



# Westerly's Witness

www.westerlyhistoricalsociety.org

February 2026

## Westerly Historical Society Executive Board 2026

<b>President</b> Thomas J. Gulluscio, Jr.	<b>Membership Chair</b> Cory Jacobson
<b>Vice President</b> Zachary J. Garceau	<b>Newsletter</b> Robert Peacock
<b>Secretary</b> Becky Jacoinski	<b>Programs</b> Robert Peacock Becky Jacoinski
<b>Treasurer</b> Robert Boucher	<b>Web Master</b> Maria Bernier
<b>Archivist</b> Zachary J. Garceau	<b>Social Media</b> Jane C. Perkins
<b>Babcock-Smith House Museum Liaison</b> Thomas J. Gulluscio, Jr.	<b>Videographer</b> Greg Pettys
<b>At Large Member</b> Mary Jo Girard	<b>At Large Member</b> Paul Gingerella

## Program Notes

### **“THE LARCHMONT DISASTER” WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH, 6:30 pm**

Please join us as Daniel Harrington shares the fascinating details of our version of the Titanic disaster. This 1907 accident, considered to be the worst maritime tragedy in New England, occurred off the coast of Westerly and resulted in tales of heroism and survival among hundreds of deaths.

*This program is co-sponsored by the  
Watch Hill Lighthouse Keepers Association.*

### **“RESTORING OUR ELM STREET HOME” WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11TH, 6:30 pm**

Please join us as Carly Callahan, discusses her family’s efforts to accurately restore the exterior of their 1840 Greek Revival home on Elm Street.

### **PROGRAM THANK YOU**

Thank you to Bill Mitchell for his January program on “Westerly’s Italian Family Tree”. It was well attended and well researched!

### **TRIVIA QUESTION**

Welcome to our monthly feature recommended by the Westerly Historical Society Executive Board.

There were at least seven quarries between Route 3 and Route 91. In addition to the Macomber, Hunter, Smalley, Chapman, and New England Quarries, two were later owned and operated by the Smith Granite Company and called the Smith Granite Company North Quarries. They were worked from 1880 to 1955 to a depth of about 150 feet. Initially, these two quarries were owned and referred to as what quarries?

**The answer is on the next page!**

## *In this Issue*

Program Notes .....	Page 1
Presidents Corner .....	Page 2
Editors Notes .....	Page 2
Presidential Signatures .....	Page 3
Special Announcements .....	Page 4
From Our Archives .....	Page 5
Discovering Westerly’s Cemeteries .....	Page 6
Discovering Westerly’s Cemeteries .....	Page 7
Discovering Westerly’s Cemeteries .....	Page 8
Discovering Westerly’s Cemeteries .....	Page 9
Field Trip – Exploring a Cemetery.....	Page 10
Field Trip – Exploring a Cemetery.....	Page 11
Sponsor Recognition.....	Page 12



# WESTERLY'S WITNESS

Published by the Westerly Historical Society  
P. O. Box 91, Westerly, RI 02891, nine times per  
year in January, February, March, April, May, June,  
September, October and November

The mission of the Westerly Historical Society is to  
research, study, and preserve the local history in  
our community. We are a dedicated, all-volunteer,  
non-profit organization that owns numerous  
historical artifacts and an extensive photographic  
collection.

## CONTACT US

President *Thomas J. Gulluscio, Jr.*

[WHSPresident@gmail.com](mailto:WHSPresident@gmail.com)

Vice President and Archivist *Zachary J. Garceau*

[WHSArchivist@gmail.com](mailto:WHSArchivist@gmail.com)

Secretary *Becky Jacoinski*

[WHSSecretary@gmail.com](mailto:WHSSecretary@gmail.com)

Treasurer *Robert Boucher*

[WHSTreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:WHSTreasurer@gmail.com)

Membership *Cory Jacobson*

[WHSMembership@gmail.com](mailto:WHSMembership@gmail.com)

Programs *Robert Peacock and Becky Jacoinski*

[WesterlyHistoricalSociety@gmail.com](mailto:WesterlyHistoricalSociety@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor *Robert Peacock*

[WesterlyHistoricalSociety@gmail.com](mailto:WesterlyHistoricalSociety@gmail.com)



Social Media *Jane C. Perkins*

Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/WesterlyHistoricalSociety/>

## President's Corner

*Thomas J. Gulluscio, Jr.*

Hello friends, I hope you are all navigating through  
this Winter in good health.

