NORTH SMITHFIELD HERITAGE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
VOLUME VII ISSUE IX OCTOBER 2026

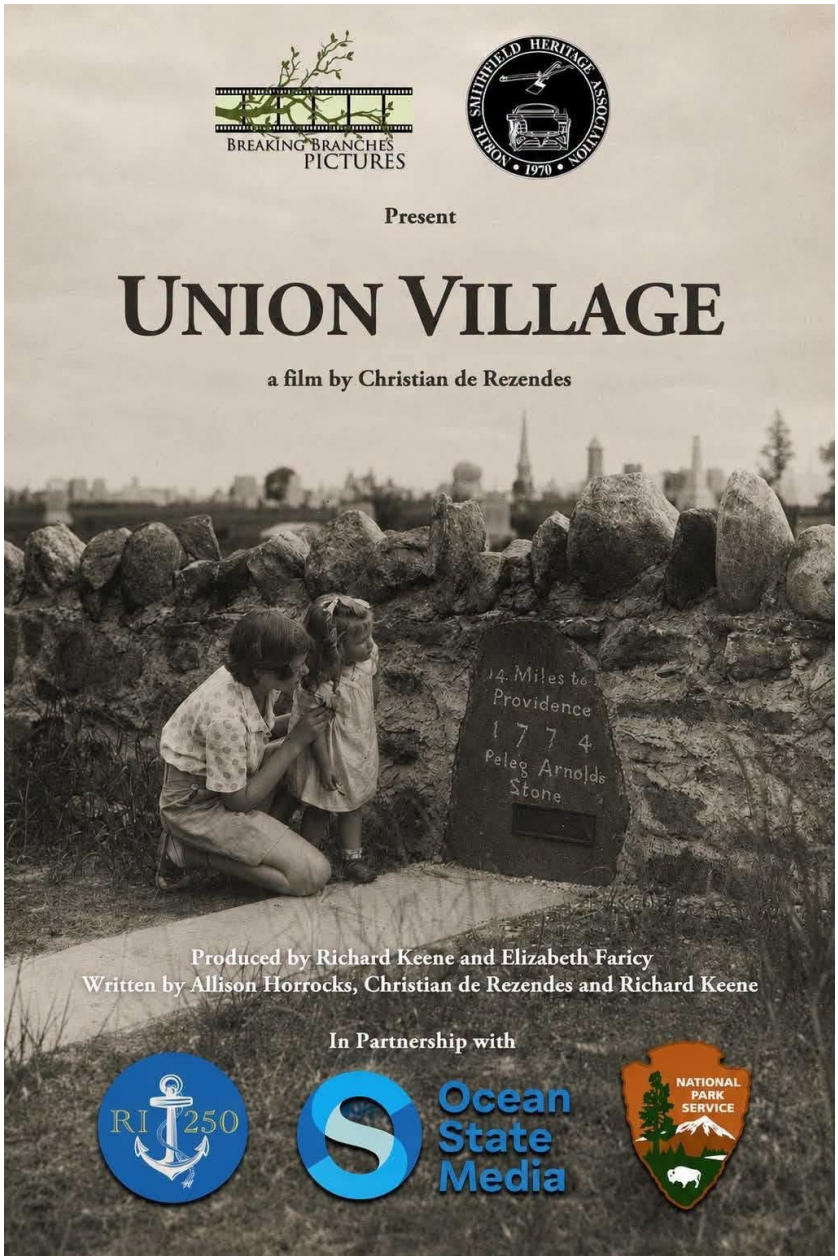


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We thank local filmmaker, Christian DeRezendes (Breaking Branches Films) and Allison Horrocks (National Park Service) for their work to write and create the documentary, “Union Village”. Without their extraordinary efforts, this film would not have been possible.

The half hour film premiered on Labor Day at the Woonsocket Museum of Work and Culture and recently on Ocean State Media (formerly RI PBS), The NSHA received grants from the RI 250 Commission and Ocean State Media to create the documentary that focuses on Union Village before and during the Revolutionary War.

https://watch.ripbs.org/show/union-village/



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Heritage Hall is located at 101 Green Street.

