

Castle Chronicle

Volume 13 Number 1 ■ Spring 2004

Published by the Cocumscussoc Association at Smith's Castle ■ 55 Richard Smith Drive ■ Wickford, Rhode Island 02852



Looking for Mary Talbot Pitman

Deborah Peterson

Last fall I had the pleasure of studying a remarkable 1807 whitework quilt from the Cocumscussoc Association's collection for a class in the material culture of the early American republic. This quilt is a treasure: an exquisitely executed and well preserved example of French or Marseilles quilting. Rather than using color blocks, this technique involves hand-stitching a design onto the surface of the quilt, then "stuffing and cording" elements of the design to give it a soft, raised effect. The quilt is finished on three sides with six inches of hand-knotted netting.

Although my first concern in studying the quilt was with its classically influenced style, I was also very curious about the life of its maker. All I knew was her name—Mary Talbot—and that she had begun the quilt in 1807 in anticipation of her marriage to John Pitman, a Providence attorney. Additionally, I wanted to know what it was like to live in Providence in the years following the American Revolution; who Mary's family was; where she lived; and how and where she learned to sew so skillfully.

The most obvious clues were found in the quilt itself—the sophisticated design and the superior needlework talent applied to it. I had a hunch that Mary Talbot had learned these skills in school, and here I got lucky. I found two of Mary's childhood embroideries in Betty Ring's *Let Virtue Be a Guide to Thee*, the catalog of an exhibition mounted by the Rhode Island Historical Society. Most of the samplers were worked by girls who had attended Mary "Polly" Balch's academy from 1785 to 1830, one of the longest run-



Smith's Castle is fortunate to have this very fine example of French- or Marseilles-type quilting in its collection. The quilt was executed by Mary Talbot Pitman of Providence in 1807. The central medallion of the quilt clearly shows the small precise stitches that form the design and the trapunto (stuffing) that gives the quilt its raised textured surface. Photo by Barbara Carey.

ning of the schools that began to appear in Providence at the time of the Revolution.

The school was located on North Main Street until 1801, when Mary Balch built a house for herself at what was then 22 George Street, on the East Side. In her new, larger home Balch continued teaching her day students—mainly girls and young women—and began taking in boarders. She placed an advertisement in the *Providence Gazette* in 1809 describing "...Her System of Education [which] comprises Reading, Orthography, Grammar, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, with the Use of Globes, History and

Composition, Especially the Epistolary Style; Drawing, Painting, Embroidery, with all the Varieties Of plain, fancy and elegant Needle Work. Likewise Music..."

Her curriculum expanded in 1825 to include "*Rhetorick, Philosophy, Astronomy and Chemistry.*" This regimen very much reflected the Federal Era's preoccupation with personal refinement as a means of moral growth. Many of the new middle class were sending their boys and girls to school in the hopes of cultivating a measure of "gentility" formerly reserved for the very wealthy.

Mary attended the Balch school from 1795—when she was eight

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Castle Chronicle is published quarterly by the Cocumscussoc Association at Smith's Castle 55 Richard Smith Dr. Wickford, RI 02852
E-mail: smithscastle@earthlink.net
Web site: www.smithscastle.org

Subscriptions are by Smith's Castle membership only, beginning at \$25.

The viewpoints expressed by contributors to *Castle Chronicle* are not necessarily those of the Cocumscussoc Association.

Note from the President

Before we race off to start our 2004 activities, I want to reflect on our incredible accomplishments and new activities in 2003.

2003 was marked thematically by the 325th anniversary of the construction of the Castle by Richard Smith Jr. in 1678. The 325 committee kept this theme front and center throughout the year.

On opening day, our meeting-room exhibition panels were unveiled to help our visitors visualize Smith's Castle history.

In May, the hearth-cooking committee's Tavern Night was a memorable event, with hearty fare and spicy banter enjoyed by all.

In August, our partnership with the Hera Gallery was an opportunity to introduce new audiences to Smith's Castle and allowed Castle members to see our site from an artist's perspective.

