

Interpreting Historic Places



THE 18TH ANNUAL RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE

Historic Preservation Conference

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 2003 · EAST GREENWICH, RI

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Telling Untold Stories at Historic Places

Patricia West, Ph.D., *Curator, Martin Van Buren National Historic Site (Kinderhook, NY) and Adjunct Professor of Public History, The University at Albany*

Introduction by Stephen White, AIA, *Dean, School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation, Roger Williams University*

Dr. Patricia West is a leading scholar and practitioner of interpreting historic sites. Her book *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* examines the origins and institutional histories of some of America's most cherished historic sites, like Mount Vernon, Monticello, Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House, and the Booker T. Washington National Monument. Currently the curator of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site

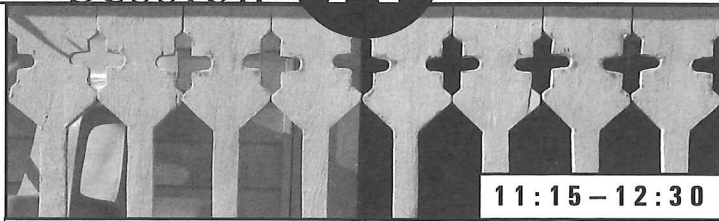
in Kinderhook, New York, Dr. West has served as a consultant at numerous historic sites, including Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, the Saratoga National Battlefield project, Friendship Hill National Historic Site, and the Chapman and Roberson museums. Many of her published articles and presentations examine how to tell the stories of overlooked populations like women, servants, and minority ethnic groups.

The keynote address is sponsored by Roger Williams University School of Architecture, Art, and Historic Preservation.

Conference Agenda

8:30-9:00	9:00-10:45		11:15-12:30		2:00-3:15		3:45-5:00	5:00-6:00
Registration <i>at the Varnum Memorial Armory</i>	Opening Session Welcoming Remarks Keynote Address 2003 State Preservation Awards <i>at the Greenwich Odeum</i>	B R E A K	Session A <i>Consult guide for locations</i>	L U N C H	Session B <i>Consult guide for locations</i>	B R E A K	Session C <i>Consult guide for locations</i>	Closing Reception <i>at the Varnum Memorial Armory</i>

Session



A1 Farmland and Farming Preservation

SITE Town Hall Council Conference Room, 125 Main St.

Ken Ayars, *Chief, Division of Agriculture, RI-DEM*

Steve Connors, *Director, Rhode Island Community Farm*

Polly Hutchison, *Farm Manager, Casey Farm*

Ken Lagerquist, *Executive Director, Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association*

Lee Whitaker, *Director of Planning, Town of East Greenwich*

Farmers are preserving Rhode Island's open space. Using creative strategies, farmers can withstand the economic pressures that threaten their land and their way of life. This panel will discuss some alternatives: crop specialization, community farming, interpreting historic agricultural practices, and selling development rights.

A2 Interpreting Historic Places: Act Locally, Think Globally at Your Museum

SITE Armory of the Kentish Guards, 57 Peirce St.

Chuck Arning, *Ranger, John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor*

Gordon Beeton, *Curator of Education, Slater Mill Historic Site*

Lisa Dady, *Curator, Heritage Harbor Museum*

John Tschirch, *Architectural Historian, The Preservation Society of Newport County*

Patricia West, Ph.D., *Keynote Speaker*

Your historic site can add a national or even international dimension to its interpretation. Learn about how the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom links historic properties throughout the U.S., how the women's suffrage movement is revealed at Marble House in Newport, and how a site in Pawtucket tells some of the biggest stories in world history—technology, industrialization, and immigration. Then challenge the panel to find the global stories at your museum.

A3 Working on the Waterfront

SITE Varnum Armory Lounge, 6 Main St.

Davison Bolster, *Chair, Warren Waterfront Committee*

Martin Douglas, *President, Maritime Preservation Alliance*

Richard Greenwood, Ph.D., *Project Review, RIHP&HC*

Valerie Talmage, *Director of Projects, Trust for Public Land*

In 2003, traditional activities like fishing and boat building are competing with coastal tourism and real estate development for a place on the waterfront. Hear from waterfront activists who are working to preserve not only unique buildings, docks, piers, and other infrastructure but also the activities they serve: fishing, boat-building, marine industries, and recreation.

