



Jamestown Historical Society

# HERITAGE

Spring 2003

*To promote interest in and preserve the heritage of Conanicut Island.*

## **Conanicut Battery Award**

On April 12, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission presented a Preservation Project Award to the Friends of Conanicut Battery for the Conanicut Battery Earthworks Restoration.

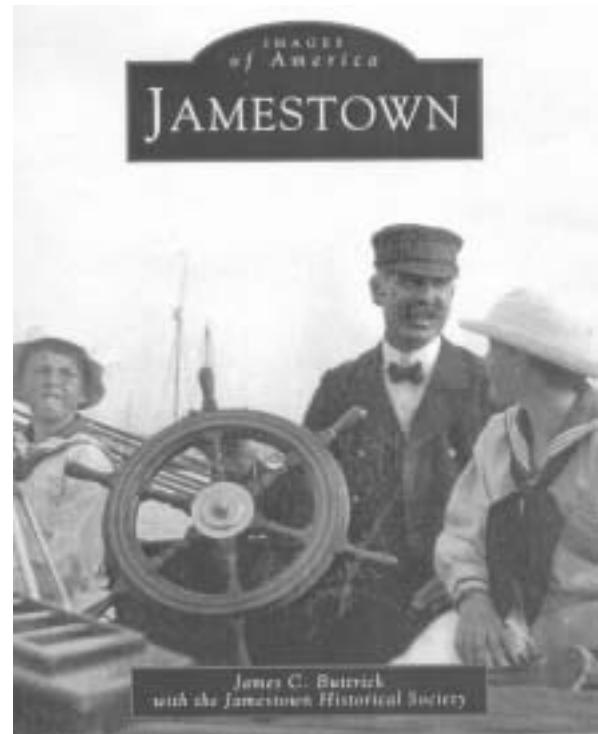
The award reads “This vital link in the defenses of Narragansett Bay had been largely overgrown and ignored since the end of the American Revolution. From 1998 to 2002, the Friends of Conanicut Battery reclaimed both Revolutionary and World War I installations in an exemplary collaboration between professional designers and volunteer workers.”

Congratulations to all the Friends!



John Howard accepted the award for the Conanicut Battery Earthworks Restoration.

## **Book of Jamestown Photographs**



*Images of America: Jamestown* is scheduled for release in August 2003.

Photographs, primarily from the Jamestown Historical Society Collection, have been brought together in a Jamestown volume of the Arcadia Press series, *Images of America*. Jim Buttrick, the curator of the Bevins exhibit currently at the Museum, selected the photographs and authored the text, with support on historical detail from Mary Miner.

The book is scheduled for release in August.

## Summer Program 2003

**Saturday June 14**

### **MILL TOUR**

**Starting at the Jamestown Windmill**

**9:30 AM**

Visit the Jamestown Windmill, the Gilbert Stuart Museum and Benjamin Hammond Mill, and the Kenyon Grist Mill. Return to the Jamestown Windmill between 2 and 3 PM. \$20 per person. Reservations suggested.

**Sunday, June 15**

**Orientation for Windmill Volunteers**

**Jamestown Windmill, 1 PM**

To volunteer call 423-1820.

**Saturday, June 21**

**ANNUAL FLAG RAISING**

**Conanicut Battery, 11 AM**

Jamestown Band will accompany the raising of the British, French and American flags, while the Newport Artillery and Varnum Continentals offer cannon and musket salutes.

**Saturday, June 21**

**Orientation for Museum Volunteers**

**Jamestown Museum, 1 PM**

To volunteer call 847-3339.

**Saturday, June 21**

**Jamestown Windmill Opens**

Windmill hours, 1 to 4 PM, Saturday and Sunday until Labor Day.

**Saturday, June 21**

**Meetinghouse Open House, 1:30 to 3:30 PM**

Everyone is welcome to the regular meetings for worship on each Sunday at 10:30 AM.

**Wednesday, June 25**

**Jamestown Museum Opens**

Museum hours 1 to 4 PM, Wednesday through Sunday. Continuing exhibit on Charles Lovatt Bevins, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Jamestown architect.

**Saturday, August 9**

**SUNSET HISTORY CRUISE**

**Leaving from East Ferry**

**7 PM – 9 PM**

Learn the history of Rose Island and Gould Island from Charlotte Johnson and Captain Frank Snyder (USN, Ret) while relaxing on *The Spirit of Newport*.

