

# A Portal to the Past

## Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum

### FAMILY THREADS

#### AN EXCERPT FROM *THE THREAD OF THE RIVER*

.As the two brothers, John and Samuel Slater, built up a solid business in textile manufacturing, so did the three Allen brothers – Crawford, Philip, and Zachariah. Like the Slaters, they started at the very beginning of the nineteenth century. Their mills, however, were only in Rhode Island; and their success in textile manufacturing did not outlast the Civil War years.

Like the Slaters, the Allens were enlightened mill owners, recognizing their responsibilities to their employees by building substantial mill housing, churches and schools within the mill villages. Their names appeared often in phil-

anthropic endeavors, particularly in the development of libraries. Zachariah was one of the organizers of the Providence Public Library; Philip and Zachariah were among the founders of the Providence Athenaeum with Philip serving as a director from 1836 to 1839 and from 1865 to 1869.

Both Philip and Zachariah were deeply involved in the petitioning of Congress to impose a tariff on foreign cotton and calico goods to protect American manufacturers after the War of 1812. Philip's vast knowledge of all

the facts, both scientific and statistical, of cotton manufacture made his support invaluable.

Philip had a taste for mechanical and manufacturing pursuits like his brother, Zachariah. He built the first steam engine ever built in Providence. He was the first to import the improved bobbin and fly frames and the lapping machine for cotton cards for his looms.

He entered politics and served in the Rhode Island General Assembly from 1819 to 1821. He was appointed by President Adams to the

Continued on next page

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
Clouds Hill Connection	4
Find	5
From the Collection	5
From the Kitchen	3
Inside Scoop	4
Project Update	4
What's It?	5
With a Focus on Education	5

### ON THE FARM

Any working farm and any country establishment depended on horsepower for the smooth running of the facility. Until the early 1900s, transportation consisted of horse and carriage, horseback riding, the train, bicycles, or on foot. Three train stations served the Cowesett area –

the East Greenwich station at the foot of London Street, and stops at Elisha Street and Folly Landing in Cowesett. Someone would have to meet the train with a horse and carriage, especially if any goods needed to be transported. On the farm, horses were

used extensively, along with teams of oxen, for all manner of jobs, ranging from plowing fields, grading roads, plowing snow, hauling load and working on the treadmill which powered silage cutters and

Continued on page 3

**T h r e a d s**  
c o n t i n u e d

presidency of the Rhode Island branch of the Bank of the United States, where he was disbursing agent for revolutionary pensions in Rhode Island, in 1827, serving until 1836. Philip was Governor of Rhode Island from 1851 through 1853. Upon the death of one of Rhode Island's United States Senators, Philip went to Washington as Senator from December, 1853 to 1859. During this period, he chaired the Agriculture Committee and served on both Commerce and Naval Affairs Committees.

Zachariah's interests were many and varied. He established the first silviculture plot in America (marked today in Lincoln Woods State Park), and was noted for his tree planting around his mills. He became involved in Canada's treatment of the Pottawattamie and Ojibwa Indians, sending the superintendent of Indian Affairs at Toronto a copy of his pamphlet "Treatment of Indians", and earning letters of thanks and totems from Indian leaders.

Zachariah invented various modifications to textile machinery, a hot air furnace for domestic use, and an automatic cut-off valve for steam engines. He wrote pamphlets and lectured on his inventions and the workings of his mills before many industrial societies. He established Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Com-

pany.

He was one of the founders of the Providence Institution for Savings; one of the original incorporators of the Rhode Island Historical Society, serving as President; a lifelong member of the Board of Trustees of Brown University; and responsible for the establishment of evening schools, setting up two in Providence.

