

PASSAGES

THE LONG ISLAND, BRIER ISLAND, AND DIGBY NECK NEWS

Searching for Slocum:

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A Brier Islander goes the distance

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In Search of Joshua Slocum

Society board member travels thousands of kilometres to acquire artifacts, documents, and new pieces of maritime history

BY THE JOSHUA SLOCUM SOCIETY

The Joshua Slocum Society is working hard to get the Slocum Boot Shop ready for the June 27th opening. Part of the preparation has been to collect key information and archival documents about Slocum. Joshua Slocum was the first man to sail single-handedly around the world. He did this from 1895-1898. His connection to Brier Island is that he spent his formative years living on the island in his youth. His famous book, *Sailing Alone Around the World*, remains a classic.

Board member, Kristina Inrig, recently travelled to the United States to pick up several key antiques. The trip started small, but ballooned into a major opportunity to grow the collection and the following!

Kristina has been busily collecting items for months. It started when the newly formed Joshua Slocum Society

was created in February after the Slocum Boot Shop was transitioned from the Denton family for use by the new organization.

“At first, my goal was to collect antique cobbler items from the 1850s,” Kristina shared. “We wanted to create a replica cobbler shop like the one Joshua Slocum would have worked in with his father as a boy.”

Kristina’s first collection trip was back in March when she drove from Ottawa to Brier Island with a U-Haul truck. She stopped at over 25 places to collect antiques and special items from an 1850s cobbler bench to wooden shoe lasts and everything in between.

“In about two weeks,” Inrig said, “I collected all the items that would have taken Slocum’s father a lifetime to accumulate. Now we had an

authentic collection that represented a boot shop from the original time period.”

With the cobbler collection complete, a lively discussion began online about whether the historic site at 118 Water Street is the real boot shop where Slocum actually worked. Several people insist that it is the real shop as documented in several books and archives. Others say it was closer to the store and destroyed in the great Groundhog Day storm. Still others think it was closer to Peters Island. The consensus is that there is no consensus. There is no one alive today that was there when Slocum worked at the shop. What we know is that the original boot shop was a fish shop on Water Street and it was a cobbler shop in the 1850s. We did find some primary evidence to show that the shop purchased at 118 Water St was a cobbler shop in the

past. Drop by to learn more and this uncertainty of historical places will be part of our display.

The next major priority for the group was to start collecting items that were less about the cobbler shop and more about Slocum and sailing. This led Kristina Inrig to take a second trip. At first, it was just to pick up a model boat of the sloop "Spray" which is the boat that Slocum sailed around the world in the late 1800s. The model was located in South Carolina and wouldn't ship well to Brier Island. Inrig drove with her son all the way to pick it up.

"I soon discovered that there was a rare hand-written letter by

Slocum from 1899 that was available in Florida," Inrig recalls. "I figured I was already in South Carolina so I might as well carry on to Florida and pick up the letter as well." That is exactly what she did.

Kristina began posting about the new acquisitions from the US which created a buzz on the Joshua Slocum Society Facebook page. She decided to take a few videos as well and began posting short YouTube Videos and Facebook Reels. There was a lot of excitement and interest.

Inrig began heading North to bring the letter, model boat, and several other items to Brier Island. There were several unique items that could not be acquired so she decided to see if she could at least take photos of these items to share in the boot shop this summer and online.

The first stop on the journey home was the Georgetown University Archives in Washington. A special booklet called the "Sloop Spray Souvenir" was available from storage in the Special Collections unit. This was a publicity flyer compiled by

Henrietta Slocum and published in the early 1900s. It includes a number of newspaper articles about the famous trip. Kristina took photos and videos of every single page of the document.

"I want history to come out of the archives and into the world," Kristina said. "There are so many interesting artifacts buried in the archives that help tell this story." Kristina began sharing the details and the response

was so positive that she decided to extend her trip a little longer.

The next archives on the list were from the New Bedford Whaling Museum. Inrig arranged to spend the morning in the reading room to photograph a collection of photos and documents relating to Joshua Slocum. She also took several videos to create future content about these items. Another special piece was an original painting that depicts Joshua Slocum working on the Spray in Fairhaven.

After the museum stop, Inrig headed to Fairhaven to document the Joshua Slocum monument. She also walked the path to where Slocum most likely rebuilt the Spray at a place known as Poverty Point.

The trip was coming to an end, but a special tip suggested that she should

take the time to go to Martha's Vineyard. Not being a stranger to ferries, Inrig took the journey across the river, rented a bicycle, and cycled with her son to the Martha's Vineyard Museum.

A wonderful collection of artifacts were laid out by the Museum. There was a model of the Spray, pieces of coral that Slocum had collected on his trip, and several photos and documents. Kristina photographed everything and took several videos as well.

The visit to Martha's Vineyard was so successful that she returned the next day and found her way to Slocum House. It was the last home on land that Slocum lived in before he headed to sea the last time in 1909. He was never seen or heard from again. While photographing the plaque about the home, a black truck pulled up and Inrig ventured up the driveway to introduce herself. As luck would have it, the owner of the Slocum House was the man in the black truck. He lived off-site and just happened to be driving by today. He was extremely kind and allowed access inside the wonderful house where photos and videos were taken of the property.

