



# NORTH SMITHFIELD HERITAGE ASSOCIATION MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME I, ISSUE 7 ~ SEPTEMBER 2020

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## STARTING IN OCTOBER:

### Open House at the Little Red School House

If you've driven through town, chances are you have driven by the "Little Red School House" at 190 School Street. Built in 1876-77 on land given by the Forestdale Manufacturing Company, the building was used as a school from that time until 1974, when it became the headquarters for the North Smithfield Heritage Association. While a school, it was originally known as the Branch School in District Number Three, then later as the Forestdale School.



We want to share this special building with you! Please join us during our new open house series, every Saturday throughout October, November, and December, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Face coverings are required, and hand sanitizer will be provided. Please maintain proper distancing and enter through right door and exit through left. Thank you!

**Visit us on Facebook for updates throughout the month.**



## SEPTEMBER SPOTLIGHT: NSHA LEASES MEMORIAL TOWN HALL

We are happy to announce that NSHA will sign a five-year lease with the town this week that will give the Association control of the Memorial Town Building for the foreseeable future. This gives NSHA the ability to preserve this icon of Slatersville in its current state. While it has yet to be decided exactly how NSHA intends to use this historic building, the town leadership has expressed a desire that it be used, at least in part, as a museum. The lease with the town also allows NSHA to potentially use the building as a visitor center, community center, and/or cultural center.

The building itself, built nearly 100 years ago in 1921, is a two-story brick, neo-Georgian structure, with a colossal tetrastyle portico, full entablature, and pediment. It is built on the site of a long-established hotel and boarding house. As described in historic records, the building “achieves a measure of dignity by virtue of its appropriately civic, monumental facade and its situation atop high ground at the center of the village.”



Memorial Town Building, 1922

As recently announced in *The Valley Breeze*, NSHA will engage the community for input on potential uses of this special building. NSHA will conduct a public open house on Saturday, October 17 from 10 a.m. until noon. A virtual open meeting will then be held; for information and sign-in instructions on how to attend, please contact us at [nsha@nsheritageassn.com](mailto:nsha@nsheritageassn.com).



Memorial Town Building,  
Present Day

According to NSHA President Richard Keene, “The Heritage Association is excited about preserving this building as it is for as long as we can. . . . The building is iconic to Slatersville. When you think about the village of Slatersville, you’ve got the Memorial Town Building and you’ve got the church. Those are the two bookends, I would say, what stands out in people’s minds.”

NSHA looks forward to this new endeavor!



## Upcoming Events

\*Be sure to like our Facebook page to receive updates about upcoming events\*

### Ongoing

#### *Historic Cemetery Cleanup*

See NSHA Facebook page for information.

~

Saturday, October 10, 2020 ~ 9 a.m.

*Historic Cemetery Guided Tour*  
Grange Road & Rocky Hill Road  
Cemeteries

Register at [nsha@nsheritageassn.com](mailto:nsha@nsheritageassn.com).

~

Saturdays beginning on October 10  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

*Open House - Forestdale School*  
190 School Street

See page 1 for details.

~

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2020 ~ 6:30 p.m.

*NSHA Board Meeting*  
Zoom Video Conference

~ open to all members ~

Email [nsha@nsheritageassn.org](mailto:nsha@nsheritageassn.org).

~

Friday, October 16, 2020 ~ 7 p.m.

*Heritage History Night*  
Zoom Video Conference

“Drone North Smithfield”

Email [nsha@nsheritageassn.org](mailto:nsha@nsheritageassn.org).

~

Saturday, October 24, 2020

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

“Celebrating Suffrage”

Heritage Hall

See page 8 for more information.

## GET YOUR NSHA CALENDAR WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!



New England Image & Print plans to print the first batch of the new NSHA 2021 Calendars this week. These collectible, limited edition, high quality calendars feature photographs of local historic buildings and locations, as well as a brief description. The professional images were provided by local photographers Michael St. Jean, Larry Smith, Christine Keene, and Aleksandra Norton. Editors include Michael St. Jean, Judy (Tenzar) Beauchemin and Aleksandra Norton.