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Please join us for a NSHA

Dinner Party

& Annual Meeting

Friday, Dec 11th 630pm
Heritage Hall
101 Greene St,
Slatersville,





Includes an optional yankee swap & accepting donations for the food pantry

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We thank Scott and Ralph for helping to wash and wax the floors at Heritage Hall.



We thank National Park Ranger Mark Mello for conducting a historical cemetery tour in Slatersville on Saturday, September 12, 2026!



Thank you to Steve Biron for help at Hotchkiss cemetery. We were able to reset a granite post and get the gate working again . If anyone with experience working with concrete can join us we could use your help.



We thank Donna Millette for donating photos that used to belong to her grandmother Rowena McCullough.

The NSHA Archives are located at the Memorial Town Building, 1 Main Street, Slatersville.

Open every Monday through Wednesday from 10 am until 12 pm.

Please allow us to scan photos of family, friends and landmarks. It helps us to preserve our town's history!

Don't lose your family history! Please write names on the back of your family photos.

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Development

Annual Appeal 2026

Please help fund our historic preservation efforts. Make a tax-deductible 2026 donation! Renovations are nearly complete on the second floor of the Memorial Town Building, one of Slatersville's most iconic historic buildings. We just need to replace four large arched windows on the second floor and 9 windows on the first floor. Donations help significantly.

Donate via PayPal Giving Fund, or Venmo. You may also mail your cash or check donation to NSHA, P.O. Box 413, Slatersville, RI 02876. Or pay with a credit card at our headquarters at the Memorial Town Building (1 Main St) from 10 – noon on Monday-Wednesday.
We can also pick up donations at your door. Any amount helps enormously!

The North Smithfield Heritage Association Fund (Endowment)

Estate planning? Need to make a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA?

Make a tax-deductible legacy donation to the North Smithfield Heritage Fund to avoid paying higher taxes. The RI Foundation manages the endowment fund, helping it to grow every year.

Click on the link for more information:

https://rifoundation.org/giving/funds?q=north+smithfield+heritage+&s=3

Education Outreach

NSHA volunteers recently started a new initiative with the NS Middle School Gardern Club organized by teacher, Sarah Dionne. The club seeks to promote planting of native perennial flowers in local public spaces.
Next week they will begin planting spring bulbs!



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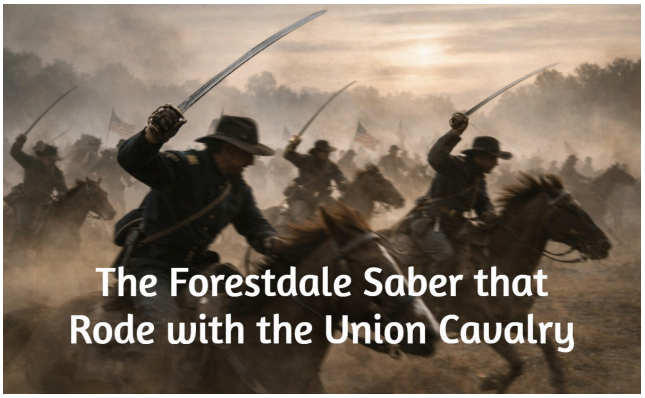
North Smithfield Heritage Calendars $10



Buy your newly printed 2027 NSHA Calendar now! These popular items feature beautiful photos of historic local buildings and landmarks. They only cost $10 and are available at Wright's Dairy Farm, Village Paint, Leeway Hardware, the Town Clerk's Office, The Memorial Town Building, the Forestdale School, and on our website. We will deliver locally for free!

Order yours today: **https://wix.to/kdcOaFM**

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Artifact of the month: By Al Menard

In 1971, Rev. George Harvey, pastor, historian, and co-founder of the North Smithfield Heritage Association, made an unexpected, yet remarkable discovery. While cleaning the Slaterville Congregational Church, a teenager named Larry Walter ventured beneath the pulpit into a narrow crawl space. There concealed in the shadows were a sword and scabbard! To this day, the reverend wonders, "who put it there and why?" We may never learn the answers to those questions, but bits of the sword's history have begun to emerge.

