

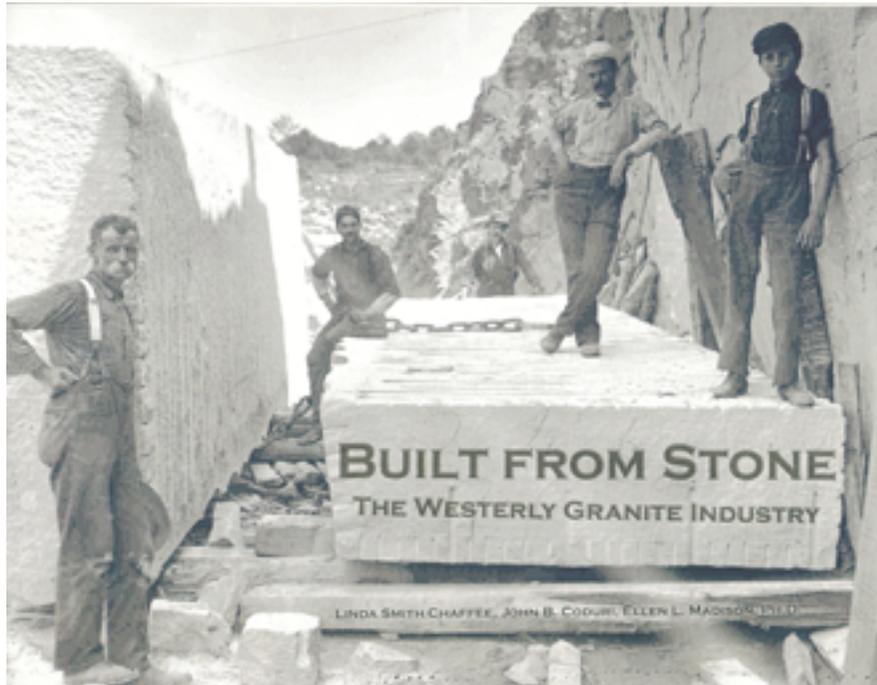


# *The Babcock-Smith House Museum Newsletter*

Volume 7 Number 1

March 2011

## Granite Book Premieres on May 28



**Built From Stone: The Westerly Granite Story** is finished. We can now proudly announce the book as one of the museum's most significant achievements. Perhaps it will not make the national bestseller list, but, if the presales are any indication, it will be Westerly's bestseller this spring.

This full color, hard-bound edition with more than 200 pages of photographs, history, personal stories and much more was the natural outgrowth of the 52 full-page articles that ran in *The Westerly Sun* and were paid for by Michael Slosberg. The book brings together much of the information from the series and previously undiscovered and unpublished material into a coherent whole which will educate and entertain us all and renew our pride in Westerly's granite heritage.

Please allow us a moment of personal indulgence. We have witnessed an outpouring of sharing and support which our long and incomplete list of acknowledgments reduces to names on a page, but which touched us deeply. We will remember the tears of a man as he handed us precious papers from a father he had never met. The man who glowed with pride as he posed for a picture with his

donation of a record book found in his attic. The woman who brought us copies of yellowed newspaper clippings which she had collected years ago. The family members who sifted through old family pictures to find just the one we were looking for. The generous people who readily agreed to write articles, take pictures, research a tiny missing detail. The man who told us of his surprise that other ethnic groups besides Italians helped make the industry what it was. Those who told us proudly: "I saw my grandfather's name in the list" or "I went to the cemetery last week and I am seeing those monuments with new eyes. Thank you."

The three of us shared the same daunting question of 'where do we begin,' the disappointment of not finding more information, the frustration of thinking something was done and discovering it was not, and the excitement at seeing just the right cover design for the first time. We learned more about our families' involvement in the industry. Most importantly, we proved that it is possible for three people to work together harmoniously with respect for each other's talents and work ethics.

*Linda Smith Chaffee, John B. Coduri, Ellen L. Madison, Ph.D.*

## Docents' Page

### Evening of Colonial Hospitality Fifth Grade Student Tours



Partake of colonial hospitality presented by costumed docents who want to share a bit of history, fun, and exposure to their activities with you. Westerly is three and a half centuries old and contains much history of which we are all a part. If you have ever wanted to learn more, have ever

wanted to get a glimpse of what docents do, or have ever wanted to explore the new opportunities to share in this history, please attend. Don't let fifth graders have *all* the fun!

April 7, 5-7 pm  
BSH Carriage House

### New Tour Guides Welcome

Meet new people while sharing your love of local history. Volunteer to become a tour guide, assistant or storekeeper on a Friday or Saturday afternoon this summer. Knowledgeable docents will train and assist newcomers. Contact Ed Fazio at 401-322-8240 to volunteer.

