

NORTH SMITHFIELD HERITAGE ASSOCIATION MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume III Issue 9~ November 2022

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The Memorial Town Building escapes serious damage

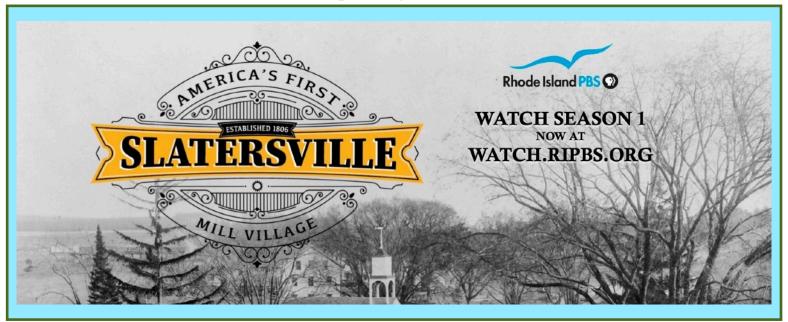
A car recently crashed into the rear of the Memorial Town Building then caught fire. Thanks to nearby neighbors and the NSFD, the driver was pulled to safety and the fire was quickly extinguished. The town's insurer hired C&L Builders to repair the damage.







Upcoming Events



NS Heritage History Night



Christian De Rezendes will present *Building the Puzzle: The Making of Slatersville* on Friday November 18th at 7:00pm at Heritage Hall, 101 Green Street.

December Heritage Walk

Waterford Village

9:30 am on Saturday, December 10th. Visit Coblin Rock, Mammoth Mills Ruins, Blackstone Canal, Waterford School, St. Paul's Church Waterford RR Station, RR Fountain, Covered Bridge Site.

Meet at Fire House Pizza parking lot (Great Road).





Upcoming Events

BSA Troop 438 North Smithfield invites you to join them for a pancake breakfast to help raise funds for the troop to renovate a newly purchased used trailer and to support their service project efforts.



Troop 438 North Smithfield looks forward to serving you a delicious breakfast in great company for a good cause. Thank you for your support!

Administration

The Board of Directors meets at 6:30 pm the second Tuesday of every month at Heritage Hall and via Zoom. Members are welcome to attend.



NSHA Christmas Party and Pot Luck Dinner



6 pm on Friday
December 9, at Heritage
Hall, 101 Green Street.
Also a Yankee Swap.
Bring a dish to share and
a wrapped gift to swap.
For members and
guests only.

North Smithfield Heritage Association

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND





In person or Online

Forestdale School CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

190 School St., Forestdale

Thursday, Dec. 8 from 5 pm to 8 pm

OR

In Person at the Memorial Town Building

Tuesdays from 9am to noon.

Online at www.nsheritageassn.org/shop

Pay on-line or C.O.D and get Free Local Delivery!

Featuring our 2023 Historical Calendar, North Smithfield Throws, Puzzles, Maps, NS books and Commemorative ornaments ...

Proceeds benefit NSHA preservation efforts throughout Town 401-651-6316 <u>nsheritageassn.com</u>



We thank Glenn Clough for sharing four generations of Clough and Jolin family photos with us!



We thank Richard and Charlotte Boudreau for loaning two scrapbooks filled with photos created by Marion Humes who once lived on the former Richard Mowry Farm on Greenville Rd.

Terry Skinkle and Jean Hibbert donated a Norman Rockwell print that we will hang at Heritage Hall. Adrienne Nys also donated 2 frames. Thank you for your support!

Your memories contain our local heritage! Please loan your old family photos and/or letters to us to scan. We'll return them promptly! We'll also store them for you if you'd like.

