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NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2015

The holiday season is approaching and we take this opportunity to wish everyone Happy, Healthy and Safe Holidays.

EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

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| Nov 1 Victorian Tea | Our tea was a huge success. Thanks to Pegee Malcolm, Cindy Corkum, Polly Barey, Trish Harmon and the helpers and volunteers for all their hard work. Hopefully we will schedule another for the Spring. |
| Nov 10 & 17 Genealogy
7 p.m. | Learn how to search for your roots with Trish Harmon at the Warwick Library on Sandy Lane |
| Nov 14 9-3 Bazaar | We will have a table at the Woodbury Union Church. Join us and view our books and booklets for sale. Do your Christmas shopping. |
| Nov 14 6:30 pm
Paranormal Event | At the John Waterman Arnold House. Space is limited. Reservations required. \$25 per person. |
| Nov 28-29 Festival of Trees

Sat 11-8 Sun 11-4 | Imperial Room One Rhodes Place to benefit RI Shriners and Children's Hospitals. Some of our members are sponsoring and decorating a tree.
Visits with Santa, vendors, Mrs Claus Cafe
Adult Donation \$2 children [12 and under] free |
| Dec 12 Open House
11-2 | At the John Waterman Arnold House. Join us for refreshments and meet and greet in celebration of the season. |

MEMORIAL BRICKS

The bricks have been laid adjacent to the front walk.

We will continue to accept orders for bricks during the coming year. Small 4 x 8 \$50 Large 8 x 8 \$75. Forms are available at Arnold House.



CITY HALL

At the end of the year we will remove the current display showing 50 years at Arnold House. [see article that follows]

Please drop by if you haven't already done so and see City Hall decorated for Christmas at the same time.

MEMBERSHIPS

Although our fiscal year begins July 1 we accept memberships any time. Forms can be downloaded from our website.

BUSINESS SPONSORS

Our thanks to our business sponsors for the coming year. Listing follows.

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A library, to modify the metaphor of Socrates, should be the delivery room for the birth of ideas—a place where history comes to life

----Norman Cousins

50 YEARS AT THE JOHN WATERMAN ARNOLD HOUSE

By Felicia Castiglioni Gardella

As the year grows to a close we look back at our 50th year at the Arnold House. Our society was first organized in 1932. For 33 years the group met in libraries, private homes and grange halls and struggled to collect and preserve the history of the city of Warwick. These intrepid folks dealt with a lack of technology, a lack of storage space, a lack of money and a lack of interest from the public. But still they persevered with the hope that one day they would have a permanent home somewhere in the city.

Then in 1964 they heard that the John Waterman Arnold House in Lakewood was going to be burned down due to its rundown condition in order to expand the cemetery. It had been vacant for quite a few years and had not been maintained. The previous year the barn adjacent to the house had been burned by the city as an exercise for the fire department for the same reason.

On investigation they discovered the house had been built by Israel Arnold in c1785. Israel was a direct descendent of William Arnold one of the first proprietors of Warwick. He had been one of the original proprietors of Providence but came to Warwick in 1638 after a disagreement with Roger Williams. The original Arnold land extended from [approximately] Narragansett Bay to the East, Post Rd to the North, Airport Rd to the South and beyond Arnold's Pond to the West. During King Phillip's War [1675-76] he took refuge in the garrison house of his son Stephen located at what is now Rhodes on the Pawtuxet. When he died there in 1676 at the age of 88 he was the highest taxpayer in town.

His 6th generation direct descendent was Israel [1749-1814] who owned and managed the farm and was also a judge and sea captain. It is assumed that there was another house that had been built on the foundation of the present house that had burned down during King Phillip's War. Israel married Mercy Waterman, daughter of John Waterman another proprietor of Warwick and they had seven children; four boys and three girls. John Waterman Arnold was born in 1791. They lived in the present house that was described as an "Arnold farmhouse in Lakewood on a hill where the old burial ground, now Highland Cemetery is located. Part of the land was sold in 1872 to make a section of another Arnold farm the Central Park Plat, now known as Lakewood." [*History of Washington and Kent Counties* 1889, page 1278]

John Waterman Arnold [1791-1872] married Eliza Harris [1800-1868] in 1825 and built the current addition as a kitchen and quarters for the hired hands. They had two children, Israel Barlow Arnold [1830-1871] who died after serving in the Civil War, and a daughter Ann Elizabeth Arnold "Eliza" [1828-1906] who was the last Arnold to live in the house. The Arnold Farm had been almost entirely self-sufficient; growing their own livestock, chickens and vegetables and even tobacco. The wool from their sheep was sold to local textile mills to make material for uniforms during the Revolution and the Civil War. Arnolds owned the

property from 1638 to 1906 and many of the Arnolds who lived in the house are buried in the adjacent cemetery.

When Ann, a spinster, died in 1906 the property was sold and/or rented to a series of dairy farmers until it came to the attention of the Warwick Historical Society in 1964. They approached the property owners at the time and the result was the property was deeded to the Society in 1965. In 1971 again thanks to the efforts of the society the house was placed on the National Register of Historic Houses.

The house has undergone a number of restorative projects over the years thanks to grants from the Champlin Foundation, the Department of the Interior, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission and Rhode Island Legislative Grants. During the past year the house has been painted, storm windows replaced, and a new walkway installed. In 2007 the society received an award from the Rhode Island Preservation Commission in recognition of the restoration of the Arnold House by an all volunteer group. Maintenance of a property of this size requires due diligence from the society's board members and the pursuit of grants, as well as donations from the public through its various fund raising activities.

The Arnold House now houses a substantial library of books, pamphlets, documents and ephemera that are not available elsewhere that helps preserve the history of Warwick and fulfill its mission. Its database is also available to members doing research and has been a valuable resource for authors and civic groups. The Society has worked in conjunction with the Warwick Historical Cemetery Commission to promote the maintenance and preservation of its historical cemeteries. During the past year three "lost" cemeteries have been located due to our joint effort. We are now the caretakers of the Stukely Westcott historical collection at the request of the Society of Westcott Descendants of America. Stukely Westcott was one of the original proprietors of Warwick. We also house the book collection of City Historian Don D'Amato and have a complete collection of his newspaper articles in our database. Our current City Historian, Henry AL Brown, has graciously allowed us to scan most of his collection of documents on the Brown family of Providence and Warwick as well as his postcard collection, documents and articles he has written and/or collected. There have been many others over the years too numerous to mention here who have made major contributions to our historical collection.

Our activities during the past year have been presentations at the library, presentations to local organizations, participation in Gaspee Days Festival and Parade, Conimicut Festival, Woodbury Union Church Festival, Paranormal Events, our Open Houses and house tours, a Victorian Tea, and maintenance of our display case at City Hall.

It is thanks to all our volunteers over the past 83 years who have worked tirelessly and diligently that has helped keep history alive and well in Warwick.

BUSINESS SPONSORS

Business Cards and links can be viewed on our website www.whsri.org

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