

Rehoboth Antiquarian Society Magazine

Carpenter Museum • Blanding Library • Arts in the Village

2022



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Letters to the Members

To the members and supporters of the Rehoboth Antiquarian Society, thank you for being with us in 2022. Covid is not yet behind us, as we hoped a year ago, but we have had a successful year nevertheless and look forward to the new year with optimism.

Both the Blanding Library and the Carpenter Museum reopened to the public. Masks are required, and nearly all patrons have been courteous about this. Programming has been largely online, but we also enjoyed take-home crafts and outdoor (and even some indoor) in-person programs. The Museum's craft show and the library book sale were highlights in the fall. Sadly, the Arts in the Village series has not yet resumed, but we have hopes for next year.

We welcomed new members and volunteers; and also mourned some who died this year. Our

Board saw changes as well. Trustee Hank Coleman resigned for health reasons. Helen Litterst has been appointed to his place, to be confirmed at the Annual Meeting in May. We also lost Trustee Ted Ballard, who died just before the holidays. Ted was a conscientious, long-time volunteer for the Town as well as for the Antiquarian Society and is missed.

It is hard to say what will be possible four months from now, but, we hope to hold our Annual Meeting in person on May 4. Watch for more information about that, all our other activities, and the annual scholarship. Thank you all for being part of what we do; I hope to see you soon.

Rebecca Smith, President
president@rehobothantiquarian.org

Thank you, Members, for all of your support over the past year. There were many challenges; but, we were so happy to see some of you in person during our 2021 Speaker Series, and at the triumphant return of the Crafter's Marketplace.

This year the Marketplace was brought back to where it all started, in the Rehoboth Village. We hosted over 30 vendors in three locations and saw hundreds of visitors shop safely for locally made wares.

Both the Marketplace and Speaker Series will return this year. Three exciting new speakers will be hosted by the Carpenter Museum. In addition to these programs we will be bringing back an old favorite, Strawberry Festival! Look for information about these and other programs on our website, on social media, and in your email inboxes through our monthly news eblasts, and quarterly newsletters.

The Carpenter Museum and E. Otis Dyer Jr. Research Center continue to develop a collection of artifacts and books while providing tours and research guidance to the community. We welcomed new Assistant Director Chelsea Johnston to the Museum staff and are so excited for what she brings to our team. For you RAS members, Chelsea is creating another Members Only event for this spring. With the help of a Rehoboth Cultural Council grant we are also planning a brand new historic food program that is hands-on in our very special open hearth kitchen.

We look forward to seeing you again!

Danielle DiGiacomo, Director



BLANDING PUBLIC LIBRARY

Back on February 23, 2021, the Library reopened its doors after shutting down to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community. You may recall that the end-of-year holidays in 2020 coincided with a surge in COVID cases, and the Library was closed after the Thanksgiving holiday due to high transmission rates locally.

It felt so good to welcome people back, to see everyone's smiling, if masked, faces in our beloved building again. We found ways to safely and briefly enjoy each other's company. We applied the new strategies we developed in 2020 to provide some diversion, education, and companionship: outdoor story walks, outdoor story times, take-and-make crafts, and online story times, puppet shows, music performances and book club meetings. We explored the phenomena of haunted objects with The Paranormal Couple via Zoom, and the Friends of the Blanding Library held an outdoor paperback book and plant sale in May.

With time and vaccines, we even felt comfortable meeting in person again in small groups with some social distance. The Greybeards performed in Goff Hall in June with the windows wide open for ventilation. In July, mini-golfers enjoyed a course set up inside Goff

Hall and on the Library grounds, and young readers enjoyed story times with a therapy dog, a former kitty rescue, and alpacas, two magic shows, and an in-person puppet show. The Friends of the Blanding Library showed us how to make and enjoy Kombucha and Jun tea in August, then held their annual book sale in October. Goff Hall hosted part of the Antiquarian Society's Crafters' Marketplace in October, and the bake sale portion of the Congregational Church's annual bazaar took place in Goff Hall in November. The Library also hosted a Halloween hunt, Elvis, our Elf on the Shelf, gingerbread house crafting, a holiday book tree workshop, a holiday centerpiece workshop, and our holiday toileTREE collection of hygiene products for the Rehoboth Food Pantry.

As libraries around us cancel programming and close their doors again due to staff shortages and yet another surge in COVID cases, we remain grateful for the community we have enjoyed over the past year and remain committed to welcoming you to the Library for a chat, a good book, a movie, or help navigating your digital devices. All best wishes in the new year.

Whitney Pape, Director



YE MEETING HOUSE AT PALMERS RIVER

Workers at the Excavation Site, 1974

Kate Gallagher

CARPENTER MUSEUM VOLUNTEER AND GRADUATE CANDIDATE IN
MUSEUM STUDIES AT HARVARD EXTENSION SCHOOL

In 1974, the Rehoboth Town Bicentennial Commission funded an archaeological dig. The excavation was an archaeological study of the “ye Meeting House at Palmers River” and the Palmers River Burial Ground located on Lake Street in Rehoboth. The goal of this excavation was “done for two purposes: to help the people of Rehoboth understand their heritage, and to examine an important public site through historical archaeology” (Abernathy). Dr. Maurice Robbins, a State Archaeologist of Massachusetts approved the excavation and a three-member crew of professional and student archeologists got to work. The public was involved as well. The volunteers, mostly Rehoboth residents, helped in the site’s preparations, excavations, and presentation of results. It was estimated that over 1,000 Rehoboth townspeople (15% of the population in 1974) were personally in contact with the project.