Please contact us at nsha@nsheritageassn.com or call 401-651-6316



From the Archives

The Brayton House Part One- James Brayton by Al Menard



This month's biography begins at a dark and shameful time in Rhode Island's history. In the 1700's, Newport, R. I. ruled the American slave trade. From sloops and ships with names like Endeavor, Success and Wheel of Fortune. Newport landowners had been importing slaves from the West Indies and Africa since the 1690s. By 1755, a fifth of the population was Black. It was during this time that Newport landowner, George Easton acquired a young slave named Rose. Around 1740, Rose had a son with her owner George. She called him James. When George Easton died, Rose and her son were sold to Preserved Brayton of Rehoboth, MA. Preserved married Patience Greene, who was a minister of the Society of Friends. Quakers were among the first white people to denounce slavery in the American colonies. Patience convinced her husband to free their slaves. She would go on to make a tour of the middle and southern states campaigning for the liberation of slaves. She is now considered one of the country's first abolitionists.

Not only did the Braytons free their slaves, but they also provided them with a sum of money, allowed them to use the Brayton name, and gave them the option to stay on as paid help.

Rose and her son, James Brayton, remained in the Rehoboth area. When he was in his thirties, James married Lucy Page. Soon they moved to Union Village in Smithfield, RI. and built a wood frame 1 ½ story dwelling where 257 Great Road now stands. James had purchased the land from George Comstock and paid for it through day labor. This dwelling would be the home for generations of Brayton family members.



From the Archives

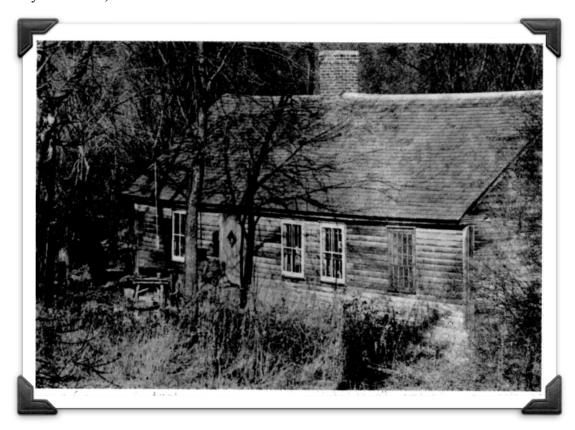
James and Lucy had three daughters. Lydia who married Cato Willard, Patience who married John Gray Ross, and Lucy who married Isaac Glasco. Glasco was a blacksmith of mixed African American and Native American heritage. In 1823 he petitioned the Connecticut General Assembly for an exemption from taxation, arguing that, because he was not allowed to vote, he should not be required to pay taxes. The legislature rejected the petition. Black people would not get the vote until 1869.

It is also reported that James Brayton served in Rhode Island's "Black Regiment" in the Revolutionary War in 1776.

He died on January 18, 1801, at the family home. He and his wife Lucy are buried in the Friends (Quaker) Cemetery on Smithfield Road.

We can only imagine the difficulties that James must have had to overcome as he worked his way from slavery to hired help to landowner himself. Though the homestead has disappeared, history will always remember the legacy of the remarkable son of a slave who became a free man and established a family homestead that would stand for almost 200 years.

Next month: The Brayton House, Part 2 - The Blackstone Sisters.





From the Archives

The Mystery of Ellen Marsh's Diaries

Many of our readers have been following the mystery of the secret code found in the diaries belonging to Ellen Marsh, the daughter of Dr. Metcalf Marsh. As the reader may recall, Ellen wrote some of her entries in code. We have been trying to figure out the code since finding these diaries in our archives two years ago.

The mystery has been solved. The cipher has been broken. Jennifer Brouillard of Lincoln solved it on October 31, Halloween.

A group of ten individuals and one classroom had been working on this mystery. After two months or so it finally happened. We can now decipher her entries.

Jennifer says, "When I saw the word 'Metcalf' spelled in code (Mtecylf), I realized that the 'y' was taking the place of the 'a,' and the 't' was taking the place of the 'e' and vice versa. Then I checked the 'i,' 'o,' 'u' to see if it was a vowel cipher. And it was!"

So, the cipher code is:

$$a = y$$
, $e = t$, $I = n$, $o = s$, and $u = r$

The other letters do not change.

