



NORTH SMITHFIELD HERITAGE ASSOCIATION MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME II, ISSUE 9 ~ DECEMBER 2021

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Historic NS

NSHA is proud this month to showcase the poem (on page 3), “Second Battle of Nipsachuck: The Battle of the Swamp,” by Zachary Simpkins, who is in grade 7 at NSMS. Zachary won first place in the “Historic NS Art Contest.” NSHA plans to incorporate his poem into the Sesquicentennial History Book as well as place it in our Time Capsule. We thank all students who submitted their wonderful art.

THANK YOU, NSHA MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS

As we wind down a year in which we celebrated the anniversary of the Town of North Smithfield’s incorporation 150 years ago in 1871, and as we reflect on another year of living through the pandemic, NSHA is so incredibly grateful for you, our members and supporters.

Despite the challenges that have arisen in our individual lives and in our collective life, NSHA’s members and the members of the North Smithfield community have carried on with the work of preserving and celebrating our history, and looking toward the future.

From the many improvements to the Forestdale Schoolhouse and Heritage Hall—to the new life that has been brought to the Memorial Town Building—to the history events, community gatherings, and historic hikes that have been enjoyed by so many despite the setbacks—we have carried on!

We look forward to another year of attending NSHA events with you. And we look forward to sharing more stories of our history with you in the *NSHA Newsletter*. In the meantime, enjoy this abbreviated holiday edition. We sincerely wish you all happy holidays and a happiest and healthiest New Year.





DECEMBER SPOTLIGHT: ICE CUTTING ON PRIMROSE POND

Al Menard of the NSHA Archives Committee recently came across photographs of and *Woonsocket Call* articles about ice cutting on Primrose Pond from the early 1900s. *What is ice cutting?* Before modern refrigeration, ice harvesting from frozen lakes and rivers was an important industry that required hard work and careful planning. Ice was crucial for railroads to cool boxcars for the shipment of fruits, vegetables and meat, and was needed for butcher shops, creameries, stores and breweries. Reading these articles about local ice harvesting helps us understand the history of our climate and industry; read on...

A January 12, 1900 article announced to the local readers: "Ice is being cut on the Primrose pond by the Crystal ice company, and a dozen men are wanted at once." A headline fourteen years later announced "Icemen and Plumbers Busy" due to a "cold snap" from "16 below to 9 above" on January 14, 1914.

A headline from twenty years later, January 11, 1934, read that the "First Crop of Ice Is Now Being Cut: Primrose Pond Yielding 11-Inch Harvest; Further Thaw Feared." That article indicated that "mild winters in the past two years" had "prevented the cutting of any sizable crop in this vicinity." The article mentioned the Rhode Island Ice Company, which was cutting on the Primrose and Esmond Ponds, and the Laquerre Ice Company, which was cutting on Harris Pond.



George Smith cutting ice on
Primrose Pond (1939)



Ice cutting — Primrose Pond
(1939)



The most recent article, from March 5, 1937, lamented: "The North Smithfield icemen are resigned to the fact that there will in all probability be no ice cut here this winter." The article continued, "[u]sually the Primrose pond has frozen thickly enough for a crop when some other ponds didn't and ice has been wholesaled from there, but this year the house is empty as are all the rest of them." *Thank you, Al, for sharing these stories, and thank you to Gail Denomme for the news clippings!*



“Second Battle of Nipsachuck: The Battle of the Swamp”

by Zachary Simpkins

The land that once belonged to us,
The land where we were free,
The swampy land of Rhode Island,
It was for you and me.

The pale men with their cannons,
That chased us Natives out,
They drove us out of our homeland,
For we were not devout.

The summer breeze, facing disease,
I pushed hard through the swamp,
The Dark brown mud, the chewy cud,
My fellow warrior's stomps.

Our bravest leader, Sachem Quiapen,
Her hair flowed in the wind,
Mounted on her bold Dragoon,
And fighting to the end.