**Wednesday, August 27**

**ANNUAL MEETING**

**Jamestown Library, 7:30 PM**

Featuring a slide lecture "Aerial Photos of Newport, Jamestown and the Bay" by Richard Grosvenor.

**Sunday, August 31**

**Jamestown Museum and Windmill Close**

Last day to visit the Jamestown Museum or the Windmill until June 2004.

**September 6**

**HOUSE TOUR**

**10-2 PM**

This year's house tour will take us to Charles Bevins's Channel Bells. Watch for our flyers and check *The Jamestown Press* for tour details.

**Late August / early September  
(Date and place to be announced)**

**BOOK SIGNING**

*Images of America: Jamestown* is scheduled for release in late August. Get a first edition, signed by the author. Watch *The Jamestown Press* for details.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**By Bill Burgin**

After a long and miserable winter, the Society is looking forward to warm weather and some exciting programs.

The museum will open this June again with Jim Buttrick's Bevins exhibit that was so popular last year. Janie Harris and Jane Bentley, our inexhaustible events co-chairs, have planned some wonderful programs, including a mill tour, a boat tour to Rose and Gould islands, a house tour, and finally the Annual Meeting with a talk by Richard Grosvenor. Mark your calendar today!

Fox Hill Farm was sold this winter. The sellers, Tot and Mary Wright, requested that the new owner, Patrick Driscoll, give the Society a Historic Preservation Easement. The easement will prevent any alterations of the façade without Society approval. We are very pleased with this significant step toward the voluntary preservation of our historic residential properties and hope that other owners will consider doing the same.

As you all know, Governor Carcieri has promised to tear down the Jamestown Bridge. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration are documenting the existing bridge with still photography and recording the demolition with still and video photography. They have promised to salvage builders' plaques removed from the structure, to create a public education interpretive display, and to write a report about the bridge.

Among the options they are considering are "updating and republishing *The Jamestown Bridge, 1940-1990*, from the "*Bridge to Nowhere*" to *Obsolescence* by Sue Maden, published by the

Jamestown Historical Society, or preparing a new, high quality publication that will also serve as a catalogue for the interpretive display and a companion piece to the existing literature on the history of the bridge." The Society and the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Officer are acting as consultants for the effort. The Society has been designated to receive the plaques and artifacts for permanent archiving and safekeeping and have already received some of the builder's plaques and initial archival photos. We will be reporting more about this effort in upcoming newsletters.

Summer is always volunteer time. Both the Windmill and the Museum need docents from June to August. If you can volunteer just one short afternoon out of the entire summer, it will keep the doors open. You don't have to know much about Jamestown History; all you need to do is be pleasant to the visitors and learn something yourself during your extended visit. Please call me at 847 3339 to volunteer for the Museum or Linnea Petersen at 423-1820 to offer an afternoon at the Windmill.

This is also the time of the year to remind you to send in your dues and to sign up a new member or two. The budget that the Society works with is modest but accomplishes many things in the preservation of the history of Jamestown.

Finally, welcome to the following new members who joined the Society during 2002: Paul and Anne Barrett, Nancy Bennett, Spencer and Pamela Berger, David Boenning, Jean Boschen, Jan Burns, Joan Engel, Diane Hurley, Sue Johnson and Doug Moore, Janice Mattingly, Susan Potter and Charles Armstrong, Warren O'Sullivan, Jane Scott, and Rene Stawicki and Erich Stahl.

## **Program Committee**

**By Janie Harris & Jane Bentley**

The Program Committee has planned a number of exciting events for this summer, starting with a mill tour of historic Jamestown and South County Mills.

### **June 14, MILL TOUR**

The four-mill tour will begin at the Jamestown Windmill and end with jonnycakes at the Kenyon Grist Mill.

Join us at the Jamestown Windmill at 9:30 AM on Saturday, June 14 to hear Andy Shrake discuss and demonstrate the Jamestown Windmill, built in 1787. Andy, who restored the windmill last year, is



The Jamestown Windmill is the first stop on the June Mill Tour.

coming back to discuss the historic features of the Mill and its operation, as well as to answer your questions.

You can leave your cars in the field at the windmill as we board a Viking Motor Coach and head for the Gilbert Stuart Museum in Saunderstown. Here we will see both a snuff mill (the first snuff mill in America) and a grist mill. The grist mill, also called the Benjamin Hammond Mill, was built in 1662 and is a National Historic Landmark.

