

# REHOBOTH ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

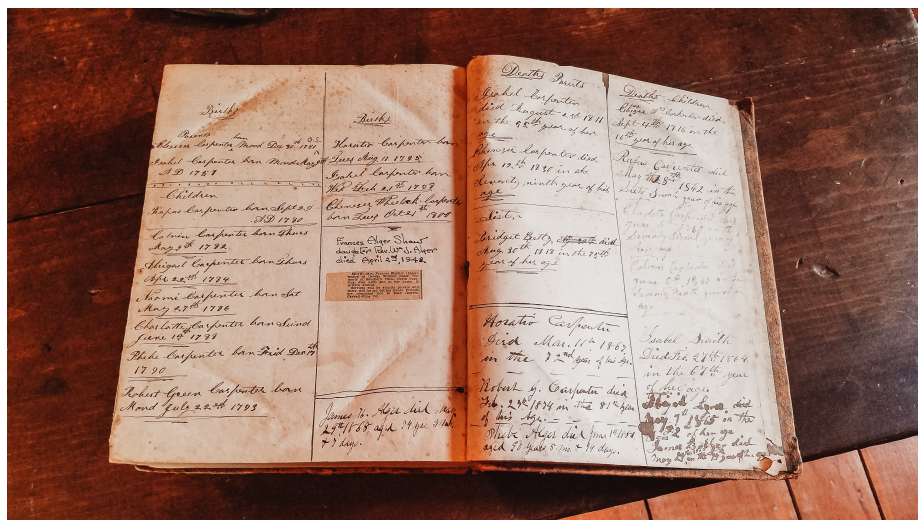
Carpenter Museum  
Blanding Library  
Goff Memorial Hall  
Arts in the Village  
Cultural Events



SUMMER 2021  
RAS Newsletter

## CARPENTER FAMILY BIBLE

Few three dimensional artifacts are as helpful to genealogists as a family Bible. The book typically listed the births, deaths, baptisms, and marriages of family members and was handed down through generations. For centuries religion was the center of American families and the family Bible the most sacred object of a home. Information was written, by hand, into the front or back pages of the book for future generations to reference.



*This 18th century Carpenter Family Bible is a recent acquisition into the Carpenter Museum's collection. It comes from Sally Shaw Lobkowicz of Maine who is related to the Rehoboth Carpenters through Phebe Carpenter who married James Alger which is noted in the Bible (not visible in photo).*

The first entry in this book appears to be the birth of Isabel Carpenter born on Monday May 9, 1757. The inclusion of newspaper clippings and even photographs is common. Note the newspaper death announcement of Frances Alger Shaw from 1942 on the same page as Isabel's birth announcement 200 years earlier. Family Bible information is often scattered and incomplete but they remain a valuable resource for researchers.

## UPCOMING MUSEUM EVENTS

### REHOBOTH MILKMAIDS SOFTBALL TEAM EXHIBIT

**Now Open**

The Museum is open the 1st Saturday of the month and every Tuesday and Thursday from 1 to 4 p.m.

### LECTURE SERIES

**Tuesday, June 22 at 7 PM**

Brenda Sullivan of the Gravestone

Girls Zoom Lecture

**Summer-Fall Series**

Tobey Site Archaeology Dig

Hornbine School House

Visit our website for full details:

[www.rehobothantiquarian.org/carpenter-museum/2021-speaker-series](http://www.rehobothantiquarian.org/carpenter-museum/2021-speaker-series)

### CRAFTERS' MARKETPLACE

We are excited to announce smaller, curated artisan shopping events to be held once again at the Museum and in Goff Memorial Hall.

**October 23, 2021**

### ARTS IN THE VILLAGE CONCERT SERIES

**Coming Back in 2021**

[rehobothantiquarian.org](http://rehobothantiquarian.org)

*The RAS preserves, promotes and enhances the significant historical, educational, and cultural assets of Rehoboth, Massachusetts*

# WELCOME SUMMER 2021

*By Rebecca Smith, RAS President*

My column last fall ended with the *Mayflower* heading into the Atlantic at the beginning of hurricane season, and we all know what awaited those aboard: landing in the wrong place in the teeth of winter; several months of building houses and digging graves while freezing, hungry, and sick; fifty per cent mortality; and, finally, the hopefulness of spring.

