

Johnston Historical Society

Historical Notes

Vol. XXVI, #2

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www.JohnstonHistorical.org

July 2020

The Bordens of Neutaconkanut Hill (part 2): The Joseph Borden Story by Steve Merolla

This past February I gave a talk at our general meeting on one of the branches of the Borden family of Neutaconkanut Hill. As recounted in more detail in an earlier newsletter (July 2019, Vol. XXV, #2), the Bordens were originally of French extraction, the family taking residence in Kent, England after William the Conqueror defeated the Anglo-Saxon King Harold in 1066 at the battle of Hastings. The Bordens were knights serving William and received lands for their service.

Richard Borden was born in 1601 in Headcorn, Kent, and his wife Joan Fowle was born around 1604. The Bordens were Quakers and may have thus emigrated to America to escape religious persecution in England. They arrived in America in 1635, at Boston, and by 1638 were residents of Aquidneck Island. Richard was one of the founding fathers of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, and helped to establish the Quaker Church there. One of the leading men of the town and a man of means, he purchased lands far afield from his home town.

In 1659 he began his first land purchases in the town of Providence when he bought some eighty acres of land from William Field (*Early Records of the Town of Providence*, Vol. II, pg. 32). On September 6, 1661, he purchased sixty acres of land from Shadrach Manton (*E.R.*, Vol. I, pg. 73). Both these deeds stated that the lands involved were situated on Neutaconkanut Hill. Although he made these purchases here in the Providence area, Richard always maintained his home in Portsmouth. It should be noted that up until the twentieth century, Neutaconkanut Hill encompassed a much wider area than thought of today. Starting from an area around the former 1025 Club, it extended down along Plainfield Street from the King Estate, past the ball fields at the Park, along a short stretch of Killingly Street and then westwards up along Hartford Avenue till it met the intersection with (aptly enough) present-day Borden Avenue.

Richard Borden died on May 25, 1671, leaving behind a considerable estate. In his Will he left his Providence landholdings to his eldest son, Thomas, who was born in England on October 3, 1627. In 1663, Thomas married Mary Harris, daughter of William Harris, one of the leading men of the colony. Even before inheriting the Providence lands, Thomas had made his own purchases in the area. On November 8, 1660, he purchased sixty acres of land from Joseph Wise of Roxbury,

Massachusetts "...upon the Hill called Neutaconkanut..." (Johnston Deeds, 2/583). In 1662, Thomas was voted a freeman of the town. Through inheritance from his father and his own purchases, Thomas Borden amassed a farm of roughly 400 acres, most of it on the Hill.

Thomas and Mary Borden had eight children. It is not known for sure where they built their dwelling house, but a good guess may be on the north side of Hartford Avenue, about a mile from the Woonasquatucket River and near to later-day Ochee Springs. Wherever the house was located, it would have been demolished by 1675 during King Phillip's War, at which time nearly every structure on the mainland was destroyed by Native American warriors. The Bordens took refuge back in their native Portsmouth to wait out the war with their other kinsmen. The war ended in 1678, but Thomas was never to make it back to Providence, for he died on November 25, 1675, in Portsmouth.

The exact date for the return of Mary Borden and her children is not known, but by 1679, she was back on the Providence tax rolls along with her sons. In his Will, Thomas Borden had divided his 390-acre estate equally between his three sons -- Richard, Joseph, and Mercy, each to receive a 130-acre share. Richard Borden, being the eldest son, could have invoked the old English Law of Primogeniture and pressed a claim for the whole estate, but knowing his father's wishes and the terms of the Will, he subsequently quit-claimed to his brothers Joseph and Mercy their shares of the estate; these quit-claim deeds were executed on December 5, 1706.

Joseph Borden, the second oldest son, was born November 25, 1669. After the death of his father he received the western and northwestern part of his father's lands. This particular section encompassed an area on both sides of Hartford Avenue, the western boundary being present-day Borden Avenue and the eastern bound just up from the King Cemetery along Hartford Avenue. The northern boundary ran along part of Borden Avenue to the big bend in that road; the southern section, below Hartford Avenue and containing most of the land, reached to within a quarter mile of Central Avenue.

