

The Hinterlander

Western Rhode Island Civic & Historical Society
May 2011



President

Norma Smith
821-4117

Secretary

Vivean Peasley
615-8151

Treasurer

Donna Gaumitz
392-1935

Ways & Means

Brenda Titus
385-9997

Building & Grounds

Rob Larocque

Historian

Lynda Hawkins

Museum Committee

Dorothy Pogonowski

Membership

Dorothy Pogonowski
397-7801

A few weeks ago Dave Westcott of the RI Spinners Guild came to assess our spinning wheels. We now know what we need to get our wheels functional. He did get the walking wheel in the kitchen area is now working. The Spinners Guild may be taking part in some of our events this year. They will be giving spinning demonstrations on the lawn for Heritage Day. On his visit we found that we have a disassembled barn loom in the house and they would like to come and reassemble it for us one day this summer.

Robert Larocque has been busy getting the grounds ready and has been going over what is in the barn. He has found that we have a disassembled wagon in there. The students at the high school will take this on as a project in September and restore the wagon to its original condition. He is working on replacing the boards on the fence that need replacing and will be getting it painted. Sheila Kane and Robert are planting around the house and are looking for any donations that members may have either in monetary contributions or plants they may want to give from their own gardens. Nicki Larocque, a junior member of the society, has also helped with the grounds. They are getting wooden whiskey barrel to install as rain barrel so the plants can be watered when needed. Vivean Peasley and Marie Andrée Bergland have donated the money to buy the whiskey barrel for this purpose. Gail Tatangelo a URI Master Gardner, with the help of the fire station has pruned our apple tree this year.

Dottie Pogonowski, Sandy Lukowicz and Robert are working to get the house clean for opening day. All the fireplaces are now open and visible. It is their goal to have the house open every Saturday (except July 4 and Labor Day weekends) This can only be done with member participation. If you would like to donate sometime to make Paine House available to the community call Dotty at 397-7801.

The well house cover will be installed by the carpentry students at the high school in the next couple of weeks. It will be assembled on site. Humbert DeGregory has agreed to build the decking that is needed for the well house to be installed. Sandy's son, Greg Asselin is making a new society sign for our front lawn. Our old sign was in poor condition and not repairable. He is also going to maintain the field this year to be sure the grass does not get too tall.

The RISEUP Paranormal Group helps societies and groups with historic properties by offering public investigations into paranormal activity in their property. They have done this at Belcourt Castle in Newport and the Warner Theater in Torrington Connecticut. This year they will having four such investigations at Paine House. All proceeds are to benefit Paine House. At this point in time three of the four events are sold out. Kevin DeCosta will be at our next meeting to explain to our members how this works and what they do.

Open house is May 28. The house will be open from 10am-1pm. This is a chance to come and see the new windows and curtains. We are also having a yard sale that day. If you have any items you would like to donate for the yard sale, call Robert at 825-7514 and he will make arrangements to have them picked up, or come by that morning and drop it off.

June 14 is Flag Day. We will be having a Flag Day Ceremony at 7pm following the Farmers Market. The Korean War Veterans will be a part of this ceremony. If you or anyone you know has an old, worn and tattered flag, they should bring it to this ceremony for the proper disposal of the flag. Flag protocol calls for flags to be burned in a respectful manor. The Farmers Market will be every Tuesday from 4-7.

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Next meeting

May 24

Paine House

7pm

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."

URI History and Timeline

Land Grant colleges were the brainchild of Senator Justin S. Morrill of Vermont to provide funding for higher education by sale of public lands. On July 2, 1862, with our country engaged in a great civil war, Abraham Lincoln, signed the Morrill's Land Grant Act, which gave to each state thirty thousand acres of public lands for each senator and representative in Congress. The proceeds arising from sale, were to be invested, and the annual income was to be, in the words of the Morrill Act, "inviolably appropriated by each state, to the endowment, support and maintenance, of at least one college, where the leading object shall be, without excluding, other scientific or classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning, as are related to agriculture, and mechanic arts, in such manner, as the Legislature of the states, may respectively prescribe, in order to promote, the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes, in the several pursuits and professions in life."

