

# The Historian

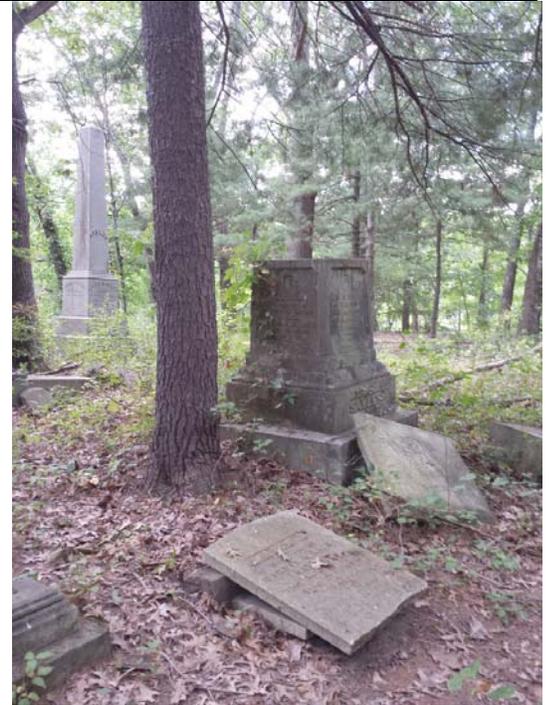
BURRILLVILLE HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2015

## Sayles-Cook Cemetery Restoration Planned

The BH&PS Cemetery Committee would like to restore/conservate cemetery #118 (Sayles-Cook Lot) behind CVS in Pascoag. This abandoned cemetery is the resting place of the Sayles family who once owned the Granite Mill in Pascoag. It has four very tall, impressive monuments - the tallest in town. Over the years, two of these monuments were toppled; another is leaning and will topple eventually. We need to hire a monument company with a crane to level and reassemble these monuments. We have to create access to the cemetery and also will have to hire a tree specialist to remove 5 large trees that are growing up alongside some of these tall monuments. Volunteers from the historical society's cemetery committee will complete the project by resetting/repairing additional headstones in this cemetery.

The total cost of the project is about \$11,000. We are applying for grants and have started a fundraising campaign to make this project a reality. We are appealing to our members, town residents and businesses to please donate to this important restoration project. If we receive funding, the project will begin in May and should be completed by October 1st. This is a huge undertaking and a very exciting project. Please see the enclosed donation sheet.



The Sayles-Cook Cemetery overlooks Union Pond in Pascoag.

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*President's Message*  
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The Society has two very exciting projects planned for 2015 described in this newsletter. I hope you can attend the March meeting to learn about these endeavors. Please use the enclosed donation sheet to support these special efforts. You can also support the projects by going to our Facebook pages and "Like" us - and tell your friends!

Come to the April meeting to learn about the old phones from the 1930s and 1940s.

The May meeting will feature a slideshow on the history of the mill in Harrisville from Andrew Harris to William Tinkham, Austin T. Levy and today.

Don't forget the Annual Preservation Conference on April 25th in Chepachet. The deadline to mail your registration is April 11th. You will meet people from all over the state with similar interests in preserving history.

We also look forward to Kenneth

Proudfoot's film, "The Amazing Life and Times of Austin T. Levy."

Betty Mencucci

### Meetings

**Tues., March 24 – Information on Sayles-Cook Cemetery Project and Civil War Monument. 7:00 p.m. Election of officers.**

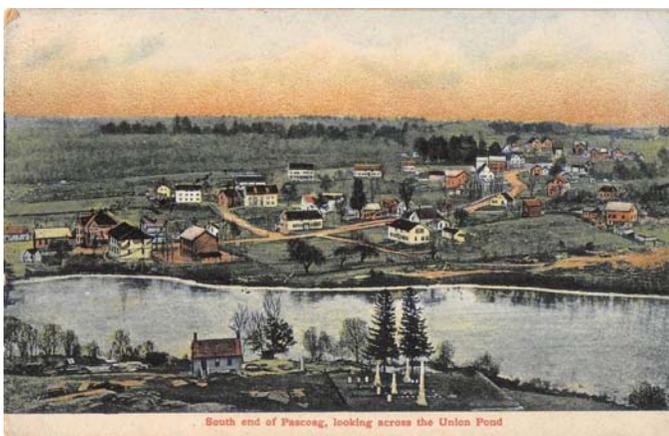
**Tues., April 28 - Presentation by Denis Couture on old telephones. 7:00 p.m.**

**Tues., May 26 – Harrisville Mill Slideshow. 7:00 p.m.**

**March Meeting will feature information on the Sayles-Cook Restoration Project and the Joseph Taylor Civil War Monument.**

Please come to the March meeting to learn about two very exciting projects. Come and learn about the restoration/conservation work planned for the Sayles-Cook Lot in Pascoag. We will describe in detail the work that needs to be done. If you would like to volunteer to help clean the cemetery, we could use your help.

