



NORTH SMITHFIELD HERITAGE ASSOCIATION MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume III Issue 7~ September 2022

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Slatersville- America's First Mill Village

It's Finally Here! After more than a decade in production, we are truly excited to announce that the World Premiere of ***SLATERSVILLE: America's First Mill Village*** will take place on Friday, September 16, 2022 at 8pm on Rhode Island PBS. The entire series will consist of 11 episodes and be split into two seasons; 5 episodes for Season One and 6 episodes for Season Two. Season One will premiere on September 16, 2022 with a new episode to follow every Friday evening at 8pm through October 21, 2022.

***WSBE Rhode Island
PBS transmits HD
programming on:***

Digital 36.1
Cox 08 / 1008HD
Verizon FiOS 08 / 508HD
Full Channel 08
Comcast 819HD
Verizon FiOS 18 / 518HD
DirecTV 36
Dish Network 36

WSBE Learn transmits on:

Digital 36.2
Cox 808
Verizon FiOS 478
Full Channel 989
Comcast 294 or 312

Rhode Island PBS is now available to subscribers of YouTubeTV.

The full schedule is available to live stream for free within the broadcast viewing area

at <https://watch.ripbs.org/livestream>.

To view the trailer for ***Slatersville~ America's First Mill Village***: <https://vimeo.com/736256618>



AMERICA'S FIRST
ESTABLISHED 1806
SLATERSVILLE
MILL VILLAGE

A
CHRISTIAN DE REZENDES
PICTURE



FRIDAYS at 8PM Starting SEPTEMBER 16 on Rhode Island **PBS**

 <p>EPISODE 1 The Mental Smugglers 9.16.22</p>	 <p>EPISODE 2 Controlling No Man's Land 9.23.22</p>	 <p>EPISODE 3 The Great Change 9.30.22</p>	 <p>EPISODE 4 Conscience Money 10.7.22</p>	 <p>EPISODE 5 The World According to Uncle Johnny 10.14.22</p>
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Livestream or Video-On-Demand at www.ripbs.org Learn more at www.firstmillvillage.com.



Thank You



We thank Michael Moore and family for donating an early 20th century Singer sewing machine, a photo of the 1931 Slatersville men's baseball team and the minutes book (1899-1910) of the North Smithfield Court Kearsarge of the Foresters of America.

We also thank Bruce Follet for loaning us Minerva Mowry's scrapbook (1800-1900) and many old newspapers dating from 1851-1865 including *The Woonsocket Patriot* and various newspapers from Worcester and Boston.

We welcome new archive volunteers David Whitefield and Sam Turco!

Your memories contain our local heritage! Please loan your old family photos and documents to us to scan. We'll return them promptly!

Please contact us at nsha@nsheritageassn.com or call [401 651 6316](tel:4016516316)



From the Archives

Rosina Ellen Marsh (1850 – 1911)

The Slatersville Hat Girl

By Al Menard

Last month we talked about Dr. Metcalf Marsh. This month we will focus on his daughter, Miss Ellen Marsh. Ellen was born on January 25 in the year 1850. She was baptized Rosina Ellen, but everyone called her 'Ellen' as her mother's name was also Rosina.

Her famous father, Dr. Marsh, died unexpectedly when Ellen was 4 years old. She was left in the care of her mother, brother, grandmother, and aunt. Little is known about her childhood. She surely went to the local schools which at the time were one room schoolhouses. And the church was always an important part of her life. At home, Ellen would have had to share the many chores that come with living on a farm.

As a young woman, Ellen liked to attend dances and other cultural events. Often, she would go to lectures on topics of the day such as women's rights, slavery, and temperance. Back at home she churned butter regularly and did a lot of washing. She would take trips to Rocky Point and Block Island and when she got older to Philadelphia and New York City. The family enjoyed having clam bakes and picking cranberries and blueberries.

Hats were one of Ellen's main interests. It seems that she was very good with a sewing needle and that she found her niche in ladies' hats. She found work at the Knowlton Hat Factory in Upton, MA. This factory was the biggest women's hat factory in the world! The factory oversaw boarding for young women who came to help in the sewing and finishing rooms. The girls were usually paid piecework so when work was 'slow' they would return home until they were needed again.

