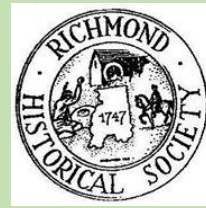


# RICHMOND REFLECTIONS

## The Richmond Historical Society Newsletter



Vol. 47 No. 3

September 2021

### Greetings Members and Friends of RHS,

September is membership renewal month, so watch your mail for your renewal application form and please return it as soon as possible! Currently you can sign up for membership for as little as \$10, which ensures that you receive our quarterly newsletter as well as reduced prices for events.

Membership levels include: Single \$10.00, Family \$15.00, Supporting \$25.00, Sustaining \$50.00, Lifetime\* \$250.00

As you know we have been unable to hold any fundraising events due to Covid, and with the continuing pandemic are unlikely to host any events until Spring 2022 at the earliest. Small nonprofits such as RHS are struggling. The Society owns two historical buildings, the Bell School and the Old Carolina Town Clerk building, both of which require ongoing upkeep. At this time the Bell School is in need of some major expensive repairs. We are applying for a grant through RIHPHC made possible by the passage of a bond referendum in March 2021, and will learn in December if it is awarded to RHS. I urge members of all levels to consider not only renewing your membership, but also if you are able, to make an additional tax deductible donation to RHS. Help us to continue our goal to preserve and share Richmond's colorful history.

Have you been bitten by the genealogy bug? Long-distance member **Jodi Brusseau LaCroix** and her cousin **Alex Amalfitano** have been bitten big time! In this issue they share how their paths crossed and the genealogical journey they are now taking together as they search for shared ancestors. You will be entertained by their story and will also pick up some helpful tips if you are interested in researching your own family tree.

**Dory Wagner** and daughter **Heidi** continue to keep the Bell School gardens spruced up. The school will be open to the public for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic on Thursday, September 23 from 5:00-7:00 PM, when the food trucks roll into Richmond. Items from several of the original 15 school districts will be on display. Membership forms will be available and a limited number of RHS cookbooks will be on sale for \$15. You can enjoy a variety of items from the food trucks and then stop in and say hello! ~~~ Kristen Chambers



9/11/2021- Twenty years later, we remember

## 2021 RHODY AWARDS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION ANNOUNCED



RI Historical Preservation  
& Heritage Commission

The Samuel Clarke Farm was summarized thus on the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: "The Samuel Clarke Farm occupies a 40-acre parcel of land at the southwest corner of Lewiston Avenue and Shannock Hill Road in southern Richmond. The farm contains a well-preserved wood-frame dwelling-house built ca. 1691 and enlarged/updated ca. 1700-1785, with some further alterations done ca. 1895-1937. Six outbuildings include a wagon shed with 18th century framing (altered in the early 20th century), a mid-18th century stone blacksmith shop; a ca. 1812-1818 wood-frame schoolhouse that was moved onto the property ca. 1844; and a wood-frame barn, corn crib, and privy, all built before ca. 1870 (the barn has several late 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> century additions). Various historic landscape features include a stone-lined dug well and root cellar, dry-laid stone walls that crisscross the property, and a Clarke family burial ground with graves dating from 1792-1950. The remainder of the farm consists of woodlands, wetlands, and open fields. The Samuel Clarke Farm exhibits a high level of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association." The form meticulously describes the history and significance of the buildings and property, and thanks to the perseverance of owner John Peixinho, the farm was subsequently added to the National Registry of Historic Places.

Preserve Rhode Island and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission announced the honorees of the 13th annual Rhody Awards for Historic Preservation on September 8. RHS member **John Peixinho** is the recipient of a Historic Preservation Project Award for his passionate commitment to preserving and protecting historic Samuel Clarke Farm in Richmond. His comprehensive approach has restored the early-period farmhouse, outbuildings, fields, and stone walls. John has been a strong supporter of RHS, and we congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition!