This priceless keepsake will be sold by NSHA for just \$15. All proceeds support local volunteer historic preservation activities and events. Buy your copy at the following locations: Forestdale School (Saturdays from 10am to 2pm); Wright's Dairy and Bakery (order online with your purchase); L'il General; Village Paint; Goodwin's Farm Stand; and Leeway Ace Hardware.

Get your calendar while supplies last!



## THANK YOU, AUCTION-GOERS!

We are proud to announce that, thanks to our generous supporters and volunteers, the first-ever NSHA Facebook Auction that ran throughout the month of August was a huge success! The Facebook platform brought enthusiastic bidders from outside of town, and even from outside the state—including from Massachusetts and Florida. The hardworking auction committee volunteer members raised \$4,537 from the auction, which funds will go a long way to helping NSHA fulfill our mission of preserving our town's most treasured places and memories, and sharing them with you.

The auction committee would like to thank the donors, bidders, and participating businesses for their support. In turn, NSHA would like to recognize the committed, dedicated auction committee members for their work on this month-long project!

### *HISTORIC CEMETERY OF THE MONTH:* CAPTAIN JAMES BUXTON CEMETERY

Located on a triangular lot with no known owner of record on the left along Route 146A on the way from Slatersville Plaza to Uxbridge (past Buxton Street) is Historic Cemetery NS001, the Capt. James Buxton Cemetery. James Buxton (1745-1817) served from 1777 to 1782 as lieutenant and captain in Col. Benjamin Tupper's regiment. He was born and died in what was then Smithfield, but is currently the northwestern-most portion of North Smithfield; he is buried at the cemetery along with his wife Esther Southwick Buxton (1748-1835) and their three children, Jonathan (1771-1870), David (1777-1861), and Rufus (1778-1862).



The Rhode Island Historic Cemetery Commission website indicates 76 burials within the cemetery, with 56 inscriptions and 20 fieldstones; the oldest burial in 1809 and the newest in 1944. The cemetery covers an area of 18,460 square feet and is completely surrounded on all sides by a low stone wall and includes an iron gate on the Route 146A side with a sign: "BUXTON." Over the years, neighbors and volunteers have maintained the cemetery.



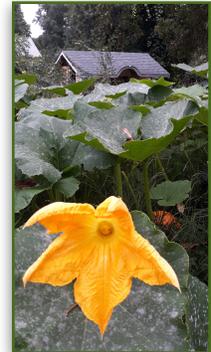
## Neighbors Like These

*by Freya Hainley*



On Maple Avenue in Forestdale a large, white farmhouse keeps history. Built in 1830, the home has retained many of its original features including arched windows, roof cornices, wood clapboards, barn, and the quintessential white picket fence. “You wouldn’t know it because it’s so much fancier than the architecture today, but this house would have been considered pretty basic by Victorian standards,” Ann Lilley explains. As we chat, my eyes can’t help but to wander. There are pear, apple and cherry trees lining the driveway and birds, including today an extremely vocal cardinal, dart amongst the branches. A quaint potting shed is hugged by gardens that this year produced lettuces, beans, peppers, and zucchini.

Sprawling the length of the driveway, Ann’s latest gardening experiment, straw bale gardening, has yielded a beautiful patch of pumpkins and winter squash. “Ann, that squash looks like the size of a small child,” I exclaim! “It probably weighs about twenty pounds,” she jokes. “I was thinking about having a contest,” she continues. “Guess its weight correctly, win a squash!” It’s conversations like these that make Ann Lilley and her husband John exactly the type of neighbors you want to have during a pandemic.



Just outside the picket fence, a garden bench has been kept well stocked throughout the pandemic with various useful and morale boosting items. The bench offered spring flowers, jump ropes, side walk chalk, rocks to paint, and fresh veggies. A gifted quilter, Ann temporarily put crafting on hold to answer the community’s need for cloth face masks. She has both led and contributed to several mask making efforts throughout town including the North Smithfield High School Class of 2020 and The Meadows, a Neighborworks senior housing community.