A4 A New Wave of Mill Rehabs: Strategies for Reuse

SITE Varnum Armory Tudor Room, 6 Main St.

Peter Gill Case, *AIA, Architect, Truth Box Inc.*

B. J. Dupre, *Partner, Armory Revival Company*

Virginia Sarra Hesse, *Principal Preservation Architect, RIHP&HC*

Phyllis Van Orden Nathanson, *Owner/Developer, Blackstone Studios, LLC*

In just two years, almost a dozen major mill rehab projects have gotten underway. Financial incentives and emerging markets are making it easier to convert industrial buildings to residential, commercial, light industrial, artists' spaces, schools, and mixed uses. Hear about some of the exciting projects — Monohasset and Providence and National Worsted Mills in Providence, Lebanon Mill and Parkin Yarn in Pawtucket, and Ashton Mill in Lincoln.

A5 Introducing Rhode Island's New Preservation Grant Program

SITE Town Hall Council Chamber, 125 Main St.

Sharon Allison, *Grants Coordinator, RIHP&HC*

Christine H. Callahan, *State Representative (Newport, Middletown, Portsmouth)*

Paul Crowley, *State Representative (Newport)*

Sarah Zurier, *Special Projects Coordinator, RIHP&HC*

Museums! Theatres! Art centers! Historic sites! Concert halls! Did you know that Rhode Islanders voted for \$3 million in grants for preservation projects at museums and cultural facilities? This workshop will review guidelines and brief applicants on Rhode Island's new preservation grant program.

A6 Building Rhode Island's Economy Around Quality of Place

SITE Greenwich Odeum, 59 Main St.

Kip Bergstrom, *Executive Director, Rhode Island Economic Policy Council*

Ken Payne, *Chief Policy Advisor, RI Senate*

Ted Sanderson, *Executive Director, RIHP&HC*

Scott Wolf, *Executive Director, Grow Smart Rhode Island*

The Rhode Island Economic Policy Council proposes to focus economic development on "quality of place" and to promote authentic places in which to live and work. Similarly, the Governor's Growth Council calls for "growth centers" in authentic places. State interest in capitalizing on Rhode Island's historic community centers could transform historic preservation programs. This panel will explain the Quality of Place initiative and discuss plans to implement it.

A7 Gorton-Greene Farm BUS TOUR

DEPARTS Outside Varnum Armory, 6 Main St.

Helen Kessler, *Owner, Gorton-Greene Farm*

Wm McKenzie Woodward, *Architectural Historian, RIHP&HC*

Home to one family for many generations, this visually compelling property includes a rambling main house, 18th-century cider press, and landscaped setting. Begun around 1685 as a stone-ender for Samuel Gorton Jr., the main house was expanded in the 18th century and remodeled in the early 20th. The complex presents valuable lessons in architectural history, landscape design, and agriculture, and preservation strategies for each of those areas.

A8 Clouds Hill BUS TOUR

DEPARTS Outside Varnum Armory, 6 Main St.

Wayne Cabral, *Business Partner, Clouds Hill Bed & Breakfast*

Anne D. Holst, *Owner, Clouds Hill Bed & Breakfast*

Robert O. Jones, *Architectural Historian, RIHP&HC*

Step back in time as you cross the threshold at Clouds Hill. Designed by architect William R. Walker, this elegant, one-of-a-kind country house was built in 1872-77 as a wedding gift for Elizabeth Ives Slater Reed. It retains all of its original furniture and furnishings, from an Egyptian-style mantel to Chinese export vases.

A9 Main Street History and Architecture WALKING TOUR

DEPARTS Outside Greenwich Odeum, 59 Main St.

Lisa Bourbonnais, *Assistant Planner, Town of East Greenwich*

Wilbur Yoder, *AIA, East Greenwich Historic District Commission Chair*

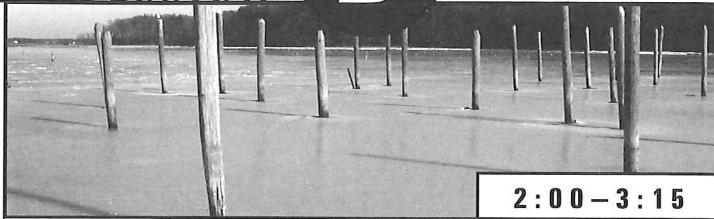
The heart of East Greenwich, Main Street is one of Rhode Island's favorite hometown corridors. Tour landmarks, like the restored Kent County Court House (now Town Hall) and gleaming Jiggers Diner, as well the dozens of commercial and institutional buildings that make up the fabric of Main Street.

