

Johnston Historical Society

Historical Notes

Vol. XIII, #2

Christopher Martin and Louis McGowan, Co-Editors
www.JohnstonHistorical.org

July 2007

The Providence and Springfield Railroad

by Louis McGowan

Older residents of the area will remember when trains ran through Johnston. The sound of the trains could occasionally be heard up until the last New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad freight train ran across town in 1962. The history of this branch of the NY, NH & H, though, began 150 years ago with the Woonasquatucket Railroad.

As far back as the mid-nineteenth century, a railroad was planned to run through the Woonasquatucket River valley. Some promoters saw the railroad as reaching all the way to Springfield, Massachusetts. A survey for the railroad was accomplished during 1856-'57, and the Woonasquatucket Railroad received approval from the State legislature to build in January 1857. The train line would run alongside the Woonasquatucket River from Olneyville to Stillwater, a mill village in Smithfield. Heading west at that point, the line would run to Pascoag.

The rail line was not built at that time due to, first, a financial crisis and, second, the Civil War. A committee was formed in 1866 to revive the project. It was reported that there was plenty of demand for commercial transportation between Olneyville and Pascoag. The Woonasquatucket River north of Providence supported nine cotton mills, two woolen mills, and four factory stores. In Pascoag and surrounding villages, there were twenty-one woolen mills, four shoddy mills, two cotton mills, and numerous other manufacturers and dealers.

Even though the facts above were presented to the committee, that group recommended that the line should run to Woonsocket and not to Pascoag. They did not see the value of the Pascoag line as being certain. They felt that another line could be run from Woonsocket to Pascoag by the owner of the "Air Line Road" between New York and Boston. This latter road was owned by the New York and Boston Railroad.

As fate would have it, the New York and Boston was absorbed by the Boston, Hartford and Erie Railroad, which soon became the New York and New England Railroad. The owners of the New York and New England had another agenda. They were looking for an alternate route from Boston, south-east to Providence, and then on to points west. They already had a route from Boston to New York, but it ran along the northern

border of Rhode Island and totally bypassed Providence. The New York and New England people saw the Woonasquatucket Railroad as a way to run out of Providence, across to Woonsocket and then on to Boston. It was a round-about route, but it seemed the only viable one at the time. For our purposes in this article, we will not deal extensively with the New York and New England's ultimate goal. We are going to primarily deal with the Providence and Springfield itself, the way it was originally envisioned.

The original promoters of the Woonasquatucket Railroad started re-thinking their preference after the New York and New England came into the picture. William Tinkham, a prominent mill owner in Burrillville, became the driving force behind the project. His reason for being involved was his concern over the lack of fuel for his mills. Tinkham was able to get the *Providence Journal* to support the project, and newspaper advertisements proclaimed the benefits that the railroad would bring to people of the area. Residents along the route were urged to contribute money for the construction of the line. This appeal did not go over too well, but, thanks to a City of Providence bond, the builder's faith in the project, and much investment from outside Rhode Island, the effort went forward.

The Providence and Springfield becomes a reality

In 1871, the Woonasquatucket Railroad was renamed the Providence and Springfield Railroad. The directors of the line felt that people not used to the former name would have trouble with it, and they also felt that the name of the railroad should reflect the line's intention to expand outside of Rhode Island. Dillon and Clyde, railroad contractors, began construction in 1872 on the 20.84 miles of mainline. When completed in 1873, the line ran from Dike Street in Olneyville all the way to Pascoag following the Woonasquatucket, Tarklin, and Clear Rivers.

What is interesting for students of Johnston history is that the Providence and Springfield Railroad ran across Johnston from the village of Manton right on through the village of Graniteville. Our town has gotten no credit for it, but the stations used for Lymanville, Allendale, Centerdale, and Greystone were all in Johnston, even though the stations were named for the corresponding North Providence villages across the Woonasquatucket River from each station. This odd naming was probably due to the fact that each of the North

Providence villages was centered on a textile mill. There were none on the Johnston side. The Manton Station was also in Johnston, but the Manton name was used in both towns on opposite sides of the river.



The Graniteville train station, captured here about 1920 and actually called the Centerdale Station. The Providence and Springfield provided both passenger and freight service until 1905 when the New Haven Railroad took over both roles. New Haven stopped carrying passengers in the 1930s and freight service ended in 1962. The station was torn down to make way for a Burger King. The grain elevator burned in the 1980s.