As we emerge from our comparatively bearable year of Covid, the hopefulness of spring is no less welcome! Our buildings have re-opened, volunteers are returning, and programs and events are being planned.

The gardens at the museum and library have been weeded and mulched and are full of blooms, and some wonderful landscaping is going on at Goff Hall. Many thanks are due to RAS volunteer and Rehoboth Garden Club member Susan Gerbi McIlwain (pictured right) whose energy and focus turned up grants, donations, and helping hands to transform the area near our new walkway.

***Come and enjoy – I hope to see you soon.***



## SUMMER-FALL LECTURE SERIES AT THE MUSEUM

The Carpenter Museum is excited to announce another summer-fall speaker series! This year we have a stellar lineup of speakers that will cover topics ranging from graveyards to DNA. Along the way we'll also learn about the Tobey Site archaeology dig, and Rehoboth's historic one-room Hornbine School House.

The first lecture will be virtual via Zoom on Tuesday, June 22 at 7 p.m. with Brenda Sullivan of the Gravestone Girls who will take her audience on a virtual cemetery tour beginning in colonial New England burial grounds.

Brenda has been immersed in gravestone art, history and symbolism for more than 30 years. An education in Art History and restoration led to the creation of Gravestone Girls and a mission to "Keep Our Dead Alive" through educational lectures, tours, classes and creation of New England gravestone replicas.

Participants will learn why we have cemeteries and gravestones and how American styles and art evolved over almost 400 years. Registration for this virtual 90 minute program is free for RAS members and \$5 for non-members. Register online: [www.rehobothantiquarian.org/carpenter-museum/2021-speaker-series](http://www.rehobothantiquarian.org/carpenter-museum/2021-speaker-series)



## HERITAGE AND HISTORY IN REHOBOTH

*By Lende McMullen  
Dyer Research Center Manager*

There's history behind the Grear property. Yes, that's the property located near the Veterans' Memorial Gazebo that town voters at annual town meeting in May agreed to purchase for preservation. Nicely proximal to Redway Plain, the Victorian aged trolley track pathway, and town-owned Ephraim Hunt Ministerial Lands, this property expands and preserves the essence of Rehoboth and its endearment for open space and nature.

As it encompasses 36+ acres of open field it is also reflective of the life belonging to previous owners and farmers, Ralph Horton and his father, Frank.



Frank Horton, (1874-1960) along with his wife, Ella and son, Ralph (1897-1986) lived in the house across the street from the Rehoboth Congregational Church at 138 Bay State Road and operated a dairy farm of about 30 partially registered Holstein cows. Ralph, later took over the farm and expanded its operation to about 100 cows, when after church on Sundays, a family or two might wander over after church to visit that pristine farm. The kids would pet those slurpy cows' noses and mouths easily and wipe their hands on their Sunday best without giving it a second thought.

The property was sold and the barn converted to Fletcher Preparatory School in the late 1960's where stalls for the cows were converted to classrooms and offices. By 1972, the school and property went into receivership and was sold to Malcolm and Clarice Grear who transformed the school into a spacious, contemporary home for themselves and their 4 children. Their backyard not only became a sanctuary for the family and their pets but also extended north and west toward a pond, rolling hills, and open fields reflecting the rural life the Grear family enjoyed. Parallel to Route 44 the acreage ends across from the Redway Plain and today's Veterans' Memorial Gazebo, much of it hopefully to become town land set aside for preservation.

Born in Kentucky, Malcolm Grear (1931-2016) taught at RISD and established Malcolm Grear Designers (MGD) in Providence. Established in 1960, the firm is internationally known for its visual identity and design logos. Locally, his designs include those for The Wheeler School, Trinity Repertory, and New Bedford Whaling Museum.