It was during this time, while Ellen worked in Upton at the Hat Factory, that she began keeping a diary. It was the NSHA's great fortune that, in the materials from the Marsh Estate, five small diaries were found that belonged to Ellen when she was in her twenties. They range in years from 1870 to 1877.

The diaries begin with a poem from Longfellow and within the dairies there are many references to scholarly writers as well as contemporary favorites. Ellen was well read and like her father she favored the popular poetry of the day and included many poems in her diary.

The diary entries are often very plain, reporting who visited or where she went. And Ellen was not very regular with her entries. They are quite sporadic, sometimes she did not write anything for months. And like most hand-written documents, Ellen's penmanship sometimes makes it very difficult to read.

Nevertheless, these diaries and her letters bring Ellen Marsh alive to us as we begin to see the times through her eyes. This is interesting, yes, but what about *her secret*?



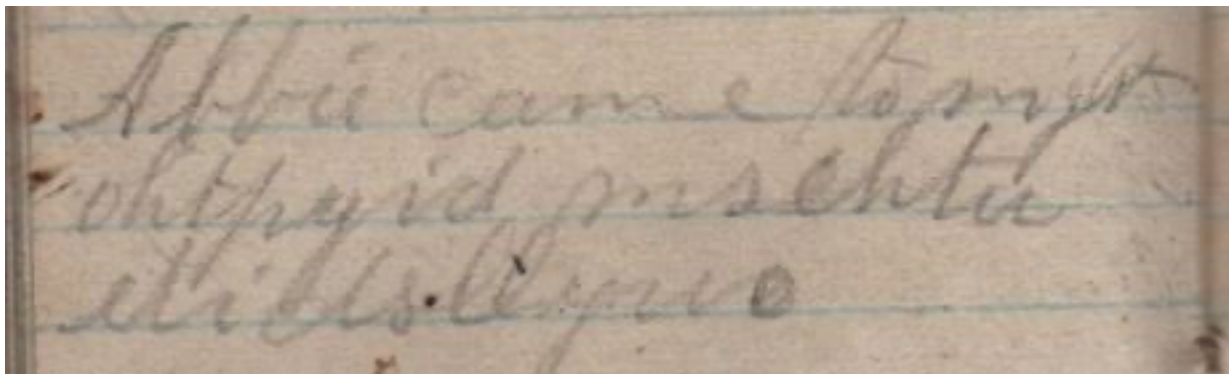
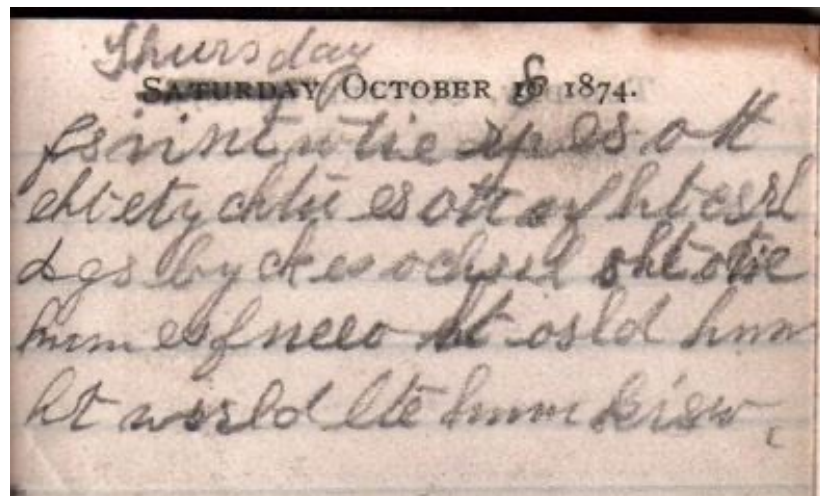
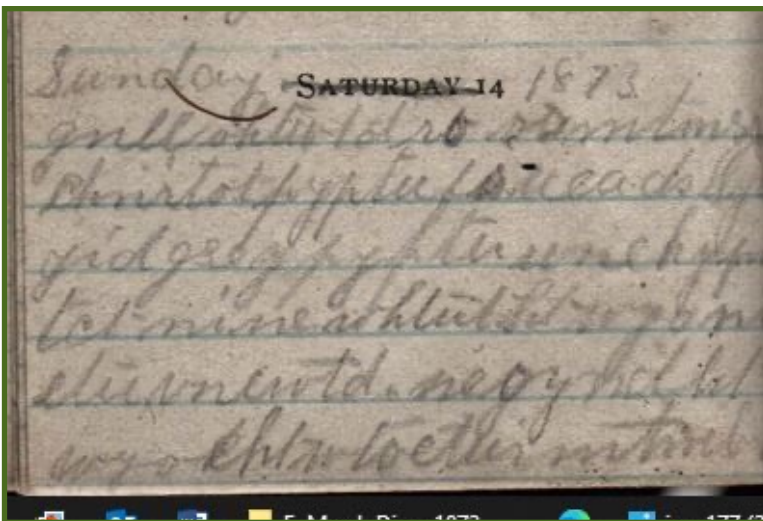
Ellen's secret is that her diaries contain sections written in code. So far, no one has been able to break this code. We do not know why she needed to have such secrecy. But it has certainly increased our interest in her writings and has given us a unique view into her past. (More on this in a moment.)

