



Jamestown Historical Society

# HERITAGE

Fall 2002

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

## CONANICUT BATTERY DEDICATION DAY

June 29, 2002



## THE CONANICUT BATTERY'S PLACE IN THE REVOLUTION

### *Excerpted from the Conanicut Day Address by Albert T. Klyberg*

The Rhode Island theater of the Revolutionary War was not the scene of dramatic, decisive events, compared to New York City, Philadelphia, or Virginia, but Narragansett Bay and the people who lived here were nonetheless impacted tremendously by the War. Integral to the big picture were the dozens of local fortifications, like this one, that played a role, sometimes on more than one occasion, in all these developments. In Providence, a main fortification was built at the top of College Hill; others at Fox and India Points. There was Fort Hill in East Providence and Fort Independence near Field's Point. Entrenchments of one kind or another were placed on either side of the Bay down to Bristol Ferry on the east, and here on Conanicut and all along the North and South Kingstown shore to Point Judith.

What's the meaning and import of all these places? First of all, there are hardly any of them left. Everything which can be secured and safeguarded is an important testimony to what once happened here. This is a highly valuable rescue. What is left is only a fraction of what Rhode Islanders could visit and study a hundred years ago. When Edward Field published his *Revolutionary Defenses in Rhode Island* in 1898, he was able to illustrate his book with photographs of the remains of dozens of fortifications, including Providence. Most of these were pulled down and bulldozed out to create the shipyard that made Liberty ships in World War II.

So just the survival and the revival of a place like this is very important.

Moreover, the actual site is a powerful tool for teaching the story of the events that shaped Rhode Island for fifty years after the Revolution. It gives us a three-dimensional context to appreciate people like the Quaker General Nathanael Greene and the irony of the recently freed slaves who died in the defense of other people's liberties.

In the end, of course, the effort is not just about remembering the past and paying homage to sacrifices, it is about how we question ourselves and whether we feel we would be able to rise to or equal such challenges. We study history because it's the story of real events, real people and real time, and it's part of our heritage. But we also study history because as a free people we have an obligation to act in civic life beyond narrow self-interests and to develop a perspective of the larger community commonwealth. It's what I call "civic knowledge" and its value is an asset to a democratic society. We learn facts in order to process information. Information with perspective can become knowledge. Knowledge in action leads to true wisdom. To be a free society we need to be a wise society. History, and places like this which inform history, are therefore valuable, and events like this which point that out are worthy of our leisure and our reflective time.



## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**By Bill Burgin**

Having just had my first two meetings with your hardworking Board of Directors, I am humbled by the daunting tasks our enthusiastic and diligent President, John Howard, has completed in the last five years. In addition to overseeing the many programs, exhibits, and facilities of the Society during his stint as President, John achieved, with the help of many industrious volunteers, the following:

- Final details of the Friends Meetinghouse acquisition and ongoing maintenance. The path between the Friends Meetinghouse and the windmill this summer now allows for safe passage between the two Jamestown Historical Society buildings.
- The commencement of the restoration of the Conanicut Battery, including realization of its restoration after the death of Ed Connelly. We dedicated the Battery Park this summer on June 29<sup>th</sup>. As the pictures on the front of the newsletter show it was a glorious day and a wonderful celebration.
- The successful application for grants that have enabled the Society to completely digitize our historic photograph collection. The complete collection can now be viewed at computer stations in the Jamestown Library and Museum. High quality reproductions can be obtained through the Museum.
- The writing and publication of *100 Years in Jamestown from Destination Resort to Bedroom Town* for the year 2000 celebration.

- The facilitation of the restoration of the Windmill by steadfast and assiduous volunteers, so that we can see the vanes spin and the bonnet move.
- The organization of the first (in my memory) planning/brainstorming retreat that resulted in the creation of six committees, each headed by a Board member, that will balance the work of the Society and encourage participation by volunteers in the Society's many programs.

John's hard work and devotion to the Society deserve our eternal gratitude.

Brookie and Howard Harding co chaired the Windmill Committee for 15 years and have overseen its restoration by Andy Shrake. This year they have handed their stewardship of the Windmill to Linnea Peterson. Many thanks to Brookie and Howard for their dedicated and devoted help with one of the town's most valuable historic assets. Brookie has been with the Jamestown Historical Society since 1978, serving as Board Member, Secretary, Vice President, and President. Linnea Peterson takes on the job of Windmill Chairperson, after serving as Treasurer since 1988.