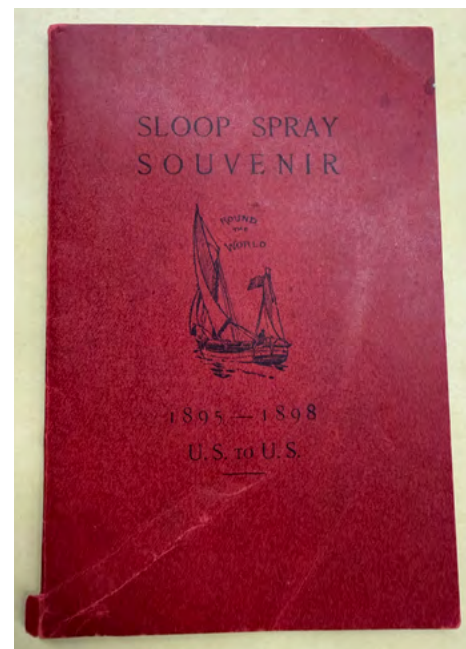
That special visit was the final stop on the journey and Kristina made her way back to Brier Island. She had gathered a wonderful collection of artifacts, photos, stories, and information to help build an even better display at the Slocum Boot Shop.

Drop by this summer to learn more about Joshua Slocum and the growing collection. The site at 118 Water Street opens for the summer season on June 27th with an Open House. There is also a Slocum Walk taking place on July 2nd as part of Old Home Weekend. A new website has been created: joshuaslocum.com

See you this summer!



ABOVE: Kristina with the Slocum letter at Raptis Rare Books, in Palm Beach, Florida.



ABOVE: Slocum House, in Martha's Vineyard. **RIGHT:** The copy of the Sloop Spray Souvenir at Georgetown University Archives in Washington. (Photos: Kristina Inrig)




JOSHUA SLOCUM SOCIETY



WHAT'S NEXT?

★ **IT'S TIME TO GET THE DISPLAY READY ON BRIER ISLAND!** ★

We have now collected a number of items in Canada and the US in addition to several donations.



1. CLEAN UP THE FISH SHOP

Let's get the space clean, organized and ready to showcase our shared history.





2. SORT & GROUP THE ITEMS

Group display items by type to create meaningful and engaging exhibits.

- Cobbler Shop
- Sailing Materials
- Slocum Items
- And More!



3. PREPARE THE DISPLAY

Plan the layout, highlight key stories, and bring everything to life for visitors.





Save the Date!

**FIRST EVENT
OPEN HOUSE**



JUNE 27TH, 2026

Join us as we celebrate Joshua Slocum, our heritage, and the next chapter of the Slocum Boot Shop.

★ **MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK!** ★ THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THIS JOURNEY. ★

The
JOSHUA SLOCUM SOCIETY

OPEN HOUSE

*The Slocum Boot Shop
& Maritime Display*

★ SATURDAY ★
JUNE 27TH, 2026
★ 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM ★

Step inside a recreated 19th-century cobbler's workshop, inspired by the place where a young **Joshua Slocum** worked alongside his father before heading out to sea.

★ JUNE 27, 1898 ★
On this day, Joshua Slocum arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, completing his 46,000-mile solo voyage aboard the *Spray*—the first solo circumnavigation of the globe.

118 WATER STREET, WESTPORT
(BRIER ISLAND)
Drop in anytime — everyone welcome!

THE JOSHUA SLOCUM SOCIETY

SLOCUM WALK

THURSDAY, JULY 2ND, 2026

Join us for a guided walk around Brier Island, stopping at key points of interest relating to the life of legendary sailor **Joshua Slocum**, who spent his youth on Brier Island.

STOPS INCLUDE:

- Joshua Slocum Monument
- Former Baptist Church
- Cemetery
- Replica Boot Shop
- Peters Island Lookout

MEET AT 1:15 PM —
WESTPORT RECREATION HALL (21 SECOND ST)

PART OF OLD HOME WEEKEND BY
THE WESTPORT RECREATION AUXILIARY

FOR MORE INFO: EMAIL: [JOSHUASLOCUMSOCIETY@GMAIL.COM](mailto:joshuaslocumsociety@gmail.com)
EVERYONE WELCOME! FREE OF CHARGE!

*Make it a day on Brier Island and stay for Prize
Bingo with the Auxiliary!*

**WESTPORT
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

LOBSTER SUPPER

JULY 4TH DOORS OPEN
AT 5:00PM

COME OUT TO THE
WESTPORT FIRE DEPARTMENT
LOBSTER SUPPER
for great food, good company,
and a fun community event
supporting your local
firefighters.
Everyone is welcome!

\$20 LOBSTER PLATE
(LOBSTER, ROLL, SALAD, DESSERT)

\$10 SALAD PLATE
(SALAD, ROLL, DESSERT)

DESSERT INCLUDED!

21 SECOND STREET, WESTPORT
AT THE REC HALL

PRE-BOOK YOUR MEAL AND SKIP THE LINE!

CONTACT TO PRE-BOOK:
EDNA O'NEILL 902 247 4255
TAMARA ALBRIGHT 902 308 0879
OR PM ON FACEBOOK

TIVERTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

FATHERS DAY BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, JUNE 21
8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

TIVERTON COMMUNITY HALL

EGGS, BACON, SAUSAGE, FRENCH TOAST,
HASH BROWNS, TOAST, COFFEE, TEA & JUICE

ADULTS: \$12 - CHILDREN: \$7 - KIDS UNDER 5: FREE