

Johnston Historical Society

Historical Notes

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The Reverend Daniel A. Sweet House

by Steve Merolla

Many Society members driving to our headquarters on Putnam Avenue have no doubt noticed a handsome first quarter nineteenth century house located at just a stone's throw away from where we meet. This house, sitting at 89 Putnam, stands out in that it is in an unpainted condition; it is the Reverend Daniel A. Sweet house. Its design is of the basic center chimney, five-bay style, quite similar to our own Elijah Angell house, and in fact the two properties share a history.



89 Putnam Pike, the Daniel Sweet House. Photo by Christopher Martin.

In 1816, Elijah Angell acquired a twenty-five-acre parcel of land along Putnam Pike. Around the year 1825, he built the house that is now headquarters of the Johnston Historical Society. On April 9, 1828, Elijah Angell sold 16 1/2 acres of this property to his brother-in-law Daniel A. Sweet for \$300 (J 7/389). Daniel A. Sweet was born around 1805, the son of Nathaniel and Persis Sweet. He married Mary A. Tallman, daughter of John and Penelope Tallman of Fall River, Massachusetts. She was the sister of Lydia H. Angell, the wife of Elijah Angell. It is not known when Daniel and Mary wed, but their first child was born in August 1827, so the marriage could have occurred at that time. Daniel's occupation was that of a stonemason, and this is confirmed by both the 1850 Federal Census and his death record. This seems to have been a very common line of work in the village of Graniteville. Mr. Sweet also held the title of Reverend of the Baptist Church. The Federal Census of 1860 lists his occupation as "Clergyman F.W.B.," the initials standing for "free

will baptist." A short biography of Reverend Sweet can be found in the *Free Baptist Cyclopedia* (1889), on page 633. In part, the passage alluding to him reads "...He was converted about 1840, and two years later began to preach. He was ordained by the Six Principal Baptists about 1845, but holding views on open communion differing from them, he with his church in 1856 united with the free baptist Q.M." It is clear that Reverend Sweet was an important member of the Church, for two deeds refer to him as "Trustee of the First Baptist Church in Johnston. One of the deeds (J 15/61) is quite important, for in it Serril E. Sweet donated the parcel of land on which the former Graniteville Baptist Church now stands, to Daniel A. Sweet, as trustee of the Church. The date was January 25, 1859, and it is likely the building was built within a year or so afterwards.

The short note on Reverend Sweet in the *Free Baptist Cyclopedia* states that he died on June 28, 1861, after a protracted illness. His death record states that he died of consumption, which we know today as tuberculosis. Almost certainly as a result of the onset of that illness, Reverend Sweet executed an Indenture of Lease between himself and his wife on May 18, 1861, a little more than a month before his death (Lease Book 1/182). Through this document, he made provision for his wife's maintenance after his passing. Mary Sweet was to be given possession of her husband's dwelling house along with the other outbuildings on the property. This is the house at 89 Putnam Avenue. Mrs. Sweet was also given the rents and benefits of two other dwelling houses and the blacksmith shop, all of them to the rear of the main dwelling house. The 1870 Beers & Co. map of Johnston does in fact record three dwelling houses as being part of the "D. Sweet Est." On May 15, 1862, the children of Daniel A. Sweet, they being Harriet A. Jenckes, Daniel Sweet Jr., Mary A. Sweet, Lydia F. Mathewson, and Eliza A. Jenckes confirmed the above agreement after the death of their father through a further entry in the Lease book records, volume 1, page 198. It is interesting to note that in these documents reference is made to the village of "Graniteville" and the "Powder Mill Turnpike," as well as to the fact that the western boundary of the property bordered on land of Prince Collins, who once inhabited our headquarters house at 101 Putnam Avenue.

A look at the 1870 census tells an interesting story. It indicates that after Reverend Sweet's death, his wife Mary continued to live in the main dwelling at 89 Putnam Avenue, but also that daughter Eliza A. Jenckes, her husband George, and their children also lived in the house. Five years later the 1875 Census notes that another daughter, Mary A. Burrows, and her husband George (listed as a cigar dealer) were also living there. Though

there were in effect three families living in the house the census indicates that there were only actually six people residing in the dwelling.

