



Richmond Reflections

Vol.44 No. 4 The Richmond Historical Society Newsletter Winter 2018

President's Message

While I enjoy Christmas, I must say I look forward most to the solstice and the return of the sun. And frustratingly, the return is so slow. Sixty more days of darkness. When the sun returns, let's hope that we will not have a repeat of last year's wet, humid Spring - a real destroyer of lawns. I digress, of more importance is the Society's progress since our last newsletter.

I am happy to report that things are progressing nicely. We have a new member, Jacob Ludwig of Wood River Junction, who has kindly offered to help us with publicity and building maintenance. In that regard, some of the windows on the east and south sides of the Bell School need attention and re-glazing. We have applied for monies from the town in the next fiscal budget via their Community Service awards. Keep your fingers crossed. And, thanks to the elf who put a wreath on the door!

Since our Fall program had to be cancelled, I suggest that interested members attend a Genealogical Workshop offered by Clark Memorial Library in Carolina in conjunction with the Richmond Historical Society. This program will be held there on Wednesday, January 16th at 6:30 pm. Ms. Helen Smith, 2nd Vice President of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society, will be the workshop's speaker and guide. This will be an excellent opportunity for beginner and advanced researchers to learn more about their ancestors.

With the help of our members Thomas King and Kathleen Gallagher, the old Town Clerk's office has been cleaned. Unfortunately, my search for a Graphic Artist fell on deaf ears. I repaired to my bindery to design a timeline of Carolina village, thus producing two of them covering the periods of 1800-1899 and 1900-2018. They will be made into canvas photos and relatable to photos of the actual events.

So to all, a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR !

~ REW

From the Archives, Gratitude, and Assistance

Holiday greetings! The Bell School looks ready for the holidays with candles in the windows and a wreath on the door. Otherwise, we are buttoned up for the winter. We do look forward to using our new display cases, compliments of Mark Trimmer and the Varnum Museum. And, thank you to our Treasurer, Carolyn Richard, for painting them.

During the spring and summer months, we tried to have the Bell School open on Saturdays along with the Farmer's Market held next door. Due to the lack of sufficient docents, it was difficult to keep it consistent. *Volunteers are always appreciated.*

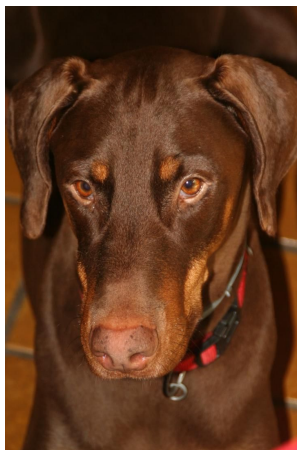
Thanks to a legislative grant, the Society was able to purchase a new laptop for the Archives. Our old computer used Windows XP, with which interaction was not easy. The new laptop is loaded with our Past Perfect Museum software, and we have now joined the 21st Century! We could not have added this technology without the help of Clark Memorial Library IT Specialist, Alexis Turner. Her invaluable assistance guided us in choosing the right product for our needs, as well as setting everything up when it arrived. *Kudos to you, Lexi!*

In closing, the Archives are located on the second floor of Clark Memorial Library. There is *always room for assistance*, and no previous experience is necessary.

Betty Mowchan

10th Rescue Doberman

RHS members Frank and Virginia Williams have a new dog! Ivan is their 10th rescue from Doberman Rescue located in New Hampshire. Virginia reports, "All have been loyal, affectionate, and handsome".



Richmond's Longest Serving Town Clerk

Halsey P. Clarke was Richmond's longest serving Town Clerk, and probably enjoyed the longest tenure of any city or town Clerk in Rhode Island history.

Mr. Clarke was born in Richmond on August 18, 1818 to David and Susannah Perry Clarke. The Clarke homestead, long since demolished, stood where the Westerly Community Credit Union built its Richmond branch on Kingstown Road (Route 138). His great-great grandparents were Benjamin Perry and Susanna Barber, who had married on October 11, 1727. Susanna Barber's great grandfather was George Soule, listed as "a servant" and "21 years of age" when he travelled to this new world on the original Mayflower.

In a simpler time over a century ago, the local Hope Valley newspaper headlined that July 3, 1902, was *Richmond's Gala Day* where nearly everyone in town gathered on the grounds of the Clarke homestead to honor Halsey P. Clarke on his half-century of service to the town of Richmond. The Carolina Band provided the music. Ice cream and lemonade were in plentiful supply. Dignitaries from all over Rhode Island attended to honor Mr. Clarke, and to present him with the gift of a Morris chair.