`The sword found in the church is a saber, which is a type of sword with a curved blade designed for swift, slashing cuts. Its story begins in the village of Forestdale. It was there in 1824 that Newton Darling established a scythe factory along the Branch River. The operation quickly became the most important industry in the village. Henry S. Mansfield entered the partnership and when Mr. Darling sold his interest, Eustis Lamb became a partner. Known as Mansfield & Lamb, the firm flourished and effectively owned the entire village.

When the Civil War began, every village and town felt its impact. In northern Rhode Island, families felt it most acutely as young men enlisted in growing numbers. Their absence meant fewer hands for farm work and mill labor, and the constant worry of sons serving in a perilous conflict.

By1860, the Mansfield & Lamb Scythe Company employed 100 men and produced 168,000 scythes a year. The firm's ambitions extended beyond farm tools; the company erected a large, stone cotton mill along the falls of the Branch River. It would one day become the Forestdale Manufacturing Company. In 1861, when the Civil War began, Mansfield & Lamb received a contract to produce sabers for the Union Army. After the first 10,000 were delivered, the U. S. Inspector General declared them the finest in the country. Two more orders of 10,000 soon followed, cementing the firm's wartime reputation.

Our sword is a U.S. Model 1860 Light Cavalry Saber. Where did this saber go before it was hidden beneath the church pulpit? It may have traveled with Union cavalry soldiers during the Civil War. Sabers like this one were used in fast horseback charges, dangerous scouting trips, raids, and for close battles. Although it may have been present at major battles such as Gettysburg or Antietam, its wartime history remains unknown.

The Forestdale saber is both an historical artifact and a tangible reminder of the human impact of war. Forged at the Mansfield & Lamb Scythe Works, how it came to rest in a hidden crawl space of the Congregation Church remains a mystery. Although its steel blade cannot recount its wartime journey, it reminds us that every object shaped by conflict bears traces of the lives it touched.
Title photo from www.lengendaryarms.com.



A scythe and a saber, forged side-by-side at Mansfield & Lamb in Forestdale, during the 1860s – one for harvest, one for war.

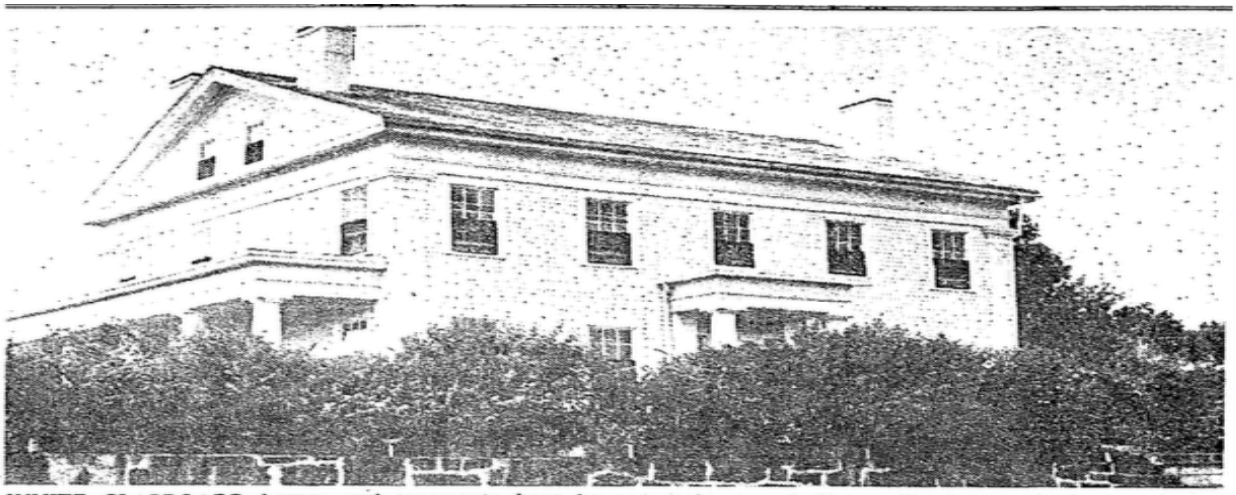
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Fifty Years Ago

This short article was taken from the November 1976 edition of the NSHA newsletter. It is interesting because not only does it recall that the Forestdale School was once the headquarters of the NSHA, it also mentions an article that appeared in the Providence Sunday Journal about Slatersville. This article, which appeared on page H14 of the Arts and Leisure section was published on October 24, 1976 and it is included below.