At the rather advanced age of 43 years, Joseph Borden married Margery Whipple on September 12, 1712. On June 2, 1713, their son Joseph Jr. was born. At this point in life, things seemed to have been going quite well for the Bordens. They owned a large farm, were now parents, and were presumably financially secure. But just then, the unthinkable happened. For some reason, on the early winter day of December 30, 1713, Joseph Borden left his

house and walked down to the Woonasquatucket River -- he never made it home. His body was discovered in the river; he left behind his wife and six month old son. At a Town Council meeting of January 3, 1714, during a probate session, it was determined that Joseph Borden had died intestate. His wife Margery presented an inventory of the estate and she was granted administration of the estate and guardianship over her son. The inventory included four head of cattle, twenty sheep, three swine and amounted to £83-16-06. This was probably a slightly above average valuation of a farm at that time. A Coroner's Inquest was held on February 18, 1714. In its report the inquest stated: "Here followeth the record of the Coroner's inquest upon the death of Joseph Burden of Providence... being summoned upon a jury of Inquest to make diligent search into & after the death of Joseph Burden... who was found dead in Wanasquatucket River this 30th day of December in the year of our Lord (1713); ... Whereupon we have made the best examination & by the best information we can have we do conclude he was drowned in said River by accident... Recorded ffebruary ye 18th: 1713/4". (*E.R.* vol. IX, pg. 155).

Margery Borden was now, of course, in a difficult situation, having to raise a baby and manage a farm. Perhaps in her favor was that she had to raise only one child. Not to be forgotten was the fact that her deceased husband's brothers lived on adjoining farms, were of some means, and almost assuredly assisted her and their young nephew as best they could. An example of this comes from the Will of Mercy Borden, uncle of Joseph Borden. In 1753, in one of the many terms of his Will, Mercy bequeathed to his nephew: "I give & bequeath unto my Nephew Joseph Borden, son of my brother Joseph Borden, deceased, all the residue & remaining part of my lands without the Seven Mile line & the remaining part of the Commonage..." (*Prov. Probate Book 4/316*). This "line" was an important delineating mark in the northern part of the state, seven miles out from the town of Providence; it came to be known as the "Seven Mile Line." More than likely this property is the same as the forty-five-acre farm in Gloucester that is alluded to in other Borden deed records.

Unsurprisingly, no deed activity was carried out by Margery Borden after her husband's death and thus this branch of the Borden family "goes under the radar" for many years, until son Joseph Borden Jr. comes of age. This does indeed occur about a couple of decades later. It is recorded in town records that Joseph Borden Jr., now 23 years of age, married Margery White (b. c. 1718) on July 17, 1735. He was made a freeman of Providence on May 4, 1736. Tax records indicate that his mother Margery was still alive in 1749, as she is taxed as "Joseph Borden's widow"; she is not enumerated in the tax rolls of 1752, indicating that she may have died in either 1750 or 1751. Joseph Borden Jr. and his wife Margery had four children, all girls: Deborah, Lydia, Amey, and Meribah. As was the case with his father, Joseph Borden Jr. carried out practically no deed activity in Johnston; the only two instances were the sale by Mr. Borden of a half acre of land to his neighbor Samuel Greene along Borden Avenue (J 3/30), and an indenture or lease to be discussed later. However, he did own the farm in Gloucester alluded to earlier and a dwelling house in North Providence; it is possible that the house in North Providence passed to him within the family and not by deed purchase.

It seems that Joseph Borden Jr. may have had a nickname and some notoriety in the town. The account book of Laban Waterman of Johnston, a coffin maker, notes that on December 3, 1784, he made a coffin for the granddaughter of "grate Joseph Borden." When I read this account passage many years ago, I could not quite figure its meaning. What was meant by the apparent nickname "great" Joseph Borden? The answer almost surely comes from the cemetery records of James Arnold, who transcribed the data of nearly every headstone in the state in the 1890s and early 1900s. In the recording of the data of Joseph Borden's headstone in 1891, this note was inserted; "This man was considered the stoughtest man in town & he was 7 feet high & strong in propotion." Such a person in that day and age would have been looked upon with awe, and the fact that nearly 100 years after his death the story about him was still known, is a testament to his notoriety in the town. Indeed, one Borden geneology states that he was known as "Great Joe Borden."

