

Castle Chronicle



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Cheese Making at Cocumscussoc 1660-1692

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Milking
from Rhode Island Tales
and Tales of Old Times,
1839.



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Note from the President

Colonial Harvest Festival 2008 showed Smith's Castle at its best (see Kristel Henry's exquisite photos on pp. 16 and 17). Our volunteers worked smoothly in weaving together the activities of local vendors, re-enactors, artists, representatives from other museums, as well as our own stellar docents, into a vibrant and colorful tapestry of colonial American life. Many thanks to event chairs Maggie Skenyon and Melissa Powers, to the committee, and to the entire Smith's Castle team for staging such an incredible experience for our visitors.

Proof of success was visitor reaction. Audiences were truly mesmerized by demonstrations of colonial fiber arts and fashion; model shipbuilding and navigation; and foods and crafts. Children proudly showed their efforts at punched tins and laughed at the seemingly simple game of "mouse in the hay." Children and adults both were fascinated—and a little freaked out—by 17th-century sausage making ("The casing is made from what?"). And all of these activities were framed by the authenticity of this 17th/18th century site, as our docents told the stories of real people who shaped our community into what it is today.

Smith's Castle continues to evolve and elaborate on the stories of the people who lived here. This year we started off with the new installation of the law office of Attorney General Daniel Updike (c. 1693–1757), which this month graced the cover of the Rhode Island Bar Association's *Rhode Island Bar Journal* (see p. 3).

This winter, we will be reinstalling the pantry as a cheese-making room (dairy) to interpret the activities of Esther Smith (?–c. 1691) and her contribution to the development of the South County cheese export boom in the 18th century. Advance research for the exhibition (p. 4) shows the history behind the family tradition concerning Mrs. (Joan) Smith's cheese recipe from Gloucestershire and how the dairy relates to the architecture of the Smith family's c. 1678 home and to the relative wealth of Richard Smith Jr., as suggested in his c. 1692 estate inventory.

Preliminary research for future seasons includes expanding upon the story of Abigail Newton Updike (c. 1663–1745), a locally renowned doctress. We will also be developing the story of Caesar Updike, one of the Updike's slaves who earned his freedom by volunteering for Rhode Island's "Black Battalion" in the American Revolution. These true stories from Cocumscussoc's past make Smith's Castle a unique experience for our visitors and not "just another colonial house." And adding layers to our interpretation and exhibitions gives visitors a reason to return.

I hope I've gotten you interested in coming back soon for a visit to Smith's Castle. Your next opportunity will be December 6 and 7, noon–4:00, for "Christmas at the Castle," one of our longest running events that has become a Wickford holiday tradition. This year the theme is "Christmas through the Ages." You will see rooms decorated for the holidays in the styles of the mid-17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, with docents dressed in the clothing of each period to tell you all about Christmas at that time. Our traditional bake sale will be back, and, as always, Father Christmas will be here to greet children. Scheduled entertainment, generously funded by the North Kingstown Arts Council, will include eScape from South Kingstown, the Hummingbirds, the East Greenwich Bell Ringers, and Sheila Boothroyd on guitar. Free mulled cider for all. Admission is \$4; members and children under 12 are free.

Finally, no *Note from the President* would be complete without a plea for volunteers. Saving Smith's Castle and interpreting it for the thousands of visitors who pass through the gate every year is a community responsibility. Historic sites around the country are beginning to vanish due to fewer resources, fewer hands, and diminished relevancy in a modern world. If you believe Smith's Castle is an integral part of this community, not only for what it once was but also for what it offers us today, then a small donation of time is a meaningful commitment, if not a duty. That may sound like a burden, but in fact we have a lot of fun keeping this place alive. Working side by side with enthusiastic people who have a lot of heart and spirit is a joy, and every moment is a learning experience. Whatever your interest, talent, or schedule, we can use you. Pressing needs for the next season are volunteers for docenting, school programs, grounds and gardens, buildings, membership, fund raising, and grant writing. If you've got even a small amount of time, we've got something for you to do. If you are interested, or if you have comments and ideas, please email me at smithscastle@earthlink.net.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Neil Dunay".

—Neil Dunay, President

Welcome New Members

Sharon Brewer
Janice Kleinline

—as of November 1, 2008

Scout Troop Lends Helping Hands with Landscape



Helping out with the clean up were Justin Skenyon (in circle) , Ben Foster, Dan Foster, Jake Rooney, John Rooney, Ethan Carter, Dan Carter, Michael Avarista, Jared McConnell, Daren McConnell, Richie Reich, Tim Reich, Gayle Wolf, Leo Skenyon, Caitlin Skenyon, Derek Stritzinger, Nate Bonn, Alan Dyer, Kyle Wolf, Andrew Wolf, Steven Buchanon, Mike Stone, Janet Stone, and Joe Robenhymer (not all are pictured).



On a dreary, rainy Saturday in September, Justin Skenyon and fellow boy scouts and advisors from Narragansett Troop 1, cleared brush and debris along the Boffi property line and around the area of the Great Swamp memorial. Justin organized and led the effort in order to fulfill a requirement for his Eagle Scout badge.



The results of their hard work are clear in the before (top) and after photos.

Our thanks to Justin and his crew for a job well done!

Daniel Updike's Law Office Covers R.I. Bar Journal



The *Rhode Island Bar Journal* features the Smith's Castle law office of Daniel Updike on the cover of its November/December 2008 issue. Pictured is a detail of the Beriah Brown desk with a few of the eighteenth-century law books that belonged to the former Rhode Island attorney general.

Updike was Rhode Island attorney general from 1722 to 1732 and again from 1741 until his death in 1757. He is best remembered for helping define Rhode Island's boundary with Connecticut in the 1720s, and his "masterly effort" in arguing Rhode Island's case that led to the annexation of Little Compton, Tiverton, Bristol, Warren, and Cumberland from Massachusetts in the 1740s, establishing the Rhode Island boundaries we know today.

This season, Smith's Castle inaugurated a permanent exhibition recreating the c.1755 office Updike maintained at Smith's Castle—his family's ancestral home. The exhibition commemorates the accomplishments of Updike as attorney general, recreates known elements of his office from the inventory of his personal estate, and interprets the workings of a mid-eighteenth-century law practice. ■

Cover of November/December 2008 issue of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal*. Photo Brian McDonald.

The Dairy at Smith's Castle

Cheese Making at Cocumscussoc 1651–1692

Darrell McIntire

No discussion of the storied “Narragansett Planters” of eighteenth-century Rhode Island advances far without a reference to one of the primary products of the “plantations”—Narragansett or Rhode Island cheese. And few discussions of Narragansett cheese fail to include the oft-repeated assertion that Mrs. Richard Smith Sr. brought the original recipe with her to America from England. “The wife of Richard Smith brought from Gloucestershire to this country, the recipe for making the celebrated Cheshire cheese, and from this recipe the Narragansett [cheese] was made in imitation of the Cheshire cheese....” [Updike 1847: 182] So states Wilkins Updike, almost certainly the original published source of this claim.

We know that Mrs. Richard Smith senior was Joan Barton, daughter of John Barton, of Morton, Thornbury, Gloucestershire, England. She was born ca. 1600, but her date of death is unknown. Daniel Goodwin, in his authoritatively annotated 1907 edition of *A History of the Episcopal Church in Rhode Island*, notes that Updike’s claim “is, probably, the only existing evidence of the fact that she [Joan Smith] accompanied her husband from Gloucestershire to America...no mention being extant of her in New Amsterdam or Narragansett.” [Updike 1907: 220] Also, Goodwin observes, “her name not occurring in her husband’s will, she must certainly have died before July 14, 1666.” [the date of Richard Smith Sr.’s death]

In 1646, about a decade after the family’s arrival in America, there is reference to a Joan Smith in the Gloucestershire Probate Records *Abstracts from Wills, 1636–1650* for Thornbury and Oldbury on Severn. The record of the will of Eleanor Barton, widow, lists her daughter, Joan Smith, as a beneficiary. If this is in fact our Joan, it is strong evidence that she was living in 1646, presumably in America.¹ Another record, suggesting she was living in New Amsterdam two years later, is found in the *New Amsterdam Council Minutes* for April 3, 1648: “Sentence. William Harck, sheriff of Flushing, for having solemnized a marriage between Thomas Nuton widower, and Joan, daughter of Richard [and Joan] Smith, against her parents’ consent, and contrary to law, fined 600 guilders, dismissed from office and the marriage annulled.” [Dutch MSS IV: 374–5] The use of the plural

possessive, (i.e., parents’ consent) suggests that both parents were alive at the time.² A letter from Roger Williams to John Winthrop Jr., dated October 6, 1651, indirectly places Joan’s death before 1651. Williams writes, “I have been advised to sell and have sold this howse to Mr Smith my neighbor, who also may possibly be yours, for I heare he is like to have Mrs Chester.” [LaFantasie: 1, 351] Williams believes Richard Smith will soon marry Winthrop’s neighbor, Mrs. Chester—obviously, not a claim Williams would make if the first Mrs. Smith were still living.³ Cumulatively, these records allow us to date Joan Smith’s death to between April 1648 and October 1651. It is at this time (ca. 1649) that Richard Smith Sr. left New Amsterdam and settled permanently in Rhode Island—the loss of his wife perhaps triggering his decision to do so.

Whatever the precise date of Joan Smith’s death, it is certain it was prior to Richard Smith Sr.’s permanent settlement at Cocumscussoc and his purchase of Roger Williams’ trading house in 1651. Since Joan Smith never lived at Cocumscussoc, she could not have made Narragansett cheese. It is possible, of course, when cheese eventually was made at Cocumscussoc, it was with her recipe—she having passed it on at an earlier date to a family member or retainer.

The first mention of cheese at Cocumscussoc occurred in a postscript to a letter dated April 17, 1666, from Richard Smith Jr. to John Winthrop Jr. “My kinswoman Ester hath sent you by this Indian barer a small token, namly two cheses.” [Updike 1937: 82]⁴ Cheese making likely commenced at Cocumscussoc between 1660 and 1666. When Richard Smith Sr. left New Amsterdam about 1649, Richard Smith Jr. (and presumably Esther as well) remained there, serving as his father’s agent until the late 1650s when he too moved permanently to Cocumscussoc. Thus, it is Esther Smith—Mrs. Richard Smith junior—who must be credited with first making cheese at Cocumscussoc and with initiating the tradition of cheese making in Rhode Island’s Narragansett country. We can only speculate as to whether she had earlier learned her mother-in-law, Joan’s, recipe, or if it was Esther herself who brought the recipe—Updike family tradition having simply muddled senior and junior in the retelling over the generations. Joan Smith was in

her mid thirties when the family left England. Esther Smith was about ten years old at the time (assuming she was close in age to her husband). This suggests that while it was Esther Smith who first made Narragansett cheese, the recipe could well have been brought to America by her mother-in-law, Joan.

