

Johnston Historical Society

Historical Notes

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Christopher Martin, Editor Louis McGowan, Assistant

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www.JohnstonHistorical.org

A Case of Senseless Vandalism

by Steve Merolla

Through the past many years that the Cemetery Committee has been working in our town's burial grounds, we have thankfully seen very few instances of any recent vandalism. However, that situation changed this past year, and in a most troubling way. On account of a rather snowless and mild early winter the Committee was able to clean Cemetery #69 in four work sessions between December 13 and January 7.



The gravestone of Ruth Clemence, before it was destroyed by vandals.
Photo by Steve Merolla.

Cemetery #69 is known as the Belknap Cemetery, located about a quarter mile west of the Greater Rhode Island Baptist Church on Greenville Avenue. It lies very close to the chain link fence

that borders the property along Route 295. The land on which the cemetery is located has been much in the news lately, for it is the proposed site of a new Citizens Bank corporate headquarters. At the time we started cleaning the site, we had no idea of the impending project.

The people interred in this cemetery are members of the Belknap family. Benjamin Belknap moved to Johnston (then part of Providence) from Northlake, Connecticut, in 1740. The house he resided in (he was not the builder), was located at the corner of Pine Hill Avenue and Greenville Avenue. The house lay in neglect for many years and was torn down in 1999. Benjamin Belknap and his family were to make an important mark on the history of the town. In fact, the above-mentioned house was the site of the first Town Meeting in Johnston, held on April 18, 1759; Benjamin was elected as a town officer at that meeting.

The cemetery itself is surrounded by the standard granite posts and iron pipes, with a smaller interior section delineated by granite posts and iron chains. There are about two dozen marked or inscribed gravestones present as well as about the same number of unmarked "crude" fieldstones. Of all the above gravestones, two stand out in importance. They are the markers for two younger daughters of Benjamin and Hannah Belknap, Ruth (Belknap) Clemence and Olive Belknap:

In Memory of / Ruth the Wife of Mr. / Thomas Clemence / Daughter of Dr. Ben / jamin Belknap & / Hannah his Wife / Who Died Novemr / ye 18th 1750 Aged / 21 Years & 7 days

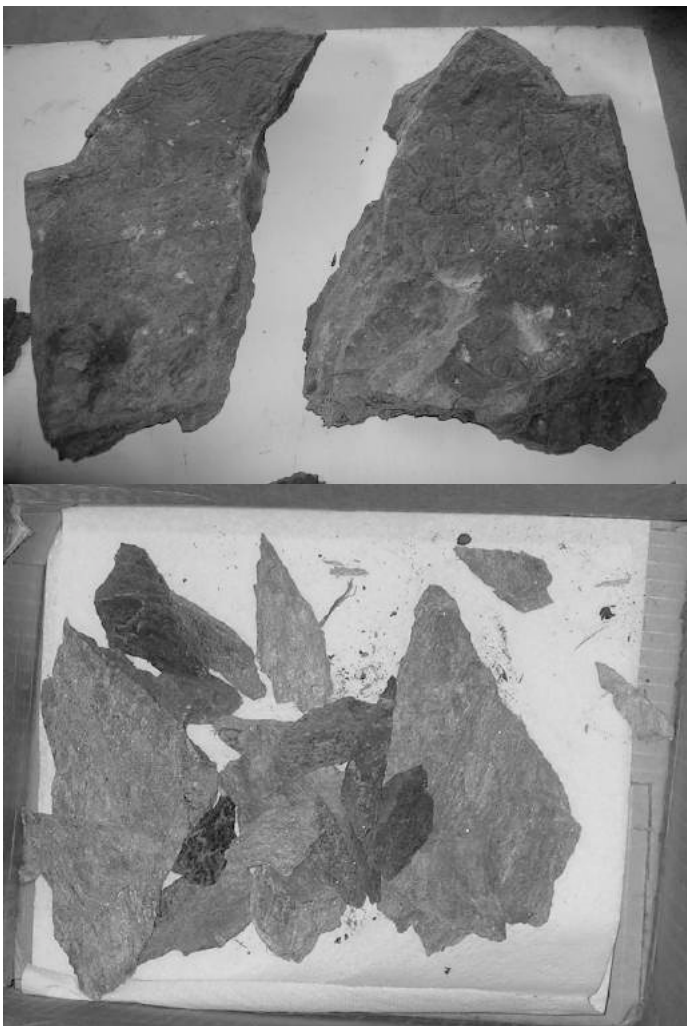
In Memory of / Olive the Daugr / of Dr. Benjamin / Belknap & Hannah / his Wife who Died / ye 26th of Novemr / 1750 Aged 11 years / 2 M & 9 Days

On a personal level, it was quite tragic that two of the Belknap daughters died so relatively young, and even more so when one considers that the two girls died about a week apart. Both died in 1750, making their markers the oldest inscribed gravestones in Johnston. There are a few gravestones in town with earlier death dates but they are "backdated," carved many years after the actual death date.

