

The Hinterlander

Western Rhode Island Civic & Historical Society
November 2011



President

Norma Smith
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Secretary

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Treasurer

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Ways & Means

Brenda Titus
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Building & Grounds

Historian

Lynda Hawkins

Museum Committee

Dorothy Pogonowski

Membership

Dorothy Pogonowski
397-7801

Dear Members,

The newsletter is late this month for a couple of reasons, a malfunctioning computer and also waiting for the decision on our application for a Champlin Grant. Good News!! We have been approved for the grant in the amount of \$48,780 for replacement of the shingles on the house. We are anxious to see the house once the old shingles are removed. It may give us an idea of how the house was added to over the years and maybe even tell us where the original house is within the structure we know today. We hope to film this project so we can have this in our archives.

The election is this Tuesday and the proposed slate of officers is as follows:

President: Brenda Titus

Vice President: Norma Smith

Secretary: Sandy Lukowicz

Treasurer: Dorothy Pogonowski

Museum Chair: Sandy Lukowicz

Ways & Means, Programs: Norma Smith

Historian: Dean Bentley

Building and Grounds: Geoff Gardner

Membership: Lynda Hawkins

If anyone is interested in any of these positions, nominations can be taken from the floor.

The Holiday Open House is Sunday December 4 from 10am to 3pm. We will be offering refreshments to our visitors this day and would like to ask members to bake for this occasion. Call Brenda and tell her what you are planning to bring. We will have our antiques sleigh out for the purpose of members and visitors to take family holiday photos.

In a recent issue of the Kent County Times there was an article on the Lippitt Mill in West Warwick. It has been condemned and there is a strong possibility of it being torn down. This is the last wood mill in our area and is second in age to the Slater Mill in Pawtucket. It would be a sad state of affairs to see this mill suffer the same fate as so many of our historic buildings in recent years.

We are working on establishing a Historic District Commission in Coventry. Communities that have such a commission are eligible for federal grants the require such a commission to apply. If there is anyone that would like to help with this, let us know.

Next meeting
November 29, 2011
Paine House
7 PM

Mission Statement

The purpose of this Society shall be the "gathering and preserving early and present day historical materials relating to the western area of Rhode Island; providing for the accessibility of such materials as far as may be feasible to teachers, school pupils and the public cooperating, with Churches, granges, patriotic organizations and schools, and promoting the social and cultural life of the area."

LIPPITT MILLS COMPLEX (1810)



The Lippitt Mills complex, sited between the intersection of Main and Wakefield Streets and the North Branch of the Pawtuxet River, comprises a number of connected structures of various dimensions, and several smaller, free-standing buildings. Sited near Main Street is the original building on the site, the Number One Mill. It is a three and one-half story, wood-shingled structure, 34 feet wide and 104 feet deep, with a clerestory monitor in its end-gable roof and a short, square tower at the front topped by an octagonal cupola. The original large doorways in the center of the facade on each story were filled in during a 1984 renovation. Water wells to power the mill were located in the basement; the upper floors were used for weaving, spinning, and slashing. Behind the Number 1 Mill is a boiler house and engine

house. A two-story ell at the left rear of the main mill, formerly a repair shop and cloth room, connects to the Number 2 Mill. This is a 160 by 45 foot structure once used for speeding, drawing, and weaving; a small ell extending at a right angle from the east side was used for carding and weaving. Also on the mill lot are a mill office, on Main Street, and several store-houses at the rear of the property.

The present dam, constructed in 1889, is sited upriver from the mill complex. From the dam, water was diverted through two headraces under the two major mill buildings. The waterways rejoined in a trail race, which returned water to the river several hundred feet below the dam.

Manufacturing at this site dates from at least 1737, when Joseph Edmonds had a saw and gristmill here. Christopher Atwood later owned the property, then his son Nehemiah owned it. In 1809, Nehemiah Atwood sold the gristmill and sawmill, land, and privilege to Christopher and Charles Lippitt, Benjamin Aborn, George Jackson, and Amasa and William Mason, who formed the Lippitt Manufacturing Company and erected a spinning mill the following year. Originally designed to be two stories high, the mill was raised to three stories during construction. Extensive additions were later made at the southern end of the structure. Yarn was put out to be hand woven in local homes, and in 1812 the company contracted with the Vermont State Prison for weaving. The company purchased more land, called the New Privilege, in 1824, and in 1830 built a bleaching mill (Number 2 Mill), and 80 by 40-foot structure, later enlarged. Later additions to the complex include a boiler house (1865), a cloth room (1865), and an engine house (1871). The mills had a capacity of 10,000 spindles in 1875 and 10,640 spindles and 210 looms in 1888.

