

Johnston Historical Society

Historical Notes

Vol. XIV, #1

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www.JohnstonHistorical.org

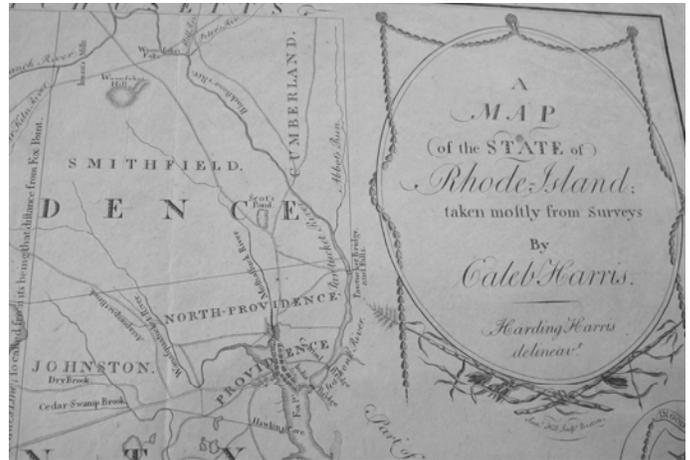
March 2008

Caleb Harris, Mapmaker

by Steve Merolla

Recently, I acquired from Mr. Tom Greene, Town Historian of North Providence, an important map that happens to have a Johnston connection. The top of the map reads: "A Map of the State of Rhode Island taken mostly by Surveys taken by Caleb Harris -- Harding Harris delineat." The bottom of the map indicates that it was engraved for Carter & Wilkinson of Providence in 1795. The copy in my possession is not an original but rather a re-strike of the original engraving made sometime in the 1890s. Mr. Greene, a map collector, states that in his opinion this was the first true and accurate map of the entire state. The earlier maps did not have the detail of the Harris map. The next map drawn of the entire state of any importance was created by James Stevens of Newport in 1831, some thirty-five years after the Harris map.

The Harris map shows relatively more detail for the northern part of the state than the southern part. The reason for this is the Johnston connection. Caleb Harris was born August 9, 1739, the son of Henry Harris (1702-1789) and Tabitha Westcott (1706-1771). Caleb's great-great-grandfather was Thomas Harris (?-1686), one of the twelve who, along with Roger Williams, founded Providence. The Harrises were one of the most important and influential families in the state's historical past. Almost certainly, Caleb was born in an area of Providence that was later incorporated into the Town of Johnston in 1759. The Harris lands in Johnston were quite vast, stretching from the area of Greenville Avenue / Killingly Street south to straddle both sides of Hartford Avenue. In the Hartford Avenue area, the width of the property stretched from around the Town Hall east to the intersection of Hartford Avenue / Borden Avenue. By the mid 1700s Henry Harris owned the part of the original homestead that centered on both sides of Hartford Avenue. Deed activity from the 1760s and 1770s show that Henry gave about 200 acres of land to his son Caleb, the biggest piece on being 160 acres on December 17, 1776 (Johnston Deeds 1/63; 2/10; 2/601). This was the section referred to before, on both sides of Hartford Avenue between Borden Avenue and Town Hall. This farm retained its same basic configuration almost into the twentieth century. The 1882 Hopkins Map denotes the 136-acre Burril Farm, which was in fact the main part of the earlier Harris Farm. The main farmhouse and outbuildings are also denoted on the map (more on the location of the house later).



Detail of the 1795 Caleb Harris map.

As noted previously, Caleb Harris was born August 9, 1739. On October 11, 1760, he married Margaret Westcott, daughter of William Westcott. She was born in 1742 and died April 3, 1825, at eighty-three years of age. Caleb and Margaret had thirteen children, only four of whom lived past the age of twenty years. Caleb was for many years Town Clerk of Johnston, as was his father before him. His distinctive signature can be seen in the deed books at Town Hall and on other documents that he signed. He was also a member of the Town Council at various points of his career. During the Revolutionary War, he served as a captain in the Captain General's Cavaliers from July 24-31, 1778, the time period coinciding with the Battle of Rhode Island. He also carried out appointments in service to the war effort for the town. In March 1776, he was "appointed one of a committee to procure weapons and accoutrements" for the town; in October 1776 he was appointed Inspector of Gunpowder; in April 1777 he was one of a committee chosen to provide blankets for the troops; and in July 1780 he was appointed Commissioner to sign and number bills of public credit.