His varied interests lasted his lifetime, including his service in 1875 as a member of the Rhode Island Geological Survey Commission. Zachariah also created a master plan to create a system of industrial reservoirs along the Woonasquatucket River so all mills would have water despite droughts. This was issued the first charter in the United States for conservation for industrial purposes. Zachariah, Philip, Samuel G. Arnold, Thomas Thompson, and Samuel Nightingale formed the Woonasquatucket River Company to implement the plan. Between 1823 and 1853, they built five reservoirs:

Date	Name
1823	Slack Reservoir
1827	Sprague Lower Reservoir
1836	Sprague Upper Reservoir
1838	Waterman Reservoir
1853	Stillwater Reservoir

The third brother, Crawford, was a most enlightened mill owner. When he and his brother in law, Sullivan Dorr, acquired the Bernon Mill in Woonsocket, he quickly realized that "beauty, order, and neatness would elevate the moral tone of his employees and secure better service from them." Better tenements were erected, broad streets laid out, and trees planted to enhance the mill grounds - Bernon was a model mill.

In 1813, Philip Allen purchased land from Eseek Smith in the village of Enfield on the Woonasquatucket River in Smithfield to build a small cotton mill, which he operated until 1857. The mill was then sold to Earl Mason, Henry Lippitt and others, who continued to operate it. The village was renamed Allenville when Philip purchased the land, and is now Esmond. In George S. White's MEMOIR OF SAMUEL SLATER, CONNECTED WITH A HISTORY OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE COTTON MANUFACTURE OF ENGLAND AND AMERICA, published 1836, page 260, the mill, in 1831, was described thusly: "There is a stone building 125 feet long with several ramification of brick and wood, all painted white, which gives it an aspect of neatness and beauty; 4300 spindles and 100 looms are run, giving employment to 130 operatives. Here are made only fine goods, from No. 45 to 50. H. Holden, agent."

**W H A T  
Y O U  
H A V E T O  
S A Y . . .**

"Best historic home visit we have ever done.  
Thank you"

Stephen and Bonnie  
Black  
Canton, Mass.



"This was a great tour.  
Loved it."

Betty Gilbert  
Hickory, North Carolina



"Wonderful - beyond  
belief"

Janice Fournier  
Pawtucket, R.I.

## F a r m c o n t i n u e d

and other machines, to mowing the lawns.

Expenses for keeping these animals would make today's horse owner happy. In 1874, A. C. Pierce sold hay to the farm for 43 cents per hundred weight – a far cry from today, when good hay is well over \$200 a ton. In 1874 and 75, Rowland Crandall was shoeing horses for \$4.55 to \$5.10 per horse. A horse blanket supplied by Browning and Fitts cost \$2.50 (as opposed to today's prices running between \$50 and several hundred dollars). A tip cart harness from G. Branch was \$7. The head coachman, Bryon Hynes, received \$30 a month plus room and board, while the under coachmen, Robert Merrill and George Bates, received \$20 per month.

At the farm and the house, it was not only the paid staff who were expected to drive to the train or deliver the cream to East Greenwich. Reading the diaries of Elizabeth Ives Reed in the 1890s, one is struck by the revelation that most of her life in Cowesett revolved around these two duties. She was expected to hitch a horse and drive to the train to pick up her brothers or her father as they returned from Providence – often having to meet several trains or drive to several stations due to lack of communication. In addition, almost daily, she drove the extra cream and milk to East Greenwich.

Elizabeth never married and spent her life managing the farm. She spent her later years in half of a double farmhouse erected northwest of the main farmhouse, sharing it with the family of boss farmer, George Weeden. (The first George Weeden to be boss farmer was in the 1870s.)

Summer made as many demands on the farm as any other season. For the month of June, 1886, the farm produced 85 dozen eggs and churned 1432 pounds and 15 ounces of butter.

## F R O M T H E K I T C H E N

Summer brings an abundance of fruits and berries. Growing along the hedges and stonewalls around the farm fields and along the dirt roads would be black raspberries and blackberries. Wineberries and red raspberries would be cultivated in the garden along with peaches and cherries in the orchards. Here are three summer recipes from the cookbook of Elizabeth I. S. Reed, which she prepared for her daughter, Helen Slater Reed Allen.

### Peach Custard

Peel, quarter and sprinkle well with sugar half a dozen large peaches; beat two eggs with two tablespoons of sugar and a pinch of salt and a little cinnamon; add one pint of milk. Pour this over the peaches, and bake in a quick oven (375 degrees). Serve with sponge cake.