Photo from Images of America: Johnston, vol. 1 (1997)

Within a year or two, the P&S extended service to the Union Passenger Station in Providence, increasing the main line to 22.8 miles of track. The Union Station had really reached its capacity, though, already serving four other railroads. A special committee recommended to the city council that the Providence and Springfield erect a passenger station on Gaspee Street. A very modest one was built, which was occupied by the P&S in 1880. The small building was all that was needed since the station served only two daily trains in each direction when opened. Less than seventy passengers rode each train on average. The Gaspee Street Station was not well received, even though it saved P&S substantial rental fees that they would have paid for use of the Union Station. The former was only a quarter of a mile from the Union Station, but passengers could reach it only by crossing the busy tracks leading to the Union Station.

The physical resources of the P&S

The P&S remained basically the same throughout the 1880s, although expenses increased for the small railroad as equipment and structures grew older. A 200-foot long trestle bridge at Olneyville began to settle and in 1882 had to be filled in with dirt to create a solid roadbed. Swampland in Olneyville through which the line passed had to be filled in. A new turntable and water tank were installed in Pascoag. The passenger and freight stations, engine house, and turntable at Providence were also expanded in 1883.

The Providence and Springfield began operations with two steam engines, the "Hercules" and the "Stentor." Both were built by the Rhode Island Locomotive Works in 1873. A third engine, "Achilles," was added in 1874. They were numbered 1, 2, and 3. All three engines cost about \$12,000 each, and they easily covered the two passenger round trips, one regular freight trip, and extra trains. An increase in both freight and

passenger train traffic led to the purchase of the Number 4 locomotive, "Mars," from the Rhode Island Locomotive Works in 1882. Because the amount of passenger train miles was continuing to rise and because the first three engines were aging, they added a #5 engine in 1889. It was never named.

Original equipment for the line was three coaches and a baggage car. A second baggage car was added after six years and during the mid-1880s three more passenger coaches were added. A milk car was purchased in 1889. The original freight equipment consisted of twenty-five box cars, sixteen flat cars and thirty-six dump cars. The inventory of dump cars increased to seventy-two over the years and five flat cars were added in the late 1890s.

A big help to local folk, but a financial flop for investors

According to Edward J. Ozog, author of the article on which this piece is based, "the Providence and Springfield was a great benefit to the region it served." As an investment, though, it was unsuccessful. The company never paid its stockholders a dividend. Earnings were sufficient to make payments on the line's bonds, but expenses for new equipment and improvements left little for stockholders. The road had cost sixty-five percent more than projected, and income averaged about twenty percent less than expected. Looking back, this is not surprising since the line had opened during the financial panic of 1873, which was followed by a severe business recession. The recession affected the mills along the line, as shown by the fact that one half of the mills along its route were either closed or operating irregularly during 1878.

When the Providence and Springfield opened for business, it employed fifty-eight workers. By 1877, only forty-five were needed. Overall, the line functioned pretty well, despite the lack of return for its backers. The big problem for the company, though, was that there was no money for it to achieve its main goal, the extension of the line beyond Pascoag. The extension was necessary if the P&S was going to increase its earnings. Since the investors had not received a return on their investment, they were not willing to contribute more capital for expansion.

Vultures on the horizon

Since 1882, the Pascoag line had been running its trains over the New York and New England Railroad track from Olneyville to the Cove in Providence. In 1887, the New York and New England started to put pressure on the Providence and Springfield in order to gain control of the P&S, and during that year the New York and New England presented a \$60,000 bill for track usage to the smaller railroad. There was no way that the P&S could come up with that money, since their net income the previous year had been less than \$3,000. The New York and New England began buying up stock in the Providence and Springfield, and by 1890 the former owned 3,400 shares in the P&S, 800 more than necessary for control of the line. On October 1, 1890, the New York and New England leased the Providence and Springfield for ninety-nine years for the annual rent of \$66,047 per year. The rental fee was used to pay interest on bonds and capital stock of the Providence and Springfield. This was the first time that stockholders realized a return on their stock since the line was built. Most of the stockholders

now were, of course, New York and New England people and not the original investors.