### Docents Enjoy Other Museums

The docents are now planning their 2011 spring visit to the General James M. Varnum House in East Greenwich, RI to be followed by a luncheon. Call Ron Brunelle at 860-599-2154 for further information.

Last year the docents visited both Smith Castle in Wickford, RI and the John Adams and John Quincy Adams' homes in Quincy, MA. The second day of the Quincy trip was a celebration of the 275th birthday of John Adams, held at the Church of the Presidents where both presidents and their wives are buried.

Every year since 1974, nearly 300 fifth graders and their teachers from the Westerly School System and now from St. Pius X and St. Michael's Schools spend a morning at the museum learning about local colonial history and the history of the granite industry. Students participate in colonial crafts such as stenciling, weaving, and writing with a quill pen and also get to play with some typical colonial toys such as Jacob's ladder, whirligigs, and ten pins.

Their visit includes a guided tour of the 1734 mansion and a scavenger hunt in which they are asked to locate and identify many arcane colonial items such as adjustable fire screens, candlewick trimmers, and other household "appliances." Students always enjoy shopping in Joshua's Store as the docents make a special effort to create inexpensive hand-crafted items appealing to children. Their visit concludes with a light snack and a Q & A session. Students come in groups of 50 to 60 students per day and tours are typically scheduled over six days.

This museum field trip coincides with the study of colonial history and is always held in late May. We are grateful to the local PTO for providing transportation. The program requires several months of planning and typically involves around two dozen museum docents, but it is one of the most gratifying experiences for these willing museum volunteers. It is particularly heartwarming to have an adult come to the museum and fondly reminisce about visiting as a fifth grader. This is not an uncommon occurrence, especially when one considers that over the past 36 years we have had many thousands of students participate in this program.



## 2010 Members of the Babcock-Smith House Museum

### Docent Members

Sandra Abbott  
Dianne and Jon Babcock  
Mildred Beam  
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Mary and Ronald Brunelle  
Roberta Burkhardt  
Dorothy Clarke, emerita  
Roslyn Clarke, emerita  
Mary Cool  
Barbara Cotton, emerita  
Elizabeth Fox, emerita  
Ann Frink  
Frances Kelly, emerita  
Dawn Lafleur  
Mary Ann McCarty  
Jessie Mearns, emerita  
Mary Mitchell +  
Kathy Niles  
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Linda P. Schackner  
June Silvestri  
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Mary Lou Walter  
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Barbara and Bob Brin  
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Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Toscano  
Mrs. Howard E. Weston  
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Jane Whyte  
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United Way of Rhode Island (2)

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Ken and Linda Chaffee \* #  
Mrs. Carolyn G. Longolucco \* +  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Potter \* +

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Mr. & Mrs. Edward Fazio \* #  
Ellen L. Madison, Ph.D \* #  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael A. Slosberg

\* indicates docent  
# indicates current trustee  
+ indicates former trustee

Our thanks extend to all our members who have contributed their time, talent and other gifts to the Babcock-Smith House Museum. We have made every attempt to make the list accurate as of March 1, 2011. Please inform us of any errors.

# Happenings

## Westerly Historical Society Annual Meeting

Thursday, **June 2**, 5:30 gathering, 6 pm dinner  
Masonic Hall on Elm Street  
Turkey dinner, \$18/person  
Authors of **Built from Stone** will share anecdotes and observations.

## American Girl / Favorite Doll Tea

Wednesday, **July 13**, 2-4 pm  
Once again, the docents have scheduled one of their very popular summer doll teas. Our guests bring their favorite dolls for a lovely afternoon tea in the Carriage House and bit of history. In addition to providing the delicious desserts, docents take our guests on a short tour of the house including highlights such as the antique doll house. Docent seamstresses also make sure that Joshua's Store is well stocked with clothes sized for American Girl Dolls. For reservations call 401-348-8178.



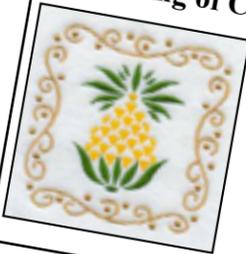
## Christmas Bazaar

Saturday, **December 3**, 9 am-2 pm  
Local residents tell us that the Babcock-Smith House Christmas Bazaar is an annual favorite. One of the most popular stations is the Nook of Nature which provides a great selection of natural greens in attractive arrangements for your door or table. Joshua's Store offers a wide selection of hand-crafted articles made by the docents.



## An Evening of Colonial Hospitality

Thursday, **April 7**  
5-7 pm  
Come and join us for an evening of fun, refreshments and a little bit of history.



