

# News from the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association

Teachers' Center, Library, Indian House, Memorial Hall, Craft Fairs



## MAY 2018 ISSUE

### Inside this issue:

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| <b>Curator Retires</b><br>after 35 years at PVMA | Pg. 2 |
| <b>PVMA People</b>                               | Pg. 2 |
| <b>Membership</b>                                | Pg. 4 |
| <b>Town Hall Update</b>                          | Pg. 3 |



### Indian House Holds Member Open House

A new "Membership Activities Committee" launched its first offering April 14th at the Indian House Children's

Museum. Members enjoyed hands-on activities including tavern life, textiles, and delicious fireplace cooking. 2018 is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Indian House Memorial and PVMA joining

forces.

Watch for updates on the upcoming Indian House repairs and anniversary activities in our next newsletter.



### WELCOME TO THE NEW ONLINE PVMA NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *News from the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association* located in Old Deerfield, Massachusetts since 1870. In order to serve the Members, Friends and Supporters of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association more effectively, this newsletter will be sent periodically to your email.

In an effort to create more transparency, the Council wants to make information about the Association and its activities available more often. Please let us know if

you prefer a hard copy. The digital version, however, is much more cost effective than printing and sending mass mailings.

The newsletter will be sent out quarterly by the Council. We welcome suggestions for articles you would like to see, or articles you might want to submit for publication consideration. Questions you have about PVMA for which you would like an answer, and anything else which might be of interest to the newsletter's audience, are also welcome. (See last

page for details of how to submit to the newsletter.)

In each issue it is intended that there will be updates on activities in which PVMA is currently involved. There will be details of future plans and information about how to get involved. There will also be articles about the staff and the collections. Stay tuned for future issues. We anticipate issues in April, June, August and at the end of the year.



*Photos above and left are of participants enjoying our April 14th hands-on programs for members, supporters and friends. The programs were designed to illustrate what happens during typical field trip activities at the Indian House.*

**Photos courtesy of Ben Bensen.**

# PVMA PEOPLE

## MEMORIAL HALL CURATOR SUZANNE L. FLYNT RETIRES

After 35 years with PVMA, first briefly as Assistant Curator and then as Curator, Suzanne L. Flynt retired at the end of November 2017. Her years of service marked a renaissance in PVMA collecting, exhibits, collections care, and publishing. Among her other major contributions was the establishment of a long-term, positive relationship for PVMA with Native Peoples, reflected in very sensitive exhibits related to these first inhabitants. This work greatly enhanced the PVMA Founders' expressed intent to honor the Pocumtucks and other Native Peoples who lived here before the English settlers.

Through her association with the PVMA families' descendants, as well as her ongoing personal research and publishing, Suzanne has amassed an unmatched knowledge of Deerfield history. Two of her most recognized publications include *The Allen Sisters: Pictorial Photographers 1885-1920* and *Poetry to the Earth: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Deerfield*. An active search for a new curator is presently underway. The position is scheduled to be filled by the Fall.

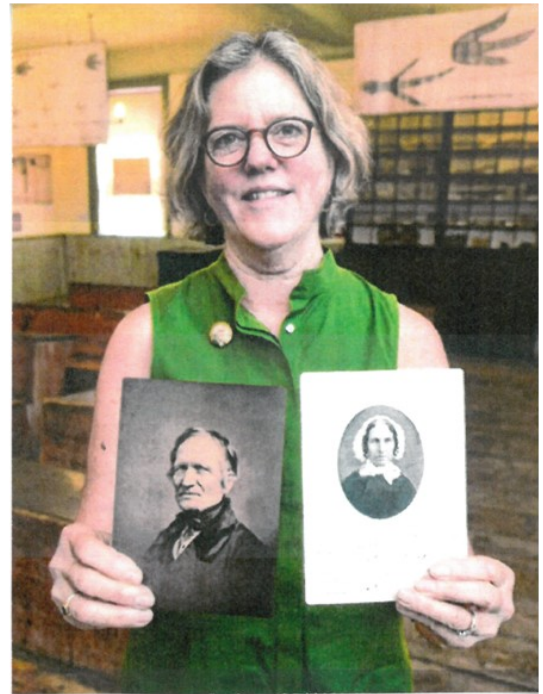


Photo courtesy of *The Recorder*, Greenfield, MA

*Our 150<sup>th</sup> is coming in 2020. You won't want to miss it!*



## MEET YOUR COUNCIL MEMBERS



**Council President Carol Letson** is a transplant to the Franklin County area who has grown to love this fascinating region. She raised her family in Greenfield and was the Director of the Library at Greenfield Community College before retiring. Her interests are history, sailing, reading, and enjoying local cultural events. Carol has served on several PVMA Council committees.



Council member and newsletter editor **Jeremy Rogers** has been associated with PVMA since 1999. A Humanities teacher at Frontier Regional School, he has made full use of PVMA Teacher Professional Development pro-

grams as well as leading numerous annual field trips to Memorial Hall and the Indian House with his students. PVMA Teacher of the Year in 2008, he is the author of *So Much History, Such a Small Village*, a book of Deerfield history published in 2016.



## FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TIM NEUMANN

### Happy Birthday!

To PVMA that is - it's our birthday month.

May 10, 1870, George Sheldon and friends gathered in what is now the Old Deerfield Town Hall. Authorized by an Act of the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives, they organized the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association and wrote their first constitution.