The Dairy at Smith's Castle

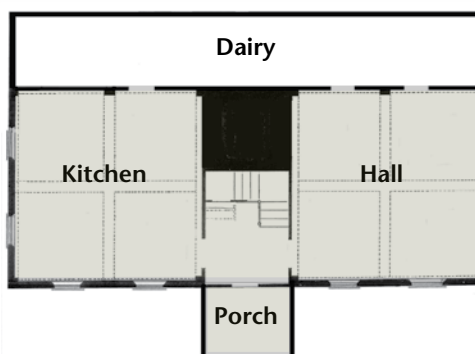
*as commodious as art can well render it,
or as occasion requires*

About 1678, Richard Smith Jr. began construction of a grand new house on the site of his father's former trading house at Cocumscussoc. King Philip's War had recently ended, and Smith Jr. and his wife, Esther, had returned to Cocumscussoc from the safety of one of their farms on Aquidneck Island to find their former home and business in ruins. The trading house, built by Richard Smith Sr. 40 years earlier, had sheltered troops of the United Colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Connecticut at the beginning of the war, and was the point from which the devastating surprise attack on the Narragansett winter encampment at the Great Swamp had been launched. In 1675, in retaliation, surviving Narragansett warriors razed, not only the Smith trading complex, but also nearly every English house northward to Providence. But, even had the trading house survived the war, most of Smith's former trading partners, the Narragansett, hadn't. Those who weren't killed or executed were sent into slavery. Only a few escaped and were assimilated into neighboring tribes. When the Narragansett signed a formal peace treaty in 1682, fewer than 500 had survived.

While the war brought an emphatic end to the Smith trading enterprise, the fur trade had been declining for more than a decade. By the 1660s, beaver had disappeared from the region, and the value of wampum had plunged. [Billings: 118] Trade with the Narragansett was declining when Richard Smith Sr. died in 1666. The Narragansett were no longer able to afford the English and Dutch trade goods proffered by the Smiths. As Smith's income from the fur trade tapered off, the importance of agricultural commodities grown at Cocumscussoc and at other Smith-owned farms around the Bay increased. In



Figure 1. Richard Smith Jr.'s 1678 house incorporated a number of expensive, cutting edge features, including a projecting porch, twin front gables, and an integral lean-to at the back. Drawing by Susan Cole Stone.



the 25 years between his father's death in 1666 and his own death in 1692, Richard Smith Jr. guided the transition of Cocumscussoc from a fur trading business into an agricultural enterprise that produced crops and raised livestock for markets at Newport and elsewhere around Narragansett Bay—creating a model for the great “plantations” that would develop along the western shore of the Bay in the eighteenth century.

The two-room, center-chimney floor plan was one of the most prevalent layouts among first period New England houses. Richard Smith Jr.'s new house—a post and beam, two-and-a-half-story, two-room, center-chimney house with a projecting porch—was an elaboration of this basic style (fig. 1). Smith was an extremely wealthy man; one of the richest men in New England (sidebar fig. 1, p. 8). His wealth enabled him to incorporate many extravagant features and emerging trends into his house, often years before their widespread adoption elsewhere in the area. One of the most striking features of the house—especially to a contemporary observer—was its size. At 52 feet wide and approximately 27 feet deep (excluding the projecting porch), the house was huge by standards of the time. A study of recorded dimensions of 70 houses in Massachusetts Bay, 1637–1706, revealed none as large as Smith's Castle and only three of comparable scale. [Cumings 1979: 212]

—continued on page 6

Richard Smith's Dairy

One of the most notable exterior features of the house was its two-storied, gabled central porch—created by extending the chimney bay forward beyond the front facade of the house. This feature made Smith's house unique in Rhode Island. No other example of a two-room, center-chimney house with a projecting porch is known to have been built in seventeenth-century Rhode Island. However, many such houses were built in neighboring Massachusetts Bay. There, the projecting porch was associated, especially before 1650, with the larger, more extravagant homes of the wealthy elite. Even as it came into more widespread use as an upgrade to existing older homes after 1650, the projecting porch continued to be viewed as a superfluous, even luxurious, architectural element. [Cummings 1979: 35] The Smith family's ties to prominent Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut families are well documented, and undoubtedly significantly influenced the form of Smith's new house.

At the back of Smith's house, beneath a steeply pitched roof, which gave the house its characteristic saltbox shape, an integral lean-to spanned the full width of the structure. Lean-to additions at the back of earlier-built houses were common in seventeenth-century New England. At first, they tended to be small, single-room, shed-like structures built against the back wall of the house. Over time, they expanded into larger, two- or three-room spaces and, ultimately, grew to span the full width of the back of the house—creating the characteristic "saltbox" form. Smith's was one of the earliest houses built in New England that incorporated the full-width lean-to configuration as an integral part of the house's structure rather than as an added-on appendage.⁵

Smith's 1692 inventory identified the lean-to as a dairy (fig. 1). Houses that incorporated a specialized dairy room were rare in seventeenth-century New England. Cummings' survey of 105 rural household inventories in Massachusetts Bay, dating from 1630 to 1660, found just five houses with a dairy room or milk house. Of 107 inventories dating from 1650 to 1700, just two instances of dairies were identified. [Cummings 1979: 216]⁶ By the early eighteenth century, service/utility functions were typically relegated to a lean-to that was extended across the entire rear of the house. Generally, the space was divided into three rooms. In the center was a kitchen that was taking over the food preparation functions that previously took place in the hall. On one side of the kitchen—usually the east—was the dairy or buttery. The room on the other side, commonly, was

a bedroom. Also, about the same time, the floor of the lean-to was frequently sunk below the level of the first floor, but higher than the level of the cellar floor. This provided an area intermediate in space and temperature between the cellar and the ground floor of the house. [Cummings 1979: 31]

From his 1692 inventory it is not possible to determine if Smith's lean-to was subdivided into specific rooms or if it remained one large space. Since Smith did not have the space limitations most of his fellow New Englanders struggled with, it would not be surprising if the lean-to remained one large open space. Adjacent to his new dwelling was Smith's so-called "stone house," a presumed remnant of the trading house, that was used for storage—in the 1692 inventory, items normally found in the buttery were listed in the chamber of the stone house. Also, Smith's new house included a cellar beneath both the hall and kitchen (another extravagant feature, as it was usual to have a cellar under one or the other, not both), making even more storage space available. While we do not know the specific interior layout of Smith's lean-to, we do know that the overall structural configuration of his house incorporated features, in 1678, that Cummings noted would not be broadly applied for another twenty years, or so. In fact, when Cummings visited Smith's Castle during its 1990s restoration, he stated he would date the house to the early eighteenth century were it not for the 1692 Inventory that firmly places it earlier. [Renshaw: 3]

Smith's lean-to dairy had a steeply sloping roof that ended at a very short wall at the back of the house. Mortises in the beam along the interior wall of the dairy room (visible flanking the fireplace in today's kitchen) are located barely five feet above the level of the floor. For there to have been sufficient head room in the lean-to, the dairy floor must have been lower than the present kitchen floor, perhaps two to three feet lower. The floor could have been compacted earth, or it might have been covered with stone. As Smith spared no expense in constructing his new house, a stone floor would not be a surprise, but we have no evidence of one. With limited wall height above grade, any windows in the back wall of the house would have been small, sheltered by the overhang of the roof—allowing little warming sunlight to enter. If there was an exterior door it was most likely at the side of the lean-to, on grade, allowing the milkmaid, often burdened with buckets dangling from a yoke across her shoulders, ease of access. Shelves, a near-universal feature of dairy rooms,

would have been built along the walls at shoulder height. [Cummings 1979: 31] When combined with work tables (or a counter built at waist height) the result was an efficient configuration that kept the necessary paraphernalia of cheese making conveniently within reach.

The Smith ancestral home, Thornbury in Gloucestershire, England, has an ancient cheese-making tradition with records extending as far back as the eighth century. A highly informative book on the rural economy of Gloucestershire, written ca. 1789, contains a very precise accounting of Gloucestershire dairy farms, and focuses specifically on the making of cheese in the district. The author, William Marshall, spent considerable time living, farming, observing, and writing in Gloucestershire. Here is his description of an eighteenth-century Gloucestershire dairy room:

"The chief peculiarity observable in a Gloucestershire dairy room, provincially, 'dairy house,' is that of its generally having an outer door, opening into a small yard, or garden place; while the dairy of most other districts, is cooped up in a corner, with only a small window for the admission of air and light; every thing being dragged, in and out, through a number of inner doors, or perhaps rooms or passages. But an outer door gives a freer and more general air; and much better and a more commodious light; besides rendering the business of cleanliness more easy. In the dairy yard there is, or ought to be, a well; with proper benches, and other conveniences, for washing and drying utensils. The room, too, is large and commodious: 15 feet by 18 feet may be considered as a middle-sized dairy. The cheesemaking, and the churning, are done in the 'dairyhouse:' so that the entire business is collected, into as narrow a compass as may be: a circumstance of some importance, in a large dairy; and, a small one, the advantage is proportional. The floor is generally laid with stone. The shelves are mostly of elm, or ash. With respect to aspect, the outer door, when well placed, opens near the northeast or northwest corner; the window on the north side: the inner door, on the south side, opening into the kitchen. A dairy room, on this plan, is as commodious as art can well render it, or as occasion requires." [Marshall: 134]

Although Marshall was writing in Gloucestershire approximately one hundred years after Richard Smith's death, he was describing long-established Gloucestershire dairy traditions that presumably predated Richard Smith Sr.'s days as a young man in Thornbury. The features of Smith's dairy that are known to us conform closely to those of the Glouc-



Figure 3. The interior of the ca. 1670 lean-to of the Fairbanks House, Dedham, Massachusetts. The door leads to what was originally a cheese closet. A cheese basket leans against the wall to the left, and a cheese ladder hangs on the door above the butter churn.

estershire dairy room described by Marshall: Smith's dairy is on the north side of the house; it has an interior door on the south wall leading into the kitchen; it is large and commodious—at approximately 520 square feet, it is twice the size of Marshall's "middle-sized" dairy, although the proportions vary. The features of Smith's dairy of which we have no direct evidence—the floor, the placement of doors and windows, and the shelves—could well have been as Marshall described. The most convenient location for an exterior door would have been near the northwest corner of the house, where it is today. While there is no indication that a well was located near the west side of the house, Cocumscussoc Brook flows nearby and would have been a convenient source of fresh, clean water.