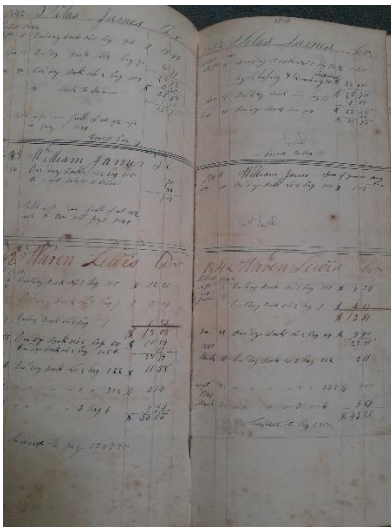
© The Westerly Sun

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

Richard Wolke and Denise Stetson

Thanks to Martha Baton and Laurie Arruda of the Hopkinton Historical Association and Langworthy Library, our Archives have recently acquired three valuable 19<sup>th</sup> Century documents.

The first was the source of the informative chapter on Lower (Richmond) Hope Valley authored by Gladys Segar in 'Driftways into the Past'. Ms. Segar used what she referred to as, "--one of the ledgers, dated 1812 – 1814, still survives to give us a picture of what everyday life was like in those days". In fact, she was referring to the Arnold Mill Company Store 'Day Book' that recorded sales, debts, and rent of the Mill employees. This valuable document was in the Lucy Tootell Collection in Langworthy Library and was kindly sent to us by Archivist Baton.



The second document is indeed a true Mill ledger (1841 – 1847). This ledger records the employees name on one page with all his/her debits (expenditures) at a Mill Company store including those from the Day Book, food, and rent, while on the opposite page is recorded his/her credits such as cash purchases and hours worked. The Mill is not identified but cotton is mentioned suggesting the Dow Mill. By checking the names of the employees, we may be able to identify the mill.

The third document appears to be a Day Book. It is inscribed, 'Byron S. Reynolds, Wyoming, 1888' and contains the Accounts of Reynolds and Allen from 1888 to 1910. Byron was born in 1854 and census records show him a retail and wholesale butcher until 1910 when he is listed as a farmer. We have not found information of a company listed as Reynolds and Allen. There are two possibilities as to the source of this book, either R&A was a private company, or these gentlemen were

involved with the Dow Mill Company Store. Regardless, there is much information for the researcher to be found in these documents.



Dow Woolen Mill

## A GENEALOGICAL SEARCH – AND AN UNEXPECTED SURPRISE

by Jodi Brusseau LaCroix and Alex Amalfitano



**Jodi:** I've been working on my genealogy on and off for approximately 35 years. First my mom's side consisting of Latondress, Landry, Clark(e), Bitgood, Peckham, Babcock, Saunders, and Worden. Then my father's side consisting of Brusseau, Church, Crandall, Kenyon, Larkin, Locke and Pfatt. Each side of the family took me deeper and deeper into the fascinating lives of ancestors that had lived so long ago. I had wanted to learn more about these people and not just their vitals. By learning about them, I could know them, not let them be forgotten. Because of them, I was here.

I found that my paternal grandmother's line, the Church's, went directly to the Mayflower. Richard Warren's daughter, Elizabeth married Richard Church. That Church name went all the way to my grandmother, Elsie. I learned through my maternal grandmother's line; the Clarkes went to the Revolutionary War; from Alva P. Clarke to Abel Peckham, my 5<sup>th</sup> great grandfather. Then I found through the same Clark(e) line I could trace to the Civil War from my great-grandfather Alva to John Foster Bitgood, my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandfather, who married Sarah Georgiana Clark(e). I was not only of French-Canadian descent with blood lines from Quebec, Montreal and Acadia (now Nova Scotia), but of English ancestry as well.

Here I was, a local girl from the Chariho area, having grown up in Richmond and Charlestown with these ties and when I retired from the Town of Charlestown, being the 28<sup>th</sup> Town Clerk, I realized I had served the town I partially grew up in, just as some of my ancestors had served. It was a very humbling experience for me. Oh yes, I was indeed a very local girl!

Now during this time, Ancestry came out with their DNA package, which I promptly took to see if I could find any matches. I did find a few relatives I'd lost track of on my mom's side and was so happy to have found them! My mom was also very local, she was born in the Columbia Heights section of Shannock. So many stories she had told about her life. I had other relatives that grew up in the area, working at the Carolina or Shannock Mills. So of course, I'm always interested in anything to do with the mills.