In September, Smith's Castle and Forest Park Elementary School received a certificate of commendation from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) for their collaborative children's education initiative, Documents and Discovery.

With a grant from the Rhode Island Committee on the Humanities (RICH), Smith's Castle took the managing role among five local museum partners in developing a public educational program on Rhode Island slavery and its legacies.

In November, Smith's Castle (for the first time in recent memory) marched in the Wickford Veteran's Day Parade. Les Flood led the group with the tractor he recently and generously donated to the Castle.

Another first: Our membership committee held an elegant tea for new members. This was a great way to welcome our new members and inspire them to get involved in Castle activities.

In December, our holiday member party—always a local hit—this year included a silent auction. The funds raised were used to purchase a new computer and other essential office equipment and software.

Finally, Smith's Castle new Development Committee sponsored an annual fund drive that exceeded expectations. Thank you to committee leaders Paul Carlson and Barbara Dawson and to fund-drive chairs Russell and Cathy Shippee, as well as to everyone who contributed.

So 2003 was a great year, but 2004 can be even better. In addition to many of our regular events and our fantastic adult education series, new events to look for include:

- An Antique Auto Show on July 18,

- A summer member party as a counterpart to our successful holiday party (leaders and volunteers for this event are needed), and

- A tour of houses in historic Wickford village on September 19.

Please visit the Web site for a calendar with a full list of planned 2004 activities.

Unfortunately, we still do not have a leadership team firmly in place for Plantation Days. If you would like to volunteer as a leader, please call the Castle immediately. We must shortly make a final go/no-go decision.

Smith's Castle volunteers reported more than 8,200 hours of volunteer time last year. I thank each of you for every minute you spent on behalf of the Castle. I hope you find it as enjoyable as I do, and I look forward to working with you again this year.



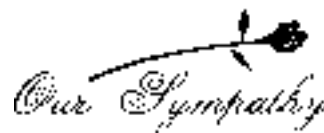
—Neil Dunay

Welcome New Members

Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Carroll
Linda Cooper
Ms. Denise Coppa
James E. and Carole J. Dilley

Martha Fuller and Family
Nathan Fuller and Family
David Gannon
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Perreault

—as of 2/13/04



The Chronicle has been informed of the deaths of Castle members **Marie Rocchio** and **Lee Williams**. On behalf of the membership we extend sincere sympathy to their family and friends.

Annual Meeting Committee Reports

Following are summaries of committee reports presented at the Association's annual meeting, January 31, 2004. Complete transcripts are available in the Castle office.

Treasurer's Report. Rain or snow adversely affected major special events, reducing receipts to about \$5,500 below projected income. Cold weather increased utility bills to \$3,000 above budget. Despite these challenges, receipts of \$85,085 were less than \$1,000 below total expenditures of \$85,921.

—Neil Dunay for James Powell

Buildings. Fire code violations addressed by kitchen remodeling; oil tank replaced; interior and exterior repairs made; and maintenance painting completed in Castle and Annex. Initial steps taken to establish maintenance plan for both buildings to document conditions; establish standards; schedule, track, and record tasks and service providers; and identify future needs to adequately plan for expenditures.

—John Weaver

Annual Fund Drive Surpasses Goal

The first Annual Fund Drive conducted by the Development Committee of Smith's Castle surpassed its 2003 goal of \$7,000. By December 31, 2003, through the generosity of 103 donors, the Castle had received \$10,850.

The funds raised will benefit the youth education programs at the Castle. The committee consisted of Barbara Carey, Barbara Dawson, Donna Dufault, Neil Dunay, Betsy Fenik, Beth Martin, and Betsy Steiman. Paul Carlson was chairman. Cathy and Russell Shippee were honorary chairs and are to be commended for their leadership.

The committee mailed 450 solicitation packets to the general membership and friends of the Castle. Campaign materials were designed by Barbara Dawson. The response was extremely good with an approximately 25 percent return with gifts. Gifts ranged as high as \$1,000. This presents a real challenge for the annual campaign of 2004.