Quite clever. It had NSHA stymied for years. Now we will be able to read the coded messages. And hopefully we will be able to figure out why she used a cipher on them. From what we have decoded so far, the messages seem to be of things that she preferred others not see, like a recipe for a depilatory, or a reference to money owed her mother. Our challenge now is Ellen's difficult handwriting. And this is



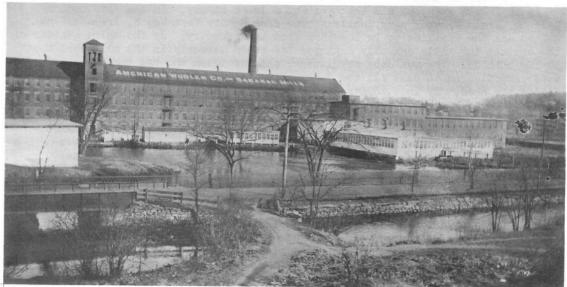
compounded by the diminutive size of the diaries. They are 2 ½ by 4 inches in size! But we love a challenge!

NB: It must be mentioned that though we have been using the term 'code' throughout this process, these messages are really ciphers. Simply put, in a code the word or phrase is changed, in a cipher the letters are changed.



Fifty Years Ago

This month we will start a new feature called Fifty Years Ago. We have recently digitized all of NSHA's original newsletters and we thought it might be interesting to see what types of articles made the newsletter back then. The newsletter was originally published only 3 times per year and it was only 4 pages long. It was also typed on a typewriter. My, how things have changed!



AMERICAN WOOLEN COMPANY - SARANAC MILLS showing the mill, mill pond, and Blackstone Canal. Located on Canal Street, No. Smithfield, where now there is marshland and rotting auto hulks, the large brick factory was a major employer in the area for many years. It was destroyed, and only several stone arches and foundations mark the location of the former mill. Picture courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Wright

THE BLACKSTONE-WATERFORD AREA

Although existing as two separate and distinct entities in two towns and in two states, Blacktone, Mass., and the Waterford section of North Smithfield, R.I., are in effect one village, bound by the inextricable bonds of a common history and way of life.

Geography and technology made both of these places. The most important geographic feature, the Blackstone River, gave birth to the twin communities through its great water power potential, and shaped the destiny of the two river communities for a century or more.

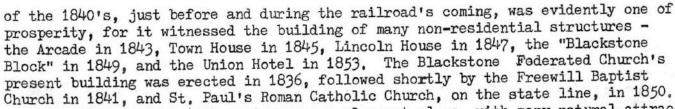
Technology also played a role in their future. The first successful cotton textile factory in the U.S.A. began only slightly more than a dozen miles south of here, and soon after, scores of small mills and settlements, utilizing the early and crude machinery, sprang up in large numbers in the rural backwaters of Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts.

Before 1808 there was little human habitation in Blackstone, but in that year or the next the Blackstone Manufacturing Company erected its first mill on the Blackstone River. At intervals (1842, 1845, 1847, 1854) other buildings were erected and the cotton manufacturing business grew in importance.

Waterford was described by an early writer as being "mostly a waste", of bog, swale, and a sand-lot, until 1825, when W. & D.D. Farnum built the first mill there; as in the case of Blackstone, this mill was foll ed by other mills (in 1828 and 1835.

The Blackstone Canal, built in 1828, lasted only about 20 years, dying in "the locomotive blaze on the Providence and Worcester Railroad". The period





The village of the 19th century was a pleasant place, with many natural attractions in and about the place. Tall trees lined the streets, and the scene was described as tidy, orderly, and clean. The nearby woods, with their large oaks, chestnuts, and maples, and the lovely Blackstone River, flowing between a hemlock covered ravine at High Rocks, were a pleasant respite from the toils of the mills.

As the mills grew, so did the need for a labor supply. In the late 1830's Welcome Farnum brought many families over from County West Meath, Ireland. He wanted all the families to be together from that country. By the third quarter of the century the mills annually employed 800 hands directly in the mills and about 50-100 outside. The resident population, and the Irish who had been imported, were insufficient to fill all the jobs in the mills, and new sources of supply filled the need. By the 1870's French Canadians began to move into the area in

large numbers.