No trace of the interior space of Richard Smith's dairy survived the ca. 1740 renovation of the house by Daniel Updike. However, the ca. 1638 Fairbanks House in Dedham, Massachusetts, the oldest surviving example of this style of house, although smaller, is very much like Smith's 1678 house. In 1668, a lean-to addition was built onto the original two rooms of the Fairbanks house, giving the house the same configuration the Smith house would take when it was built a decade later. Figure 3 is an interior view of the Fairbanks House lean-to. The view looks west towards a door to the "cheese room" where cheese was placed on shelves to age. A door on the left wall connects to the kitchen; a door on the right, back wall of the house, exits to the back yard. There is a shoulder-height shelf running along the walls of the space. The walls and ceiling have been whitewashed. There is a small window on the north, lean-to wall.

—continued on page 10

During tours of Smith's Castle, visitors are told about the wealth of Richard Smith Jr. (1630–1692) as evidenced by the architecture of the house: its size (among the largest in New England in the last quarter of the seventeenth century) and its level of detail (chamfered beams and molded paneling and cover boards, for example). But is it possible to quantify Smith's wealth relative to that of his contemporaries in New England?

The study began by examining two sources of transcribed probate inventories. The first source was *Rural Household Inventories: Establishing the Names, Uses and Furnishings of Rooms in the Colonial New England Home, 1675-1775*, in which Abbott Lowell Cummings reproduced all (199) complete inventories recorded for rural

The second source was *The Plymouth Colony Archive Project*, which was initiated in 1998 by Patricia Scott Deetz, James Deetz, and Christopher Fennell. This website is designed to make available historical constructions on various topics of Plymouth Colony's social history, and to provide interactive access to the underlying primary sources. All but two of the 82 transcribed probate inventories from Plymouth Colony from 1675 to 1687 were included. (The inventories of John Alden of Duxbury, 1687, and Jacob Cooke Sr. of New Plymouth, 1675, were excluded because degradation of the manuscript has obliterated most of the values, including the estate total.) The website indicates these are "Selected Probates," but the criteria for selecting them are not described nor does the site provide an estimate of how many probates were not transcribed. The website does not provide transcription of probates later than 1687, so it will be necessary to find transcriptions of Plymouth inventories for 1688 to 1699 for a complete analysis.

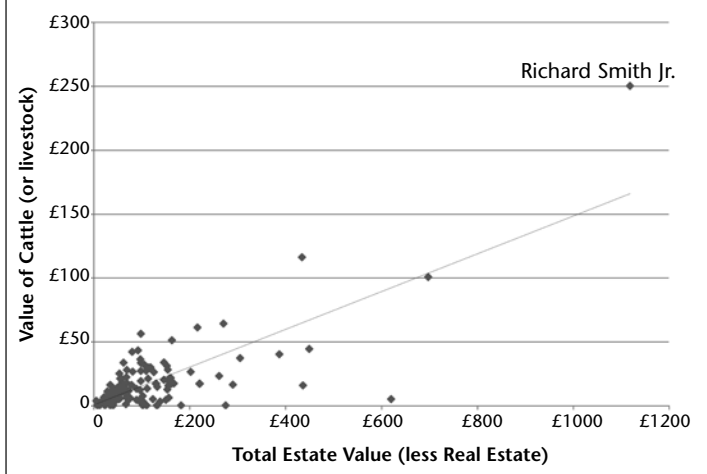
[illegible]

When available, the stated total inventory was used, even if it conflicted with the actual calculated total. (Exceptions were made when the error was very large. Richard Smith Jr.'s estate was actually worth about £100 more than the stated total; however, we used the value as given.) When the inventories provided no total valuation, they were calculated. Because Richard Smith Jr.'s inventory did not include real estate, valuations for housing and/or land in the Suffolk and Plymouth inventories were not included.

For cattle, we included cows, neat cattle, steers, bulls, calves, heifers, and yearlings (and other referenced ages). Of the 120 inventories, 20 did not disaggregate the value of cattle from other livestock; in those cases the total livestock value was used.

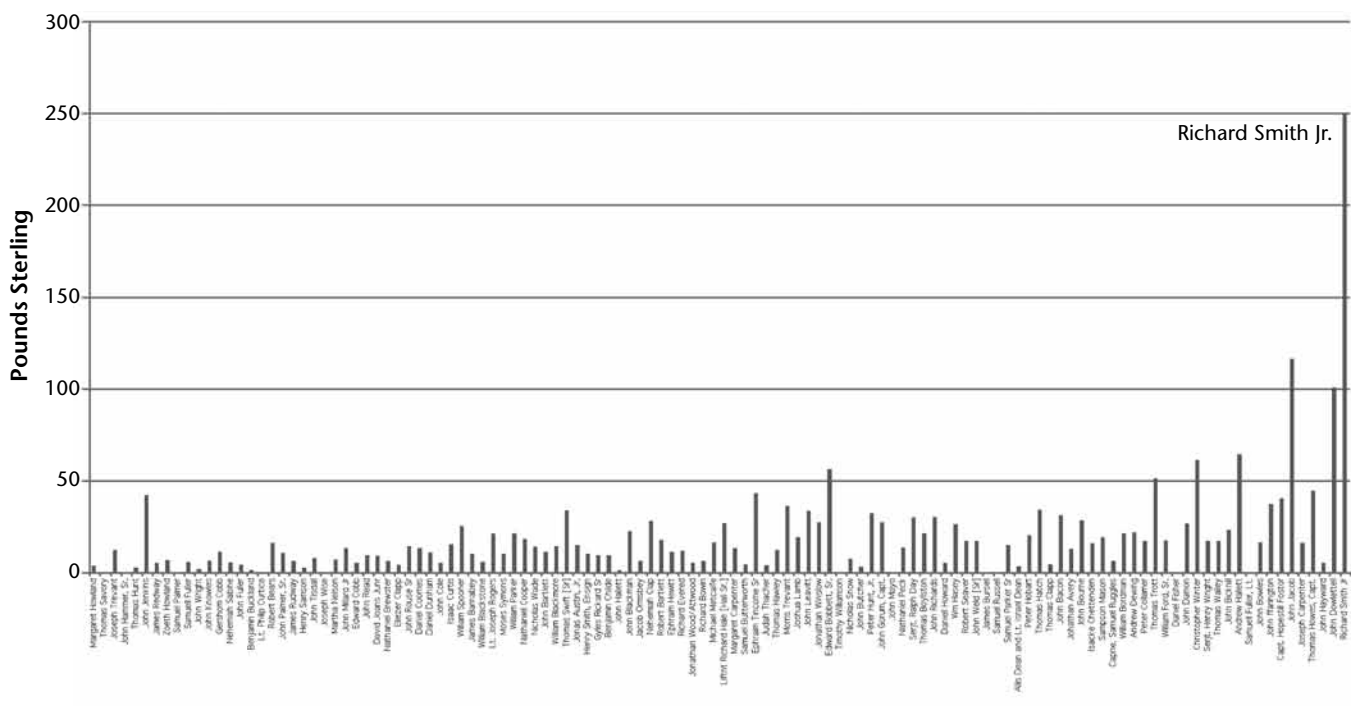
Figures 1 and 2 clearly show that the value of Richard Smith Jr.'s inventory is well above the other 119 inventories in both the total estate value and value of cattle. In addition, Figure 3 shows his estate has a higher ratio of value of cattle to total estate value (22 percent) than the average (15 percent).

Figure 3. Relationship of Estate Value to Cattle Value



Of the 120 inventories examined, 86 percent had a total value, without real estate, of less than £200 and 86 percent had a value for cattle of less than £30 (the cluster of points on lower left above). The diagonal line represents the average ratio of cattle to total probate value.

Figure 2. Value of Cattle (or Livestock)



Richard Smith's Dairy

The most basic requirement for a dairy, in the seventeenth century as well as now, is that it be a cool, immaculately clean space. Warm milk sours quickly, and anything less than near-antiseptic surroundings in the dairy can be lethal. Utensils—buckets, milk pans, pitchers—must be clean, as must the udders of the cows and the housewives' hands that touch them. Cleanliness in the dairy was as much a concern in the seventeenth century as it is today. Note the admonition of a contemporary of Richard Smith Sr.: "Touching the well ordering of milk after it is come home to the dairy, the main point belonging thereunto is the housewife's cleanliness in the sweet and neat keeping of the dairy house; where not the least mote of any filth may by any means appear, but all things either to the eye or nose so void of sourness or sluttishness, that a prince's bed chamber must not exceed it." So wrote Gervase Markham in *The English Housewife*, 1615. [Markham: 169] William Marshall also has much to say on the subject of cleanliness. For example: "There are three things principally requisite in the management of a dairy: Skill, Industry, Cleanliness.... Cleanliness, may, indeed, be considered as the first qualification of a dairywoman; for, without, she cannot have a fair claim to either skill or industry." [Marshall: 134]

When Richard Smith Jr. built his luxurious house after King Philip's War, he included a very large dairy, creating a space in which large amounts of cheese and butter could be produced. Prior to the war, as early as 1660, the Smiths had made some excess cheese, often giving it as gifts to friends and colleagues. Did Smith intend to produce greater quantities of cheese to sell at market—to create, in effect, a commercial dairy as a response to economic and market changes following the war? It appears he certainly built a dairy that could support a substantial cheesemaking enterprise. However, more than a "commodious" work space would have been necessary. An adequate supply of milk and the cattle necessary to produce it, as well as sufficient workers to carry out the labor-intensive production of cheese and butter would have been required. Were these available to Smith at Cocumscussoc?

Cocumscussoc Cattle

In general, the early settlers of America introduced cattle they brought from their homes in the old world. This would suggest the Smiths, being English, possessed English cattle, specifically, Gloucester cows from Gloucestershire. However, there is no record of Gloucester cattle associated with the Smith

family, nor with English settlers in America more generally. The Smiths lived and worked among the Dutch at New Amsterdam for a decade (1640–1650) before they settled permanently at Cocumscussoc. We know Richard Smith Sr. ferried trade goods and other items to and from his trading post at Cocumscussoc. It is not unreasonable to believe he could have brought livestock to the site as well.