Signs Now Identify Heritage Headquarters

No longer will your headquarters appear anonymous to visitors to town, as in the case of the recent and otherwise well-documented "Tour of Slatersville" published recently in the ***Providence Sunday Journal,*** describing the building only as "the small red Victorian school house with elaborate white trim." Two signs, made and donated by Mr. Walter Karczmarczyk, have been put into place by the building committee, identifying both the building's former use as the Forestdale School and its present function as NSHA headquarters.



WHITE CLAPBOARD homes and tenements have housed residents of Slatersville for nearly two centuries.

Outing / By JEAN SANFORD

And, of course, there are mills in Slatersville

SLATERSVILLE — In 1806, 16 years after Samuel Slater founded America's first successful textile mill in Pawtucket, Slater and his brother John, built a cotton mill in North Smithfield. Around this mill grew the first textile mill village in Rhode Island, perhaps in the nation. The community, initially called Buffam's Bridge, soon became known as Slatersville.

Slatersville today is still largely composed of buildings that mill owners constructed and owned over the years — workers' houses, a church, commercial buildings and, of course, the mills.

To get to Slatersville take 146 north and exit at signs to Slatersville and Forestdale. Follow the signs along a road which runs beside the Branch River and it brings you to Slatersville's common via School Street.

The multi-leveled village is dramatically situated. A triangular grassy common with a white church at its head is bordered on one side by white clapboard houses. On the other side of the common, across School Street, the land drops steeply to the Branch River valley where the mill buildings are located.

Slatersville is one of two villages in Rhode Island that has kept its town common. This is a good spot to begin exploring.

The Congregatinal Church, built in Greek revival style by mill owners in 1838, was remodeled in 1895. It has a handsome Doric portico and its present octagonal spire replaces a slightly larger one toppled in the 1938 hurricane. Inside, its simple 19th-Century spirit is retained while being adapted to 20th-Century needs.

The common owes its survival to Henry P. Kendall, who purchased the mill and village in 1915 to create a model New England village — something that had never actually existed in Rhode Island. He had porticos and porches added to the bare mill tenements. Painted white with black trim, the center-chimney houses form a harmonious background for the green common.

Follow Green Street toward the town center. John Slater's house originally stood at the end of this block at North Main. After his death, it was moved next to the church and around 1845 his son-in-law, Elisha Bartlett, built the imposing Greek Revival house which now stands on the site. A side porch with Doric portico faces North Main.

The North Smithfield Town Hall across North Main, a brick neo-Georgian structure of 1920, occupies a dominant position on high ground in the center of town.

Steps lead down a steep slope to the next level of the village where two commercial buildings, three-and-a-half-stories high, loom over the small buildings around them. The nearest one was built in 1850. Its adjacent twin is a copy built in 1870. Both buildings have stone rubble walls faced on the front with brick. Monolithic granite piers and spandrels form the framework of the first floor.

Beyond, on Main Street, are more mill houses of an early date. Across from the commercial blocks, a low, stone structure, which may have once been used for mill storage, now houses the town library.

Next to the library, steps lead down to the canal and a town park which is being developed. Descend and follow the tree-shaded path to the right along the canal. Suddenly space opens to reveal the broad smooth expanse of the reservoir reflecting the golden hues of autumn.

Water pours over two dams. Old wooden gates to control the flow are still in place at the outlets to the canal and river. Water was vital to manufacturing cotton long after it ceased to be used for power.

Return along the canal path to Main Street and cross Railroad Street for a look at the working heart of the village — the mills which the water once powered. Standing near the entrance to the grounds, you can survey the mill complex composed of buildings from different periods.

On the edge of the Branch River on the right, the one-and-a-half-story, white clapboard building is all that remains of Slater's 1806 mill. Behind it rises a massive four-story stone structure built in 1826 with an arcaded belfry of a later date. An 1843 stone mill stands further back. On the left, beyond the willows bordered canal, is a long brick weave-shed added in 1894.

