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Continuing the Tradition ~ Preserving Our History

bvhsri.org • 1873 Old Louisquisset Pike (Rte 246) • PO Box 125, Lincoln RI, 02865

Concert by Michael DiMucci *Americana II: The Roaring Twenties to the Big Bands*

Michael DiMucci, tenor and pianist, presents a concert of songs from America's past, and the stories behind them. This program, taking place at BVHS at 3 pm Sunday November 4, will feature well-known melodies from the Roaring Twenties and Jazz Age, through the 1930s with the Great Depression and the beginnings of Old Hollywood, to the Big Bands and crooners of the 1940s as our country approached the era of World War II. This



Michael DiMucci

concert is the second in a series focusing on American popular music. Last November, DiMucci gave his first "Americana" con-

Concert
Michael DiMucci
3:00 pm, Sunday, Nov. 4
Northgate, 1873 Old
Louisquisset Pike,
Lincoln
Tickets \$20 at door
and on
BrownPaperTickets.com.

cert at BVHS, performing songs from the time of the American Revolution to the first World War.

DiMucci studied piano with the late Chester

Fruscione of Trenton, N.J., and at the Westminster Conservatory of Music in Princeton, N.J., where he also studied pipe organ.

As a singer, DiMucci apprenticed at Boheme Opera in Trenton, N.J. for two seasons with Maestro Joseph Pucciatti and currently studies voice with Rhode Island baritone and Artistic Director of Opera Providence, Rene de la Garza.

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Historian Shares Stories About Origin of Slater Mill

By Carl L. Johnson

In American history, the Slater Mill site in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, is justifiably regarded as the inception of the Industrial Revolution in our country. Samuel Slater of Belper, England, at the age of 22, having completed an apprenticeship of six-and-one-half years in Jedediah Strutt's cotton spinning mill, emigrated from Eng-



land in September 1789 and arrived in New York that November, bringing with him a thorough knowledge of water-powered spinning ma-

chinery. This knowledge was a valuable commodity, since a handful of American manufacturers, such as Moses Brown, who saw promise in textile

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manufacture—producing high-quality thread and therefore cloth—had been trying, unsuccessfully, to replicate this technology in America. While Slater was New York for a period of several weeks, a ship's captain informed

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Slater Mill was built in 1793

Sharing History of Slater Mill

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him of two men in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, who were planning to open a cotton mill. Those men were Moses Brown of the prominent Brown family, and Brown's son-in-law William Almy. Samuel promptly penned a letter to Moses Brown, stating that he had had oversight of and a thorough familiarity with the water-powered spinning mechanisms invented and developed by Sir Richard Arkwright.

Slater spent his first night in Pawtucket as the guest of Sylvanus Brown, who was a respected pattern maker and millwright, and eventually one of the builders of Slater Mill. The date was January 18, 1790. Sylvanus Brown—not related to Moses Brown, although both were members of the Society of Friends, that is to say, Quakers—was assigned the task of interviewing Samuel Slater. Sylvanus and his partners wished

to establish just how acquainted was this young Englishman with the details of Arkwright's spinning works. It so happened that they found in Samuel Slater the ideal candidate for their nascent mill operation. It was in Pawtucket Village, specifically a space Mr. Brown rented within Ezekiel Carpenter's fulling mill, in December 1790, that Moses Brown, under Slater's tutelage and in association with William Almy, Sylvanus Brown, blacksmiths and machinists Oziel Wilkinson and his son David, began the first successful cotton spinning business in America.

Drawing from the Blackstone River to provide power for their spinning frames, which was machinery based on English designs but adapted to their Rhode Island location, the "Yellow Mill" opened in 1793 as Almy, Brown and Slater Cotton Manufacturers. It was not officially titled

Slater Mill during Samuel's first decade there, but recognized as such in a colloquial sense.