I wonder what those men... and the single woman member mentioned (!) gathered then would have thought about their newly formed Association eventually purchasing the building in which they were meeting. They knew the building as the "town house," a center of community life. It would be hard for them to imagine the town without it.

PVMA did buy the "town house" and started renovations in, what was their far off future, 1995. The PVMA Founders would likely be astonished that PVMA would have the resources to do that. But given the importance of the building to town government and local social life, I do not think the Founders would be surprised that PVMA stepped up to preserve the town hall when others did not.

Although structurally stable after many years of work, PVMA's ultimate goal is to put the Town Hall back in

use again. We want to re-start that effort by reconnecting us all to that beautiful structure.

The Old Town Hall is our history in three dimensions. And it is important historically as its status as a Save America's Treasures federal project implies.

The original building is not lost, just hidden — its history is there in multiple layers. A 19<sup>th</sup> century history of the town can be traced through the architectural transformation of the building over 170 years. It evolved from a modest 1842 single-story Gothic structure into an 1878 two-story, with town hall above and two-room grammar school below, then into a porticoed and pillared Greek-inspired temple of democracy in 1925. Evidence of these many periods of use are still there. Even the first floor room in which PVMA was born is still there - it was jacked up to become what is now the second floor auditorium that for decades welcomed spring Town Meetings as well as PVMA's own Annual Meeting.

But what is not so clearly preserved are all the memories of our town that the building holds.

### That is where you come in.

I am sure there are many PVMA members and friends who have personal memories of the old Town Hall from their past. PVMA would like to gather these memories as part of our up-coming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming in

2020, maybe for inclusion in a booklet or online exhibit.

PVMA people have hinted at this rich history but the record is not complete.

PVMA member Helen Yazwinski is one person who has shared some of her memories. She has lived on Memorial Street across from the Town Hall her entire wedded life and for many years worked in the town assessor's office in the little brick building next door. Helen



made sure PVMA knows that the beautiful plantings she organized around the Town Hall are in memory of Hap Eaton, Sr., Depart. of Public Works Superintendent.

I suspect that former librarian Nancy Bell and others hold many tales of the Dickinson Library that was housed on the first floor until the 1990s.

Neighbors Maryanne and Frank Ciesluk, Sr. shared with us the importance of the Old Town Hall in their youth as a dating destination as movies were shown there regularly. Were you there too?

Here's a more recent memory shared by Pamela Lee Cranston who grew up in Deerfield in the 1960s in her recent Legacy Society mailing interview: "...we also spent a lot of time at the Town Hall theater where my parents directed and played in many productions of the Stockade Players during the 1960s-70s. I was also in productions of "Camelot" and "Hansel and Gretel", hosted by Bement School, which my parents organized and directed. I also remember exploring the old town library, where I discovered many glorious first editions of the old *Wizard of Oz* books."

Send materials to us either by email [pvmaoffice@deerfield.history.museum](mailto:pvmaoffice@deerfield.history.museum) or to: PVMA, PO Box 428, Deerfield, MA 01342-0428. Items can be scanned and returned upon request.

Now structurally stable, the Town Hall renovations ultimately should ensure this historical building will be in regular use.





# POCUMTUCK VALLEY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

## SAVE THE DATE!

**June 10 – Party for Members, Donors and Friends at 1 pm... Watch for your invitation in the mail.**



**May 5** – Memorial Hall Museum is OPEN for the season, weekends only in May, then June to October, Tuesdays – Sundays, 11am – 4:30 pm.

**June 17** – Concert in honor of “Juneteenth” @ 3pm in the Music Room of Memorial Hall Museum.

**July 4** – Independence Day Concert (*free*), @ 3pm in the Blue and White Hall in the Teachers’ Center.

**July 8** – Old Deerfield Sunday Afternoon Concerts begin now through August @ 3pm in the Music Room of Memorial Hall Museum.

**August 4 – October 7**, Indian House Memorial Children’s Museum is OPEN on weekends.

## SUBMITTING IDEAS, QUESTIONS AND ARTICLES

If you have an idea for an article for a future newsletter, comments or questions to share, or an article you would like to have considered for publication, please contact the editor at: [pvmaoffice@deerfield.history.museum](mailto:pvmaoffice@deerfield.history.museum)

Please note that any articles accepted for publication in this newsletter could be subject to editing to fit the space available, if necessary. PVMA will not be able to return unaccepted articles unless they are submitted with a return self-addressed stamped envelope. Digital submission is preferred. Our mailing address is PVMA, PO Box 428, Deerfield, MA 01342.

## **Not a member? We would love having you join PVMA!**

As a Member of the Association, you are the backbone of this organization -- a legal, voting stakeholder as well as financially making all that we do possible.

PVMA’s members play a role in the governance and direction of PVMA that is quite different from other “memberships” you may have with other non-profit organizations who use the term for their “donors”. You actually become the organization at PVMA!

PVMA leadership takes your membership seriously in shaping our future. There are several new board of director committees working to recommend to members improvements, such as bylaw changes and new programs, that will keep us in the forefront as a 21<sup>st</sup> century museum. In the near future we will be asking for more member input, as PVMA values our members’ commitment to our future.

Members enjoy many benefits which are listed on our website at <https://deerfield-ma.org/join/>. If you would like more information on PVMA itself you will find it at <https://deerfield-ma.org/about/> or contact Lee Oldenburg at 413-774-7476, Ext 100.