



NORTH SMITHFIELD HERITAGE ASSOCIATION MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume III Issue 3 ~ April 2022

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North Smithfield 150th Anniversary Celebration

Anniversary Parade - May 7, 2022

The parade will start at 10:00 am at Slatersville Plaza and travel along a two-mile route along Victory Highway, Green Street, and North Main Street. It will consist of five divisions including trucks, motorcycles, marching units, bands, and floats. Food Trucks will be at the Congregational Church and the Memorial Town Building.

Quaker Highway and Central Street will close at 8:00 am. The parade route will close at 9:45 am. Parking will be available at the Village Haven, Halliwell School, Town Hall, Pacheco Park, and St. John's Church. Participant parking will be off Quaker Highway.

The Committee meets at 10 am every Friday, at the Memorial Town Building as well as via Zoom. Contact Kate at kpasquariello@nsmithfieldri.org for further information.





Time Capsule

The North Smithfield 150th anniversary time capsule

Donate iconic items from the past 150 years. Contact us to arrange drop off or pickup! We plan to seal the capsule on April 29, 2022 and then store it in our archives at the Memorial Town Building.

Also, we are looking for anyone who may have attended the ceremony and burial of the NS 125th anniversary time capsule on June 6, 1995. Would anyone have photos of this event? Thank you!

Sesquicentennial History Book

Author John Hill, a retired reporter for *The Providence Journal*, continues his research for the new history book. Currently, we seek information about local sports programs especially histories of Pop Warner Football, Youth Hockey, and Youth Soccer.



Thank You!



We thank Mary Ruth Cayer and Dick Potenza for recently sharing their memories about living, and working in North Smithfield.

Education

We also thank NS Middle School students and Junior National Honor Society members Robert Harvey, Aayan Khan, Ethan and Thayer Glucksman for volunteering to do their community service requirements on the NSHA Google Maps History Tours project.



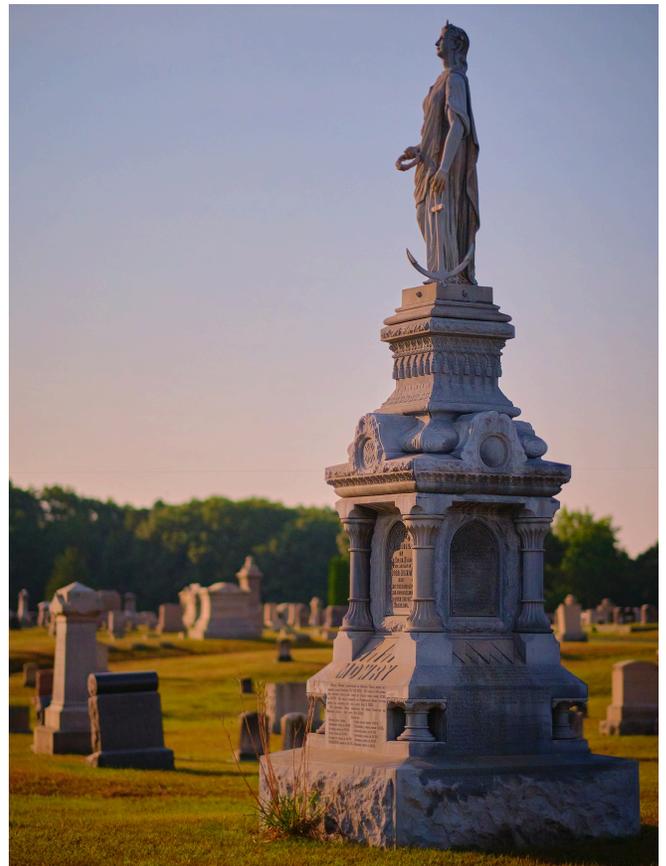
Historic Cemetery Awareness Months

The RI Historical Cemetery Commission and the RI Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission jointly agreed to designate April and May 2022 as Cemetery Awareness Months. Volunteers conducted spring cleanup in several historic cemeteries in town including the Buxton Lot on Quaker Highway, the Richard Mowry Lot on Greenville road, the Gideon Sayles lot on Iron Mine Hill Rd, The Hotchkiss Cemetery on Smithfield Rd and the Blackmar-Wing, Jashub Wing and Harris-Mowry Lots on Providence Pike.



Save the Date

Historic guided tour of Union Cemetery at 9:00 am, Saturday, May 21st followed by a gravestone cleaning demonstration at 11:00 am in the Hotchkiss Cemetery.