The Reverend Warren Dawley offered these words: "Fellow citizens of the town of Richmond and guests, we come together today upon a rare occasion, for never before in the annals of this or any other town was a townspeople assembled for such a purpose. We come together today to celebrate in a simple manner the fifty first annual election of the Honorable Halsey P. Clarke to the office of Town Clerk of Richmond. Mr. Clarke's ancestors were among some of the earliest settlers of what is now the town of Richmond. He is the son of David Clarke, was born in 1818 on the same farm where with the exception of about ten years, he has lived all his life. His opportunities for an education were very limited. He attended only one term at the public school and a few terms at private schools. In 1852, Reynolds Hoxie, who was then serving his fortieth year as Town Clerk, because of the infirmities of old age, requested that he be relieved from further service and named Halsey P. Clarke as his successor. At the next election, Mr. Clarke was chosen to fill the office...and Mr. Clarke had a notable record of service. He attended every town meeting...since he was first elected and missed only three meetings of the Town Council in 51 years".

Mr. Clarke died at home on August 30, 1908, just two months after he retired. He was succeeded as Town Clerk by Oscar E. Barber. His wife predeceased him, but he was survived by six children and several grandchildren.

Carolyn Richard

A Mystery Still Unsolved

In late September of this year, Loren Spears, Director of the Tomaquag Museum, contacted our President, Richard Wolke. Loren had received an envelope from John Poss of Gastonia, NC. Mr. Poss sent Loren the empty envelope addressed to Moses P. Barber of Arcadia, RI. Since the Tomaquag Museum was in Arcadia, Mr. Poss assumed the Museum would be interested in the envelope. Lauren thought the Richmond Historical Society would be a more appropriate place for the envelope.

Who John Poss is, and how he came into possession of the envelope addressed to Moses P. Barber of Arcadia, is presently a mystery. Perhaps Ms. Spears can shed some light on this in the future? The envelope's postmark indicated it was sent from the Carolina Mills Post Office to Arcadia (The Barbers lived in both villages). In the latter 1800's, had it come from elsewhere to the Carolina Mills Post Office, it would have travelled on the Stonington-Providence Railroad to the Carolina Station in Charlestown. This station is just south of the junction of Routes 91 and 112. It would have been postmarked at the post office of origin, yet there was no date on the postmark. It isn't known when the Carolina Mills Post Office closed, and became the Carolina Post Office which existed in the General Store until 1951.

Regarding the Arcadia Post Office, there was a mill in Arcadia and the post office was housed in the mill building. The structure burned in the late 1930's.

Sometimes I have a moment of inspiration. Moses P. Barber was the cause of the latest one. Fortunately, we have a copy of Lauri Tarket-Arruda's wonderful book, "*Richmond, Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries*" in our house. Moses P. Barber is listed on page 197 of this amazing book. Moses' grave site is on page 65. His name, date of birth and death were listed, 1849-1900.

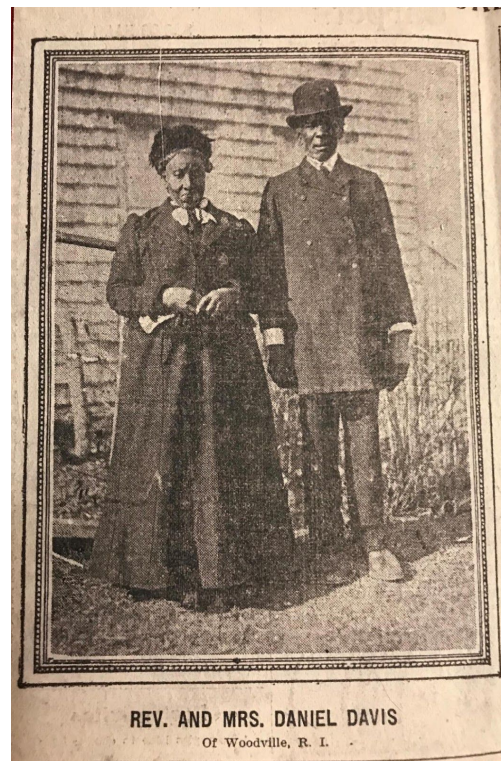
On a beautiful autumn afternoon, with Lauri's book in hand, Dick and I went to the Wood River Cemetery which is located off Rt. 3 by the Chapel at Wood River. There, in section 'O' we found the grave of Moses. There is a simple marker with no information about him. Moses could never have imagined that two strangers would go by automobile to search out his resting place. These strangers would still wonder who he was. Did he work in the mill, was he a farmer, or how did he live? What was the cause of his death, at what is now considered a young age? Finding his grave site opened a small door into where he had lived, but many remained closed and perhaps will never be opened.

Johanna Wolke

In Search of the Final Resting Place of Elder Daniel Davis, Part 2

In the previous newsletter, I described the circuitous journey to finally locating the grave of Elder Daniel Davis. In this edition, my fellow searcher Rev. Bettine Besier, Priest of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Alton, shares Part 2, where she and several congregants visited the cemetery to pay homage to the man who was an itinerant preacher at the church. Theirs was not an easy journey either! The following is mostly in Bettine's own words.

Kristen Chambers



On Sunday September 16, 2018, we made it out to the cemetery. There were eight of us who went, but I forgot to take pictures. I feel like our quest to get out there could be added to your entertaining chronicle of events. I thought that we were all set to go on that Sunday, but when I sent the reminder out to our parishioners on Friday, one person emailed me back and said that she had heard that the turf farm had just seeded out there and they didn't want anyone walking out to the site. So I called Tuckahoe, and they put me through to Jason (who is the Forman). And yes, Jason asked that we not go out there until at least the end of October because of the seeding.