Some researchers claim the highly successful eighteenth-century dairy enterprise of colonial Rhode Island suggests that Dutch cattle were introduced early into Rhode Island: "Because of the strong feeling in Massachusetts against the Rhode Island group, however, there was little commerce between them. It is entirely possible that cattle were obtained from Virginia, or from the Dutch in the nearby colony of New Netherland. The fact that the dairy cattle of Rhode Island received more than local notice at a very early date as being of superior quality, would indicate a strong infusion of the Dutch cattle characteristics. In fact, before specific breeds of cattle became established in America the 'Rhode Island Cow' was well known as an excellent producer." [Bowling: 148]

The cattle introduced from the Netherlands to New Netherland were probably similar to the ancestors of our present-day Holstein-Friesian cattle from North Holland and Friesland. There they had been bred for centuries as dairy cattle and were likely one of the most productive dairy breeds in existence at the time. "Cattle from Holland and Sweden were of higher quality and accustomed to better treatment than the English cattle....also, of all the different nationalities that colonized on the North American continent the Dutch were superior in the field of animal husbandry." [Bowling: 139] While the Dutch cattle were superior in productivity to their English counterparts, they were less hardy and required greater care. "The domestic cattle are here in size and other respects about the same as in Netherland, but the English cows...thrive and feed best, yea, appear to be better suited to this country than those from Holland; they require less trouble, expense, and attention....Milch cows, also are much less trouble than in Holland, for, most of the time, or when necessity demand, a little hay is only occasionally thrown to them." [O'Callaghan: 277]

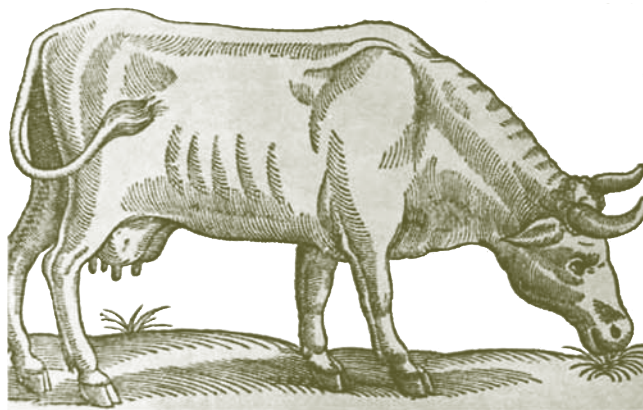
It is probably safe to say the pastures of seventeenth-century Rhode Island nourished cattle of both Dutch and English origins, and the seventeenth-century husbandman would have wanted to augment the superior productivity of the Dutch cows with the hardiness of their English counterparts.

Exactly what combination of these two eventually would produce the “Rhode Island Cow” of the eighteenth century is not known. Whatever her specific genetic make-up, the Rhode Island Cow was apparently the source of the famous Narragansett cheese, as well as the foundation of the commercial dairy enterprise of the Narragansett plantations of the eighteenth century.

While we have no way of knowing the kinds of cattle Richard Smith Jr. owned, we do have some information documenting the numbers of cattle at Cocumscussoc. In September 1684, Richard Smith Jr. petitioned the United Colonies of New England requesting compensation for the losses he sustained in the winter of 1675–76 when his trading house was occupied by troops from Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut. Specifically, Smith listed “Killed and eaten by soldiers: 26 head of cattle, at least 100 goats, and 30 fat hogs.” [Trumbull: 512] When Richard Smith Jr. died in 1692, the inventory of his household included 135 head of cattle. Therefore, between 1651, when the family settled at Cocumscussoc permanently, and 1675, Smith had accumulated at least 26 head of cattle, all of which were lost in the war.⁷ Between 1678 and 1692, he replenished his herd and increased it to 135 head. At the time of his death, the value of Smith’s herd accounted for approximately one-third of his movable estate (sidebar, pp. 8 and 9).

From these numbers we can approximate the amount of cheese it would have been possible to produce at Cocumscussoc. Eighteenth-century records tell us two pounds of cheese per day could be produced from the milk of one cow. [Lownes: 67] Cheese was made in the summer, generally in July and August—about 60 days of the year. Therefore, before King Phillip’s War, Smith’s 26 head of cattle (assuming most were milk cows) could have produced as much as 3,000 pounds of cheese per year. In 1692, Smith’s 135 head could have produced about 15,000 pounds. Certainly, the actual amounts were not this great. Some of the milk would have been converted to cream and butter, which was necessary to produce the cheese, and some of the cows were undoubtedly heifers that did not yet produce milk. And, of course, a few bulls would have been necessary. However, all things considered, it is certain the resources necessary to produce significant amounts of cheese existed at Cocumscussoc.

Following King Philip’s War, Richard Smith Jr. built an extremely large dairy as well as a sizable herd of dairy cattle. It seems imminently reason-



According to period sources, the seventeenth-century cow: “should be long in the leg and carcase..., the hindquarters should be poorly developed relative to the forequarters and head..., the udder, preferable white, should have four teats and no more..., her belly should be round and large, and her forehead broad and smooth with well spread horns.” Contemporary pictures, though few, go far to confirm this impression. Image from *History of Four Footed Beasts and Serpents* by Edward Topsell, 1658. [Fussell: 10,15, 38]

able, therefore, to assume Smith was producing substantial amounts of cheese for truck or market. He owned one-half interest in the sloop *Primrose* [Smith 1692] that gave him ready access to markets in the area, especially Newport. Whether or not his products were shipped beyond Newport at this early date is unknown. [Woodward: 27]

Because cheese making was established at Cocumscussoc before 1666, Smith’s Castle earns credit as the source of the cheese that ultimately would be produced by the plantations of Rhode Island’s Narragansett basin in the eighteenth century. In addition, as the Smith family lived and traded among the Dutch in New Amsterdam, and had ample opportunity to acquire Dutch cattle, it is tempting to speculate that Richard Smith Jr. also might well have been instrumental in the development of the Rhode Island Cow. If this is the case, Cocumscussoc can be credited, not only with the beginnings of cheese making in Narragansett, but with laying the foundation of the animal husbandry that made it possible.

Between the Severn and the Wye, the richest dairy pastures lie.

In crediting Joan Smith as the source of the recipe for Narragansett cheese, Wilkins Updike noted “... the recipe [was] for making the celebrated Cheshire cheese, and from this recipe the Narragansett [cheese] was made in imitation of the Cheshire cheese...” and, he continued, “the cheese was of extraordinary

—continued on page 12

Richard Smith's Dairy

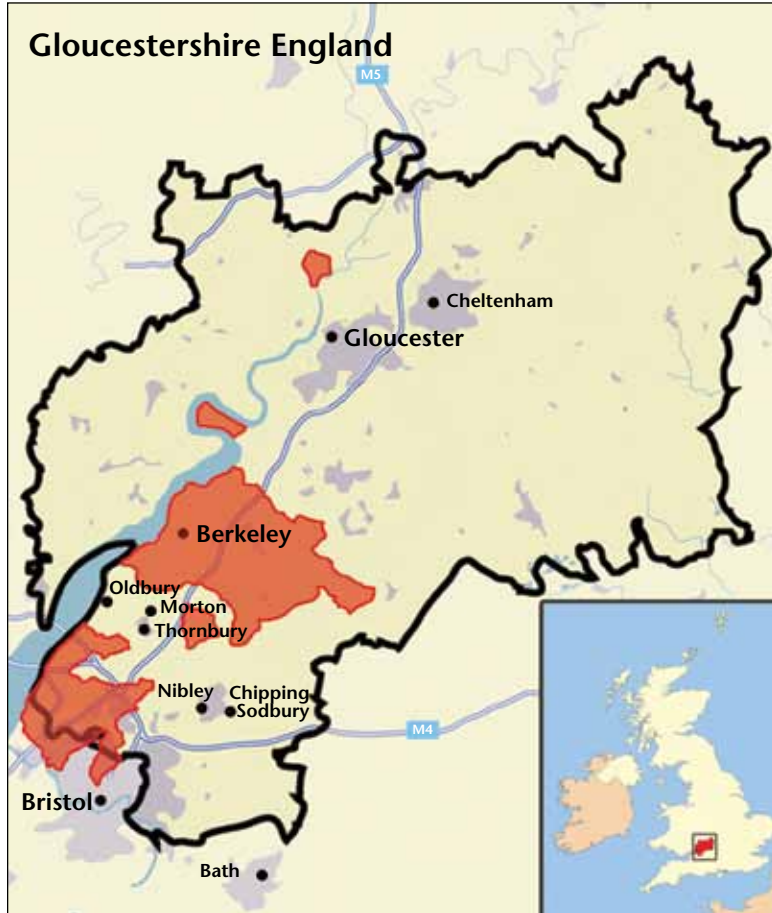


Figure 3. Gloucestershire England. The ancient Hundred of Berkeley is defined by the dark gray areas. The exact boundaries of the Hundred are not known today, but Thornbury Parish is usually included within the Hundred. Image compiled from Wikimedia Commons and Genuki, Towns and Parishes.

richness and flavor being fortified with cream and coated with butter daily as it cured."

Thornbury, Gloucestershire, the English home of the Smiths, is located in the southern part of Gloucestershire near the estuary of the Severn River. It is about five miles from Berkeley (baak-lee), site of Berkeley Castle, the ancient administrative center of the Hundred of Berkeley.⁸ Modern sources place Thornbury either within, or adjacent to, the Hundred of Berkeley (fig. 3).

