



The Babcock-Smith House Museum

Newsletter

Volume 13 Number 2

Summer 2017

Welcome, Jacquelyn Smith

The cheerful sound of a bird chirping interrupted our conversation, but Jackie Smith, our new resident manager, told me that it was the ringtone she had assigned to her mother because her mother is always cheerful. Since Jackie always has a smile on her face and can deliver even bad news in an uplifting way, she seems to have inherited that quality.

Jackie's first introduction to her future home came serendipitously in October of 2009 when her beloved DAR was holding an event here and Ed Fazio was giving a tour of the museum. Ed happened to mention Benjamin Franklin's association with the postal system and the names of associated roads, such as the King's Highway, which sparked Jackie's interest since she had lived on King's Highway in Fairfield County. She also said that, if she could invite anyone, living or dead, to dinner, it would be Benjamin Franklin. Since Jackie has deep ties as a tour guide and volunteer with both the Varnum House and the General Nathanael Greene Homestead, this is high praise for Franklin.

Jackie recounts giving her first tour at the Greene Homestead and embarrassingly drawing a complete blank. Then, mercifully, the fire alarm went off. She evacuated with her guests; the fire marshall came and declared that the heated attic had triggered the alarm. Meanwhile, Jackie had surreptitiously brushed up on her notes, resumed the tour and, in her words, "nailed it."

Enveloped in history, Jackie is presently applying for admission to a Ph. D. program in history at Brown University, but knows that the competition is stiff for the fifteen available openings. Her bachelor's degree in anthropology from RIC, her love of reading history, especially books written by local authors, her interest in gender roles, and her DAR involvement will look good on her application.

So also will her entrepreneurial flair. Jackie once owned a successful café near PPAC in Providence where she loved the interaction with staff and customers. Her brother Michael had enlisted her to work with some of his marketing students in China who used her as a pretend client.

It was payback: she had written her senior thesis on a cross-cultural study of gender roles as demonstrated by McDonald's customers in Shanghai, and her brother had helped with her research.

Although Jackie has traveled widely, she is temporarily narrowing her focus to studying Westerly; and her conclusion, not an unfamiliar one, is that everyone in Westerly is related to someone else in Westerly. Of course, she is, too, with her heritage going back to four of the early settlers; but she is still searching for that elusive Smith connection. To date, she has discovered a Smith in eastern Connecticut – a distant cousin to Orlando, perhaps.

And, since her brother is her best tennis partner, but is in China, she is looking for someone with whom to play tennis. If you volunteer for the job, you will find an upbeat energetic bookworm, but I suspect she may be a killer on the tennis court.



They Are Back!

After a two-year hiatus, fifth graders returned for a full day at the Museum. Because of the additional space, upstairs and down, in the Carriage House, Ed Fazio and committee reorganized the tour and added some interactive events. Six learning stations provided a tour of the museum and of the granite exhibit. Students conducted a physics experiment using their math and science skills to calculate the mechanical advantage of a jack used in the granite industry; but, instead of a stone, a student stood on the jack and another effortlessly turned the crank to raise the "load" up several inches.

They played colonial and Victorian games, used a quill pen, tried weaving, played with old-fashioned toys, studied the wall photo of the men in the granite shed, hefted some tools, and ran their hands along polished granite.



Snippets

We send our congratulations to Dwight Brown who received the Julia Award from the Westerly Historical Society at its annual meeting. Julia Smith organized the Historical Society in 1913 and its first meeting was held around our dining room table. Dwight was recognized for his many valuable contributions made to preserving and sharing local history.

Susan Sullivan Brocato and Brenda Linton, who toil weekly on organizing vault material, have completed organizing the Bonner collection.

The Westerly Historical Society has a handsome new sign soon to be erected on Cross Street.

Trustees wielded rakes, shovels, and loppers as they spruced up the grounds on a Saturday workday, filling Harry Bjorkland's trailer with runaway lilac sprouts and invasives, and helping Maureen Bjorkland plant urns and the kitchen garden.

With a little nudge from Resident Manager Jackie Smith, Ed Fazio, Ellen Madison and Tony Smith tackled the storage area off the common room, cleaning out generations of accumulated "treasures." Now Jackie Brennan, our textile person, has a clean and orderly place in which to store her mannequins.