At noon we will depart for the Kenyon Grist Mill in Usquepaugh for a tour of the 18<sup>th</sup> century mill and the 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, an open house, and a jonnycake feast. Paul Drumm will explain the operations and Dick Donnelly will be the master of jonnycakes.

We will return to Jamestown between 2 and 3 PM.

Participation in the tour is limited by the size of the tour bus to 45. The cost of the tour is \$20 per person, which includes transportation and admission fees. Sign up now by calling the Museum at 423-0784. If the machine answers, please leave your name, telephone number, and the number in your party.

### **August 9, SUNSET HISTORY CRUISE**

Join us for a leisurely and informative tour of two of Jamestown's neighboring islands, Rose Island and Gould Island, aboard *The Spirit of Newport*. The boat will leave from East Ferry at 7 PM, returning at about 9 PM.

During the first leg of our cruise, Charlotte Johnson, Executive Director of the Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation, will point out key historic landmarks on Rose Island and discuss their significance to our area's colonial history and their role in subsequent military operations. She will also address the saving of the lighthouse proper and its recognition on the National Register of Historic Places. Charlotte

promises anecdotes from lighthouse keepers who have tended the light over the past century and will answer your questions about the island's ecology and its bird and seal populations. She will explain the programs and opportunities for the use and enjoyment of the island offered by the Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation.

Then we will cruise northward and Captain Frank Snyder (USN, Ret.), formerly a history professor at the Naval War College, will discuss the history of Gould Island as we motor around it. Captain Snyder is an expert on the role of the islands of Narragansett Bay in military operations and history, and is currently the Raymond A. Spruance Professor Emeritus of Command and Control at the U.S. Naval War College. He continues to lecture on command and control, the planning process, as well as naval battles of World War II. He will be available to answer your questions as we cruise homeward into the sunset to Jamestown.

Hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar will be available on board throughout the cruise.

### **September 6, HOUSE TOUR**

This year's house tour features Channel Bells, a lovely, shingled 1888 home designed by 19<sup>th</sup> century architect Charles L. Bevins. The house is perched high above Fort Wetherill, and the piazza that wraps around it offers extensive views of the East Passage and the ocean.

Bevins's preference for bold scale, complex window forms, and Japanese detail is much in evidence. Particularly of interest are the complex roof forms. Gable, hip, gambrel, and saltbox roofs all peacefully coexist, giving an over all sense of a pyramid.

See the Jamestown Historical Society Occasional Paper 1, "*So Who Was Charles Bevins?*", written by James Buttrick, for information about the architect. You can buy a copy at the Museum if you didn't save the insert to last year's newsletter.

Tour details will appear in flyers and *The Jamestown Press* as the date approaches.

### **August 27, ANNUAL MEETING.**

Our annual meeting will be held at the Jamestown Library at 7 PM. Following the business meeting, at which the activities of the Board of Directors will be reported and officer elected, our featured speaker Richard Grosvenor will present a slide lecture entitled, "Aerial Photos of Newport, Jamestown and the Bay".

Mr. Grosvenor, a well-known artist who served for years as head of the Art Department of St. Georges, has also designed and built his own home, boat, and airplane. He will show slides of his wonderful aerial photos of Narragansett Bay and Conanicut and Aquidneck Islands. His discussion will focus on the changes in the Point section of Newport, as illustrated by aerial photos dating from the 40s, 50s, and 60s.



Channel Bells sits on a Dumpling high above Fort Wetherill.

## ***Collections Committee***

***By Linda Warner***

The Museum will be open this summer every Wednesday through Sunday from 1 to 4 PM. Opening day is Wednesday, June 25. We will close our doors on Sunday, August 31, the day before Labor Day.

The Charles Bevins exhibit, gathered and arranged by Jim Buttrick, was so well received last year, that we decided to hold it over through the 2003 season. Jim has graciously agreed to make it available to us



again. The permanent exhibit of Ferry memorabilia will again be in the middle room.

Volunteers are needed to serve as docents at the Museum. As docent, you greet visitors and get to spend a little quiet time among the historical artifacts of Jamestown. It only takes a few hours and is a pleasant way to spend a summer afternoon. We will be calling previous volunteers over the next few weeks to set up the schedule. Please say yes if you are called. New volunteers are always needed and welcome. Call Bill Burgin at 847-3999 to volunteer.

Orientation for all docents is Saturday, June 21, at 1:00 PM.

