



# PORTSMOUTH

## *Historical Society*

### June 2018 Newsletter

**The Museum is Open!** After an extended painting job, including the exterior of the building and the first floor display room, the Portsmouth Historical Society looks wonderful. Although the building was constructed in the year 1865, it looks almost brand new! The painting was carried out with the support of grants from the RI Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission and the 1772 Foundation along with our own funds, thanks to our generous membership.

In addition, our **handicap ramp** at the west end of the building has been completed. This is a first step in making our entire building handicap-accessible. Plans are being considered for an elevator for the building and we hope to have that in the near future. Our curators have put up a great new annual display titled: **“A Slice of Portsmouth Life: Observations from D.D. Shearman’s Diaries”**.

There was a great turnout for the play **“Murder at the Coal Mine”** last week at the Common Fence Point Community Hall. Over 110 people attended this play based on an event that took place at the Portsmouth coal mine in the 1870s. The play was researched and written by two of our curators Gloria Schmidt and Marge Webster and performed by the **Portsmouth Community Theater** group. It was directed by Cindy Killavey.

**Upcoming events:** On **Monday 11 June**, Board member **Kathy Hickey** will lead our second **Historical Society Book Club** discussion at the Museum from 6 to 7:30 PM. The book to be discussed is **Elaine Showalter’s “The Civil Wars of Julia Ward Howe”**. The book, available at the Portsmouth Library, is a recent book discussing the life and times of one of Portsmouth’s most famous summer residents. She lived just up Union Street and she spoke from time to time in our own church/museum. An added treat to those who come will be a tour of our **“Julia Ward Howe Room”** in our museum, where we have a number of historic artifacts related to Mrs. Howe.

**Friday 15 June** we will host the 3rd grade from Melville School at the Museum.

**Monday 18 June at 7 PM** at the Museum we will have our **Annual Meeting**. This will be an opportunity for all members to come hear from your President and all of the Committee Chairmen report on the past year’s activities and the busy upcoming events. Also it will be an opportunity to see our new annual exhibit.

Please join us for the meeting and refreshments as we kick off the Society's 80<sup>th</sup> year of celebrating Portsmouth's wonderful history.

An impressive number of other activities are scheduled for this year. We hope all members will visit the museum on a Sunday afternoon this summer and bring your guests. This year we have extended our hours and are **open from 2-5 PM.**

**Volunteers:** We are still looking for Docents to host our properties on Sunday afternoons and, in addition, we are always looking for those who would like to volunteer to help us publicize Portsmouth's History in other ways. And local donations of Portsmouth or RI-related items are always accepted. We are especially interested in photographs, diaries, letters and other artifacts. Donors in May included George Thurston and Mary Trickey.

**A Message from your Membership Committee:**

It is time for membership renewals again and we have this reminder from our Membership Committee Chairman Gary Gump:

“Renew your membership now and avoid the rush! Your current annual membership ends on 31 May, and renewing early will reduce the cost of our membership renewal mailing. Renewals are accepted anytime and all will be for our 2018-19 year. Check our website: [www.portsmouthhistorical.org](http://www.portsmouthhistorical.org) for the necessary forms.”

Our Society membership continues to grow throughout the year. To accommodate this continued growth and to spread our membership dues across the year, the Membership Committee is recommending that the annual membership period be changed from the fixed period of June 01 thru May 31 to annual based on the month in which a member first joins the Society. For existing members there is no change and for new members their annual membership will be due each year in the month they joined. This change to the by-laws will be proposed and voted on by the board to apply to new members that join going forward.

Future lectures by your President:

6 June: The League of Women Voters: The Women's Suffrage Movement: The Local Angle”

20 June: Portsmouth Business Association: “Portsmouth Businesses in 1918”

30 June: Prudence Island Historical Society: “The Postcard Photography of O.E. Dubois (1908-1913)

Thank you for your support,

Jim Garman  
President