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A few steps from the bench is one of the latest projects Ann and John Lilley have collaborated on for community benefit. “John converted an old hutch, added a clock, and the legs,” Ann tells me. Ann and John are amazing when it comes to upcycling; taking a no longer used item and



repurposing it for a creative and different purpose.” Frankly I’m speechless. They have truly outdone themselves this time with The Forestdale Little Free Library. A yellow structure with glass doors is trimmed with green and red paint. Two shelves of books; free to take and read; forever if you wish, peek from behind those glass doors. The library is further decorated with hand painted nasturtiums and a portrait of the neighbor’s cat, Night-Night, and Vince, Ann and John’s corgi.

Currently, Ann is expanding community outreach by partnering with the North Smithfield Heritage Association. Her latest project was inspired by a trip to St. Louis during the spring. “The city was awash in daffodils,” Ann says. “It was breathtakingly beautiful!” She hopes that people will be inspired by her story and will join in the effort “to plant daffodils throughout our yards, street sides, and public spaces with thousands of daffodils.”



Ann is working with the North Smithfield Heritage Association to offer at cost, bags of fifty daffodils for \$15.00 each. See her daffodil flyer on the left, on page 10, and on the NSHA Facebook page.

As my visit concludes, I realize that I have never left the Lilley’s empty handed and how very lucky I am to have such friends during a pandemic. Sometimes it’s something tangible and greatly appreciated like homemade biscotti or egg biscuits, or fresh lettuce and cubanelles. Equally valued are often the jokes we share, Ann with a twinkle in her eye, and John with a wry smile. I am often laughing hours later, a chuckle coaxed from a memory of the day.



## FALL HISTORIC CEMETERY CLEAN-UP SUCCESSSES ABOUND

Autumn has arrived, and the NSHA Cemetery crews remain busy. And their work is not all work—an exciting discovery was made last week when a Research Team, led by Larry Smith, found the Jonathan Paine Cemetery north of Rocky Hill Road. The lot contains nine burials marked with fieldstone headstones and footstones, pictured on the right! Great work, Larry and team!



Kim Walker and Ed Walker cleaned seven gravestones that had been offered to successful bidders during the recent auction. Kim and Rachel Pecoraro began an extensive restoration in NS56, Joanna Comstock Lot on Premisy Hill Road. They repaired and reset the gravestone of Joanna Comstock (1781-1868) and discovered pieces of the gravestone of her husband Ariocho (1770-1835). They also cleared brush from NS47 Philip Mowry Lot off Woonsocket Hill Road.

Ed Walker repaired and reset several gravestones in and around an Aldrich Family plot at Hotchkiss Cemetery. He also assisted TJ Smith with his restoration efforts at NS48 Oliver Smith Cemetery behind TJ's home on Rocky Hill Road. Paul Collamati and Natalie Norris continued maintenance efforts to keep Hotchkiss looking dignified.



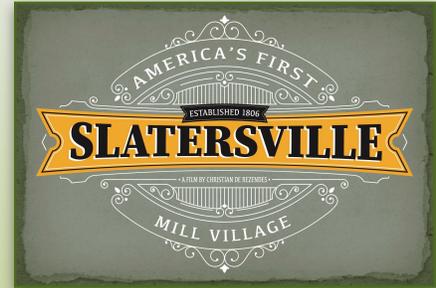
Cemetery director Denis Chamberland repaired and reset another gravestone in NS24 Gideon Sayles on Iron mine Hill Road. He and Dick Savaria also cleared a trail to NS60 John Mowry Lot on Iron Mine Hill Road.

Many more cemeteries need some TLC before winter sets in. This is the perfect time to work outside! Please contact us at [nsha@nsheritageassn.com](mailto:nsha@nsheritageassn.com) if you would like to help for an hour or two of helping to restore these precious historic areas in our own backyard.



