

The Babcock-Smith House Museum Newsletter

Volume 15 Number 2

Spring 2019

“I Think It Was Awesome and Cool.”



Photo by Lisa Konicki

Visitors and volunteers have gone home. Textiles are back nestled in archival blankets. Joshua and Hannah Babcock now gaze serenely over an empty parlor. Granite pieces have returned to the familiarity of the Carriage House display cases and BDA buttons have returned to the safety of the Westerly Historical Society vault.

For two months, the historical objects were on public display at the Westerly Library Hoxie Gallery in celebration of Westerly's 350th anniversary. They triggered memories, raised questions, garnered compliments and resulted in gifts, particularly from the last fifty years, to the two sponsoring organizations.

Dedicated volunteers tackled the monumental task of choosing, preparing, moving, mounting, and then returning the items which ranged from the tiniest piece of hair jewelry to the grandiose photo of the Sullivan Quarry. Throughout the two months, guides shared some of their favorite objects with visitors, docents brought bridge groups and swimming friends, and our formal programs continued.

It was the last Westerly showing of the Hopkinton table on which men signed the papers that separated Hopkinton from Westerly in 1757. The table had been on loan to the the Museum from the Hopkinton Historical Society for the last nine years and has now returned to Hopkinton.

“Loved it—having lived here all my life, I was always proud of our little town—now more than ever. Thank you!”

Our efforts are not over. Throughout the year, programs will center on facets of Westerly history.

The Babcock-Smith House will be featured in the pop-up book about Westerly to be created by the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce in time for Christmas.

Out of the Attic

Barbara Champlin Whitford generously opened up her third floor which had served as an attic in the home which had been in her husband's family for four generations. Jackie Brennan and Wanda Butler spent several sessions searching through boxes and trunks and acquired 55 items for the textile collection, as well as a new rug for the parlor. All the items have been inventoried, photographed and archivally stored.

Brenda Linton and Ellen Madison also scoured the Whitford collection for antique toys, boxes from local businesses, paperwork and books which were distributed to the Museum, the Armory, the Historical Society, and the Friends of the Westerly Library.

Whitford's home was built by the Greenman family who owned a major shipyard on the Pawcatuck River.

Thank you to Barbara for sharing these treasures. Her generosity is a reminder that, if you are downsizing, please remember these local organizations.

Westerly Granite Monument on the Move

It has moved four times! That doesn't sound impressive until one realizes that "it" is the Civil War Soldiers' and Sailors' monument in Wheeling, WV. That monument, produced by the New England Granite Works from Westerly granite, is about 24 feet tall and weighs 25 tons. Originally set in downtown Wheeling, the monument is returning to the downtown area adjacent to West Virginia Independence Hall.



of life in Wheeling. They believed that the monument should be centrally located to be a constant reminder of the terrible price we as a nation paid to end slavery and preserve the Union.

Relocation was not an easy project. Citizens raised \$135,000 and experts from Coon Restoration and Sealants were hired to disassemble, relocate and reassemble the monument. Mike Major of Mike Major Sculpture LLC was engaged to repair damage the statues had suffered since the monument's dedication in 1883.

In response to inquiries from the group, the Babcock-Smith House Museum sent details from the order books of the New England Granite Works to aid in the restoration; in return, the group sent us a slide show of pictures (shared below) documenting the monument's relocation. Thanks to Helen Brennan for keeping the Museum abreast of the happenings in Wheeling.

Why leave the peaceful setting in Wheeling Park? Many citizens felt the monument was too far removed from the ebb and flow



Disassembly



The core of the monument



Off to the new site



Reassembly



Damaged foot



Nearly as good as new

Trustees: John B. Coduri, Chair; Maureen J. Bjorkland, Jacqueline F. Brennan, Susan Sullivan Brocato, Linda Smith Chaffee, Edward A. Fazio, Betty-Jo Cugini Greene, Stephen M. Greene, Ellen L. Madison, Ph.D., Anthony Gallup Smith. Official publication of the Orlando R. Smith Trust, DBA Babcock-Smith House Museum, published twice a year as a non-profit organization. Babcock-Smith House Museum, 124 Granite Street, Westerly, RI 02891 401-596-5704 babcocksmithhouse.org

78th/102nd Monument Repaired



The December 2018 issue of *The Dispatch* reported that, in mid-October, restoration work had taken place on the 78th & 102nd NY Infantry monument located on Culp's Hill in Gettysburg. Over the years, the monument had suffered damage. Although some of the most severe damage had been previously repaired, damage remained to the soldier's hat, gun hammerlock, and the end of the gun barrel. The October work centered on repairing the soldier's hat bill. Because the monument had been originally created by Smith Granite Company, Westerly granite was used for the repair. The hammerlock and the end of the gun barrel will be repaired during the next year or two.

Jeff Harding, Licensed Battlefield Guide and author of the article, is spearheading the restoration efforts. Jeff is looking for any available photos of the monument taken between 1900 and 1975. If you can help, contact Jeff: Tours4U@comcast.net. Jeff has been an invaluable help to the museum in the preparation of the web pages of the Westerly granite monuments at Gettysburg.

Tom Foley, granite researcher and museum member, forwarded this article to us.

Monument Hunters



John and Brenda Linton will share their adventures looking for Westerly granite monuments from Maine to Florida and New Hampshire to California. It is very appropriate that two former history teachers would take on this task. Westerly granite monuments are a microcosm of American history from the landing of the Pilgrims to WWI.

The program will take place October 13 at the Carriage House.

Fallen Soldier

Two tornadoes swept through Vicksburg National Military Park on April 13 knocking the bronze statue of the 7th RI infantryman off its Westerly granite pedestal. Erected in 1908, this monument was the only one among hundreds of monuments in the military park to be damaged. Ironically, the statue depicts the infantryman picking up the fallen colors and now he himself has fallen.