Walk across the Railroad Street bridge and turn right up the hill on Church Street to see St. Joseph's Catholic Church in the Carpenter Gothic style. It was built in 1872 to serve a French-Canadian population which had largely replaced the original English mill workers.

To see John Slater's grave, return to common, walk past the church and turn right beyond the school. Slater and his family are buried in an enclosure in the center of the cemetery.

Slater descendants owned Slatersville until 1900. When they sold the mills and village they gave the church building and common to the church. Slatersville continued to be both a mill village and a textile village until the mid 1950s when the Kendall family sold it. At that time houses and buildings which had always belonged to the mill owners were sold to individuals. The mills are now used by Glas-Kraft.

As you drive back to Route 146, pause to look at Forestdale, a smaller textile mill village of a later period. By the river below stands a great granite mill built in 1860, with a tower which was capped in 1885 with a shingle style belfry. The mill is connected by a bridge to a small Victorian mill office on the road. Along Main Street stand small double mill houses and a store and post office building (1858). As you drive out of town, note on the left the small red Victorian school house with elaborate white trim.

(This tour was prepared with the help of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.)

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NS 22, the Richard Mowry Lot, located 250 ft south of Greenville Rd (Rte 104) at telephone pole #164, has been completely cleaned and repaired! NS volunteers began this monumental effort by clearing away years of brush, leaves and poison ivy.

Next steps included cleaning headstones, repairing broken headstones and resetting monuments that has fallen. All work was done with care and respect.

The cemetery has also been transcribed so that the genealogical data that might have otherwise been lost to time and weathering has been digitally preserved. This will help future researchers to trace their family lineage.



Before



After

North Smithfield volunteers rule ... 6 years of grounds clean up and 3 summers of repairs at NS022! Check out the end result in the included video link:

https://youtu.be/-yMQBtjBP-w?si=KHAm7l2u4e2pmMEf

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NSHA Monthly Board Meeting

The Board of Directors will meet at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, November 10th at Heritage Hall, 101 Green Street. NSHA members are welcome to attend in person or via Zoom. **Members will recieve reports and an agenda with Zoom instructions.**

Conservation

We are looking for people to help on the Conservation Committee. Members will work with NS DPW to clear and mark local hiking trails, plant native trees and plants, and preserve local natural resources. Can you help? Contact nsha@nsheritageassn.com

Genealogy

Would you like help to conduct research on your family tree? Would you like to learn to use FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com?

Lynne Pelletier has extensive experience and access to several databases. Please contact nsha@nsheritageassn.com to coordinate an appointment.



We are looking for people to help on the **Arts and Culture Committee.** Members will collect and exhibit examples of local art. They will also help develop a program that displays local cultures. Any help is welcome.
Contact nsha@nsheritageassn.com

Ghosts and Paranormal Activity

Kara Pessia, a local spiritual medium, continues to help with spiritual research. Have you heard about or seen paranormal activity in North Smithfield? We would like to document it.

Anyone interested in joining the Paranormal Research Team please contact us at nsha@nsheritageassn.com.