Your society has an interesting line-up of programs  
coming up, with an especially entertaining and  
informative one on February 11th with a program  
telling the story of the sinking of the Larchmont off  
Watch Hill in 1907. Coincidentally, this program will be  
presented on the actual anniversary of the disaster.

I am pleased to report that your society has taken an  
active role in supporting the efforts of our community  
to celebrate our nation's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday in many ways.  
We have several members volunteering on committees  
and boards and we are collectively working as a board  
of directors and as always with our dear friends at the  
Babcock-Smith House Museum to ensure we get this  
done in grand fashion!

While I have your attention, may I ask that those of  
you reading this who have not yet renewed your  
annual membership to this great organization to please  
do so very soon, Our membership chairperson, Cory  
Jacobsen, and I have to send reminders out to  
everyone who has procrastinated just a bit too long  
and we really would appreciate you helping us to  
shorten that list or do away with it all together.

Look for a little treat from yours truly within the  
announcements section of this edition in recognition of  
Presidents Day.

Be well,

Tom

## EDITOR'S NOTES

*Robert Peacock*

*Thank you to*

*Mary Jo Girard, Zack Garceau, and Tom  
Gulluscio for contributing articles.*

*As always, we welcome guest authors to  
contribute articles, and we enjoy including  
them in the monthly newsletter!*

**TRIVIA ANSWER** – The two North Quarries of  
the Smith Granite Company were originally called  
the Frazier Quarries and were located on the farm  
of William Robinson Frazier Sr.

*Thank you for patronizing our generous  
newsletter commercial sponsors including:*

**MICHELLE'S SCHOOL OF DANCE**

**THORP & TRAINER INSURANCE**

**WESTERLY DENTAL GROUP**

**GREY SAIL BREWING**

**THE WINE STORE**

**SERVPRO**

*We encourage you to support these fine businesses!*

## Presidential Signatures in the Archives

By Zachary Garceau

**This article was written in honor of Presidents Day and the 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday of our nation.**

One of my favorite pieces of trivia is that the Westerly Historical Society possesses documents with the signatures of three United States Presidents (Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Buchanan). While I often make mention of this fact, little has been written about the actual documents these men signed.

The signature of Thomas Jefferson is affixed to a document granting “leave and permission” for Jesse Dickins of the brig *Harlequin* to sail to “St. Sebastian” [It is unclear where this was located, but it may have been a Dutch-occupied island given the spelling of Sabastian] with salt and materials for fishing.