As stated earlier, Mr. Borden made only two deed transactions in Johnston, one for a half acre of land and the other a lease or indenture. On August 14, 1735, Joseph made an agreement of lease or indenture with a Mr. Samuel Weldon of Boston, a merchant: "...have leased out... all mines & minerals that are now upon or shall hereafter be found upon any part of my farm... Samuel Weldon shall... Dig & carry away all minerals & Oar of all sorts that shall be found upon any part of my farm... Provided always that said Weldon... shall not dig up any Meadow or orchard Land whereby said farm may be damaged or the Buildings thereon hurt... In consideration of the Privelages above, said Weldon shall render & pay unto the said Joseph Borden... the sum of two Shillings per Run for every Run of Iron oar that they shall dig... & shall render & deliver unto the said Borden the 1/8th part of each & all other sorts of oar... and also that the said Waldon shall be obliged to work at digging said Oar in the said farm 100 days in a year for ever..." (P 9/415).



"In 1992, Dan Meunier and I stumbled upon part of this quarry while hiking an area just north of Central Avenue and about three-quarters of a mile east of Atwood Avenue, in an area just north of Winika Estates." Photo by Steve Merolla.

How the mineral deposits were discovered, especially in the early 1700s, and how reports of it made their way to Boston is unknown, as is how extensive the operation was or how much money was made by the two parties. It is possible that the mining operations may still have been a source of income as much as

seventy years later. When the Joseph Borden farm was divided between his daughters in 1801, each daughter quit-claimed to her sister a certain part of the farm. Each quit-claim deed had a clause stating that each heir would have rights to the limestone quarry operations on the estate: "... With one undivided fourth part of all the Lime rock on said homestead, with Liberty at all times of Breaking the Ground, passing & re-passing with Teams & otherwise and of working said Limerock as that business requires, doing as little damage as that may be..." (J 3/383). Again, the extent of the operations is unknown (1801), but it is apparent that lime rock rather than iron ore was the core of the business. In fact, there was a large formation of limestone that ran through this part of Johnston, evidenced by the fact that there was once a limestone kiln located off Killingly Street in the Manton section of town, dating from the 1700s.



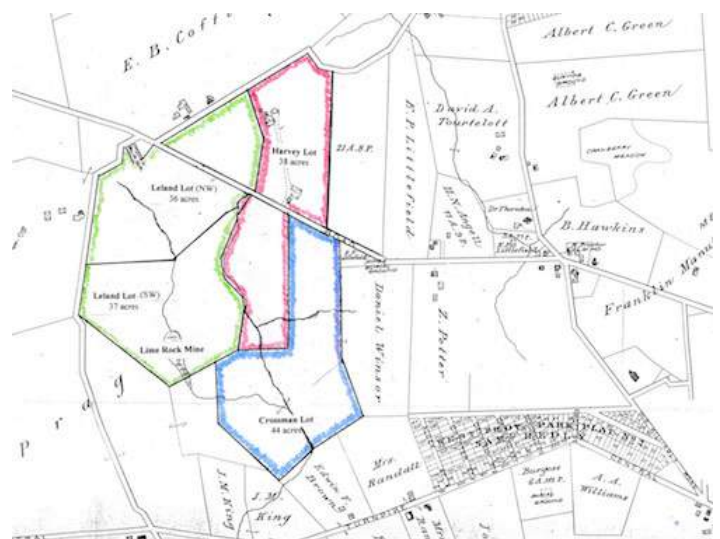
A drill mark shows evidence of quarrying. Photo by Steve Merolla.

In 1840, Charles T. Jackson authored "A Geological Map of Rhode Island," in which he discussed the various forms of rock and ore throughout the state. In his study of limestone formations, he included this passage on page 81: "Limestone also occurs on the Almy farm, now belonging to Mr. William Jenkins. I examined the bed and found it to consist of the granular and compact varieties of limestone... The lime is not wrought at this place at present..." In conducting a deed chain, I confirmed that the Almy farm, owned in 1840 by William Almy's son-in-law William Jenkins, was in fact the site of the Borden limestone quarry. In 1992, Dan Meunier and I stumbled upon part of this quarry while hiking an area just north of Central Avenue and about three-quarters of a mile east of Atwood Avenue, in an area just north of Winika Estates. Unfortunately, the extent and value of the mining operation are unknown at this time, though the Jackson report does confirm that activity had ceased by 1840.