The development committee is congratulated for a job well done.

—Paul Carlson

Collections. Cataloguing and documentation of collections continues. Mold discovered and removed; dehumidifiers recommended to alleviate reoccurrence. 20th century Cocumcussoc Farm quart bottle purchased. Awards for Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) to be announced in early Spring. If received, funding to finance services of preservation architect and collections specialist to assist in planning for needs of house and collections.

—Linda Eppich

Development. 450 solicitations produced outstanding 25 percent response rate and netted \$10,850 exceeding the \$7,000 goal.

—Paul Carlson

Docents. Nine new trainees were inducted in 2003. Training integrated the information available in the new visitor orientation exhibition and catalogue. Docents provided community outreach for the Roger Williams National Memorial 400th anniversary celebration of Roger Williams' birth and the North Kingstown Veterans' Day parade. Continuing education included participation in a New England Museum Association conference on thematic tours, an on-site speaker, and field trips to other historic sites. Visitors are impressed that the very professional Castle tours are conducted by volunteer docents.

—Betty Fenik

Education, Adult. Educational collaborations with Master Gardeners and Old Narragansett Church were well coordinated and received. Highly successful women's living history camp led to planning two camps in 2004. Adult programs continue year round with North Kingstown Free Library collaboration for winter educational outreach.

—Chris Kalina for Carol Bozarth

Education, Youth. More than 2,200 students, teachers, and chaperones served by quality, affordable, standards-based, volunteer staffed programs. Documents and Discovery: Kids Make History Live received national award from American Association of State and Local History. Successful week-long children's living history camp to be repeated in 2004. Youth Historians move to adult volunteer status; Castle Kids, new youth group, is established. Diane Amaral is to assume youth education leadership in 2004.

—Chris Kalina

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Did You Know?

In 2003, Smith's Castle's Web site (<http://www.smithscastle.org>) received almost 22,000 visitors and 234,000 total hits. This averages out to 65 visitors and 700 hits a day.

These numbers aren't huge in the Web world, but are significant when compared to the numbers of actual visitors that come to the Castle annually.

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Garden. Focus was care of 18th Century Garden, with additional attention given to other garden areas and trees. Two highly successful Castle-Master Gardener educational programs offered in 2003; five to be offered in 2004. Planning underway for 2004 as Smith's Castle assumes lead responsibility for garden care with URI Master Gardeners continuing to participate and advise. Board of URI Master Gardener program extremely pleased with association with Castle—one of three R.I. historic garden sites with which it collaborates.

—Donna Shammass for Jules Cohen

Grounds. Activities included April clean up day, site readiness support for special events, routine property maintenance, replacing entrance fence, and dead tree removal. Thanks given to URI Master Gardeners for assistance.

—John Aubin

Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island

Following the business portion of the annual meeting, Wm. McKenzie (Mack) Woodward of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission presented an illustrated survey of historic landscapes in Rhode Island from the colonial era to the mid 20th century.

Rhode Island is fortunate in being the first state in the country to have enacted legislation that funds historic landscapes. As a result there is significant attention being given to issues related to this area of historic preservation.

For more information see, *Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island* published by the R.I. Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, 150 Benefit Street, Providence.

The report explains the historical development of a broad range of vernacular landscapes in the state and includes a discussion of current issues, threats, and opportunities relating to this topic. It also contains an annotated inventory of historic landscapes throughout the state.

Marketing. Committee responded to needs for banner for 325th anniversary year; state-wide rack card distribution; Mark Your Calendar, promoting 2003 special events; marketing support for all activities; update of press contact list; participation in North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce Museum Night and Trinity Rep Holiday Open House; ongoing support for promotion of 2004 Antique Auto Show.

—Carol Allen

Membership. Year long activities included renewal mailing and acknowledgments; maintenance of computer data base; quarterly trustee reports; new member solicitation at events, and new member tea. Successful year resulted in increase in membership units and receipts.