The three-person team did such a good job on the second floor storage area, that, when it came time to take down the plaster model exhibit in the Isaac Smith Room, they evaluated the storage area where the models are kept and did a wholesale rearrangement of the shelving. However, they are not hiring out.

Because a new exhibit featuring women's accessories was going into the Isaac Smith Room, we installed a honeycomb shade to keep out the sun.

Jackie Brennan and her daughter Dawn have mended the two braided rugs in the museum.

Folks working in the vault at the Westerly Public Library, in preparation for its special collection exhibit celebrating its 125th birthday, discovered a dingy cardboard box filled with 78 rpm records which had been a gift in 1940 from John Sullivan of the Sullivan Granite Company. It was labeled "The Story of Westerly Granite," and the labels indicated that there were four different programs. Mystified as to what is on them, we have taken them to be digitized. Stay tuned—there may be a new program in our future.

Enclosed in the newsletter is a page of updates which we made to *Built From Stone* when we sent it out for its third printing. There are a couple of corrections, but most changes reflect new discoveries which we have made. The list will be available for anyone who has purchased an earlier edition.

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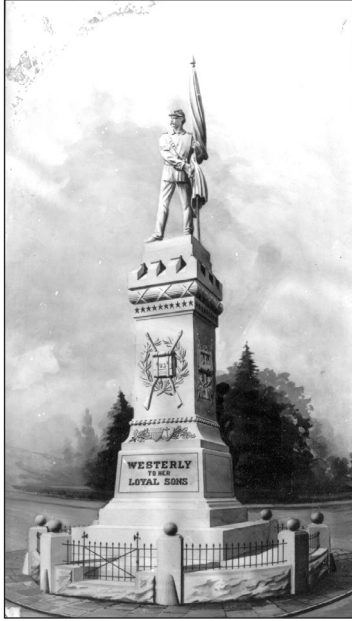
When asked why there were no women in the photo of the granite workers, one young woman replied, "Because they underestimated us."

We had learned that fourth graders studied simple machines, so it seemed like a good review question when Linda Chaffee was showing giant levers and introducing compound machines such as the jack. When she asked for an example of a simple machine, one youngster, fresh from his tour of the Museum, replied, "That thing that you push up and down to make butter." Ah, yes. The butter churn. Truly a simple machine.

In Memoriam

Donn Barclay
Dorothy Gallagher
Docents

Westerly Civil War Monument?



Once in a while, a gift just lands in your lap. In our case, two related gifts landed within the same week from two different sources.

The first was a framed picture of a monument of a soldier on a pedestal with the words "Westerly To Her Loyal Sons" on it. The picture came as a new part of our permanent loan from the Westerly Public Library and none of us had seen the completed statue. We surmised that it might have been a proposal for Westerly's Civil War Monument.

That very week, Dwight Brown sent a digital copy of the picture, asking if any of us had ever seen it. He had purchased a copy years ago from a private seller and had sleuthed his way through various issues of *The Narragansett Weekly* to find something about it and was willing to share that information.

An April 7, 1887 issue referred to a March 8 meeting of a special monument committee which, apparently, had voted to solicit designs for a proposed Civil War monument for Westerly. A "Convention of Honorably Discharged Soldiers and Sailors, living in this village and vicinity, together with the citizen's committee" would select the winning design.

The solicitation for designs had worked, and on April 14 the paper reported that "the designs were handsomely framed, and so placed as to show them to the best advantage. A large majority of those present voted for a design submitted by the Smith Granite Company; and the design is now on exhibition in the show window of the New York store."

On April 21, 1887 the paper reported that "Westerly has at last fallen into line" with other parts of the country where Civil War monuments were either underway or already erected. A long and detailed description included even the setting requirements: "the foundation for the monument is to be composed of good-sized building stone, well laid in good cement, and to a depth of not less than six feet."

The description works its way up from the base: "on the front of the third base, in raised polished letters, will appear the dedication: "Westerly to Her Loyal Sons," and the dates "1861-1865." More details follow until we reach the statue. "The

crowning feature of the monument will be a granite statue, of heroic size, representing the color bearer of the regiment" and describes why he is posed as he is.