### Cherry Bavarian Cream

Cover half a box of gelatin with half a pint of cold water and let soak for half an hour. Pour the juice from a pint of pitted red cherries and sweeten it with sugar. Stand the gelatin in a pan of boiling water and stir until dissolved. Whip a pint of cream; add gelatin to the cherries and juice. Turn into a metal pan, stand on ice and stir until cold; add

the whipped cream and pour into a mold. Refrigerate the mold until hardened. Serve with whipped cream heaped in the center of the mold.

### Blackberry Wine



Rinse the berries, measure them, and for every gallon add a quart of boiling water. Let stand for 24 hours, stirring it three or four times during this interval. The third day, strain off the juice and in every gallon of this strained liquor, put two pounds of refined (white) sugar. Cork tightly and let it stand until cool weather, when you will have a wine that you will never voluntarily be without, as it will be found so efficacious in sickness and a good and harmless tonic for the feeble and convalescent.



The farmhouse used almost 5 dozen eggs, Alfred Reed used 30 dozen, and 27½ dozen went to the city. 49 pounds of butter were used at the Alfred Reed house, along with 240 quarts of milk, and 20¼ quarts of cream.

Remember, all that butter was churned by hand by the women working on the farm. Often, the farm dog had the job of walking on a dog sized treadmill which powered the churn. One of these may be seen at the Blue Slope Country Museum (see the Clouds Hill Connection in this issue.)



Cedar Hill Farm

## INSIDE SCOOP

### Our Visitors

Over the last three months, we have welcomed visitors from 13 states: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. In addition, 11 of Rhode Island's cities and towns have sent us visitors; and we had visitors from England, Ethiopia, and Turkey.

### Taking Tea

Our first tea of the season was enjoyed as part of our Gardens in Bloom day on June 24<sup>th</sup>. Thirty people enjoyed the delicious sandwiches, fruit, scones, and pastries provided by Tom's Market Catering of Coventry, R. I. It was a perfect day, and the broad porch was a great setting.

Next will be the July 22<sup>nd</sup> tea, also on the porch; and on August 26<sup>th</sup>, a Victorian Fashion Show tea. Here, models wearing period and reproduction Victorian clothing will stroll among the tables, taking the guests through a full day in the life of a Victorian lady.

Two other teas have been added to the schedule for this year. On September 9<sup>th</sup>, Clouds Hill will host a picnic tea. Guests will receive a picnic basket with their sandwiches, fruit and scones and may take it out on the grounds to tables set up in the gardens. Iced tea and

lemonade, and pastries will be served to their tables. In case of rain, tea will be served on the porch.

For the first time, the museum will host a Christmas tea on December 15<sup>th</sup>. This will allow guests to enjoy the decorated house and will include a lecture on a Victorian Christmas by museum curator, Anne Holst.

Teas are by prepaid reservation only and space is limited. Reservation forms for all teas are available on our website [www.cloudshill.org](http://www.cloudshill.org) or by calling 401-884-9490. The museum is not open for tours during the teas.

### Upcoming Special Exhibitions

Family Threads, an exhibition of the textiles and clothing of Clouds Hill will be presented in September this year, with open dates of September 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> from 12:00 to 3:00 P.M. The display will be on view for other tours from September 8<sup>th</sup> through the 23<sup>rd</sup>. This display includes something for everyone who loves cloth, laces, embroidery and more. Over 700 pieces of flat linens, much with beautiful embroidered monograms and lace trims are included in the collection, with the oldest piece dating to the 1790s.

The popular Day in the Country will be held on Columbus Day, October 8<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. Activities include making cider and apple butter, shelling and grind-

ing corn for corn muffins, churning butter, visiting dairy goats, learning about the world of bees and their importance to food production, watching a demonstration of draft horses, and more. It is a great chance to learn about where food comes from.

October 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 to 3:00 P.M. will be the open days for the new exhibition on the Gentleman Sportsman, which features the hunting and fishing paraphernalia used in the late 1900s in the field. This is a special exhibit for the men to enjoy, although by the 1890's, the gentler sex was taking to the field to shoot and fish.

## PROJECT UPDATE

We are currently preparing to begin two projects at Clouds Hill.