The Palmers River Meeting House was used by the Rehoboth community from 1719-1774. Not only was the Meeting House used as a church building but as a secular community center as well. From the

excavation it was found that the Meeting House was constructed with wall plaster, nails, bricks, window glass, and lead. As you can see from the photographs, other materials were found; such as glass buttons, arrowheads, and even the chisel that may have been used to engrave the gravestones. Through the excavation, archaeologists also determined the location of the Meeting House on the property.

Until the mid-19th century, the land next to the Meeting House was used as a burial ground and today contains about 175 graves. From the Burial Ground’s excavation, we are able to learn about Rehoboth’s founders and their families. Insight about the religious beliefs and societal status of the buried can be found by observing a gravestone’s details and designs.

By the late 1700’s, Rehoboth had changed; its population grew immensely and the center of town was now “the Village” which contained a new burying ground and training field. By 1774, the Meeting House was demolished and a new

one called the “Yellow Meeting House” was built in the middle of the Rehoboth Village Cemetery, next to Redway Plain. In 1906, a new and improved building of importance was built, the Rehoboth Congregational Church.

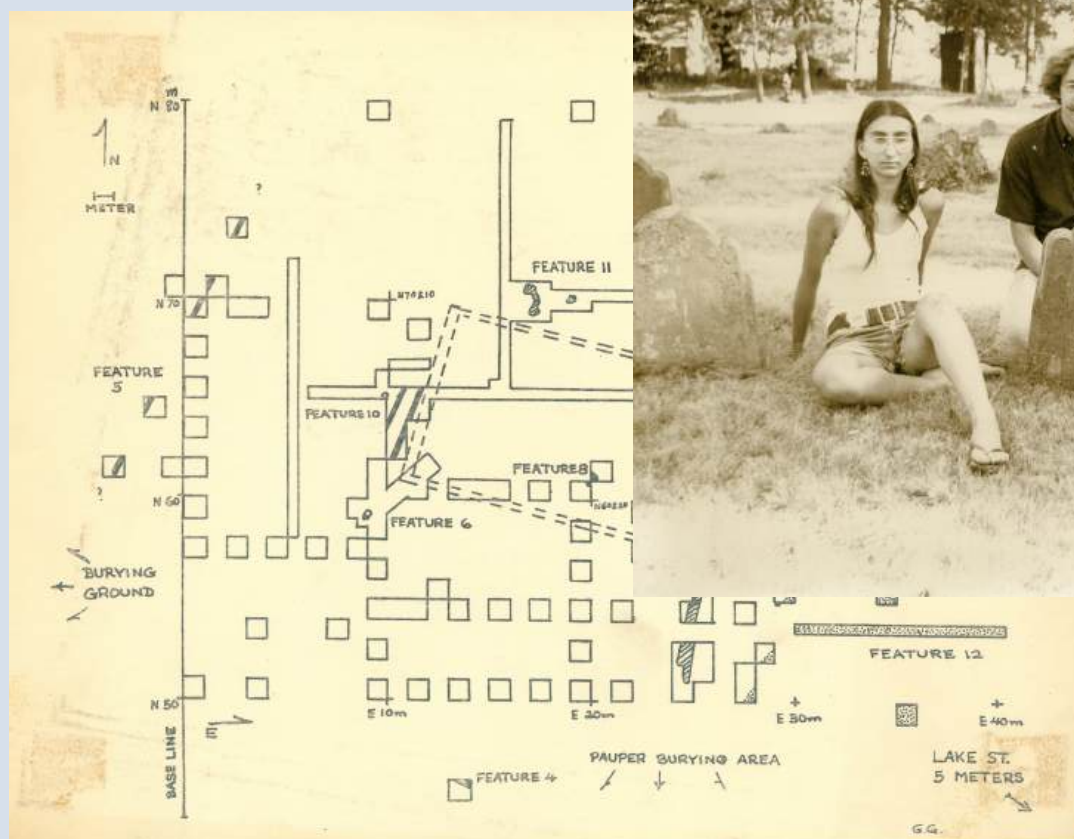
In the beginning of the 19th century, some townsfolk unfortunately used the Palmers River Meeting House and burial land as a dumping ground which is why many shells, glass bottle fragments, flatware, and ceramics were found during the archaeological dig. If you walk the burial ground today, you can find “a prominent engraved stone [which] marks the location of the meeting house” (Abernathy). As you drive by or visit The Palmers River Burial Ground and former Meeting House location on Lake Street, you can thank the town commission, archaeologists, community members, and volunteers for preserving the historical site. The land was the center of Rehoboth life at one time where many of the first Rehoboth families congregated to create the Rehoboth we know today.

For Further Reading See:

Abernathy, Leslie. Horvath, Stephen. “ye Meeting House at Palmers River” 1719-1775. January 1, 1977. This report is available at the E. Otis Dyer Jr. Research Center.

You can also read the article about Sue Withers’ talk on the History of the Rehoboth Congregational Church in Summer 2021’s Rehoboth Antiquarian Society Newsletter. This newsletter is available at the Dyer Research Center and on the Society’s website.