Another link in the line between Providence and Springfield was added in 1893 when the Douglas Junction Extension was opened. This extension ran from Pascoag to Douglas Junction just over the Rhode Island/Massachusetts border. The goal of the P&S was to reach the existing Boston and Albany Railroad's trackage at Palmer, Massachusetts, which would bring the Providence and Springfield into Springfield itself. It seems that the promoters never seriously considered an independent railroad all the way to Springfield.

The New Haven takes over

The New York and New England Railroad fell into receivership during the financial panic of 1893. It was reorganized as the New England Railroad Company in 1895, but was purchased by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad in the same year. At first the New Haven controlled the old New York and New England through stock ownership, but in 1898 they leased the New England, which included the lease to the Providence and Springfield. In 1905, the New England and the Providence and Springfield were deeded to the New Haven.

The New Haven had a monopoly on land and water transportation in southern New England by the turn of the century. Having a monopoly meant that they could raise the freight rates they charged to customers, who did complain, but to no avail. No one could challenge the New Haven until the Southern New England Railroad, a Grand Trunk subsidiary, nearly broke New Haven's monopoly power. They were ultimately unsuccessful in breaking New Haven, but with time, New Haven's power abated. First, the courts and finally, the automobile did them in.

While the New Haven operated the Providence and Springfield line, they ran one freight train between Providence and Pascoag. Until about World War I, five daily passenger trains and one Saturday train ran between the same cities. During the 1920s, train service fell to two trains each way, and that ended after the depression. A gas electric car carried passengers for the last few years of service. The automobile, operating on improved roads, and the migration of textile mills to the South, had done in the passenger train. After the depression, freight trains ran to Pascoag only on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The last trains ran on the line in 1962.

The trains traveling this route were relatively slow and traffic was light. This meant that accidents were rare. Passenger trains traveled up to fifty miles per hour and freight trains thirty-five miles an hour.

Remaining signs of the old Providence and Springfield

There is not much left in Johnston to remind us of the old P&S line. The roadbed is still pretty much intact, although all the rails have been ripped up. None of the stations remain. The Centerdale Station was the last to disappear, being torn down in the early 1990s to make way for a Burger King. The grain elevator just west of the station lasted until the 1980s. The small Allendale, Lymanville, and Greystone stations and the

larger Manton Station are long gone. There is still a Railroad Avenue, though, running parallel to the Woonasquatucket River just south of Graniteville.

The Providence and Springfield Railroad never achieved the greatness that its original promoters had hoped for, but it admirably served the people and businesses along its path. The P&S played an important role in our town's history.

Sources: Most of the historical information for this article was taken from Edward J. Ozog's three part story that was carried in Volume 21, Issue 3 and 4, 1990, and Volume 22, Issue 1, 1991, of the "Shoreliner," the quarterly journal of the New Haven Railroad Historical and Technical Association. His story was entitled: "Another Way to Boston, the New York and New England in Northern Rhode Island."

The Art of the Hoe

by Fred Mikkelsen

Mariano DiFazio had four of his sons working the farm but needed more help for the summer of 1952.

[But first an explanation: The border between Johnston and Cranston has always been a "blur" to those who grew up in either municipality along "the Pike." Some kids went to Thornton Elementary School and some to Mae Wescott Elementary School, but still they identified themselves as coming from "the Pike" or from Thornton, and so this story must bridge that hazy border.]



Photo by Fred Mikkelsen

The DiFazios lived on Nardilillo Street in Johnston, but the land they owned and farmed was on Scituate Avenue in Cranston, along with other lands they rented. I lived in the Phenix Avenue area of Cranston and a neighbor suggested I could work on a farm and pick up some money over the summer. I really wanted a paper route but there were none available at the time. So when Angelo DiFazio and his old pickup truck appeared on one summer morning, I hopped in the back along with another kid from my street and thus began my adventure as a farm laborer, and a friendship with a family that will always be dear to me. (I hope to tell the DiFazio family story in greater detail in a future article).

The farm was a vegetable farm or "Truck Garden" because the produce was "trucked" to market. In addition to marketing at

the Farmer's Co-Op and several wholesalers in Providence, the DiFazios were a large supplier to the A&P Warehouse in Cranston. The most successful farmers had farms that were weed free, regularly cultivated, fertilized, and cared for and the DiFazios were successful farmers. The implement of choice was the light and easily manipulated onion hoe and all it required was a competent pair of hands and an occasional sharpening of the cutting edge.



