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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note:

History is full of mysteries. It is the element of the unknown that calls most loudly from the past and in turn sometimes causes us to raise our own voices in defense of a point of view. Each mystery resonates in many different ways. It is the particular chord they strike in each of us and our own view of the human condition that make historical mysteries appealing and each proposed solution a matter of personal interest. In Newport, nothing fits this description more closely than the mystery surrounding the Old Stone Mill, or "Newport Tower."

When a mystery seems insoluble it is then that one must step back and examine the facts. This was the approach taken by the Committee for Research on Norse Activities in North America AD 1000-1500, an international group of scientists, historians, and archaeologists, who came to Newport in 1993 to study the Newport Tower. This is also the approach of Johannes Hertz in his article, "Round Church or Windmill? New light on the Newport Tower," which presents the findings of the Committee for Norse Research, including the results of historical research, photogrammetric surveys, and Carbon-14 testing. While solutions can be questioned, facts cannot.

Johannes Hertz is well-qualified to present his own interpretation of the facts at hand. He was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1927, and studied architecture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in that city. In 1959, he was appointed Curator of the Medieval Department of the National Museum of Denmark. In 1983, Hertz became head of the State Antiquary's Archaeological Secretariat. In addition, he has carried out many archaeological excavations, especially on medieval castles and fortified sites, and is the author of numerous papers on medieval archaeology.

Also in this issue of *Newport History*, which is dedicated to the mystery of the Old Stone Mill, is a photographic essay depicting the evolution both of the appearance of the tower and of interpretations of it in painting and photography. The images are from the collection of the Newport Historical Society. In "From the Collection," Ingrid M. Hattendorf examines a collection of artifacts at the Society compiled during an archaeological excavation of the tower. Ingrid has a degree in anthropology from the University of Arizona and researched and cataloged the collection as an intern at the Society in 1996.

In addition, please visit the Newport Historical Society's exhibit on the Old Stone Mill, opening this summer.

The Publications Committee of the Newport Historical Society would like to take this opportunity to thank Howard S. Browne, M.D., for his many years of service. As a member and chairperson of the Committee, Dr. Browne pressed for the highest possible standards for *Newport History* and lent many hours of his time assisting this editor and the Committee in maintaining those standards. The results of his dedication and work are evident.

Finally, just a reminder to our readers. *Newport History* invites scholars, local historians, genealogists, and others with a knowledge of Newport County's history to submit their written works for possible publication. All submissions will be reviewed by the Editor and Publications Committee of the Newport Historical Society for suitability. Please call or write the Society for more information.