To see artifacts found at the site, along with additional photos and excavation maps, visit the Carpenter Museum and see our newest exhibit!



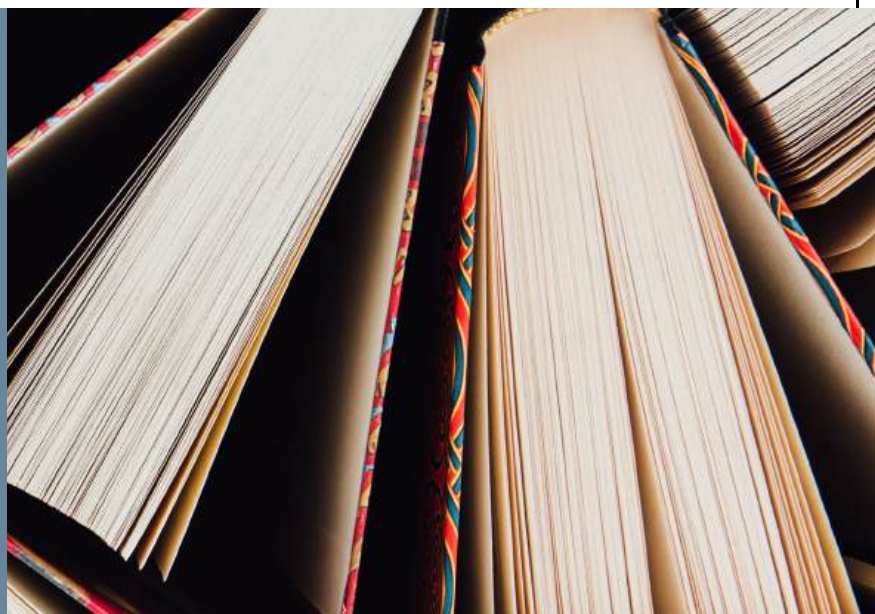
Palmers River Meeting House Excavation Map, 1974



The Crew:
(Not in Order): Mary Corino, Steve Horvath, Steven Cole, and Leslie "Skip" Abernathy, 1974

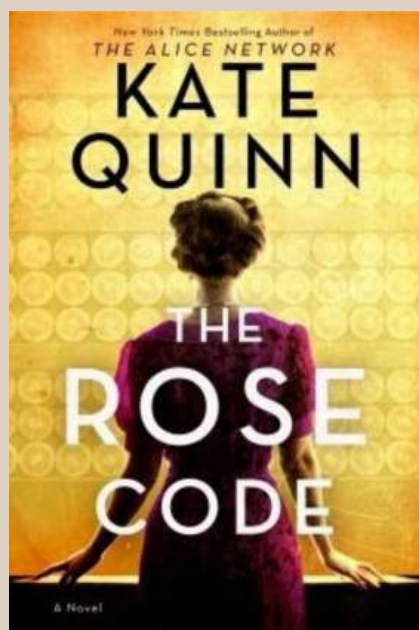
Staff Picks

Meredith's Best of 2021



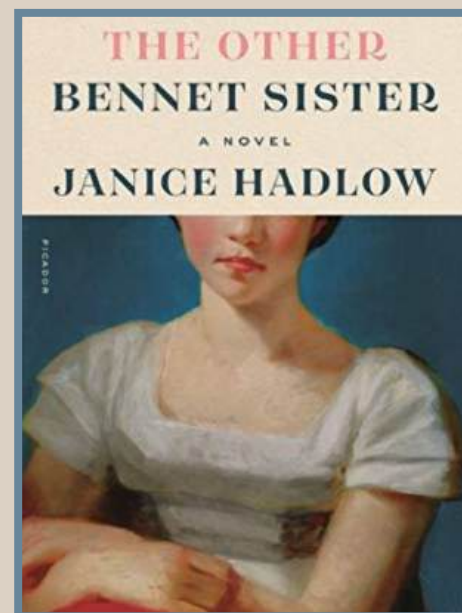
Meredith Richards, Librarian

Over the course of the somewhat tumultuous year 2021, I was able to disappear into books, and the escapism was necessary and appreciated. Of the books I read and listened to, three stood out to me as my Best of the Year (please note, two of these books were published in 2020. Due to popularity or ignorance on my part, I didn't get to them until this year). You'll notice that all three of my books are historical fiction, they're all written by women, and they all feature female main characters. I guess I have a type.



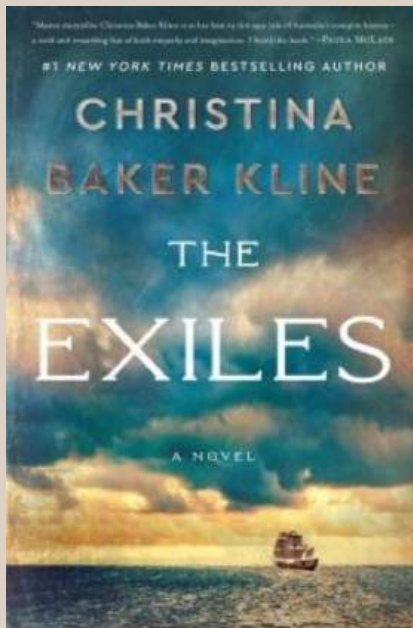
The Rose Code by Kate Quinn

Kate Quinn's three most recent novels – *The Alice Network*, *The Huntress*, and *The Rose Code* – have all been phenomenal. They all take place within the years before and after the World Wars and involve time jumps, strong female characters, and a good mystery. *The Rose Code* focuses on the women of Bletchley Park, fictionalizing the lives of some of the codebreakers who helped the Allies win WWII, though not without incredible sacrifice. If you like these kinds of stories, you should definitely check this book out (from your local library)!