Through many years of research, I had come across some plat maps that had been drawn by Caleb Harris for individual properties in town. I was not aware that this same Caleb Harris had produced a map of Rhode Island. It is interesting to note that the map indicates that he was assisted in his endeavor by his son Harding Harris (Harding was born September 12, 1768, and died March 20, 1808, of tuberculosis. There is an article on Harding in Society Newsletter Volume VII #5 of 1997). A look at the Probate records for Caleb Harris sheds some interesting

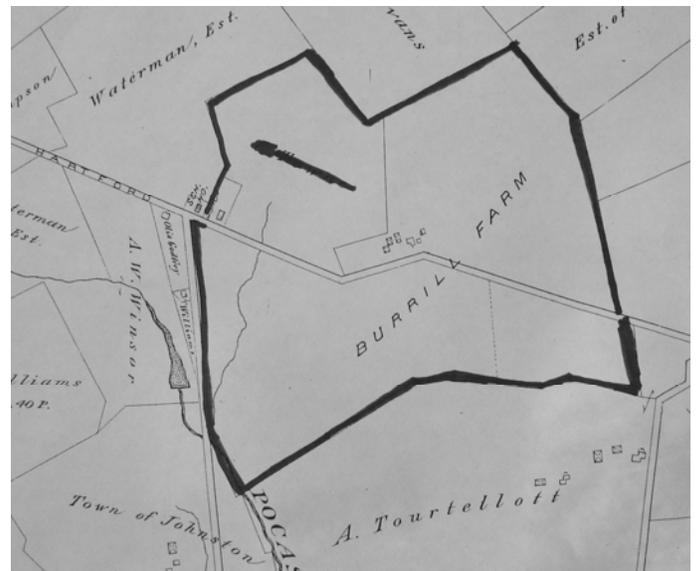
light on his life and confirms his connection to the state map. The preamble of his will shows that his death was the result of an accident: "In the Name of God Amen I Caleb Harris of Johnston... being in a very unhappy situation as to my bodily health by reason of a hurt of my horse stumbling and falling under me, but at this time of a sound mind and body ..." Parts of the Will read thusly: "I give and bequeath to my son William Harris my Surveyors Compass & Chain and all my mathematical instruments of every kind with my Load Stone..." Of interest also: "I give and bequeath to my Grandson Stephen Harris... my silver watch marked on the inside Lese & Price, Philadelphia No. 1802..." The inventory of the estate came to a total of \$633, a considerable sum for the day. Included in the inventory were items not normally owned by the average person of that day and age, such as a violin, a set of framed pictures, and the aforementioned silver watch. Other items pointed to his work as a town official such as "blank writs & executions" and "State laws & sundry books." Also included was a listing for a "Surveyors Compass & utensils." Of most importance for our story, there was note of "Maps of Rhode Island -- \$2.25." Thus we know that Caleb had in his possession at least some of the maps he had produced.

Caleb Harris dictated his Will on December 5, 1811. He died January 16, 1812 at seventy-two years of age. Various deeds mention a family burial ground on the property, and indeed, James Arnold visited the Harris cemetery on May 3, 1891: "On the well-known Harris farm on the Hartford Pike on the north side of the said road on top of a small hill, lot walled in poor condition & yard much neglected" (Arnold, Johnston Cemeteries pg.318). In this cemetery Arnold found seven marked stones (most slate), including Caleb, his wife Margaret, and their sons Cyrus and William along with their wives. Arnold also noted that there were a further thirty-one graves marked only with "rude" or unmarked fieldstones! We can only speculate that these unmarked stones were earlier members of the Harris family such as Caleb's parents. It is also probable that some of these stones were of Caleb's many younger children, most of whom died before 1800 (the carving of gravestones before the 1800s was still not widespread). It is a mystery as to the fate of this important cemetery. It is no longer mentioned after the inventories after 1891. It was located on the north side of Hartford Avenue in our area of discussion. If anyone has any information on this cemetery please contact us so that we may be able to round out the story of the Harris family.