—Janet Breault

Long Range Site. 2003 activities focused on \$200,000 R.I. Department of Transportation Enhancement Program grant to be disbursed in FY2005. Committee is seeking early release of monies to hire consultant to complete a cultural landscape report. The report will provide the Association with a comprehensive research and planning document that will guide the preparation of a landscape master plan and, ultimately, the detail design and construction of the landscape improvements for which the transportation grant was awarded.

—Darrell McIntire for Mary Turkel

Resident Director. 150 volunteers submitted a total of 8,225 hours for 2003. Individuals were recognized for significant contributions in 2002 and 2003.

—Barbara Carey

Rhode Island Council for the Humanities initiative, R.I. Slavery and Its Legacies. Collaborators—scholar Joanne Pope Melish, Smith's Castle, Newport Historical Society, Pettaquamscutt Historical Society, R.I. Black Heritage Society, and R.I. Historical Society—completed implementation activities with three performances of a new work by Sylvia A. Soares, *Plantation Complex*, in late February and release of two curriculum supplements. The supplements, for grades 3 to 5, are: an investigation of slavery through analysis of the Pettaquamscutt Historical Society's Ernest Baker mural, *Economic Activities of the Narragansett Planters*, and a story path game involving students in role playing of slave and slave holder.

—Margaret Skenyon



Drawing for Felicity, an *American Girl* doll, was held December 8 during Christmas at the Castle. Winner Lara Seaberg was thrilled to receive this special memento as she and her family moved to Mansfield, Texas in December. They will be missed. Proceeds from the drawing benefitted the Castle's educational activities.

Newly Elected Officers and Trustees

Jules Cohen, Trustee, joined the Castle to coordinate the URI Master Gardener-Smith's Castle project, which provides garden care and related educational programming.

A Yale grad with an MBA from Boston University, Jules managed the computer department at Leeson, a local textile machinery manufacturing firm; opened the R.I. branch of a national computer programming firm; and partnered in a computer consulting and programming services firm. After doing adjunct teaching at local colleges and for trade associations, Jules joined the Rhode Island College faculty as a professor of computer information systems.

Now retired from teaching, he is part-time director of handicap services for the R.I. Golf Association. Besides the Master Gardeners, his interests include Narragansett Council, Boy Scouts of America; Kent County Visiting Nurse Association; and R.I. Wild Plant Society.

His wife Dede joins Jules as an active Master Gardener.

Guy J. Natelli, Secretary, is president of Natelli Systems, Inc., which specializes in software systems development and project management. He has a masters degree in computer science from Steven's Institute of Technology. With 25 years of experience, he has developed behavioral health, military, telecommunications, financial, and operating systems software for a variety of companies. Natelli Systems has been a business member of the Cocumscussoc Association since 2000.

Guy originally hails from New Jersey and came to Rhode Island in 1987 with his wife Monica and two children. He and his family took an immediate interest in Smith's Castle—its history and its serene setting. One of his interests is photography, and he took many pictures of the Castle and grounds after the February 2003 snowstorm. He donated the photos to the Cocumscussoc Association.



Carol Palmer Trustee, Originally from Massachusetts, Carol earned her BA in economics from the University of Rhode Island. She has a keen interest in education and culture and shares a history interest with her daughter Grace, a Castle docent.

Carol worked for the Newport Preservation Society and has an extensive volunteer resume with The Children's Workshop, Fishing Cove Early Learning Center, St. Paul's Church, Davisville Middle School, and Cub Scouts. At Forest Park Elementary School she is the publicity liaison and chair of the garden committee and is active with the PTO and the school advisory committee.

Her adventures include backpacking in Europe, traveling in east Asia, cruising the Caribbean, and sailing from Newport to Florida. She also likes to hike, visit natural sites with her family, and take her chocolate Lab for swims in Narragansett Bay.



Jim Powell, Treasurer, is a tax and financial consultant, with various individual, trust, not-for-profit, real estate, and construction clients.