Anticipating the cost to be \$6000, the committee did not anticipate that it would be difficult to collect the donations. Slyly, it even indicates that "it would cost very much more if erected in any other locality," a reference to Westerly's granite industry.

Dwight could find no more references until May 3, 1894, a full seven years later. Sadly, it appears that it was not as easy as the committee had thought to raise the money. "Most of the money had been given with the proviso that if work was not begun within five years the money should be refunded."

The minutes reflect the amount of money, including accrued interest, to be refunded to various groups. One item is of particular interest. "That the sum of \$27.28 donated by the British American society, with accrued interest, be given to the Memorial building committee for the purchase of books for the Public Library."

We all know that the Westerly Public Library, now celebrating its 125th birthday, is Westerly's official Civil War Monument. How fitting that these two gifts should be linked in history and in the gifts to us. And, as prejudiced as we at the Museum are about the granite industry, we agree that Dwight Brown summed up the result beautifully. "There can be no comparison."

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Additions and Corrections to *Built From Stone* Third Printing

Back of Title page: Line after "All rights reserved" add "Third Printing 2017"

Page 27: After Archie Brothers Granite insert "Atlantic Monument Co."

After Dixon Granite works insert "Doney, J. H."

Change E.G. King to "E.C. King"

After Andrew Morrison insert "Morrison Granite Company"

After Alexander Robertson insert "Rowe and Veal"

After Westerly Granite Works insert "Westerly Monumental Works, Sweeney Quarry"

Insert "Westerly Pink Granite Company"

Page 41: Caption under first picture DELETE "; for the massive Andrus mausoleum in Valhalla, NY"

Page 61: 1907 second entry should read "Frank Sullivan purchases half interest in Crumb Quarry for \$50,000"

NEW ENTRIES

"1917 Sullivan purchases Barnicort's share of Crumb Quarry for \$50,000"

"@1918 Sullivan buys out the Klondike Quarry owned by James Gourlay and family; the Joseph Newall Quarry owned by Joseph Newall and Company; and the old Thompson-Reinhalter Quarry owned by John Thompson"

"1919 Sullivan acquisitions merge to become Sullivan Granite Company"

Page 62

"2012 Museum wins national award from AASLH for documenting granite history"

"2013 *Westerly Granite: A Tour of Westerly Granite* DVD developed in conjunction with curriculum guide"

"2014 *Carved from Stone: Legacy of a Granite Town* documentary airs on RIPBS"

"2015 Granite exhibit opens at the Babcock-Smith House Carriage House"

Page 86: First word change General to "Colonel"; Same line change Allegheny City to "Pittsburgh"

Page 87: Line two of text change General to "Colonel"

Page 103: Add "Fletcher, Archibald" after Fletcher, Archer

Page 106: Change Romanelle to "Romanella"

Pages 100-107—ADD THE FOLLOWING NAMES

Barbone, Joseph

Brown, Dwight

Card, Louise

Dortch, Charles David

DuFour, Joseph L./Leon

Hill, John E.

Keenan, Denis

Keenan, William

Kenney, John E.

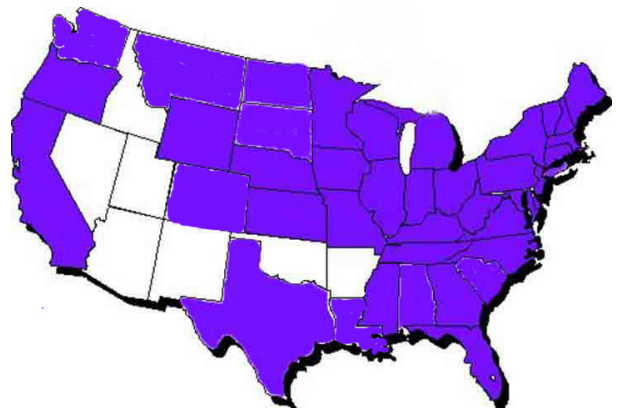
Kenney, Everett M.