Malcolm and Clarice Grear sold their home in 2012 and moved to Wakefield, RI. Clarice remained owner of the 36+ acreage until her passing in February this year. While her estate remains in the hands of heirs, their willingness to convey the property to the town is much appreciated as it reflects the esthetic values and heritage known in Rehoboth.

# BLANDING LIBRARY

## GOFF MEMORIAL HALL

Summer means Summer Reading activities and we will have a lot for everyone to enjoy this year, especially after not being able to share in-person activities last year. As you can imagine, we are delighted to offer programs this summer, both outdoors and inside the Library while minding social distancing.

We will have our schools' suggested reading lists on hand, and library staff members are eager to help you find something on or off the list to enjoy.

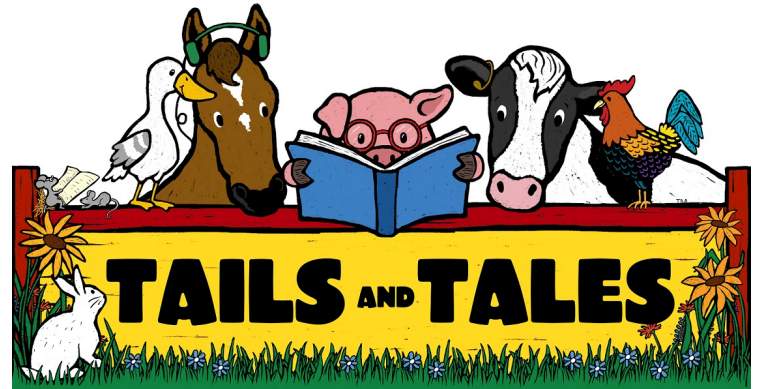
New this year are special Book Buddy packs for Blanding Library's younger patrons under 5 years old. Our hope is that reading will become a lifelong pleasure for all!

A new Story Walk will feature Mirra Ginsburg's book, *How the Sun Was Brought Back to the Sky*, illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey. Be sure to visit the Library's front garden to enjoy this sunny tale displayed throughout the summer months.

In addition to the highlights of our summer activities presented by our Children's Librarian Cathy Charbonneau, there will be an online program for curious people of all ages, "When Objects Talk Back," on June 21 at 6 p.m.

The Friends of the Blanding Library are sponsoring a Mobile Mini-Golf afternoon Saturday, July 10.

The Paranormal Couple will dive deep into the phenomena of Haunted Objects, exploring the origins and showing some of the alleged haunted objects they have recovered during their paranormal investigations, and sharing the creepy yet intriguing stories that accompany each item. Register for this free program at: <https://tinyurl.com/453um3t2> and a secure link will be emailed to you before the event. This program is presented by The Southcoast Six, a group of local libraries collaborating to bring interesting events and activities to our library patrons.



The Summer Reading Program theme is "Tails and Tales," supported by the Massachusetts Library System, the Boston Bruins, Boston Pride, and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Summer reading packets will be available for patrons 5 years and older, filled with a reading log, stickers to track reading, a starter Brag Tag, reading lists, and more! Suggested reading goals will be listed, however parents are encouraged to adjust them to fit the age, reading ability, and "wiggliness" of individual children.

During the week of June 20 - June 27, young patrons may stop in or call to reserve a new Take & Make activity, featuring supplies to create a fairy/gnome house for your home garden. Only offered during this week in limited numbers, so be sure to stop by and pick one up!

The Rehoboth Cultural Council is sponsoring both Magician Scott Jameson in July and Jungle Jim's performance in August. All three of these events promise fun for the whole family. Details of dates, times and reservations for these programs will be posted soon in our online calendar: <http://www.eventkeeper.com/mars/xpages/B/BLANDING/ekp.cfm?curOrg=BLANDING>

Other summer events will feature Miss Joyce's Adventures, Newton's puppets, author/illustrator Nancy Cote's virtual stories, and more! All listed on our website calendar and Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/Blanding-Public-Library-Youth-Services-112545290475311>.