On January 16, 1886, widow Mary A. Sweet died at 80 years of age. As a result, her property, including the homestead dwelling at 89 Putnam Avenue was to be divided amongst her heirs. Oddly enough, an actual written document relating to the division of the estate has not been discovered, but a plat map exists that depicts the division and is entitled "Plat of the Division of the Homestead Estate of Daniel A. Sweet, deceased, at Graniteville, Johnston, R.I., May 29 A.D. 1886." Through a series of deeds the heirs quit-claimed to each other the shares they were assigned. At this point, Daniel A. Sweet Jr. had died in 1864, and Harriet A. Jenckes in 1866. Deed J 43/336 is most important, for in it remaining heirs Lydia A. Mathewson and her sister Eliza A. Jenckes quit-claimed Lot #2 of the Plat to their sister Mary A. Burrows, and this is the lot containing our subject house. The 1892 Hopkins Co. map confirms that Mary Burrows was now owner of the homestead and that her sisters Lydia and Eliza (both now widowed) were living in two other houses at the back of the estate.

Mary A. Burrows was married to George W. Burrows of Johnston. According to town death records, Mr. Burrows committed suicide on June 13, 1886, at 48 years of age, and only two weeks after his wife gained title to the house. Some twenty years later, his wife Mary also met a tragic end, passing away on May 23, 1906, the result of shock after receiving serious burns. Her nephew Cassius S. Mathewson (son of Lydia Mathewson) purchased the house on January 10, 1907 (J new 16/369). He died January 28, 1909, leaving no Will; having no children, his wife Florine became sole heir, but within a week of her husband's death she transferred ownership of the house at 89 Putnam Avenue to her mother-in-law, Lydia Mathewson (J new 15/48). Mrs. Mathewson died on October 1, 1910; having no surviving children, she left the bulk of her estate to her niece Josephine Sweet (wife of Byron Sweet) and nephew Daniel S. Jenckes, the children of her sister Eliza Jenckes. Daughter-in-law Florine Mathewson ended up with the houses at 6 and 10 Mathewson Street. On February 9, 1918, Josephine Sweet, along with two heirs of her now deceased brother, sold the subject house to a third heir, Eliza M. Jencks (J new 24/461). Miss Jenckes in turn finally sold the homestead out of the family by two deeds, the one occurring on June 25, 1921 (J 32/329) transferring the house itself.

Ascertaining the date that the house was built is somewhat difficult because tax records do not seem to conform to other, usual indicators. Reverend Sweet purchased land for his house from brother-in-law Elijah Angell in April of 1828; his first child was also born that year. It would seem logical that he also began the building of his house in that same year, however, tax records do not bear that scenario out. In the first years after he purchased the property, his various tax bills were quite minimal as compared to his neighbors, indicating that there was no house yet present to be taxed. Daniel Sweet's town tax rate was just \$1.00 in 1835, but for the year 1836 rose dramatically to \$10.00, a ten-fold increase. A set of highway tax rates survives for the years 1835 and 1837, and in these Reverend Sweet's tax bill shoots up from .19 cents to \$1.73, again nearly a ten-fold increase. It

should be noted that his tax bills were compared to his neighbors and it confirms that while their rates either stayed level or increased slightly during these years, his was the only one in the area to increase so dramatically. This evidence points to a build date of the house at 89 Putnam Avenue as being around 1836.

But where did Daniel A. Sweet live prior to building his own house? The 1830 Federal Census places Sweet next to Elijah Angell. At first glance this would indicate they lived in adjacent houses. However, it is known that the Angell house may have been built as a two-family dwelling, as evidenced that there was a bake oven also on the second floor. Thus it is quite possible that Mr. Sweet and his family lived on the second floor of his brother-in-law's house for a number of years; it certainly would have made it easier that the two people involved in the day-to-day running of the households were sisters.

A quite interesting point comes from page 807 of Richard Bayles' *History of Providence County*, written in the early 1890s. Bayles states that "...Elisha Angell and Daniel Sweet built the house occupied by Edwin H. Farnum..." Our headquarters was in fact known for many years as the Farnum-Angell house. It is possible that Daniel A. Sweet made an arrangement whereby he helped his brother-in-law Elijah Angell build his house in exchange for the privilege of living on the second floor until his own house was built.