The much larger and more modernized White Mill across the Blackstone along the riverbank was solely of Slater's conception. Thereafter, the Yellow Mill would most often be referred to as Old Slater Mill. However, two years prior to Samuel Slater's death in April 1835, Andrew Jackson, the president of the United States, visited Slater at his home in Webster, Massachusetts, where the president said to him, "Mister Slater, I regard you as the father of our American Manufacturers!" Slater's reply was, "Yes, Sir. You could say that I wrote the psalm, and the choir has been singing to it ever since."

Mr. Johnson has worked for Old Slater Mill Association as an Interpreter and tour guide for 12 years. He will be giving a talk on Slater Mill at Northgate at 2 pm Nov. 18.

DiMucci Concert Celebrates the Jazz Age to Big Band Era



Michael DiMucci at Northgate

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DiMucci has performed throughout the New England area in large and small venues for concerts, private recitals, special events and weddings, and was a regular guest artist at the University of Rhode Island's Opera Workshop. There DiMucci performed many

lead tenor roles including Tamino in *The Magic Flute*; Nanki-Poo in the *Mikado*; Ralph Rackstraw in *H.M.S. Pinafore*; Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* and Matt/Larry in *Face on the Barroom Floor*.

DiMucci also performs in concerts and recitals for Opera Providence as a

guest singer.

Because of his diverse musical background, Michael is at home singing Broadway/Musical Theater, Opera, Classical, as well as Jazz and the American Songbook. Tickets are \$20, and are available at the door or through Brown-PaperTickets.com.

One Hundred Attend Ives Lecture on Stone Walls



The golden age of stone wall building, Ives said, was between 1775 and 1825

By Erika Niedowski

Walking through the beautiful trails of Prudence Island last summer, my partner Patrick and I wondered about the stone walls we happened upon. You know the ones I mean: the time-worn walls in the middle of the forest that seem to have lost any clear function.

Those walls have stories to tell, and Rhode Island state archaeologist Tim Ives shared some of

them in an engaging talk at North Gate called “Stone Walls in Rhode Island.” BVHS sponsored the Oct. 14 talk as part of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission’s Archaeology Month, and more than 100 people attended.

Rhode Island has the highest density of stone walls in the country, according to Ives. Who knew? Ives dismissed the theory that stone walls

have Native American origins and, thus, spiritual significance. He says New England’s stone walls were agrarian stone walls, generally built by or for pre-colonial and colonial farmers. What he called “the Golden Age of Stone Wall Building,” between 1775 and 1825, reflected a number of economic and demographic realities.

Ives showed photographs of stone walls across Rhode Island, from North Smithfield to Charlestown. (Block Island’s southwest corner is apparently a stone wall paradise.) He pointed out many things to consider: the shape of the stones, the type of rock, whether the wall is symmetrical or runs in a zig-zag, how high and thick it is. Some walls are flat, made of easily stackable rocks. Some are made of rounded stones interconnected in ways that to my eye seem to defy physics. I learned the term “one handers,” which are stones small

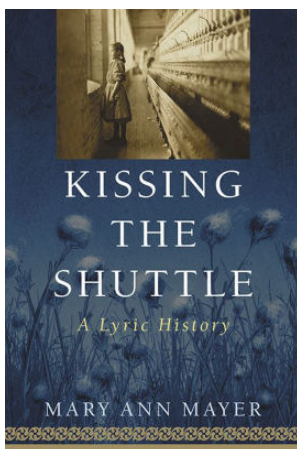
enough to be picked up by one hand, which long ago were gathered from rocky fields and repurposed.

As times changed, farms were abandoned, and stone walls were abandoned too, part of landscapes that eventually became reforested.

Ives posed thought-provoking questions about stone walls: Are they part of public heritage? Should they be preserved? Rhode Island has some protections for stone walls in state law, and some communities, including Smithfield, are protecting them. North Smithfield has been considering an ordinance that would protect them essentially by giving them historical status, according to *The Valley Breeze*.