The pale men with their cannons,
They began to rain down fire,
And all the people I'd grown to love,
All perished in the mire.

For I was the unlucky one,
As the only survivor,
Escaping through the vast forest,
And standing in the mire.

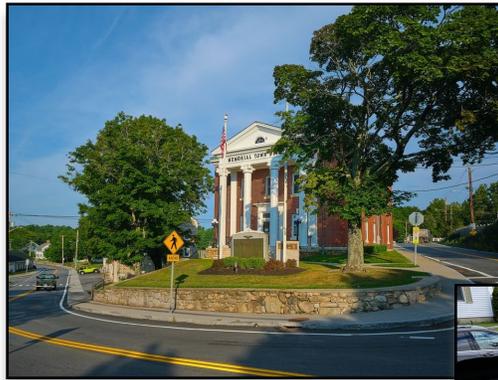
"Spread the news," I screamed, I shouted,
"Our bravest leader is gone,
Sachem Quiapen has died in battle,
So listen to this song,"

The land that once belonged to us,
The land where we were free,
The swampy land of Rhode Island,
It was for you and me.



2021 NSHA Yearbook

Some memories from our year.



Be sure to visit our Facebook page to view many more photographs of our members, volunteers, and supporters in action!





HISTORIC CEMETERY OF THE MONTH: **DARIUS MOWRY CEMETERY**

In last year's December Newsletter (Vol. I, Issue 10), we highlighted the Darius Mowry Cemetery. Since that time, NSHA has been fortunate to have member Lynne Pelletier working hard on documenting and restoring our local historic cemeteries. This month, Lynne delves deeper on this historic cemetery, and the work of the NSHA Historic Cemetery Volunteers...

The Darius Mowry Cemetery is located on Pond House Road directly behind a private residence. It is a small cemetery, approximately 10 x 40 feet with no enclosure of any kind. There are thought to be six burials here; five graves are marked with fieldstones and one is an inscribed marble headstone. When the cemetery was surveyed in the early 1970's, it was noted that there was also a footstone inscribed with the initials, L.M. but it is now missing.

Darius Mowry was born January 29, 1782. He was the son of Richard Mowry and his wife, Hannah Arnold. He was married to Lydia Colwell who was born in Glocester, RI. They had at least seven children; Olney, Darius, Hannah, Lydia, Emer, Jackson and Elizabeth. The marble headstone is for their daughter, Lydia. Lydia was born in about 1819 and she died at age 21 on April 25, 1840. The other graves are assumed to belong to Darius and other family members.

The cemetery restoration crew got a chance to put their puzzle-making skills to the test recently when they were contacted by the homeowner whose property includes this small family lot. He was seeking advice about restoring the visible graves and he said that a previous homeowner had told him the gravestones were laid flat to protect them from damage during construction. It isn't clear when this occurred but the large marble headstone was broken into six pieces and became embedded into the lawn. The homeowner thoughtfully marked the grave with a large heart shaped plant hanger. *(See photos of restoration on next page.)*

The crew, which included Ed and Kim Walker, Rich Keene, Barbara St Germain and myself, went to see what could be done. When we first observed the remnants of the marble headstone it was easy to see that something wasn't quite right. The writing on the pieces did not line up making it hard to read. The first step was to carefully remove each segment and place it on a piece of plywood. Then, after playing with the alignment of the pieces in true puzzle fashion, we were able to determine what was engraved on the stone. Unfortunately, we also realized that there were several pieces missing! A quick search around the yard led to the discovery of three more pieces, but only one fit into our puzzle. The two mystery pieces might be part of the missing footstone but there are no letters on either piece and the pieces also don't seem to fit together. Another puzzle to solve?

The bottom of the marble headstone was next located by using a probe. It provides us with the original location for the headstone's placement. Once all of the pieces of the headstone are located, they will be reassembled, epoxied back together and then both the marble headstone and the fieldstone markers will be raised to their original upright positions.