Jason suggested that I contact Kevin Gilligan, and to ask him if we could walk out on his private road. Kevin owns Bucknam Road, next to the church, where the solar panels are going in. I didn't have any contact information for Kevin. But, I knew his father-in-law is a member of St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church in Hope Valley. I obtained his email and wrote to him about our situation. He sent me his daughter Kelly Gilligan's email. I sent her a request which she replied to on Saturday. Not only did Kelly give us permission to walk out to the cemetery, she even offered to let us drive on their road.

On Sunday morning, off we went. Never had I walked on Bucknam Road, where there are quite a few houses. At the end of the road is Gilligan's estate, but we had to continue past that point. There is an old air strip; finally we came to the cemetery. Located on the corner of the turf farm and Gilligan's estate, it was about a twenty minute walk. Once out there, we talked and prayed!

I was sorry to see it was a little run down. The pictures in Lauri Tarket-Arruda's book made it seem in better shape. Most of the old cemeteries are like that. Kelly Gilligan was knowledgeable about the people who are buried there.

I am trying to find someone in the parish who might want to be our historian. There is certainly a lot to learn!

Rev. Bettine Besier

A Place to Hitch Your Horse

My wife Roxanne and I lived in the village of Wakefield for thirty years. We built and moved into our dream house in Carolina in 2006. One artifact that I found in the basement of the Wakefield house was a galvanized hitching ring which I brought along to the new house. A perfect place was found on our new red barn/garage for mounting the ring. Having noticed that the ring was embossed with the name "J.W.Fiske" made me curious. Upon checking Google, I found out the following information.

Joseph Winn Fiske was a metalsmith, born ca. 1832 in or near Chelmsford, Massachusetts. When a young man in 1853, he moved to Melbourne, Australia where he manufactured and sold hardware and tools. When Fiske returned to Massachusetts in 1858, he opened a manufacturing facility where hardware including brackets, hooks, umbrella stands, garden figures, fountains, and weather vanes were made. In 1864, he moved his office and showroom to 120 Nassau Street, New York City; while keeping his factory in Massachusetts open. Ten years later, Fiske moved his office and showroom to the corner of Park Place

and Church Street. In 1900, Fiske incorporated into J.W. Fiske Iron Works. At this time, the manufacturing facility was moved from Massachusetts to Brooklyn, New York.

The company remained in the family for four generations, and after 1956 operated under the name J.W. Fiske Architectural Metals, Inc. located at 111-117 Pennsylvania Avenue in Paterson, New Jersey. Between 1987 and 1996, before it closed, the company manufactured steel and aluminum windows, entrance frames, and curtain walls. In the early days, the company manufactured several types of ornamental and architectural metalwork such as iron settees and chairs, stable fittings, statuary, crestings and fittings for mansard roofs, fountains, and aquariums.

Many of these early manufactures may be found on Ebay under "J.W. Fiske". It is worth a visit to the Ebay website to view the descriptions and prices that these early items command today. The hitching ring that I have (pictured) obviously belongs to the stable fitting category and, being galvanized (addition of zinc to form an alloy with iron) is designed to resist corrosion.

If one owns an old house or barn in Richmond, it might be a good idea to look around to see if there are any galvanized artifacts embossed with "J.W. Fiske". If so, you have something that is part of history.

David G. Johnson



Richmond Historical Society Membership Form



Email: rihiso@gmail.com

Web: richmondhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com

Facebook: Richmond RI Historical Society

Contact Information

Name

Street Address

City ST ZIP Code

Home Phone

Cell Phone

E-Mail Address

Yes, I want to become involved in the Richmond Historical Society.

We have many Volunteer opportunities. Listed are several areas of interest, and the types of activities they might involve. Please check off any areas in which you are interested.

Meetings: programs; speakers; refreshments

Fundraising: programs; speakers; events; sales; apply for grants

Newsletter: contribute articles

Bell School Museum: docent; displays; events; building maintenance

Archives: use Past Perfect software for accessions and genealogy; organize and maintain collection; research questions from public

Cemeteries: clean up; tours; flag veterans' graves

Education: sharing collections/donations; interact with local schools and organizations; present on a hobby or topic of interest

Publicity: newspaper ads; share on Facebook; post flyers; liaison with schools and organizations

Genealogy and local history: interview residents; research areas of interest

Social Media: contribute to website; 'like', share and comment on Facebook page

Additional Information

Feel free to share any additional information, i.e. special interests, hobbies, skills, previous volunteer work, etc.

Type of Membership (Please check only one)

Single.....\$10.00

Family.....\$15.00

Supporting.....\$25.00

Sustaining.....\$50.00

Lifetime.....\$250.00

Membership Dues (except for Lifetime) are payable annually in the month of September.

Mail completed application and check to:

Richmond Historical Society

PO Box 408

Wyoming, RI 02898-0408