Stone walls are under threat from development, yes. But the biggest threat to stone walls, said Ives, is Nature itself – which is unsympathetic to the history they hold.

Former Lincoln Native Publishes ‘Kissing the Shuttle’



Mary Ann Mayer, a former Lincoln resident, is author of “*Kissing the Shuttle: A Lyric History*” (Blackstone River Books), which combines original poetry, narratives and historical photographs to depict the rise of textile mills in the 19th century through the beginning of the 20th century.

Mayer is the recipient of a Massachusetts Cultural Council Award and Boston’s GrubStreet Poetry Prize, and was a finalist for the May Sarton New Hampshire Book Prize. She is an editor of *Crosswinds* poetry journal.

The book’s title, “Kissing the Shuttle,” was an expression that refers to

putting one’s lips against the loom’s shuttle to pull thread through the eye of the shuttle during refilling. It was also known as the Kiss of Death, since the practice transmitted diseases, including tuberculosis, among the weavers.

Donations are always welcome.

www.bvhsri.org/join

Upcoming Events at North Gate

**Most events are free.
Everyone is welcome.
Donations are gratefully accepted.**

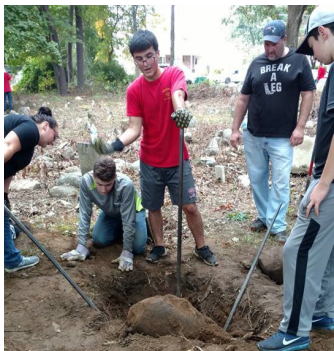
3:00 pm, Sunday, November 4: Concert by Michael DiMucci, *Americana II, The Roaring Twenties to the Big Bands*. Tickets \$20.

2:00 pm, Sunday, November 18: *Slater Mill*, a talk by Carl L. Johnson.
BVHS, 1873 Old Louisquisset Pike, Lincoln, RI 02865. Free.



Slater Mill

Scouts Clean Up Cemetery



Raising Tombstones

On October 7, the Scouts of Troop 1 Manville tackled a much needed cleanup at CU33, a historical cemetery located in Cumberland on property owned by the Kimball family, at the north end of Kimball Street, southwest of Willis Drive. A huge amount of prep work was done by Nick Lizotte and his family, clearing a batch of brush and poison ivy before

cemetery restoration expert Ken Postle and the Scouts got on site. They were joined by the Mom and Daughter team of SH Digs and members of the Kimball family, Kathy Kimball and Janice Kimball Hare. Kimball and Hare poked and prodded to locate more headstones as other adults and teams of Scouts raked and gathered up brush, fallen limbs and trash.

“What a huge effort and impact,” Postle reported. “Seventy-six bags of leaves were gathered and over a dozen new markers were lifted to daylight by the 24 of us who were on site, and many great memories were made.”

Retired Firefighters and Police Flag Veterans' Graves



Goff & Jenks Students Flagging in Oak Grave Cemetery in May

The Pawtucket Retired Firefighters and Police officers will be honoring our

many veterans at Mineral Spring Avenue Vets Cemetery at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 10, by refreshing all the flags in time for Veterans Day, Nov. 11. If you would like to reflag any of our local Blackstone Valley historic smaller cemeteries, contact Ken Postle before Nov. 11 via his Facebook page and he will try to help with flag supplies.

BVHS Gets Its Picture Taken



Aerial View of BVHS

On Great Road Day, BVHS was visited by photographers Carol Dandrade, Bob Evans and Sarah Keates. They are part of a group of 10 photographers who were recently dubbed the “Blackstone Heritage Corridor Photography Ambassadors” by

the BHC. The trio photographs historic sites for the Corridor for fun and practice. Here is an unusual view of Northgate from the air, taken with a small aerial drone by Evans; you can see a tiny corner of BVHS’s new parking lot. We’ll be sharing more photos soon.

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401-862-4202

Email: jjhdio70@gmail.com

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