The Quarries on Pine Hill

By Louis McGowan

Quarrying granite was an on-going business on Pine Hill in the Graniteville section of Johnston. On the hill, there were fairly good-sized masses of granite. Over the years, pits were created from all the rock that was removed in bulk. In addition, surface quarrying took place (that is, stone was removed from small outcroppings of the granite). Not a lot is known about the industry in the town, but rock was being removed from a Pine Hill quarry at least from the early nineteenth century. Quarrying on the hill ran well into the twentieth century, although it is not known if the quarries ran continuously.

It is documented that the columns at both ends of the famous Arcade in Providence were sculpted at the quarry on Bare Rock Ledge (also referred to as "Bear Rock Ledge") on Pine Hill. Providence architects Russell Warren and James Bucklin created plans in 1826 for the Arcade, an enclosed shopping mall to be erected in Downtown Providence. For the design, they chose the fashionable Greek Revival style. The plans included two grand entrances which resembled temple fronts, one on Westminster Street and one on Weybosset Street.¹ The twelve large columns, (a thirteenth was broken in transport; part of the column marks a grave in the North Burial Ground in Providence), said to be the biggest in the country at the time, were hauled from Johnston to Providence by twelve pairs of oxen (although sources differ on the number of teams -- anywhere from eight to eighteen). One can only imagine the difficulty of hauling these columns from atop Pine Hill down dirt roads for the eight-mile trip to Downtown Providence.

Joseph Olney², owner of the quarry, was the Johnston man who contracted for the project with Cyrus Butler of Providence, the person who conceived the idea of the Arcade. The columns were twenty-two feet in length and each had a capital and a pedestal, bringing the total length of each to twenty-four feet³. The crew of workers at the quarry had to remove twelve blocks of granite from the ledge, drilling holes along seams, driving iron wedges into the holes until fissures opened and the stone faces split from the ledge. The rough blocks then had to be shaped on-site into smooth shafts which tapered from three feet wide at the bottom to thirty inches at the top. The finished columns weighed approximately twelve tons each⁴. Olney used custom-built wagons to carry the columns and did the moving in the winter to avoid getting bogged down in mud. Benjamin, the son of Deacon James Olney, was in charge of driving the team of twenty-four oxen. Joseph plotted out a route which would avoid bridges over the Woonasquatucket River. The columns were moved down Greenville Avenue to Manton, then down Killingly Street to Hartford Avenue and on into Olneyville Square. The last leg was moving down Westminster Street onto Weybosset Street, after crossing the one bridge they had to navigate, where Hartford Avenue crosses the river.

A 1919 Providence newspaper article⁵ stated that no other building in Providence ever used stone columns because of the huge expense of producing the Arcade columns. Other builders used columns made of wood.

A later owner of at least one of the quarries on the hill was Emor J. Angell, whose family ran a stone-cutting plant on the hill. In 1843, Emor became apprenticed for a year with his half-brother, Elijah Angell (the same Elijah our house is named after), to learn the craft of stone-cutting. It seems that Elijah was running the family quarry at that time. After a year with his brother, Emor worked for various other quarrymen, including Nathaniel Sweet and Daniel Sweet. It is assumed that their quarries were in Johnston, but they may have been in nearby Smithfield. Quarrying was a seasonal occupation then, and Emor cut timber in the off months. After working for Daniel Sweet for seven years, Emor bought him out and ran the business from 1854 to 1875. He was quite successful and usually employed twenty hands or more. He supplied many cities with stone, including New York and Baltimore. Emor began operations at Bare Rock Ledge on Pine Hill in 1861. As the business could now be carried on year-round, in the winter of 1867-'68, over 6000 feet of curbstone was taken from this ledge alone⁶.

There were other men in the quarrying and stone-cutting business on the hill. William Carey later took over Emor Angell's quarry⁷. Hubert Angell was one of the members of the latter's family that ran their stone-cutting operation. The Luther family also owned a Pine Hill quarry in the mid to late nineteenth century.

Also working in the Graniteville quarries was Albert A. Lippitt, who quarried, cut, and sold the rock from here for over sixty years, until around 1930. His father, Benomi Lippitt, and his grandfather, Benjamin Lippitt, quarried and sold Graniteville rock before him. It is said that they were working the quarries here long before the Arcade columns were wrestled from the ground. Stone from the Lippitt quarry formed part of the foundations of numerous buildings in Providence, including the

Grosvenor building, the Butler Exchange, and the Industrial Trust building. They also supplied granite curbing to Cranston, Central Falls, and Pawtucket. Albert A. Lippitt employed forty to fifty men at his quarries, often working four or five ledges at the same time. He ran quarries in Johnston, Smithfield, North Smithfield, and Providence⁸.