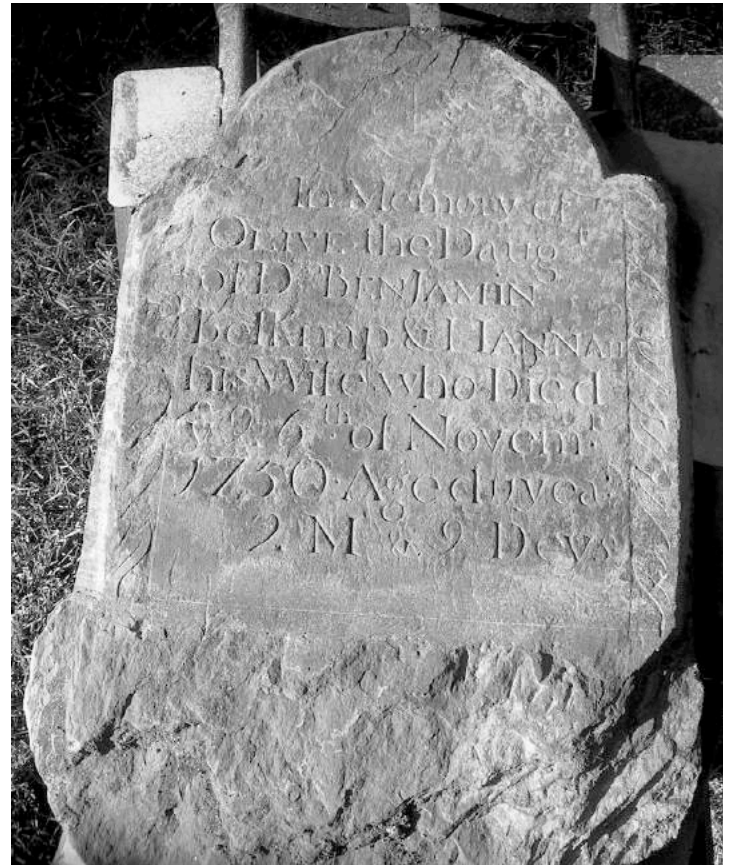
Pictures of these two stones were sent to Mr. Vincent Luti of UMass-Dartmouth, the foremost scholar and expert in regards to the gravestone carvers of New England. He immediately identified the carver as being John Anthony Angell. In an unpublished manuscript Mr. Luti stated that Angell died on April 6, 1756, at age 55. The epitaph on his gravestone states that he

was born in Coblenz, Germany. Luti theorizes that his name was probably "Engel" and was anglicized to Angell when he came to this country. He initially resided in Newport, but by 1747, he appears in Providence records. Luti feels that what may have brought him to Providence was that the only other active carver in the area was George Allen, who was very busy, and resided in Rehoboth. Luti further states that Angell carved his stones with a low to occasionally medium carving depth (relief), making them somewhat difficult to read at times; that description matches our two stones. In addition, he utilized stones of a "crumbling bituminous-like material, making them perishable and hard to read." His design elements were very similar to the foliate style of George Allen, principally carving rosettes and acanthus scroll designs. Contrary to many other carvers of the time, Angell did not carve winged angels or human effigies. A further note of interest is that the footstones for the Belknap girls did not, as was customary, have inscribed slate stones -- they were in fact made of "crude" fieldstones.

stone was lifted by at least two people and repeatedly smashed against a large fieldstone. As Mr. Luti explained, Mr. Angell's stones were of a crumbling quality and as a result the stone exploded into many pieces. A peculiar aspect of the damage was that in many sections a thin layer of the actual carving (about 1/8th to an 1/16th of an inch) either disintegrated or blew off the rest of the stone. With the help of Deputy Police Chief Dan Parrillo and other members of the Committee, the broken pieces were removed in hope of repair; at the same time, the stone of Olive Belknap was also removed for safekeeping.