The Caleb Harris House

Where did the Caleb Harris house actually stand? There are several clues from deeds, maps, and historical survey. Various deeds indicate that the house would have been very close to the Hartford Turnpike (Hartford Avenue). The "Old House Meadow" and the "Barn Meadow" are both described as being along the road (Johnston Deeds 5/167,169, & 219). Deed 4/206 states: "One lot of land with the buildings & improvements thereon... beginning at the crook at the north side of the Turnpike road, westward of the Barn Meadow...". A look at the 1882 Hopkins map of Johnston does indeed show a group of outbuildings and houses on the north side of Hartford Turnpike, right at a significant crook in the road. The map depicts the house and buildings and the property itself as the

"Burrill Farm," and this must be explained. On May 21,1813, William and John Harris, sons of Caleb Harris, sold off the majority of the ancient Harris farm (about eighty acres) to Nehemiah P. Knight of Providence (J 5/167&169). A few months later, on November 4, 1813, Knight sold the property to James Burrill jnr. Esq. of Providence. Burrill was a prominent citizen who was elected to the U.S. Senate and served from March 4, 1817, until his death in Washington D.C. on December 25, 1820. He had previously served in many state-wide offices and in fact the town of Burrillville is named after him. Because of his renown, the old Harris farm came to be known thenceforth as the "Burrill Farm" and the farm was referred to by that name up until the twentieth century. Members of the Burrill family sold the part of the farm on the north side of Hartford Avenue (fifty-one acres and seventy-one rods) to William Almy by various deeds spanning a period between 1827 to 1834 (J 7/314; 6/415; 10/54). Almy's heirs sold the farm in 1852 (J 15/148) and from that period on there were a succession of owners.



Detail of a plat map showing the Burrill Farm property straddling Hartford Avenue.

An interesting allusion to the old house on the property occurred in 1895. In that year, Norman Isham, renowned architectural historian, published a book called "The Old Houses of Rhode Island." In this book, Isham studied the oldest houses in the state. On page 94 of the treatise he makes mention of "...the Almy house... on the Hartford Pike, about a mile east of Pocasset. Brick chimney at end of house, but boarded over. Date c.1718." A look at maps from 1882 and 1895 does indeed show a house on the north side of the pike about a mile east of Pocasset (Pocasset being the area near Memorial Park where the Pocasset River crosses Hartford Avenue). There is only one good candidate for a house of that age in that area, the Harris house. Why Isham referred to it as the Almy house is unknown. We do know that the Almy family owned the property between 1827 and 1852; they were well-known and very wealthy textile manufacturers who lived in Providence and would have probably leased out the farm to others. After many years of research, I have seen that it is quite common for a house or farm to be known not by the name of the original builder far back in history, but a later, well-known

owner. Isham gave the house a build date of around 1718. If this is accurate, then the house would almost certainly have been built by Caleb's father Henry Harris, who was born in 1702. If, however the house was even older, then it is possible that it was built by Henry's father, Thomas Harris, who was born in 1665. In his will (proved 1741), Thomas gave to his son Henry "...all that my Homestead farme & Lands thereto adjoining with my Dwelling house..." (Providence Will Book #4). Since there is a clear line of title on the property itself from Thomas to Henry to Caleb Harris, then I think it is quite possible that this is the house mentioned in the will. If so, the house was probably built by Thomas in the late 1600s. In fact, I lean towards this earlier build-date.

Where exactly did the house stand? If in fact it was at the prominent crook on Hartford Avenue as indicated by deeds and maps, then it seems that the spot could have been in the general area of the new Senior Center. Several years ago, the late Mabel Sprague (born 1913) stated that she thought she remembered an old house about where Midas Muffler is today, which again is in the general area. Unfortunately, there do not seem to be any pictures existing of this particular house. I also suspect that this would have been the area of the Harris cemetery. Does anyone have remembrance of this house?



Visiting an Old Johnston Farm and Walking Some Old Johnston Roads

by Louis McGowan

On Saturday, January 12, 2008, Dan Brown and I did a little exploring at one old Johnston farm and on some old Johnston roads. We started off at Highland Memorial Cemetery off George Waterman Road, where we visited the three historic cemeteries that were moved to Highland within the last few years. The cemeteries are surrounded by modern stone walls, which are well built and quite attractive. Two of the cemeteries look fine inside the walls too, but the most recently moved historic cemetery (the Blanchard Lot from Plainfield Pike) is not looking too good inside. None of the old gravestones have been erected yet, and the ground is very uneven. We have been promised by the manager of the cemetery that the situation will be remedied this spring.