This publication was financed in part with a Federal grant administered by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, which receives federal funds from the National Park Service, US Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior.

Regulations of the US Department of Interior strictly prohibit discrimination in departmental Federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, please write to Office of Equal Opportunity, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1201 Eye Street NW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20005.

Session

B



2:00 – 3:15

B1 The Narragansett Bay Shellfishing Industry: Preserving a Way of Life

SITE Town Hall Council Conference Room, 125 Main St.

Michael E. Bell, Ph.D., *Consulting Folklorist, RIHP&HC, and Folklorist/Writer, "From Bullrakes to Clambakes: The Occupational Folklife of the Narragansett Bay Shellfishery"*

Alexander Caserta, *Photographer, "From Bullrakes to Clambakes"*

Arthur Ganz, *Supervising Marine Biologist, RI-DEM*

Michael McGiveney, *President, Rhode Island Shellfishermen's Association*

Shellfishing on Narragansett Bay has undergone significant changes since Native Americans taught it to early colonists. This panel will explore these changes, their impact, and the resource itself. We will consider issues of sustainability, pollution, overfishing, and the critical balance between protecting a resource and preserving shellfishing traditions.

B2 Success Has Its Problems: Arguments for Sound Preservation Practice

SITE Varnum Armory Lounge, 6 Main St.

Lisa Bourbonnais, *Assistant Planner, Town of East Greenwich*

James Garman, *Former Newport Historic District Commission Chair*

Claire McQueeney, *New Shoreham Historic District Commissioner*

Wendy Nicholas, *Executive Director, Northeast Regional Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation*

Roberta Randall, *Senior Historical Architect, RIHP&HC*

When land values rise in a historic district, it is tempting to construct large additions on small historic buildings—or even to tear them down and replace them with larger buildings that allow high value land to produce greater income. Join us for a presentation on "Taming the Teardown Trend," and take part in a discussion with panelists from communities facing these situations.

B3 Interpreting Historic Places: Making Your Site Relevant to New Audiences

SITE Armory of the Kentish Guards, 57 Peirce St.

Corinne Heditsian, *Chair, Armenian Historical Society of Rhode Island*

David Henry, *Head of Museum Education, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design*

John McNiff, *Ranger, Roger Williams National Memorial*

Ray Rickman, *Former Deputy Secretary of State and Past President, Rhode Island Black Heritage Society*

What do Roger Williams, Christiana Bannister, and Isaac Touro have in common with 21st-century Rhode Islanders? It's all in the interpretation. Innovative programs and inclusive themes can reinvigorate historic sites and tap into new audiences. Survey some strategies, such as discussing religious liberty, arranging residencies for artists in local neighborhoods, and spotlighting the untold stories of overlooked populations.

B4 Main Street: Preservation Opportunities for Small Businesses

SITE Town Hall Council Chamber, 125 Main St.

Chris Di Fazio, *Coordinator, East Greenwich Main Street*

Virginia Sarra Hesse, *Principal Preservation Architect, RIHP&HC*

Geoffrey Marchant, *Director, Community Development Consortium*

East Greenwich's Main Street is the setting for a discussion of preservation incentives and strategies available to the small business owner. Your shop, restaurant, bed-and-breakfast, art studio, or other small business may qualify for state and federal tax credits, easements, loans, Community Development Block Grants, and local business programs.

B5 Hill District WALKING TOUR

DEPARTS Outside Varnum Armory, 6 Main St.

Bruce MacGunnigle, *East Greenwich Historic District Commissioner*

Donald Powers, AIA, *Architect and East Greenwich Historic District Commissioner*

The Hill District is home to many of East Greenwich's most distinctive residential and institutional landmarks. Stroll down Pierce Street to view historic churches, the Kentish Guards Armory, library, Varnum House, and sites of the former Greenwich Academy. Explore well-preserved Stick-Style, Shingle-Style, and other late Victorian houses, as well as the 18th-century windmill that poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow used as a study.

B6 Stone Wall Workshop BUS TOUR

DEPARTS Outside Varnum Armory, 6 Main St.