The Rhode Island General Assembly of 1863 authorized the Governor to accept and receive the funds for the sale of 120,000 acres in Kansas Territory, upon the terms and conditions of the Land Grant Act. The Governor was also authorized to transfer to Brown University all the funds this state received if the institution agreed to assume all obligations imposed upon the state in the Land Grant Act. Thus Brown University became the Land Grant College of Rhode Island.

The University of Rhode Island, the state's current Land, Sea and Urban Grant public research institution, had humble beginnings as the state's Agricultural Experiment Station and agricultural school chartered in 1888. Using funds from the Federal Act to Establish Agricultural Experiment Stations (or the Hatch Act of 1887 that authorized \$5000 annually to each state for agricultural research), state, municipal, and private matching funds were raised by local citizens in South Kingstown, including Jeremiah Peckham, Jr., Thomas G. Hazard and Bernon E. Helms, the Kingston postmaster. For a total of \$5000, the 140-acre Oliver Watson Farm was purchased as a site for the experiment station and school. The old farmhouse, now restored and listed as an historic landmark, still stands on the campus.

1888 to 1930

In July 1888, the Board of Managers met at the Farm in Kingston for the first time, and in May 1889, engaged John H. Washburn as Principal of the State Agricultural School. He assumed his duties in October 1889, and began at once to organize the school, which opened in September 1890. A few weeks earlier, Congress passed an amendment to the Land Grant Act-known as the "Second Morrill Act-" authorizing substantial, annual, federal appropriation in support of colleges established under the Act of 1862.

In 1889, the Agricultural Experiment Station Building, later named Taft Hall for Governor Royal C. Taft, was completed to house the faculty and laboratories of the Agricultural Experiment Station. Later in 1890 and 1891, South Hall, College Hall (including the first library) and the Ladd Laboratory, named after Governor Herbert W. Ladd, were completed to house the agricultural school students and faculty.

With strong support from the state's Grange organizations and an infusion of federal funds from the Second Morrill Act, on May 19, 1892 the name of the State Agricultural School was changed to the Rhode Island College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (RICA&M). It was a day of great rejoicing in Kingston, a cannon now located on the southwest corner of the quadrangle, was borrowed for the celebration from a sympathetic townsman. Student enthusiasm, however, excelled the tensile strength of the cannon, as is evidenced by the present fragmented condition of "Old Ben Butler." The first class of 17 members (including URI's first graduate (alphabetically) George E. Adams who later in 1917 became dean of the School of Agriculture) graduated two years later. Dr. Washburn (being Principal of the State Agricultural School) became the first president of the college. In September 1892, the college opened with its courses of study in Agriculture and in Mechanics (or mechanical engineering) extended to four years.

The year 1894 was an important one in the life of the new college. In May, an agreement was entered into between the State and Brown University whereby the Morrill Land Grant Funds became available to the College, establishing RICA&M as Rhode Island 's Land Grant College. Another highlight of the year was the appointment, of Capt. William Wallace Wotherspoon, as the first Professor of Military Science and Tactics. His services were terminated by his transfer to the Spanish-American War three years later. But during his brief assignment, he had seen the construction and completion of Lippitt Hall (named after Governor Charles W. Lippitt) as a drill hall and armory in 1897. And in his words, "by sparing no effort to instill into the cadets a sense of the importance of the work begun" he had established URI's military tradition that continues on today in our ROTC Program. Captain Wotherspoon gave further inspiration and stimulus to military work at the college by his own advancement to Major General in 1912, and to Army Chief of Staff in 1914.

The year 1895 promised to be one of marked growth for the college. But the situation soon changed! On Sunday, January 27, 1895, while most of the young men and faculty were at church, College Hall caught on fire. With wind blowing at 40 miles an hour, the building was consumed in forty-five minutes. The institution had received a staggering blow. However, with united effort, faculty and students set themselves to the task of rehabilitating the college. The report of President Washburn bears the following testimony, "Within a week after the fire we had completed the carpenter shop; in two weeks we built the barracks, also a building for laboratory and classroom work in botany --- all temporary buildings". College Hall was rebuilt as Davis Hall in honor of Governor John W. Davis.