He earned a BS in Accounting and AAB (Bachelor of Advanced Accountancy) from the University of Florida and received CPA certificates in the states of Florida, Illinois, New York and Missouri. Jim is also a Certified Fraud Examiner.

Prior to retiring as vice president and director of special financial projects for Ralston Purina Company, Jim served as vice president and director of internal auditing for the same company, with worldwide responsibility for corporate internal auditing.

His previous positions include audit manager and professional education manager for Arthur Andersen & Co., director of internal auditing for Continental Baking Company, and adjunct instructor of managerial accounting and financial accounting in the adult MBA program at Fontbonne College in St. Louis, Missouri.

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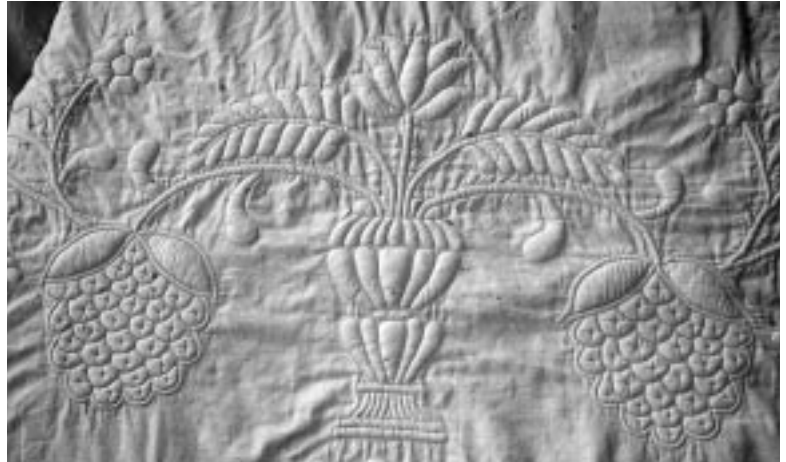


Looking for Mary Talbot Pitman (from page 1)

years old—until at least 1800, and quite possibly longer. I learned from Ring's book that Mary's parents were Benjamin Talbot (1743–1805) and Hannah (Brink) Talbot (1746–1830) and that they had at least three other children: Benjamin, Hannah, and another daughter. One of Mary's embroideries in the catalogue is a mourning picture from 1800 commemorating her sister Hannah's death in 1795; it contains the urn and willow imagery that dominated gravestone carving at the time, and the rendering of the willow was a hallmark of Balch's instruction.

Soon afterwards, I spent an afternoon at the Rhode Island Historical Society Library looking through the papers of Mary's father, who ran a dry goods store in Providence. Benjamin Talbot was originally from Dighton, Massachusetts, and had begun buying property on the west side of the bridge in Providence as early as 1767.

The original settlers had been allotted tracts of land on the sloping east bank of the Providence River. A single bridge had been built at Market Square to connect the East Side to the marshier West Side that would eventually expand outward and upward into what is now the downtown area. A large salt cove occupied what has become Waterplace Park and



Another detail of the quilt shows a tulip and hydrangea-like flowers with plumed foliage cascading from a classical vase. Photo by Barbara Carey.

the new train station. According to the diary of Theodore Foster, a young lawyer in the town, by 1776 there were 310 families totaling 1,677 inhabitants on the west side of the river, and one of these families was the Talbots, living on Broad Street.

When Benjamin Talbot first settled in Providence, neither the College Edifice (Brown's University Hall) nor the First Baptist Church had yet been built. The Old State House between Benefit and North Main (first known as Towne and then King) streets was not yet ten years old. The population of both the East and West sides of town would swell from 5,000 to nearly 30,000 over the next 50 years when Benjamin and his wife Hannah would have found themselves in a very different world from the hard-scrabble colonial one they had grown up in. By 1805, when he died, Mary's father owned a 120-acre farm in Cranston and properties on Broad Street and Distil House Lane (now Page Street).