Joseph's wife Margery died October 13, 1794, at 76 years of age. Great Joe Borden himself passed away on February 5, 1795, in his 82nd year. Somewhat surprisingly, considering his advanced age, he never drew up a Will, thus putting his estate into administration of the probate court. Since there were four daughters, the estate would be divided into four shares. Before that took place, his daughter Deborah, the widow of Levi Potter, sold off what would be her quarter share of the estate to her brother-in-law Joseph Leland (husband of Meribah Borden) in 1795 (J 3/188). Perhaps she was in financial need because of the death of her husband in 1787; there are indications that she may

have moved to upstate New York at some point. Settlement of the estate took place on April 13, 1801, about six years after Joseph Borden's death. This was done through a series of quit-claim deeds in which two sets of heirs would give up claim to a third heir the part of the farm the third heir was to receive. Daniel and Meribah Leland received two shares, the extra as noted from Deborah Potter. The first share was the southwest portion of the farm, of some thirty-seven acres, and upon which the quarry was located (J 3/381). The second was the northwest section, some thirty-six acres, and which included the half part of Joseph Borden's Johnston dwelling house; they also received the half part of the house in North Providence. Amy Crossman and her husband Daniel received the southeast section of the farm, forty-four acres, along with half the dwelling house in North Providence (J 3/383). Lydia Harvey and her husband Nathan received the northeasterly section, thirty-eight-and-a-half acres, along with the other half part of Joseph's Johnston dwelling (3/379); it was on this share that the house was actually located. It also seems that each heir received a quarter interest of the farm in Glocester, Rhode Island.

And what was the ultimate devolution of the Joseph Borden farm, what did the heirs do with their shares of the farm as the years went on? Deed evidence indicates that Amey Crossman had died by 1806. Her husband was living in that year in Glocester, perhaps on the farm owned by the family. Their children Daniel B. Crossman and Lydia Crossman inherited the forty-four-acre Johnston property. It seems that Daniel neglected the land he inherited, possibly because he was now living in North Providence, possibly in the house once owned by his grandfather. His sister Lydia took him to court in an "action of waste" and won the case, thus gaining full control of the property (J 4/516). On April 16, 1819, Lydia, now living in Gloucester (possibly with her father), sold her forty-four-acre part of the Joseph Borden estate to Samuel Greene (J 5/662).

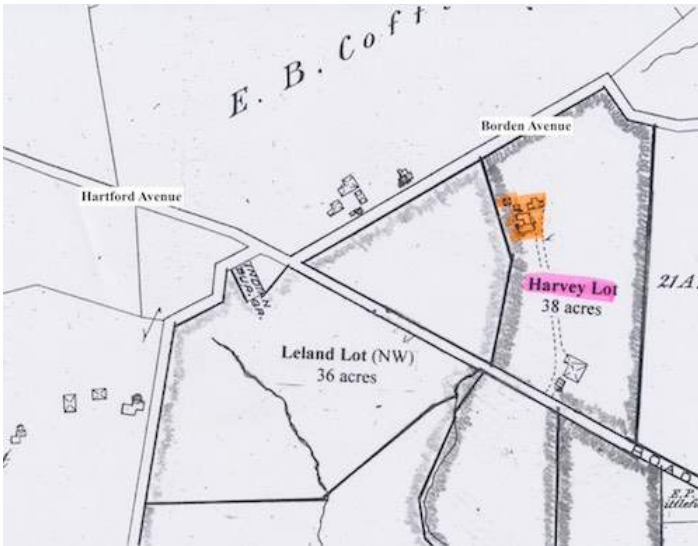


The Leland, Harvey, and Crossman parcels, north and south of Hartford Avenue at Borden Avenue.

Meribah and Jesse Leland had received two shares of the farm. The northwest portion, which included half of the dwelling house, was sold on March 23, 1814, to Samuel Stone (J 5/225). Of the second share of the estate the Lelands owned, the southwest portion, there was a very quick turnover in ownership.