Top: The two biggest pieces of the severely damaged Ruth Clemence gravestone.
 Bottom: Miscellaneous shards -- it'll be quite a puzzle to put them back together.
Photo by Steve Merolla.



Olive Belknap's stone, cleaned of lichen.
Photo by Steve Merolla.

At this time, some repairs have been made to the vandalized stone. However, many chunks of stone with inscribed script are now missing, especially those recording date of death. These two stones are basically rare examples of folk art and are irreplaceable. They will be placed back into Cemetery #69 when we feel that the area is secure. It is a great shame that after surviving 266 years intact and in such great shape that the stone of Ruth (Belknap) Clemence was damaged so badly by modern-day vandals.

Note of interest: Gravestones of this era are very rare in Johnston; there are only two other 1750s stones in town (Cemetery #21) and they are of a later date. The great majority of people who died before 1800 had their graves marked with "crude" fieldstones. In fact Benjamin and Hannah Belknap themselves are buried under fieldstones; thus, it is a measure of their grief that they had gravestones carved for their two daughters at a time when it was rare to do so.

In March it was discovered that there was vandalism in the cemetery. Unfortunately, the stone of Ruth (Belknap) Clemence had been smashed into various sized chunks. For some reason, this stone had lain completely out of the ground for many years and this made it a natural target for the vandals. It seems that the

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**Police Chief Chester Bennett Colwell**  
by Louis McGowan



*Drawing of Chester Colwell by Pete Smith;  
photo courtesy of Bob Whittaker.*

For twenty-five years Chester Bennett Colwell was the Chief of Police in Johnston. He was the man who replaced longtime Police Chief Hiram Kimball, taking over the reins in 1934 when the Democratic Party took control of Johnston for the first time since the Civil War. In his 1959 obituary it is said that he "ran the town's affairs in the manner of an indulgent father of a large boisterous family." It was noted that he loved the rough-and-tumble of election campaigns. Until the department became permanent in 1956, he was his party's leading vote getter.

As boss of the police department, he is said to have sometimes dealt harshly with offenders, but he was also known to be kindly in his treatment as much as he could. His obit states that he was liked and respected by the men of the police force. He was a controversial figure, though. His attitude towards bookmaking and gambling was described as "tolerant." He stated in an interview in 1951 that he planned to do nothing about bookie operations which had been discovered in Johnston [Editor's note: growing up in Thornton in the middle and late 1950s, we all knew who the bookies were in the village. It was not exactly a secret -- LHM]. Colwell referred to known bookmakers as "gentlemen" whom he welcomed in the town [Editor's Note: This is interesting -- in England, "Turf Accountants" are just regular businessmen. Maybe, Chief Colwell was just ahead of his time]. There were protests against him for his attitude, but they did not seem to amount to much.

His working career started with a turn as a butcher and farmer. He was a life member of Johnston Hose No. 3 Fire Company, a

Mason, a member of the Johnston Lions, and a congregant of St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Since he was a direct descendent of Roger Williams, he was also a proud member of the Roger Williams Family Association.

All in all, though he was a colorful and controversial figure, it looks as if he was also a successful and competent Police Chief.

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A Forgotten Pottery-Making Site in Johnston
by Louis McGowan

A number of years back, Grace and Eugene Van Wye donated to our society a large collection of pottery fragments and associated pieces from the pottery manufacturing process. The pieces were all found on the site of what must have been a small, primitive operation in Johnston on the south side of where Cherry Hill Road meets Greenville Avenue. Mr. and Mrs. Van Wye were caretakers of the Sarah Dyer Barnes homestead on nearby Greenville Avenue until it was torn down in the early 1980s.

The items made at the site were glazed and painted red ware, a type of earthen ware distinguished by its high iron content (which gave the ware its distinctive color). We know nothing of the site, so we are forced to speculate about much that went on there. More than likely, the site was used in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The clay used was probably dug locally. There would have been a kiln on-site which was needed to bake the wares to a useable state. To form the pieces, a potter's wheel would have been used. If less symmetrical items such as tobacco pipes were made here (no evidence of these items was among our artifacts), they would have been made in molds or simply formed by hand.

In order to make the red ware more water tight, glaze would have been applied. Many of our fragments are glazed. There was also decorative painting applied on what appear to be fragments from plates or low dishes. One of our pieces has the letters "ptemb" incised on the surface. This would have been from a piece that had the word "September" added to it.