Upon his father's death Benjamin Talbot Jr. advertised in the *Providence Gazette* offering to rent and possibly sell the Broad

Street property, which he described as being "...opposite the Town Pumps... consisting of five lower Rooms, one in the second and three in the third Storey, with a Garret, and a good Cellar; a shop and Store below for West-India Goods; Barn and Chaise-House; Fountain Water in the House, which is accommodated With an excellent Garden..."

Although Benjamin Talbot Sr. could not sign his own name he had managed to provide for his family quite well. It's likely Mary spent a good part, if not all, of her childhood in the Broad Street house, living above her father's store and making her way across the bridge every day to attend Mary Balch's school, where she perfected her needlework skills.

She began work on her quilt in 1807 when she was 20 years old, and she and her mother were probably still living in the Broad Street home after her father's death. Notices in the *Providence Gazette* over the next couple of years show Benjamin Talbot Jr. still trying to settle his father's estate and sell the property. It was finally auctioned off in 1807. In 1810, census records show the

John Pitman house, #12 George Street, Providence, was the home of Mary Talbot Pitman in 1836. It was built in 1795 by the Reverend John Pitman, Mary's father-in-law. Photo by Deborah Peterson.



widow Hannah Talbot and her family were still living somewhere in the West District.

By this time Mary must have been anticipating her marriage to John Pitman (1785–1864), a Brown University graduate who practiced law. I don't know how they met, but I can imagine several possibilities: If she was still attending the Balch academy in 1801 when it relocated to George Street, Mary would have passed the Pitman home at No. 12 on her way up the hill to school. Or had John's sister Eliza, who was Mary's age, also attended Balch's school, where they had become friends?

Social intercourse was an important part of the genteel life of the time, and Providence had its share of dances, dinner and card parties, and civic meetings, according to contemporary diaries. Besides church and school attendance, a young woman of Mary's station (who had undoubtedly learned to dance at school) might attend "assemblies" held at places like the Old State House or the Golden Ball Hotel, once located at the corner of Meeting and Benefit streets. She might also have attended some of the theatrical events advertised in the local papers, quite possibly making the acquaintance of other young people of her class.

I found it interesting that Mary had begun to work on her wedding quilt five years before her 1812 marriage. According to Jack Larkin's *The Reshaping of Everyday Life*, Mary's generation was marrying at a later age than their parents did in order to establish itself more securely before starting a family. This delay obviously had different implications for women than for men. While Mary spent her time selecting just the right imported cotton for her

quilt, possibly from one of the merchants in Providence's Cheapside (now the block of North Main Street between Market Square and Steeple Street), her fiancé was on the road, travelling by horseback through Pennsylvania and Ohio before returning to Salem, Massachusetts, where he and his wife would settle after marriage.

Mary was 25 and John 27 when they were married at her sister's home by the Reverend Gano on the evening of October 22, 1812. The following November she gave birth to the first of their nine children.

Within ten years of their wedding, Mary and John had returned to Providence, where they remained for the rest of their 51-year marriage. Because her husband held positions of prominence, appointed first a U.S. District Attorney and then a U.S. District Court Judge, it is not difficult to get a sense of his character through the speeches and correspondence he left behind. But Mary Talbot Pitman's wedding quilt possesses an equally striking eloquence: the careful attention to detail, the patient hand-stitching, the gracefully formed floral and neoclassical images suggest a woman of sensitivity with the resolve to live a life inspired by the virtues of the time.

This thought struck me when I found her grave in Providence's North Burial Ground. Mary died in 1863 at the age of 76, and John died the following year at 79. Beside their graves three smaller slate headstones tell a sad story: Two sons, Franklin and Edward, four and nine years old, died within a day of each other in 1832 and another son, William, died two years later at age three. What a trial for Mary, I thought, to lose three little boys so abruptly. Were they taken

by the Asiatic cholera that ravaged the country in 1831/32, or was it scarlet fever?

I like to imagine that Mary once again turned to her needle and thread—as she had after her sister Hannah died—and worked her grief into something worthwhile and beautiful, something that would be cherished as much as her remarkable wedding quilt is today. ■



Mary Talbot Pitman's gravestone is in Providence's North Burial Ground, along with others of her family. Photo by Deborah Peterson.