In 1896, the National Land-Grant College Association (the forerunner of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges) adopted the report of its Committee on Entrance Requirements, Courses of Study and Degrees. This report emphasized the desirability of degrees awarded by the land-grant colleges, representing work that would be approximately uniform in character and scope. This action made it necessary for RICA&M, to raise admission standards, despite the fact that many of Rhode Island 's country high schools were not prepared to furnish candidates that met the higher requirements. This led to the decision to establish a two-year preparatory high school department, in 1898, with Marshall H. Tyler as Headmaster. This preparatory school was continued for ten years until 1908, when Tyler moved on to chair the college's Mathematics Department.

Also in 1896, the Agricultural Experiment Station established Rhode Island 's first marine laboratory at the end of Succotash Road in the village of Jerusalem. After particularly intense fishkills in Point Judith Pond during the summer of 1895, fishermen and oyster farmers of the pond approached scientists at the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station to inquire if they could explore the reasons for the fishkill and somehow solve the problem. As a result of this inquiry, Dr. G.A. Field of the Experiment Station established Jerusalem to study oyster and lobster biology, and recommendations from the lab led to the establishment of a permanent breachway to the pond and establishment of the Port of Galilee. This laboratory, now known as the Jerusalem Coastal Fisheries Laboratory operated by the RI DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife, is the one of the oldest continuously operating marine laboratories in the United States. The RIAES Marine Laboratory was predated only by the U.S. Fisheries Commission Laboratory in Woods Hole, founded in 1875 by U.S. Fisheries Commissioner Spencer F. Baird, and the Marine Biological Laboratory, also founded in Woods Hole in 1888 by the famed Harvard naturalist Louis Agassiz.

At the turn of the 20th century, the growth of the college slowed, with few additions to the facilities for over a decade. The enthusiasm and support for the college of many influential citizens waned, and indifference was evident with many of the agricultural leaders of the state. Dr. Washburn, whose work had been so effective in organizing the State Agricultural School, and who served as president of the college for over ten years, resigned in August, 1902. His work for the college had been that of a pioneer. Among his noteworthy contributions was the establishment of special short courses in agriculture for Rhode Island 's farmers. Among these was the first in the country six-week Poultry School focusing on husbandry of the famed Rhode Island Red. Other early studies initiated by Washburn included analysis of soils and development of fertilizers, improvements in production of potatoes and apples, as well as dairy studies and the studies of grasses and other forage and pasture crops.

Dr. Homer J. Wheeler was made Acting-President upon the resignation of Dr. Washburn, and served for seven months. During this short period, he made a contribution of far-reaching importance by securing a \$3, 000 state appropriation for student labor. This appropriation continued for many years and helped many young men and women to secure an education. The shortest administration in the history of the University was that of Kenyon L. Butterfield beginning in April, 1903, and ending in June, 1906. President Butterfield was an enthusiastic leader, distinguished by his breadth of view and his marked administrative ability. He strove to make the college of greater service, to greater numbers of Rhode Islanders. This led to the organization of an extension department in the college in April, 1904, with Professor A. E. Stene as Superintendent of College Extension. A much expanded extension service continues today as Rhode Island Cooperative Extension. URI, like all Land Grant Universities, is now organized on the three cardinal points, ~ research, classroom instruction and extension work, as first pioneered by President Butterfield. Butterfield left Rhode Island to assume the presidency of the Massachusetts Agricultural College (MAC, now University of Massachusetts), where he established an extension program there as well. While at MAC he assisted in the drafting of the federal Smith-Lever Act of 1914 that established a Cooperative Extension Service at all Land Grant Colleges nationwide. Thus President Butterfield and RICA&M made an indelible mark on how publicly funded higher education is carried out throughout the United States.