Pieces made at the Johnston site would have been strictly utilitarian. Basic forms such as jugs and jars, plates and bowls, mugs and milk pans, chamber pots, pans, butter pots, and other common kitchen and pantry pieces would have been made here rather than fancier pieces that would have been made in urban areas. During the Colonial period, the British did not allow the Colonists to make anything other than strictly utilitarian pieces, because they wanted the better pieces to come here from England. Of course, we do not know yet what period the Johnston pottery site was active in, pre-Revolution or post-Revolution.

The potter(s) that worked here probably did not do potting full time. Typically, rural potters from this period worked on their craft part-time. They would have farmed their land the rest of the year.

If you are interested in seeing some of these pieces from our town, we have a number of items on display in our museum.

A Brief Look at the Life of Mario R. aRussillo

[This past May, Anthony Ricci donated a Testimonial Program from September 2, 1964, honoring Mario R. aRussillo. Inside was a one-page biography of Mr. aRussillo, our town's first Town Administrator. The following is an edited version of the biography with additions from other sources -- LHM]

Mario R. Russillo was born in Providence on June 4, 1924, the son of Filomeno and Domenica Russillo, and was educated in the Providence school system. He enlisted in the armed forces during World War II and served in the African and European Campaigns. After the war, he took courses at the University of Florence and at the University of Rhode Island. At the time of the testimonial, he lived in Johnston with his wife Verna and three children.

Russillo was active in a number of civic and charitable organizations. He headed up the town March of Dimes campaign, the Cerebral Palsy drive, and the Cancer drive. He was long active in the Boy Scouts of America and was a member of the National Board of Junior Naval Cadets in America. In addition to being a licensed commercial pilot, he was also Commander of the local Junior Naval Cadet program and a former flight instructor.

Mario entered politics when he was elected Johnston Town Clerk in 1960. He was re-elected in 1962. He was said to be a very competent and innovative town clerk, introducing many modern advances to the office such as setting up the Town's first fiscal control system and helping to set up the first Town bid purchase control system.

In 1964, he ran for the post of Town Administrator, created under the new Johnston Charter. At that time he was a member of a group of insurgent Democrats, who were challenging an entrenched democratic machine in the town that was controlled by Francis Manzi. He was successful in his campaign and became Johnston's first Town Administrator. He won again in 1968, but did not seek reelection in 1970. aaRussillo (by this time he had added "aa" to his name) went back to non-political life and became a contractor.

While he was in office, aaRussillo was active in the campaign to build a high school, which opened on Cherry Hill Road in 1968. He also was responsible for adding paid firefighters to the town fire department.

Unfortunately, Russillo will always be linked to a political scheme that generated national notoriety for him and one time close ally, Ralph aRusso. During the 1964 campaign (Russillo for Town Administrator and Russo for State Senate), the two of them added a small "a" to the beginning of their last names in order to gain a more favorable place on the ballots. In the 1968 campaign, aRussillo decided he needed a second "a" and became Mario R. aaRussillo. It evidently worked, as he won the election. The silliness ended for him in 1995 when he dropped the "aa," but the memory of the maneuver still lingers.

Mr. Russillo passed away in 2001. Statements made in newspaper articles at the time of his death called him smart, clever, honest, and at all times, a very fussy dresser.

Thornton's Children Remember

[The information in this piece is taken from an article that Joe Fuoco wrote for the long-departed newspaper, *The Echo*. The piece was published in the June 4, 1987, edition of that local newspaper. In the article, Joe Fuoco wrote a story blending his memories with those of Victor Paglia and his brother, Al, both of whom he interviewed for the article. I have edited here Joe's work for our Historical Notes -- LHM]

Victor Paglia -- recalled that Thornton village had a vehicle called Abbott's Jitney, an old Model T Ford, which carried people from Thornton down Plainfield Street to Fenner's Stand. Victor and his brother, Al, described Fenner's Stand as a bawdy house, a place where people were noisy and bawdy, but not a house of prostitution [Editor's note: in more recent times, the road house morphed into the 1025 Club, a dinner and banquet club]. The brothers said that bareknuckle fist-fighting took place there.