The Other Bennet Sister by Janice Hadlow

Poor Mary Bennet gets such a bad rap. Fans of *Pride and Prejudice* (the original book and any of its iterations) know that she's the priggish, annoyingly-pious middle Bennet sister to the heroines (Lizzy, Jane), the villain (Lydia), and the pliable (Kitty). This story takes Mary's life before and after the events in the original story and shows a side that makes you not only pity her, but come to root for her in the end. There's even a *Pretty Woman*-esque shopping scene. Where would the Bennet sisters be without Aunt Gardiner?



The Exiles by Christina Baker Kline

I was already fan of Kline's two previous novels, *The Orphan Train* and *A Piece of the World*, but I was not prepared for the punch that *The Exiles* packed. The story follows nineteenth-century women who, charged as criminals, were first sent to prison in London and then transported to Australia aboard a repurposed slave ship. I knew vaguely about the history of Australia as a penal colony for Britain's criminals, but never imagined what they endured. I also had never heard any stories of the 'crimes' some of the female inmates committed. If that isn't enough to pique your interest, there's the additional story of an Aboriginal girl who is forced to relocate. I literally could not put this book down.



The Blanding Public Library offers many programs for the whole family, including a weekly story time for kids! Children & caregivers are invited to join us in our hall for a fun interactive program of movement, books, music, games & more. Prepared for children through age 4. Siblings are welcome. Registration required. Visit www.rehobothantiquarian.org/blanding-library to find out more.



RESURGENCE OF THE MORTAR AND PESTLE

Chelsea Johnston

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CARPENTER MUSEUM

The 18th century kitchen was in many ways the heart of the house, from a place to make food and find warmth, to a space of education and community. Kitchens were the most used room in all early American homes. There were many important objects in an 18th century kitchen, some of which we still see today, like an apple peeler. Other objects would be more unusual in modern kitchens, like a nutmeg grater or an oil lamp. As I was doing research on the Carpenter Museum colonial kitchen, I noticed that we have a range of mortars and pestles. As someone who has recently become more interested in cooking and baking, they are objects that caught my attention. While simple tools, a mortar and pestle are very important in the history of cooking.

A mortar is a bowl, while a pestle is a curved club, normally made of the same material. They are

used together for pounding, grinding, and mashing. It is thought that one of the first uses for the mortar and pestle was for “milling by pounding”, though they have been used for many different tasks through the years. They have a rich history of being used medicinally which can be traced at least as far back as Ancient Egypt. Similarly designed tools have been found in many different cultures all around the world from Africa to Asia to America. Mortars and pestles can be found in a range of sizes and shapes, depending on the needed use, from small hand sized ones to sets that need to be used standing-up and by multiple people.

Mortars and pestles, or similar tools, have even been used by people right here in Rehoboth for thousands of years, from the early Pokanoket people to modern day. One example of a Native

Peoples' mortar and pestle is currently on display at the Museum. The use and popularity of these tools have shifted. I was able to look at some of these uses, and how they have changed by exploring the ones that are within the Carpenter Museum collection compared to those in my, and friends' own kitchens.

Within the Carpenter Museum's historic colonial kitchen, I found four mortar and pestle sets from the 18th and 19th centuries. You might not know them as such, as they have more of a vase-like shape than you would commonly see today in New England. They are made out of wood, which was a plentiful material in Rehoboth in the 18th and 19th centuries so used often. In terms of hardwood, which would be needed for tools like the mortar and pestle, the area was rich with oak, maple, beech and chestnut. The mortars and pestles seen in the Carpenter colonial kitchen seem to be made out of either oak or maple. Mortars and pestles from the 18th century could be made from other materials, including stone and metal, these materials were either more expensive or less accessible than wood in Rehoboth.

In 18th century Rehoboth most of the food that residents ate was made and processed by themselves or a family member. This was typical in America in general and while there were some raw ingredients that you might get from other places, sugar per-say, a lot of the work to make edible food would be done in your own home. From grating and grinding to filling and coring, these processes were part of daily life as there were no other options. Thus, a mortar and pestle would be an integral part of your kitchen and they would be used for many different forms of food. This is why they might be larger than some of the ones that are seen today.

Mortars and pestles were also commonly used medicinally. People would pick herbs from their gardens or scavenge them from the land. These herbs were ground into a paste that could be used to heal a variety of ailments as a salve, poultice, or ingestible.

As with many objects, as technology advanced the use of mortars and pestles changed. This shift began in the late 19th century. Part of this change was connected to the creation of more specialized tools. Later changes in power sources, including water and then electricity, led to tools that could do more work in less time, and with less personal effort. Changes in food styles helped mortars and pestles go out of fashion. They were replaced with faster and fancier machinery like the coffee grinder and later the food processor and blender.





