

Johnston Historical Society

Historical Notes

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www.JohnstonHistorical.org

History of the Johnston Historical Society

by Louis McGowan

To talk about the history of the Johnston Historical Society, we have to begin with the history of its mother group, the Johnston Bicentennial Committee, which gave birth to the society. The Rhode Island Bicentennial Committee, with its RI76 program, was given \$40,000 by the State Legislature to set up bicentennial celebrations all over the state. \$1000 was given to each of the state's thirty-nine cities and towns as long as they formed a bicentennial committee and used the funds for bicentennial events. At least thirty-five cities and towns joined, Johnston being one of them. Johnston's organizational meeting was held on August 28, 1973. Thomas Pagliarini and Robert K. Pirraglia were co-chairmen of the committee. Their program for 1973-'76 included a diverse array of events. Among them were: a lecture series, a colonial quarterly journal, a grammar school essay contest, a high school debate series, library historical displays, a colonial arts festival, a heritage fashion show, and a Bicentennial Football Game.



Louis McGowan and Bel McGowan (nee Peters) at a Christmas Open House event in 2008. Photo by Christopher Martin.

About the same time that these events were happening, there was a growing awareness that the Farnum/Angell House (later called the Elijah Angell House) was in real danger of being torn down. There was serious talk of the house demolished to make way for a new Graniteville Fire House. Blanche A. Farnum, wife of Edwin H. Farnum and the last owner/occupant of the house, died

on February 27, 1965. The property passed to her cousin Edith Childs through probate. Some diligent town residents fought to preserve the house. They were successful, and Ms. Childs sold the property to the Town of Johnston on July 26, 1968. A portion of the grounds, probably the site of the famous rose gardens planted on the house property, was used for the new fire station that was built in 1968.

By December 1973, the Farnum House Restoration Committee (aka Farnum House Committee) was a recognized sub-group of the Johnston Bicentennial Committee. By 1974, nine couples and three individuals had joined the house committee. It was planned that the house would become a historical museum and the home of the Johnston Historical Society. Louis Perrotta, Sr. and Mrs. Ralph aRusso were co-chairpersons of the Farnum House Committee. Plans were conceived for a brilliant floral garden much the same as the one at the Governor's Mansion in colonial Williamsburg. The Farnum House restoration was set to start on April 14, 1975. Some of the restoration plans came to be both inside and outside of the house. One of the things they did was to take out the bow window that had been installed sometime earlier in the twentieth century on the first floor and replace it with reproduction windows of the type that were in place in the rest of the house.

Many Bicentennial events were planned and held during this period, including a Colonial Ball and a Las Vegas Nite. Large Johnston Bicentennial Parades were held in 1975 and 1976. The crowd for the 1975 parade was estimated to be 12,000 people.

On June 2, 1975 a lease was signed between the Town of Johnston and the Johnston Bicentennial Committee for the Farnum House. The term for the lease was for 100 years, and the rent was to be three peppercorns! Some interior restoration went on during the following nine years. The proposed museum did not happen during that period, however. For some time, a hair-dressing school operated in the house.

In the Spring of 1976, the Johnston Historical Society came into being. It was formed by John Nanni in a last ditch effort to save the Sarah Dyer Barnes House on Greenville Avenue. The charter members were: John and Carol Nanni, Jean Cioci, Gina Perrotta, Jean Vacca, Jack Shaw, and Angie Russo. John Nanni was the first president of the new society. The house could not be saved, but the society has lasted!

About 1977, the Rhode Island Chapter of Painters and Decorators of America painted the Farnum House for free (both

labor and paint). Our members prepared (scraping, etc.) the house for painting.

The society sponsored annual Thanksgiving Dinners during this time period, which were held at the Clemence/Irons House in Novembers at least from 1977 through 1984. They were wonderful events with traditional foods and everyone dressed in costume.