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Ring, Betty. *Let Virtue Be a Guide to Thee, Needlework in the Education of Rhode Island Women, 1730–1830*. Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, R.I., 1983.

Deborah Peterson, a native Rhode Islander, works at Brown University's Rockefeller Library. Her interest in New England history has led her to take classes in American civilization at Brown, and this article grew out of research for a class in the material culture of early America. While researching Mary Talbot Pitman's life, she discovered that Mary's son, John T. Pitman, was a field officer in the same Civil War regiment as her great-great-grandfather, David B. Hawkes.

Postcards from Smith's Castle

Long before it became a museum open for public tours in 1949, the Richard Smith Block House was a noted tourist attraction. As early as about 1900, tourists could purchase postcards of the blockhouse at the local drug store as a memento of their Wickford visit.

Smith's Castle has been assembling these vintage postcards to chronicle the site's landscape and development in the 20th century. Here is a selection of these postcards.

If you have a postcard of the Castle that is not shown here, please consider allowing us to scan it for our digital archives.

Although the façade of the Castle faces the water, what we consider the rear of the building was an important aspect from the time of Daniel Updike's renovation of the building c1738 to the early 20th century. Postcards from before the 1920s almost uniformly show the Castle from the north-western side. Most of the cards are not dated, but card number 1 from 1909 shows what we would call the back of the Castle, before the meeting-room ell had been added. The second postcard dated 1919 still calls the site the Babbitt Farm in reference to its contemporary owner. Postcards 3–6, all undated but probably from the teens and twenties, are taken from similar vantage points. On the reverse of postcard 5, the correspondent wrote, "This is one of the nice farms out this way." Two facade views (numbers 7 and 8), though undated, probably appeared during the Fox ownership in the 1930s, with one identified as the Cocumcussoc [sic] Farm dairy. Dating from the same period, number 9 is the only known postcard to show an interior view of the Castle. It captures how the Fox's decorated the old kitchen. "Chimney dates to about 1643," the caption asserts. Not shown are two views of the "Great Grave" marker. Postcard number 10 is a modern (pre-1990) view of the Castle.

A local restaurateur thought the Richard Smith lore was so compelling to tourists that he named his establishment "Smith Manor" (number 11). The name was derived from the disproven 19th-century assertion that Roger Williams established his trading post at this site, about where the Texaco Station and Burger King stand today on Post Road near the entrance to Quonset. Hand-dated 1954 but probably produced in the 1940s, the reverse of the postcard states,

The earliest recorded history of Smith Manor dates from 1636 when a Richard Smith of Portsmouth purchased this tract of land for 50 pounds. Roger Williams later bought it and operated an Indian trading post from 1644



1



2



3

to 1651, when he sold it to John Winthrop, later to become Governor of the territory.

Land evidences indicate neither Roger Williams nor Richard Smith ever owned the land. The lot was more likely part of John Fones' Devil's Foot purchase in 1672, and the house was likely built by Jeremiah Fones (c1664–1747) in the early 1700s. This house/restaurant was demolished in the early 1960s—progress! ■



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11

continued from page 5

Karen Pizzaruso, Trustee, says no matter where she lands, she enjoys re-search into local history. Originally from New York, she's also lived in Connecticut, Louisiana, and Florida. Karen works for a landscape architect and serves on the board for South County Literacy Volunteers.



She joined Smith's Castle in 1982 and started a visiting docent program, taking a suitcase full of Castle artifacts to area schools. She also did public relations, served as a trustee, and funded the punt project. Her children are grown but still remember dressing in colonial garb, playing games at Plantation Days, and being filmed for *PM Magazine* with Matt Lauer.

Family and work obligations shortened her available time over the years, but "when the recent invitation to get more involved came, it was wonderful!" Husband Pete says he'll be back too to pitch in when needed.

Margaret Skenyon, Trustee, has lived in North Kingstown for 20 years. She has degrees from Bryant College and the University of Rhode Island, with a major in political science and journalism.