Because these new tools took less physical effort and were faster, they became staples of American kitchens. Advancements in factory and commercial manufacturing led to foods being processed on a major scale and thus eliminated the need for tools like the mortar and pestle.

Today mortars and pestles are still in use, they have even made a bit of a comeback. While some still use them often, mortars and pestles have become specialty items. They are mostly brought out for specific uses like grinding herbs for pesto or for guacamole, which has seen a rise in popularity. This leads many of the mortars and pestles that are seen today in modern New England to be made out of stone, or marble, and to be a smaller size than the ones that are in the Carpenter colonial kitchen. The rise in mortar and pestle use comes partially from people becoming reinterested in exploring where their food comes from and what goes into it. At the same time, cooking as an elevated hobby has become more popular. These two factors have led

to mortars and pestles, which had still been used by chemists and professional chefs, to reenter the kitchens of everyday people. There is more exploration of the art of food, which has led people to experiment with the ways in which preparation affects flavor. Many people enjoy the use of mortars and pestles because grinding and smashing is better for bringing out taste and aroma than a cutting method. People enjoy using them for the ways in which they connect users to the food they are eating.

As we drift through the cold months – I hope that you find new and exciting ways to spend time, cozy in your own kitchens, maybe learning a new tool or revisiting a classic favorite recipe. As for me, I will continue to dig into the many historical objects in our space and see what we can unearth next. If you feel interested, swing on by and learn a little bit more about your own kitchen through ours, and maybe, you too will find something new that you hadn't expected in the heart of your house.

IN MEMORY OF
**TED
BALLARD**



We are sad to share that Rehoboth Antiquarian Society Board Member, Edwin (Ted) Craven Ballard II passed away this past October. Mr. Ballard was an active member of the Rehoboth community, a long time Board Member of the RAS, and beloved volunteer. We will miss his attention to details, his curious mind, and, of course, his abundant memory of town history. We will miss Mr. Ballard especially at the Strawberry Festival where he always took the time to share his knowledge of local archeology and native tool use.

Thank you to all those who donated to the Society in honor of Ted Ballard. You help keep his passion for history, community, and learning alive.



The Arts in the Village Committee hopes to resume its series in the fall of 2022. The safety of our concert-goers and performers is our first consideration.

We send our best wishes for good health to you and your families and look forward to when we can enjoy evenings of beautiful music together at Goff Memorial Hall!

-Arts in the Village Committee

**ARTS IN
THE
VILLAGE
UPDATE**

THE HISTORY OF ANAWAN SCHOOL



Anawan School 8th Grade Graduation 1938 (Carpenter Museum Collection 2003-007-034)

Lende McMullen, Research Manager
E. Otis Dyer Jr. Research Center

It was December of 1930 when Anawan School first opened its doors to students in Rehoboth and was our town's first brick school. Designed to accommodate grades 1-8 in 4 rooms, it eliminated half of the one-room district schools in town, matched the growing trend in other nearby towns, and promoted educational progress.

Previously, the district one-room schoolhouse was the norm, offering crowded seating and lacking adequate lighting, heat, ventilation, drinking water, indoor toilets, and sometimes a playground. At this time, Rehoboth had a total of 10 district schools throughout the town. In these one-room schools a teacher taught grades 1-6, allowing only a few minutes of instruction to a small number of students, while the remaining students often became distracted in more ways than one.

Rehoboth raised \$35,000 to construct and properly furnish this new school house with another \$500 raised for the land. During this time, Americans were experiencing the effects of the Great Depression. Yet even in the economic downturn, the people in Rehoboth invested in a new centralized school for its children.

Miss Dorothy L. Beckwith dedicated teaching service began at the Perry District School and continued at Anawan school in 1930 as principle and teacher. Along with 3 other teachers later that year she taught two grade levels per classroom. This configuration allowed more time for recitation and improvement was substantially shown. Enrollment in 1930 at Anawan School for grades 1-8 was 154 students out of 470 total dispersed throughout the 5 schools in town.



Dorothy L. Beckwith
Carpenter Museum Collection, 1997-005-006

Anawan School was named for Chief Anawan of the Pocasset People and Wampanoag who was captured in town marking the end of King Philip's War in 1676. In the original building there was the main floor offering an office, teachers' room, and 4 classrooms with seats for 166 students. Hardwood floors, high ceilings, and large classroom windows permitting a capacity of natural light were installed. The basement accommodated the heating plant, toilets, a store room, playroom, an auditorium with a stage, and small kitchen. For heating and ventilation, a blower to the heating plant burned buckwheat coal which was an inexpensive, clean, and satisfactory fuel. It was the first time a bus was available for students to get to school.

As described by the principal and noted in the 1930 Annual Report of the town offices, Anawan School was now a place of "Student pride which the children felt and the response to the new advantages were further incentives to better individual effort." In promoting that awareness, a

carved wooden sign was hung at the entrance of the school stating "Through these doors walk the best children in the world".

The following year brought an increase of 21 students. Conditions of having all 8th graders in one school improved so much that the consolidation of all 7th & 8th graders began at Anawan School in 1932. However, the increased enrollment necessitated the two grades to utilize the basement as a classroom for them.