Over the years there were gradual changes in partners, with the Lippitt playing an important role in the company's leadership. But on July 19, 1889 the entire Lippitt Company holdings here were sold to the firm of B.B. & R. Knight. The Knights made a number of improvements. They constructed a new dam and installed new power equipment and modern machinery, including ring spinners to replace some mule spinning frames. A new wheelhouse was constructed in 1901. By that time the mill had 4928 mule spindles and 231 looms, run by both steam and water power, and produced sheetings and twills. The picker house was rebuilt and a new elevator tower for Number 1 Mill was constructed in 1912. In 1925, B.B. Knight sold the Lippitt Mill property to Joseph Hayes, owner of the Riverpoint Lace Works, who used it to manufacture, dye, and leach lace. The Hayes family has retained ownership to the present, although they stopped manufacturing lace here in the early 1970s.

The 1810 Lippitt Mill is one of Rhode Island's earliest textile mills, especially notable for its wooded construction. Perhaps the oldest American textile mill still used for manufacturing; it is entered in the National Register of Historic Places. The remainder of the complex is recommended for nomination to the Register.

Slater Mill Historic Site

Taken from Wikipedia free Encyclopedia



A National Historic Landmark, the Slater Mill is located next to the Blackstone River in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Modeled after cotton spinning mills first established in England, the Slater Mill is the first water-powered cotton spinning mill in North America to utilize the Arkwright system of cotton spinning as developed by Richard Arkwright. Samuel Slater, the mill's founder, apprenticed as a young man in Belper, England with industrialist Jedediah Strutt. Shortly after immigrating to the United States, Slater was hired by Moses Brown of Providence, Rhode Island to produce a working set of machines necessary to spin cotton yarn using water-power. Construction of the machines, as well as a dam, waterway, waterwheel and mill began in 1790 and completed in 1793. Manufacturing was based on Richard Arkwright's cotton spinning system which included carding, drawing, and spinning machines. Slater initially hired children and families to work in his mill, establishing a pattern that was replicated throughout the Blackstone Valley and known as the "Rhode Island System". It was later eclipsed by Francis Cabot Lowell's Waltham System.

Slater Mill has the distinction of carrying the first, lowest reference number in the National Register of Historic Places reference number series, although many hundreds of other sites were listed on the NRHP before it. The site was further designated a National Historic Landmark on the same date in

1966.

The original portion of the Slater Mill built in 1793 was six bays long and two stories tall. During the 19th and early 20th century several additions were made beginning in 1801 and a second in 1835. Between 1869 and 1872 a large addition was made to the north end of the mill. Cotton spinning continued until 1895, after which the mill was used for various industrial uses until 1923. Although the building had suffered numerous fires in the past, two fires occurred in 1912 which precipitated awareness of the building and the need for its preservation.

In 1921 a non-profit organization, the Old Slater Mill Association, was founded with the purpose of saving the historic Mill. Efforts to restore the mill began in 1923; modern additions to the structure were removed restoring the mill to its 1835 appearance. In 1955 it opened as a museum. Restoration of the nearby Wilkinson Mill (built 1810-1811) was completed in 1978 as part of the Slater Mill site.

The Slater Mill site serves as a living history museum, educational center and community center. It includes five acres of land on both sides of the Blackstone River, a dam on the river, two historic mills (the Slater Mill and Wilkinson Mill), and the Sylvanus Brown House (a house built in 1758 but moved to the site in the 1960s). Tours are conducted by costumed guides. The Blackstone Valley Visitor Center, located across the street, houses the Slater Mill's museum store, art gallery and theater.

The Slater Mill Community Guild Studio serves as a regional fiber arts and crafts center. Functioning as a guild house, it houses local guilds and groups including quilters, basketmakers, spinners, fullers, dyers, surface designers and weavers. The Center hosts meetings and events of these groups, as well as programs, meetings and workshops for the public.

Each year the Slater Mill hosts the Labor & Ethnic Heritage Festival. The festival honors Rhode Island's labor and ethnic traditions as well as Rhode Island's legacy of industry and innovation with a day of folk music and dance, ethnic foods, artisans and fine crafts.



You are invited

to step back in time with us at our

Holiday Open House

Sponsored by the

The Western Rhode Island Civic Historical Society

At the

Paine House Museum

7 Station Street, Coventry

Sunday, December 4th

10:00-3:00

For more information please visit:

info@westernrihistory.org

Come enjoy a tour of the house decorated in traditional holiday décor.

Please bring your camera and feel free to take your holiday family photos in front of one of our beautifully decorated mantels or our antique sleigh.

Take a break for a moment from the holiday hustle and bustle to enjoy some refreshments.

Our gift shop will be open.