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Veterans Day Ceremony

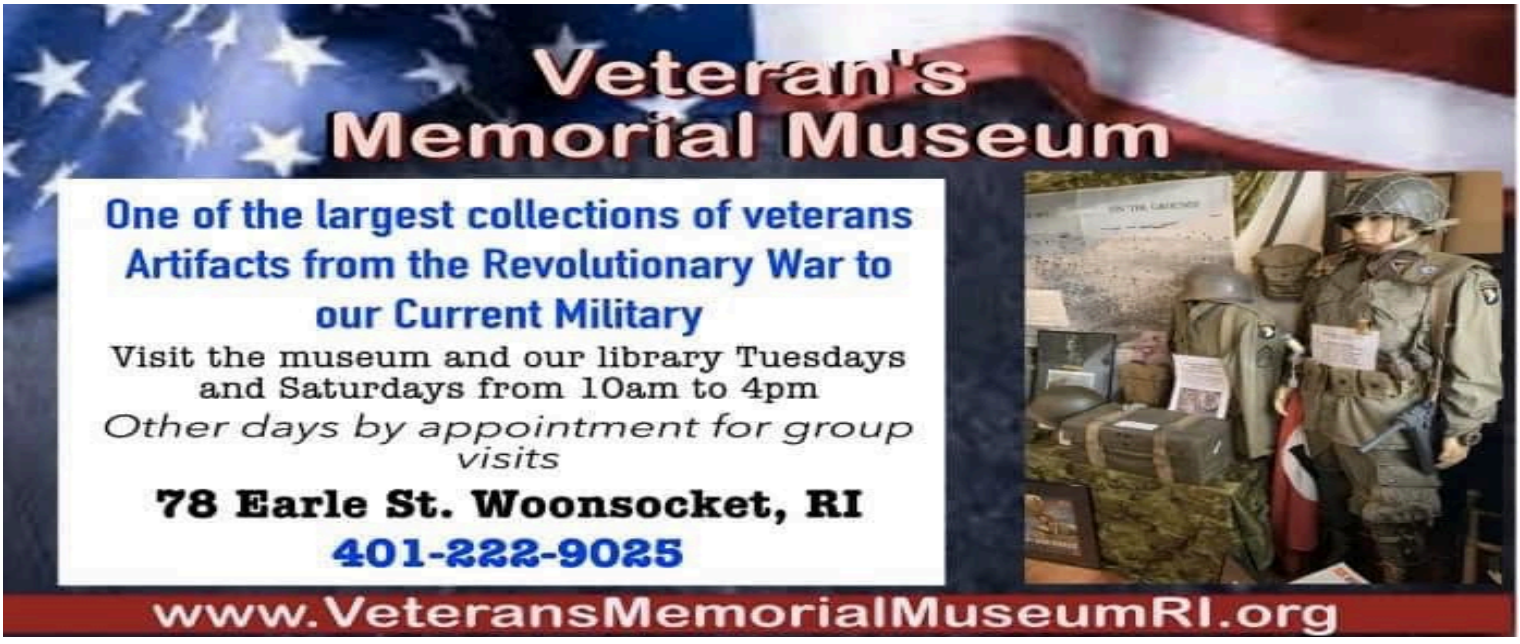
The LeClair Kozlik Logan Bassett VFW Post 6342 will hold its annual Veterans Day Ceremony on Wednesday, November 11, 2026 at Scouters Hall. The Scouts will participate with the Veterans in the ceremony. Local State and Town officials will also participate. All veterans and local Town residents are invited to attend. Following the end of the ceremony there will be a free collation. The ceremony will commence at 11:00 am, so please attend early.



Veterans Memorial Program

Nominate a deceased local veteran for honors at the Memorial Town Building. The VFW, local Boy Scouts and the NSHA will conduct a brief flag-raising ceremony in honor of the veteran as well as publish a brief biography of the honoree's military service in the NSHA newsletter. Families may later purchase the flag.

Family or friends may contact the NSHA to nominate a veteran.
nsha@nsheritageassn.com



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This granite stone was found and is sitting in the middle of ceremonial stones.

Indigenous peoples created stone bowls and grinding depressions using different techniques depending on the rock type:

Granite and Hard Stone Mortars (Bedrock Mortars / Metates): When working with hard igneous or metamorphic rocks like granite, they used a technique called pecking and grinding rather than chipping.

Pecking: They repeatedly struck the granite surface with a dense, hand-held hammer stone to fracture and pulverize tiny bits of rock grain by grain, slowly shaping a basin or hole.

Grinding and Pounding: For food preparation, bowl-shaped depressions (mortars) in granite outcrops were often deepened over generations through the continuous pounding and grinding of nuts, seeds, and acorns with a stone pestle.

The Research Team continues to locate and document local colonial, indigenous and other historical stone features.

Ron Lapierre is the RI Coordinator for the New England Antiquities Research Assn. (NEARA)

The Research Team generally meets at 6:30 pm at Heritage Hall on the second Friday of each month.
Please contact NSHA or just show up if you'd like to participate!

