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SALEM
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2021 Winter-Spring Newsletter

Dear Members,

Happy new year, three little words that have rarely been weighted with so much meaning, potential and hope. Hope that soon everyone will be vaccinated and safe from this horrendous virus that has set our world upside down; hope that life as we knew it will begin to return to some measure of normalcy, and hope that we will once again be able to meet face to face to enjoy lectures, walks, and the stories around and about our beloved historical city. Alas, until that time is upon us, the trustees and members of the Salem Historical Society have been busy Zooming, discussing, researching, and planning events for the upcoming year.

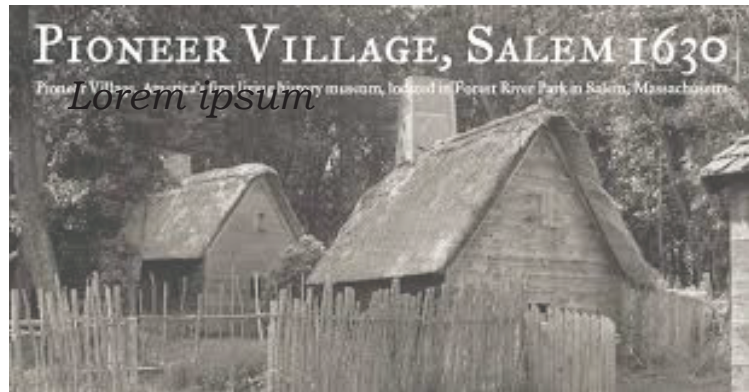
Once again, we have partnered with several Salem organizations to bring you the annual events that we all love, albeit, with a new twist. The Leslie's Retreat Salem Resistance steering committee has been working diligently to create a socially-distant virtual reenactment for the 246th anniversary of Leslie's Retreat while Salem State University will honor Charlotte Forten, class of 1856 its first African American graduate, on March 2 with the annual Charlotte Forten Day program. Trustees have also been involved in different aspects of publications about Salem. We continue to answer questions submitted to us via our website <http://www.salemhistorical.org> so send us your questions, as you will see we sometimes have more questions than answers ourselves.

As always, thank you for your continued support and we hope to see you soon.

Robin Woodman

An Update on Pioneer Village

by Salem Historical Trustee
Elizabeth Peterson, Director
Witch House and Pioneer Village



The plan to move Pioneer Village to the current Camp Naumkeag site continues to make progress. We have entered into the design phase of the project and are working with the Oudens-Ello team to integrate the historic cottages into the new space. The museum will be enhanced greatly by the addition of a visitor center that will feature exhibits and displays relative to Salem's Indigenous culture and our early colonial period and their continued impact on our world today. The plan is multi-phased and taking place over several years. If progress continues as expected, Pioneer Village:Salem in 1630 is poised to be a very significant part of the Salem 400 celebrations planned for 2026. The official opening of the visitor center is slated for June of that year.

The village relocation project's inception originated a few years ago as a potential solution to realize the full potential of the village. Members of Salem's preservation community were consulted and their favorable response moved the project forward. Placing the village at the current Camp Naumkeag site allows for increased visibility and visitation, as it will be directly on the Salem Trolley route. It allows for the opportunity to eventually expand interpretation into Fort Lee. This would create a cohesion between Salem's pre-colonial, early colonial, Revolutionary War and Civil War histories.

It is a very exciting, creative process that allows us to take a fresh look at the vision for this much esteemed site. As we move forward, we will share updates on pioneervillagesalem.org

Salem's Forgotten Almshouse Burial Ground

by Jen Ratliff

Salem Historical Society member and former trustee, Jen Ratliffe, has dedicated herself to uncovering and sharing the forgotten stories of our collective past. Her most recent focus is Salem's Forgotten Almshouse Burial Ground.



Jen writes:

“Salem is often celebrated for its history of millionaire merchants and their mansions, but there is another side to the city’s past, that of Salem’s poorest residents: the aged, disabled, ill, or transient, that were relegated to a harsh life at the City Almshouse. The last almshouse built in Salem, opened in 1816 on Collins Cove to provide housing and support for the city’s impoverished, many of whom were expected to work the adjacent city Farm to offset the cost of their stay. The site was active for over a century and included a small burial ground which would have served as the only option for those who were unable to afford a funeral or that had no family to claim their remains.”



Unfortunately, until Jen’s research, few knew of the land’s former purpose and significance, as there is little remaining evidence of the Almshouse or its burial ground.

