

On Pettaquamscutt Winter Speaker Series begins

By PHILIP COZZOLINO

NARRAGANSETT – The 2018 On Pettaquamscutt Winter Speaker Series kicked off Sunday at Maury Loontjens Memorial Library with a presentation on 18th and 19th-Century samplers from Blaire O. Gagnon, associate director at South County Museum. Gagnon was presenting on the craft of young women who sewed samplers as part

of their education some 200-250 years ago. Through her presentation, Gagnon also addressed the importance of women's education in history, the process of her research and subsequent documentation of historic samplers and the confusing nature of Rhode Island genealogy.

A packed house was on hand in the library's community room to hear the presentation, which began with an important

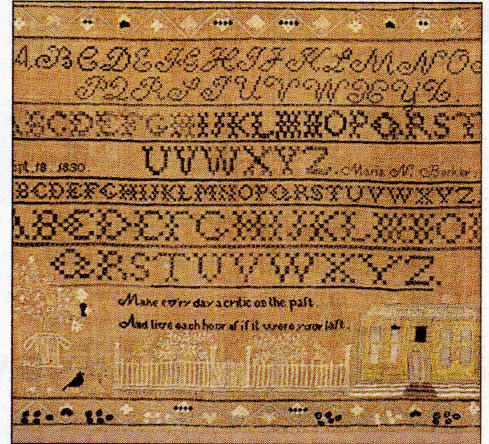
note from Gagnon which underscored the significance of such a study of historic samplers. A sampler is a sewing and stitching school exercise which has the participant typically sew the alphabet and numbers 1-10 along with their name and the date the sampler was created. The work usually also incorporates aesthetic patterns and bands into the design, and some go as far as to include art and pictures.

Specifically, Gagnon was examining samplers made by schoolgirls in Rhode Island as part of their education in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

"You cannot understand female education unless you understand samplers," said Gagnon. "Samplers was the medium by which girls presented their literacy and education to their parents, their teachers and the public at large."

"[Samplers] give us a lot of evidence of young women and as most of us know, women's history was not something that was recorded," Gagnon continued. "It is often hard to go back and recreate women in history and these documents allow us to do that."

Gagnon took charge of documenting Rhode Island samplers for a project in 2016, which resulted in the creation of the website and database samplerarchive.org. On the website, photos of samplers collected can be viewed in high quality, and samplers can be sought out using a myriad of search qualities such as the name of the girl who stitched the sampler the date the sampler was created and the location the sampler originates from, among other factors. Along with pictures come complete informational listings of each sampler documented. The database was created using three sampler collections - Rhode Island Historical Society, Daughters of the American Revolution and the Winterthorpe Collection. Gagnon noted New England samplers are among the oldest in American history and Rhode Island samplers in particular are sought after due to their creation at such an early time period, including an



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pictured is a sampler sewn in 1830 by Maria N. Barker of Middletown. The archive notes Barker was aged 7-9 at the time of the sampler's creation. Photo courtesy of samplerarchive.org and the Rhode Island Historical Society.

abundance of pre-Revolution works.

"One of the reasons for doing this database is to try to find all the samplers," said Gagnon. "So we can compare the samplers to each other and get a better idea of history of what is a common sampler and what is an uncommon sampler."

The South County Sampler Initiative was funded by the Rhode Island Council for Humanities and work began in 2016, though Gagnon admits she is still hard at work on the database. The work was carried out entirely by volunteers, and three days were chosen throughout last year in various parts of the state for the public to bring in samplers and have them documented for the initiative. Gagnon added interest grew throughout the process, with

more public participation at each subsequent hosting date.

In order to trace the history of certain samplers, Gagnon also spent time researching Rhode Island genealogy, and tracing samplers through family lines as they were typically passed down from one female to another. This task proved daunting for Gagnon, as many married first cousins or other distant relatives some 200-250 years ago.

The On Pettaquamscutt Winter Speaker Series continues with a presentation from Gary Cassabona, state biologist, on "Habitat management for pollinators." The next event is scheduled for Feb. 25 at 1:00 p.m. at Maury Loontjens.

NOTICE is hereby given that a Public Hearing by and before the Zoning Board of Review of the Town of Narragansett is scheduled for Thursday, February 15th, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the Large Board Room of the Narragansett Town Hall to consider and act upon the following applications:

Public Hearing: Thomas Szelag – Assessor's Plat L, Lot 273 (Pocono Road/Ocean Road) for relief under Chapter 731 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Narragansett, entitled 'Zoning', specifically a Special Use Permit from the Coastal and Freshwater Wetlands Overlay District (Section 4.3) to construct a 4 bedroom dwelling at the above-referenced property.

Public Hearing: UBS Realty, Assessor's Plat P, Lot 320 (332 South Pier Road) for relief under Chapter 731 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Narragansett, entitled 'Zoning', specifically a Variance from the Dimensional Regulations (Section 6.4) to construct a covered porch onto the existing single family dwelling at the above-referenced property.

Public Hearing: Frank T. Caprio and David Caprio - Assessor's Plat N-B, Lot 30-2 (Old Boston Neck Road) for relief under Chapter 731 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Narragansett, entitled 'Zoning', specifically a Special Use Permit from the Coastal and Freshwater Wetlands Overlay District (Section 4.3) to construct a new 3-bedroom house at the above-referenced property.

Public Hearing: Robert and Patricia Risica – Assessor's Plat B-2, Lot 99A (80 Riverside Drive) for relief under Chapter 731 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Narragansett, entitled 'Zoning', specifically a Variance & Special Use Permit from the Coastal Resources Overlay District (Section 4.4), a Special Use Permit from the Coastal Resources Overlay District (Section 4.3) to construct a rear deck at the above-referenced property.

Public Hearing: Michael Vickers – Assessor's Plat D, Lot 174 (130 Boon Street) for relief under Chapter 731 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Narragansett, entitled 'Zoning', specifically Special Use Permits from the Table of Use Regulations (Section 6.1 Use Code 51), Substandard Lots of Record – Commercial and Industrial Lots (Section 8.1(c)), a Non-conforming Use of Buildings or Structures (Section 9.1.(2)), and Alterations to Non-conforming Uses and Structures (Section 10.1) to construct a mixed-use building (residential/commercial) at the above-referenced property.

Public Hearing: Michael Vickers – Assessor's Plat D, Lot 175 (134 Boon Street for relief under Chapter 731 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Narragansett, entitled 'Zoning', specifically Special Use Permits from the Table of Use Regulations (Section 6.1 Use Code 51), Substandard Lots of Record – Commercial and Industrial Lots (Section 8.1(c)) and Alterations to Non-conforming Uses and Structures (Section 10.1) to convert the second story storage area to an office and reconfigure the parking area at the above-referenced property.

Said petitions are on file in the office of Community Development in the Town Hall and available for review during regular office hours. Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired must notify the Department of Community Development at 401-782-0632, 48-hours in advance of the hearing date.