Undoubtedly, President Butterfield had much to do with the selection of Dr. Howard Edwards as his successor. The choice was a most fortunate one for the college and the state and resulted in an administration that carried the college steadily forward for nearly a quarter of a century.

In his first annual report as President, Dr. Edwards discussed the need of revising the academic program of the college and proposed Home Economics as a women's course of study, thus admitting women into the college. President Edwards' method of providing the physical accommodations necessary for the Home Economics course was unique. He asked for a special state appropriation of \$80, 000, to build a new men's dormitory. The appropriation, although greatly reduced in amount, gave the college its first major building (East Hall) in over ten years. Use of East Hall as the men's dormitory permitted the remodeling of Davis Hall and its use as a women's dormitory, which in turn made it possible to offer the Home Economics course in the fall of 1909.

It was during the Edwards Presidency that the first master's degree was awarded in 1907. A year later in 1908, the fraternity system began on campus, with the first fraternity, Rho Iota Kappa, followed by the first national fraternity (Theta Chi) in 1910, and the first fraternity house built by Beta Phi in 1912.

In addition to beginning graduate education, the Greek system and admission of women to RICA&M, President Edwards in 1908 was responsible for urging a study commission to assess the value of the college in contributing to the economic well-being of the state. In April, 1909, the study commission, headed by the Dr. Walter E. Ranger, State Commissioner of Schools, presented its report. The commission's report was a strong endorsement of the college, recommending greatly increased financial support from the state. The commission concluded its report with fifteen specific recommendations to increase the value of the college to the State. The first recommendation, immediately adopted in 1909, was the change in name to Rhode Island State College.

As Commissioner of Education, it fell to Dr. Ranger to formulate the commission's recommendations. But later as President of the Board of Managers, he gave generously of his time and of his energies in helping to carry out the commission's recommendations. His great vision and services to the college and to the state are honored by Ranger Hall, named so upon its completion in 1913.

World War I in 1917 provided trying times for the college. A total of 301 young men from the college served in the war, many of whom were trained in the Student Army Training Corps. Due to the war and very few students on campus, classes were suspended between April 28, 1918 and January 2, 1919. President Edwards wrote of the student sacrifice, "The college is poor, in physical wealth, and resources; it numbers among its friends, few of high position, large possessions, or powerful influence, but it has here, evidence of a wealth, of capable service, of high sense of duty, of heroic sacrifice, that must forever be preserved, as its most cherished tradition, and that compels, the gratitude and respect of the people of our state. Somewhere, somehow, we must preserve this story, in imperishable stone and bronze."

In June, 1922, President Edwards dedicated the college war memorial, "in memory of a gallantry, devotion, and sacrifice that has been surpassed, never and nowhere". The memorial, near the upper entrance to the campus consists of a huge granite boulder bearing a large bronze plaque on which are recorded, twenty-three names of students who perished in Europe. In June, 1928, the Memorial Gateway on Upper College Road was dedicated as a part of this War Memorial.

The decade of the 1920s was a period of considerable growth for Rhode Island State College. The faculty and staff of the College of Agriculture and the Agricultural Experiment Station were outgrowing their quarters in Taft Hall, so they moved in 1921 into Washburn Hall upon its completion. A major building campaign led to the completion in 1928 of Bliss Hall (named after Zenias Bliss, a state legislator instrumental in securing funding) to house the Engineering classrooms and laboratories. Also that year, Rodman Hall was completed as a gymnasium, and Edwards Auditorium opened as the largest lecture hall and performing arts center on campus. Additionally in 1928, East Farm, one mile south of campus on Kingstown Road, was acquired and became the site for orchard crop and poultry research.

Upon the death of President Edwards in April 1930, John Barlow, Dean of Science, was appointed as Acting President. In this capacity, he served the college faithfully for more than a year. Ten years later in 1940, he was again called to serve in a similar capacity for a more extended period.

