



PORTSMOUTH

Historical Society

February 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to our February Newsletter. It has been a very active time for the Historical Society as we plan an increased number of events for a very busy 2017. More information at our web site www.portsmouthhistorical.org

Past events: We had a full house for a very interesting lecture on the history of Prudence Island by the Island's Historian Joe Bains on 12 January. Also I spoke to the Portsmouth Rotary on the 17th and we signed up 10 new members for the Society. (See the video at www.portsmouthhistorical.org - Video Theater)

Future Events: I will be giving a lecture on **Thursday 16 February** titled: **'Guns, Boats, Bullets and Booze,' A History of Prohibition in Newport County.** at the Library (630 PM). Sign up at the Library 683-9457 for reservations.

We will also be celebrating **Portsmouth's Founders' Day** at the Portsmouth Town Hall on **7 March**. The original **Portsmouth Town Compact** (1638) will be on display. Come see this fascinating document!

On **9 March** we will be having our first **Portsmouth Trivia Night Contest** for High School and Middle School students at the Gulfstream Restaurant at Melville. The public is invited to come and learn about Portsmouth's great history.

Other Forthcoming Events: We are currently working on our annual exhibit for the Museum. Members of our curatorial staff each have their assignments and research is beginning. We will have an Open House for members on **21 May** and the Museum will be open for the summer and fall the next week. Our annual meeting and Board election will be on **19 June**.

Buildings and Grounds: We are finishing up the process for having the exterior of the Museum cleaned up and painted, thanks to a grant we received from the RI Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission. Also we are moving forward with plans to make our Museum ADA accessible. This is a long-term project but we are moving along. We are fortunate to have the assistance of Professor Melissa Hutchinson, from RWU, who is very skilled in ADA requirements.

New appointment: We are pleased to announce that **Nancy Crawford**, a member of our Board and Curator's staff has been appointed Curator of our Society with the unanimous vote of the Board.

We need docents! Docents are volunteers who serve as hosts to the public when our museum is open (Memorial Day to Columbus Day). We will provide training and our main requirement is having an interest in Portsmouth's history and in talking to the public. Being a docent is very rewarding and essential in keeping our museum open to the public. So please volunteer to be a docent. More information is available by email at phsdocents@portsmouthhistorical.org.

Portsmouth Glen Farm Museum Planned: With the new management of the Portsmouth Lower Glen Farm we plan to establish an **Historical Society Museum Annex** there. We have already recovered some ribbons and other artifacts from as early as 1906 from the farm. If you have any historical artifacts from the age of the "**Gentlemen's Farms**" or would like to help in establishing this museum, please contact us by email at phsinfo@portsmouthhistorical.org.

Historic House Survey: Plans are moving forward to catalog historic houses in Portsmouth. Gary Crosby, Town Planner and PHS Board member, is working on the History portion of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. It will include notation of our town's many historic houses. We will be assisting him and we always are looking for volunteers who can provide input to this survey.

Cemetery Survey: We are also getting ready to survey the historic large and small cemeteries in the town when the weather gets a little warmer. We will celebrate "**Rhode Island Historic Cemetery Restoration/Awareness Day**" on 13 May. We will have a lecture that day by Jacob Begin, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist at RIDOT, which will include a visit to a local historic cemetery. Stay tuned to www.portsmouthhistorical.org.

Volunteers: As you can see this is a critical year for member volunteer support for our upcoming events and field work opportunities. Please get involved, as we are taking on many more projects and facility upgrades over the course of 2017. Your active assistance with all of these projects and events listed above is vital to their success. Contact us at PHSinfo@portsmouthhistorical.org and let us know what you are interested in, or contact a Board member directly from the list on the website. We will be happy to provide you with more information. If you think our history is important, as we do, please join us by volunteering your time. We are grateful for your support.

Jim Garman
President

TAKING PRIDE IN PORTSMOUTH'S HISTORY