Morandi, James

Portaluppi, Mathia (Matthew)

Robertson, James

Vuono, Natale



Caption Page 10:

Westerly granite monuments have now been documented in 41 states.

“Don’t Leave Home Without It . . .”

The talented team of Jackie Brennan, Mary Cool and Jan Tunney has created a fascinating seasonal exhibit featuring women’s fashion accessories from the Museum’s collection.

Fashion accessories, a term that came into use in the 19th century, can be loosely categorized into two general areas: those that are carried and those that are worn. Traditional carried accessories include purses and handbags, hand fans, parasols and umbrellas, wallets and canes. Accessories that are worn may include boots and shoes, hats, bonnets, gloves, shawls, jewelry, scarves, socks and stockings. A good sampling of these are on exhibit in the Isaac Smith Room.

Some fashion accessories have gone completely out of style, while others come in and out of fashion. Pashima shawls, plain and patterned, have remained classic; hair accessories continue to be fashionable. Some, like the umbrella, became totally utilitarian, contracting and shortening until frequently no longer than six inches long, but is now hailed again as a fashion accessory.

The exhibit will remain open for the remainder of the season.



Museum Hours

July and August: Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday
2-5 pm
June, September and October: Saturday
2-5 pm

Sold Out

There was not a seat to be had on the buses headed for the museum-sponsored tours at the Annual Rhode Island Statewide Historic Preservation Conference on Saturday, April 29. Watch Hill was the headquarters of the Conference sponsored by The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RI-HPHC). At 11:15 a full-to-capacity bus headed for the Museum where docents Cathy Larsh, Mary Ann McCarty, John Leach and Carol and Ed Fazio in costume offered guests a tour of the mansion and the granite exhibit. Guests had lunch on the grounds of the museum and then returned to Watch Hill.

At 1:30 a second bus headed for downtown Westerly, where Ellen Madison, John Coduri and Linda Chaffee pointed out the details of the granite in the Industrial Trust Building, the Library, the Town Hall and Christ Church. Then all boarded the bus for River Bend Cemetery where the guides pointed out the fine points of several statues, mausolea and monuments.

In response to the interest in the granite tours for the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Conference, the Babcock-Smith House has scheduled two walking tours for this summer. Tours in future years will focus on specific subjects. If you have requests or ideas for these tours, email lchaffee@cox.net or woodyhillbandb@verizon.net.

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Upcoming Events

Don't Leave Home Without It...

Exhibit features women's fashion accessories from the Museum's collection.

Special 2017 Exhibit in the Isaac Smith Room

Downtown Granite Gems: A Walking Tour of Westerly

Thursday, July 13 at 6:30 pm (Rain date July 20)

The tour will include a variety of buildings and monuments which demonstrate the importance that Westerly granite played in Westerly's downtown history. Meet on Wilcox Park esplanade at 6:30. Tour will last about an hour.

A Variety of River Bend's Monumental Art (1880-1940)

Thursday, August 17 at 6 pm (Rain date August 24)

This tour is an introduction to the various types of monuments in River Bend Cemetery with the emphasis on those of Westerly granite. Later tours will focus on other specific subjects. Meet at the cemetery office.

Westerly Granite and the Civil War

Tuesday, September 5 at 6 pm

Linda Chaffee will highlight a variety of Civil War monuments culminating with Westerly's own. The program will be at the Westerly Public Library. Free to all.

Monumental Genius: James Batterson and

Sunday, September 10, at 2 pm

the Transformation of Art and Industry in Victorian America

William Hosley, well-known Connecticut historian, will focus on the well-connected James Batterson of the New England Granite Company, who was responsible for building many impressive buildings and monuments made from Westerly granite. He parlayed his political connections into commissions for the most important war memorials and monuments in the country, including the signature monuments at the national cemeteries at Gettysburg and Antietam.

The Battle of Stalingrad

Sunday, September 17 at 2pm

Anastasia Goodman (aka Harriet Grayson), author, will discuss the Battle of Stalingrad, which many historians consider the turning point in WWII, through readings from her Sasha Perlov mystery series and a discussion of the actual epic battle.

All events at the Carriage House unless noted otherwise. Not-yet members \$5.00; members free.