Officials estimated that it will cost \$20,000 to repair. The Museum and the Docents have made a donation towards the repair.



Providence Journal photo

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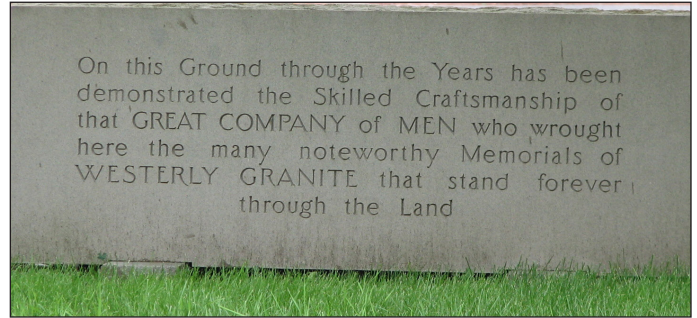
Now You See It. Now You Don't!



During the recent demolition activity at the site of the former Smith Granite Company on Granite Street, workers came across a broken tablet that is the sister piece to the tablet at the entrance to the granite museum. We thought that the piece had been lost and were thrilled to learn that it had been found. Determining who should be contacted and getting in touch with the property owner was a long circuitous process. When we went to look for the tablet, we couldn't find it. We were very disappointed! A long-lost piece had been found and then was gone again.



The reverse side was what we had been looking for. Broken in two pieces, it is an important artifact of the granite industry. The Comolli Granite Company has joined the two pieces so that the break is barely noticeable. It is scheduled to be in place for the Open House on May 25.



The two tablets were originally on either side of an exedra in an area displaying works of the SGC. If you have pictures of this display yard, please let the museum know. We are looking for a photo of these tablets in their original setting.



Months passed. When it looked like the project was being abandoned, Trustee Chair John Coduri did one last reconnoiter of the property. He found it! The reason we had not found it before was that the side pictured above had been showing and was not what we had been looking for.

Did you forget to renew your 2019 membership? The Museum relies your membership dues to continue its work in preserving and sharing Westerly's history.

Membership Form

Member/Corporate Sponsor Name _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ Email _____

Membership Level: __\$25 __\$50 __\$100 __\$250 __\$500 __\$1,000 __\$1,500 __\$2,000 __\$3,000

Make checks payable to Babcock-Smith House Museum.

Thank you.

I would like information on: ___ candlelight dinners for 12 ___ including the Museum in my estate plan

My donation will be matched by _____

Tidbits

- How wonderful to watch three nonagenarian “retired” docents, Mildred Beam, Gertrude Smith and Annabel Sherwood reminiscing at the Docent Appreciation Luncheon. The culinary students from Westerly High School did a fantastic job preparing and serving luncheon.
- Harry Bjorkland and Ed Fazio installed motion detection lighting outside the resident manager’s apartment.
- Finally, we have solved the problem of the “black hole” that callers sometimes encounter when calling the Museum. From now on, calls are automatically forwarded to Jackie Smith’s cellphone.
- Harry and Maureen Bjorkland have donated a stereoscope viewer so that museum visitors can view our newly acquired double image of the Antietam Soldier.
- Hugh Barton completed the bulk of his research on Lazzari and Barton and has shared it with the Museum for our granite records. It is now available on the website. He is eager to start another project for us.

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- Thanks to Lido Mochetti and Jane Abrams who have spent 47 hours of volunteer time inventorying the contents of the Museum House, writing fuller descriptions of items, and making recommendations to the Trustees regarding items such as rugs which need attention. Lido especially enjoyed the toys which are tucked away in the chest of drawers in the Toy Room.
- The Gallup Sampler, done by Emeline as a little girl, has been professionally refreshed and reframed using the old frame, but with the addition of museum glass. It has been mounted on a darker fabric to minimize the stains and the raw edges were left visible.
- William Mitchell added 17 more granite worker sheets.
- We have installed an energy-efficient heat and air conditioning system for the southern portion of the museum.

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Museum Hours

May 25 through October 31: Saturday 2 -5
July and August: Thurs, Fri, Sat & Sun 2 -5
By appointment: (401) 596-5704 or (401) 322-8240

Babcock-Smith House Museum
124 Granite Street
Westerly, RI 02891



babcocksmithhouse.org

Trustees

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Upcoming Events

Richard Comolli: Master Carver

Saturday, May 25 at 2 pm
Presented by John Coduri at the Carriage House

The DAR and Westerly, Rhode Island

Sunday, November 3 at 2 pm
Presented by Jackie Smith and Sandra Berman
at the Carriage House

Westerly 350: Pokemon Go Historical Walking Tour of Westerly

Sunday, June 9 from 1-2 pm; meet at the Wilcox Park Gazebo.

Premier of Babcock/Franklin Video

Sunday, December 1 at 2 pm
Presented by Betty-Jo Cugini and Jim Karpeichik
at the Carriage House

Westerly Notables in Local Cemeteries

Sunday, June 23 at 2 pm
or Monday, August 5 at 6:30 pm at the Carriage House

For more details, check our website
Babcocksmithhouse.org

Westerly Park/Downtown Tour

Monday, July 8 at 6:30 pm (rain date Thursday, July 11 at 6:30 pm)
Meet at the Columbus statue in Wilcox Park.

Post Office Mural Story

Sunday, September 15 at 2 pm
Presented by Ellen Madison at the Carriage House

Monument Hunters: a little travel, a little history, a little mystery

Sunday, October 13 at 2pm
Presented by John and Brenda Linton at the Carriage House

Did you miss a program? Check the website for the video.



The Babcock-Smith House Museum has been pleased to be an active part of the celebration of Westerly's 350 years.