Rolf Johnson, Joe Jamroz, and Danny Brown at the McGowan-Peters wedding at Hearthside in Lincoln in September 2008. *Photo by Christopher Martin.*

The usual problems with small groups plagued the society. Only six members attended the General Meeting in November 1978, and there was mention in the minutes of the need for more members. Seeing that it was important to recognize the value of our old homes, the group plaqued six houses, which were presented at the May 1980 Heritage Day event. Heritage Day (later Heritage Weeks) started in 1979 and ran into the 1980s. Our historical society was always a big part of the action, including handling food sales until 1984. The event was originally sponsored by the historical society, the Mohr Library, the Johnston Recreation Department and the Rhode Island Heritage Commission. The Heritage events were held at Johnston Memorial Park, where lots of fun activities went on, including parades, judging of historic children's costumes, and art contests.

During the late 1970s and early '80s, the society met at members' homes and at the Farnum House.

A December 1978 ad from the society in the "Observer" requesting old pictures and maps evidently did not do much good, because not much was passed on to us through the years.

In May 1980, the Bicentennial Commission was mentioned as still being active, as was the Farnum House Committee. At the May 1980 presentation of plaques, it was stated again that the Johnston Bicentennial Committee was restoring the Farnum House in hopes of using it as a museum and for civic activities.

During June 1980, George Testa was elected president, taking over the reins from out-going president John Nanni. George chaired the June 1982 general meeting, but Vice President John Nanni chaired the following meetings (July 1982 on). Gina V.

Perrotta was elected president in August 1982 and October 1983. In 1983, John Nanni was appointed Chairman of the Board. This is thought to be the only time that someone held this position with our group.

Although the group seemed quite active, membership remained low during this time, with about twenty-one members in 1981. Attendance at meetings was generally between six and twelve people. As ideas to increase membership, it was suggested in June 1981 that speakers should be found for every meeting. It was also thought that a newsletter should be considered.

On February 24, 1983, a call was made by JHS for all members who had been working on "old homes" research project to bring in their data. It is presumed that this work was for the purpose of plaquing houses.

At least from 1984 through 1988, flea markets were held on the Farnum House property. Outside vendors rented spaces. It is not known if these fundraisers were held in other years. During this time period, the society participated in harvest suppers, oral history projects, house research and historical tours (there were two of them: in 1984 and '86).

On January 24, 1984, the Bicentennial Committee assigned its interest in its 100 year lease of the house to the Johnston Historical Society. This was just prior to the town handing over the house to us.

The newsletter committee met for the first time on June 4, 1984. The first issue of our "Historical Notes" (that name was not used until March 1986) came out in September 1984 with Louis McGowan as Editor. Originally, we published six times a year. We still are publishing the Notes with Christopher Martin as editor, but only three times a year now.

On September 23, 1984, Mayor Ralph aRusso turned over the deed to the Farnum House to the JHS. It was said to be a beautiful autumn day.

Shirley Beaune was elected President in June of 1984 and '85. In June of 1986, Cathy LoBello was elected president and was re-elected in June 1987. In August of 1986, we first appointed trustees to our board. John Nanni and Pat Macari were the first ones elected.

Eileen Perriello served many years as recording secretary of our group in the 1980s.

In October 1986, John Nanni passed away. He was the founder of our group and our first president.

1987 Robert Garofalo reproduced the bake oven and the fireplace hearth in the keeping room of the Farnum House. Both had been taken out when heating ducts were installed in the 1970s. A period nineteenth century Rhode Island fireplace surround was added.

After very low attendance during meetings in 1987, the board decided to suspend monthly meetings for a time and concentrate on the restoration of the house. Newsletters were also not

published from January 1988 to September 1989, when our Historical Notes started up again. In the minutes, there was a mention of lack of active members.

In the winter of 1988-'89, the first floor of the Farnum House was flooded when our tenant died and the heat was left off. Paid for by insurance money, Warren Lanpher restored most of the interior of the house in 1989 and '90 (he did work in every room on the first floor).

Cathy LoBello served as president until September or October 1990 when she left the group. After this, Pat Macari took over as Acting President.