On the very day after the Lelands obtained ownership of this portion, April 14, 1801, they sold the same to neighbor and kinsman William Borden King (J 3/381). Obviously, this transaction was arranged far in advance of the actual sale; it was the same lot containing the limestone quarry.

The final lot, of some thirty-eight acres, was set off to Lydia and Nathan Harvey. This was the northeasterly portion of Joseph Borden's estate and included the other half part of his dwelling house. Deed evidence indicates that Lydia Harvey was widowed by 1820 and living in North Providence. However, the Harvey family was to hold on to their part of the Borden estate longer than any other branch of the family. It was not until March 18, 1834, that Joseph B. Harvey, son of Nathan and Lydia, sold the property, the purchaser being his adjoining neighbor and future governor of Rhode Island, Samuel Ward King (J 9/67). Because of some financial problems, King lost the property at public auction on March 25, 1846 (J 12/291). The new owner was Daniel Winsor, and the Winsor family would keep possession of the so-called "Harvey Lot" well into the twentieth century. This lot was important in that all the quit-claim deeds indicate that the Borden family burying ground was located within the boundaries of the "Harvey Lot."



The Harvey Lot showing the locations of structures.

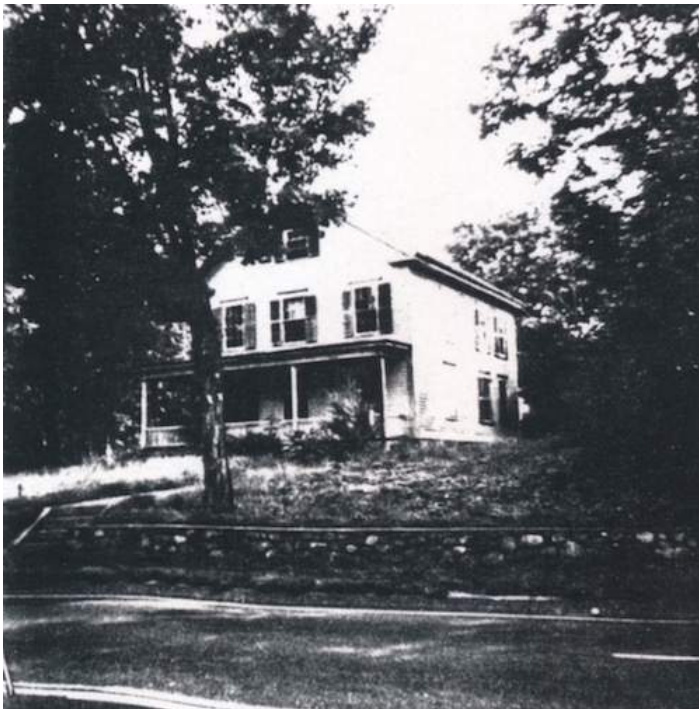
The "Harvey Lot" had the longest north/south extension of any of the other lots, covering about an equal area both above and below present-day Hartford Avenue. When James Arnold visited the cemetery in 1891, he stated: "On the farm owned by Andrew Winsor on the south side of Hartford Turnpike & on the south side of the orchard in the rear of the house; a yard fenced, in poor repair & the graves neglected." Arnold recorded the marked gravestones of Joseph and Margery Borden, Bethiah Baker, Mary and Mercy Stone, and an astonishing fifty-four unmarked or "crude" fieldstones. When the Joseph Borden estate was divided amongst his heirs, each quit-claim deed stated that those members of the family were to have access to the cemetery, as noted in deed J 3/383: "With one undivided fourth part of the family burying place on said Homestead, as the same hath lately been bounded out & lyeth within said Harvey & his said Wife's land." However, it seems that none of Joseph Borden's children or grandchildren were ever interred there. Buried under the