By 1940, enrollment at Anawan School increased to 238 students from the town total of 460 for grades 1-8. Sometimes, 50 pupils were in one classroom. It was later in the year when all one-room school houses closed in Rehoboth and the North Rehoboth School was opened for students living north of Winthrop Street. There now existed 3 consolidated schools in town. Pleasant Street and North Rehoboth Schools enrolled grades 1-6 while Anawan School enrolled grades 1-8. This decreased enrollment at Anawan School to 208 pupils.



Anawan School Teachers 1947 or 1948
Carpenter Museum Collection 1997-005-011
From left to right: Maryjo Trayner, Margaret Kammerer,
Bea Kammerer

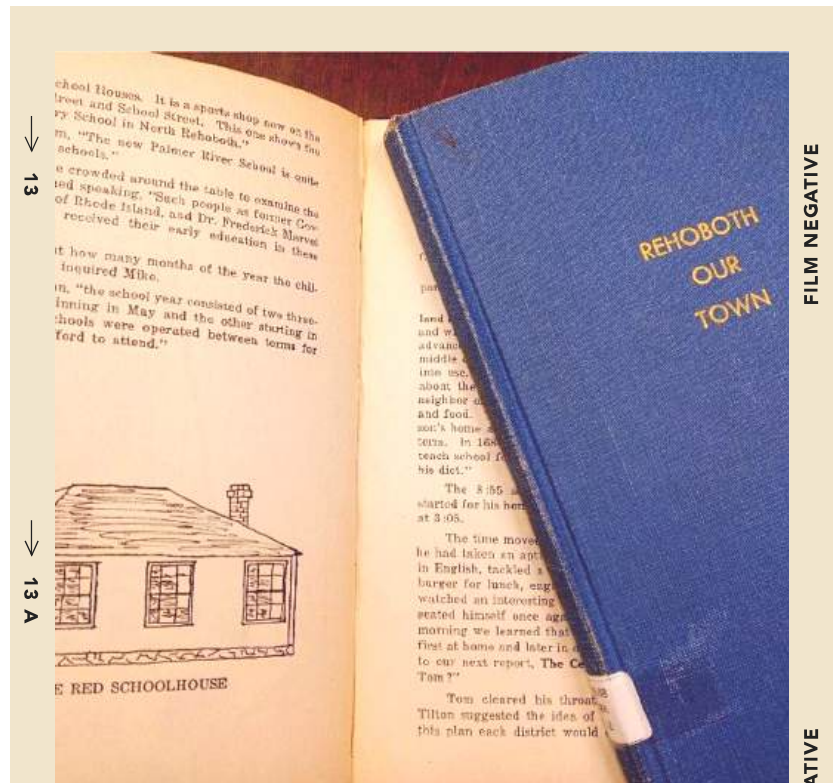
The following year brought the addition of 2 more rooms built on the east side of Anawan School permitting a teacher per grade in one room. At that time, the school held grades 5-8 with 167 students. Grade 9 was added in 1949, and accommodated grades 4-9 with 253 students.

Palmer River Elementary School was built in 1952 for grades 1-6 granting Anawan School to become a Jr. High School accommodating grades 7-9 with 179 students enrolled. The 9th grade Civics Classes of 1957 and 1958 wrote and raised funds to publish a small book titled *Rehoboth Our Town*. It was illustrated and written to introduce the reader to the town's history and offered a guide to historical sites. Copies of this book exist at the Carpenter Museum and Dyer Research Center for members and the public to view.

By 1962 a new high school in town accommodated grades 9-12 affording the Anawan Jr. High School to house the 7th and 8th grades with 93 eighth graders graduating that year. By 1969, there were 279 students in 7th and 8th grades at Anawan Jr. High School.

In 1970 the new Dorothy L Beckwith Middle School was built. There were 611 students enrolled in grades 5-8, thereby closing Anawan Jr. High School. To relieve overcrowding at Palmer River Elementary School, Anawan School reopened to house first grade in 1972. Five first grade teachers taught 110 students at Anawan.

There were 23 more first graders at each North Rehoboth and Pleasant Street School. Half-day Kindergarten classes held in the basement rooms, began in 1973 with 52 students of 126 in total. Finally, in 1999 the kindergarten and first grade students from Anawan School joined Palmer River Elementary School after the new construction of a large addition there was completed and Anawan School closed.



Anawan School Teachers June, 1960
Carpenter Museum Collection 1997-005-010
From left to right: Margaret Kammerer, Rocky Wild,
Bea Kammerer, Dorothy Beckwith



For over 20 years, the future of Anawan School has been a controversial subject for the town. According to an article in the “Sun Chronicle” dated August 14, 2012, town selectmen deemed it unsafe to enter and restricted access to only authorized personnel. Over the years contractors were not allowed to enter the building and the school deteriorated beyond repair. Proposals for veterans and senior housing were approved, but these projects failed.

Efforts by the Community Preservation Committee and Historical Commission to avoid losing this historic town building were also unsuccessful in saving the brick structure.

On Monday evening, September 13, 2021, The Rehoboth Board of Selectmen voted to demolish Anawan School located at 55 Bay State Road. Its arched windows, front door frame, and the façade with a pineapple above will be conserved.

In closing, it is sad to think this historical building is lost to the town especially when we’ve retained other buildings, such as the Hornbine School and Goff Memorial Hall. Preservation is an important attribute of New Englanders and Rehoboth always has a history to tell for it began so long ago. We will miss you, dear Anawan School, you served us well in your time.