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The NSHA recently installed two new wayfarer signs. The sign that tells "The Story of Nipsachuck and Primrose" is located next to the NS School Administration Building at 450 Greenville Road. The sign that provides "A History of Union Village" is located in the Union Cemetery near the entrance at South Main Street.

Both signs were funded by a grant from the RI 250th Commission and the Town of North Smithfield. We encourage you to visit the signs to learn about our local history!



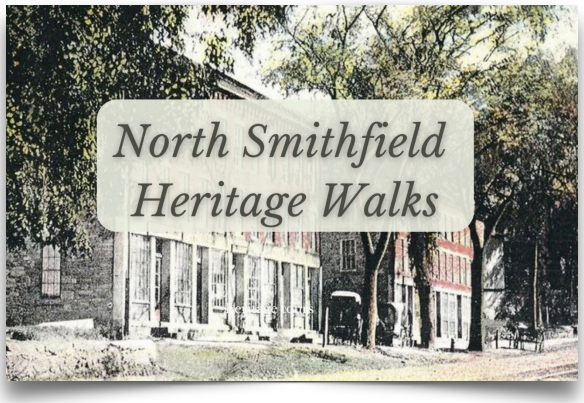


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A hardy group of hikers braved the chilly temperatures on Saturday, October 17th for a tour of Crook Fall Brook, NS 48 Oliver Smith Lot, Amasa Sweet Quarry, Obed Paine Homestead, Sheep Wall, Great Wall and the William Mowry Homestead.

November 21: Lower Crookfall Brook and Old Smithfield Road



We will visit the remains of the massive Pumphouse at Woonsocket Reservoir #1 and then hike along Crookfall Brook to the former Reservoir #2 (Tadpole Pond) and continue on to the 18th century dam on Spring Brook. Meet at 9:30 am at Aldi's parking lot at Dowling Village.

Notes:
-Tour dates and times are subject to change. Check the NSHA Facebook page or website for last-minute changes.
-Tours are generally rain or shine unless there's a downpour or a blizzard when we start.
-Participants are encouraged to wear long pants, comfortable hiking shoes, use insect repellent, bring water, and wear blaze orange during hunting season (Sept-May).
- See NSHA Facebook Page Events or contact nsha@nsheritageassn.com for more information.

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The hay rides were a popular attraction!



Many families braved the chilly weather for the annual event.



NSHA Archivist, Al Menard, represented the NSHA with artifacts and information.



Kids enjoyed having their faces painted.

We thank NS Parks and Recreation for sponsoring and Goodwin Brothers Farm for once again hosting the NS Fall Festival today!

We also thank Wright's Farm, Tim McGee, NS DPW, NS EMA, NSHA volunteers, Boy Scout Troop 1139 Slatersville, Texas Roadhouse, The Beef Barn, Mickey G's, Not Your Average Popcorn, Tammy and Paige Pessia, Gayle O'Donnell, and Cat Reyes for their participation and assistance.

The chilly weather may have affected the crowd but the hayrides ran steadily until 7:30 and everyone was in good spirits!

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We thank all who worked so hard to put our annual Apple Crisp/ Yard Sale event together. A special thank you to Doreen Gardiner for baking the delicious apple crisp!We also thank those who generously donated items to be sold at the yard sale and those who patronized the event. It was a very successful day!



Bargain shoppers got a chance to shop for merchandise kindly donated to the yard sale.



Jeanne sold delicious hot apple crisp to yard sale guests.



Christine and Beth sold NSHA merchandise and held tours in the Forestdale School.



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Pumpkinfest 2026-A perfect weather day!
Thanks to all who set up and took down booths, worked the booths, and to all that visited!







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Heritage Hall, 101 Green Street.



Memorial Town Building, 1 Main Street.



Forestdale School, 190 School Street

We need volunteers to help paint picket fences at the Forestdale School and at Heritage Hall. A community service volunteer recently completed part of the fence at Heritage Hall.
Please contact us at nsha@nsheritageassn if you'd like to help. Hours are flexible!

Help Wanted!
Looking for volunteers to help with our maintenance team. The team makes minor repairs to the three historic buildings and grounds. Please contact us at nsha@nsheritageassn.com if you'd like to help out!