The mills were of substantial economic benefit to the two communities, not only by providing employment, but by paying a large share of the town's taxes. Just after the turn of the century, the Blackstone assessors, in their overeagerness to extract more dollars from the Blackstone Manufacturing Company, caused the company officials to make a sudden and drastic move. It was a very short move, in terms of distance, perhaps no more than several hundred feet, but that was sufficient to put their new mill in North Smithfield, Rhode Island, and rese of the unreasonable demands of the Blackstone assessors. In 1904, the mill "moved". All of the old mills, of stone, including the one dating from about 1808, were torn down (after being sold for \$500), and a new three story mill was erected. Also built was a two-story addition for pickers and a new office building. The new mill operated with 40,000 spindles, and had new turbines which generated 1200 housepower through four 36 inch turbines. Power was also supplemented by electricity.

There has been little growth in the villages for the last half century or so, and they are no longer the thriving industrial centers that they once were. Today they serve as residencts for families whose members have found employment elsewhere. The ethnic character has undergone change again with the influx of a large number of Polish, so that Blackstone and Waterford are characterized by a

heterogeneous population,

WAN



NS Historic Cemeteries





NSHA Cemetery volunteers continue to work at the Hotchkiss Cemetery on Smithfield Road.

The leaves are finally on the ground. Much work remains to move them to the on-site dump areas.

Please contact us if you can help for a few hours!



Donations needed

Do you have any unused old tools to get rid of? The NSHA cemetery group could use them. Right now we bring our personal tools each day. Packing and unpacking our cars each day takes a lot of time so we are looking for tools that we can leave at the job site. The tools would be kept covered and out of sight.

Tools we are looking for include shovels, pry bars, carpenter levels, probe bars, mortar mixing tub, masonry hammer, sledge hammer, stone chisels, etc.

Thank you





Historic Cemetery of the Month

The Jeremiah Mowry Lot By Lynne Pelletier



This month's historic cemetery is the Jeremiah Mowry lot located on private property on Cedar Forest Road. Located on what was once Jeremiah Mowry's farm, this cemetery is also known as NS 57 and it contains the graves of at least 5 individuals, although there may be more unmarked graves lost to time.

The three beautifully carved slate headstones caught my attention and made me want to learn more about the family buried here. Slate was a very common material used for creating headstones in early New England and a slate tablet can be very detailed with the intricate carvings done by hand. How well these carvings have stood up to time has always fascinated me; as does the symbolism of the carvings. For example, a common image on slate tablets such as these may be an urn symbolizing death of the body, while a willow tree or branch symbolizes earthly sorrow. There are so many more interesting images that were carved onto headstones such as animals, flowers, angels, hands in various positions as well as religious symbols, all with unique meanings.

Jeremiah Mowry was born on March 24, 1741 in Smithfield to parents Joseph and Margery Mowry. Joseph and Margery were actually second cousins which is why her maiden name is the same as her married name. Jeremiah married his wife, Elizabeth Morton on July 15, 1781 and they had at least 5 children. Jeremiah was a farmer by trade and according to the book "A Family History, Richard Mowry of Uxbridge, Massachusetts, His Ancestors and his Descendants," Jeremiah was "a sterling man of much energy and thrift. He lived long in his native town and did much town business. His farm was an excellent one, a few miles south of Woonsocket." Jeremiah died on June 11, 1826 at age 85.

Elizabeth Morton Mowry was born January 20, 1763 in Smithfield to parents William Morton and his wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth died in her 88th year on April 27, 1851.