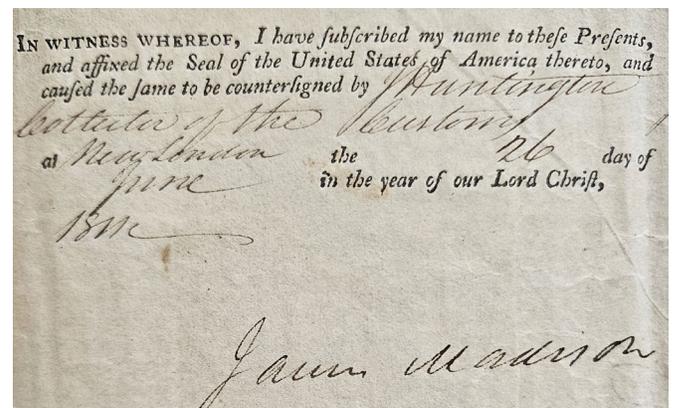
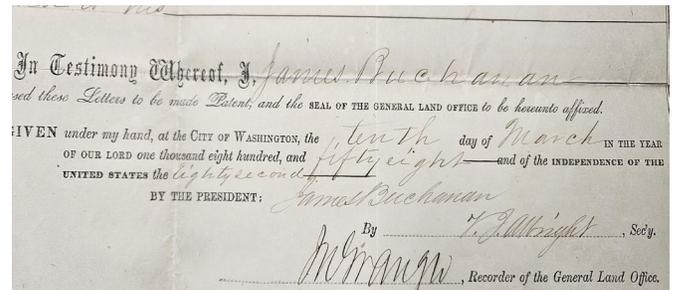
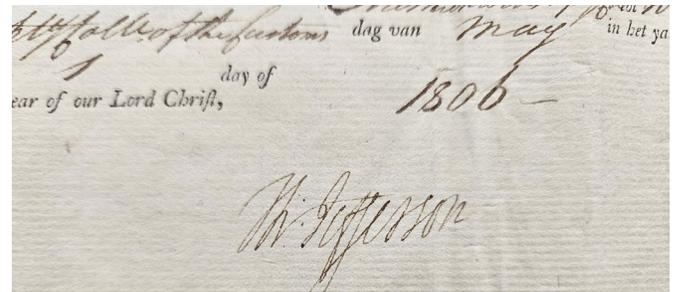
Interestingly, this document was printed in French, Spanish, English, and Dutch, and presumably was to be used as evidence that a ship had the support of the United States government in the event it was accosted by Pirates. Printing the text in four languages would prevent any issues of language barriers. This document was also signed by then Secretary of State James Madison and dated May 1, 1806. (See Page 5 Photo)

The above-mentioned document is not the only one in the archives to bear the signature of James Madison. The Society also possesses another similar document dated June 26, 1811 which was signed by Madison in his role as President of the United States. This second document is again for Jesse Dickins, this time for the brig *Freeman* which was bound of Barbados carrying livestock provisions and lumber,

This document is also signed by Secretary of State Robert Smith, an interesting anomaly, as Smith had resigned as Secretary of State in April 1811, and would not have been in that role by June 1811.

The final document signed by a United States President in the Society’s archives is land warrant no. 6597 which granted Hannah Harris, the widow of Benjamin Harris, 160 acres of land in Henderson, Minnesota. Benjamin Harris was said to have served as a Private in Captain Pollard’s Regiment of the Maine Militia and participated in the “North East Frontier Disturbances.” Hannah Harris then assigned the land to a man named Walter Bruce.

*These presidential documents are among the most prized items in the Society’s collections.*

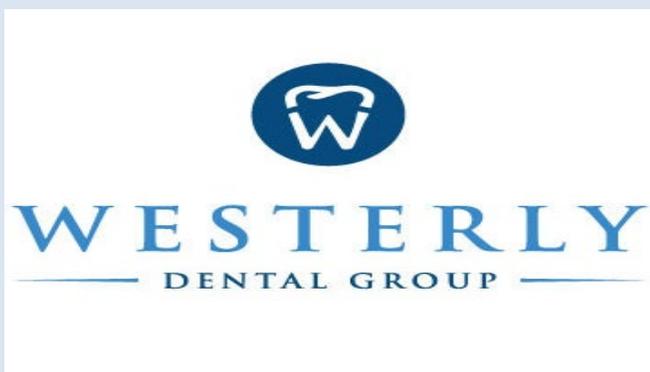


For more information, contact  
[whsarchivist@gmail.com](mailto:whsarchivist@gmail.com)

*Please Patronize Our Generous  
Newsletter Sponsors*



*Since 1910*  
**401-596-0146**



**401-596-2848**



**401-315-2337**



**Babcock Smith House Museum**  
**401-596-5704**

## Announcements

### Special Note from President Gulluscio

In recognition of Presidents Day, I thought I might reflect back in time to all of the past members of the Westerly Historical Society who have stepped forward to lead this very cherished and respected organization by either being nominated for election into the position or by taking a battlefield promotion when the current President could no longer serve in the capacity.