# HISTORY OF THE REHOBOTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

*On November 29, 2021, the Rehoboth Congregational Church will celebrate 300 years of service in Rehoboth. Former Board Member Sue Withers gave a history of the Church during the RAS Annual Meeting on May 5. The following is condensed from Sue's presentation.*

The first meetinghouse in present day Rehoboth was built on Lake Street and was named Palmers River Meeting House. The original organization consisted of the pastor, Rev. David Turner (a physician) and ten members (all male). They were called Second Precinct Congregationalists.

In 1773 the members of the Palmers River Church voted that "the old meetinghouse should be sold or pulled down provided that a new one can be built upon the plain near Timothy Redways." The new church became known as the "Yellow Meeting House" and was built in the middle of what is now the Rehoboth Village Cemetery on Bay State Rd. next to Redway Plain.

The "Yellow Meeting House" had an adjoining area set off as a burial ground. The site included a stable, a cemetery west of the Meeting House, and a powder house.



The building measured 45 feet by 50 feet. It had no bell or steeple and served as both church and town meeting house. Rev. Robert Rogerson and his successor, Rev. Otis Thompson, ascended one of the two spiral staircases and preached beneath a sounding board to the worshippers. There were closed pews in the building and a gallery across the front and two sides. The right to occupy certain pews was sold at public auction. The singers sat in front and behind them, high up in either corner, were seats for Negroes, men in one corner and women in the other. It was during this time that the church school (called Sabbath School) was organized by the church pastor "in the face of no small opposition." There was no heat in the building until 1819 when a stove was installed. Church attendees brought along hot bricks, stones or foot warmers or sat and shivered through the service. Winter services lasted about one and a half hours – with summer services lasting two hours. **Continued on next page . . .**



## Conclusion of Rehoboth Congregational Church History

This Meeting House was pulled down in 1840 after the present Congregational church was built in the village. The "Yellow Meeting House" had served the town for 66 years.

In 1839, following much argument, the present building was erected on Bay State Rd. on land donated by Jonathan Wheaton. A man named Myron Goffee gave the church a lot adjacent to the Wheaton land. The cost to erect the building was \$3800. The building stands where Wheaton's barn once stood and several church members were fearful that the barnyard odor would permeate the building. Thus it was called by some as "The Church in the Barnyard."

This resulted in some of those disgruntled members leaving the church and joining with others to organize the Union Baptist Church in the building now owned by the Anawan Grange at the intersection of Routes 118 and 44. In November of 1839 there was a public auction for the sale of pews in the Bay State Road church. They were sold at prices ranging from \$35.50 to \$116.

In 1906 the church building was raised, and a basement added which provided office space and space for other activities. Also at that time eight stained glass windows were installed in the sanctuary.



The Phipps Studio of Boston was selected to create the windows. According to a letter from owner Horace Phipps, the artist who made the original windows was a Mr. Charles Webb of New York "coming from the Tiffany Company."

The principal benefactor for the creation of several of the stained glass windows and the church "renovation" was Leonard Carpenter Bliss who gave \$2,000 toward the project. Members of the Goff, Bowen and Horton families also contributed to the cost of the windows. Most donors were descendants of Thomas Bliss, one of Rehoboth's incorporators in the 1600s.

The Rehoboth Congregational Church, with a current membership of 375 people, has remained an integral part of the Rehoboth community for almost 300 years.

## RAS ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW

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On May 5, over 40 members attended the 137<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Rehoboth Antiquarian Society held over Zoom. Board President Rebecca Smith opened the meeting. Wayne Taylor, Treasurer, noted that despite the pandemic, RAS "continued to operate on a sustainable basis ... and continued to provide our set of services to the Rehoboth community."

The directors of the Carpenter Museum and Blanding Library also gave reports. Hank Coleman was welcomed as a new trustee with Kylee Hitz stepping down. Many thanks to Kylee for all her years of service!

At the conclusion of the meeting, former town clerk and RAS Board Member Sue Withers provided a history of the Rehoboth Congregational Church, which is celebrating its 300-year anniversary.