As things turned out, Ellen never married. After her return from Upton, Ellen would stay at home and help on the farm. She helped raise her brother's child and nursed her mother who lived to be 86! Ellen, as well as her family, were very involved with the Union Grange, #13, P. of H. She was secretary to that organization for more than 15 years.

Ellen stayed in her comfortable home on Mechanics Street and entertained both neighbors and relatives on a regular basis. She was remembered in her obituary as a woman who was "a helpful neighbor always ready to aid in case of sickness."

Ellen lived to the age of 61 in the same home that she was born in. She died at home on August 5, 1911 and is buried in the family plot at Union Cemetery.

Anyone interested in trying to break the code is encouraged to contact Al Menard at NSHA@nsheritageassn.org. We have copies of coded messages that can be sent in digital form. Any help would be appreciated! Below are a few samples:





NS Historic Cemeteries

Work continues in several NSHA cemeteries. Gravestone restoration crews are working to repair and reset gravestones at Hotchkiss Cemetery. They welcomed a new volunteer, Kathy Jackson.

We also welcome new volunteer, Andrew Chernasky who recently adopted NS5 The Israel Aldrich Cemetery near CVS.

We also thank Derek Mahon for his wonderful work cleaning nearby WO11 The Quaker Church Cemetery on Smithfield Road and Christine MacWilliams for cleaning along the Union Cemetery wall on the same road.





Historic Cemetery of the Month

Joseph Nichols Lot
By Lynne Pelletier



NS016, the Joseph Nichols lot is also known as the Nichols-Mowry lot. This family burying ground is located on Douglas Pike near the intersection with Pound Hill Road in the Tarkiln section of town. It is situated on a small rise and overlooks a nearby pond. It is about 65x25ft in size and it is enclosed by a black wrought iron fence with a gate. Until recently the cemetery, and the path that leads to it, was covered with weeds. Thankfully, Bob Hanson has adopted the cemetery and has done a wonderful job cleaning up the brush.

The 10 graves belong to members of the Nichols family and their descendants. While researching the Nichols family, I located a book called “Representative Men and Old Families Of Rhode Island.” Volume 3 of this series, published in 1908, contains an interesting biographical sketch about Joseph D. Nichols and his family. His was a true “rags to riches” type of story that demonstrated his ability to work hard and overcome adversity.

Joseph Dennison Nichols, was born September 29, 1813 in Rhode Island. It was said that he was very poor as a boy and was taken in by his grandfather, William Nichols. Joseph worked in many mills in the Warwick and Coventry area learning the textile trade. He married Harriet Stafford on February 2, 1836 and they had 6 children; Olive Amanda, Henry Stafford, Ruth Taylor, David Dennison, Joseph Dana and Albert

Ruthben who died at age 7.