Photo by Fred Mikkelsen

I would be paid \$1 for each day's work and lunch would be provided. What lunches they were! A quart milk bottle filled with ice cold tea with milk and sugar; a sandwich fashioned from half a loaf of fresh Italian bread filled with delicious things I had never tasted; vegetables ranging from broccoli to potato, often cooked with eggs and cheese or with meats. Not only was lunch a break in the hard work day but a gastronomical adventure.

Mariano oversaw the operation but no longer worked in the fields, and when he would drive in the long driveway, all eyes would be on the task at hand and all backs bent in toil. His sons treated his visits with silence and diligence, whether out of respect or fear I'll never know, but I suspect the former. He never missed what was or was not getting accomplished and would take Angelo aside and direct him to how things should proceed.

The onion hoe was preferred because it could be worked close to a plant's root system and could skim just below the soil surface lifting out weeds or could cut heavy weeds off at the root. It is not enough to just "stir" the soil, a weed up-rooted and turned to the sun will soon wither and die. The hoe can be pulled or pushed or even turned on end to get the most elusive weed. It does take some concentration and hand-eye coordination to efficiently do the job.

One day, as we were working a field of peppers, I was distracted enough that I chopped off a pepper plant in an effort to keep up with the line of men and boys working their way across the field. As luck would have it, Mariano DiFazio was driving in the driveway for his daily visit. He got out of the car

and walked over to where I was standing. With out a word, he took the hoe from my hands and went on to silently demonstrate how to hold and work the tool and then handed it back to me with a stern look that would have wilted any weed I'd missed. I thought, "Well that is that, I got off pretty easily."

Saturday was payday and Mariano would take out a very large roll of paper money and count out dollar bills to each of the kids who worked that week, a dollar for each day. I had worked six days so when he got to me he counted out six dollars and placed them in my outstretched hand. He then took one bill back and said, "That is for the peppers that would have grown on the plant you killed." He spoke not in anger, but as a lesson in agriculture, in economics and in life. It is a lesson that has stood me well, ever since.

Society Doings

Executive Board Election

We held elections at our June general meeting. The slate of officers was elected as proposed, with no additional nominations. The new lineup is as follows:

President: Louis McGowan

Vice President: Dan Brown

Treasurer: Virginia Brunelle

Recording Secretary: Evelyn Beaumier

Corresponding Secretary: Christopher Martin

Trustees: John Barattini, Gregory Burr, Rolf Johnson, and Bel Peters.

Speakers

Our April meeting was graced by Sparkle Bryant, a ranger at the Roger Williams National Memorial in Providence, who gave a very interesting talk about Roger Williams.

In May, back by popular demand, Christopher Martin presented "What the Heck is That? Part 2: Another Close-Up Look at Johnston," in which he challenged us to identify closeup views of places and objects that we see every day, but may not really notice. He stumped us on more than one!

June brought us a very impressive slide presentation by brewery memorabilia collector Greg Theberge. Greg covered the whole history of Rhode Island breweries from about 1860 to the closing of Narragansett Brewery in 1981. With more than 400 slides the show went by very fast, but Greg invited one and all to visit his collection in person at his Burrillville home. Anyone up for a road trip?

Bara Hack

After the yard cleanup on April 21, a number of JHS members ventured into Connecticut to visit a reputedly haunted ghost town in Pomfret called Bara Hack. Following an old woods road we soon came across stone walls and foundations marking the location of at least part of the town. Further investigation led us to a cemetery on a hill and possible evidence of a mill race alongside a river. Sadly, we saw no ghosts, but perhaps the

story might have been different if we had visited at midnight instead in broad daylight!