The first, as mentioned in "A Focus on Education" (on page 5), is the Senior class project of an East Greenwich High School student. We look forward to seeing what will be found on the dining room ceiling.

A local scout, working toward Eagle Scout, is the lead on the second project. His troop will join him to make a noticeable change to the landscape on the drive.

Look for the exciting outcome of these projects in the next issue.

## THE CLOUDS HILL CONNECTION

If you attend our Day in the Country and enjoy seeing some of the old agricultural tools in use and on display, plan to expand on what you have seen with a visit to the Blue Slope Country Museum in Franklin, Connecticut. Just past Norwich off Route 2, the museum is an easy drive from Rhode Island and is open by appointment and on certain advertised days. This is probably the most complete collection in New England, including dairying, a dog treadmill, saws for ice and wood cutting, an extensive collection of woodwork-

ing tools, a collection of kitchen equipment, wagons and early trucks, and much more. It is all housed in a beautiful new bank barn, built by Pennsylvania workmen and a gorgeous example of their craft. While there is no direct Clouds Hill connection, this is a museum not to be missed if you enjoy the simpler life, where a need was identified and a tool to meet that need crafted by hand. For more information visit their website at [blueslope.com](http://blueslope.com).

WITH A FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Clouds Hill always looks forward to the month of June, as this is when the Victorian Society in America hosts their American Summer School in Newport. Under the direction of Professor Guy Wilson of the University of Virginia, the Newport school draws students from around the world and across the United States. A visit to Clouds Hill is always included in the school's field trips. This year, as a result of the tour, three students expressed strong interest in completing their master's theses for their respective colleges at Clouds

Hill. One person was interested in the pottery and porcelain; one in doing a thesis of the clocks in the house; and one looked at the dining room for an in depth study. We are always interested in working with students on these types of projects.

Two students from the nearby New England Institute of Technology are also working on senior projects at Clouds Hill. One student is compiling a video tour of the second floor and third floor billiard room, which will be available to show to those

who do not wish to climb stairs to the second floor. The second student is researching and making a video presentation of the relationship between Alfred A. Reed, Sr. and the King of Siam. This can be shown to enhance the viewing of the Reed artifacts from Indonesia.

Finally, an East Greenwich High School senior will be working with museum Director, Wayne Cabral over the summer to clean the dining room ceiling and expose the fresco design thereon.

FIND

While rearranging things in the attic of the carriage museum, we came across a strange item – a poke. Designed to be worn around a cow (or in our case, a calf's) neck, it prevented the animal from squeezing through hedges and escaping its pasture. In the case of the calf sized poke, we can also assume that it might have been useful for weaning the calf, as mother would not have appreciated a poke in the side when the calf tried to nurse.



WHAT'S IT?

Visit our website, [www.cloudshill.org](http://www.cloudshill.org), for the answer.



FROM THE COLLECTIONS

The Pottery Collection

Three beautiful salt-glazed stoneware jugs with bird designs in cobalt blue.

Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum  
P.O. Box 522  
East Greenwich, R.I. 02818

Postage

FIRST-CLASS MAIL



### **Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum**

Located at: 4157 Post Road, Warwick, RI

Mail: P.O. Box 522  
East Greenwich, R.I. 02818

Telephone: 401-884-9490

E-mail: [office@cloudshill.org](mailto:office@cloudshill.org)

**... a portal to the past ...**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
[WWW.CLOUDSHILL.ORG](http://WWW.CLOUDSHILL.ORG)

Clouds Hill Victorian House Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation operating a historic Victorian home as a museum for the public.

The house is an important part of the history of the City of Warwick and the State of Rhode Island. It was built in 1872 by William Smith Slater for his daughter, Elizabeth Ives Slater, on her marriage to Alfred Augustus Reed, Jr. It has remained in the same family since it was built, passing from female to female until reaching the current owner. The lineage of the family can be traced to several notable figures.

In addition to the architecture and interior of the house, other collections include textiles, porcelain, carriages, and much more. The property on which the house sits has been referred to as the West Bay arboretum.

Donations to Clouds Hill are deductible to the fullest extent of the law.