About two years ago, I was contacted by someone regarding a DNA match that he found. He said we share a relative. Our DNA also shows us as possible 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins. Well come to find out we sure are cousins!

**Alex:** Three years ago, I was gifted a DNA test kit from my partner. I sent in the test and when I received the results about 10 weeks later, I started to play around with my genealogy, mostly on my mother's side of the family because I knew very little about her side. I had information about my Italian side, the Amalfitamos and Romanellas. Now I was looking at the Hunt side which I found included Church, Jaeger, Greene, Tate, Woodmansee, Crandall, Kenyon, Larkin, and Locke. Family always said that my grandfather's lineage was German, but my DNA results said different. My mother's maiden

name is Hunt (very English). Working back a few generations I noticed my 3rd Great Grandfather, John B. Pfatt, was from Germany, coming to the States in the 1840s. So, **there** was the German connection. Then I started working on my great-grandmother's line. I knew her name was Grace Hunt, though I never knew her. I then started collecting all the vital records from town halls around the state to know more about these people. I found a connection to the Mayflower from my great-grandmother's line. I discovered her maiden name was Church. This was very exciting because that family is very well documented in several writings.



Finally, I noticed on ancestry there were DNA matches. Well, of course I started looking through the matches and I found Jodi Brusseau LaCroix. A French Connection? I looked at her ancestry tree. I sent her a message and said "How are you related to Lodowick Church?" I told her that Lodowick was my 4th great-grandfather. A day or two later I got a message on Ancestry from Jodi saying he was her 3rd great-grandfather. This really made my day. We started just messaging information back and forth on Ancestry then we started chatting via Facebook Messenger. I found out JODI'S grandmother Elsie, born in 1914, and MY great grandmother Grace, born in 1910, were sisters! *(Pictured, left)* I never knew Grace had a sister. No one ever really spoke much about that side of the family and never said Grace had a sister. After those few messages, the rest was history. Jodi and I still discuss why nothing was ever said. We both had found that Grace and Elsie did not get on too well and found a few possibilities as to why but it will really always be a mystery with no actual proof.

Jodi and I became very close studying our mutual family history and bouncing ideas and documents off each other. This made me grow into a very good amateur genealogist, and I joined lineage societies like SAR and General Society of Mayflower Descendants. Jodi, being a local Town Clerk, has a bit more organizational skill and always seems to "know someone" for contact purposes. Not many degrees of separation in Rhode Island.

**Jodi:** I never dreamed what meeting up with Alex would do for me! I found a kindred spirit. I discovered that I went to school with his uncle. His mother was just about 4 years ahead of me in school at Chariho. I even had a vague memory of his great-grandmother Grace. I sent Alex copies of all the Church line that I had, as well as any pictures. Via Facebook, I introduced him to my Aunt Pat, my grandmother's daughter. Alex wants to meet Aunt Pat but unfortunately, she has not been feeling well and that meeting has not happened yet. Alex has gone to the various cemeteries to find the gravestones of our relatives, taken photos and honored them, letting them know they are not forgotten. He even went to my mom's grave at White Brook and brought her flowers. I thought, wow, my cousin is such a good and honorable man. He sent me a picture and I cried like a baby.

This journey has been wonderful so far. We have found out so much. We found we are descendants of Colonel Benjamin Church, born 1639 in Plymouth Colony of Richard and Elizabeth (Warren) Church, died 1718 Little Compton. Elizabeth was the daughter of Richard Warren, who arrived at Plymouth on the Mayflower. This is where Alex and I have our direct descendancy to the Mayflower.

**Alex:** My great-grandmother Grace Church married Frederick Arthur Hunt of Potter Hill, Westerly, where the Hunt family resided from about 1849. The Hunt Family are also direct descendants of Richard Warren of the Mayflower through a different daughter. So, I've got several Mayflower connections. It amazes me how many Mayflower families within the first and second generation came to Southern Rhode Island and Connecticut.

Working on genealogy and finding somewhat lost relatives is worth all the hours of travel and research. I don't even want to think of the money spent on all the documents purchased. I know my research collection is huge (and was not free) and I imagine Jodi's is as well. Ah the price of one's passion in life! The most important part is that I've met so many people over the past few years working this. I can't wait to see what the future holds to see where my research goes. As Jodi and I have discussed in the past we have so many common ancestors that it was fate for us to finally find each other and be able to research our family history together.