JHS Tea

Our April 29 Tea Social at the John Stevens House was a great success! About thirty-two people attended the two-hour event and enjoyed a wide array of finger foods, desserts, and of course, tea. Between ticket sales, the raffle, and the silent auction, we raised about \$960 for the society. At least one attendee was impressed enough to send us a laudatory email:

From: "charles" <...@cox.net>
To: info@johnstonhistorical.org
Subject: THANKS FOR A GREAT EVENT
Date: Sun, 29 Apr 2007 23:30

Hi all: Just thought I would drop a line regarding your April 29, 2007, tea event at the John Stevens House. I found this to be one of the most fulfilling events put on by a local historical society in quite some time. I plan to highly recommend this event for my two organizations, namely the Coventry Historical Society and the Western Rhode Island Civic Historical Society. I found your concept of holding this event in a privately-owned historic home to be a great touch of class. And just the way everything was handled -- so elegantly, etc. -- was so enriching. (I can only hope we can come near to duplicating such in Coventry!)

Also, I really enjoyed talking to your membership regarding ideas on fundraisers, increasing membership through the house plaques, and other historical society activities and events. It is so refreshing to find a group of people so enthusiastic and energetic about historic preservation and related activities! This was simply a Sunday afternoon well spent -- with the Johnston Historical Society! Thank you very much for initially making sure that I could obtain tickets (kudos to Kit Rhodes) and then making me feel right at home in the John Stevens Homestead (congrats to all)! If there is anything relating to historical society activities perhaps I can assist you in, please feel free to contact me. It was just so great!!!

Charles M. Vacca Jr.
Coventry Historical Society
Western RI Civic Historical Society

Thanks for the kind words Charles! It takes a lot of hands to pull off such an event, and we would be terribly remiss if we didn't give credit where it was due:

Ida Silva made a lot of the desserts, made scarves for the raffle, and helped with set-up. Mary Silva made cookies. Kit Rhodes made breads and helped with set-up. Dan Brown donated tuna fish and chicken. Vicky Hittinger donated a beautiful orchid for the auction. Kim Calcagno donated orange and strawberry preserves for the raffle. Bruno Ramieri donated a painting for the auction. Bel Peters donated a stained glass piece for the auction. Wishes Under Wraps donated a gift basket for the auction. Pauline Ramieri donated flowers and linens for the tea and helped with set-up. Virginia Brunelle helped with set-up. John Barattini donated the event tickets. Rolf Johnston donated

plants for the raffle. Ellen Lanpher donated pastry puffs. Louis McGowan and Bel Peters donated food items for the tea and helped with set-up. And of course Michael and Liz Burch lent us the use of their beautiful historic home. Thank you everyone!

JHS Picnic

All work and no play makes JHS a dull society, so we met on the grounds of our Putnam Pike property Sunday, June 10th, with no agenda other than eating some good food, socializing, and having a good time. About twenty-five JHS members, friends, and family enjoyed a repast of grilled burgers and hot dogs, potato salad, deviled eggs, pasta salads, etc., plus a whole table full of desserts! Folks chatted, played horseshoes and badminton, and just relaxed and enjoyed the fine weather.

Although we hadn't intended on raising money for the society at the event, when Rolf Johnson donated a bottle of wine we couldn't resist spontaneously raffling it off. We raised \$41 and member Robin Smith claimed the prize.

Among those attending were Evelyn Lewis and Jean Romano, who had been in town since the beginning of June cleaning out their cousin, Mabel Sprague's, house.

Clemence-Irons House

Historic New England held one of their twice-yearly open houses at Clemence-Irons House on May 5, and a few JHS members took the opportunity to explore one of Johnston's oldest documented residences. The Clemence-Irons House is also one of the few remaining examples of stone-ender construction in Rhode Island.

Our Properties

Bel Peters would like to thank all who showed up on the morning of April 21 to help tidy the yard at our Putnam Pike property. It only took about one-and-a-half hours -- less work was required because we did a similar cleaning in the fall. A little raking, a little weeding, and the place looked great!

We have estimates for the plumbing and heating work and interior restoration of Belnap School., Now we need to send the project out to three bidders. In addition, Louis is working with Roberta Randall of the Preservation Society regarding getting the school on the National Register of Historic Places.

Bel Peters reported at the May general meeting that we finally have clear title to the Brown Avenue property, which should allow us to go ahead and sell it to the Department of Environmental Management.

The museum and house continue to be open by appointment, and we always welcome visits by interested individuals or groups. Just shoot us an email at info@johnstonhistorical.org, or leave a message at (401) 231-3380 to set one up.