Since its founding in 1913 by Julia Smith, the society's founder and first president, the Westerly Historical Society has understood the importance of such an organization to preserve the rich history of the now 244 year old Town of Westerly and has worked diligently to fulfill that mission since Julia first assembled that small group of locals in the parlor of her Granite Street mansion, now known as the Babcock Smith House.

Julia served a short term of only one year before passing the torch to the second president, Ethan Wilcox. Wilcox delivered a paper to the Westerly Historical Society in 1913 on the origin of the name of Cookie Hill and served the society for five years. Maybe we will enlighten our readers in a future edition with the location and history of Cookie Hill.

Over the 113 year history of the society, most of the Presidents served relatively short terms of one to three years, with 29 out of the 38 past Presidents holding office for 3 or less years. Notably, Everett Whipple served the society for the longest term on record from 1920 to 1935 for a fifteen year run until what appears to have been ended only by his death.

Our readers are sure to recognize a few surnames on the rolls of past Presidents including Smith, Wilcox, Perry, Coy, Stillman, Utter, Rathbun, Lathrop, and Willets to name a few. We even have past Presidents who came from the same family lineage such as Harvey and Phebe Perry, Julia and Issac Smith, and Husband and wife presidents, Helen and Francis Lathrop.

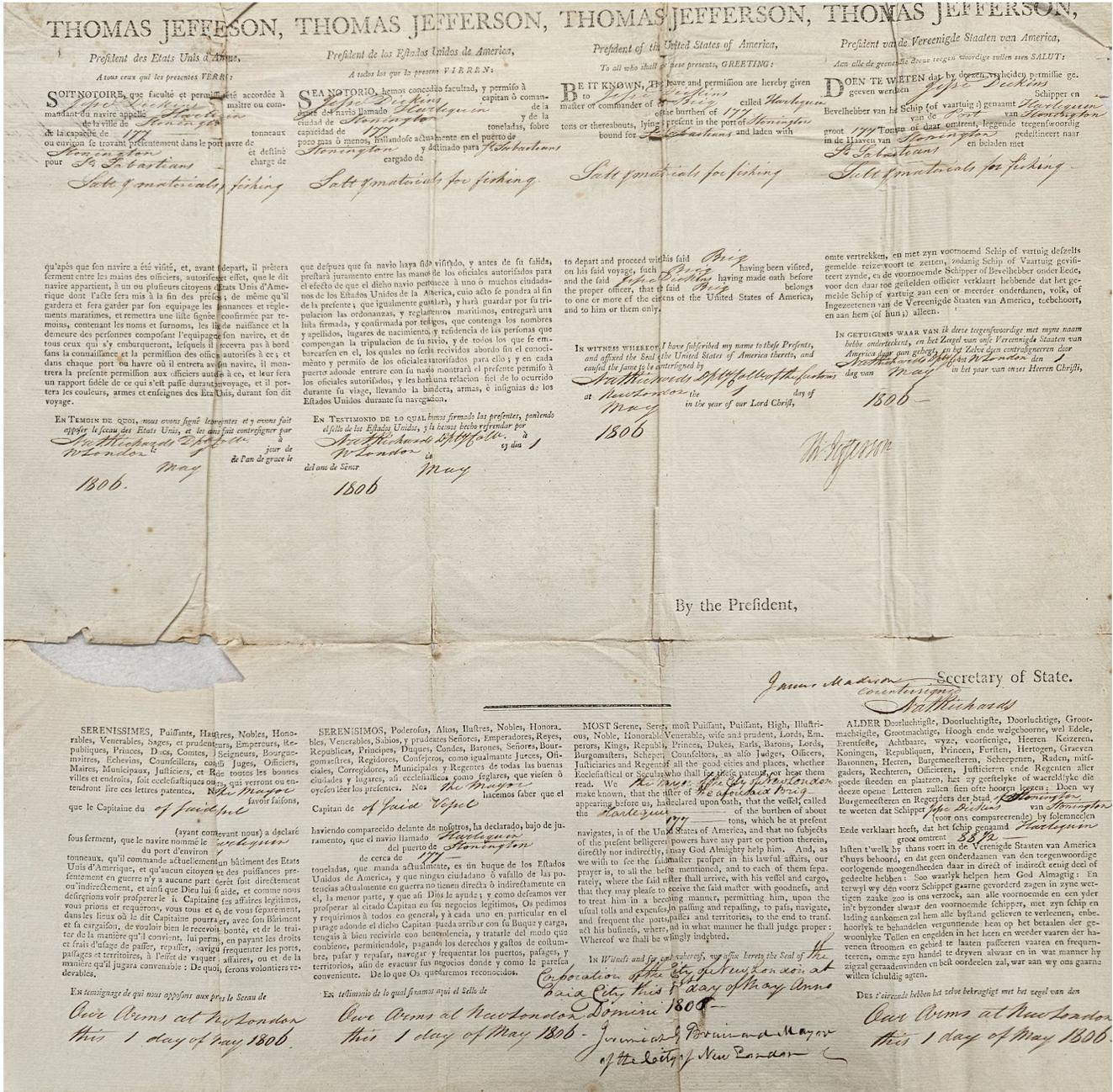
I only hope as I write this and reflect back that my predecessors held the honor of the title with the same sense of responsibility, comradery and satisfaction as I have for the past ten years.