Historic Cemetery of the Month



Stephen Mowry Lot
By Lynne Pelletier

The Stephen Mowry Lot or NS 012 is a small family graveyard located within an auto salvage yard on Iron Mine Hill Road. Unfortunately, it is in very poor shape and in need of restoration. The lot is approximately 60 feet by 50 feet and is divided into two sections by a large stone wall in the center of the cemetery. The upper portion of the cemetery contains 5 engraved headstones for the immediate family members of Stephen Mowry Jr. The lower portion of the cemetery contains 12 fieldstone markers and it has been speculated that these graves belong to Stephen Mowry Sr. and his other children.

Stephen Mowry Jr. was born in Smithfield on September 7, 1781 to parents, Stephen Mowry and his wife, Amey Cook. Stephen Mowry “was a farmer and he lived on an excellent farm about a mile south of Sayles Hill in Smithfield” according to the book *The Descendants of Nathaniel Mowry* by William Augustus Mowry.

Stephen married his wife, Alpha Chase, sometime before 1808 and together they had at least two children. Stephen died on November 22, 1844 at age 63. Alpha Chase was born in Smithfield on October 3, 1780 to parents Bernard Chase and Margaret Paine. She died on February 21, 1865 at age 84.

Urana Paine Mowry was the daughter of Stephen and Alpha. She was born on September 1, 1814 and died on October 2, 1829 at the age of 15. She is buried beside her

parents.

Smith Ray Mowry was the son of Stephen and Alpha. He was born August 13, 1808 in Smithfield. He married his first wife, Diana Aldrich on June 11, 1837. Diana was born in about 1821 and died on June 27, 1853 at about 31 years old. Diana died 2 days after giving birth to her fourth child, a daughter, who was born and died on June 25, 1853. The headstone does not list the child as female but *The Descendants of Nathaniel Mowry* book does. It also curiously lists the date of both mother and child as 1847. I have not been able to determine which year is correct.

Smith Ray Mowry was remarried in 1856 to Adelia Ballou. According to the book *An Elaborate History and Genealogy of the Ballous in America* by Adin Ballou, Smith Ray Mowry has “held several offices of trust and responsibility in his native vicinage- such as Overseer of the Poor, Town Councilman in 1836, 1837, 1838 and Representative in the General Assembly. He was an influential and respected man.”

His obituary in *The Woonsocket Reporter* states that Smith Ray died of consumption on September 29, 1884 at age 76. He spent the last 12 years of his life living in nearby Woonsocket. He is remembered as having “a kind, cheerful, social and hospitable disposition” and “both towns recognized the loss of this intelligent and faithful citizen”.

One final note about this family... in the February 26, 2020 edition of *The Valley Breeze* there was a short article and a picture of a stone foundation located in the woods off of Iron Mine Hill Rd. It has been theorized that these remains are what is left of a home that Stephen Mowry built in the 1820's or 1830's for his son Smith Ray on the family farm. It is thought that the family grew potatoes and fruit trees on the farm but discontinued farming and eventually abandoned the home.





Did You Know?

Heritage Hall History



Heritage Hall, located at 101 Green Street, Slatersville, was built in 1897 as a chapel, known as St. Luke's Episcopal Mission.

Some 30 residents of Slatersville had filed a petition with St. James Episcopal Church in Woonsocket in 1896 to form St. Luke's Mission under their auspices. A house of worship was needed and thus William P. Holt acquired the first parcel of land upon which the church was built on August 23, 1897 from the William Slater Mill Corp. for one dollar. The cornerstone was laid on Sept. 11, 1897 and the Church opened on December 19th of that year.

The Church was provided with black walnut pews and chancel furnishings; the altar was adorned with a brass cross and vase. The walls were two shades of brown, harmonizing with the furniture and the overhead finish of hard pine. An organ was installed and the Church was lighted by two chandeliers of electric lights, designed and made by Robert P. Smith, Sunday School Superintendent. The total cost of the church and furnishings was about \$3,000 of which \$1,100 had already been contributed when the building was finished. Only \$1,900 remained as parish debt.

That year, the 1897 Christmas bulletin of St. James listed the original members of the mission. Among the charter members were Martha, Mary, Max and Theodore Helm, and Mary, William P. and Welcome H. T. Holt.