unmarked fieldstones are most certainly the original Joseph Borden and his wife. When Arnold visited the cemetery in 1891, he stated that it was located on land owned by Andrew Winsor, and in fact Andrew had received it from his father Daniel Winsor. Now the question is this: what happened to the cemetery! A deed chain was run from Andrew Winsor down to his daughter Sarah Winsor. She had received title to her father's house, situated on the south side of the Hartford Turnpike, in 1940, through quit-claim deed (J 57/425). The deed mentions her place of residence as being 948 Hartford Avenue. Sarah died March 17, 1958, at 74 years of age. The probate record indicates that she was single, a teacher, and once again confirmed her address as 948 Hartford Avenue (Estate # 398: book 2, page 19). The record also stated that her father was Andrew Winsor and her mother Josephine Barnes. About three years after Sarah's death, the Rhode Island DOT condemned the Winsor house to make way for the construction of Route 6/195, which now runs underneath Hartford Avenue. The condemnation document stated that the house was a two-and-a-half story, thirteen-room colonial structure of about 80 to 90 years of age; it was also stated that the house had fallen into disrepair since the death of the owner. Judging by the estimated age of the house, it was probably built by Andrew Winsor around 1880, the year he received title to the farm from his father Daniel. The condemnation maps clearly show that the house stood in what is today the center of the highway. Since the cemetery was described by James Arnold as being located in the rear of the house, we can only conclude that it was demolished when the highway was constructed. How could this have happened? In 1891 Arnold had stated that the cemetery was in "poor repair & the graves much neglected." Some seventy years later the situation likely would have been even worse, and the presence of a cemetery on the property might not have been readily apparent, especially if all the marked stones were down and everything covered by dense underbrush. If the house had deteriorated, surely the grounds would have also. It should also be noted that the one person who would have had knowledge of the cemetery, Sarah Winsor, had died three years previously, and her knowledge of it may not have been passed down. It would have been quite interesting to see how big the grave was for Great Joe Borden, but let us not forget the over fifty other people that were buried there.



*Route 6 goes right through the center of the Harvey Lot at Hartford Avenue.
Photo by Steve Merolla.*

At the time of the partition of the Joseph Borden estate through various quit-claim deeds on April 13, 1801, as previously cited, his Johnston dwelling house was still standing. In deed J 3/377, the northwestern part of the estate was set off to the Lelands: "With one estimated half part of the said Dwelling house & the ground on which it stands... also the one half part of the Cellar under said House, meaning the easterly part thereof..." In deed J 3/379, the northeastern part of the estate, set off to the Harveys: "Together with one estimated half part of the said Dwelling house & the ground on which it stands... with the western part of the Cellar under the said House..." Also, a line at the beginning of the deed states: "Beginning at the northwest corner of the Dwelling House of the said Deceased, Joseph Borden..."



The Andrew Winsor House, circa 1968. The house was demolished prior to the building of Route 6.

However, by the year 1814, indications are that the house was gone. In deed J 5/225, the Leland family sold off the northwestern part of the estate to Samuel Stone: "...with the easternmost part of the Cellar whereon the late Joseph Borden deceased, Mansion House formerly stood..." In deed J 4/323 of July 11, 1814, Samuel Stone sold to the Harveys: "...the undivided half part of the Dooryard Lot owned by Joseph Borden with the easternmost part of the Cellar of the Mansion House of the said Joseph Borden ...formerly stood..." Thus we know that the original house, possibly even the same built by Joseph's father in the early 1700s, was almost certainly gone by 1814. In that day and age, fires were always a constant danger, as fires were constantly maintained in those houses; or perhaps after nearly a century the house just fell to pieces. Deed descriptions indicate that a new house was likely built on or near the site of the older Joseph Borden dwelling. The reason this would be so is because certainly the other outbuildings would have still been in place. The deeds mention the presence of a well, blacksmith shop, hen house, cooper's shop, shoemaker's shop and coal house; the people of that era were frugal and would not have constructed a new house far away from these original

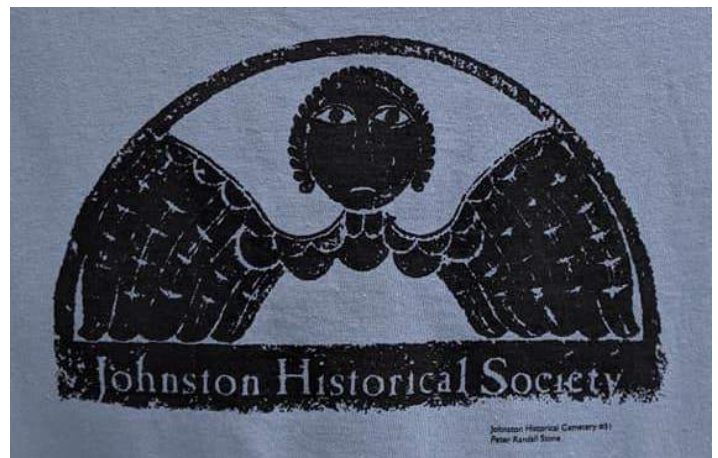
outbuildings. Thus, I assert that the Joseph Borden house was located on the northern part of what would become the Harvey Lot. Several nineteenth century maps confirm the location of a house in this area; the house thus depicted on the maps would have been a newer structure built near to the site of the older house.