Thank you so much to Lynne for your tireless work with NSHA and our local historic cemeteries. We can't wait to learn more in 2022! (See photographs from this story on next page.)



The process of restoring Lydia Mowry's gravestone (1819 c. — April 25, 1840) at the Darius Mowry Cemetery was an act of love by NSHA volunteers.





NSHA Gifts and Swag available now! Check out this flyer for more information. While our in-person events have passed, be sure to reach out for your last-minute holiday shopping and beyond!

North Smithfield Heritage Association
401-651-6316 nsheritageassn.com

Shop Last Minute for Christmas with Us!

 **Online or in person**

Online at www.nsheritageassn.org/shop

In Person at the Forestdale School
Thursday, Dec. 15 and Saturday, Dec. 17 from 10am to 3pm

In Person at the Memorial Town Building
Tuesdays from 9am to noon time.

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

Featuring our 2022 Historical Calendar, Puzzles, Maps, NS books and Commemorative ornaments ...



Proceeds benefit NSHA preservation efforts throughout Town



Celebrating NSHA's 2021 Preservation Achievements

The accomplishments of NSHA's members this year are numerous, and much of this Newsletter and the NSHA Facebook page are dedicated to sharing those accomplishments throughout the year.

As we round out 2022, NSHA would like to take a moment to send a special thank you to the Town of North Smithfield Town Council for its continued support of our most significant preservation efforts this year: the new Historic Tax Credit ordinance and the new Malavery House local historic district.



Grange Road National Historic District

Grange Road is one of our oldest roads. Along with Rocky Hill Road and Pond House Road, it once formed part of the Old Oxford Turnpike (Road), which colonists used to travel from Limerock to Oxford, MA. Originally, the turnpike was almost certainly a trail used by Native People to travel to and through Nipsachuck. This year, the town council approved a new local Historic District for the 18th century Malavery House on Grange Road. It was built in about 1720 by Nathaniel Mowry's granddaughter, Experience, and her husband, John Malavery. For a time, the house served as a stagecoach stop on the turnpike. The Malavery House is one of the oldest houses in town and is owned by Irene Nebiker.

Historic Residence Tax Credit Ordinance

This year, the town council passed amendments to the town's Historic Residence Tax Credit ordinance. The amendments authorized changes to the state law that gives local jurisdiction for the tax credit program to the North Smithfield Historic District Commission. The state law (through an act introduced by state rep. Brian Newberry) allows North Smithfield historic residence owners to become eligible for state historic residence tax credits. The act also importantly expands the definition of "Historic Residence" to include historic accessory structures such as barns and certain historic commercial buildings, as well as residential structures.



Our Members Make NSHA a Success!

This past month, NSHA welcomed new members Irene Blais, Brian Dubois, Bob Mowry, and Julie Mowry, as well as Tad Maciejewski and Christine Dubois. Our current member roll indicates that we have 157 members with current dues. We sincerely thank all who recently renewed for the next year!

Do you need to renew your membership, or would you like to join NSHA? Your \$20 annual dues allow us to conduct our vital preservation activities. Seniors over 85 years old and students are still free. If you are not sure of your status, please contact us! Visit our website or contact us at (401) 651-6316.

Payment Options:

PayPal Giving Fund: search for nsha@nsheritageassn.com, select “Donation” and type the purpose for the payment on the memo line (including Dues).

Give cash or check: Make checks payable to “NSHA” and note the purpose (“Dues, Annual Appeal, or Merchandise”) on the memo line.

Mail Checks: NS Heritage Assn, P.O. Box 413, Slatersville, RI 02876.

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





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Stay tuned in 2022 for more stories, news, and events from NSHA! Also, please preserve North Smithfield's history by sharing your family memorabilia, photos, and memories with us! Your community and your family will thank you! See you in 2022!

-The NSHA Board and the NSHA Newsletter Team