Richard Smith was from Thornbury, and Joan (Barton) Smith was from Morton, neighboring towns in Thornbury Parish usually placed within the Hundred of Berkeley. One wonders why a woman of Gloucestershire would carry a "recipe for making the celebrated Cheshire cheese" to America. Gloucestershire and Cheshire, while both in the west of England, are not—certainly by seventeenth-century

transportation standards—near neighbors. It is difficult to understand how a woman of Gloucestershire would possess the knowledge, experience, means, or desire, for that matter, to make a cheese indigenous to a region some 150 miles from her home. Gloucestershire has its own cheese-making tradition, and is known for its own—Gloucester—cheese made from the milk of its own—Gloucester—cows. "Gloucester cheese is a traditional, unpasteurized, semi-hard cheese that has been made in Gloucestershire since the 16th century. Records show, in fact, that Gloucester cheese was known as early as the eighth century. The hard, natural rind has some gray-blue mold and bears the marks of the cloth in which it is matured. Cheese merchants paid attention to the rind's robustness. They used to jump on it with both feet to test it. If the rind didn't crack, the cheese was safe to travel. The full-cream, two-milking-sessions milk in Double Gloucester gives it its characteristic, rich, buttery taste and flaky texture. It is firm and bitable, like hard chocolate. The color is pale tangerine. The cheese has a flavor of cheese and onions. Not as firm as cheddar, it has a mellow, nutty character with an orange-zest tang." Today's Double Gloucester has a fat content of 48 percent. [www.cheese.com]

An eighteenth-century source notes, "The Hundred of Berkeley has ever been celebrated for the superior quality of its cheese. What, in the kingdom at large, is termed Gloucester cheese; particularly Double Gloucester; is, in Gloucestershire, called "Double Berkeley;" not more on the account of the superior quality of the cheese of this district; than because the principal part of the thick cheese of Gloucestershire is made within this Hundred." [Marshall: 103]

So why did Wilkins Updike (and others) label Mrs. Smith's cheese "Cheshire" rather than "Gloucester?" And why would her recipe not have made Gloucester cheese? The most probable explanation is simply that she was no longer in Gloucestershire and was not using milk from Gloucester cows. That is to say, it is likely the recipe Mrs. Smith brought from Gloucestershire produced, using the milk of cows nurtured on the meadows of Cocumscussoc, a cheese that had the flavor, texture, and other characteristics they associated with cheese from Cheshire—not that Mrs. Smith brought with her a Cheshire cheese recipe, *per se*.

It is widely accepted that geography bestows various properties on certain foods and drinks—a concept known as "terroir." Originally a French wine-making term, *terroir* now applies, not only to wine, but to coffee, tea, and certain foods, including

cheese. It can be very loosely translated as “a sense of place,” or the sum of the qualities of an environment that become embodied in certain qualities of a product. For cheese, the assumption is the land on which a cow grazes imparts a unique quality to the cheese that is specific to that region. That Narragansett cheese resembled Cheshire cheese is entirely plausible. One of the defining characteristics of Cheshire cheese is its salty flavor, which comes from the salt springs that flow under most of Cheshire. The salt enters the pasture land and thus the cows’ milk from which the cheese is made. [www.timetravel-britain.com] The cows of Narragansett also grazed in pastures adjacent to salt water so it would not be surprising if their milk were similar to the milk of Cheshire’s cows, or if their respective cheeses possessed similar qualities.

University of Tennessee geographer, Loyal Durrant Jr., referring to eighteenth-century Rhode Island cheese, states, “The cheese was the English cheddar cheese, now known in the United States as American cheese, but sold at the time under a regional name.”⁹ So which was it? Was Narragansett cheese a Cheshire cheese or a cheddar cheese? Possibly both. “Cheshire is a dense, semi-hard cheese that is defined by its moist crumbly texture and mild salty taste. Industrial versions tend to be drier and less crumbly, more like a mild cheddar, as this makes them easier to process than the traditional texture. Until the late nineteenth century, the different varieties of Cheshire cheeses were aged to a sufficient level of hardness to withstand the rigors of transport (by horse and cart, and later by boat) to London for trading purposes. Younger, fresher, crumbly cheese that required shorter storage—similar to the Cheshire cheese of today—began to develop in popularity towards the end of the nineteenth century.” [Wikipedia.com] It is possible that Narragansett cheese in the eighteenth century was, like the “industrial versions” of English Cheshire in the nineteenth century, cured longer so it could be more easily transported (we have no record of the Narragansett planters jumping on their cheese to determine its transportability). Different curing times for the same basic cheese could explain why Narragansett cheese has been characterized both as a Cheshire and a cheddar cheese.

Another twentieth-century writer, Albert E. Lownes, notes that ripening of Narragansett cheese “took several months and during this period the cheese had to be turned over and buttered daily. Most of the cheese was made during July and August, but

the turning and buttering continued until late in the fall.” [Lownes: 67] This suggests an aging period of eight to twelve weeks. This is more consistent with the aging time of cheddar than of Cheshire, which is generally cured four to eight weeks, depending on variety.

Lownes also noted certain refinements to the basic Narragansett cheese. “Most of the cheese made in Rhode Island was natural cheese, but some fancy cheeses were made by adding herbs or herb-teas to the curds to give color and flavor. Sage was most popular, but teas made by boiling young corn husks or spinach gave a fine green color.” Mary Earle Gould in her definitive study of wooden ware in colonial America provides further details about these fancy cheeses. “Cheese was often made with juices which gave it different flavors, adding also to its appearance. Sage cheese was a common variety and this was made by adding the juice of sage leaves or the leaves themselves, chopped finely. Other flavors were made of various herbs and herb teas, and from teas made by boiling young green corn husks or spinach, which gave a fine green color. Pigweed water was used to color the cheese green without giving it any taste.” [Gould: 102] ■

The Spring 2009 issue of the Chronicle will continue the examination of cheese making at Cocumscussoc, with a look at the process of making Narragansett cheese.

Notes

1. “1646. Barton, Eleanor—Morton, Thornbury, widow dtr Joan Smith; Rich Wither; 3 childr of Robert Roche; Thos son of Jn Joanes; dtrs Jane Godd & Alice Freland; sis Eliz & her dtr Winifred Burnell; cousin Martha Burnell; grandson Thos Jones; son Wlm exec; overs bro Wlm Burnell & kinsmean Jn Burnell.”

2. Despite this inauspicious start, the couple was eventually allowed to wed. “Thomas Newton, widower of Dorthea Newton, residing at Oakeway [On-coway], being reconciled, both parties being satisfied with Mr. Richard Smith, with regard to the marriage of his daughter, Joan Smith, now wife of said Thomas Newton, after the usual proclamations have been made, without any opposition, so are Thomas Newton and Joan Smith confirmed in the bond of marriage by the Director General and Council, in the

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Richard Smith's Dairy

presence of the aforesaid Mr. Smith and John Dollingh, on the 10th April, 1648, in New Amsterdam" [Dutch MSS IV:?]

3. Mrs. Chester was Mary Sharpe?/Wade?, (?–1688) the widow of Leonard Chester (1610–1648). She did not, of course, marry Richard Smith, but rather Richard Russell of Charlestown, Rhode Island, and Wethersfield, Connecticut, in 1655. [Torrey, 18: 644]

4. It was Smith's habit to refer to Esther as his kinswoman or his cousin rather than his wife. The identity of Esther Smith has never been determined. We do not know her family name. If she were in fact Richard Smith Jr.'s first cousin her name could have been Smith or Barton, but this has not been established. We do not know her birth date, and finally no record of a marriage between her and Richard Smith Jr. has ever been found. However, we do know Esther was from the same area of Gloucestershire as her husband and his parents. In a letter dated October 22, 1669, written by her husband to his uncle, William Barton, Richard sends Esther's greetings to her friends. "We are all in helth, my Cousen Ester Smith presents her respts to you and all her friends, my Loue to all relacions."

5. Cummings identifies the Whipple-Matthews house in Hamilton, Massachusetts, built at the same time as the Smith house, as one of the first integral lean-to structures in Massachusetts. [Cummings 1979: 33]

6. The dearth of references to specific service areas identified as dairies does not mean cheese and butter making were not taking place in the colonial home. "not unexpectedly in a pioneer society, the more specialized functions of buttry (a storage/utility space) and dairy seem to have been absorbed into the larger working areas of hall or kitchen." The cellar, which quickly became a near-universal feature of New England houses, often absorbed these functions as well. [Cummings 1979: 29]

7. The 26 head of cattle killed by troops may not have been the full extent of Smith's herd. He may have transferred cattle and other livestock from Cocumscussoc to Aquidneck where he and his family remained during the war.

8. A "hundred" is a unit of land established in the Anglo Saxon era prior to the Norman Conquest. It is a subdivision of a shire (county) composed of one hundred units. Precisely what this unit was, however, is not known with certainty. A likely explanation is that

it was one hundred households. Since each hundred was further subdivided into groups of ten households (possibly giving rise to the parish unit) this suggestion seems reasonable. [www.genuki.org.uk]

9. "now known" means 1952, the date of Durand's article. Today, American cheese has become synonymous with processed cheese, but not all American cheese is processed. [Durand: 265]

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Cheshire Cheese

Recent Events

Harvest Festival 2008

Photos by Kristel Henry

A beautiful autumn day provided an idyllic backdrop for Smith's Castle's recent Harvest Festival of colonial-era life and skills. Visitors were connected to their fore mothers and fathers by docents and re-enactors who enthusiastically shared their knowl-

edge of Smith's Castle's early history. Our docents and guest re-enactors are to be commended for their tireless commitment to preserving our community's heritage and their imaginative re-creations that bring the past alive for our visitors. ■



Steve Salisbury, "Big Bear"



Louise Duckworth (left), Nancy Cox, and Gail McKinney



Shadow Pines Farm alpaca



Neil Dunay



Don McKinney

The Castle Chronicle: Winter 2008



Stephanie Skenyon (New Hampshire Historical Society)



Wilfred and Virginia Royle



Nancy Cox, Lebanon Militia



Ken Gilbert (Pawtuxet Rangers), Joe Pereira, "Crow" and Chris Palmerie, "François" (Free Men of the Sea)



Barbara and Alex Crudale



Meggie and Emmet



Ron Sullman (Varnum Continentals) and Kristel Henry

Cultural Landscape Report for Cocumscussoc

In spring 2009 the eagerly anticipated cultural landscape report (CLR) for Smith's Castle, begun in 2006, will be completed. Lucinda Brockway of Past Designs, the historic landscape consultant retained by the Cocumscussoc Association to conduct the CLR, submitted the *Executive Summary* of her study in spring 2008. The *Executive Summary* presents a comprehensive overview of the entire report and provides a concise introduction to the intent, method, scope, and result of this two-year endeavor.

The completion of the CLR and the archaeological investigations conducted as part of the study represent a quantum leap forward for the Cocumscussoc Association. For the first time we will have a comprehensive, detailed, thoroughly documented examination of the landscape associated with Smith's Castle as it evolved over the more than three and a half centuries of its existence.

This season the Chronicle has been reprinting the *Executive Summary* in installments. This issue includes the final section—

1936–1949: Subdivision and Change; 1949–Present: The Cocumscussoc Association; Feature Analysis; Names and Dates; Assessment: Significance and Historic Integrity; Conclusion; and Bibliography.