Nathaniel Eastman, *Head Mason, Landscape Creations of Rhode Island*

Arthur Gardner, *Mason, Landscape Creations of Rhode Island*

Paul Robinson, Ph.D., *Principal Archaeologist, RIHP&HC*

Jonathan Zeyl, ASLA, *Owner, Landscape Creations of RI*

Stone walls are an indelible and yet endangered feature of Rhode Island's historic landscape. Observe the craftsmanship and technology of 18th- and 19th-century stone walls at Boesch Farm; then learn about materials and construction methods as stone masons reconstruct a damaged section.

B7 New England Wireless and Steam Museum BUS TOUR*

DEPARTS Outside Varnum Armory, 6 Main St.

Volunteers of New England Wireless and Steam Museum

*3-hour tour

Gordon Beeton, *Curator of Education, Slater Mill Historic Site*

Pay a visit to a remarkable collection of Rhode Island-made stationary steam engines, as well as the world's oldest surviving, originally equipped wireless station. This electrical and mechanical engineering museum emphasizes the beginnings of radio and steam power. Join us for a tour, an engine "steam-up," and an on-the-spot discussion with a guest curator.

B8 How Far From Frozen Pi'nt To Arctic? Industrial Geography of the Pawtuxet Triangle BUS TOUR*

DEPARTS Outside Varnum Armory, 6 Main St.

Ned Connors, *Principal, Edward Connors and Associates*

Richard Greenwood, Ph.D., *Project Review, RIHP&HC*

The Pawtuxet River Valley boasts an industrial history just as rich, but much less heralded than the Blackstone. This tour will explore the mill villages of both the north and south branches of the river, visiting the mills that made Fruit of the Loom a famous brand name, a mill that has been in active textile production since 1809, and a factory that currently runs spinning machines by water power.

B9 Boesch Farm and Casey Farm BUS TOUR*

DEPARTS Outside Varnum Armory, 6 Main St.

Kathryn Cavanaugh, *Preservation Consultant*

Polly and Mike Hutchison, *Farm Managers, Casey Farm*

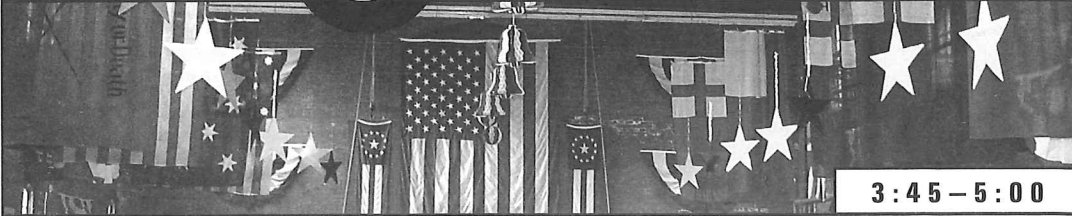
Lee Whitaker, *Director of Planning, Town of East Greenwich*

Mind the April mud—and spend an afternoon on the farm. First stop is Boesch Farm, acquired in 2001 by the East Greenwich Land Trust. Witness three centuries of stone walls, fields, and farm buildings and discuss future plans for the site. Then visit Saunderstown's Casey Farm, a former plantation operated by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, to explore the balance between historic preservation and an active working landscape.

*3-hour tour

Session

C



3 : 4 5 – 5 : 0 0

C1 Interpreting Historic Places: Regional Context

SITE Armory of the Kentish Guards, 57 Peirce St.

Sue Andrews, *Chief of Interpretation, John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor*

Melissa Bingmann, *Director of Education, Rhode Island Historical Society*

Neil Dunay, *President, Cocumscussoc Association at Smith's Castle*

Jessica Files, *Director of Education, Newport Historical Society*

What makes a 17th-century house in North Kingstown different from a 17th-century house in Lincoln? Regional identity! Review the National Park Service's formal creation of a National Heritage Corridor in the Blackstone Valley, and hear the latest about a new project that compares colonial-era African-American life in South County and Newport.

C2 Help for Your Historic House

SITE Town Hall Council Conference Room, 125 Main St.

Bob Major and Mary Turkel, *Principals, The Preservation Cooperative*

Roberta Randall, *Senior Historical Architect, RIHP&HC*

Janet Zwolinski, *Executive Director, Preserve Rhode Island*

This session will provide a wealth of useful information for the homeowner—whether it's planning a restoration project and choosing a contractor or getting listed on the National Register and working with a local historic district commission. Learn about tax credits for house renovations, maintenance tips, and advocacy for your historic neighborhood.