TIMELINE 1931 TO PRESENT (to be continued in the next newsletter)

Event Schedule If you want to help with any of these events call Brenda at 623-0682

Open House May 28, 2011 from 10-1

Farmers Market beginning June 14 thru September 27, 2011 every Tuesday from 4-7pm

RISEUP Paranormal public investigations, June 11, July9, August 13 and September 10 7pm

\$35 per person \$30 for members. June, July and September are sold out.

Smithsonian Museum Day and International Peace Day Ceremony September 24, 2011

Museum open from 10am to 4pm. Peace Pole Ceremony 2pm

Heritage Day October 1, 2011

Ellis Island, NY bus tour. \$70 per person, includes transportation and admission to both Ellis and Liberty Island.

President's Message (continued from page 1)

September 24 will be combined with the annual Smithsonian Museum Day and the International Day of Peace ceremony at the Peace Pole. The house will be open the public from 10am to 4pm. The Peace Pole Ceremony will be from 2-4pm with music provided by the duet Morning Glory. Local Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts will be part of this ceremony.

Heritage Day is still in the planning stage. We will be having a pumpkin toss this year. Rob Cagnetta of Heritage Restoration has done this as a fundraiser for other groups. He has a catapult that tosses pumpkins. I don't know all the details but will explain it better when we get more details. Rob will also be talking with us about what we need to do to get the Historic Building Survey done for Paine House. This will help to determine how the house evolved over the years. We can then be better prepared when applying for grants. The Champlin Grant request has been submitted for the residing of Paine House.

We have been contacted by a URI student that wants to do some intern with us this year. There is also an interest in our quilts from Sue Charwood, who is a quilt expert and the museum at Rhode Island School of Design. We are also working on Paine House as a senior project for the history department at Coventry High School. They will do the research we need to determine the date of 1668 if possible. This will also help us with the book that we have been planning for Paine House. The other book planned with the historic pictures has been delayed, but is moving forward now. We will once again have a group from the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School come for a tour of Paine House in June with the help of junior members Nathan DJ Titus and Nathan and Nicki Larocque.

We are working with the Elm Research Foundation for dual purpose. They provided us with an American Elm for the Liberty Tree Memorial we dedicated in front of Coventry Town Hall. They want to create public awareness in establishing the American Elm back into our communities. They have fund raising projects for this purpose. We partner with them in asking for donations or actually selling the tree as your own personal Liberty Tree Memorial. There will be more details on this in future newsletters.

There was a remaining amount of money from the Champlin Foundation from when the roof was done in 2001. It has been approved by the Champlin Foundation, that we purchase solar shades for the windows. These shades will help to filter the damaging UVA rays that are harmful to our collection.

We have found some items from the Mercy Train within our collection, that were given to our society in 1948. They are mostly French books. We have been in contact with the Museum of Work and Culture to see if they would like these items on loan to display along with the box car they have on display there.

For those of you that don't know what the Merci Train is: The Merci Train was a train of 49 French railroad box cars filled with tens of thousands of gifts of gratitude from at least that many individual French citizens. They were showing their appreciation for the more than 700 American box cars of relief goods sent to them by (primarily) individual Americans in 1948. The Merci Train arrived in New York harbor on February 3rd, 1949 and each of the 48 American states at that time received one of the gift laden box cars. The 49th box car was shared by Washington D.C. and the Territory of Hawaii. Parades and ceremonies of welcome were conducted in the state capitols and major cities of almost all the states.

The box car that was given to Rhode Island was found a few years ago in a junk yard. Once it was realize what this box car was, it was restored and is now on display at the Museum of Work and Culture. Many of the items that were in these box cars are now gone. We have a few of those items and what better place to display them other than along with this box car.

We also have a large Read Genealogy Chart on the third floor. It will be displayed on loan at the Gorton Menard Funeral Home (residence of Byron Read). Because of its size, it cannot be displayed in Paine House. Since it is on the third floor where no one can see it, it was suggested that we loan it to the Menard's for display in Byron's house.