The cultural landscape report and the archaeological investigations conducted in support of the study were funded by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation through a Transportation Enhancement Grant that was awarded to Smith's Castle in October 2002.

Support from the Johanna Favrot Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation assisted in broadening the research conducted and in developing a site maintenance plan during Phase 2 of the CLR.

The site committee gratefully acknowledges the generous financial support of these organizations and expresses its appreciation for the kind, attentive, and thoroughly professional assistance received from:

Michael Bennett, Stephen Devine, Thomas Queenan, Sharon Stone, and Michael Hébert, Environmental and Intermodal Planning, Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

Wendy Nicholas and Brent Leggs, Northeast Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Paul Robinson and Charlotte Taylor of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.

Daniel Lynch, Soil Sight LLC, Archaeological Geophysics.

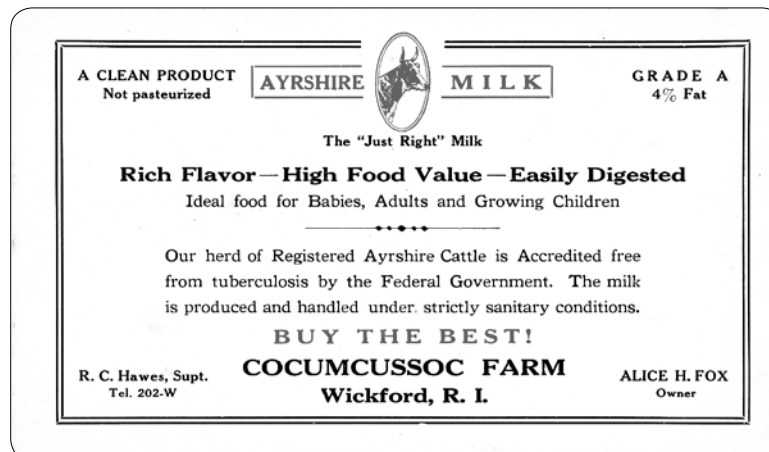
Joyce Clements, Ray Pasquariello, and Richard Petyk, Gray and Pape, Inc. Cultural Resource Consultants.

Patricia Rubertone, Department of Anthropology, Brown University.

The site committee is especially grateful to Cindy Brockway, who has exceeded our very high expectations and produced a product that gives an insightful review of our site's past and also insures a sound basis for organizing and directing the evolution of the Smith's Castle landscape well into the 21st century.

Finally, the work of all of these people, along with the financial resources that supported the work, and, in fact, the very existence of the Smith's Castle site committee would not have occurred without the dedication, foresight, hard work, and leadership of Mary Packard Turkel (1946–2008). The Cultural Landscape Report is dedicated to her memory.

A promotional ink blotter from the Cocumscussoc Dairy was donated recently by Wakefield resident, Doris Magoun. Her father worked for the dairy in the 1930s.



Cultural Landscape Report for Cocumscussoc, Part 4

*Prepared by Lucinda Brockway
Past Designs, Inc. Kennebunk, Maine*

1936–1949 Subdivision and Change

When Austen H. Fox inherited the farm after the death of his parents in 1933 and 1936, the desire to continue the farm operation was gone, and the opportunities for sale and subdivision of the real estate were great. A large Naval Air Station was contemplated at nearby Quonset Point (construction began on the Air Station buildings in 1940), so land speculation in the area was rampant. The realities of Depression-era financing, however, caused some deals to sour. The first buyer for Cocumscussoc was Vesta Corporation, an entity that quickly defaulted on the payment for the property and required the property to be put up for auction in the summer of 1940. Vesta Corporation reorganized as Vesta Underwear Corporation, and this new entity purchased the property at the foreclosure.

Vesta Corporation was begun in 1916 when Vesta Knitting Mills underwent a corporate reorganization. In 1941, the company closed its Providence plant and sold its building to Imperial Knife, a company that had been leasing a portion of the building from Vesta. Known for its manufacture of fine knit jersey underwear, it is hard to know what Vesta's interest was in the Cocumscussoc property. Was it a company investment opportunity, a potential site for a mill operation, or something entirely different? Whatever the reason, Vesta Underwear Corporation continued to hold title to the property until 1947 when they sold the entire property to John Lawson. At this time the property included all of the same land described in the deed transactions of 1870 minus a nine-acre parcel purchased in 1932 by the State of Rhode Island for its State Police Barracks on Post Road, and with the addition of the lot where the milk and ice cream stand was located on West Main Street.

John Lawson purchased the four parcels of land (the Homestead Farm, the remains of the orchard lot, the island, and the ice cream stand property)

and immediately began a plan for its subdivision into residential and commercial lots, known as the Quonset Housing project, funded in part by the U.S. Housing Authority. In total, 262 house lots were planned for the property. A 1941 newspaper article noted that "Two historic South County landmarks—the Richard Smith Blockhouse and the 'great grave' will be spared." [Cady notebook newspaper clipping May 15, 1941]

The Homestead Farm property was subdivided and in 1947 Frank McKendall purchased a house, the poultry barn, and other outbuildings, along with the northern fields of the farm, for his private residence. A new northern property boundary was drawn along the location of the old farm road, from Post Road down to the corner of the dairy barn complex. The dairy barns

were razed in anticipation of further residential land sales, and both roads to the barn were left unused to revert to woodland. In total, the McKendall purchase included four platted lots covering almost 60 acres—the largest intact acreage remain-

Smith's Castle as it appeared about the time the Cocumscussoc Association purchased the property. Photo courtesy of Robert Fitts.



ing from the Homestead Farm.

Up to this time, the lane from Post Road to the Cocumscussoc house had remained the main driveway to the house. Under the Lawson plans, however, this entry was to be abolished and all of the properties were to be accessed from a new subdivision road brought in from Post Road south of Cocumscussoc Brook, to be known as Cocumscussoc Way. The bridge crossing the brook that led to the fields south of the house was in need of repairs, and plans were drawn to upgrade the dirt lane to a paved residential subdivision road to be known as Roger Williams Drive, which would cross the brook in approximately the same spot and create the new road to the lots near Smith's Castle.

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North Kingstown tax map shows lots as platted in 1947. Courtesy of North Kingstown Office of Land Evidence and Probate Records.



It seems that some work was set into place to prepare the road bed and bridge for the new road, but the brook crossing was never realized, and Roger Williams Drive north of the brook became a private right of way, wider and better surfaced than the former farm road but still not an acceptable town road. Without the bridge a new entry road was required from Post Road into the properties north of the brook. In an effort to maximize his opportunities for land subdivision, Lawson continued his plans to abolish the old entry and redesigned the layout of the entry road in 1957, moving it away from the brook closer to the edge of the wetlands west of the old dairy barns. This offered the opportunity for two lots, one on each side of the new road. The larger lot, on the north side of the new road, was a parcel of 7.3 acres and included the wetlands near the old barn complex (the remains of the streams and tributaries on the north side of the Cocumscussoc house), and enough upland for a residential house or business lot along Post Road. The second lot, totalling 2.83 acres, included the land between the new road and Cocumscussoc Brook including the remains of the old ice house and freshwater spring.

Between this road and the water, three lots were platted: two small approximately half-acre lots set on each side of the small creek north of the house, and a 1.8-acre lot where the Cocumscussoc house stood. The fields south of Cocumscussoc Brook were divided into more traditional house lots set each side of the improved Roger Williams Drive, with larger lots along Post Road, probably for potential commercial or retail purposes.

In 1949, the Cocumscussoc Association had raised enough funds to acquire title to the 1.8-acre parcel surrounding the "Smith Block House," with access to the site via the bridge over the brook and Roger Williams Drive. Along with the house parcel the Association took title to the 10-acre Queen's (Rabbit) Island. Since the bridge was never constructed, the Association used the old access road until Richard Smith Drive was built in 1957. In 1957, the Association purchased another piece of the old farm: the 2.8-acre parcel where the old entry, remains of the ice house, and spring were located. This purchase assured "an attractive entrance and driveway as well as control of the brook and the wooded area between the main house and the Post Road." [Member's Day announcement vertical file] Between 1958 and 1960 two small parcels of land on both sides of the brook were acquired by the Association—the first was the title to the land that was to have been used for the bridge and for Roger Williams Drive, and the other was a small parcel between Post Road and the brook that offered the Association a straight southern boundary line from the edge of the brook to Post Road. Finally, in 1960, the seven-acre parcel north of Richard Smith Drive was acquired by the Association, and the 23-acre parcel now owned by the Association was fully acquired.

It took several years for the ways and easements for Richard Smith Drive and Roger Williams Drive to be finalized. In 1966, Richard Smith Drive was officially designated as a public way and the northern end of Roger Williams Drive was officially abandoned. Only a small portion of the original Homestead Farm

remained, but the Smith house and its immediate surroundings had been spared the wrecking ball. With the complete reconfiguration of the property by the U.S. Housing Authority project, much of the landscape setting of the house was changed, including the original entry lane to the house from the main road. However, glimpses of the former landscape remained visible, if only as a hint to their past purpose, both above and below ground on the land that the Association was able to acquire.

1949–Present: The Cocumscussoc Association

Though the house and grounds at Cocumscussoc had been well maintained until 1936, thirteen years of neglect had caused both the house and the grounds to suffer. In a newspaper article describing the saving of the house, one writer noted: “While it is not of distinguished appearance, the house has an attraction for architects.” [Cady notebook article 1948: September 18] John Hutchins Cady directed the restoration of the house. Those individuals who came to Cocumscussoc’s rescue were well known and well connected. They included some of the twentieth century’s best Rhode Island historians, architects, socialites, and antiquarians. Many left their own papers and their own research behind to document not only their work, but their research findings for later scholars. Substantial architectural work was undertaken to not only stabilize the house but return the building to its earlier configuration, including the removal of the 1880s ell (now the

annex office building) to another part of the property, the removal of the clipped gables, and the removal of the nineteenth-century porch. The trumpet vine which had become a predominant feature of the porch was saved and trained over a new arbor set away from, but across the length of, the front of the house.