C3 Interpreting Historic Places: Historic Districts and Preservation Planning

SITE Greenwich Odeum, 59 Main St.

James Garman, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, Salve Regina University*

Robert O. Jones, *Architectural Historian, RIHP&HC*

Jon Özbek, *Principal Planner, City of Providence, Department of Planning and Development*

Wm McKenzie Woodward, *Architectural Historian, RIHP&HC*

In the 35 years since properties in Rhode Island were first listed on the National Register, attitudes toward historic significance have broadened. Many neighborhoods and building types that were once ignored are now considered significant. New planning tools can assist a wider range of historic resources. This panel will explore the important connection between interpretation and preservation.

C4 Military Archaeology and Artifacts

SITE Varnum Armory Lounge, 6 Main St.

D.K. Abbass, Ph.D., *Director, Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project*

Don Marcum, *Curator, Varnum Memorial Armory Museum*

Charlotte Taylor, *Archaeologist, RIHP&HC*

Rhode Island has a rich legacy of military sites and collections. Hear about the exciting battles on land and sea fought during the Revolutionary War, and take a behind-the-scenes tour of one of our state's finest collections of military artifacts and photographs. Many of our military sites, ranging from the impressive Fort Adams to earthen embankments, still survive; learn what is being done to protect and interpret them.

C5 East Greenwich Harbor and Waterfront WALKING TOUR

DEPARTS Outside Town Hall, 125 Main St.

Michael E. Bell, Ph.D., *Consulting Folklorist, RIHP&HC, and Folklorist/Writer, "From Bullrakes to Clambakes"*

David Dumas, *Lawyer and Historian, East Greenwich*

Robert Smith, *Owner, Greenwich Bay Clam Company*

Veteran Shellfishermen of East Greenwich

The Harbor District features houses and shops built by captains, sailors, and fishermen and a working waterfront. Walk through Scalloptown, pass under the rugged stone arch of the Railroad Bridge, and visit docks, shanties, and the Rhode Island Clam Company processing plant.

C6 Varnum House Museum WALKING TOUR

DEPARTS Outside Town Hall, 125 Main St.

Bruce MacGunnigle, *East Greenwich Historic District Commissioner*

John Tschirch, *Architectural Historian, The Preservation Society of Newport County*

Lawyer and future Revolutionary War General James Mitchell Varnum built this substantial house in 1773. Purchased by the Varnum Continentals in the 1930s, the property was restored and furnished to the Revolutionary War period. Join the tour to learn more about Varnum's history, and discuss the interpretation of the house with a museum professional.

Shuttle Buses make a circuit of downtown locations throughout the day.

Lunch is served at the Varnum Memorial Armory, 6 Main St.

Closing Reception is held at the Varnum Memorial Armory. Co-hosted by Preserve Rhode Island and the East Greenwich Preservation Society.

Sponsors

Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

Town of East Greenwich
East Greenwich Preservation Society
East Greenwich Land Trust
The Greenwich Odeum
The Kentish Guards
New England Wireless and Steam Museum Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities
Varnum Continentals

National Park Service
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Preserve Rhode Island

Roger Williams University School of Architecture, Art, and Historic Preservation

Dave's Marketplace
Dunkin' Donuts
Felicia's Coffee
Greenwich Bay Gourmet
Post Office Café
Sam's Club
Starbucks Coffee

In cooperation with

Clouds Hill Bed & Breakfast
Cocumscussoc Association at Smith's Castle
Conway Bus Service
East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce
East Greenwich-Warwick Garden Club
Grow Smart Rhode Island
Heritage Harbor Museum
Landscape Creations of Rhode Island
Maritime Preservation Alliance
Meeting Mavens
Murphy & Murphy
Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design
Newport Historical Society
The Preservation Society of Newport County
Rhode Island Community Farm
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
Rhode Island Economic Policy Council
Rhode Island Historical Society
Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project
Rhode Island Militia
Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association
Salve Regina University
Slater Mill Historic Site
Trust for Public Land
Warren Waterfront Committee

Sponsors acknowledge with deep appreciation the many individuals and organizations that contributed to the 2003 conference. We particularly recognize the hard work of all the speakers, panelists, and presenters and thank them for donating their time and expertise.