Our summer programs were very successful this season: Battery Dedication Day was a resounding success, Walter Schroder's lecture on the Hessian occupation of Newport was fascinating, Jane Bentley's house tour to Clingstone was a sold out success, and Jim Buttrick's exhibit at the Museum and paper on Charles Bevins were such triumphs that the Society is going to reopen the exhibit this coming summer.

I am looking forward to an exciting year. I only hope that I can keep up the good work generated by all of our volunteers.

## ***New JHS By-Laws***

***By Jane Miner***

### *Why New By-Laws*

As you may remember from last fall's newsletter, the JHS directors, officers, and committee chairs held a day long strategic planning retreat in October 2001. As a result of discussions at that retreat about how the Society could best continue its activities in the future, it became apparent that the By-Laws needed to be updated. Since 1992 was the last time they had been changed, the timing was right for a thorough review and appropriate changes.

### *Focus of Change*

The main change from the 1992 By-Laws to the 2002 version, included with this issue of the newsletter, is in the "Committee" section. While many of the committees in the 2002 version have existed before, duties have not always been defined and committees could not always act effectively.

A "Committee on Committees" was formed last fall to determine how best to revamp the committee structure. Janie Harris, Dick Hines, and Jane Miner gathered information from the various folks who have been performing the committee functions and combined that information with ideas from the retreat. After review and tweaking at several Board meetings, the present structure was adopted. The result is a group of committees chaired by current directors, in which the activities of each committee are functionally related. Having directors assigned as chairs will not only provide leadership for the committees, but also will provide active roles for the directors.

### *Committee Membership*

The new structure is also designed to encourage wider participation by the membership. We hope

that as members join committees, they will want to become more involved and may eventually become directors or officers. So, if you have an interest in joining one of the Society's committees, please contact the chairperson listed on the back page of this newsletter. Although we've grown over the last several years, this is still an all-volunteer organization that can't survive without the involvement of its members.

## ***Friends of the Conanicut Battery***

***By John Howard***

The Jamestown Historical Society has signed an agreement with the town of Jamestown to assume an oversight role in the Conanicut Battery's ongoing management. The Friends of the Conanicut Battery, however, will continue as a separate organization devoted to preserving the Battery. Modest dues may be assessed in order to help defray the expenses of upkeep and to add to the endowment for future improvements.

In 2003, we plan to open a view corridor in front of the Battery by selective clearing and/or topping of trees to create a 100-yard wide view of the water. The Friends are organizing a workday in mid-May to clean up the winter damage to the park and begin the view corridor work. We are also planning an annual ceremony in late June, featuring Rhode Island colonial reenactment troops and including flag-raising and cannon fire.

The park has already suffered its first vandalism. The OP interpretative sign on the ridge has been attacked with a BB gun or a spike of some sort. We are fixing the sign temporarily and will replace it as soon as possible on the principle that evidence of vandalism begets more of the same. This is the sort of thing the endowment is for.

**THE JAMESTOWN HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

**BY-LAWS**

**ARTICLE I**

***Name***

The name of this organization shall be "The Jamestown Historical Society." It is incorporated as a non-profit organization in the State of Rhode Island and is located in Jamestown, Rhode Island. Its mailing address is P.O. Box 156, Jamestown, RI 02835.

**ARTICLE II**

***Purpose***

The purpose of The Jamestown Historical Society shall be to promote interest in and to preserve the heritage of Conanicut Island, as well as related events, issues, and places.

**ARTICLE III**

***Membership***

1. Membership in this Society shall be open to all persons interested in the purpose of the Society. There shall be junior, active, and honorary members. Only active members shall be entitled to vote at the meetings of the Society.

2. Junior members may join before reaching the age of 18.

3. Active members may join upon reaching the age of 18. Active membership shall consist of four classes: single, family, life, and

contributing. Dues levels shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

4. Honorary membership may be conferred on any person who has made an outstanding contribution to the Society, Town, State, or Nation.

5. Upon payment of life or contributing dues, an individual shall thereafter be exempt from all further dues and shall have the rights and privileges of an active member. Contributing members may specify the manner in which their dues shall be used, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. Contributing members automatically become life members.