Oh, and by the way, Everett Whipple, with God's grace and the society's support I'm coming for your term record! Tom

# From Our Archives

The following historical artifacts were donated to further expand the historical collections of the Westerly Historical Society. As always, we sincerely appreciate all donations!

The signature of Thomas Jefferson is affixed to this document granting "leave and permission" for Jesse Dickins of the brig *Harlequin* to sail to "St. Sebastian". Interestingly, this document was printed in French, Spanish, English, and Dutch, and presumably was to be used as evidence that a ship had the support of the United States government in the event it was accosted by Pirates. This document was also signed by Secretary of State James Madison and was dated May 1, 1806.



Please remember to consider us when disposing of old documents, photos, and artifacts.

We would love to add it to our expanding collection to be preserved for future generations.

If you are interested in obtaining additional information or arranging for a donation of a locally related item to our collection, please email our President, Thomas Gulluscio, at [whspresident@gmail.com](mailto:whspresident@gmail.com) or our Archivist, Zachary Garceau, at [whsarchivist@gmail.com](mailto:whsarchivist@gmail.com)

# Discovering Westerly Cemeteries

## Westerly Cemetery # 14 – The Frazier Lot

*By Robert Peacock*

There were reportedly at least 17 burials in this cemetery with most marked by carved headstones and a few marked by fieldstones. The most recent known burial was in 1900 and the oldest known burial was in 1843.

Approximately fifty feet by one hundred feet, the cemetery is located approximately five hundred feet from North Granite Avenue and six hundred feet from Old Hopkinton Road enclosed by granite block wall.

According to the records of the Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries Commission, the cemetery includes the remains of;

Mary Barker, wife of Charles Barker, born in 1766 and died in 1843 at age 78,

William R. Frazier Jr, born in 1838 and died in 1889,

William R. Frazier Sr., born in 1803 and died in 1890,

Elizabeth B. Frazier, wife of William R. Frazier Sr., born in 1810 and died in 1856 at age 46,

Charles H. Frazier, son of William R. Frazier Sr. and Elizabeth B. Fraizier, born in 1828 and died in 1854 at 26.

Horace S. Frazier, son of William R. Frazier Sr. and Elizabeth B. Frazier, born in 1831 and died in 1848 at 17,

Jarus Frink, husband of Mary Frink, born in 1755 and died in 1843 at age 89,

Mary Frink, wife of Jarus Frink, born in 1766 and died in 1854 at age 88,

Samuel Lawton, born in 1801 and died in 1845 at age 44,

John Teft, born in 1763 and died in 1852 at age 89,

Peleg Tefft, husband of Rebecca Teft, born in 1777 and died 1864,

Rebecca Tefft, wife of Peleg Teft, born in 1787 and died in 1843.