Pat Macari served as President from around 1990 to October 1996. Pat, Louis McGowan, Rita Saccoccio, and Marsha Czubek kept the society functioning, but during most of this period, meetings were not held and the newsletter was not published from January 1991 until August 1996. At an executive board meeting on May 11, 1995, Pat, Louis, Rita, and Marsha decided to resurrect the JHS in the Fall after fixing up the outside of house. General meetings were started up again in September 1995. During the summer of that year, Warren Lanpher restored the exterior of the Farnum House. Bel Peters started up a number of flower beds on the property. At an October 1995 Open House, we signed up a group of very valuable new members, namely Everett Cogswell, Dan Brown, Steve Merolla, and Mike Carroll (the first three are still with us and have been mainstays of our group). Our cemetery committee started up in November of 1995 and is very active to this day. It has inventoried all our ninety-plus cemeteries and has been working for the last few years restoring cemeteries. Our plaque committee began work the following May and has plaqued many structures around town.

We received our first and really our largest ever family collection of photos and documents in August of 1996, the White Family Collection. The collection was paid for partly with society funds and partly with a donation of vintage photos to the seller from Louis McGowan.

At the September 25, 1996, meeting it was evident that things were moving along nicely with the society – lots going on again with the Cemetery Committee and the Plaque Committee, a Ham and Bean Supper was held, as well as a trip to Salem, a Johnston Bus tour, and our annual picnic. In the summer of 1996 Warren finished replacing all the sashes in the house with reproduction six-over-six windows.

In October of 1996, Louis McGowan was elected President, a position that he still holds. Pat Macari was elected V.P.; Dan Brown, Treasurer; Bel Peters, Recording Sec.; Mike Carroll, Corresponding Sec., and Steve Merolla and Everett Cogswell, Trustees.

In November of 1996, we made offers to purchase the Benjamin Belknap House, but eventually backed out because of the high cost of restoration (\$125,000 + a roughly \$40,000 purchase price). We also signed a contract with Arcadia Publishing for our first photo book of Johnston (in their "Images of America" series). It was published in 1997.

Town-wide cemetery clean-up days started up in April 1996 with the JHS and the Rec Department co-sponsoring the events. Clean-up days followed through 2007, skipping 2008 and 2009, and on again from 2010 through 2011. Pat, Steve, Everett, Louis, Dan, and Mike Carroll continued the inventory of our town's cemeteries. Pat and Steve gave monthly reports from the cemetery committee from 1997 to 2017.



Tim Kee and Anthony Ursillo at the dedication of the Museum Barn Addition in April 2014. *Photo by Beth Hurd.*

Mike Carroll also had our first society tee-shirts made up. Bel Peters began her long string of organizing food fundraisers. In 1996 and '97, she organized a breakfast, a corned beef dinner and a spaghetti dinner. Many of our members donated their time and energy to make these events successful.

In March 1997, Dan, Steve, Louis, and Lisa Jorgensen acted as judges at one or both of the high school and middle school history fairs. Steve and Louis judged in 1998. Steve, Louis, Leisa, and Bel judged in 1999. We continued judging through 2001.

Evelyn Beaumier spent fifteen years as recording secretary from 1997 to 2011, doing a wonderful job of recording our meeting minutes. Bob Jackson helped support our newsletter for a number of years with annual donations as did Walter Beaune.

In 1997-'98, we started work on our second "Images of America" book with Arcadia Publishing.

In November of 1997, we were notified that we had been awarded our first grants. We received a 1998 State Legislative Grant to establish a historic marker (plaque) program. We also received the first of our Champlin Grants, a \$7000 grant which funded a reconstruction of the fireplace and hearth in the back room of the Farnum House, provided money to build a fence along the front of our property and gave us funds to purchase a computer system.

On October 29, 1998, we received the wonderful news from the Champlin Foundations that we had been awarded a \$48,900 grant to construct a museum. This would mean fulfilling a long-time dream for our society. We had been meeting in the Graniteville Baptist Church leading up to that time, which was fine, but we were looking for our own space, which would include a museum

and a permanent place to meet. Local 57 volunteered to dig the cellar hole for us.