6. Junior, single, and family members will be reminded via the newsletter of their annual membership deadlines.

**ARTICLE IV**

***Board of Directors***

1. There shall be at least six and not more than nine directors of the Society. Two or three directors shall be elected by the members of the Society at each annual meeting to serve for a three (3) year term each. No director may serve for more than two consecutive three year terms; however, after an interval of one year, a director will be eligible for re-election.

2. The duties of the Board of Directors shall be to promote the overall activities of the Society. It also shall approve the annual budget and any expenditure in excess of a committee budget, as well as any expenditure in excess of

\$2,000. The Board also shall approve any changes in investment policies. In the event a vacancy shall occur in the Board of Directors, the remaining directors may at their discretion fill that vacancy for the remainder of its term. The Board shall set goals and guidelines for the various committees deemed necessary by the Board. All standing committees shall be chaired by directors.

3. The Board shall meet at least four times a year (at a time and place designated by the president), or at the call of the president, or upon the request of any two members of the Board of Directors. A majority of the sitting directors and officers shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Officers**

1. There shall be at least four officers of the Society who shall each have a vote at Board meetings. These shall include a president, a vice-president, a secretary, and a treasurer, who shall be elected by the members of the Society at each annual meeting for a term of one year. No officer shall serve more than five consecutive terms in one office, except that the Treasurer shall be exempt from this provision.

2. The president shall be ex-officio a director; shall preside at all meetings of the Society or the Board of Directors; and shall perform such other duties as usually pertain to this office. The president shall be ex-officio a member of all committees, with the exception of the Nominating Committee.

3. The vice-president shall also be ex-officio a director; shall preside at all meetings in the absence of the president; and shall assist the president in such duties as may be delegated by the president.

4. The duties of the secretary shall be to keep a correct record of the proceedings of meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors. The secretary shall mail, or cause to be mailed, the minutes to all board members at least one week prior to the next meeting; and shall see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these by-laws or as required by law. The secretary shall be custodian of the records; shall keep a register of the mailing address and telephone number of each director and officer; and shall keep a record of attendance of directors and officers at meetings. The secretary shall perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the president or the Board of Directors.

5. The duties of the treasurer, under the supervision of the Board, shall be to have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the Society. The treasurer shall keep, or cause to be kept, and be responsible for the keeping of, accurate and adequate records of the assets, liabilities, and transactions for the Society; and shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all monies and other valuable effects of the Society in the name of and to the credit of the Society in such banks, trust companies, and other depositories as may be designated from time to time by the Board of Directors. The treasurer shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the Society based upon proper vouchers for such disbursement and in accordance with the Board-authorized budget;

and shall report in writing the state of the treasury at each board meeting and prepare, or cause to be prepared, all other financial reports as required by the Society. The treasurer shall perform all the duties incident of the office of treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the president or by the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Committees**

The president shall appoint members of the Board of Directors as chairpersons of the following committees. Other committees may be created with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors as needed to carry out the programs of the Society. The committees shall submit written reports from time to time, as deemed necessary by the president and/or the Board of Directors. All committees may enlist such help as may be needed from the membership to fulfill their charge.

1. Windmill Committee. This committee shall be charged with the curatorship of the Jamestown Windmill and for its the display to the public. It shall coordinate all maintenance and repair issues with the Buildings and Grounds Committee for action.

2. Collections Committee. This committee shall be charged with the overall care and supervision of the collections of the Jamestown Museum and for the organization and presentation each year of the Summer exhibit. It shall be responsible for the acquisition of items offered to the Museum as gifts, as well as for the purchase of items that reflect the history and/or customs of the Town of Jamestown. Such items

include, but are not limited to, photographs, written documents, objects and ephemera. It shall be accountable for the care, storage, and cataloging of these holdings. It shall coordinate all maintenance and repair issues with the Buildings and Grounds Committee for action.

3. Buildings and Grounds. This committee shall be charged with coordinating the maintenance and repair of all properties owned and/or leased by the Society.

4. Program Committee. This committee shall be charged with arranging for programs, including lectures, house tours and other special events, of historical interest for presentation to the members and the community at large. It shall also be responsible for membership activities, including recruitment and maintenance of the membership roster and statistics.

5. Finance Committee. This committee shall be charged with preparing and submitting to the Board of Directors a recommended budget for each fiscal year. It shall be responsible for the investigation of financial matters, the recommendations of policies concerning investment strategies and insurance coverage, as well as any other financial matters as are referred to it from time to time by the Board of Directors. It shall arrange for the conduct of an annual audit of the Society's financial records, to be performed in accordance with an approved audit program.