An inspection of the markers by Westerly Historical Society Board Member Mary Jo Girard indicates the following people were also buried here;

William W. Frazier, husband of Sarah E. Gardiner, born in 1838 and died in 1889,

Sarah E. Gardiner, wife of William W. Frazier, born in 1845 and died in 1900,

William R. Frazier Jr., born in 1865 and died in 1895,

Lottie Frazier, wife of William R. Frazier Jr., born in 1864 and died in 1891 at age 28,

Clarissa M. Hall, wife of John R. Frazier, born in 1832 and died in 1875,

John R. Frazier, husband of Clarissa Hall, born in 1826 and died in 1884.

Sadly, grave markers also remember three infants including;

Henry Cumingking, son of Edwin Cumingking, born May 24, 1874 and died three days later on May 27, 1874

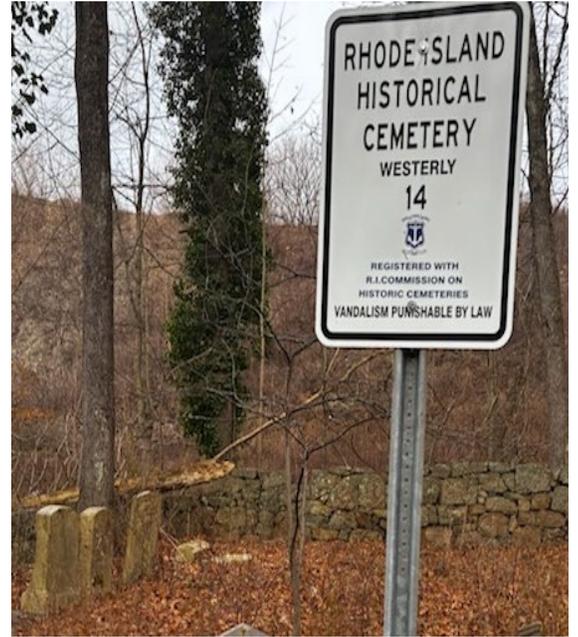
Charles G. Frazier, son of Wiliam R. Frazier and Lottie Frazier, born August 10, 1891, died two months later.

An unnamed infant son of the Parke family, with a marker “In Memory of Our Infant Son Died Aug 28 1869”.

According to the 1878 book by Frederic Denison, “Westerly and Its Witnesses”, the historical cemetery was recorded as being "on the farm of Mr. William Robinson Frazier and near fifty rods northwest from his residence a little north of the railroad enclosed in the corner of a field and in plain view from the railroad bridge.” Denison also noted that Horace S. Frazier tragically at age 17 when he “drowned near Watch Hill”.

For those using GPS, the cemetery is located at 41 Degrees, 23 minutes, and 11.7 seconds North by 71 degrees, 48 minutes, and 48.6 seconds West.

**In addition to a personal visit to the cemetery, information for this article was obtained from and sincere appreciation is extended to the research of Reverend Denison in the 1860’s, the files of the Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries Commission, the personal knowledge of Cemeteries Commissioner Larry Hunter, and the personal research of Mary Jo Girard.**