We will also reveal the plans to create a Civil War monument on the grounds of the Bridgeton School. This project will cost about \$3000. We are seeking donations to help fund both of these efforts. We also are planning to hold an informational day/fundraising event at the Bridgeton School this spring to raise money and public awareness for these projects. There will be an ad in the Bargain Buyer. If you would like to be involved in either of these projects, please call 568-8449 or send an email to [bmencucci@cox.net](mailto:bmencucci@cox.net). Our annual elections will be held that evening as well.



South end of Pascoag, looking across the Union Pond

Old Postcard showing the Sayles-Cook Cemetery circa 1900 (in foreground).

**Hard Memorable Winter**

This has been a hard winter on everyone with record-breaking low temperatures and constant snow. Our January meeting was canceled because that's the day the Blizzard of 2015 hit bringing us 27" of snow. Burrillville was mentioned in the national news as being one of the hardest hit areas in Rhode Island. During the month of February, we have received weekly snowstorms and numerous



Betty Mencucci stands in a "slot" path leading from BH&PS parking lot to the Bridgeton School - Feb. 18th.

days with a low temperature below zero. With no melting taking place and frequent storms, it has been hard to keep up with the shoveling at the Bridgeton School. The February meeting was canceled as well, because our paths and walkways could not be properly cleared. The

path from the parking lot has turned into a 20" wide slot that is 5 feet tall and about 15-20 feet long.

**Learn about Old Phones at the April Meeting**

Turn your cell phones off for the evening and come to see a demonstration of telephones from the 1930s and 1940s. Denis Couture will be showing a 1932 Western Electric Model "202" with a Kellogg crank ringer box and the E1 handset "spit cup" type; and a post-war 1947 Model 302 Western Electric known as the "Lucy Phone" after the "I Love Lucy" show.

"Like" us on Facebook

*Burrillville Historical & Preservation Society*  
*Burrillville Historical Cemetery Committee*  
 Tell your friends to like us. Spread the word!

**March Is Membership Month**

It's time to send in your annual membership dues. An individual membership is only \$10.00, and a family membership is \$15.00.

**Donations**

Betty Mencucci – information on hazardous waste sites in Burrillville, mostly from the 1980s (Western Sand & Gravel in Nasonville and RefineMet International in Mapleville).

Anonymous– donation of items and booklets pertaining to Zambarano Hospital.

The Cemetery Committee now meets on the first Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend. There are many ways to become involved.

**BH&PS earns money from DINO'S and IGA slips.** BH&PS receives a percentage of the total. Drop them off at the Jesse M. Smith Library, mail them or bring them to a meeting. Proceeds are used to preserve our archives! We also save used ink cartridges and redeem them at Staples for office supplies.

**Member Alice Lavigne dies at age 87**

On December 9, 2014 Alice M. Lavigne of Glendale passed away at the Overlook Nursing Home in Pascoag. She was born in Woonsocket, RI, a daughter



of the late Arthur & Gabrielle (Rogister) Lavigne. She will be remembered as owner and operator of the former Alice's Florist in Glendale for 65 years. Besides being a member of BH&PS, she was also a Lion's Club member and a member of the Oakland-Mapleville Fire District. She served on the Parks and

Recreation Committee and on the Board of Canvasses. Throughout her life, she was very generous and supported and sponsored many organizations.

**2015 Preservation Conference**

I urge everyone to try to attend the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) annual conference in Glocester on Saturday, April 25th. The cost is only \$40 for the entire day and that includes lunch. The theme this year is "Sticks and Stones" and examines historic rural landscapes and the long-term impact of changes on the land. The sticks are the forests, cleared for agricultural fields long ago, regrown, and now managed as conservation land, parks, and private woodlots. The stones remain where they were placed to mark burials, to provide sturdy building foundations, and to build walls that separated farm fields and delineated property boundaries. The keynote address will be given by Robert Thorson who will talk on New England stone walls. He is the author of *Stone by Stone: The Magnificent History in New England's Stone Walls*. Following the keynote, attendees will be able to attend 3 different sessions for the remainder of the day. The sessions include many choices of walking tours, bus tours, lectures and workshops. There will be several tours beyond Glocester including Foster, Scituate and Burrillville. I will be one of the group leaders giving a walking tour of Harrisville. I will also be one of the leaders in a walking tour of the Sprague Farm in Glocester.