Anawan School in its deteriorated condition





MARSDEN PERRY

FROM REHOBOTH FARM BOY TO TYCOON

By: Leslie Patterson

REHOBOTH ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY MEMBER
AND CARPENTER MUSEUM VOLUNTEER

Marsden Jasiel Perry, once described as “the man who owned Rhode Island,” was actually born in Rehoboth in 1850 and spent his childhood here. By the late 19th century, Perry had become a prominent industrialist and banker as well as an art collector and philanthropist. He was a descendant of one of the original families who settled in Rehoboth in the mid-17th century. His parents were Horatio Perry and Malvina Wilson Perry. After his father died when Marsden was only 3, his mother remarried and the child went to live with his grandmother Lucy Perry, a teacher who encouraged this bright and ambitious child.

Near the close of the Civil War, Perry enlisted in a Massachusetts Company and was assigned to the governor’s office in Boston. At the age of 21, Perry went to Providence to seek his fortune and start his own company. In 1881 he became a director of a Providence bank called the Bank of America, later to become the Union Trust Company. By the age of 45 he was on the board of 21 corporations. By this time, he had become, according to one observer, “a man known to be a patron of art and literature, a

prominent clubman, a devotee of golf and polo, and the best groomed man in Providence.”

As early as 1882, Perry saw the potential of electrical power and he acquired control of the Fall River Electric Lighting Company. In 1884 with two others he purchased the Narragansett Electric Light Company. He was also influential in the development of suburban electric railways around Rhode Island and into nearby Massachusetts. In 1893, Perry and his associates obtained control of the street railways in Providence, which expanded greatly during the next 10 years until it was said that he controlled practically all the roads in Rhode Island. Perry had earned a fortune with his vast influence in electric and gas utilities, water, and rail transportation.

As a very wealthy man, Perry was able to indulge his keen interest in collecting valuable art objects and in fine houses and architecture. He first acquired the Eliza Ward House on the corner of Benefit and George Street in Providence. He then commissioned extensive interior changes from the architects who

would design his bank and office building. This house is now privately owned but its elegant interior has been on view at least once in recent years, as part of the Providence Preservation Society's Festival of Historic Houses.

In 1901 he purchased the historic John Brown House at the corner of Benefit and Power Streets, a house that John Quincy Adams once called "the most magnificent and elegant private mansions that I have ever seen on this continent." After Perry's death, John Nicholas Brown bought his Brown ancestor's house in 1941 and donated it to the Rhode Island Historical Society, which operates the house as a museum. It is considered the finest house museum in Rhode Island.

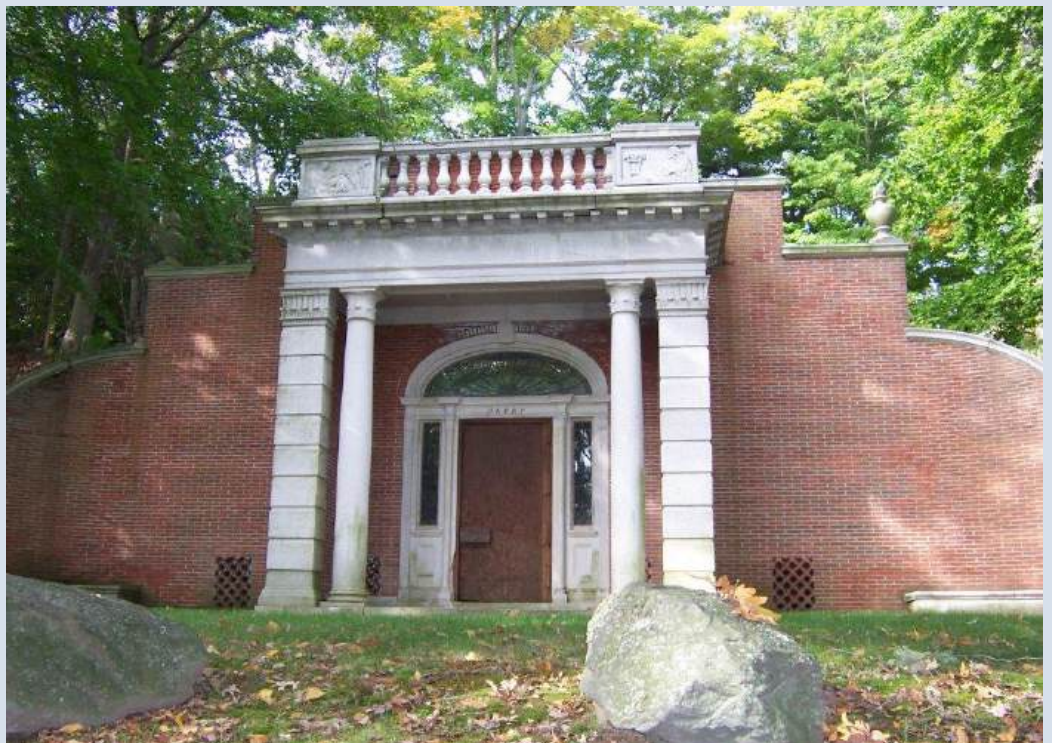
The John Brown House became a showplace where Perry could display his extensive collections of art, including Chinese porcelains, fine paintings, and 18th century furniture, to name just a few of his many collecting interests. Perry's world-class collection of Shakespeare-related works is now part of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. Various valuable decorative objects that Perry collected can also be found at the National Gallery of Art. Perry collected manuscripts and books of

George Washington, and British writers and artists such as Lewis Carroll and William Morris.