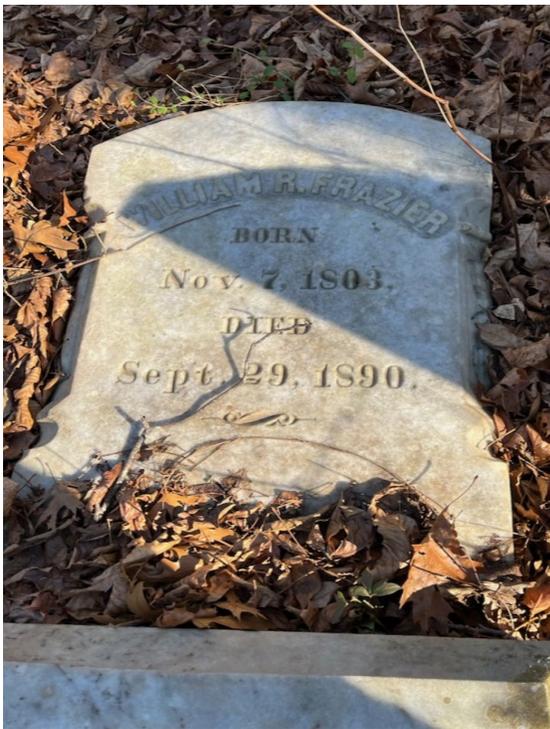


There were reportedly at least 17 burials in this cemetery with most marked by carved headstones and a few marked by unlettered fieldstones.

It is enclosed by a thick and well- built granite block wall and previously had an outward swinging double iron gate which hung on iron pins from two rough cut granite posts and held securely in the middle by a partially buried carved granite block with a notch to hold the gates from swinging inward.



**Clarissa M. Hall, wife of John R. Frazier, born in 1832 and died in 1875  
John R. Frazier, husband of Clarissa Hall, born in 1826 and died in 1884**



**Unfortunately, several grave markers have fallen over, unknown if by time or by vandals.**

**William W. Frazier, husband of Sarah E. Gardiner, born in 1838 and dies in 1889  
Sarah E. Gardiner, wife of William W. Frazier, born in 1845 and died in 1900.  
William R. Frazier Sr., born in 1803 and died in 1890**



**Photo on left is the marker of Charles Gilbert Frazier, son of William R. Frazier Jr. and Lottie Frazier, born on August 10 of 1891 and died just two months later. Photo on the right is the marker of Henry Cumingking, born on May 24 in 1874 and died three days later on May 27 in 1874.**



**Two photos above are the marker which memorializes an unnamed infant of the Parke Family and reads “In Memory of Our Infant Son Died Aug 28 1869” on the front and “Parke“ on the top.**

## Field Trip - Exploring a Cemetery

*By Mary Jo Girard*

This particular field trip was decades in the making, even crossing the boundaries of a generation. The starting point was in 1977, when the adventurous curiosity of myself, my sister and my cousin couldn't be stilled.

Every Sunday evening until my Italian grandmother passed away, my parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins gathered in her basement kitchen for supper, a spread just like in the Old Country. Inevitably, the children went outside to play or were emphatically sent there!

We couldn't help but go wandering, which was pretty standard behavior of the day. We found ourselves at the remnants of a home a bit off of Oak Street on Old Hopkinton Road...the house had partially collapsed on itself, leaving some of the roof to sit rather awkwardly upon its old stone foundation.

It gave me the impression of Dorothy's house, when it lands in Munchkinland, with the witches' striped socks and ruby slippers peering out from under the wreckage. We loved poking around the property looking at the broken glass jars, rusting metal pots, and seeing the evidence of the lives that once lived there.

I vividly remember seeing the Westerly Sun newspapers from the 1930's strewn about, somehow protected from decay. There was advertising for movie fare of the day and, in another local matter, a bobcat had been shot on Franklin Street. It was fascinating!

As I drove by the spot in subsequent years, I watched the roof eventually disappear and the ivy take over the lot. Today, most people would never know that a house ever existed there.

Thirty years later, on Thanksgiving morning in 2007, I told my husband about the mysterious missing house and foundation. He agreed to go on field trip! We managed to find foundation stones, but barely, as most of it had been ravaged by plants and weather. But no good field trip needs to end prematurely! We wandered up over the hill and enjoyed a very long stroll through the expansive November woods.

And there we stumbled upon it. An amazing, intact cemetery seemingly in the middle of nowhere. A stately, rectangular granite block wall enclosed the gravestones. Granite pillars with iron hardware marked where the gate had been located, long ago gone to effects of weather. The granite center gatestop, carved out to receive the gates and prevent them from swinging inward, showed ingenuity in its simplicity.