Al and Victor -- talked of Giammatteo's store, where "when things were slow Giammatteo used to have the kids (us) run races for pieces of pie. You see where Mainelli's stands? That was the spot where a Protestant Church stood." [Editor's note: Mainelli's was a spa which was directly across the street from Myrtle Hall. The church was of the Congregational denomination].

Al -- spoke of Simone's Drug Store, Dalton's Meat Market, and the police station, all located within a block of each other on Plainfield Street. The brothers laughed as they told of the A&P, which was Walter Sepe's market. "They used to leave the groceries on that step. We kids used to run by and grab stuff from the bags and take it home. It used to take my father a week or more to pay for the groceries he never ordered."

Al and Victor -- laughed as they told of the "back door joints." They were speakeasies, which ran during Prohibition. "We had Aitcheson's, Ferri's -- a bunch of them. We used to get two dollars to wash the glasses. Nobody was supposed to be drinking, but, well you know..."

Joe -- "it was always a bar room town, all clustered about the intersection." The brothers described Billy Aitcheson's bar -- "...What a place that was. Brass rail, brass front, tile floors. What a shame it's gone."

Joe -- He wrote for a few paragraphs about Ferri's Block, [Editor's note: which once stood at the northwest corner of the intersection of Plainfield Street and Atwood Avenue]. He described it as "...a large, multi-purpose building that once housed two barber shops, a theatre, a spa, a pool parlor, a bowling alley, an espresso shop. It burned, was rebuilt, and then demolished."

Victor -- talked about the outdoor theatre that was run in the early days by John Votolato by the brook next to Ferri's Block. Chairs would be lined up and silent movies shown. He said that what killed the outdoor theatre was not change, but the presence of mosquitoes.

Joe -- told of how you used to be able to "...hear the persistent humming of the textile mills, the sound of the weaving machines, the life blood of the town. The people worked in the mills and in few other places, once."

Victor -- recounted how he remembered the mill that exploded. He said that it was the Red Mill, where they worked with silk [Editor's note: this would seem to be the Brown Mill, which way back was called the Red Mill. It was on Plainfield Street where the Pocasset River crosses, and it burned to the ground in the 1970s].

Joe -- went on to talk about what has happened to much of Thornton of old; where things once stood there are now empty spaces, and where "Buildings that once were prominent showplaces have gone to ruin." He bemoans the fact that there is no program in place to restore Thornton "or to make the eyesores less painful." Joe mentioned that "even the influence of the church has waned, and this was a village where a feast to honor a saint was held at least once a month. Maybe the saints too have been forgotten, or the people who honored the saints have just grown too old or have died."

Victor -- brought up the memory of John Slack, nicknamed "Fuzza." Victor said: "He could eat anything. He was even a marathon runner. He slept in cars, in the ice house. He never seemed really young. He was John Slack, what a character."

Joe -- "You had the superstitious and the hyper-religious and the warring factions, each paesa claiming its saint was better than the other saint, and you had with that unique, garish, gaudy, and crazy circus-like festivals with kids dressed as angels floating on wires and dropping rose petals and little airplanes pouring flowers from the sky." He said that: "Today the great festivals have become carnival-oriented enterprises. It is the stuff of custom, of folklore, but somehow it lacks heart."

Victor -- talks about the soccer games behind the new St. Rocco's Church and how it was the Cricket field before it was Ferri's Field.

Joe -- goes on in the last few paragraphs about the Thornton that was. He lived and died in the village, and he loved it. He saw "the clubs, the shops, the stores, most of the restaurants, the bars, ripped from their foundations or their doors locked. What remains is an echo." He said that "Thornton has never had pretention, never really celebrated itself, so it will die a soundless, uncelebrated death. That's all right. It never aspired to more."

[Editor's note: We have lost a lot more of our history in Thornton since Joe Fuoco passed away (about ten years ago if I remember correctly). Bud Mullins died and his gas station closed after more than fifty years in business. The Collins Drug Store closed, and

the building and the other remaining buildings west of the store on Plainfield Street were razed to make way for a modern chain drug store. The main section of the Holy Nativity Church has been taken down. The Village Rendezvous Building on the Cranston side of the village has been torn down. Mainelli's Spa, also on the Cranston side, has closed. The Myrtle Hall building has been sold out of the Votolato family, which owned it for many decades. In that building, ABC Flag, which the Votolato family has owned also for decades, has closed (December 2014). This means the end of a period of over 100 years of Votolato-owned businesses in the village. Time marches on, sometimes sadly.]