If you walk around Pine Hill today, you can still see evidence of the quarrying industry. In many places one can find granite outcroppings which have been worked for the precious rock. In and around shallow depressions on the hill, there are pieces of discarded rock with rows of drilled holes that tell us that the stone workers were here many years ago. One large quarry is still in place near the intersection of Route 44 and Route 295. Also on the hill, off Pine Hill Avenue, is a smaller, water-filled pit. Lastly, if you look around in Graniteville, you can see the Pine Hill granite on the older properties, where it was used at foundation rock, fence posts, and steps. The quarries may have closed, but their output is readily evident.

Footnotes:

1. *The Providence Journal*, October 13, 2008.
2. It is stated in some early sources that James Olney was the one in charge of this operation. Deacon James Olney was, in fact, a distant cousin of Joseph and had some involvement in the project, but Joseph seems to have been the man in charge.
3. *Old Rhode Island*, James J. Scanlan; Vol. 2, Issue 6; 1992.
4. *The Providence Journal*, October 13, 2008.
5. *The Sunday Tribune*, August 3, 1919.
6. *History of Providence County, Rhode Island*, Bayles (editor); W. W. Preston & Co., New York, 1891.
7. "Old Times in Graniteville; A Boy's Story of life in the '90s" by Ralph N. Sweet; a small, privately published memoir; published around 1936.
8. *The Providence Journal*; Nov. 2, 1930.

The Browns of Belfield Drive

By Louis McGowan

Much of the following article was written using information provided to me by Susie Frances Brown in 1998 (some information was also taken from Clarence I. Brown's 1903 study of the Johnston Browns). Susie never married and lived her whole life on Belfield Drive (the former Snake Den Road), although in a number of different houses. She passed away at age 97 in October of 2011.

George Washington Brown was the grandfather of Susie Brown of Belfield Drive. He was the son of John Olney Waterman Brown and Abby Olney Curtis and a ninth generation descendent of Chad Brown, the first member of the Brown family to live in Providence. George was a farmer by trade, but had received a good education at the Scituate Institute of Education. He spent much of his life working the land on Snake Den Road. He married twice, first to Julia Etta Randall in 1855 and later to Martha Brown, who was the daughter of Isaac Brown and Mary Cady. George and his first wife, Julia, had seven children: Lydia Frances, Franklin, William M.S., Warren S., Louisa Amelia, Evelyn Etta May, and David. There appear to have been two children by the second marriage. Susie told me that after marrying Julia, they moved to the Steere Farm (labeled "Mrs. F. Steere" on the 1870 Beers map of Johnston; the house burned in the 1920s) on Snake Den Road and rented the house there (which

was on the site of a modern junkyard). The house was below a large brook that ran under a bridge off a high hill (later cut down) and ran southward, emptying into the Pocasset River near Pocasset Falls (an attractive site just north of Hartford Avenue that was obliterated when Route 295 was put in). Huge gullies were on both sides of the hill, which was known as Gulf Hill.



The Steere House on Snake Den Road (now Belfield Drive) is shown here about 1909. The house, which burned in the 1920s, was situated on the north side of the road, about halfway in from Hartford Avenue. George Washington Brown is second from the right, and the other people are his family from two marriages. *Photograph courtesy of Susie Brown.*

George W. Brown passed away in 1910. One of his children with Julia, William Manchester Smith Brown, was born on August 4, 1878, at the old Kimball farmhouse on Snake Hill Road. William was a carpenter by occupation, but had learned to set type while working at a newspaper called the *Gazette* in Scituate, Rhode Island. At an early age he moved to Prudence Island, where he was a boss farmer. He met his future wife, Mary Katherine Belfield, when she was vacationing with a friend on the island. They later married and moved to Providence. After living for a time in Harmony after that, they purchased a small house on a piece of land on Snake Den Road. Later, William bought back the Kimball Farm, where he was born (this would have been the farm that included the house labeled "C. Brown Est." on the 1870 map. C. Brown was probably his grandfather, Cyrus Brown). William then repaired the house and rented it. His family (which included daughters Ethel Brown, Susie Brown, and Lillian Carpenter) needed the fields at the Kimball House as they had cows and other market animals. Before he died, William built a larger house, about forty feet long, with a large front room, big enough for a square dance. Susie said that once in a while, dances were held there. In William's later years, he was kept busy with a table garden.