Donna Gaumitz is taking on her cemetery project again. She is looking for help from anyone that would like to care for our cemetery off of Boston St. We still do not know how the society became the owner of this cemetery, but next year we should pay attention to the Brayton Cemetery on Ken Ray Dr. In the spring we should try to organize a clean up there with the help of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. That cemetery is connected to Paine House and should get our attention. According to the Coventry Cemetery book there is a black Reverend and his family buried there. I would be nice to know the connection with the Braytons if possible.

Carl Mattson is helping us our advertising and promotion of our events. We have been lacking in our ability to get the message out when things are happening for the society and Paine House. He has created a free website that he will update accordingly. The website is <http://painehouse.weebly.com> All events will be posted on the website. We also want to congratulate Carl for his win to be on the Coventry Town Council. We wish him the best of luck for his term in office.

I want to thank Marilyn Nagy for her years of service to Paine House as Vice President and Museum Committee Chair. This winter Marilyn resigned from both positions for personal reasons.

Dottie has agreed to head the nominating committee as the annual elections are scheduled in July.

Over the winter we became aware that the Byron Read Building in the Anthony Village was for sale at a reduced price. It is a strong possibility that if this building is purchased by someone that is only interested in the lot, that the building will be taken down. We thought we should make an effort to see that the building would be preserved. There was an article in the paper about fate of this building not unlike the demolition of the Company Store (Coventry Fish Store) that was torn down just a few years ago. For us to undertake such a project would require community involvement. Unfortunately, this plea to save the building fall on deaf ears. We as a society cannot do this alone and it would require a community effort, which we thought was there after the outcry of the demolition of the Company Store. It looks like the Byron Read Building may meet the same fate as the Company Store unless there is a developer out there that is interested in preserving the building.

We have a lot going on this year. It takes a lot of planning work and dedication to get things done. From this newsletter you see that we have a lot of member participation, Dottie and Sandy in their efforts to get Paine House clean, organize the tour and its guides, getting the inventory completed, finishing the windows by getting donations of curtains to arranging to have the solar shades to protect our collection. Rocky Larocque in getting the grounds cleaned up, making repairs to the fence, trimming the branches off the trees to make Paine House more visible, Brenda in her efforts to plan an organize events for community awareness and to raise money for the benefit of Paine House, Carl Mattson for getting us on track with advertising and promotion of our events., Dr. Ricci for taking wonderful photos of Paine House and the collection for the book we are planning once we get

our research done. Our Junior members DJ Titus, Nicole and Nathan Larozque, Everett Hudson for offering his historic photos for the book of historic photos of Coventry, and also George Matteson and his historic photos for this same book.

There has also been a lot of community participation, from the RI Spinners Guild, RISEUUP Paranormal, Gene Dufault and the Carpentry students at Coventry High School, Chief Robert Seltzer and the Central Coventry Fire District, Gail Tatangelo and Humbert DeGregory of the URI Master Gardeners, Boy Scouts Troop 1, Girls Scouts Troop 593 , 4H Shamrocks, Boy Scout Summitt Troop 39 for its efforts with our Liberty Tree Memorial, Valerie Talmage and Susanna Prull of Preserve RI in their efforts in helping us assess the possibilities of the Byron Read Building. RISD, the URI intern, RISD Museum and its interest in our quilt collection, Rhode Island Historical Society and its interest in our French items from the Merci Train, Keith Farless of Highland Restoration for the repair of our broken window at not charge and for coming to assess and make recommendations on the Byron Read Building. , Rob Cagnetta of Heritage Restoration helping with our historic survey of the house and coming with his pumpkin catapult to help us raise money, Jessica Selby and Angelena Chapman of the Kent County Daily Times, for all their efforts in covering the stories about what we are doing in our efforts to preserve Paine House. Robert Hartley of the Korean War Veterans in helping us to establish a Flag Day Ceremony that we would like to make an annual event. Gordon Two Bears Stand who comes every year to our Peace Pole Ceremony and does a wonderful Native American spiritual service for peace, Donna Powers and Jackie Vinnaco of Morning Glory who provide the music for our Peace Pole Ceremony, It is a great achievement when we can combine the efforts of membership and community for the purpose of preserving Paine House for generations to come.

Best Regards to all,

Norma