

NSHA RELEASES 2017 CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT



North Smithfield – The “Little Red Schoolhouse” (c. 1877) of Forestdale, celebrating its 140th birthday, is the featured historic site on this year’s gold filigree Christmas ornament.

Issued by the North Smithfield Heritage Association, the 2.5” height x 3.25” width x .25” depth ornament will be introduced at the Town’s Pumpkin Fest, Saturday, Sept. 16 on the grounds of the Town High School and will be available in North Smithfield at several area establishments after that. Donations of \$15 for each ornament go towards the preservation of the Forestdale School House and the organization’s other historic building, Heritage Hall, on Green Street, Slatersville.

This year’s ornament is a re-issue of one commemorating the last of the old-style schoolhouses in North Smithfield. “Due to its popularity (it was a sell-out in 2010), the Association felt that it was time to re-introduce this ornament depicting the Forestdale School in an effort to keep its history alive,” said NSHA President John Faricy. “This school replaced a school which once stood at the corner of Great Road and Maple Avenue. Land for the school was deeded to School District #3, in consideration of one dollar, on December 12, 1876, by the Forestdale Manufacturing Company under the conditions that the land be used for ‘school purposes only’ and that the School ‘erect a suitable fence around said premises,’ he added.

The School was then built and occupied in 1877 as a wood clapboard sided building with a gingerbread trim and a cupola. It was named the Forestdale School and provided education for the Village children, whose parents were mostly employed by the company. During the 1940’s, a library was founded in the School by Mary Foley Potenza, a teacher there, and it operated independently for a time before merging with the Town system. By 1958, the School was used solely as a kindergarten and named the Eleanor Howard Kindergarten, in honor of the teacher who had established the Town’s first kindergarten.

On June 19, 1974, the school closed its doors to pupils, and a long-standing town tradition and connection with the past came to an end. Since then, the Town has leased the building to the Heritage Association to preserve it and make it available to the public whenever possible.

The ornament, updated for 2017, will be available in North Smithfield, starting at Pumpkinfest this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.. Thereafter they will be available at **Wright's Dairy Farm & Bakery**, 200 Woonsocket Hill Road; **Lil General**, 659 Great Road; **Lulu's Krazy Daisy at 706 St. Paul St.**, the **Town Administrator's Office, Town Hall; Town Clerk's Office**, Town Hall Annex, 575 Smithfield Road; **North Smithfield Library**, 20 Main St.; and by appointment by calling Louise Vanhouwe (769-8177).

This is the eleventh such ornament produced by the ChemArt Company of Lincoln, RI, for North Smithfield. A limited number of prior year ornaments are still available: Slater Mill; North Smithfield Town Hall; Horse Drawn NS School Bus; John Slater House; Wright's Dairy Farm and Bakery.

With the help of the Town of North Smithfield, many Town civics' organizations plus foundation and private donations, the North Smithfield Heritage Association continues to maintain two historic buildings in Town, the "Little Red Schoolhouse" in Forestdale and Heritage Hall, at 101 Green Street, Slatersville. The NSHA is a certified 501.c.3 non-profit organization. Tax deductible donations and new members are always welcome.