Mowry Aldrich was born in 1781 likely in Rhode Island. Different records list his birth place as Glocester, RI, Burrillville, RI, or Uxbridge, Massachusetts. His parents were Peter Aldrich and Amey Mowry. Amey Mowry was a sister of Jeremiah making him Jeremiah and Elizabeth's nephew. Mowry married his wife, Molly or Polly Paine in about 1801 and they had two children. The epitaph carved into Mowry's headstone is

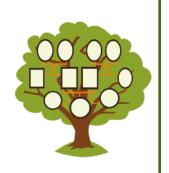
particularly poignant: "Farewell my wife and children dear. I've left this world of pain, May virtue be your practice here, Until we do meet again." He was only 23 years old when he died on February 27, 1804 leaving a young widow with a toddler and unborn baby.

Two more individuals are reportedly buried in this cemetery but there are no gravestones or much information about why they are thought to be buried here. The first individual is Jonathan, also known as "Crazy Jonathan", Mowry and his first wife, Patience Twitchell, daughter of Benjamin Twitchell. Conflicting records indicate that Jonathan Mowry is actually buried at Union Cemetery with his second wife, Ruth MacIntire. Jonathan and Patience had 6 children before her death and another 7 after his marriage to Ruth. It is likely that only Patience is buried in this cemetery and Jonathan is buried with his second wife, Ruth at Union Cemetery.



Genealogy

Would you like help to conduct research on your family tree? Lynne Pelletier has extensive experience and access to several databases. Please contact nsha@nsheritageassn.com to coordinate an appointment.



Ghosts and Paranormal Activity



Do you have a ghost(s) in your house? We would like to document it! Please contact us right away.



November Spotlight

Turkey Trivia Facts About The Turkey- An All-American Bird By The Old Farmer's Almanac

Are turkeys native to the Americas?

Yes, turkeys originated in the "New World." Specifically, wild turkeys are native to Mexico. It's a funny history. European explorers brought wild turkeys home with them in the early 1500's. The birds were domesticated in Europe and later brought to North America by English colonists. Note that domestic turkeys have white-tipped tails; wild turkeys have dark-tipped tails.



Why do turkeys gobble?

Only male turkeys, or toms, can make a call known as a "gobble," and they do it mostly in the spring and fall. It is a mating call and attracts the hens. Wild turkeys gobble when they are surprised by loud sounds and when they settle in for the night. The wild turkey can make at least 30 different calls!

Could the turkey have been the national bird?

Ben Franklin thought that the turkey would be a better national symbol than the bald eagle. According to the Franklin Institute he wrote in a letter to his daughter:

"For my own part, I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative for our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; he does not get his living honestly...like those among men who live by sharping and robbing...he is generally poor, and often lousy. Besides, he is a rank coward: the little king bird, not bigger that a sparrow, attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district...For in truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America. Eagles have been found in all countries, but the turkey was peculiar to ours..."

How much turkey does the average person eat per year?

The average person in the United States will eat 15 pounds of turkey this year.

What's that weird wobbly thing on a turkey's neck?

The loose red skin attached to the underside of a turkey's beak is called a wattle. When the male turkey is excited, especially during mating season, the wattle turns a scarlet red. The fleshy flap of skin that hangs over the gobbler's beak is called a snood and it also turns red when the bird is excited. The wobbly little thing in the turkey's chest is the turkey's beard and is made up of keratin bristles. Keratin is the same substance that forms the hair and horns of other animals.



Is the turkey considered a game bird?

Yes, but the wild turkey is one of the more difficult birds to hunt. It won't be flushed out of the brush with a dog. Instead, hunters must try it attract it with different calls. Even with two seasons a year, only one in six hunters will get a wild turkey. By the 1930's, almost all of the wild turkeys in the U.S. had been hunted. Today, thanks to conservation programs, there are plenty of wild turkeys- they even invade cities and suburbs!

Are turkeys named after Turkey, the country?

When Europeans first encountered the wild turkey in Mexico, the incorrectly classified the bird as a type of guinea fowl called a turkey fowl. It was Turkish traders who originally sold the fowl from Africa to European markets; Turkey has no native turkeys!



What is a baby turkey called? And what about adult turkeys?

A baby turkey is called a poult, chick, or even a turklette. An adult male is a tom and a female is a hen.

How big do turkeys get?