William W. Brown (left) and Susie Brown (right). *Photographs courtesy of Susie Brown.*

See the uncropped photos on page 101 of *Images of America: Johnston II*.

After William died, Mrs. Brown and her daughters Ethel and Susie sold the house.

Snake Den Road became Belfield Drive when a contest was held to name the street after the oldest resident living there (it is not clear who organized the contest, although Susie told me that she and a person named McGuire had a hand in it). Susie's mother, Mary Katherine (Belfield) Brown was found to be the oldest resident and the street was re-named after her maiden name. It remains Belfield Drive to this day. Susie told me that: "Everybody far & near was happy over the more pleasant name of (the) Road"!

The State's Green Acre program condemned their old, small farm and tore two houses down. The land was set aside as part of Snake Den Park.

Susie, when I met her, lived in a small, twentieth century cottage on the south side of Belfield Drive. I enjoyed visiting her and learning little tidbits about days gone by.

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### Memories of Thornton

Compiled by Louis McGowan.

*The information in this article is taken from an e-mail written to us by Edmund N. Santurri on August 25, 2012.*

Edmund N. Santurri lived on Maple Avenue in Thornton in the fifties and early sixties before moving to Providence in 1964. He has lived in Minnesota for over thirty years. At the time of his e-mail to us, he mentioned Billy Adams who lived on Morgan Avenue, was a classmate of Edmund's in the first grade, and died after being hit by a car in front of his house.

Edmund recalled the Thornton Spa on the Ferri Block which was located on Atwood Avenue at the corner of Plainfield Street. The spa was a variety store which sold groceries and had a soda fountain. The store was run by Edmund's grand-uncle Emil Fuoco, who was married to Mary Ferri. Also working in the store were Emil's siblings: his older sister and Edmund's grandmother Filomena "Filly" (Fuoco) Santurri; Emil's older brother Joe Fuoco, and his younger brother Louie Fuoco. Edmund himself worked in the spa in the early sixties. One of his memories is of Jimmy Stone, basketball great at Providence College, coming in for something in the spa occasionally and then running across the street to a building where it was rumored that people played cards. He remembers teenagers hanging out at the corner there, who would pop in for a "short Coke" or a "dime Coke." The spa also served coffee cabinets, sandwiches, and the like.

Elsewhere on the Ferri Block was a barber shop that was owned by a guy everyone called "Chunkie." Edmund thought that it was named Anthony's Barber Shop and was next to the pool hall. Across Plainfield Street from the spa (on the Cranston side) was "China" Salzillo's gas station.

Across Atwood Avenue from the gas station was a nightclub (also in Cranston) called the Village Rendezvous and across Plainfield Street from the club (now back on the Johnston side)

was Ferri's Tavern, run by "Boozie" Ferri, brother of Butch and Buffy of B and B nightclub fame (the BnB -- later the B&B -- was located north of Thornton on Atwood Avenue). The fourth Ferri brother was Nicky, who taught in Johnston schools for many years.

Edmund's parents were Edmund and Norma Santurri. His mom is still alive and lives in Greenville. His father, Edmund, was a lawyer in the town for many years, eventually becoming Johnston Probate Judge. He passed away a few years ago. His father's father was Cliff Santurri, who lived with Filly on John Street at the edge of Frog City. At the corner of John Street and Plainfield Street was Izzo's Market.

Edmund, with his brothers, Robert and Rick, and his sisters, Paula and Norma, lived on Maple Avenue in the Pocasset Worsted Mill village and hung around with Billy Iannotti (his father's dance studio was on School Street), George Healy, and Frank Leone (his father owned Leone's Auto Body on Plainfield Street). The Santurri family shopped mainly at Pezza's Market, got their haircuts at Fico's Barber shop, and got their nails at Diprete's Hardware store. The children all played on Pocasset field, mainly on the basketball court that went up in the early 1960s.