Jen will be giving a virtual talk at the Pickering House on March 14, 2021. <https://pickering-house.org/>

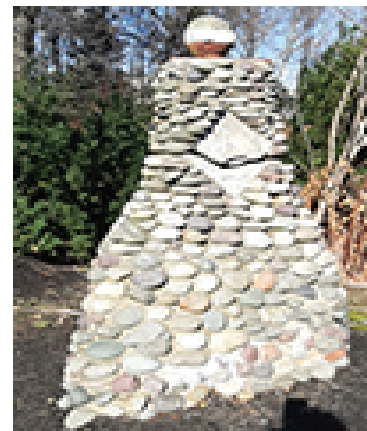
From the Research Desk...

Trustee Irene Axelrod answers questions from the SHS email

The most interesting and unusual research question this month comes from a pathologist in Michigan who is researching the history of autopsies in America. His question is about the death of Jacob Goodale (or Goodell) in 1676 as he says “at the hands of none other than Giles Corey” infamous for the method of his own death in 1692.

The pathologist is looking for records of the postmortem completed by Dr. Zerubabel Endicott. Having had no success in searching the online catalogs of several libraries, I wondered if early records might still be kept in the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of Massachusetts. In checking that website I was advised that only qualified medical professionals could have their questions answered. I passed that information on to the pathologist and asked him to let me know the results of his search. If anyone reading this has any ideas, please contact me through the SHS email account at salemhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Another interesting question that, unfortunately, went unanswered was one regarding a stone marker a member discovered on Google Earth in the back parking lot of the CVS located at the corner of Highland Ave and Marlborough St. The question posed, quite simply, is what was the marker created to symbolize and why is it still preserved in it's, apparently, original location? The pictures below show this three-sided stone or more precisely rock tower that stands approximately six feet tall capped with a ball. Each side has a plaque; one plaque is missing, one, presumably, dates the monument to 1956, and the third has the numbers 272-74. Please contact us with any information regarding this mystery.



PUNTO URBAN ART MUSEUM

The Punto Urban Art Museum is a mission-driven social justice art program created by North Shore CDC, a community development non-profit founded in the neighborhood in 1978. Believing that public art can be a tool to help integrate neighborhoods and create more resilient communities, North Shore CDC created the Punto Urban Art Museum. This is a mission-driven art program with the goal of breaking down invisible socio-economic barriers. The open air museum contains 75 Large scale murals featuring 40 global and 25 New England-based artists.

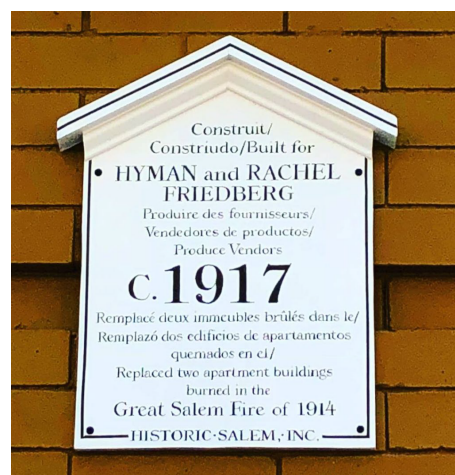


Join PUAM for a virtual Artist Round Table: What Does It Mean to Be Free on Thursday, February 4th at 2:00 PM featuring three muralists Keisha De Leon, Jacob Ginga, and Meghan + Christopher Nichols. RSVP at: <http://puntuurbanartmuseum.org>

Due to Covid-19 restrictions SHS encourages you to view <http://puntuurbanartmuseum.org/freedom/> to see and learn more about Punto's new art work inspired by Nina Simone's song *I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free*

Salem Historic Plaques

19 plaques were placed on historic properties throughout the Point through Historic Salem, Inc. as buildings have been rehabilitated by North Shore CDC. The plaques give a brief description of the first owners, their occupation and how the buildings were erected to replace the ones that were destroyed by the Great Salem Fire of 1914.



The history for each plaque can be viewed on the Historic Salem website: <https://www.historic-salem.org/>

Protecting and Promoting Salem's Rich Veterans' History of Service

by Trustee Beth Bower and Kim Emerling



The City of Salem's Veterans' Services office not only assists Salem's veterans with 'a variety of city, state, and federal benefits', but also promotes and preserves the memory and memorials of over 385 years of our community's service to our country.