The domestic tom can weigh up to 50 pounds, the domestic hen up to 16 pounds. The wild tom can weigh up to 20 pounds and the wild hen up to 12 pounds.

Can a turkey fly?

The wild turkey can fly! It does, however, prefer to walk or run.

The domestic turkey is not an agile flyer, although the bird will perch in trees to stay safe from predators.

How long do turkeys live?

The average life span of a wild turkey is three to four years. It generally feeds on seeds, nuts, insects and berries. The average life span of a domestic turkey, from birth to feezer, is 26 weeks. During this period of time, it will eat about 75 pounds of turkey feed.

Education

NSHA volunteers will help NS Middle School history teacher, Valerie Carnevale, procure artifacts for her December Civil War classes.





Preservation & Restoration



Memorial Town Building (1 Main Street)

We plan to start removing partition walls on the second floor as we begin to return the hall to its original configuration. Contact us if you'd like to help!

Forestdale School (190 School Street)

The Town Council recently approved a bid from Martone Construction for a new roof and emergency exit stairs at the Forestdale School. We will fund the repairs entirely from grants. Work will start as soon as we can get the contract to the Town Administrator.





Heritage Hall (101 Green Street)

The Board of Directors approved funds to reupholster the four throne back chairs.

Winter is coming. We need to shovel sidewalks at Heritage Hall and the Forestdale school after every storm. Contact us if you'd like to help!





Heritage Hall Rentals (101 Green Street)

Rent the newly renovated upper and lower halls!
Call Jeanne at (401) 447-1801 to make a reservation.





Indigenous Ceremonial Stone Features

The Research Team team continues to locate and document local colonial and indigenous stone features. The team will visit a stone chamber in the Buck Hill Boy Scout Reservation Area in Burrillville at 9:00 am on Saturday, November 19.

The team meets at 6 pm every other Friday night at the Memorial Town Building.
Attend in person or via Zoom!



November is American Indian Heritage Month!

Tomaquag Museum - Culture Bearer Series. Nikommo. December 3.

Hingham Historical Society Lecture Series: Native Homelands/Settler Colonialism (via Zoom). Next lecture January 2023





Recent Activities

In October, Ryan Bouchard and Emily Schmidt, of the Mushroom Hunter Foundation, made a presentation about mushroom hunting followed the next day by mushroom hunting field trip to Goodwin's Farm.





NS Days – Spooky Spirits Night, at Goodwins Brothers Farm, was a resounding success. Thank you to all who contributed to a wonderful event!



VFW Post 6342 held a Veterans Day ceremony at Scouters Hall supported by local Scout groups.



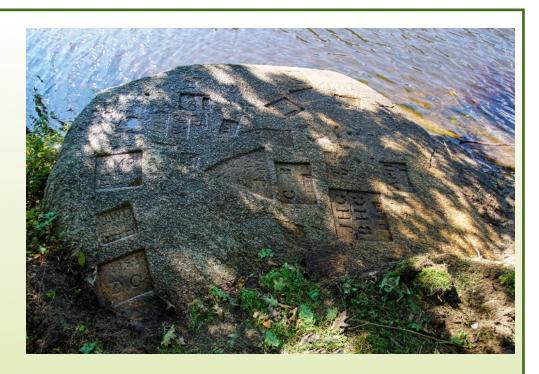


Our Holiday Shoppe was another huge success. We thank our volunteers and patrons who made it possible!



Mystery Photo

November's mystery photo comes to us from member, Larry Smith. Larry was taking pictures of the Forestdale Dam for NSHA's 2023 calendar when he spotted this interesting rock. It appears to be some kind of memorial but no one is sure of its origin. The rock is imprinted with geometric shapes and carved initials. A few of the shapes have dates such as 1847. The Forestdale Mill once occupied this land so these may be the initials of some of the employees who worked there. Does anyone know anything about this mysterious memorial rock? If so, please contact us!







NSHA Merchandise

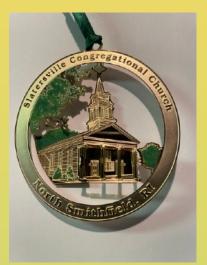
This month's featured item is the NSHA 2023 Calendar.