Betty Mencucci

For more info visit,

<http://www.preservation.ri.gov/conference>



Winter scene in Burrillville circa 1900. Photo courtesy of Earl McWilliams.

## Austin T. Levy & Me by Kenneth Proudfoot

If you live in Burrillville, you know of Austin T. Levy. Until two years ago this month, I had never heard of him. Worse, I had never been to Burrillville!

Now, I want to share his life, his accomplishments, and his philosophies with the world. I also want to help everyone discover this lovely town and its wonderful residents. Here is the brief story of Austin T. Levy and me.

Austin T. Levy had three big careers. He was a successful textile industrialist, a visionary Bahamas' agriculturist, and a generous philanthropist. But he was much more. With everything he accomplished, the world he inhabited became a little richer, a little better, and a little nicer. I have truly enjoyed getting to know this man, who has become a teacher, a mentor, and an inspiration.

Austin T. Levy came into my life through his wife, June Rockwell Levy. Mr. Levy, a successful 20<sup>th</sup> century textile manufacturer, had named a charitable foundation after his wife. One day I asked where the money for the foundation came from. No one in my circle could tell me. I looked up the foundation name and found a photo of June's husband and the source of the foundation's assets. I went to our library website searching for "Austin T. Levy." A book with that title popped up. It was written by Louis Bleiweis and published in 1953. Mr. Bleiweis was a reporter for the *Woonsocket Call*, a daily newspaper, and spent much time with Mr. Levy. June Rockwell Levy asked him to write her husband's biography following his untimely death in 1951 at the age of 70. In the pages of Mr. Bleiweis's book, I realized that the vision, scope, and accomplishments of Austin T. Levy were both unique and lasting.

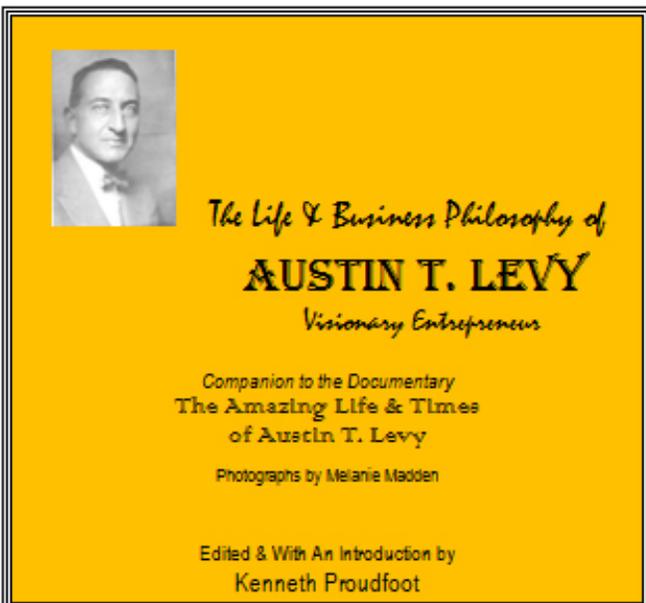
My immediate thought was to shoot some video of the people and places that could help showcase and document the life and times of Austin T. Levy. I quickly realized the subject required a more professional treatment as a documentary film that could be broadcast on television and shared through DVDs and classroom programs. With Emmy-winning videographer Jim Karpeichik, a film of Levy's life is in production.

With further reading and research, I found that Levy's ideas and philosophies about business, life, money, wages, profit-sharing, government and many other subjects are the keys to understanding his optimistic outlook on life, his great love of people, and his great success in manufacturing, civic improvements, agriculture and philanthropy.

In addition to gathering news articles, photos and people's recollections to develop a one-hour documentary of his life, I began collecting his writings and speeches.

I have just completed a book of these speeches and writings that reveal the thought process behind Austin T. Levy's busy life of doing well by doing good. The book - *The Life & Business Philosophy of Austin T. Levy, Visionary Entrepreneur* - brings together the thoughts, beliefs and philosophies of this inspiring leader of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

I hope some of Austin T. Levy's words will inspire you as they have me.



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