Next, we visited the old house at the west side of Highland Cemetery. The staff was nice enough to let us look at the interior of the homestead, which is identified as the E. Sweet House on the 1870 Beers map of Johnston. It is a post and beam structure with a more recent addition, that is not post and beam, on the west side. It was erected as a center chimney building, but at some point changes were made (probably when the addition was put in), and what remains are two smaller chimney systems. The opening for the bake oven is present, but the oven itself was taken out when the chimney system was reworked. The house is now vacant and has been totally gutted on the inside. There are two fireplace surrounds still in place, and the four-panel doors have been saved. The future use of the property is unknown.

The house was last lived in by James E. Mitchell, who was a blacksmith by trade. He and his brother Frank Mitchell, Jr., who also was a blacksmith, shoed horses all over the area. Their father, James Mitchell, Sr., owned and raced harness horses at local tracks.

The property surrounding the house is very scenic. There is a stream with two very old bridges crossing it, a pond, and some nice cleared land in addition to a few outbuildings associated with the homestead. We walked to the old stone dam at the south end of the pond, where, we were told, there used to be an icehouse. On our way back, we saw an old farm road leading west from the house, so we decided to walk that path. We knew that old maps show a road running from Pine Hill Avenue to the E. Sweet House, and we figured that this must be the road. Dan and I had talked before about traveling this path.

The temperature was around fifty degrees, and the walk was very pleasant. The road was abandoned long ago, but little vegetation has grown up on its surface. After a few minutes we reached a site where a new housing development is being built. The construction work obliterated the last few hundred yards of the old road. After we reached Pine Hill Avenue, we walked north until we met another dirt road running east. Danny knew this road from his childhood. He used to ride on the local milk truck with Alex Harrington who drove for the S.B. Winsor Dairy of Manton. This dirt road was the last stop on the route. Alex would drive down the road to deliver milk to a house that no longer stands. Danny was pretty sure that the chimney from the house was still in place, and sure enough, when we had walked a couple of hundred yards in, there it was. All other traces of the house are long gone, but the late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century chimney is in good shape. It stands about twelve or fourteen feet high and is made up of small, rounded boulders that project out from the surface. A fireplace opening is seen on the east side of the chimney. The new housing development has reached within a few feet of the chimney, so we fear that it may not last long.

We picked up the dirt road on the other side of the development and followed it back to the cemetery, ending up a couple of hundred yards north of the first road that we walked. On the way back we passed several small pits where granite was quarried many years ago. A number of cut pieces were left in place with the drill markings quite evident. This area that we were traveling about is located on Pine Hill, where much granite was quarried in the last two centuries. The granite gave its name, of course, to the village of Graniteville. The most famous stone taken from the quarries on this hill ended up at the Arcade in Providence. The columns at the Arcade were cut here and hauled by oxen team to Downtown Providence.

The roads we walked were apparently part of an informal complex of farm road/paths that were laid out before autos came into wide-spread use. The roads are more than wide enough for a horse and wagon to travel on. Some of these roads were used well into the twentieth century.

We thoroughly enjoyed our exercise and our exploration of a bit of old Johnston. It is fun to walk the paths that our ancestors did.

A Walk Through Hughesdale's Industrial Past

by Louis McGowan

Dan Brown and I ended our wandering around town on January 12, 2008, by visiting Hughesdale. We were hoping to view the wonderful industrial artifacts that are located here on the Goss property. We knocked on the door of the Goss house, and as luck would have it, Doug Goss was home and graciously gave his permission to explore his property.

I had visited the property a few times before, when Jim Goss, Doug's grandfather, was still alive. I had not been back in a number of years, though, and it was a first time visit for Dan. After talking to Doug for a few minutes, we excitedly set off to view the mill locations. We crossed a small, modern wooden bridge that spans Dry Brook, which supplied water to the three mill sites that were active here within a few hundred years of each other. Almost immediately we saw one of the stone vats that were used in the chemical works (Hughesdale Dye and Chemical Company and the Glendale Chemical Company) that were located here in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The vats may even date to the earlier New England Print Works that operated here in the mid-nineteenth century. There are seven of these granite vats in total. All but one of them (the odd one is square with a bowl-shaped depression) are rectangular, ranging in size from six feet long to nine-and-a-half feet long. The walls of the vats, which resemble old-time watering troughs, are quite thick, up to about eight or ten inches, and the interior height of the vats is two feet or so. As near as I can tell, these structures were used for dyeing cloth, mixing chemicals, or both. They are fantastic artifacts, and to find them in their original location is, I am sure, a very rare occurrence.