Members of our group attended three reunions in 1998 – a Thornton School reunion, a Calef School 75th Anniversary Reunion, and a Simonsville village reunion. Louis, Pat, and Bel all attended at least one of the reunions. Evelyn Beaumier, Pat, and Louis attended the 1999 Thornton School Reunion.



Warren Lampher working on the roof of Belknap School in 2009.
Photo by Beth Hurd.

Warren Lanpher finished the restoration of the Farnum House in 1998. He installed some door hardware and painted all the interior surfaces of the house, including the Mathewson House fireplace that was donated by Peg Mathewson. Dedicated members Fred Mikkelsen and John Barattini joined our group in 1998.

Our “Images of America – Johnston II” was completed in October 1998. The new book was delivered to us in Spring of 1999.

Dan Mernier secured in September 1999 a Rhode Island Tree Council grant of \$550 for us to plant trees on our property. We were able to purchase six trees. In 2002, Dan and Steve Merolla secured a grant from the Rhode Island Committee for the

Humanities that was used to print their book on the historic trees of Johnston.

In December of the same year, we received a 1999 grant of \$46,600 from the Champlin Foundations for furniture for the Farnum/Angell House, cabinets for the museum barn, a fence on the west side of the property and a copier. We filled the first floor of the house with period furniture and furnishings during 2000.

Five houses were plaqued in 2000, thanks to the house research by Steve Merolla.

In December 2000, we received the sum of \$35,748 from the Champlin Foundations for painting and outside carpentry work on the Farnum/Angell House, for restoration of the second floor pantry and for construction of a tool shed. In the winter of 2001, Pat, Steve, Everett, and John Barattini spent time inputting cemetery info on our computer. We completed the inventory of the town’s ninety-plus cemeteries by the end of 2001.

In the Spring of 2001, we voted to change the name of the Farnum/Angell House (previously known as the Farnum House) to the Elijah Angell House. Steve Merolla’s research showed that the builder of the house was Elijah Angell, and we felt that the name of the house should reflect that fact.

On September 23, 2001, we dedicated our new Johnston History Museum. About 175 people attended the celebration. Meetings have been held in the museum barn ever since.

To be continued in a future issue...

More Stories From Mabel

As told to Louis McGowan

Mabel Sprague told me the following stories about the Poor Farm and the surrounding area while I was sitting in her kitchen on April 23, 1998:

In the early years of the twentieth century, Charles Evans and his wife Fanny were running the Poor Farm. She said that they were the last couple to run it (Lewis Salisbury was the Overseer of the Poor when the farmhouse burned to the ground in 1918, but Mabel may have meant the last married couple?). The Evans couple owned the cows on the farm and were paid by the town to keep the residents that lived there. Women helped out in the house and the men worked on the farm. Not too many lived at the farm in its last years (only seven people lived there when the 1918 fire occurred). The Poor Farm cemetery was on the east side of Atwood Avenue at the 195 entrance. She said that the Nick Waterman Farm was where the K-Mart used to be (editor’s note: the Nick Waterman House was a late seventeenth or early eighteenth century structure that burned in June 1909). Dan Ferranti bought the Poor Farm property after the fire.

West of the Poor Farm was Charlie Rose’s piggery. He was of Portuguese descent. His property extended over to the Old Pocasset Road. On the north side of the property was Olney Williams’ property (editor’s note: his eighteenth century house

across from Johnston Memorial Park made it into the 1980s when it was torn down).

Almshouse Barn Destroyed

Providence Journal, December 7, 1908

“The barn, 10 cows and 10 tons of hay burnt last night. Overseer of the Poor and Keeper of the Farm James G. Nichols rescued one cow. Chief of Police Hiram Kimball of Thornton saw the flames and hurried 2 miles to the farm. He sent a messenger to the British Hosiery Co.'s plant to send an alarm through the mill's whistle. The volunteer fire company from the mill went to the scene but could not be of much use. Total loss was about \$4000.”