There is a house today that stands at Whittier Road and Lowell Avenue, not far from the great bend of Borden Avenue; judging by the style of the house it could very well have been constructed in the early nineteenth century. This is also the area where the Joseph Borden house may have been located. It is quite possible that the house in question may have been built by Lydia and Nathan Harvey, his daughter and son-in-law. It is also possible that from this very area Joseph Borden Sr. set out on his fateful trip down to the Woonasquatucket River on that late December day in 1713; it is also possible that the lease of indenture opening up mining operations on his property was signed in a house on this spot by Great Joe Borden.

Society Doings

Marie Thierfelder has retired from her position as chair of the membership committee. If anyone would like to take up the reins, please contact a board member.

We still have new t-shirts for sale in slate blue and khaki, and we have a few left in sage green. S/M/L or XL. \$15 each. Pick one up at an upcoming general meeting, or drop us a line and we'll arrange to deliver one to you.



Volunteers Needed!

Retirees, Scouts, students! We always need volunteers to perform various duties to ensure the smooth operation of the society. For instance, we could use a Properties Committee to oversee the maintenance of our properties. Or volunteers to serve as docents in the Elijah Angell House during open hours. Or someone to help on meeting nights, setting up coffee, setting up the room, etc. The president would like to see many people doing small jobs. If you'd like to help out, please approach a board member at the next meeting.

Our Properties

There is always maintenance to be performed to keep our properties in tip-top shape. Right now some of the things on our to-do list include:

- Some of the window sills on the barn need to be repaired and/or painted.
- The basement of Angell House has a moisture and humidity problem. We've installed a dehumidifier, but there is other work that needs to be done.
- Speaking of moisture, one of the barn's basement window wells fills up with water when it rains. Elise provided a cover and Doug Stevens installed it. That should help.
- The handicap ramp behind the barn was sprayed to keep mold at bay back around May.
- In one corner of our yard, a couple of maple trees are gradually overtaking a spruce. We're looking into having the maples trimmed.
- It seems like we repainted Angell House only a few years ago, but time flies and some of the paint is beginning to crack and peel. It's time for a touch-up, and to that end...

In early July we received a \$1000 State grant from the Rhode Island House of Representatives. We'll use that to touch up the paint on the exterior of the Elijah Angell House, and to paint the windowsills on the barn if there is enough money left over. Thank you to Representative Deborah Fellela for facilitating!



Johnston Town Council President Robert Russo, Rhode Island State Representative Deborah Fellela, JHS President Elise Carlson, and Recording Secretary Carl Johnson. Photo courtesy of Pete Fontaine.

NEW HOURS: Our museum barn is open Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30pm; and Thursdays, 9am-12pm, 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 johnstonhistorical1825@gmail.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

Because of the pandemic, we had to cancel our April, May, and June general meetings, therefore there were no speakers.

Acquisitions

- Arthur Iannelli gave us a wooden table that was made in Vermont, and a framed photo of the Clemence-Irons House.
- Jim Lombardi gave us a nice, older map of the town.
- Elise Carlson secured a photo of a Johnston fire truck, manufactured by the Maxim Motor Company of Middleborough, Massachusetts.
- Alan Gianfrancesco gave us a bicycle tire pump.
- Doug Stevens gave us a large glass jug he found in Assumpset Brook near JN069.