Maggie's interest in Rhode Island history dates to her Providence childhood when her routes to school and downtown passed houses and sites dating to the first settlement of the city.

After many volunteer years with St. Francis de Sales Parish, Girl Scouts, and North Kingstown schools, she is now director of the North Kingstown Business/Education Partnership. This organization provides grants to teachers and schools for career-related activities and matches students with volunteer mentors.

Her youngest graduates from North Kingstown High School this year and Maggie looks forward to sailing on Narragansett Bay and traveling to Europe with the love of her life, husband Jack. ■

Clean-Up Days Volunteers Needed April 3 & 4

Dig out your spring cleaning tools and join our corp of volunteers in preparing the buildings and grounds for the first school programs in mid April and opening day on May 1. We'll be working Saturday and Sunday, April 3 and 4, from 9 am to 3 pm.

Indoor and outdoor workers are needed. This is a great opportunity for families to work together in rewarding community service. Everyone has fun, and new friendships often emerge.

Castle volunteers serve a homemade lunch. Call 294-3521 to let us know you're coming.

Smith's Castle gratefully acknowledges the support of its business members.

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The Castle Chronicle: Spring 2004

This Spring at Smith's Castle

March

Day	Time	Event
Thursday, 4	9:00 am	Docent meeting at Essex Village
Tuesday, 9	7:00pm–8:00 pm	Docent/Greeter volunteer orientation
Thursday, 11	5:00 pm	Executive Committee meeting
Saturday, 20	2:00 pm	Lecture: "History of Flax," Cynthia Davis. North Kingstown Free Library. Register 294-3521.

April

Day	Time	Event
Thursday, 1	9:00 am	Docent meeting at Essex Village
Saturday, 3	9:00 am–3:00 pm	Clean-up weekend Volunteers needed, call 294-3521
Sunday, 4	9:00 am–3:00 pm	Clean-up weekend Volunteers needed, call 294-3521
Tuesday, 20	6:30–9:00 pm	Docent training #1
Saturday, 24	9:00–11:30 am	Docent training #2
	Noon–1:00 pm	Greeter training
Monday, 26	7:00 pm	Trustee meeting
Tuesday, 27	5:00–6:00 pm	Greeter training
	6:30–9:00 pm	Docent training #3

May

Day	Time	Event
Saturday, 1	Noon–4:00 pm	Opening Day: Spring Days at the Castle
Tuesday, 4	6:30–9:00 pm	Docent training #4
Saturday, 8	9:00–11:30 am	Docent training #5
Tuesday, 11	6:30–9:00 pm	Docent training #6
Saturday, 15	9:00 am–11:30 am	Docent training #7
Saturday, 22	10:00 am	Black Gold! ABCs of Composting URI Master Gardeners and Smith's Castle Register 294-3521.
Sunday, 30	9:00–4:00 pm	Thematic tour: Rack Your Brains: Nuggets of Castle History Revealed Through Everyday Expressions. Register 294-3521.

June

Day	Time	Event
Saturday, 12	Noon–4:00 pm	Strawberry Festival
Sunday, 13	Noon–4:00 pm	Strawberry Festival rain date
Saturday, 19	Noon–4:00 pm	Thematic tour: Slavery on a Rhode Island Plantation Register 294-3521.
Saturday, 26	10:00 am	Container Gardening with Heirloom Plants URI Master Gardeners and Smith's Castle Register 294-3521.



Senator Sheehan Secures Legislative Grant for Smith's Castle

In January 2004, Rhode Island State Senator James C. Sheehan (D-District 23) presented a \$2,000 legislative grant to Smith's Castle President Neil Dunay. The grant was used to cover expenses that unexpectedly developed last year. The oil tank in the basement was replaced, several rooms in the Castle were painted, and some of the proceeds were used for computer equipment for the Annex office.

"These funds could not have come at a better time," Dunay said. "We are indeed grateful for Senator Sheehan's support for historic preservation at Smith's Castle." ■

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