At this lower mill site is an earth and stone dam which forms a reservoir behind it. Water from the reservoir both powered the mill and provided water that was needed in the industrial process. The dam seems to be in good shape, and helps to frame part of what is a very picturesque location.

We left the lower dam and walked west 200 or 300 yards until we came to the area of the middle mill site, which was destroyed in a spring freshet that roared down Dry Brook in 1868. The flood destroyed all three dams in Hughesdale. The lower and upper dams were rebuilt, but this middle dam never was. Dan and I saw remnants of the dam as well as a beautifully constructed stone spillway at the end of the raceway which was built to bypass the dam and provide power to the textile mill that operated here until 1868. Thomas Hughes, whose house still stands nearby on Central Avenue, owned all the property which included these three mill sites. At the time of the 1868 flood, Hughes rented the middle site to Thomas Prey who produced textiles there.

Thomas's son, Theodore, succeeded him in ownership of the business in 1884 and ran the chemical works until it burned in 1914. Only an ice house at the upper dam remained after the fire. The outline of the ice house can still be seen.

We never made it to the upper mill site, which today includes the dam, the reservoir, and some stone ruins. Our time in

Hughesdale was fun, linking us briefly to our town's industrial history. We look forward to our next visit.

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## **Mabel Sprague House Auction**

by Louis McGowan

On a Saturday, August 25, 2007, the contents of Mabel Sprague's house on Morgan Avenue were sold at auction. A few of us from the historical society attended the event, which at least for me was a sad happening. It did not seem right to see all of Mabel's possessions on tables and in boxes all over the yard, ready to be taken to who knows where to stick in the house of someone that did not even know the woman.

Mabel was a true character, a Yankee original. She could be difficult to deal with, but she remained true to herself and her upbringing. She spent the last couple of years of her life in a nursing home, but up until then she lived alone at home and still drove her big Ford around town (it was a little scary seeing her zoom around when she was ninety years old!). She passed away in November of 2006.

Her house at 216 Morgan Avenue was built around 1790 by one of her ancestors, Abraham C. Atwood. The homestead has remained in her family ever since. She loved the old house in which she and her two sisters, Blanche and Alice, grew up. Mabel lived here almost her whole life, except for a brief period when she was first married to her husband, Ezra Sprague. Her two sisters also lived here, but Mabel outlived everyone and occupied the house by herself for many years. We do not know what will become of the house. At least a couple of people are interested in buying it. One person I know is interested in restoring the house and living in it. Some of the acres that she owned will be sold off separately from the house and will probably be broken up into house lots.

When Mabel lived there, her house was heated by coal, which she hauled up from the basement in an old coal bucket. I mentioned to her one day that maybe she should put in a nice new oil or gas furnace so she didn't have to carry the coal upstairs everyday. She said that the coal stove was good enough for her ancestors, so it was good enough for her. I guess that the work helped to keep her going.

Mabel was a life-long collector and accumulator, and evidently, her sisters were too. Nothing seemed to ever get thrown out. We saw many scrapbooks containing newspaper articles, greeting cards, recipes, postcards, and whatever. There were numerous pieces of furniture including at least ten bed frames, many old trunks, a number of old tables and chairs, and two pianos. There were many boxes of school items (both of her sisters were teachers), including school books, grade books, books on education, etc. There were Native American items including baskets and some stone tools. There were all kinds of kitchen items and other articles from the past. The quantity of items was overwhelming. Just about everything is now gone, though. The auction ate it all up.

The auction day was very hot, temperatures in the nineties. There were many out-of-state buyers, people who followed the auctioneer, Jack Martone. We had hoped to buy a few items, but we were priced out of bidding on almost everything. It was sad to see all the items that this family collected being bought up by out-of-state dealers and dispersed probably all over the northeast. In the weeks after the auction, I saw a couple of the Native American items on eBay.