Nationally recognized in 2013 as the Birthplace of the National Guard, Kim Emerling, Salem's Veterans' Agent, and a team of volunteers and student interns from area universities research and provide these stories through the City's website and Salem Veterans: Global Citizens of the World and the office's website.

The Veterans' office team has focused on research and preservation of the many monuments, memorials, parks and squares named after Salem Veterans or historical events. If you have wondered about the story behind the name on a square, links to biographies are available. The current focus for the Salem Veterans is to keep the veteran square information up to date, the restoration of the Civil War Union Brigadier General Frederick West Lander grave marker, a complete remodel of the Salem Common War Memorial, and help support the incoming Massachusetts National Guard Museum.

For further information on Salem's veterans see:

<https://www.salem.com/veterans-services>

<http://di.salemstate.edu/globalcitizens/index.php/front-page/>

For an overview of Salem's military history visit:

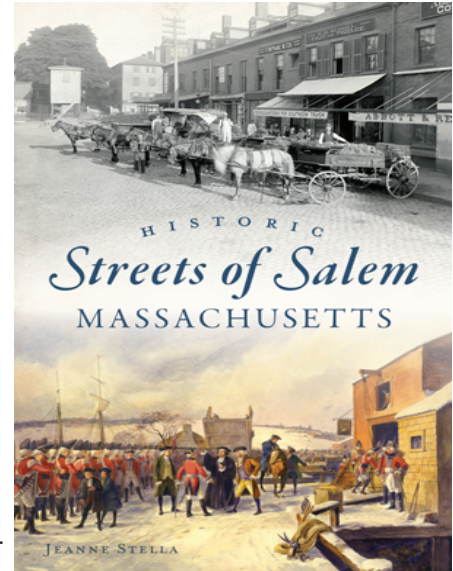
<https://www.salem.org/salem-ma-military-history/>

Historic Streets of Salem Massachusetts

by Jeanne Stella

Trustee Ryan Conary interviews Jeanne Stella, author of *Historic Streets of Salem Massachusetts* regarding her latest publication.

As one of the most storied cities in the country, any new publication on the history of Salem will find itself instantly popular both with local and national audiences. This definitely is the case with local historian and author Jeanne Stella, who worked with Arcadia Publishing to put together a collection of her “street stories” which tell the history behind the names of Salem’s thoroughfares. These stories were originally published by *The Salem News* as letters to the editor, and with this publication, are available for the first time in one volume. The Salem Historical Society recently asked Jeanne about her process for researching the book.



Jeanne Stella: *To begin researching each street I consulted The Essex Antiquarian for information on when the street was laid out. I went through all of the directories for each street, starting with the first little directory from 1837. There was no street index until 1881, so I had to go through each entire directory before 1881 to get information on any particular street. As I would go through the directories, I would find the names of interesting residents and I would track them right through the directories. In this way I built a picture of each resident I wanted to write about. I had a book of pages for each street I did. I have kept all of those pages. I have all of my research in a gigantic tub. It was a lot of work.*

The next step is when you have found interesting residents, you search for other information such as genealogies to see what you can find there. You get any information you can dig up that will give you a picture of who the person was, what they did in their life, whether they moved around a lot or stayed in one place--everything about them. I did a lot of deed research, assisted by Deb Zelano at the Southern Essex County Registry of Deeds. But most of my

continued...

information came from directories, genealogies, and obituaries. I also found interesting information in early newspapers. For maritime research I used manuscripts from the Peabody Essex Museum's Phillips Library, and I was lucky to have completed much of my maritime research before the library moved to Rowley. The manuscripts were a valuable resource in researching the lives of sea captains such as Benjamin Herbert. I used every resource that is listed in my bibliography. One thing would lead to another. It was exhausting work, but it was fun. Tracking people down can become addictive. You just have to keep finding out more. Some of the things you find out are sad. One of the people I wrote about died in Danvers State Hospital. I included that to show the reality of what could happen to a person after a life of hard work.

One of my favorite topics was Salem's role in the Revolutionary War, from Leslie's Retreat on through. Salem privateers played an important role in the war. I also enjoyed writing about maritime adventure. One of my favorite stories is the adventure of Capt. Benjamin Balch and how he was held captive and tattooed in brilliant colors by the Fiji Islanders. Another topic that interests me is determination. I like stories of people who worked hard against the odds to become outstanding members of society. There is the story of Martha Roberts (Forest Avenue) who became the first female member of the Essex Bar. And the stories of members of the African American community such as Edward Cassell, whose hard work and determination led him to prominence that surpassed the boundaries of his hometown. These stories can serve as inspirations to others.