## Open House

Saturday, **May 28**, 2-5pm  
Distribution, sales and signing of **Built From Stone** begins at 2 pm followed by refreshments including a cake to commemorate the occasion and free museum tours guided by the docents.



## Veggie Venture Luncheon

October 14  
Buffet available 11:30-2 pm  
Docents celebrate the end of summer by hosting a vegetarian luncheon buffet at which guests are encouraged to try new tasty dishes. Joshua's Store will be open. Tickets available at door for \$10.00. Cookbook with recipes will be available for \$5.00.



## Museum Tours

Open: June-October Saturday 2-5;  
July and August Friday and Saturday 2-5; or by appointment  
**Evening Hours:** Wednesday, July 6 and August 3, 6-8 pm.



## Candlelight Dinners



Enjoy the elegant ambiance of the museum dining room for a five-course meal for twelve, cooked and served by the museum docents. For \$50.00 per person the experience cannot be matched. Call 401-348-8178 for reservations or more information.

## Gifts Enhance Granite Collection



Umile Ritacco donated a record book from the Dixon Granite Company discovered in his attic.

Phil Panciera gave us a wrench used on the quarry locomotives. The wrench, 38 inches long, is pictured with a dollar bill to show the scale.



Linda Holman contributed a ribbon that quarry workers probably wore at a union convention.

Lido J. Mochetti shared many drawings done by his father Lido R. Mochetti a draftsman for Fraquelli and Brusa.



Madeline Malaghan provided us with a photograph of the legendary statue cutter Columbus Zerbarini who, as a highly respected craftsman, was the first Italian-American elected to the Westerly Town Council.



Frances Steverman shared family photographs of statue cutter John DeRocchi pictured here with his pregnant wife.

Roberta Burkhardt gave the museum library books on Watch Hill which document the use of granite in this seaside community.



Lonnie Foberg shared this photo of a crane accident involving Joseph Bray. Lonnie also shared an amazing story. Buy the book to read the story!

## From the Desk of the Chair

Last year was an exciting year for the museum and we anticipate a similar high level of activity throughout 2011.

We transitioned from an Annual Campaign to a Museum Membership program, a major recommendation in the BSH Museum Business Plan that was developed with the help of Preserve Rhode Island and a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. We saw an 11.5 % increase in membership in 2010.

One of our major initiatives was the year-long weekly granite series that began last March 29. Special thanks to Susan Sullivan Brocato, Linda Smith Chaffee, Betty-Jo Cugini Greene, and Ellen Madison for the abundant amounts of time each contributed to make this informational series a reality. We are deeply indebted to Michael Slosberg and United Builders Supply. This educational effort would not have been possible without his continual encouragement and financial support. Additionally, thank you to Tim Ryan, Andrew Burris and Nancy Young at *The Westerly Sun* and Sun Graphics for their expertise and patience with our work team throughout the past twelve months.

We will be replacing the museum furnace and oil tank and converting the dirt basement floor to cement. Both of these building improvement projects are possible due to a grant from the Forrest and Frances Lattner Family Foundation. Our building security system was replaced with a more updated version which will help us keep our treasures safe for future generations. Our most public initiative for this year is the anticipated publication of **Built From Stone: The Westerly Granite Story**. This full color, 200 plus page hard-bound edition is an attempt to share bits and pieces of the Westerly granite industry so that present and future generations can take pride in Westerly's granite heritage. Copies will be available during our docent-sponsored Annual Open House on Saturday, May 28 from 2:00-5:00.

We are very fortunate to have a dedicated group of docents. There would not be a Babcock-Smith House Museum without their tireless efforts. They are a group of wonderful, community-minded volunteers responsible for so much of the service that the trust provides to our community.

I am greatly appreciative of all the volunteer and financial assistance that the Babcock-Smith House Museum receives each year from so many people throughout our southern New England region. Very special thanks to our Board of Trustees and all of our museum members for their ongoing support and belief in our education and preservation mission that guides our efforts throughout the year.

*John B. Coburn*

**BUY THE BOOK! SPECIAL PRE-ORDER OFFER!**

Own the hard-bound edition of "Built from Stone" — an expanded, comprehensive look at the Westerly granite story.

Further details available at [builtfromstone.com](http://builtfromstone.com)

Special pre-order offer of \$34.95 available until March 31, 2011  
(\$44.95 after March 31)

Act before  
March 31

Books available  
May 28, 2-5 pm

Books may be picked up Saturday, May 28, 2011 at the Babcock-Smith House Museum  
(Shipping is also available)

**PRE-ORDER FORM**

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
email \_\_\_\_\_

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Please send your check or money order to: Babcock-Smith House Museum, 124 Granite Street, Westerly, RI 02891. Sorry, no C.O.D.'s.

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