Many donated objects may be seen in the "Acquisitions and Items from our Collections" 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, slides, or home movies of Johnston
- Any Johnston-related ephemera or memorabilia
- A leaf blower
- Fire extinguishers

Cemetery Committee Report

by Steve Merolla

The Cemetery Committee, like most other organizations, has been affected by the coronavirus (Covid-19). As related in our last newsletter, because of the mild winter the Committee was able to clean a large group of cemeteries before the state was shut down because of the virus. The Committee lost a little over a month of work, from the middle of March to about the middle of April. In addition, the statewide Cemetery Clean-up Day was cancelled, an event in which we always participated.

The Committee came back cautiously, with an eye towards safety. Social distance was maintained and of course we had the advantage of working outdoors. As of the middle of July, after our restart, we have been able to clean eight further cemeteries: numbers 7, 13, 27, 33, 50, 52, 59, and 60.

In addition, one cemetery was restored, this being #94, located off Central Avenue and near the Briarcliffe Nursing Home. The cemetery is on a hill, next to a house and enclosed on all sides by a stone wall. There were four marked headstones in the lot. The small headstone of William Henry Steere was repaired and re-set in the ground. The headstone of Nathan Sprague had sunk straight into the ground with only about a third of it showing. As is his specialty, Doug Stephens was able to "extract" the stone and it too was re-set in the ground to its proper height. The one disturbing aspect of this cemetery is the fact that one of the headstones is missing, that of Mary Sprague. The Committee had actually documented this stone some nineteen years ago, in September of 2001; the stone data was recorded and measurements taken. It is gone now, we could not find it after much probing of the ground; in fact, the footstone and the base of the headstone are still very much present. We have always run into vandalism every now and then, stones being broken or spray

painted, but this is the first instance I know of in this town where a gravestone has been removed from a burial lot. There were about a dozen crude fieldstone markers present in #94, and these were raised, straightened, and re-set. Special thanks to Robert Aubin, who has kept an eye on this cemetery for the last few years.



Nathan Sprague's headstone, post-extraction. You can see how deeply it had sunk -- the dark portion was underground. Photo by Steve Merolla.

Doug has continued with the process of replacing old cemetery signs, erecting new ones in cemeteries 27, 33, 50, and 94. The two large burial grounds behind Silvio's Restaurant (#18 & #72) continue to be a major maintenance headache; they are tough and tiring to mow. If anyone can step forward to help us out there it would be greatly appreciated.

As always, many thanks to the members of the Committee for their valuable work and for being willing to venture out during the present health crisis. Let's just hope everyone stays safe and healthy.

Upcoming Events

July and August

Summer Hiatus -- Executive Board meetings and General meetings are suspended for the summer. Have fun everyone!

September 30, 2020

General Meeting
7pm

Weather permitting, we will be meeting outside; masks required. Our speaker will be food historian David Stone, who will talk about his recent book, *Lost Restaurants of Providence* and research he's done for a follow-up volume on *Lost Restaurants of Newport*.

Columbus Day Weekend

Yard Sale -- tentatively scheduled. More details to come.

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 johnstonhistorical1825@gmail.com or leave a message at (401) 231-3380.

Historical Advertising

Here's another old ad from the Historical Advertising photo album on our Facebook page. This one is from The *Johnston Sun Rise*, July 30, 1998. The address is still an ice cream parlor, but now called Sundaes.

Celebrate Summer!

Flavors
of Homemade
Ice Cream
plus Sugar-Free Ice Cream & Soft Serve

- Ice Cream Cakes
- Mudd Pies
- Oreo Cookie Fudge Pie
- Turtle Pies
- No-Fat Yogurt Pies
- Frozen Lemonade

Delicious
FAT-FREE
Ice Cream



Only 17
Calories!
per ounce



WINSOR'S ICE CREAM

Serving the community for over 20 years
Open daily at Noon
95 Greenville Ave., Johnston
• 231-7945 •

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 15, 2020.



As of this month our Facebook page has 1,097 followers! Have you 'liked' us yet? To find us type this address into your computer browser:

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Our Executive Board

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Corresponding Secretary: Christopher Martin
Trustees: Dan Brown, Doug Stephens, Marie Thierfelder,
and Anthony Ursillo.

Our Executive Board meets at 6:30pm 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: johnstonhistorical1825@gmail.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/johnstonhistorical

Annual Dues

Have you paid your 2020 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 2020 dues. Send us a check today!

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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.

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