We were able to purchase a nice parlor stove from the house that we will install in the Belknap School. Mabel had given us a few items a number of years ago, so we do have some nice Atwood (she was an Atwood by birth) family items. It was sad, though, to see all Mabel's beloved possessions sold off for a few pieces of gold. Being a collector myself, I understand why she loved these things. They tied in with her love of history in general. She had a fantastic memory, recalling facts from eighty and eighty-five years ago. Most of the time, she was right on the mark, too. She was fun to listen to, a great storyteller. I hope that some of the people who bought her stuff were able to learn a little about her. She was truly one of a kind.

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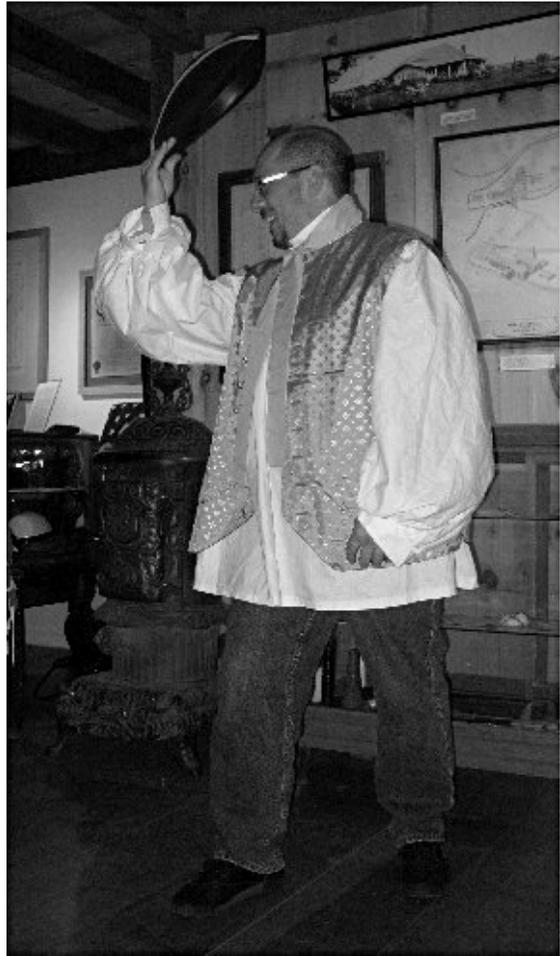
Society Doings

Speakers

At our December general meeting Fred Mikkelson read excerpts from some family letters of interest: his grandmother's account of an earthquake in Japan in the 1920s, and a second cousin's account of his experiences as a prisoner of war in the Philippines at the beginning of World War II. This man later became a Jesuit priest and now resides in a retirement home in the Midwest.

Our speakers for February were Ellie Panichas and Richard Fitzpatrick of the Neutaconkanut Hill Association. They told us all about the work their organization has put into cleaning up and restoring walking paths on the hill, some of which were created by the WPA in the 1930s. (See Upcoming Events, below, for information on an upcoming walk organized by the Association.)

Our March meeting was a fun one. Pat Perry of the Blackstone Valley Interpreters' Network gave a presentation called "Under the Petticoats," in which she talked about our ancestors' underwear (or lack thereof), bathing habits, and colonial etiquette. Steve Merolla and Kit Rhodes stood in for mannequins, dressing up as a rich man and a house maid, respectively. The talk was suggestive and revealing (in more ways than one), but presented with tact and taste, and we all laughed a lot. Photos of Pat, Steve, and Kit can be viewed online at picasaweb.google.com/johnstonhistorical.



Steve Merolla puts his best, most well-formed thigh forward during the presentation by Pat Perry at our March meeting. *Photo by Christopher Martin*

Note: We've been lucky to get a lot of great speakers (including many from the ranks of our own members and officers) for free over the past couple of years. We'd like to expand our horizons, though, so, at the suggestion and instigation of Joe Jamroz, we instituted a 50/50 raffle to be held during the break at each general meeting. Half the proceeds will go into a kitty to pay for speakers, the other half goes into the pocket of some lucky meeting attendee.

Christmas Open House

The Elijah Angell House was awash with laughter and good cheer on December 9. About thirty people toured the house, chatted, and consumed finger sandwiches, pastries, and drinks. Thanks go to Bel and her committee (Liz, Pauline, Alice, Kit, and Virginia), and Dan Brown, Phil Lemoi, and Louis McGowan who also contributed to the function.

Our Properties

Due to the skyrocketing price of oil, the Executive Board made the decision in February to raise the rent of our tenant.