6. Publications Committee. This committee shall be charged with the development and distribution of a biannual (Spring and Fall) newsletter to communicate with the membership. It shall also coordinate

the publication of occasional papers and other documents, as approved by the Board of Directors, that promote an interest in the heritage of Jamestown.

7. Nominating Committee. This committee shall be appointed by the president in the fall of each year. At the annual meeting following its appointment, it shall present in writing a slate of Officers and Directors for the ensuing year for approval of the membership. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Meetings and Programs**

1. Twenty (20) members of the Society shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at meetings other than meetings of the Board of Directors (see Article IV, section 3 for rules governing Board of Directors meetings).

2. The annual business meeting of the Society shall be held in August.

3. There shall be at least four programs and/or meetings of the Society during the calendar year.

4. Additional special programs and/or meetings of the Society may be called by the president at any time thought to be necessary or desirable, or upon written petition of any two or more members in good standing addressed to the president and/or the Board of Directors, and received at least two weeks prior to the date set for such a meeting.

At all meetings of the Society, the order of business shall be as follows:

Announcement of a quorum  
Minutes of previous meeting  
Treasurer's report  
Committee reports  
Reading of communications  
Report of president and other officers  
Unfinished business  
New business

6. Roberts Rules of Order shall be the authority in the conduct of all meetings.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Amendments**

These By-Laws may be amended or repealed, and new By-Laws may be adopted, by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Directors present at a regular or special meeting of the Board, provided that the changes have been proposed and approved at a previous meeting of the Board of Directors, and provided that written notice of such meeting and of the proposed changes in By-Laws is given at least ten days prior to the meeting at which such changes are to be presented for adoption.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Dissolution Clause**

If the corporation be dissolved, the Board of Directors shall donate its remaining assets to a similar non-profit corporation, organized under Rhode Island Law, which is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) and in accordance with the laws of the State of Rhode Island.



# CLINGSTONE HOUSE TOUR

*By Jane Bentley*



The JHS had a very successful turnout to support our House Tour on Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at Clingstone, "The House on the Rocks."

We had a beautiful day and the launch was busy from 10 in the morning till 2 in the afternoon ferrying visitors between the Jamestown Boat Yard and the house. The Wood family were gracious hosts and told many interesting stories about the history of house and events that have taken place there. Volunteers deserving a big thank you are Lynn Bell, David Bentley, Bill Burgin, Janie Harris, Joe and Nancy Logan, Sue Maden, Jane Miner, and Linnea Petersen. The pictures around this report were taken by Joe Logan and Janie Harris.

A special thanks to Bill and May Munger, who donated not only the Conanicut Marina launch but also the services of the launch captain, Dave Benson. Thanks also to all those who attended and supported the tour.



## **Collections Committee**

**By Linda Warner**

The Museum was open from June 20<sup>th</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>. A total of 433 visitors signed the visitor book – over 100 more visitors than last year. Jim Buttrick's fine exhibit on the Jamestown architecture of Charles Bevins undoubtedly helped boost the numbers. Jim gathered and arranged the Bevins exhibit, wrote a booklet on Bevins' history and work that was published by the JHS in the spring, and gave a talk co-sponsored by the JHS at the Jamestown Library in July. Jim's exhibit was of great interest to all, but especially to the owners of the houses that Bevins designed. Jim has agreed to continue the exhibit through the summer of 2003.

The permanent ferry exhibit was also spruced up to provide some new interest. The Patsie McCandless watercolor of the wheelhouse of the *Jamestown IV*, donated by Dolores Hellewell, was a new addition.

We appreciate the many hours spent by Lee Howard in setting up the volunteer calendar. We also thank all the people who donated their time: Joyce Allphin, Caroline Armington, Jane Bentley, John Biddle, Joan Briggs, Leo Brown, Bill Burgin, Gerry Callister, Ellie Chase, Pud and Bob Connelly, Alma de la Ronde, Marcia Glassie, Emma Graham, Brookie Harding, Janie Harris, Caroline Head, Dick Hines, Barry Holland, John Howard, Rose and Varoujan Karentz, Bob Kinder, Mark Lancaster, Anne Lane, Teddy and John Leyon, Bruce Livingston, Nancy Logan, Jim MacLeod, Sue Maden, Jane Miner, Mary Miner, Barbara Nesto, Karen Osenton, Linnea Petersen, Sav Rebecchi, Helen Richardson, Walter Schroder, Debbie Slattery, Betty Ann Taylor, Alma Tiexiera, Carol Todd, Lisa Tyre, Shirley Utterback, Linda Warner, Mary and Dennis Webster, Jim Wiles, Harry Wright, and Helen Zartarian.