Our museum space is also available (on a limited basis) for meetings of small groups of adults at a reasonable price. If you know of a local group or organization that is looking for a meeting space, and might be interested in using our museum, please have them contact us.

Acquisitions

- Kit Rhodes donated some antique English Christmas cards that she received from her mother-in-law, Alice Firby.
- Mayor Joseph Polisena donated a copy of the Town of Johnston Home Rule Charter from the 1950s and a brass fire extinguisher.
- Dan Mernier donated copies of articles on Johnston history from *The Observer* and a nice wrought iron sign hanger that he found in the trash.
- Evelyn Lewis and Jean Romano, Mabel Sprague's cousins, donated several boxes of ephemera (photos, scrapbooks, tax records, etc.) that had been collected by Mabel over the last ninety years or so. (We'd like to extend our thanks, as well, to Bob Heywood, who put Evelyn and Jean in touch with us.)
- Audubon Rhode Island has promised us two large display cases from their gift shop, which is being downsized. Now we just need to go pick them up! Thanks go to Kim Calcagno for facilitating this donation.
- Louis picked up three ink blotter advertisements for a local concrete company on eBay.

During June, Robert Black from Arlington Heights, Illinois, sent us some items connected with his father, Alfred Robert Black, and Johnston Hose Company #3 (Manton Volunteers). One of the items, a newspaper photograph from 1925, shows the fire company's Seagrave pumper with the volunteer crew in full dress. Captain A. Robert Black is shown in the view. Another photo of the Seagrave truck from 1924 shows Captain Black seated alongside Arthur Grenier. A third photograph shows the crew posed in the village with an earlier, smaller fire truck. Additional items were also sent along, including the 1913 Programme of the First Grand Bazaar given by Johnston Hose Company #3 and the Ladies' Auxiliary, the Program of the First Annual Concert and Ball of the Johnston Hose Company #3 from 1925, Captain Black's World War I Registration Certificate and Classification Notice, and his 1905 program for the graduating exercises of the Manton Grammar School along with a pin with the initials of the school and the year date (M.G.S. 05).

Captain Black also had a brother, Irving S. Black, who was a Second Lieutenant for the fire company. He is mentioned in the 1925 concert program. Two sisters, Lillie Black Steinberg and Margaret (Rita) Black Carson were also active in the Hose Company #3. The father of these four people was Alfred R. Black, who built a house in town at 1 Springfield Avenue in the early part of the twentieth century. He and his wife, Clara, raised their family at that house.

From 1911 until 1929, Alfred Robert Black worked hard volunteering in the fire company for the residents of Manton. At the end of that time, he married and moved to North Providence. Johnston lost one of its best, but thanks to his son, we now have some items to preserve his memory. We thank Mr. Black for thinking of us and for sending these items back to their home town.

Our sincere thanks to all who have donated items for our collections. Keep it coming!

Cemeteries

The Townwide Historical Cemetery Cleanup took place on April 14, 2007. Ten or twelve cemeteries were cleaned this year by various groups ranging from girl scouts and boy scouts to kids from St. Rocco's Church and Johnston High School to employees of Rhode Island Resource Recovery and Home Depot. Led by Mayor Joseph Polisena and Johnston Parks and Recreation Director Daniel Mazzulla, Jr., this event is a wonderful tribute to our ancestors and our town's past. Thanks everyone!

It's never too late to adopt one of Johnston's one-hundred or so historical cemeteries. All you need to do is pick up trash, weed whack grass and undergrowth, and cut and clear brush at least once a year. Not only will you be helping to make your town more attractive, you'll also be helping to preserve our heritage. If you are interested, or know of someone who might be, please contact us at (401) 231-3380 or info@johnstonhistorical.org.

Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, all events take place at the Johnston Historical Society Museum Barn, 101 Putnam Pike, Johnston, and are free and open to the public.

August 4, 2007

PawSox Outing

5pm

McCoy Stadium, Division Street, Pawtucket. Here's another opportunity for JHS members (and their family and friends) to hang out and have some fun. We'll meet at the JHS parking lot on Putnam Pike before heading to Pawtucket to enjoy America's pastime (6:05pm game time), and maybe a hot dog or two. We're going to purchase tickets ahead of time so we can all sit in the same section, so please contact Joe Jamroz (232-5797), Louis McGowan (286-3012), or Dan Brown (742-0685) to RSVP.