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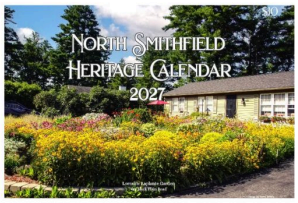
This month's mystery photo comes from an album donated by the Remas family who said the album belonged to someone in the N.S. Band during the seventies. Does anyone recognize these majorettes? What year was this photo taken? If you know, please contact us!

The NSHA often receives photos without any type of identification which is why we post them here.
Please help us to identify them for our archives!

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Forestdale School

190 School St, Forestdale, RI

Join us for Open House Hours
Every 1st + 3rd Friday , 12-3pm
&
Wednesdays 10-230pm
Starting Nov 4th

We offer a wide range of merchandise including 2026 calendars, books, maps, puzzles, ornaments, birdhouses, and much more! Also visit our online store at https://www.nsheritageassn.org/shop
Shipping & handling fees are now $10 minimum. We will deliver locally for free!

You Can Help!!

Join: Membership costs just $20 each year! ***No commitment required!*** **https://www.nsheritageassn.org/membership**

Volunteer: Help with any of our ongoing activities and events. No need to make a steady commitment. We appreciate whatever time you can spend with us!

Donate: Our Annual Appeal runs all year long. We accept local artifacts. We appreciate whatever you give!

Share: Share this free newsletter with family and friends. Encourage them to subscribe. Only shared history can preserve our heritage!

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We welcome new members: Mike McGinty, Rose Zariczny, And Robert Ross! Our membership now stands at 223 including 69 life members and 8 students. Some members live as far away as NH, WA and AR.

You can become a member by filling out the application found on our website: https://www.nsheritageassn.org/membership as well as paying $20 dues.

Dues

$20 Annual Dues were due on **January 1, 2026**. 24 **members' dues are in arrears.**

- Seniors over 75 and students pay no dues.
- Make a $100 or more donation and get a complimentary one-year membership.
- Make a $500 or more donation and get a complimentary Lifetime membership.
- Former members can renew their membership at any time. We value your support! Your dues help significantly to fund our local preservation activities.
- Pay via PayPal, Venmo, or check. Indicate 2026 Dues on the memo line.

Please contact us asap if your status has changed (over 75) or if you are unsure of your status.

Your dues are vital to our preservation efforts. Please renew today.

We thank our wonderful members for their vital support!

NSHA Payment Options

1. **PayPal Giving Fund: search for nsha@nsheritageassn.com, select "Donation" and type the purpose for the payment on the memo line.**
2. **Venmo: Open the Venmo app and search for North Smithfield Heritage Assn@ NorthSmithfieldHeritageAssn. Tap on Pay, enter the dollar amount to be paid, and fill in the field what's it for (ie., dues, merchandise, donation etc). Tap on Pay and select your payment method you have established in the Venmo app.**
3. Give **cash or check**. Make checks payable to "**NSHA**". Note "**Dues, Annual Appeal or Merchandise**" on the memo line.
4. **Mail Checks to NS Heritage Assn, P.O. Box 413, Slatersville, RI 02876.**
5. **We will also pick up payments and deliver purchases at your door if you live locally. Contact nsha@nsheritageassn.com or call 401-376-2927.**

venmo

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Please follow us!
https://www.instagram.com/nsha1970/

Followers: 384

Visit our Facebook Page to learn about our events and activities. Get acquainted with some of our members and supporters. Like and share with friends andfamily! www.facebook.com/northsmithfieldheritage

Followers: 2,057
Views: 32,975

We thank Julie Tilley for making posts to all of our social media platforms. We continue to see steady follower growth!

Website: 576 site sessions in the last 30 days.
NSHA Newsletter Subscribers: 1,775
Visit our website! Read past newsletters, learn about our organization as well as our many ongoing historic preservation activities. https://www.nsheritageassn.org/
To join our mailing list, simply contact us at nsha@nsheritageassn.com or 401-376-2927

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This newsletter is published by Lynne Pelletier. The editorial team includes: Beth Faricy, Linda Rawlings, Al Menard, Beth Newberry, Julie Tilley and Rich Keene.

Please share this free newsletter with family and friends!!

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