*The granite center gatestop, carved out to receive the gates and prevent them from swinging inward.*

I recognized the name Frazier on a few of the gravestones, as I had gone to elementary school with a Frazier. He lived on Tower Street. A descendent maybe? Thanksgiving dinner beckoned and I vowed to return to study it further. Easier said than done.

Continued on Next Page

## Field Trip - Exploring a Cemetery

*By Mary Jo Girard*

Continuing this story of a Field Trip that started in 1977, had a brief foray in 2007, now began to pick up steam again in 2021.

I had previously discovered an old house in disrepair in the vicinity of Oak Street and years later, accidentally stumbled upon a beautifully walled cemetery. It had remained as a standing witness to the lives of the Frazier family, and I was determined to find it again.

Except the land had now changed significantly. There seemed to be no trace of the foundation. I tried, in vain, to see if I could find an access on North Granite Avenue. Multiple field trips with different family members finally yielded results!

In 2022, after hiking up one hill and traversing down the rocky landscape, we emerged with twigs in our hair and briars on our clothing right to where I wanted to be, which I now knew was Rhode Island Historical Cemetery #14, The Frazier Lot.

When Westerly Historical Society Board member Bob Peacock mentioned a litter pick-up opportunity in 2025, I knew it was time to revisit this place that seemed to have a hold on my imagination. Again, with my field trip mates, and with the advances of phone technology, I was able to do real-time research as I pondered the names on the headstones.

Standing in the Frazier Lot, located on the farm once owned by William Robinson Frazier, we gave acknowledgement to those lives once lived. Including Jarus Frink, Mary Frink, Mary Barker, and John Tefft who all lived well into their 80's, a significant achievement given the era (they were born in the mid 1700's).

Records indicate Samuel Lawton's coffin plate

was crafted in 1845 by Thomas Perry, a silversmith of Westerly, Rhode Island.

The Frazier family had members spanning three generations, including son Horace who tragically drowned off Watch Hill in 1848 at the age of 17 years, 9 months, and 10 days.

Given that the Frazier Quarry (later named the Smith North Quarry) was located nearby, and was actively worked in the 1880's, this may be the source of the beautiful granite wall and the reason for the number of Frazier descendants buried here. (This information found in the book, "Built From Stone")

As we walked quietly through the cemetery reading and marveling at the history carved into the gravestones, most heart-wrenching are the markers of the infants.

Would the parents of Charles Gilbert Frazier, Henry King or Infant Son Parke take comfort in knowing their children's lives, however brief, were respected and remembered over 150 years after their passing? That alone would be worth the effort to visit these historic cemeteries, which bring alive once more the stories of those interred.

Turns out, there was no need to hike the country mile to access this historical cemetery. That hike in 2022, when there were no leaves on the trees, revealed that we were quite close to Old Hopkinton Road.

With the gracious permission from the owner of Guardian Fuel, the path to this Westerly treasure can easily be accessed from their parking lot.

And so... on this cold day in December of 2025, we checked the cemetery and perimeter for litter and then quietly paid our respects.

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**  
**The Westerly Historical Society**  
 P.O. Box 91  
 Westerly, RI 02891



*A very special thank you to our generous newsletter sponsors!*

**When you choose to shop  
 at **The Wine Store**  
 you help us fund local  
 non-profit organizations**



*The*  
**WineStore®**

**BEER - WINE - LIQUOR**

86 Franklin St, Westerly, RI 02891  
 401-596-6160 Next to TJMaxx, Home Depot

Your Partner in Community Service ©



**\$15.00 Gift Card**  
**From Frank, Donna and Tim**

**GreySail®**  
 BREWING of RHODE ISLAND



**VISIT OUR CAMPUS IN WESTERLY'S  
 HISTORIC NORTH END!**

**Brewery:**

Facebook.com/GreySail

@greysail

www.greysailbrewing.com

**Distillery:**

Facebook.com/SouthCountyDistillers

@southcountydillers

www.southcountydillers.com

63 Canal Street, Westerly