Edmund was taught by Ralph Mendozzi (brother of Raymond Mendozzi, who ran Little Rhody Hardware) in 1960. Ralph also taught Edmund's father in the late 1930s. Ralph served as Assistant Principal of Thornton School later in his career. Nicky Ferri also taught Edmund and his father.

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### **Visit To St. Peter's and St. Andrew's Church (LHM)**

Report by Louis McGowan

During December, Bel and I attended a bazaar at St. Peter's and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church on Pomona Avenue in Providence. It is a lovely little church, and we had a fun time talking to two of its oldest parishioners, aged 93 and 96. The parish was formed in 1972 by joining the congregations of St. Andrew's and St. Peter's, after the devastating fire at St. Peter's Church on Killingly Street in the Manton section of Johnston in 1971. One of the parishioners gave me a tour of the church interior, which was exciting for me because there is a St. Peter's Chapel on the left side of the church interior with many pieces that were rescued from the church at the time of the fire. Objects that I saw included: the altar, stained-glass windows, two tiered tables with candles on which offerings were made and other objects. There is also a framed "Our Roll of Honour" with names of Johnston parishioners who were serving in WWI. It was nice to see that these wonderful artifacts from the nineteenth century church in Johnston are being preserved.

Outside the church are two headstones that once marked burials on the grounds of the original St. Peter's Church. One stone is for Eliza M. Brown, daughter of Isaac and Mary Brown, who died Januray 8, 1839. The other stone is for Susie Brown, widow of Hon. Nathan Brown and daughter of Job Smith. She died October 9, 1853. Susie's family once owned much land in the area, including the land that the church stood on.

## **Society Doings**

### **JHS Annual Christmas Party**

We held our annual Christmas Party on our museum property on Friday, December 5, 2014. Thirty members came by to share holiday cheer. It was a wonderful evening with plenty of great socializing. The food was fantastic with partiers bringing desserts or appetizers. Thanks to all who came, brought food and helped set up and clean up post party. A special thanks to Alice Lombardi, Bel McGowan and Liz Burch who decorated the inside of both buildings and to Joe Jamroz and Elise Carlson for all their wonderful help. Thanks also to Phil Lemoi for hanging outside decorations at our three buildings.

### **Our Properties**

Warren Lanpher replaced the siding on the east side of the Elijah Angell House during the month of March. Next month the whole house will be professionally painted. Money for both projects comes from a Champlin Foundations grant.

### **Museum**

Louis McGowan and Elise Carlson continue to work on our museum exhibits, arranging objects by topic and adding descriptive labels. Two big wall displays are in the works -- a timeline of important Johnston events, and a display of notable Johnstonsians. Be sure to stop by and see the progress.

Our museum barn is open Monday nights (except holidays), 6:30-8:30pm; and on the third Saturday of each month, 9-11am, for those who would like to visit the museum or examine the society's collection of printed materials. Also, the Belknap School, corner of Atwood and Greenville Avenues, is open 2-4pm the first Saturday of each month, April to October. Both the museum and Elijah Angell House continue to be open by appointment -- we always welcome visits by interested individuals or groups. Just shoot us an email at [history@jhs.necoxmail.com](mailto:history@jhs.necoxmail.com), 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.

### **Grant Activity**

As mentioned above, a generous grant received from the Champlin Foundations is covering the cost of re-clapboarding the east side of Elijah Angell House, and of painting the whole house.

### **Cemetery Committee Report**

by Pasco Macari

The winter season got off to a good start, but it apart real fast. Mother Nature really did a job on us as we approached the end of 2014.

As noted in the last newsletter, the committee began working in the double yard, #76 and #77, off Greenville Avenue. We needed three weeks to clean #77, the larger of the two. James Arnold's inventory of 1891 notes fifteen burials, no rude stones. There were additional burials after he visited. The next newsletter will record those burials.

We epoxied five marbles, including the top left of Celinda E. Smith's head stone. We made three bases because the original brown stones were unstable, and mortared a total of five head stones into bases. We mortared a total of eight.

A side project we will be working on is in its planning stage at this time. It has to do with visiting each burial yard to record its location. More on that next issue.

### Speakers

Our November speaker (meeting held on December 5, 2014) was Walter Thierfelder, a Revolutionary War re-enactor. He gave a great presentation on the daily life of a Revolutionary War soldier and what they would have used in the way of clothes, weapons, various implements and food. It was a delightful show and tell time.