September 26, 2007

General Meeting

7pm

Speaker TBA.

October 20, 2007

Silent Auction

Time TBA

Johnston Senior Center, 1385 Hartford Avenue, Johnston. Please join us for our first fundraiser for Johnston's 250th Anniversary celebration in 2009. If you have something you'd like to donate to the auction -- a product, service, or really cool object -- please contact Louis (286-3012) or Dan (742-0685). More details to follow.

October 24, 2007

General Meeting

7pm

Dan Brown will give a slide presentation on the intricately carved granite grave markers of Hope Cemetery in Barre, Vermont. (Please note that this meeting takes place a week earlier than usual, because of Halloween).

December 5, 2007

General Meeting

7pm

Speaker TBA. (Please note that this meeting takes place a week later than usual, because of Thanksgiving).

Johnston's 250th Birthday

At a May 23rd meeting the 250th committee decided that our first fundraising event would be an auction (see October 20, above). We received approval from Tony Zompa, director of the Johnston Senior Center, to use that venue for the event.

Christopher Martin suggested that we put together a town cookbook. Robin Smith is writing a press release to get recipes from people in the town. If you would like to contribute, please drop us a line at info@johnstonhistorical.org.

We're also considering a souvenir booklet. Louis and Christopher have already been out photographing old houses around the town in preparation. Again, if you have any old photographs showing buildings, events, people, etc., please contact us. We'd love to see them, and possibly make copies for the society collection.

What the Heck is That?

A different look at some Johnston Landmarks
by Christopher Martin

Following are some close-ups of places or objects located in the Town of Johnston. Can you identify what or where they are? (Answers will appear in the next issue).



1



2



3

Answers to last month's poser:

- 1) The Indian soapstone quarry, located off Hartford Avenue, between the parking lot for Colorlith and an off-ramp for Route 6.
- 2) Detail of the shepherd and lamb statue in front of Our Lady of Grace Church on George Waterman Road.
- 3) The front door handle of our own Elijah Angell House, 101 Putnam Pike.

Contribute To Our Newsletter!

We are always looking for articles for our newsletter. Naturally, we would like pieces that have to do with the town's history, but if you have an interest that ties in with history somehow, why not share it with us? Maybe you collect old snuffboxes or old railroad material. Maybe you have done some of your family history that others might be interested in. Maybe you would like to talk about the old days in Johnston. Wouldn't it be fun to share your knowledge! You do not have to be a great writer to put together an article. None of us are great literary figures. If you need help though, one of us would be glad to assist you.

We think that it will make for a much better newsletter if others contribute pieces that they have written. Remember, your reminiscences about the old days in Johnston will become valuable pieces of our town's history. But if you do not get them down on paper, they will be lost forever. We should make sure that future generations know what went on in times past.

Next newsletter deadline: November 28, 2007.

Our Executive Board

President: Louis McGowan
Vice-President: Dan Brown
Treasurer: Virginia Brunelle
Recording Secretary: Evelyn Beaumier
Corresponding Secretary: Christopher Martin
Trustee: John Barratini
Trustee: Gregory Burr
Trustee: Rolf Johnson
Trustee: Bel Peters

Our Executive Board meets at 7pm in the Museum building, 101 Putnam Pike, on the second to the last Wednesday of each month, September through June (except December). All are welcome to attend.

General Meetings are held at 7pm the last Wednesday of each month, September through June (no December meeting. We hold our Holiday Party that month). The meetings are held in the Museum Building.

Our phone number is: (401) 231-3380
Our website address is: www.JohnstonHistorical.org
Our email address is: Info@JohnstonHistorical.org

Annual Dues

Have you paid your 2007 dues yet? It is that time again. Your dues help us to operate. The price of a single membership is only \$15; a family membership is only \$20. Wotta bargain! So once more, please pay your 2007 dues. Send us a check today!

Name: _____
Address: _____

Renewal Single (\$15) _____
Family (\$20) _____

New Single (\$15) _____
Family (\$20) _____

Don't forget -- your donations to the Johnston Historical Society can be deducted from your taxes. We are registered with the Federal Government as a non-profit organization.

**JOHNSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
101 PUTNAM PIKE
JOHNSTON, RHODE ISLAND 02919**