the church. According to Anne Poland, when they were sitting in the pew the sun came through the stained glass windows and "it looked like a Norman Rockwell painting."

The sisters were very private in their personal lives. During their growing-up years they lived with their father in a house located off Chapman Street in an area known as White Sisters Way. Mr. White had a farm and insisted that his daughters dress for dinner and maintain good manners in their old Victorian home. In spite of his restrictions, Helen learned to drive. Mary taught school in Norwood, Edith worked for a printing press in Norwood and Ella went to Washington. Another daughter left the family and made her home in Canada.

They were all well-known at Town Meeting for their interest in environmental matters, willingness to research items on the warrant and ability to speak up and let their voices be heard. They were affectionately remembered by members of First Parish for their unique contribution to the running of the church. They participated in the church auction, taught in the church school, and were involved in adult education. It was always a treat for church members when they were invited to their home. Lively conversation in the library and on special occasions in the living room are fondly remembered by those who knew them. They were particularly caring with children and children's issues. Ella lived to 101 years of age. Their demise brought to a close an era in the history of the town.

On Sunday, May 11, at 10:30, Avril Elkort, our selectman, will accept for the Town, a needlepoint picturing historical landmarks of Canton in honor of the Bicentennial. The needlepoint was hand worked by Queenie Holmberg from sketches by Elaine Lowry. Again the town is invited.