Our January meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Our February speaker was Dr. Edward Iannuccilli, who presented a slide show about growing up Italian in Rhode Island. In the course of his presentation, he touched a little on Italian history and immigration to our state. It was a great talk and was well-received by our members. Unfortunately, attendance was off because of the wintry conditions.

We had a special Sunday presentation on March 22 from Pat Perry of Sneak Peek Productions. She challenged us with a quiz about the origins of popular phrases, and it wasn't easy. It was made more so because some false origin stories have been floating around for years and many of us believed them. Still, by the end everyone had gotten at least one question right. As usual, Pat gave a wonderful show. There was a lot of laughter.

Our March speaker was Gloria Merchant, author of *Pirates of Colonial Newport*. She told us stories of Thomas Tew, Thomas Paine, Captain Kidd, and the twenty-six pirates who were hung at Gravelly Point in 1723.

### Acquisitions

- In November, Glenn Carlson donated a nice used monitor for our computer system.
- In November, Dennis Parillo donated a vintage wooden folding chair that belonged to Clarissa Atwood, grandmother of Mabel Atwood Sprague.
- In December, Louis McGowan donated a 1 pint, 12-ounce. Bare Rock Spring Soda Company bottle. The business was located on Route 44 in Graniteville.
- In December, Bel McGowan donated a pewter pitcher and another pewter vessel to our house museum.
- In January, Louis McGowan purchased for our group a large, framed membership certificate from the Manchester Unity Greystone Lodge of Oddfellows. The lodge was in Greystone, but many Graniteville residents belonged to the fraternal organization.
- In January, Louis purchased on-line a grocery store ledger from the early 1830s for a store on Atwood Avenue run by William Harris.
- In January, Christopher Martin donated some plastic frames to be used for museum case exhibits.

Many donated objects may be seen in the Acquisitions photo album on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical](http://www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical)). As always, our sincere thanks to all who have donated items for our collections. Keep it coming!

### Thanks to JHS Officers

During January, Dan Brown's contacts with the Greystone Social Club enabled us to become the custodians of a fine collection of trophies and photographs dating to the early twentieth century. The trophies relate to the cricket team, Benn's Mohairs, sponsored by the Greystone Mill, the Social Club billiards team, and to the company-sponsored brass band. A good number of Graniteville residents worked in the Benn mill. We also received large framed prints of King George V of England and President Woodrow Wilson of the USA. Dan donated the glass for the Wilson print.

Big thanks go out to Joe Jamroz for all his help with snow removal on our property this winter. Joe cleared paths with the snow blower for all the storms (and there were a lot of them) that we had this year. For each storm he also cleared the stairs for our tenant.

Elise Carlson has been helping greatly with our upcoming exhibit on notable Johnstonians. She has been cleaning up and re-imaging photographs of our notable citizens that will be used in the exhibit.

Christopher Martin has been posting images from our photograph collection on a couple of different Facebook pages, bringing us much-appreciated publicity.

### Greystone Social Club Donation

As mentioned above, in January 2015, the Board members of the Greystone Social Club donated a number of items to our museum. We thank them for entrusting us with these wonderful old historical items. The trophies will be displayed in one of our cases.

### Wish List

Following are a number of items we could make good use of:

- Display mannequins
- Any Johnston-related memorabilia

### Historical Teasers -- Do You Know Your Town's History?

*Answers to last issue's teasers:*

- 1) The second mill village in our town that experienced a devastating flood was Hughesdale in 1868. The flood destroyed three mill dams on Dry Brook as well as demolishing mills at each of the sites.
- 2) Johnston's first post office opened in the small village of Simmonsville in 1847 and ran until 1850. Its first postmaster was Walter S. Brownell.
- 3) The Providence and Springfield Railroad opened for business in 1871, providing Johnston with its first rail service. It later became part of the New York, New Haven and Hartford

Railroad. Passenger service ended on the line in the 1930s and freight service ended in 1962.

*New Historical Teaser Questions:*

- 1) The village of Manton was known by two other names before it acquired its present title. What were the other names?
- 2) Plainfield Pike was at one time a chartered turnpike. What was its official name back then?
- 3) Whose gravel pit/dump in Johnston was purchased by the state in 1980 to be used as the state's landfill?