**Jodi:** I am amazed at how many ancestors Alex has found that date back to just the Mayflower. He is like a bulldog once he gets his teeth in. We are always verifying each other's finds; we both are old school and want the documents in hand. We help on lines that are not in each other's direct lineage. It has been amazing! Alex has a true knack for this. And his memory- holy cow!

Here we are, two people, a "few years" apart but finding we should have known about each other. Then to know, to feel, there is this connection between us. The thought process, the humor, the capacity for finding trouble, or not!

Doing genealogy can be fun and frustrating and it can lead one down a wrong path if you are not careful. Always verify your work. Document it. Cite the source. I like to keep a hard copy of the documents as well as keep a digital copy. I also have two genealogy programs, Family Tree and Roots Magic. I have so many reference books and am always on the lookout for more! I know Alex has quite the collection as well. We say we really need to buy an old Victorian or old mill house with three floors. One floor for him, one for me and one for all our genealogy "stuff" where we can work. RI is full of old houses, surely, we can find one, right?

Oh, I can't wait until I get home where I belong. Finding our ancestors, honoring them, and as my mom would say, shacking the roads with cousin Alex. Searching and finding. Putting the stories together for future generations.

#### *About the authors*

*Jodi, the daughter of Paul Brusseau and Janice Latondress Brusseau Houston, was born and raised in the Chariho District and is a '79 graduate of what was then the Chariho Junior-Senior High School. Jodi has worked most of her life in the municipal field, first in South Kingstown then in Charlestown, eventually becoming Charlestown's 28th Town Clerk. She retired in 2011 in order to relocate with her husband to TN where he was being transferred for work. AND she still works municipal, being the City Clerk for a small community in TN! Now that her husband has passed away, Jodi is looking to come home as soon as she finds housing for herself and her daughter. She plans to continue pursuing her passion for genealogy and history with her cousin Alex, and to spend time with her family so, as her sister Hollie says, "We can get into trouble".*

*Alex is a lifelong Cranstonian, son of Alexander and Nancy Hunt Amalfitano. While his Mom hails from Hope Valley, many of his Hunt ancestors lived in the Potter Hill section of Westerly. Alex is obsessed with genealogy and all things historical. Ask him about his collection of Harper's Weekly Newspapers, old Farmer's Almanacs or even old Tax Books from various communities in RI. He enjoys gardening, cooking and antiquing. Alex enjoys spending time with his partner Gary, and is a happy Dog Dad to Daisy, the Corgi. He too looks forward to Jodi coming home so that they can collaborate on their various projects and find more of their ancestors.*

# History of Usquepaugh

by Virginia K. Arnold

USQUEPAUGH, a rural village nestled beneath Little Pine Hill (el. 360 feet), is situated on both sides of the Queen's River. It is partly in Richmond, partly in South Kingstown and near the Exeter line.

Most homes in the village were built around 1855. Earlier houses were built around a large central chimney and fire-places were used for heating and cooking.

Here and there, old stone foundations and cellar holes remain where once stood houses, mills or other buildings.

The KINGSTOWN ROAD runs through the village along nearly the same path as when the early settlement was under the rule of Britain's King.

The FRIENDS' BURYING GROUND was deeded by John Knowles of Richmond in 1755 for the use of the people called Quakers where they had built a meeting house and used part of the land for a burial ground. It was deeded to the town of Richmond on February 6, 1899. The meeting house was closed in 1844.

The QUEEN'S RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH property was "given to set a meeting house on" by Isaac T. Hopkins and his wife Susan and deeded August 28, 1844. The Queen's River Cemetery was founded later. The present church house was completed in 1918.

James B. M. Potter in 1836 built INDEPENDENCE MILL which made Jean cloth until 1866 when the mill burned.

The KENYON CORN MEAL CO. was established in 1909 when C.D. Kenyon bought the grist mill and property from Charles Hanson. It is presently owned and operated by Paul E. Drumm.

According to the Narragansett Register (1883) several important INVENTIONS originated in the area. Grant invented the felt hat body, Slocum the solid headed pin, J.P. Perry the sausage meat cutter, and Silas Mumford invented a burr picker for cleaning wool.

