

PRIMITIVE PIECES

The Newsletter of The Peace Dale Museum of Art and Culture

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Spring 2018

Slatersville: America's first planned mill village

In 1793, British-born Samuel Slater helped Moses Brown and his partners establish the first successful water-powered roller spinning textile mill in America in Pawtucket, on the falls of the Blackstone River.

The venture was so successful that within a few years, the businessmen were planning the largest water-powered spinning mill in the country. The Pawtucket Falls could not provide enough water

**THURSDAY, MARCH 22
7:00 P.M.**



power, so Slater sent his brother John, newly-arrived from England, to look for a site for the new mill. John Slater found what he was looking for on the Branch River, just south of the Massachusetts border. In 1803, the village of Slatersville was born.

By 1807, the mill was operating. Slater and his partners recruited entire families to work in the mill, and they began to build a self-contained *continued on page 2*

The campaign to take back Newport

Before the Revolutionary War, Newport was Rhode Island's largest and richest town. But its fortunes fell when the war broke out, and in December of 1776, the British seized control of the town. Col. John Cooke, unable to get reinforcements, was forced to drive his troops, cattle, and cannons up the island ahead of the approaching British regulars.

In March, 1778, Major Gen.



**MONDAY, MAY 14
7:00 P.M.**

John Sullivan was sent to Rhode Island to take back Newport. The British saw his attack preparations and launched a series of local raids. Meanwhile, France officially recognized the United States of America, and thousands of French troops set out for North America to aid in the war effort.

When news of the French involvement spread, colonial militia *continued on page 2*

The Campaign to Take Back Newport

continued from page 1 units began streaming to Aquidneck Island to reinforce Sullivan. The British, alarmed at the arrival of d'Estaing's fleet in New York, sent 2,000 troops to Newport as reinforcements. By mid-July, the British had more than 6,700 men on Aquidneck and Conanicut Islands.

Admiral Comte d'Estaing with a fleet of 12 ships of the line and 4,000 troops, arrived at Point Judith on July 29. As the French moved up the East Bay, the British scuttled ships and abandoned outlying positions.

The anticipated battle would be the first major effort at cooperation between the United States and France. But as the French and Americans were about to launch an assault on Newport, a

major storm moved in, severely damaging the French fleet. D'Estaing, no longer able to assist the colonists, retreated to repair his ships.

Could Sullivan attack Newport without French support? Would patriots be forced to surrender to the British again? Find out what happened on Monday, May 14 at 7:00 p.m. when author Christian McBurney talks about the Rhode Island Campaign, its historic significance, and its aftermath.

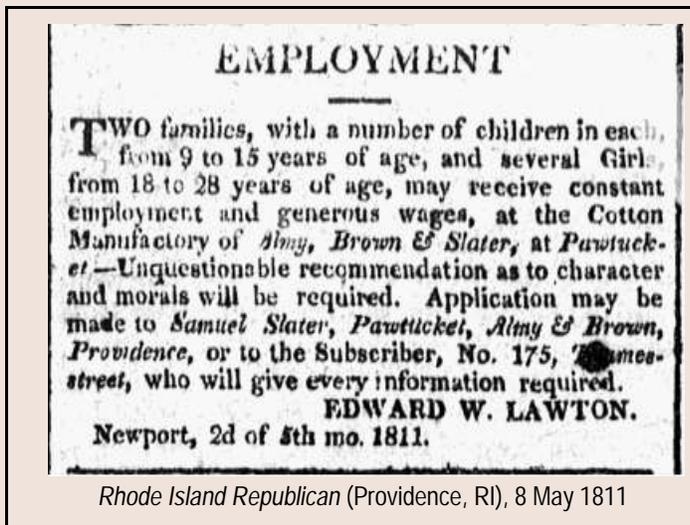
Christian McBurney, an independent historian and author, grew up in Kingston and now practices law in Washington, D.C. He lives in Maryland and Rhode Island. McBurney is the publisher and editor-in-chief of the Online Review of Rhode Island History (www.smallstatebighistory.com).

America's First Planned Mill Village

continued from page 1 village that could meet the needs of the growing work force. John Slater's house was built in 1810, and many of the company-owned houses for mill workers were built between 1810 and 1820. In 1838, a traditional new England town green was laid out and the Greek Revival style church was built. The mill owners

established a Sunday school for the children of mill workers in Pawtucket in 1797, and they followed suit in Slatersville. The Slatersville Congregational Church is the location of the oldest continuously operated Sunday School in America.

John Slater and his sons owned the village until the end of the 19th century. The village remained in company ownership until the 1950s. The Slatersville Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is part of the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. Join Park Ranger Kevin Klyberg on Thursday, March 22 at 7:00 p.m. to learn more about the growth of America's first planned mill village.



Rhode Island Republican (Providence, RI), 8 May 1811

Each program in our Spring Lecture Series takes place in the Museum Gallery on the second floor of the Peace Dale Office Building, 1058 Kingstown Road, Peace Dale, across the street from the Peace Dale Library. Refreshments will be served. The program is free for Museum members. Donations from non-members are gratefully accepted.

The Peace Dale Museum of Art and Culture
1058 Kingstown Road, Room 5 • Peace Dale, Rhode Island 02879 • (401) 783-5711
www.primitiveartmuseum.org
Beth Hogan, Museum Administrator
Louise Weaver, Administrative Assistant • Mary Brown, Educator
The Museum Gallery is open Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and by appointment

The Code Talkers

The native language of the Navajo people of the American southwest is so complex in grammar and so unique in syntax and tonal qualities that it is almost nonintelligible even to closely related tribes. That's why it was the perfect basis for the secret code created during World War II to transmit secret military information. It is the only spoken military code that has never been deciphered. The Navajo men who created it, and used it to save thousands of lives, were called the Code Talkers.

Six Navajo Code Talkers, working around the clock during first two days

THURSDAY, APRIL 12
7:00 P.M.



of the Battle of Iwo Jima, sent and received more than 800 messages, all without error. Without them, the battle could not have been won.

Join us on Thursday, April 12 to

see "True Whispers," the documentary film about this extraordinary Navajo effort. Betsy Cook, a linguist who has worked as an educator on the Navajo reservation since 1977, will introduce the film and answer questions about the Code Talkers and the Navajo language after the film.

Betsy Cook, a Wakefield resident, graduated from Wellesley and earned degrees in both French and Russian at Yale. Currently she is helping the Navajo revitalize their language using Rosetta Stone language learning software that she helped develop.

Evolving patterns of Native American coastal settlement

Rhode Island's 400 miles of coastline have supported coastal populations for millennia. Native Americans who lived in coastal communities fished, shellfished, manufactured canoes, and traded long before the Europeans arrived.

Concerns about rising seas, coastal development, energy projects, and rapid responses to major storm events have led to a flurry of archaeological surveys in Rhode Island's coastal zone. Those surveys have yielded evidence for more than 7,000 years

of Native American occupation and use of the southern New England coast. The regional archaeological record is varied,



THURSDAY, MAY 3
7:00 P.M.

ranging from small stone quarries and fishing locales to large, concentrated Native American villages and ancient ceremonial places.

Jay Waller, a Senior Archeologist at The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. in Pawtucket, will join us on Thursday, May 3 to talk about southern New England's changing coast. He will draw from real archaeological examples to summarize evolving patterns of Native American coastal settlement and use through time.

Peace Dale Museum of Art and Culture
1058 Kingstown Road, Room 5
Peace Dale, RI 02879



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CELEBRATING OUR 125th YEAR!



Children from West Bay Christian Academy enjoying one of our educational programs for students.