It is now available for just \$10 at Village Paint, Leeway Ace Hardware, Wright's Dairy and Li'l General Convenience Store! You can also purchase them at the Memorial Town Building, the Forestdale School, and our online store.



Scenic 2023 Heritage Association Calendars now available \$10 each at the following locations: Li'l General, Leeway Hardware and Village Paint





New Slatersville Congregational Church Ornament! Costs only \$15.

Just Arrived! The new Wright's Farm 252-piece puzzle. Cost is \$20.



View our entire inventory at the NSHA On-line shop at www.nsheritageassn.org.



Membership

~2022 Annual Dues are due on **May 1** each year. We thank the **160 members** who have renewed. Members in arrears can still renew by mail, via PayPal Giving Fund, or Tuesday mornings at the Memorial

~Your \$20 annual dues allow us to conduct vital preservation activities. Seniors over 85 and students are still free. If you are not sure of your status, please contact us.

~We welcome new member Hannah Contildes.

You Can Help

Join: It costs just \$20 each year!

Volunteer: Help with any of our ongoing activities and events. No need to make a commitment. We appreciate whatever you can do!

Donate: Our Annual Appeal runs all year long. We like local artifacts. We appreciate whatever you can give!

Share: Share this free newsletter with friends and family. Encourage them to subscribe. Only shared knowledge can preserve our heritage!

NSHA Payment Options

- **1. PayPal Giving Fund:** search for <u>nsha@nsheritageassn.com</u>, select "**Donation**" and type the purpose for the payment on the memo line.
- 2. Give cash or check. Make checks payable to "NSHA". Note "Dues, Annual Appeal or Merchandise" on the memo line.
- **3. Mail Checks** to NS Heritage Assn, P.O. Box 413, Slatersville, RI 02876.

We will also pick up payments and deliver purchases at your door if you live locally. Contact nsha@nsheritageassn.com or call 401-651-6316.



The North Smithfield Heritage Association Fund

Background

The NSHA created this RI Foundation endowment fund in 2021 with personal donations made by its Board of Directors and a corporate grant from Amica Mutual Insurance Company.

Purpose

The Fund establishes a perpetual investment that grows every year to help fund NSHA preservation projects and activities.

Tax Benefits

Your donation is tax-deductible.

In addition to cash, the Foundation accepts gifts of securities, real estate, and other personal property, which may help you avoid capital gains taxes on appreciated assets.

Free legal assistance

Receive legal assistance with trust or behest language; charitable annuities; charitable remainder trusts;

Contact

Kelly Riley

Donor Services Administrator

401) 427-4028

kriley@rifoundation.org

Make a tax-deductible donation to this RI Foundation managed fund that will grow perpetually. The NSHA can use a portion of the fund each year for preservation activities. Gifts can be made to the Heritage Association Fund in two primary ways:

- 1. A check made out to the Rhode Island Foundation (with a reference on the memo line to the NS Heritage Association Fund) can be mailed to the Rhode Island Foundation, One Union Station, Providence, RI 02903.
- 2. A credit card gift can be made at this link: https://rifoundation.org/funds/north-smithfield-heritage-association-fund



Outreach

Members who would like to create a post or event on the NSHA Facebook Page, should send a photo and text to the NSHA email account.

Facebook Page Followers: 1,094

Website: 276 interactions in last 30 days

NSHA Newsletter Subscribers: 1,135

Instagram (nsha1970) Please follow us!



We still need a volunteer to manage our account!

Visit our Facebook Page to learn about our events and activities. Get acquainted with some of our members and supporters. Like and share with friends and family! www.facebook.com/northsmithfieldheritage



Visit our website! Read past newsletters, learn about our organization as well as our many ongoing historic preservation activities. https://www.nsheritageassn.org/

Most importantly, share this newsletter with family and friends! To join our mailing list, simply contact us at nsha@nsheritageassn.com or 401-651-6316