Johnston Land Trust Takes Over Belknap School

On September 8, 2018, the town officially turned the Belknap School over to the Johnston Land Trust with a ribbon-cutting get-together. An estimated forty people attended. Much work has been completed on the building, including two sets of concrete stairs, new entryway doors, replacement windows, and a new heating system. A handicap ramp was constructed along the east side of the building. The front yard of the building and the two sides were asphalted, creating much-needed parking. Vintage church pews were added, replacing the old school desks. The pews make a lot more sense for use as a meeting place.

While we were sad about having to give up the building, we realized that we did not have the resources to bring the building into the condition that was needed for its proper use. We feel good that we were able to save the building from demolition and that we were able to complete the first stages of an award-winning restoration.

It sounds like the old school will truly become a well-used community or civic center, which we applaud. Mayor Polisena said that community groups such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Explorers, and the school committee will be able to meet there. The school has a nice feel inside, and we are happy to see it once again in use.

Society Doings

Antique Fire Truck Show

On September 9, 2018, an antique fire truck show was held at the Johnston Memorial Park for the fourth consecutive year. It was a well-attended, fun event, and your historical society was there as an active participant, thanks to the generosity of Richard Quetta, President of the Rhode Island Antique Fire Apparatus Society. We set up a booth with many of our fire department artifacts, including photos, old fire helmet, brass nozzles, and so on. Many people stopped at our table to view our items and talk about the items and the old days. Thanks to Dan Brown, Elise Carlson, and

Louis McGowan who set things up and were present at the table. Bel McGowan also helped out at our booth.

JHS Yard Sale

On Saturday, October 13, and Sunday, October 14, we held our annual yard sale on the museum grounds. We were only able to have the sale for a couple of hours Saturday before we were rained out. A few of us tried again on Sunday, but attendance by the public was not good. Gross for the two days was \$245, which is way below what we have taken in past yard sales. Every little bit helps, though.

Thanks big-time to Dan Brown and his son Kevin for the many hours that they put in for the event. Thanks also to Louis, Doug Stephens, Joe Jamroz, and Shar DiMaio.

Robbins Funeral Home donated many wonderful items for the sale. We also received many items from Christopher Martin, Don Jackson, Dan and Nancy Brown, and Louis and Bel McGowan.

Helping History and Heritage Happen Meets at Our Museum

On Wednesday, October 17, 2018, the Rhode Island Historical Society held its monthly “Helping History and Heritage Happen,” part of the on-going lecture series that it has been running for the last couple of years. This latest lecture was hosted by the Johnston Historical Society, the second time that we have done so. Nineteen attendees from around the state visited our museum for a lecture about fund-raising.

We received a lot of positive feedback about our museum, particularly from members of the Bristol Historical Society. They raved about the displays, with our timeline being the most popular item. Other people liked the presence of captions on displayed items. It was a great opportunity for us to show off, and it was a grand success.

Bridge at Cherry Hill Residents Visits JHS

Twelve residents from The Bridge at Cherry Hill visited our museum on November 7th. Anthony Ursillo, Bel McGowan, and Louis McGowan spoke with the guests, telling them about the museum and what we do. Our visitors all seemed to have a good time and said they would be glad to come again.

Our Properties

Yard Cleanup

Our annual fall yard cleanup took place on the mornings of November 10 and 11. The initial date of the 10th looked like it was going to be rained out so it was rescheduled for the following day, but some people showed up on the 10th anyway. Thanks to the following for helping out: Elise Carlson, Everett Cogswell, Christopher Martin, Louis McGowan, Steve Merolla, Doug Stevens, Marie Thierfelder, and Anthony Ursillo.

Our museum barn is open Tuesdays, 9-11am and 6:30-8:30pm; and Thursdays, 2-5pm; and the first and third Saturdays of each month, 9-11am, for those who would like to visit the museum or examine the society's collection of printed materials. 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, 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.

Speakers

September: Roberta Mudge Humble, professor of English at the Community College of Rhode Island, presented another of her fascinating and fun Rhode Island trivia programs. Come learn new little-known facts about your home state, or have your memory refreshed on some you may have forgotten.

October: Donovan K. Loucks, creator of the H.P. Lovecraft Archive website, gave an interesting presentation on Lovecraftian Geography. Some Johnston landmarks, like the Simmons mansion, Hughesdale School, and Clemence-Irons House were discussed.