**Upcoming Events**

**April 12, 2015**

Special Speaker Presentation: What We Did on Our China Vacation  
2pm  
Members Tim Kee and Anthony Ursillo will give a slideshow of their February 2014 trip to China. Venture out, relax with a cup of coffee and a nibble, and enjoy some China sights and history. (Rescheduled from January).

**April 29, 2015**

General Meeting  
7pm  
Our speaker will be former CCRI professor and Graniteville resident Ralph Scorpio, who will talk about the Vietnam War and its aftermath.

**May 2, 2015**

Tag Sale, Open House, and Scanning Event!  
9am-12pm  
Three great events in one! Come for the tag sale, where you can dig through and purchase some quality pre-owned merchandise (proceeds benefit the Johnston Historical Society). Or come for the open house and tour the 1825 Elijah Angell House, as well as our museum barn. Lastly, come for our first ever scanning event! Do you have old (or new) photographs of Johnston? Photos associated with town businesses, schools, churches, people, or events? We'd love to see them! Bring your old photo albums, shoe boxes of snapshots, even slides or 35mm negatives. With your permission we'll digitally scan them for our collections and, if you so wish, provide you with electronic copies. Help us to collect and preserve the history of our town for future generations.

**May 27, 2015**

General Meeting  
7pm  
Our speaker will be Jim Ignasher, Vice President of the Historical Society of Smithfield, who will tell lost tales of Rhode Island and New England. Mr. Ignasher is the author of *Forgotten Tales of Rhode Island*, *Remembering Smithfield: Sketches of Apple Valley*, and *Rhode Island Disasters: Tales of Tragedy by Air, Sea and Rail*.

**June 24, 2015**

General Meeting  
7pm  
Our speaker will be Fred Mikkelsen, who will speak on his days as Conimicut Lighthouse keeper. (Rescheduled from January).

**July and August 2015**

Summer hiatus -- no general meetings in these months.

**September 30, 2015**

General Meeting  
7pm  
David Norton Stone, author of the Quahog Trilogy (*Clamcake Summer*, *Stuffie Summer*, and *Chowder Summer*) will discuss clam shack history and his humorous quest to find the best clamcakes, stuffies, and chowder in the state.

**December 2, 2015**

General Meeting  
7pm  
Filmmaker Marian Gagnon will screen, *America's Forgotten Heroine*, her documentary about Newport lighthouse keeper Ida Lewis.

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.

**Note:** Our museum barn is open Monday nights (except holidays), 6:30-8:30pm; and Fridays, 2-5pm, for those who would like to visit the museum or examine the society's collection of printed materials. Just in case, call ahead to confirm we're here. Also, the Belknap School, corner of Atwood and Greenville Avenues, is open 9-11am the first Saturday of each month, May to October.

Do you have a suggestion for a future speaker? Or do you yourself have a topic you'd like to present at one of our meetings? Please drop us a line at [history@jhs.necoxmail.com](mailto:history@jhs.necoxmail.com) or leave a message at (401) 231-3380.

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|  Find us on Facebook | As of this month our Facebook page has 383 followers! Have you 'liked' us yet? To find us type this address into your computer browser: |
| <a href="http://www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical">www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical</a>          |                                                                                                                                         |

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| <b>Contribute To Our Newsletter!</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Next newsletter deadline: July 15, 2015.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

**Our Executive Board**

President: Louis McGowan  
Vice-President: Dan Brown  
Treasurer: Joe Jamroz  
Recording Secretary: Elise Carlson  
Corresponding Secretary: Christopher Martin  
Trustees: Belmira McGowan, Rolf Johnson, Doug Stephens and Anthony Ursillo.

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 Barn.

Phone: (401) 231-3380  
Website: www.JohnstonHistorical.org  
Email: History@JHS.necoxmail.com  
Facebook: www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical

**Annual Dues**

Have you paid your 2015 dues yet? Your dues help us to operate. The price of a single membership is only \$20; a family membership is only \$30. Wotta bargain! So once more, please pay your 2015 dues. Send us a check today!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal    Single (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_  
              Family (\$30) \_\_\_\_\_

New         Single (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_  
              Family (\$30) \_\_\_\_\_

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**