In 1845, Joseph D. Nichols founded the Oak Valley Mills in the “Nichols” or “Nicholsville” section of Burrillville. It later became known as Oak Valley. The Oak Valley Mills produced “fancy cashmeres” until it was destroyed by a fire on March 15, 1872. The successful business was said to be worth almost \$50,000 but there was no insurance. Within 10 days of the fire, work began to rebuild the mill. Joseph and his sons ran the mill until the business was eventually passed on to some of his grandsons.

Joseph died on January 27, 1879 at age 65 while Harriet died a few years later on August 24, 1882 at age 71. Their graves are located to the left of a large monument in the center of the cemetery and they are marked “Father” and “Mother.” Albert Nichols, Joseph’s uncle and a farmer from Cumberland is also buried close by as are Joseph’s sons Albert Ruthben and David Dennison.



Daughter, Olive Amanda, married Ahaz Allen Mowry in 1855 and they are both buried here along with their son, Herbert. Ahaz Mowry served on the Burrillville town council twice and on the school committee multiple times. Olive died on July 31, 1890 while Ahaz lived until April 25, 1911.

The second daughter, Ruth Taylor married Oscar Cook on December 24, 1863. They had many children and their large family lived on the original family farm that they inherited from Ruth's parents. Oscar was said to be a successful farmer and served as a justice of the peace before he died from pneumonia on April 4, 1915. Ruth died a few years later on June 29, 1918 and both are buried here.



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.



Local Historic Districts

Owners of two historic properties have expressed interest in making their properties local historic districts. We hope to complete their applications soon!





Preservation & Restoration

Memorial Town Building (1 Main Street)

The old boiler at the Memorial Town Building failed. We're working with the town to affect an emergency replacement.

Demolition of the upstairs partitions at the Memorial Town Building will begin soon.



Forestdale School (190 School Street)

Jeff has completed the request for proposal for a new roof and emergency exit stairs at the Forestdale school. The advertisement will go out soon.

Funds for this work will be provided by grants to NSHA from the Champlain Foundation received in June (\$47,750); the 1772 Foundation received in May (\$10,000), grants from the NS Town Council and contributions from you, our numerous supporters. Thank you all.

Work to strip the school foundation continues. Help is always welcome!



Heritage Hall Rentals (101 Green Street)

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





Development

1. ***Annual Appeal 2022:*** Supporters can help NSHA preservation and conservation efforts by making a tax-deductible donation today. Please use PayPal or mail a check.
2. East Coast Artisans has the new 2023 calendar. ***We hope to have some available for sale at Pumpkinfest!***
Thank you to all our sponsors who make our preservation work possible!

AccuformNMC
Brigido's Market
Extreme Sales
Leclair Kozlik Logan Bassett Post No. 6342 VFW
Leeway's True Value Hardware
Lindy's Tavern
Navigant Credit Union
North Smithfield Fence
Paul Vadenais
The Beef Barn
Village Paint and Decorating
Wright's Dairy Farm and Bakery

Education

Our School Outreach Program is off to an early start. Our research team will join Kim Rawson's NS High School history class on a field trip to Nipsachuck to learn about the clash of European and Native cultures that led to King Philip's War in 1675 and its aftermath. Two battles took place at nearby Nipsachuck during that war.





Indigenous Ceremonial Stone Features

Larry Smith and his team continue to locate and document local indigenous stone features.

Recently, renowned tribal historian Doug Harris, joined the team as well as Wabbaquasset Nipmuc Tribal member, Morning Sunshine. We look forward to working jointly with our native partners to preserve and promote this amazing part of our town's heritage!





Recent Events

On Saturday, September 10th our history walk was to the Woonsocket Reservoir #3. We visited the NS48 Oliver Smith Lot, the Amasa Sweet Quarry, the Great Wall, Crookfall Brook, the William Mowry Homestead, the Obed Paine Homestead and NS61 the Hiram Mason Lot. The weather was perfect and we met some new folks! Here are a few pictures from our adventures!





Upcoming Events

The North Smithfield Great Pumpkin Festival

Saturday, September 17th, from 11 am to 5 pm at the North Smithfield High School Grounds. The NSHA will have two booths this year! We will offer a variety of our items for sale and have information about membership available. Our second booth will have members of our cemetery crew offering information on what we do and how you can join us. Please stop by and visit!