In another article, celebrating the work already undertaken in the preservation of the house, another writer noted: “One of the most obvious needs which will meet the eyes of all will be that of work on the ground around the Castle. Some progress has been made in this respect, but until now the house itself has demanded the most attention. By next spring, it is hoped, some sort of eighteenth-century garden may be under way. Until then, those who take their pleasure in the surroundings of the historic spot will find the somewhat shaggy fields beside rippling Mill Cove not altogether unsatisfying on a pleasant autumn afternoon, with wood pigeons and gulls wheeling in idle flight only a stones throw from the bustling traffic of Route 1 which actually is 200 yards away.” [Providence Journal, Oct. 5, 1950]

To solve the need for grounds beautification, a new Colonial Garden was designed and installed under the direction of the South County Garden Club. The Club was the recipient of the 1953 Founders Fund of the Garden Club of America. Plans for the garden were drawn by Irmgard B. Graham, a talented local designer and member of the Club. The garden was set close to the south side of the house, a 35' x 45' rectangular parcel fenced on all sides by a low white

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In reponse to the article about the Congdon era in the Fall Chronicle, Rachel Peirce of Wickford sent photographs of John and Sarah C. Maglone, who were tenants on the farm in the 1850s and 1860s. The photos came from the album of Harriet Smith, who lived on Post Road across from the Castle at the time. She noted in her diary in 1859, “July 20th Wednesday– Morning went down in the great meadow on Congdon Farm to see the wonders of ‘Manny’s Mowing Machine.’ I was told and showed by Mr. Maglone how it operated, and followed it once around the field– to see its movements. I liked it much.”



Members of the South County Garden Club plant the award-winning eighteenth-century garden, 1953 (left). Photo courtesy of Robert Fitts.

By 1967 when this photo was taken, the garden had matured to frame a lovely view of the cove.



picket fence. A small gate opened onto a gravel walk that led to the front door of the house.

The purpose of the garden was to “serve as a living example of the ordered and careful way of life of our ancestors.” [Greene 1954] In its application for the award, the Garden Club argued that the eighteenth-century garden would be a “creation, rather than a restoration,” since no detailed historic references were available for the garden project. The Award funds made possible the construction and planting of the garden; the South County Garden Club underwrote the work to design the garden and ensured its future care. The Club determined that the garden was to reflect the mid to late eighteenth century, as this was the height of the House’s prosperity, and reflected the time that Daniel Updike made improvements to his father’s house.

As a true reflection of the power and politic of the Colonial Revival, the garden is an important layer in the story of Smith’s Castle and reflects the same mix of romance and scholarly intellect that guided the restoration of the house. “Surely Mrs. [Daniel] Updike and her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Lodowick Updike, would not have been content with a few herbs and simples by the back door, particularly when every week ships were dropping anchor at the dock at the foot of the orchard, bringing news of the world and its fashions. And surely it is reasonable to suppose that in the cargo with the silks, brocades and spices, and other luxuries and necessities of the day, there would have been plants and seeds from England, and, particularly, bulbs from Holland. For the Dutch had been coming into the quiet waters of Wickford harbour as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century to trade with the Indians and the Updike connections with Holland and New Amsterdam were close. With such a house, beautiful, even luxurious, and such owners, there is no need to question that there would have

been a garden suitable to the house and the people who lived there.” [Graham letter 1953]

Key words guiding the garden design were “simple but orderly.” Finding a description that colonial gardens were often set off from the house and to the south, club members proceeded to plan for the garden off the south side of the building where “a path already existed which had to be kept for passing, and the south side was precisely the place where we wanted to build the garden. With this to go on, although there are evidences of possible terraces to the east, we chose this location.”

The garden was enclosed with a picket fence whose pickets were carefully shaped to “resemble those found in a very old, now abandoned, dooryard garden on Quaker Lane.” The designer took another liberty in adding two service gates for ease of maintenance and circulation. Gravel paths were edged with brick throughout the garden. A wide border ran around the inside of the fence and separate rectangular planting areas filled the center portions. Plants were selected from a list of eighteenth-century plants. Two Washington thorns, a seckel pear, and a quince tree were planted for shade. Shrubs were mixed into the borders as well as the perennials and bulbs, and boxwood lined the main entrance path. Plants were selected and arranged to provide color throughout the season, beginning with snow drops, grape hyacinths, species tulips, and daffodils, followed by lily of the valley, flowering almond, violets, Jacob’s ladder, iris, peonies, roses, columbine, pinks, and forget-me-nots. In the fall, liatris, asters, and the last of the summer annuals (calendula, marigold, corn flowers, and others) finished the gardening season.

In 1953, the garden was installed and celebrated, tender shrubs and perennials were covered for the winter, and all looked forward to a successful garden-

ing season in 1954. On August 31, 1954 Hurricane Carol arrived, submerging the fledgling garden under sea water that stopped just short of the house doors. The hurricane took out the fence; left two boats in the garden beds; and scattered the lawns with other debris, including the corpse of a woodchuck who had nibbled the garden plants all season. Initially, the fate of the garden seemed hopeless; but by October its prospects had improved. Trees and shrubs showed signs of survival, the fence was retrieved and reinstalled, and the garden paths and planting beds were reset. Five railroad ties, which had landed on the lawns near the garden, were set into a new retaining wall off the southwest corner of the garden fence. By January 1955, the Garden Club Bulletin reported that the finish work on the garden was in place and that the garden had survived the worst of what New England's climate could offer.

The garden is an important part of the Cocumscussoc landscape today and represents more than its reflection of the spirit which rescued Cocumscussoc. It was the beginning of a long and successful partnership with the South County Garden Club, the Rhode Island Master Gardeners program, and other organized volunteers that has provided significant time, money, and labor to the Association's landscape maintenance program. Without this dedication, and the dedication of many other volunteers, the property might find itself in its original, 1950s condition.

The garden designs by Irmgard B. Graham were the first in a series of plans and master plans for the site prepared by prominent Rhode Island landscape architects and designers. Most of these efforts were developed after 1986 in hopes that some significant fundraising efforts might yield additional improvements on the site in time for the the 350th anniversary of Cocumscussoc. In 1986, Albert Veri and Associates, a landscape architecture firm in Providence, developed a schematic master plan for Cocumscussoc. The plan called for stone walls, animal pens, an orchard, underground electrical services, and new parking lot lighting. Portions of this plan were realized in 1989, including the underground electrical service, a new septic system for the Annex, removal of poison ivy, clearing of trees, and a new apple tree planted along the stream bank south of the house. In 1990, landscape architects from Bradford Associates proposed a design competition for developing a landscape master plan for the property. This effort does not seem to have gone anywhere, but in 1993, Nathan Fuller returned to the site for a discussion regarding linking the cultural and natural aspects of the property and a discussion of design costs to rebuild the bridge across the brook for expanding trail access. In 2001, Beckman Weremay, a Wickford landscape architecture firm, developed conceptual plans for visitor parking

and changes to the site entrance. In 2005, another plan, credited only to "JDG," offers suggestions for an herb garden near the rear entrance of the house, including a proposed plant list and grading study.

The many generations of inhabitants at this site have left behind bits of their past. These archaeological resources offer a wealth of potential historic information which can add to our understanding of Cocumscussoc landscape, its buildings, and its residents. Several seasons of archaeological investigation have already been realized on the grounds of the property. Excavations and studies have preceded new construction, relocation of buildings, and the installation of utilities and other services on the site. In addition, field schools and other studies have furthered the scholarly documentation of life at Cocumscussoc, and resulted in the naming of the property as a National Historic Landmark archaeology site. To date, archaeological studies have been conducted in 1972, 1973, 1989, 1990, 1991, and 2007.

Today, water continues to lap the shores of the Cocumscussoc grounds. Trees cover the once-open fields north of the house and green briar and poison ivy mask the site topography in its more remote areas. Most of the site improvements, and the ground maintenance, are focused only on the two acres surrounding the house and the annex. The remains of culverts, piping, and graded roadbeds are evidence of the old road to the barn complex through the wetland. The track bed for the Sea View Railroad is still a prominent feature along Post Road. Beneath the surface, the bend in the Post Road is still evident in geophysical sensing images. Two walls of the ice house are still standing overlooking the brook, and the freshwater spring is still bubbling to the surface not far from the edge of the brook. The foundation remains of the Babbitt and Fox dairy barns and outbuildings are easily visible next to the dirt lane which leads north from the house. On the McKendall property, many of the other Babbitt/Fox buildings are still standing, including the dwelling house, poultry house, and other outbuildings and farm structures. Further north, the Smith/Updike cemetery is hidden under the woodland trees, no longer visible from the main house.

Junipers are scattered in small groves across the front lawn of the house, their roots settled into the scattered rocks and remains of fields, pastures, and perhaps even former gardens. A large box elder tree, plane tree, and other trees shade the lawn surrounding the house. Until 2007, the trumpet vine tumbled over the arbor that was installed in 1949 when volunteers, ready to replace the arbor beams, cut back the old vines. The South County Garden Club garden still blooms behind its picket fence. A large boulder marks the spot where the Great Swamp grave may be; the apple tree sprouts are no longer viable under the

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Recently discovered in the basement of the Annex, this diorama of the eighteenth century garden was probably prepared by members of the South County Garden Club in support of their application to the Garden Clubs of America, Founders Fund Award.



Norway Maples that now dominate this part of the grounds. Boxwood-lined gravel paths lead to the front door, and visitors park on the remains of the old lane that led from the brook to the old dairy barns. Stones that remain from the old wharf come into view when the tide ebbs. Like the waves that lap the shore, the past can still be found in this landscape, glimpsed when the season is right, sleeping underground, noticed by those who care to go looking.

What does all this history mean for Cocumscussoc today? Clearly, it is a story that reaches far beyond the boundaries of the Cocumscussoc Association property. It is a story that flows along the roads, brooks, and rivers of North Kingstown. It is a story that lies beneath the woodland that today covers former fields and pastures. It is a story that sits beside the stone walls and fence lines along the highways and byways of the community. It is the story of North Kingstown and Wickford and Boston Neck. It is the story of Quidnesset and Namcook and Mascakonage. It is a story that should shape not only the future of the grounds at Cocumscussoc, but the planning efforts of the community. Perhaps the past will tell us a lot about our future if we only stop to listen.

Feature Analysis

The cultural landscape story can be told in many ways. Sometimes it is better related as the story of

people and the land. Sometimes it is better told in the evidence that remains visible today. In an effort to serve both purposes, the more comprehensive Cultural Landscape Report will trace the historic evidence of the following features on site and set each within the context of broader historic information. The following paragraphs identify and date features on the grounds today that will be described in detail in the larger report.

