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Editor's Note

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Our current issue presents lively excavations of diverse aspects of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Newport. In his “Abolition and Anti-Abolition in Newport, Rhode Island, 1835-1866,” Joey La Neve DeFrancesco details how a determined and cohesive African-American community in Newport succeeded in building institutions that had a profound impact on the lives of black Newporters in the nineteenth century. During the same period, DeFrancesco notes, the intertwined family, business and social ties of Newport politicians and merchants with Southern plantation owners led to a vigorous anti-black campaign to quash abolitionist efforts in Newport and Rhode Island. This article details how, over decades, the African-American community of Newport overcame the maneuvers of the local powerful pro-slavery bloc. Joey La Neve DeFrancesco is a public historian, organizer, and musician. He has created numerous programs at Rhode Island museums, and has published several magazine articles on the state's history. He was a Newport Historical Society Buchanan Burnham Summer Scholar in 2019, and is currently pursuing an M.A. in history at the University of Rhode Island.

In “Patterning Fashion: Decorated Textiles in the Invoice Books of Newport's John Banister, 1736-1746,” Ned Lazaro takes us back to an earlier era when richly decorated textiles were imported into the American colonies from England. Carefully extracting clues from the account books of Newport merchant John Banister, Lazaro illuminates the backstory of textiles that originated in England, India, and other exotic locales and which clothed the bodies of Newporters in the early-to mid-eighteenth century. Ned Lazaro is the Curator of Textiles and Fashion at Historic Deerfield in Deerfield, Massachusetts. He has researched, lectured, and published on various topics related to fashion, textiles, design, and the presentation of self between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries.

Elizabeth C. Stevens

EDITOR