The 1900 Parochial reports for the Episcopal Diocese of Providence note that year that total membership in St. Luke's was 140. However good times were not to continue into the new century: "the closing of the mills at Slatersville, causing the removal of 26 of the 34 communicants and almost the entire congregation from the village necessitated the suspension of the services on May 20, 1900, after the most prosperous year in its history." The owner, William P. Holt, had been one of those transferred to Wilmington, Delaware and the rector, the Rev. William H. Eastham, had been transferred to St. Paul's, Glenwood, Minnesota on May 1, 1900.

On March 7, 1906, Mr. Holt sold the building and grounds to Forrest Mowry and Myron O. Aldrich for \$10, and under their direction, it became known as Lincoln Hall, a community gathering place for social events including dances.

On July 13, 1913, it was sold by Forrest Mowry to the Union Grange No. 13 for \$10 and this began its 80-year history as the Union Grange Hall. In March 1994, the Grange donated the land, its buildings and furnishings to the North Smithfield Heritage Association.



Preservation & Restoration

Forestdale School (190 School Street)

Dionne Electric installed new lighting and electrical circuits in one of the hallways. Allard Construction and Tom McGee will install a new water line next week.



Heritage Hall (101 Green Street)



Architectural Preservation Group started to restore one of the large double-hung stained-glass windows. Larry and Charlie plan to rebuild the stairs to the attic at the end of the month.

Members dismantled and removed most of the wood cabinetry from the old piano at Heritage Hall. We thank NS DPW for helping to remove the heaviest piece, the sounding board.

NS Zoning Ordinance Amendment Local Historic Districts

The Planning board will consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance at its next meeting that reduces the administrative and financial burden of property owners who agree to let the town designate their historic buildings as an individual local historic district. This will simplify the process and reduce costs significantly.



Heritage Hall Rentals (101) Green Street

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





From the Archives

Beginning this month, we will feature a short historical sketch of some of the personalities who have had an impact on the North Smithfield community. The article will be written by NSHA's archivist, Al Menard.

George Watson Lothrop

“Philanthropist, Traveler, Businessman, Hero”

George W. Lothrop was born on January 25, 1845 in West Bridgewater, MA. His parents were George W. and Sarah (Horton) Lothrop. His mother died when he was 5 years old so he went to live with relatives in Pawtucket while his father went out west to California to engage in the grocery business.

Remarkably, when he was 10 years old he went to join his father in California. A brave boy, he traveled alone down the east coast, through the Isthmus of Panama and up the coast of California to San Francisco. This experience, a difficult as it probably was, resulted in a love of travel that would continue for all his life. After some time in California and Nevada, George and his father moved to the state of Washington. Later it would be his proud claim that he was the first white man to land as a passenger on Vancouver Point, where the city of Vancouver now stands.

Another of his favorite stories to tell was that on trips to British Columbia he would carry large amounts of gold hidden in his clothes from mining camps. “The Indians wouldn’t bother me, for my clothes were too small to fit them, and the whites never suspected that a kid would be toting hundreds of dollars in gold.”

On another trip he almost lost his life when a strong wave swept the vessel on which he was a passenger. Fortunately a seaman grabbed him by the trousers and rescued him. He would often mention that he was saved by his britches. However, he valued a different pair of pants.-the ones he wore when at age 8 when he set out to make his way in the world. For years he is said to have carried these britches around in a paper bag. He showed them to anyone who would spare the time. In 1936 he took them to the Woonsocket Institute of Savings. Later he noticed that he had misplaced them. He advertised and offered a reward but he never recovered them.

At the age of 18 he returned to Pawtucket where he worked in a blacksmith shop.

In 1864 he set up a leather belting business in Woonsocket. These belts were used for the many manufacturing businesses that were growing in the area. His business was a success. He would run it for 42 years.



GEORGE W. LOTHROP



He married his wife Sara Quinn of Pawtucket in Boston on Dec. 15, 1869. He and his wife lived in Union Village, North Smithfield in a home they called "Casa Loma." They had 3 daughters. Jennie, wife of Fred S. Coburn; Alice, wife of Foster Lincoln; Grace, wife of Marc Vickers and a sister, Mrs. Sarah K. (Lothrop) Fox.

On a day in July 1900 a fire broke out at his mill on East Street in Woonsocket. Several women were trapped on the second floor. Some jumped but 77 year old Sophia Reneault was unable to jump so George climbed a ladder, entered the building and attempted to carry her down the ladder. She was burned badly over most of her body and George suffered multiple burns. As he descended the ladder with his burden he became dazed and the two fell to the ground from the ladder. George was gravely hurt and had a long recovery but poor Mrs. Reneault died as a result of her burns. George was heartbroken.