Formation of Johnston Historical Society

The Articles of Association to form a corporation entitled "The Johnston Historical Society" went into effect on June 2, 1976, as approved by the Secretary of State's Office. The original charter members were: John and Carol Nanni, Jean Cioci, Gina Perrotta, Jean Vacca, Jack Shaw, and Angie Russo.

So, our 40th birthday was in June!

Society Doings

2016 Yard Sale

On April 30, 2016, our society held its annual yard sale. It was a huge success, thanks in large part to the efforts of our Chairman of the event, Dan Brown. He hustled up most of the big pieces that we sold and hauled them to the site and oversaw most of the sales at the sale. Thanks also go out to Louis McGowan, Joe Jamroz, Doug Stephens, Elise Carlson, Shar DiMaio, Anthony Ursillo, Tim Kee, Steve Merolla, and Marie and Walter Thierfelder, all who worked the day of the event. Big contributors to the day were: the Robbins Funeral Home, John and Regina Barattini, Dan Brown, Emily Brown (Dan's mother), Anthony Ricci, Elise Carlson, Doug and Linda Stephens, Anthony Ursillo, and Tim Kee.

Queen Mary Dinner

On May 7, 2016, we held a Queen Mary Bon Voyage dinner at our museum. Forty-one people attended, and most of them dressed in period 1940s costumes. Bel McGowan did a wonderful job of directing the event. She was ably helped by Nancy Brown and Ellen Lanpher who made delicious desserts and served on the planning committee with Bel. Janet Medeiros and her mom, Ida Silva, contributed many hours of their time working on the dinner. Serving the dinner that day were: Mike and Stacy Swett and their children, Kylie and Trevor; Shar DiMaio, and Janet. Helping out that day were: Anthony Ursillo, Joe Jamroz, Louis McGowan, and Phil Lemoi.

Louis McGowan was Captain of the ship and our guests were all given passports and acted the part of famous Queen Mary passengers of the past. Included were royalty (Queen Elizabeth and her mother Queen Mary were with us), famous political and

military figures, and Hollywood stars. A violinist played live music for close to two hours.

The sumptuous meal was mostly prepared by Bel McGowan, Ida Silva, Nancy Brown, and Ellen Lanpher. Roasted pork, baked chicken and French meat pie were served along with salad and root vegetables. Appetizers and desserts were also served.

Anthony Ursillo, acting as Fred Astaire, showed his dancing prowess by waltzing with many of the female guests.

Thanks go out to Pete Fontaine, Beth Hurd, and Anthony Ursillo for all their help in providing good publicity for the event and our society.

A great time was had by all.

Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce Visits the Historical Society

The Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce visited us on May 9, 2016, for a Networking Open House. About seventy chamber members and JHS members attended. The guests seemed to be much impressed with our facilities and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. We had appetizers for everyone and a free glass of Verde Vineyard wine. Jim Verde had a display set up and was able to talk to guests about his wine and vineyard.

Anthony Ursillo did a great job of chairing the event. He set things up with the chamber, contacted historical society members about coming (many did), and supervised the set-up of the museum for the day. Bel McGowan spent a lot of time preparing food items. Other members who helped out big time were: Fred Mikkelsen, Shar DiMaio, Elise Carlson, Jim Lombardi, Joe Jamroz, Doug Stephens, Marie Thierfelder, Louis McGowan, and Tim Kee.

Our Properties

Museum

Our museum barn is open Monday nights (except holidays), 6:30-8:30pm; and Fridays, 2-5pm, for those who would like to visit the museum or examine the society's collection of printed materials. 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.

Cemetery Committee Report

by Pasco Macari

This report covers the period from mid-March to mid-July 2016.

At the end of winter, as the growing season begins, all the cemeteries need spring cleanup. The committee does most of the yards as a group, with member Kevin Sarli going solo and doing plenty of small yards. With the help of recreation department workers doing several large yards, we finished most of them.

With the cleanup of number 28 complete, we began our restoration work. Overall condition was good; most damage was from mother nature. Some slates appeared to have been vandalized. We repositioned several marbles as they did not match up to Arnold's inventory of 1891. We mortared several marble heads into brownstone bases, epoxied two slate headstones, and mortared several foot stones. This yard has all four types of markers: rude markers, slate, marble, and granite. The granite markers are a problem to correct. They have two bases with the head being medium to large size. As they sink into the ground it's difficult to put them back to the original position. This yard is as complete as possible. We couldn't find one base for a marble head.