Heritage Night- Women in Agriculture

Join us for a presentation by author and historian, Alexis Wallace on Friday, September 23 at 7:00 pm in Heritage Hall.

Spooky Spirits Night

The NSHA and NS Parks and Recreation Commission will once again hold Spooky Spirits Night at Goodwin's Farm in October. More information to come!





Upcoming Events

October History Walk

October 8: Wesquidomsett: Visit the West Farm, NS 60, NS24, Tyler Mowry House, NS 32, Old Sayles Hill Rd, Rustic Drive-In, Milk Can; Paine Mill. Meet at Aldi's parking lot (Dowling Village) at 9:30 am. The walk will take place unless there is heavy rain.



Woonsocket Historical & Preservation Society
42 South Main Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895
Phone: 401-356-0067

The Woonsocket Historical Society is pleased to announce a series of upcoming walking tours of the Main Street area. Bob Bellerose, local historian, will conduct the first tour on Saturday, September 17 at 10:00 am. Subsequent tours will be held on October 15 and November 19 at 10:00 am.

The tour will meet at the front of the Museum of Work & Culture. Bob will walk you to the Woonsocket Falls, pointing out the trench system that brought water to the mills on Main Street, continue along Main Street highlighting the different buildings and architecture. The tour continues on the Court Street Bridge, parts of Front and Bernon Streets before ending at the Woonsocket Historical Society. The historical society is located behind the Museum of Work & Culture.

The tour should last 1 ½ hours. Please wear comfortable shoes.

This is a free tour.

Please join us in what will be an informative tour.
Please call 595-3062 with inquiries.



40th Class Reunion

The class of 1982 is celebrating its 40th year class reunion on October 15th. For more information, contact Jody Lamoureux at jody.keene@ymail.com



Mystery photo



Richard Potenza informed us that he recognized three of his classmates pictured in last month's mystery photo. The kneeling young man is Carl Klockars, the young lady with the pony tail is Cynthia Koerner, and the brunette young lady is Sandra DePointe.



This month's mystery photo was donated by Michael Moore and family. We know it is the 1931 Slatersville men's baseball team but we do not know the player's identities. Can anyone help?



NSHA Merchandise

This month's featured item is: the Slatersville Congregational Church Ornament, now for sale, along with the 150th Sesquicentennial Ornament, for just \$15. Also, we have NS Throws (blue, green or burgundy) for \$35 and 2022 Historic Calendars for \$10. ****New 2023 calendars available soon!****

View our entire inventory at the NSHA On-Line shop at www.nsheritageassn.org. There is a \$5 shipping fee for each item and local delivery is free. Orders ship immediately upon receipt of payment.



Very few 2022 calendars are left and they will now be a collector's item!



Membership

2022 Dues are now past due. We thank the 139 members who have joined or renewed. Members can renew by mail, via Pay Pal Giving Fund or Tuesday mornings at the Memorial Town building. Your \$20 annual dues allow us to conduct vital preservation activities. Seniors over 85 and students are still free. If you are unsure of your status, please contact us.

We welcome new members: Donna Macksoud, Michael and Katherine Sipala, Ellen Hewitt, Sam Turco and David Whitesell

Email nsha@nsheritageassn.com, call
[401-651-6316](tel:401-651-6316)

or visit our website nsha@nsheritageassn.org

Payment Options

- 1. PayPal Giving Fund:** search for nsha@nsheritageassn.com, 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.
- 4.** We will also pick up payments at your door if you live locally. Contact nsha@nsheritageassn.com or call 401-651-6316



Amazon Smile is a part of Amazon that allows you to shop as well as generate a corporate donation for **The NSHA**.

- ❖ Simply create an account on **Amazon Smile** (<https://smile.amazon.com>).
- ❖ Choose The North Smithfield Heritage Association as the charity that will benefit from your purchases at no extra cost to you.

Make sure you use the AmazonSmile website to shop!
(<https://smile.amazon.com>)



Outreach



Instagram (nsha1970) Please follow us!

Help wanted: We need a volunteer familiar with Instagram to manage our account. Can **YOU** help?

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](tel:401-651-6316)