As his wealth increased George began to buy real estate. Much of it in Union Village, the upper South Main St. and in Market Square in Woonsocket. He was active in local civic organizations including the Woonsocket Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, and YMCA.

George died in 1941 at the age of 96 and was buried in Union Cemetery.

Often called the "Squire of Union Village," he had a reputation for being difficult with his business adversaries and some even called him "stingy." Yet when he died he left the George W. Lothrop Fund. This trust was set up for the purpose of advancing the "health and well-being of the people of North Smithfield."

By 1966, 12 organizations had benefited from the fund to the extent of more than \$58,000. These organizations included the N.S. Ambulance & Rescue Association, N.S. Library Association, N.S. Little League, N.S. Junior League Football Association, NS Recreation, Slatersville Scouters Association, Slatersville Girl Scouts, Primrose Volunteer Fire Dept., and others.

Mr. Lothrop's legacy survives to this day. The Rhode Island Foundation now manages the George W. Lothrop Fund and our community continues to benefit from the generosity of this remarkable man.

Archives

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



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.

Email nsha@nsheritageassn.com,
call [401-651-6316](tel:401-651-6316)
or visit our website
nsha@nsheritageassn.org



Research

Native American and post-colonial Stone Features Research Team

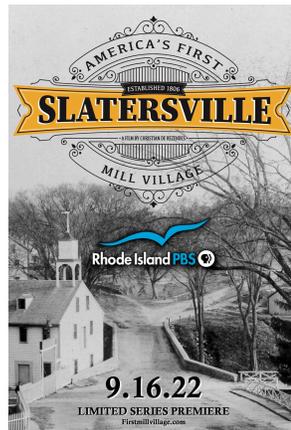
The team resumed its weekly meetings Friday, April 22 at the Memorial town Building and via Zoom. Team Chief, Larry Smith welcomed Doug Harris, former Deputy Historian of the Narragansett Indian Tribe. Mr. Harris gave the team valuable insights into local stone features that were created by Native Americans.



Slatersville Movie premiere date!

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 12 episodes and be split into two seasons of six episodes each.

Season One will premiere on September 16, 2022 with a new episode to follow every Friday evening at 8pm through October 21, 2022. Season Two will premiere in 2023 on a date to be determined.



Nature and History Tour



Crookfall Brook History & Nature Walk:
May 14, 9:30am. Meet at Aldi's parking lot. Visit Woonsocket Reservoir #1 & Pump House, Woonsocket Reservoir #2 and Mill Site, Spring Brook.

Help Promote Local History



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)



Upcoming Events



The 2022 Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner will take place at 6:00 pm on Friday, April 29th at Heritage Hall. The meeting is open to all members and their guests. Please bring your favorite dish to share!

The governance committee nominated the following officers:

President- Rich Keene

Vice President- Peter Hainley

Treasurer- Doug Osier

Assistant Treasurer- Deb Keene

Recording Secretary- Rachel Pecoraro

Corresponding Secretary- Jody Lamoureux

At-large Board Member- Ruth Pacheco

At-large Board Member- Bob Mowry Jr.

Alicia Lehrer, Executive Director of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council will talk about the council and plans to construct bike paths and greenways along local rivers.

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>)





Upcoming Events

NS Gala 2022

Come enjoy a family style chicken dinner and dancing in a semi-casual atmosphere from 6:00pm -10:00pm on Saturday, June 18 at the Village Haven Restaurant. Tickets cost \$25 and are available at the Town Hall, L'il General Convenience Store, Village Paint, and the Memorial Town Building. We will also make local doorstep sales. Groups of 6 or more may reserve a table before May 28.



Development

1. Board of Director's donations topped \$4K this year. We thank them for their dedicated service and thoughtful generosity!
2. Annual Appeal 2022: The 2022 Annual appeal has kicked off. We encourage the community to support NSHA preservation and conservation efforts by making a tax-deductible donation today.

Membership

We welcome new members: Ryan Chopy, Brian Gartland, Keith Mansen, Jean Hibbert and Terry Skinkle.

Members with current dues: 175

2022 Dues are now due. We thank the 43 members who have already paid. Members can renew at the Annual Dinner, by mail, via Pay Pal Giving Fund or Tuesday mornings and the Memorial Town building. Your \$20 annual dues allow us to conduct our vital preservation activities. Seniors over 85 and students are still free. If you are unsure of your status, please contact us.