Number 43, the Richard Fenner yard, located on the Salisbury farm at the corner of Plainfield Pike and Peck Hill Road, contains over thirty marked graves with several rude burial markers. This is as recorded by James Arnold in 1891. With the help of Lane Salisbury and his grandson, Justin, we were able to finish this cleanup in three weeks. The location of this yard lends itself to being disturbed. It has never been protected with iron rails or granite posts, and has thus been subjected to damage from farm machinery. Most of the stones were down. We have been able to erect several marble stones as of this writing, but are finding many slates and marbles up to a foot and a half below grade.

Thanks to the red crew for maintaining several yards. The cemetery committee is Steve Merolla, Elise Carlson, Shar DiMaio, Everett Cogswell, Marie Thierfelder, Nick Sprague, Doug Stevens, Kevin Sarli, and Pat Macari.

Speakers

Our March 2016 speaker was Warren Lanpher, who spoke to us about, and showed slides of, his restoration of the 1795 Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Foster. The building, which started life as a Quaker meetinghouse, was severely damaged by a runaway pick-up truck in October 2014. Using some detective work and his vast knowledge of early buildings, Warren was able to take the building back to the way it looked in 1795. Twenty of our members much appreciated his presentation.

Our April speaker was Carl Johnson, a docent from the Slater Mill in Pawtucket, and a wonderful speaker. He entertained us with a fact-filled presentation about the life of Samuel Slater.

In May, we were visited by CCRI Professor Roberta Mudge Humble, who made us laugh by looking at our unique way of speaking (aka: RhodeIslandese). She also is an authority on Rhode Island's armories, having written a book about them, and is president of the group that maintains Westerly's Armory.

Our June speaker, attended by forty-two members and guests, was George Luz, Jr., who spoke to us about his father's military career and his involvement with the numerous reunions of his father's group. That group was featured in *Band of Brothers*, an award-winning HBO series, and George's father, George Sr., played a vital part in the series.

Acquisitions

- In March, Evelyn Beaumier donated a number of Ochee Spring photos from the 1940s.
- In March, Doug and Linda Stephens donated a large, carved, c. 1900 wooden beer stein that came from the Coffin homestead on Borden Avenue.
- In March, The Johnston Police Department donated a large display cabinet.
- In June, we purchased a 1975 Graniteville Baptist Church Bicentennial Cookbook.
- In June, Don Jackson donated a 1960 Graniteville yearbook.
- In June, Steve Merolla donated to our group a historic buildings plaque for the Elijah Angell House.
- In June, Arthur Iannelli donated nine tea cups and saucers.
- In July, a penknife was donated that was made in Thornton by the Federal Knife Company.
- In July, a 1924 dedication program for the WWI Memorial in Greystone was donated by Dan Brown.

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
- Any Johnston-related memorabilia

Upcoming Events

July and August 2016

Summer hiatus -- no general meetings in these months.

September 28, 2016

General Meeting

7pm

Cranston historian Kurt Deion will talk about his efforts to visit the grave sites of every U.S. president and vice-president, a journey he began at age 9.

October 26, 2016

General Meeting

7pm

David Robinson, an underwater archaeologist from URI, will discuss the many shipwrecks and floating drydock remains he's identified on Green Jacket Shoal, together comprising the "Providence Harbor Ship Graveyard," a submerged cultural landscape frozen in time at the height of Providence's prominence as a maritime industrial port. He'll also discuss the

challenges of studying, managing, and protecting these unique resources.

November 30, 2016

General Meeting

7pm

CCRI Professor Roberta Mudge Humble will return to talk about Rhode Island armories.

Note: Our museum barn is open Monday nights (except holidays), 6:30-8:30pm; and Fridays, 2-5pm, for those who would like to visit the museum or examine the society's collection of printed materials. Just in case, call ahead to confirm we're here.

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.

 Find us on Facebook	As of this month our Facebook page has 639 followers! Have you 'liked' us yet? To find us type this address into your computer browser:
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: November 15, 2016.

Our Executive Board

President: Louis McGowan
Vice-President: Dan Brown
Treasurer: Joe Jamroz
Recording Secretary: Elise Carlson
Corresponding Secretary: Christopher Martin
Trustees: Belmira McGowan, 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: _____

Address: _____

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

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

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

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