As a leading Rhode Island tycoon, Perry naturally bought an estate in Newport in 1907. The previous owners had called it "Bleak House", after the Dickens novel. Perhaps the name was prophetic. This Ocean Avenue estate no longer exists since it was badly damaged in the 1938 hurricane and was demolished in 1948.

Thanks to Marsden Perry, the Sidney S. Rider Collection, the largest private collection of materials related to the history of Rhode Island from its founding to the turn of the 20th century, now resides at the John Hay Library at Brown University. Perry bought the entire collection from local bookseller and collector Sidney Rider and donated it to Brown in 1903. Perry also sponsored the complete renovation of historic University Hall, Brown's first and oldest building, dating to 1770. The mostly self-educated boy from rural Rehoboth who left school at age 12 had indeed made his mark on the world. Perry died at his home on Park Avenue in Manhattan in 1935 at the age of 84.

Today, Marsden Perry does not have the name recognition of those other Gilded Age titans of industry, names such as Carnegie and Vanderbilt. But Perry's interest in fine American architecture lives on in his mausoleum. Visitors to Swan Point Cemetery in Providence can't help but be impressed by this monument with its handsome façade of a Federal-style house, situated on a beautiful spot overlooking the Seekonk River.



Marsden Perry's burial place in Swan Point Cemetery



Thank You!

The Carpenter Museum and RAS would like to give a big THANK YOU to the Crafter's Marketplace Committee for all the hard work they put into last year's event. Committee members Becky Webster, Deb Craft, and Sherry Tibbetts worked tirelessly to bring the Crafter's Marketplace back to the Museum and Library, navigating the difficulty of a pandemic and the logistics of relocating a large scale show. We are so grateful for their efforts and good cheer. Profits made from the Marketplace benefit the Carpenter Museum and help support our community mission. If you are interested in joining this amazing Committee contact the Carpenter Museum at info@rehobothantiquarian.org

New Artifact Spotlight



The Carpenter Museum acquires new artifacts every year as our commitment to preserving Rehoboth history means a growing collection. One of the exciting additions this year is this portrait of Captain Timothy Lewis of Rehoboth. Captain Lewis owned Lewis Tavern located within Anawan Inn. This early 19th century tavern and hotel was frequented by travelers along the Taunton-Providence Turnpike, which is now Route 44. The Tavern was located where the Exxon Mobile gas station now stands. Captain Lewis died at sea in 1839 and left the tavern to his wife (Louisa Horton Lewis), the donor's great-great grandmother.

The painting was donated to the Museum by Elizabeth Carpenter Summer Wilkinson in memory of her mother, Mary Carpenter Ettling Summer.

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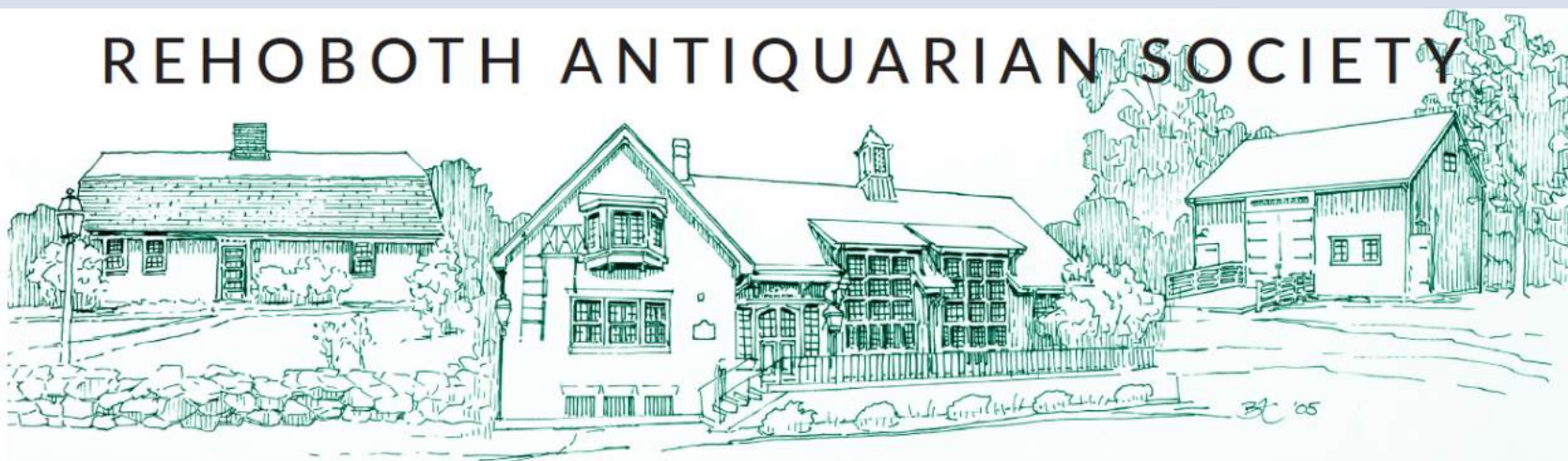
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