Mr. Loucks touched on Johnston's Clemence-Irons House during his presentation.
Photo by Christopher Martin.

Acquisitions

July:

- Lois Fitts donated a number of items from the Clemence/Newman family of Manton, including textiles, photos, and trinkets.

August:

- Louis McGowan donated three Providence Directories and five Rhode Island Manuals.
- Meredith Brown Clarke donated a small collection of Brown family photos (included were other Walnut Street neighborhood people).
- Nancy Brown Fullerton donated a 1970 Johnston High Yearbook and photos (family and two house photos).

October:

- The Burrillville Historical Society donated a c.1919 photo of the Graniteville War Memorial with village veterans in uniform standing in front of the memorial.

November:

- We bought a fire-resistant, two-drawer file cabinet to store original town records in.
- Christopher Martin donated a used fire-resistant safe.

Many donated objects may be seen in the Acquisitions photo album on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical). As always,

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

Wish List

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

- Display mannequins
- Old photos of Johnston
- Any Johnston-related ephemera or memorabilia



Cemetery Committee Report

by Steve Merolla

With the coming of Fall, the work of the Cemetery Committee is now winding up for the year. Starting in April, the group cleaned up cemeteries #21, 27, 34, 36, 38, 44, 59, 60, 76, and 77. The cleanup of these burial lots carried on until the end of May. It is usually at this point of the season that we decide on the restoration phase of our year's work. The decision on where to start was made for us when a group of Citizens Bank employees decided to adopt Cemetery #7 on a permanent and ongoing basis. It was originally intended to leave this cemetery for the end of our overall project, years down the road, because of the difficulty of the cleanup work, but since the Citizens group did the brush clearing we proceeded to start restoration work. This large cemetery is located on the east side of the hill towards where George Waterman Road meets Route 44. They have done a simply outstanding job of cleaning what was the toughest clearing job in all of our town's cemeteries. The amount of brush and brambles was astounding and daunting, but they did a great job in getting the work done, even using a large brush-cutting machine and chain saws in the process. During the season, they showed up once a month with about a dozen or so volunteers.



The headstone of Abbie A. Boyce, Cemetery #7, before and after cleaning.
Photo by Elise Carlson.

Thus, the Cemetery Committee has spent almost the entire work season restoring the gravestones in Cemetery #7, mostly on Sunday mornings. Many weeks, members of the committee went out into the field a second time, usually to clean other cemeteries in town that have already been restored. During these mid-week forays, cemeteries #1, 2, 11, 19, 39, 40, 41, 55, 69, and 87 were tidied up. As the temperatures get too cold to utilize our epoxy and mortar, we will put aside work at #7 in order to clean other

cemeteries we have previously restored. This is indicative of the dilemma we are faced with as our work continues -- as we restore more burial lots, this means that we now have to maintain them going forward. This of course cuts into our restoration work, meaning that we have to strike a balance between the two phases of our project. That is why it is so important that outside groups or individuals step forward to adopt a cemetery, freeing our group up to do repair work.

Many thanks to the people of the Committee who put in so many hours of hard work during the course of the year, sometimes going out into the field twice a week: Marie Thierfelder, Elise Carlson, Shar DiMaio, Doug Stephens, Nick Sprague, Everett Cogswell, Steve Merolla, and new member Dave Morrocco. Our Society president, Lou McGowan, has helped out a few times, and our Committee Chairman, Pat Macari, joined in the fun when he came up from Florida for a visit. A special shout out to Kevin Sarli, who on his own is maintaining about half a dozen cemeteries in town. Dan Parrillo and his son Mitchell have maintained #21, the Governor King Cemetery, for a couple of years. Many thanks again to the Citizens Bank group. Also thanks to the Town of Johnston Parks and Recreation Department for chipping in by maintaining a handful of lots and the town Highway Department for picking up the brush piles and debris left over from our own and the Citizens Bank cleanup efforts.

Historical Advertising

Here's another old ad from the Historical Advertising photo album on our Facebook page. This one is from the June 6, 1944, *Evening Bulletin*.