I would like to acknowledge my good friend Ryan Conary who helped me put this collection of stories together. I sent him the entire book as a series of emails because I have no technical knowledge whatsoever. He put the entire book on a one-word document and then incorporated all of my numerous revisions into that document. He took approximately 1/3 of the excellent photos for the book and made arrangements for the other photos that I requested. He actually engineered the work. But I wrote all of the words in the text, all except for one. Yes, Ryan changed one of the words because he thought it was wrong. I will not tell you which word it is, but every time I look at it I will always remember the argument we had about it and how he won the argument! And that is all I have to say about Historic Streets of Salem Massachusetts. Hope you buy a copy and enjoy it.

To purchase a copy of Jeanne's work, you can visit Arcadia Publishing's website, or help to support a local bookstore, such as Wicked Good Books during this difficult time.

Save the Dates:

LESLIE'S RETREAT

FEBRUARY 21, 2021



As the saying goes, “*Due to Covid-19 this year’s presentation of Leslie’s Retreat will be held virtually.*”

The 2021 event will feature a conversation entitled **Bridging the Divide** featuring:

Peter Charles Hoffer, author of
Prelude to Revolution;
The Salem Gunpowder Raid of 1775

Prof. Robert Allison, Chairperson
of Revolution 250

Associate Professor Chernoh M. Sesay, Jr.,
of DePaul University and author of
innumerable articles for the *The New
England Quarterly* and the *Journal of the African American Studies*.

This conversation will be moderated by SHS Trustee Diana Dunlap.

Festivities begin at 2:30 with a city-wide bell ringing from several local churches followed by the conversation at 3:00pm.

For further information see the full listing of events on
<https://www.leslies-retreat.org/>

Register for the zoom event at:

https://masshist.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hONSJBKdTb-SPY2NgIIInRcQ.

Salem State University Presents:

The Annual Charlotte Forten Day Program
March 2, 2021 12:00-1:30

*“Charlotte Forten’s View:
Race in the ‘Free’ American
North in the 19th Century”*



Presented by

Professor Joanne Pope Melish
Associate Professor of 19th century U. S.
History at the University of Kentucky,
author of *Disowning Slavery: Gradual
Emancipation and “Race”
in New England, 1780-1860.*

This is a virtual program. Tune into Salem State University and the Salem Historical Society’s websites for zoom information as it becomes available:

<https://www.salemstate.edu/charlotte-forten>

<http://www.salemhistorical.org/>



Salem Ancestry Days

April 30-May 1, 2021

Celebrate genealogy and ancestral connections to Salem, Massachusetts, during a weekend of lectures, tours, and research.

Residents and visitors are invited to celebrate their ancestral and immigrant connections to Salem, Massachusetts during the first annual Salem Ancestry Days celebration, which will be held April 30-May 1, 2021. The weekend will feature lectures, tours, research opportunities, and information on the people who connect us all to Salem.

Whether one is considering the Salem Witch Trials, author Nathaniel Hawthorne, abolitionist Charlotte Forten, navigator Nathaniel Bowditch, architect Samuel McIntire, or one of the families that left their mark on Salem's maritime history, there are remarkable connections to be made to the people who created the Salem story. Event organizers also hope connections are made to the native persons, the Naumkeag, who lived on the land prior to the arrival of Roger Conant and the Dorchester Company, and the enslaved or indentured persons who were not in Salem by choice.

In the early 20th century the Great Salem Fire changed the landscape of downtown Salem and gave rise to new neighborhoods of French Canadian, Polish, and eastern European immigrants. Today Salem is a home to communities of Latinx and Hispanic heritage that can and should be celebrated through Salem Ancestry Days.

For centuries, Salem has been a destination for emigrants, immigrants and travelers. The community is a landing point and a starting point for families who are starting their American journey or changing their family's trajectory. Through collaboration with the Phillips Library at the Peabody Essex Museum, Essex National Heritage Commission, American Ancestors and New England Historic Genealogical Society, and the City of Salem, the Ancestry Days celebration intends to be a gathering point for descendants of Salem's families as well as a research opportunity for people who want to learn more about their family history.

This year's festival is set to include a mix of in-person and virtual events, including a land blessing with the Massachusett, pre-recorded and live lectures on local history and how to begin to research your own ancestry, guided walking tours, and more. Events will be listed at Salem Destination www.salem.org/ancestry.