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

or visit our website nsha@nsheritageassn.org



Forestdale's one-room schoolhouse and its teacher, Mrs. Mary Foley Podenza, greet "The Pilgrims." Equipment is brought in by five of student body of 19.



Preparing for school's first movie performance. Youngsters pull down shades and tuck paper over windows under watchful direction of their teacher.



Reading a summary of the photoplay is part of routine of showing historical movies. So is a "follow-up" period for discussion after film has been seen.

"THE PILGRIMS" COME TO FORESTDALE



One of the big scenes in "The Pilgrims" is signing of the "Mayflower" compact. Teacher doubles as movie operator while children watch historical drama unfold.

Children in One-Room School in North Smithfield See Their First Educational Photoplay

BY ROBERT L. WHEELER
TEACHER said they were going to have movies and they did. Teacher is Mrs. Mary Foley Podenza of the Forestdale school, which has four walls and takes in four grades. The enrollment shrinkage which has hit all the schools, large and small, whittled the student body at Forestdale down this year from 23 to 15, and even a one-room schoolhouse is a loose fit for 15 boys and girls, all little tykes. What they lacked in numbers they made up in excitement and wriggles.

Not that the motion picture, as entertainment, is ever anything new to any American child, unless you catch a very young one, just emerging from the crib and even then you can't be sure it isn't on its way to the nearest neighborhood grind, carrying a spare. But movies in the schoolhouse were something else again, to these Forestdale kids. And silent movies at that!

All of those present had seen plenty of commercial cinemas and some were experienced enough to have developed definite tastes and preferences in film fare.

For instance, take Edwin Camara. Edwin said glowingly that he liked pictures about "them olden times" and a very little boy in very large spectacles sitting next to Edwin declared for pictures about ships. A round little girl sitting on the other side of the room was in favor of "Yankee Doodle Dandy," which she had seen recently in Woonsocket.

Well, sir, there you had these three intelligent film-goers constituting themselves a nucleus of interest and attention for the first Yale Chronicle photoplay ever shown in Forestdale, R. I. "The Pilgrims" simply couldn't miss, for it was certainly about the Olden Times, as you could tell by the Pilgrims' neckbands, which they starched every morning before Indians or breakfast, and it also had in it one of the most famous ships that ever crossed the Atlantic and the one with the largest passenger complement, "The Mayflower."

And as for "Yankee Doodle Dandy," where would George M. Cahn have been if the Pilgrims hadn't come here a couple of hundred years ahead of him to found a country so he could be born in Fox Point and have a flag to wave?

No wonder "The Pilgrims" was a hit in Forestdale!

Not all of it went over, of course. Some of the captions were a little bit above the heads of the audience, like when the persecutors of the Pilgrims were making it tough for them in the village of Scrooby, in England, and somebody with a beard said to a young Pilgrim: "Rash boy, hold your tongue lest you be clapt up in prison!" But anybody could understand them stoning the Pilgrims' doors and Edwin Camara didn't think much of that. And of course the story of the Pilgrims is good straight narrative anyway and doesn't need much oral telling. Everybody in the Forestdale school could understand snow and hardships and Indians.

Especially Indians.

There was one touch of comedy. Just after the Pilgrims had landed on Plymouth Rock the operator ran the film backward just a little way so that it looked as if they were getting back in the boat. Just suppose they had!

—Journal photos, Harry A. Scherer



A tense moment in American history. It's a cold winter, the Pilgrims are down to their last ear of corn and the Indians are on the loose. How will it all end? Well, we trust.

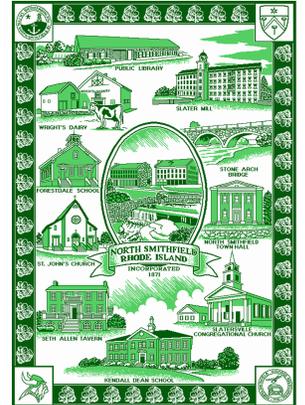
A member recently brought this wonderful photo to our attention. Does anyone recognize the children?



Get Your NSHA Merchandise!

View our entire inventory at the NSHA On-Line shop at www.nsheritageassn.org. \$5 shipping fee for each order. Free local delivery. Orders ship immediately upon payment.

2022 Historic Calendars \$10, NS 150th Anniversary Ornament \$15, NS Throws \$35



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

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Instagram (nsha1970) Please follow us!

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