The one-room USQUEPAUGH SCHOOL stood on the farm just west of the Queen's River Baptist Church and Cemetery until the 1938 hurricane destroyed it. The joint school district of No. 4 Richmond and No. 17 South Kingstown was authorized by the General Assembly, October 1838. It was referred to as the Washingtonville School in 1840 and children were taught there as late as 1912. Later they went to West Kingston in South Kingstown or Beaver River School in Richmond.

The area is recorded as first being called Cottrells, then Robinsons and later as Mumfords Mills. The Post Office was changed to Usquepaugh after 1836 but before the Civil War.

Gershem Cottrell was deeded land in 1693 from Hall's or Knight's purchase or WOWOSKEPOG. Rowland Robinson purchased land from Cottrell in 1708 and a Mill is mentioned. Robinson bought a dwelling house and more land in 1711. William Mumford sold three tracts of land, a house and mills to Peleg Mumford in 1713 and nearly 300 acres to Mumford in 1739. In 1744, Peleg Mumford deeded land, a dwelling house and grist mill, bounded easterly by the river to Jerah Mumford.

USQUEPAUGH is likely misspelled from Usquebaugh, a Scotch word meaning "the water of life" and adapted since it sounds like Wowoskepog as recorded in Hall's purchase in 1664.

October, 1974

Virginia Arnold was a charter member of RHS and lived in Usquepaugh for many years. She wore many hats in the Society, including newsletter editor. Virginia wrote the chapter on Usquepaugh in RHS's *Driftways into the Past*.

### RECIPE FROM THE PAST

Wondering what to do with your green tomatoes before the frost hits them? Try this recipe from *Down Country Cookin'* published in 1995. The recipe was contributed by Eleanor Smith, a founder of RHS, who also included an amusing recollection of her husband's reaction to "real" mincemeat pie.

#### GREEN TOMATO MINCEMEAT

*Eleanor Smith*

After a decline of fifteen or twenty years, the nutritional value and flavor of home-canned foods is again being appreciated. Early in my married life, my mother gave us a jar of mincemeat she had preserved. I made a pie with the mincemeat and served it as a special treat. I asked my husband how he liked it. With a look of unbelieving disgust, he said, "It has MEAT in it!" "Of course it has meat in it," I replied. "It's a mince MEAT pie." He explained that *his* mother's mince pies had only fruit in them, *never* MEAT. It was a long time before I again attempted mince pie. A year or so later, I learned about green tomato mincemeat from a neighbor. I found a recipe and made it. It tasted exactly like green tomatoes. Dismayed but undaunted, I experimented until I developed a mixture that was satisfying to me, my husband, and our guests at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

- 1 quart chopped green tomatoes
- 2½ quarts chopped tart apples
- ½ pkg. currants 1 pkg. seeded raisins
- 1 pkg. seedless raisins (I now use golden raisins)
- 1 4 oz. jar each of: candied orange peel, lemon peel, citron
- 1 jar grape jelly or jam (essential to flavor)
- 1 tsp. each of: cloves, nutmeg, mace, allspice
- 4 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 pkg. brown sugar (2 cups)
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup vinegar

Run tomatoes through coarse grind plate of grinder. Place ground tomatoes in sieve to drain off juice until it begins to just drip. (All that juice is what causes that green taste.) Run apples through coarse grind, also. Combine all ingredients and simmer until thick. While this is cooking, wash and scald eight pint jars, prepare new lids according to manufacturers directions. Ladle boiling hot mincemeat into hot jars, leaving ½ inch headroom, cover, and process in a boiling water bath for 15 minutes. Remove jars from canner to a wooden surface. Check in 24 hours for completed seal.

Enough for 8, 9-inch pies.

Analysis is based on 7 slices per pie.