Roads, Lanes, and Driveways

- Richard Smith Drive 1957
 - Parking Area—on farm road c.1870 (maybe earlier)
- Lane north of creek and house—1880 (maybe earlier)
- Remains of road through wetland—1880
- Entry gate and lane from Harris map—potential underground remains
- Farm road leading south from house across bridge—no remains?
- Bends on Post Road—located 2007 with remote sensing—include parts of Huling Road and pull-off for Richard Smith grove south on Route 1
- Driveway turnaround and parking area north of house in 1880—only topography and one tree evidence of this turnaround on site today

Water Features: Brooks and Streams, Springs, Ponds, and Wetlands

- Cocumscussoc Brook—mentioned in first Smith land grant

- Path of brook altered when bridge was constructed in 1870 or earlier and again when Sea View Railroad was constructed in the early twentieth century
- Culvert for Cocumscussoc Brook under Post Road—may be the same as c. 1870 (In 1802 the brook crossed under the road further north)
- Spring—mentioned in deed recorded 1659
- Stream north of house—indigenous; may have been dammed for pond in 1880

Wharves and Landing Places

- Wharf—rocks remain off shore; first mention of wharf on property in 1802 as “landing”

Topography

- Significant changes to topography in 1880 for roads and barns and in 1917 for Sea View Railroad
- Land may have been terraced for garden east of house in early eighteenth century

Boundaries and Lot Delineations

- Cove—1637 (in recorded deeds of 1651 and 1659)
- Post Road—English Path—Common Way—deed recorded 1659
- Present southern lot boundary along lots 43 and 37—1960
- Northern boundary—defined 1947

Walls and fences

- Fence at Post Road—1986–89
- Fence north of house along lot line—1958–60
- Fence surrounding garden—1953; rebuilt 1954 (and later?)
- Pressure-treated timbers off corner of garden—installed 1954
- Remains of stone wall along edge of cove—described in deed of 1802

Buildings, Structures and Foundations

- House 1678 and later
- Annex c. 1880 moved 1958–60
- Ice House (stone foundation) 1791
- Dairy Barn complex (foundations) 1880; 1919
- Arbor 1949

Orchards and Gardens

- No orchards on site today though remains of scattered trees
- Founders Fund Garden 1953–1954
- Master Gardener gardens 1986 and later
- Ornamental trees along Richard Smith Drive after 1958; 1989

Fields and Pastures

- House lawn was pasture in 1880
- No fields or pastures on site today

Woodland

- Wood lot near family cemetery described 1886 (not on property but visible)
- Areas dominated by woods today, grew after 1936

Plants

- Trumpet vine, c. 1880
- Plane tree north of house, c. 1880–1919
- Box elder, c. 1880–1919
- Pear (in garden), 1953
- Hawthorns (near garden), 1953

Names and Dates

Much of the confusion and complication arising from a study of the landscape of Smith's Castle comes from subtle differences in the choice of names and dates for specific information. For example, there are many ways Cocumscussoc is spelled during the history of this site. The individual farms changed names in the nineteenth century. The Native Americans often used more than one term to refer to the same area of land, and in the translation to the written word each of these names was spelled in various forms. Dates for deed transactions and the documenting of wills and probate are confusing—Richard Smith, for example came to Cocumscussoc in 1637, but the deed of record for his initial land purchase is recorded in 1651 and 1659. Wills are written and recorded in two different years—which should we choose in the historic record? This section of the CLR will justify the dates chosen for the landscape history and document the reasons for the selection of the specific date. In all cases, we have tried to use dates and names that could be documented and proved.

Assessment: Significance and Historic Integrity

The twentieth century has dealt conflicting blows to Smith's Castle. Up to 1936 many of the original cultural landscape features such as roads, lanes, buildings, outbuildings, and field patterns were still intact or easily evident, despite the dramatic changes brought in building construction and land changes between 1880 and 1936 for the Cocumcussoc Dairy. After 1936, the cultural landscape was dramatically and irrevocably changed by the U.S. Housing Authority project. The entrance road was changed, buildings removed, lanes altered (some turned into larger subdivision roads, some completely removed), and much of the cultural landscape reverted to archaeological evidence in the process. After its rescue in 1949, the buildings and the property received the focus of some of Rhode

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Island's best architects, scholars, and historians. The passion and professionalism of the Association have revitalized the historic integrity of the buildings, and sensitively opened them to public use. The beautifully designed Colonial Revival Garden and the carefully executed improvements to the grounds have created a setting which greatly enhances the spirit of the buildings.

What is the significance of the Cocumscussoc landscape today? Despite the twentieth-century changes there is evidence remaining from each historic era that can be dated to a specific deed, will, inventory, or map. These bits of the landscape offer us a conduit for exploring our understanding of change over time, and offer visitors the opportunity to understand the ever-evolving cultural landscape that lives in their own backyards. This is the true magic of Cocumscussoc's landscape today: interpreting the remaining bits of the past as a foothold to a larger tour of the rich cultural landscape that surrounds us. It is a tour that requires the skills of an interpreter, and yet it can capture the imagination of the visitors when they "find" the evidence of these landscape layers on the grounds of the site today. The spring, for instance, offers the chance to describe the landscape granted by the Narragansetts to Richard Smith and Roger Williams. The ice house remains can take us on a journey to the eighteenth century. The bends in the Post Road tell the story of changes in transportation, and explain the reason for so many "turnouts" along Routes 1 and 1A today. The wetland and its road remains can link us to the Babbitt Farm and Cocumcussoc Dairy, and the means by which people have manipulated the land here for centuries. The barn complex remains are a firm reminder of the renaissance of farming here in the early twentieth century, and, with a glimpse to the building remains at the McKendall property, illustrate how even the most recent past can disappear into leafy debris. The garden, imbued with the Colonial Revival spirit that saved the house and inspired the garden's design, offers a beautiful spot to rest and imagine. Touching these pieces of the past can link visitors to the broader historic context of the region and its political, cultural, agricultural, and economic fortunes and failures.

Today, Cocumscussoc is a landscape of bits and pieces, each significant in its ability to draw us into the past, but equally confusing for the uninformed visitor to understand. Perhaps this history is best related as a treasure hunt—the revelation of clues that lead to a bigger story.

Conclusion

The history of the cultural landscape of Smith's Castle is very complex, and very large. It is a story that covers not just generations, but centuries. It covers more than 17 generations of owners and individuals, all with their own dreams and desires for opportunity. The comprehensive Cultural Landscape Report will further delineate these findings and deepen our understanding of the landscape and its evidentiary remains on the 23 acres that survive here. Can we tell the story of 4,000 acres, or 660 acres, or even 300 acres on this 23-acre parcel? While 23 acres is large by twenty-first-century standards, it is small compared to the vast historical landscape that once existed here. This site can inspire new understandings about the history to be found right outside the dooryards and backyards of residential North Kingstown and coastal Rhode Island. ■

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1997 U.S. Geological Survey showing seventeenth-century land and natural boundaries.

Cocumscussoc Brook, October, 2005 (photo by the author).

Detail, U.S. Geological Survey showing nineteenth-century lands.

Cocumscussoc c. 1890 (Courtesy Newport Historical Society).

Cocumscussoc, late nineteenth century, (Robert Fitts Collection).

Mill Cove and Rabbit (Queens) Island, 2006 (photo by author).

Cocumscussoc and Mill Cove, January 2007 (courtesy Bousquet Aerial Photography).

Spring, January 2007 (photo by author).

Smith's Castle, October 2005 (photo by author).

1677 William Wood. *A Map of New England* (copy courtesy Cocumscussoc Association).

Documented land (shaded areas) owned by the Smith Family c.1680 overlaid on 1997 aerial photograph (by author).

J. Gulburn. *A Map of New England According to Land Observations, 1720* (copy courtesy of Cocumscussoc Association).

Smith's Castle 2005, (photo courtesy of author).

Memorial to the Great Swamp Fight grave (photo by author).

Flagstone surface covering drain from house 1989–91, (photo courtesy of Robert Fitts).

Caleb Harris. *Map for Lodowick Updike* (1802). Though drawn at the end of the century, this map shows the intentions of the 1709 village of Wickford (copy courtesy of Cocumscussoc Association).

Caleb Harris. 1802. *The Most Westerly Plat of the Homestead Farm of Lodowick Updike Esq. of North Kingstown* (copy courtesy of Cocumscussoc Association).

Caleb Harris. 1802. *Plat of Lodowick Updike Esq.'s South Farm Lying in North Kingstown* (copy courtesy of Cocumscussoc Association).

Caleb Harris. 1802 Homestead Plat, detail.

Cocumscussoc lands c.1800 overlaid on 1997 aerial photograph (photo courtesy of author).

Ice House (barn?) foundation, 2007 (photo courtesy of author).

Remains of Stone Landing, 2007 (photo courtesy of Neil Dunay).

Cocumscussoc, n.d. (courtesy HABS), note the location of the original entry drive.

Cocumscussoc Dairy, n.d. (photo courtesy of Robert Fitts).

Babbitt Farm, c.1915 (post card).

Cocumscussoc Land 1870–1947 overlaid on 1997 aerial photograph (by author).

Cocumscussoc 1958 showing original entrance road location (photo courtesy of Robert Fitts).

South County Garden Club planting garden, 1953 (photo courtesy of Robert Fitts).

Cocumscussoc, October 1957 (photo courtesy of Robert Fitts).

North Kingstown Tax Map showing lots platted in 1947.

Cocumscussoc Brook, April 2006.

Remains of Farm Road Crossing Wetland, January 2007 (photo by author).

Mill Cove, July 2006 (photo by author).

The Cocumscussoc Association



Upcoming at Smith's Castle

November

Day	Time	Event
Monday, 3	7:00 p.m.	Board of Trustees meeting
Saturday, 8	10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	What's It Worth Wickford?
Saturday, 22	9:00 a.m.	Docent meeting

December

Day	Time	Event
Thursday, 4	9:00 a.m.	Decorate the Castle for the season
Saturday, 6	Noon–4:00 p.m.	Christmas at the Castle
Sunday, 7	Noon–4:00 p.m.	Christmas at the Castle
Saturday, 13	5:00–8:00 p.m.	Member Holiday Party

SAVE THE DATE!

Be sure to join us in celebrating the season on the evening of Saturday, December 13th, 5:00 p.m. at the Smith's Castle Member Holiday Party

Silent Auction–

Private wine tasting for eight
Courtesy of Colonial Wine and Spirits

Raffle–

Gift certificates from local restaurants

- Cocktails
- Heavy hors d'œuvres
- Carving stations

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