## ***Curator's Comments***

***By Elizabeth Connelly***

A recent acquisition in the Jamestown Museum's collection is the Wedgwood pitcher pictured here. The reverse side of the pitcher commemorates Roger Williams's settling in Rhode Island with the



This Wedgwood pitcher commemorates Roger Williams's settling in Providence.

following quotation: "I having made covenant of peaceable neighborhood with all the Sachems and natives round about us; and having in a sense of God's merciful providence until me in my distress, called the place Providence."

The Pitcher was made in 1886 to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1636 settlement of Providence. The stamp on the bottom says that it was made for "Messrs. Warren and Wood, Providence Rhode Island." If anyone reading this knows who Warren and Wood were, we would appreciate learning about them. Their history would add to the provenance of the piece.

We have also acquired a 1920s advertisement of property for sale at the corner of High Street and Walcott Avenue. The name of the property is "Mansion House" and it was being sold by the Provident Life and Trust Company of Philadelphia. The estate included a studio and a boat house. We are seeking more information and anyone remembering this property is asked to get in touch with the Collection Committee.

## **Windmill Committee**

**By Linnea Petersen**

The windmill appears to have survived the winter in good shape and will officially open for the summer on Saturday, June 21, and close on Sunday, August 31. Orientation for our new and veteran docents will be Sunday, June 15, at 1 PM.

## **Buildings and Grounds Committee**

**By Joe Logan**

Steve Goslee has just informed us that the Town will re-shingle the roof of the Museum building in the very near future. The shingles look pretty bad right now and we have been worried that leaks will develop and threaten the collection. Otherwise, the Museum building is in pretty good shape.

The windmill was checked last fall by Andy Shrake when he closed it up, and again early this spring. He found no serious problems. A new chain has been purchased for the bonnet because the old one was rusting and staining the shingles.

The meeting house has been monitored by Bill Smith. He brought to our attention the need to replace the plaster ceiling which is cracked in a number of places and separated from the wood lath. Estimates are being obtained for this needed repair.

**Wanted:** Volunteers who are interested in helping to care for the plantings around the Museum building. The beds need to be cleaned and maintained, including watering in the summer months. Some knowledge of gardening is a plus. If interested, please call Joe Logan at 423-3572.

During the next few weeks, we will be calling former volunteers to ask if they are willing to host one afternoon at the mill this summer. As always, we welcome new volunteers. The mill is a lovely place to spend a summer afternoon showing Jamestown's historic landmark, which is 216 years old this year, to visitors from across New England and around the world.

To sign on as a docent, please call Linnea Petersen at 423-1820.

## **Publications Committee**

**By Rosemary Enright**

Arcadia Press is releasing *Images of America: Jamestown* at the end of the summer. The book, authored by Jim Buttrick with the Jamestown Historical Society, contains 186 photographs from the Society's extensive collection. Most of the photographs are published here for the first time, although many of them can be seen in digital format at the Library and the Museum. The book will on sale locally and at Rhode Island bookstores.

We are also reprinting *100 Years of Jamestown* by John Howard, which has been a popular pamphlet and continues to be in demand.

In the center of this newsletter is our second "Occasional Paper." Several summers ago, Mary Miner designed a walking tour through the cemeteries at Cedar Cemetery. In the paper, Mary captures the information from that walk.

Reminiscences of Jamestown's about the ferries and the Jamestown bridge were recorded in 1985 and in 1989, respectively. Joe Logan has transferred these interview to CDs, which can be listened to at the Jamestown Library.

**Officers and Directors  
2002 – 2003**

President	Bill Burgin
Vice President	Jane Bentley
Secretary	Marcia Glassie
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Directors to 2003	Joe Logan Harry Wright
Directors to 2004	Janie Harris Dick Hines
Directors to 2005	Linnea Petersen Linda Warner Rosemary Enright

**When Is My Membership Due?**

**By Jane Miner**

To determine whether or not you need to renew your membership dues, please look at the address label on this newsletter. Just after your name, enclosed in parentheses, you will see a letter or the abbreviation "Exp." followed by a number. The number is the month and last two digits of the year (e.g., 6/02) when your current membership expires. A letter means you are a contributing (C), life (L), or honorary (H) member, and do not need to renew your membership annually (although we always welcome voluntary contributions). Please note that for this issue of the newsletter the membership form is printed on the enclosed remittance envelope.

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