## THINGS TO DO: AT HOME EDITION

In past issues, we have been happy to share the five SLATERSVILLE-In-Progress screenings that have been held in person and virtually, and also in collaboration with the Museum of Work & Culture as part of their *Virtual Valley Talks* series. As was previously announced, an eight-part series will premiere in the fall of 2021 in conjunction with Rhode Island PBS, which is exciting news! Until then, you can view the five screenings now, for a limited time until October 15, 2020. Check them out at the links listed below!



SCREENING #1 *Slater's origins in Belper, England, the Congregational Church and Camp Toonerville* ~ <https://vimeo.com/369006304>

SCREENING #2 *"Friends of the Park" about 1971 Centennial, "That Pleasant Green Spot" letter written by Ruth Slater in 1834, and "Portuguese Alley" about Forestdale's Holy Ghost Society* ~ <https://vimeo.com/392722528>

SCREENING #3 *"The Catholics are Coming" about French Canadian immigration and Museum of Work & Culture, and "The Right Track", about religious segregation in the 1940's* ~ <https://vimeo.com/415016816>

SCREENING #4 *"The Wedding Present with 27 Rooms" - Clouds Hill Museum* ~ <https://vimeo.com/440369878>

SCREENING #5 *"What If This Could Have a New Life?" about Maxwell Mays and his painting of Slatersville, and "Uncle Johnny", a continuation from the end of "Wedding Present"* ~ <https://vimeo.com/458387878>

### MORE TO DO: AT HOME

Friday, October 16, 2020 ~ 7 p.m.  
Heritage History Night  
via Zoom

*"Drone North Smithfield"*

Mankato Saloio of Elevision Drone Services treats us to an autumn aerial tour of North Smithfield and a lecture on how drones work.

Q&A session to follow.

*See details on page 3.*

### CELEBRATING SUFFRAGE

On Saturday, October 24, 2020  
NSHA PRESENTS  
"Celebrating Suffrage Event."

This year is the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage, but the roots of the right to vote have been present in North Smithfield for much longer. Come view the Dorr Rebellion, Slatersville Suffrage Flag, a rare exhibit to the public that is not likely to be repeated.

*See details on page 3.*



## *NORTH SMITHFIELD HERITAGE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL APPEAL GOING ON NOW!*

Our town's historic villages and rural landscapes, combined with its rich history, define its charm and character.

NSHA volunteers commit themselves to activities and events that promote and preserve our town's heritage.

The 2020 Annual Appeal funds most of our volunteer efforts each year. Please help to preserve our town's history by making a donation today.

*Online via PayPal:* <https://www.paypal.com/fundraiser/charity/2169250>

*By Mail:* P.O. Box 413, Slatersville, RI 02876

*In Person:* Forestdale School (Saturdays from 10am to 2pm)

Volunteer to help raise funds: email Natalie Norris at  
[natalie@nsheritageassn.com](mailto:natalie@nsheritageassn.com)



## CONTACT NSHA

Email: [nsha@nsheritageassn.org](mailto:nsha@nsheritageassn.org) ~ By Phone: (401) 477-6394

By Mail: PO Box 413, Slatersville, RI 02876

## VISIT US AT

Website: [www.nsheritageassn.org](http://www.nsheritageassn.org)

Facebook: [@northsmithfieldheritage](https://www.facebook.com/northsmithfieldheritage)



In these dark times can we  
**Spread Joy  
and Sunshine?  
YES!**



**The North Smithfield Heritage Association,**  
is undertaking an effort in North Smithfield and hope, over a course of several  
years, to plant our yards, street sides and public spaces with thousands of  
daffodils.

We have ordered King Alfred yellow daffodils bulbs in bulk and are  
repackaging them in 50 count bags. We're offering them to you

**at cost - \$15 per bag of 50.**

Beside this modest outlay you will have to plant them in a site that offers full  
sun or part shade. Most daffodils tolerate a range of soils but grow best in  
moderately fertile, well-drained soil that is moist during the growing season.

If you refrain from cutting the foliage until it naturally dies back, your  
daffodils will return year after year, offering an incredible return on your  
invested time and money.

Please contact me to order your daffodils or ask questions,  
**Ann Lilley via Facebook Messenger, [jslilley@yahoo.com](mailto:jslilley@yahoo.com)**