## **Curator's Comments**

**By Elizabeth Connelly**

The Jamestown Historical Society is now in the process of having two handsome shadow boxes restored. Each shadow box features a half model of a full rigged sailing ship, as can be seen in the photograph below.



The boxes measure approximately 37 inches by 35 inches. The restoration is being done by Jim and Linda Plante, nationally known restorationists and builders of ship models.

The boxes originally hung in the Gardner House, a hotel of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that stood on the ground where we now have the Community Center. After the restoration they will hang in our library where they may be enjoyed by the community.

The partnership between the Jamestown Historical Society and the Jamestown Philomenian Library is wonderful for all concerned. The Historical Society has the artifacts and the Library has the venue for displaying them. Hopefully, in time to come, we will be able to have more things on display so we can all learn more about the rich heritage of Jamestown.

## ***Building and Grounds Committee***

***By Joe Logan***

The museum building had no major work done this summer, but the attic was cleaned up and reorganized during an intensive Saturday work session. The outdoor landscaping was carefully maintained by Lee Howard and Tom McCandless, to whom we owe many thanks. The museum building is to be re-roofed by the Town before winter.

The Friends Meetinghouse has been maintained carefully, thanks to the stewardship of Bill Smith and Harry Wright. Electric service was installed to provide heat during the spring and fall meetings. A minor leak was repaired in the roof. A path was constructed between the Meetinghouse and the Windmill to accommodate school groups or others making a history field trip to both sites. Thanks to Steve Goslee and his crew for that.

And of course, the newly-restored Windmill was cared for by Brookie and Howard Harding, who have now retired from that job and to whom we owe great appreciation for their many years of service.

## ***Meetinghouse Report***

***By W.W. Smith and Harry Wright***

The Meetinghouse opened for Sunday worship on March 15<sup>th</sup> this year and the Conanicut Friends Meeting will continue to meet there each Sunday through December 9<sup>th</sup>. During the summer, attendance at meeting has averaged 15.

Visits to the Meetinghouse can be arranged by calling one of us. Everyone is welcome to the Sunday worship from 10:30 to 11:30 AM.

## ***Windmill Committee***

***By Brookie and Howard Harding***

This year we were asked to open the windmill June 1<sup>st</sup> to participate in the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities' annual meeting and Community Day. Luckily, the weather was perfect. Our millwright Andy Shrake and his team opened the mill, put the canvas on, and there was enough wind to turn the sails! However, the turnout for this unusual event was disappointing, perhaps due to lack of advance advertising.

In its second year since restoration, the mill had a steady stream of visitors, averaging about 20 per afternoon. Again we wish to thank our faithful volunteers, several of whom spent more than one afternoon as docents. These willing helpers were Jane Bentley, Whit Brown, Jim Buttrick, Bob Connelly, Jim Dodge, Rosemary Enright, Marcia Glassie, Brookie Harding, Janie Harris, John Howard, Bob Kinder, John and Teddy Leyon, Sue Maden, Kathy Maloney, Jane Miner, Don Minto, Carol Todd, and Dorothy Zenie.

## ***Finance Committee***

***By Dick Hines***

As reported at the annual meeting, an audit of the books was conducted this year for the first time in the history of the JHS. Jeanne O'Reilly, the CPA who conducted the audit, suggested that the Society establish an audit committee to conduct an annual audit in house, rather than hire an outside CPA.

This recommendation has been incorporated in the 2002 update to the by-laws and a committee to conduct the 2002-2003 audit has been formed.

**Officers and Directors  
2002 – 2003**

President	Bill Burgin
Vice President	Jane Bentley
Secretary	Marcia Glassie
Treasurer	Mary Webster

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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

**Committee Chairs  
2002 – 2003**

Windmill	Linnea Petersen
Collections	Linda Warner
Building & Grounds	Joe Logan
Program	Janie Harris
Co-chairs	Jane Bentley
Finance	Dick Hines
Publications	Rosemary Enright
Nominating	Harry Wright

**Change Service Requested**

Jamestown Historical Society  
P.O. Box 156  
Jamestown, RI 02835

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