Upcoming Events

November 28, 2018

7pm
Betty Mencucci, President of the Burrillville Historical and Preservation Society, will give a presentation called "The Life

and Travels of Hiram Salisbury, 1815-1844." Hear how this man from Burrillville traveled by horse and wagon out to Buffalo, New York, visiting his father and relatives who lived in western New York, and also visited Niagara Falls and several War of 1812 sites. Later when the Erie Canal was built he traveled by boat on the canal. He was a man of many skills. He was carpenter and built furniture, wagons, coffins, sawed out gunstocks, and built a schoolhouse. He plowed with oxen, collected taxes for the town, worked at surveying, hunted wild bees, and set gravestones for family members. This fascinating program will be of interest to genealogists, War of 1812 enthusiasts, and people interested in history. Come and learn what life was like in the early 1800s and for an appreciation of the hard labor endured by our ancestors.

December 2018

7pm
No general meeting—Enjoy the holidays!

January 10, 2019

Member Field Trip to the Varnum Armory -- Rescheduled from November
East Greenwich
6:30pm
Varnum Armory, 6 Main Street. JHS members and their friends and family are invited for a tour of the 1913 armory and its large military history and weaponry collection. Reservations not required, just show up. Free, but donations are welcome.

January 27, 2019

General Meeting and Open House
2pm
It's so depressing to go out on a Wednesday night in January, we decided to try a special Sunday daytime meeting. Society President Louis McGowan will give a presentation on the late George Sutcliffe, a Johnston resident who was a fighter pilot during World War II. Louis will read a detailed account of a dogfight that Sutcliffe was involved in, as well as show some artifacts related to Mr. Sutcliffe and his military career. At the same time we'll host a post-holiday open house with light refreshments. All are welcome.

February 27, 2019

General Meeting
7pm
Ray Wolf will give a talk related to his latest book, Rhode Island's Old Cars Today: 1905-1949.

March 10, 2019

Our Town Johnston
2pm
If you missed the showings of RIPBS's documentary on our town, here's another chance. We'll be showing the 60-minute film at our Museum Barn, and some of the "stars" will be on hand to answer any questions you may have! Microwave popcorn and Yacht Club Soda will be available for your enjoyment.

March 27, 2019

7pm
Steve Merolla will do a presentation on the King Cemetery.

April 24, 2019

General Meeting

7pm

Our speaker will be local writer and historian Jim Ignasher.

Topic TBD.

May 29, 2019

General Meeting

7pm

Grayce Moorehead, Associate Director of the Mohr Memorial Library, will give a presentation on genealogy.

June 26, 2019

General Meeting

7pm

Robert A. Geake, board member and archivist at the Warwick Historical Society, will give a talk on a topic TBD.

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 or leave a message at (401) 231-3380.



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www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical

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: March 15, 2019.

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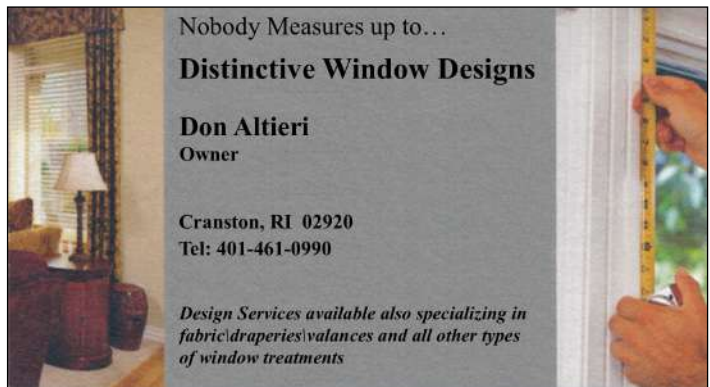
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Our Executive Board

President: Louis McGowan
Vice-President: Dan Brown
Treasurer: Joe Jamroz
Recording Secretary: Elise Carlson
Corresponding Secretary: Christopher Martin
Trustees: Steve Merolla, Doug Stephens, Marie Thierfelder, 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: _____

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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**