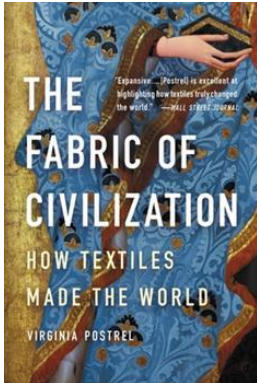
KCALORIES .....	85.30 Kc (4%)	CHOLESTEROL .....	0.000 Mg (—%)
FAT .....	0.204 Gm (—%)	CARBOHYDRATE .....	22.30 Gm (—%)
PROTEIN .....	0.410 Gm (1%)	SODIUM .....	59.00 Mg (3%)
PROTEIN: 2% CARBOHYDRATE: 96% FAT: 2%			

*Potpourri / 187*

**Book Review** by Kristen Chambers

*The Fabric of Civilization: How Textiles Made the World*

Written by Virginia Postrel



Richmond's economy, like many New England towns, for nearly two centuries was largely dependent on the textile mills that were made possible by knowledge of string and fabric passed down through countless generations. From the late 1800's to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, New England experienced a steady loss of the textile industry as operations shifted to the southern states or were outsourced overseas. Of the several iterations of textile mills in Richmond villages, the only one that remains both standing and in the business is Kenyon Industries, which is partially located in Charlestown.

*The Fabric of Civilization* demonstrates how the seemingly undramatic discovery of string and the development of textiles has been key to the development of human society. We've all heard of the Stone Age, so named because early humans learned to use stone for tools and weapons. Postrel states that period could as easily be called the String Age: "The two prehistoric technologies were literally intertwined. Early humans used string to attach stone blades to handles, creating axes and spears." When archaeologists unearthed stone artifacts, remnants of string and cord had long rotted away, and it was a long time before someone made the connection between string and stone, and longer still before physical evidence of twisted cord necessary to so many applications was discovered. "With it, early humans could create fishing lines and nets, make bows for hunting or starting fires, set traps for small game, wrap and carry bundles, hang food to dry, strap babies to their chests, fashion belts and necklaces, and sew together hides. String expanded the capabilities of human hands and built the capacity of human minds." The ability to create string is not the same as producing cloth, and the book delves into human tinkering with raw materials over the millenia – flax, wool, cotton, and in the modern era, synthetics- for a reliable supply of goods.

Postrel discusses contributions from around the globe in the processes of making fiber, thread, cloth, and dye. We learn how fabric was the impetus for technical developments including the origins of chemistry via the dyeing process; of the binary code and mathematics via weaving; of agriculture via selective breeding for plant and animal fibers; and of global exploration and economy via the exchange of dyes and textiles.

For most of humankind's existence, keeping a family clothed was an extremely labor intensive struggle. A large percentage of the daily chores performed by any woman (more so than any man) who was not in the upper class was consumed by spinning, weaving, dyeing, sewing, knitting, mending, cleaning, and all the various duties involved in producing and maintaining a family's clothing. The early textile mills removed some of the drudgery of having to create a garment from ground zero as now a person could skip the laborious initial steps and purchase ready-made cloth or yarn and jump straight to construction. Very few Americans today produce

their own fabric to hand- or machine-sew their clothing. Today we take for granted being able to buy inexpensive machine made garments at a store or online, and likely have drawers and closets filled with more clothes than we need.



Kenyon Mill

## **RICHMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Website: <https://www.richmondrihistoricalsoc.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RichmondRIHistoricalSociety/>

Email: [rihiso@gmail.com](mailto:rihiso@gmail.com)

Snail Mail: RHS, PO Box 408, Wyoming, RI 02898

### **RHS Slate of Officers**

President- **Kristen Chambers** - [krischambers1@gmail.com](mailto:krischambers1@gmail.com)

Vice President- **Richard Wolke** - [cloud11@cox.net](mailto:cloud11@cox.net)

Secretary- **Johanna Wolke** - [hansicloud@cox.net](mailto:hansicloud@cox.net)

Treasurer- **Merrill Moone** - [mkmoone@gmail.com](mailto:mkmoone@gmail.com)

Member at Large- **Dave Johnson** - [oneshadowridge@gmail.com](mailto:oneshadowridge@gmail.com)

Member at Large- **Denise Stetson** - [den.stetson@verizon.net](mailto:den.stetson@verizon.net)

Cemetery Chair- **Dory Wagner** - [dorwagg@aol.com](mailto:dorwagg@aol.com)

Archives - **Denise Stetson, Richard Wolke**

Newsletter Editor- **Kristen Chambers**

Proofreader- **Laura Orabone**