Also, our fence was hit and damaged by yet another errant driver. The driver's insurance paid for the repairs, and once again Warren Lampher lent his expertise to make the fence as good as new.

Of the three bid requests for the plumbing and heating work and interior restoration of Belnap School that were sent out as of our last newsletter, only two have elicited a response so far. We want to make sure we do our due diligence, so we'll wait a little longer.

The sale of the Brown Avenue property to Department of Environmental Management is finally (after how many years?) complete. The proceeds made a very nice addition to our Belknap School account. Thanks go to Bel Peters and Louis McGowan for their stick-to-it-iveness, and to Larry Mouradjian, Associate Director of Natural Resources at the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management for his help in facilitating the sale.

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

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

Acquisitions

- Dan Mernier and Steve Merolla obtained some youth football equipment (helmets, uniforms, plaques, etc.) from the Town of Johnston, which is now on display in one of our cases.
- Dan Mernier donated an old elementary school desk and chair that he pulled out of an East Greenwich dumpster.
- Beverly Carnasciale gave us a copy of the *Echo* from 1992 that featured a story about Swing Haven Canteen.
- Fred Mikkelson brought in an antique bow saw which is in very good condition.

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

Cemeteries

Louis reported at the February meeting that, with all the recent construction to the south of Shun Pike, historical cemetery #58 is now much more easily accessible than it used to be.

Please see Upcoming Events (below) for information on this year's townwide cemetery cleanup.

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

Upcoming Events

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

April 12, 2008

Johnston Historical Cemeteries Clean-up Day
8am

Johnston War Memorial Park. Volunteers will head to local cemeteries to clean debris as part of Earth Day. Cleanup to begin at 9am. "Coffee and" will be served at the Johnston War Memorial Park at 8:30am. Call (401) 272-3460, or visit www.johnstonrec.com for more information.

April 12, 2008

Guided Walk on Neutaconkanut Hill
Providence
10am-12pm

Neutaconkanut Park Recreation Center Parking Lot, 675 Plainfield Street. Discover eighty-eight acres of woodlands that are home to deer, turkey, fox, hawks; see spectacular views of Providence. Walk on paths created in the 1930s by the WPA, many recreated by the Neutaconkanut Hill Association. Rain date April 13. Call (401) 946-6594 or (401) 943-1219, or email rcfitz2@cox.net or ellip5@cox.net for more information.

April 20, 2008

Johnston Historical Society Breakfast
9-11am

Johnston Senior Center, 1385 Hartford Avenue. Menu includes ggs, ham, beans, toast, home fries, and French toast. A raffle and silent auction will also be held. Adults \$9; kids aged four and over \$4; three and under are free. For tickets please call (401) 231-7523; email lmcgowan@ric.edu, or visit www.johnstonhistorical.org for more information.

April 26, 2008

Johnston Historical Society Yard Cleanup Day
9am

Many hands make light work, so they say. Please lend your hands and help spruce up the yard around the Elijah Angell House and our museum barn.

April 30, 2008

General Meeting
7pm

Our speaker will be Christopher Martin, editor of Quahog.org, who will give a presentation on Rhode Island film and television trivia.

May 28, 2008

General Meeting
7pm

Kim Calcagno, a refuge manager with Rhode Island Audubon, will give a presentation on Owls of New England, complete with two live owls!

June 25, 2008

General Meeting

7pm

Smith Appleby House, Smithfield. Eschewing our usual general meeting, we plan to meet at Smith Appleby House for a personal tour. Please check the Events section of www.johnstonhistorical.org for the latest information.

July and August

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

Fall -- date to be announced

Johnston Historical Society Tea.

Johnston's 250th Birthday

Having come to a realization of our own limitations, we've decided to scale our plans for a 250th celebration way back. Now we're working on a book and a driving tour of the town. As always, if you'd like to help out, we welcome your participation.

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: July 29, 2008.

What the Heck is That?

A different look at some Johnston Landmarks by Christopher Martin

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



1



2



3

Answers to last month's poser:

- 1) Part of the sign for Town Hall Plaza on Atwood Avenue.
- 2) A stack of syrup containers at Rhode Island Fruit and Syrup Company, 250 Putnam Pike.
- 3) Part of the counterweighted gate at the entrance to Dame Farm, Brown Avenue.

Our Executive Board

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

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

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

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