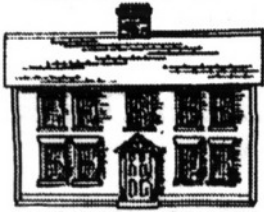


# THE EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



John Hunt House

# Gazette

Vol. XXIV No. 2

October 2011

## President's letter

Nancy Moore, President



We hope you were able to attend our "Smithsonian Night" at Weaver Library last month. Many of our members were

there as were lots of people who were curious about us and the stories behind the items in the showcase. There was even one sharp eyed person who had noticed that the blue Rumford bottle was for sale and spoke up for it as soon as he arrived. He seemed very pleased to have it. Our great thanks to the Board for volunteering to speak about their favorite artifact and to Edna Anness and Maggie Dooley who birthed the idea. Perhaps the hit of the road show was the militia jacket donated and presented by Rosemarie Sirenski. The jury is still out on exactly which war it is from – more research is needed and there was much speculation and some concrete knowledge offered by our audience. Reinhard Wohlgemuth presented the "mystery" artifact very skillfully and with great humor. Someone finally guessed that it was a horse tethering block. It weighed a considerable

amount! Dot Thornely did a superb job showing her photos of the historic gardens, explaining their evolution, and that of the URI Master Gardening Program at Hunt House. Virginia Gonsalves and Dave Kelleher talked about the Cape Verdean Museum and Union Primary respectively, giving us updates on each place and what the future may hold for each. And Edna Anness and Nancy Moore filled in the spaces with talks about the Hunt china, Crescent Park glassware, Rumford artifacts, the Civil War sword and Dorothy Marshall's "Bubbles" doll and wicker carriage. A very sweet moment came when member George Amaral recalled playing with his childhood friend Dorothy and that doll. We all enjoyed the questions and comments which continued during the refreshment time. This was a great idea which should have an encore. We certainly have many more curiosities in store.

And we hope that you will join us at St. Mary's Church (the little brown church) at 81 Warren Avenue for our October 24th meeting which will be a preview

of the material we will showcase there on Watchemoket Square Day, Saturday, October 29. Edna and our intern, Kristina Calia, are busy unearthing photos and mementos of the Square for the presentation. Have any of you items you think should be included and would like to loan for this program? If so, please call Edna Anness (434-3347) or Nancy Moore (438-4299). And just to give you a "heads-up" about a November activity: the Board agreed to meet with John Austin on November 12 to talk with him about paranormal activity which may be present at Hunt House. John has a long list of credits and references here in RI (which Edna has checked out) and has been interested in the paranormal for many years. We will keep you posted about our discussions with him and whether the Board will agree to have a survey done at Hunt House.

See you all at the October meeting -

Visit us at  
**EPHIST.ORG**



### The Gazette

Is published monthly by the  
East Providence  
Historical Society

P.O. Box 4774  
East Providence, RI 02916-4774  
Tel. (401) 438-1750  
Web Site: ephist.org

#### OFFICERS

- Nancy Moore *President*
- Kris Rose *1st Vice President*
- Edna Anness *2nd Vice President*
- Cheryl Faria *Recording Secretary*
- Pat Henry *Corresponding Secretary*
- Dot Thornley *Treasurer*
- Kris Rose *Immediate Past President*

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

- Bob Tewksbury *Buildings*
- Jeffrey Faria *Grounds*
- Kris Rose *Markers*
- Mona Breault *Membership*
- Virginia Berwick – *Museum*
- Karen Panzarella *Museum*
- Edna Anness *Acting Curator*
- Reinhard Wohlgemuth *Newsletter*
- Nancy Moore *Preservation*
- Maggie Dooley *Program*
- Maggie Dooley *Publicity*
- Reinhard Wohlgemuth *Webmaster*

## Calendar Of Events

### OCTOBER

**Monday, Oct. 24, 7:00 pm**  
 General Meeting – Public Invited  
 St. Mary's Episcopal Church  
 82 Warren Avenue  
 East Providence, RI  
**Watchemoket Preview Party!**  
 A preview of the Society's  
 programming for Watchemoket  
 Day celebrations. The history  
 of the Church and the Square  
 will be the focus of our  
 presentation.

**Saturday, October 29,**  
**9:00 am - 3:00 pm**  
**Watchemoket Square Day!**  
**FREE!**  
 St. Mary's Episcopal Church  
 82 Warren Avenue  
 East Providence, RI  
*A free shuttle service will be  
 available at Peirce Field  
 beginning at 9:00 am*

### NOVEMBER

**Sunday, Nov. 13, 1:00 – 4:00 pm**  
 Hunt House Museum open  
 Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

## Watchemoket Square Day

The East Providence Historical Society travels to St. Mary's Episcopal Church (The church was built by G.E. Harvey in 1872 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980) to join businesses and churches in this historic section of East Providence in celebration of the past, present and future Watchemoket Square. The neighborhood will be alive with a church bazaar, foods, live music, special programming and activities.

Society volunteers will be located at St. Mary's Episcopal Church providing historical programming and a display of artifacts about Watchemoket Square. Bring some comfortable shoes and join the walking tours through several of the neighborhoods to view unique architecture and buildings.

For more details of the day's activities visit  
[Watchemoketsquare.com](http://Watchemoketsquare.com)

### The East Providence Historical Society

is dedicated to preserving the heritage  
and enjoying the history of our city.

**If you are not a member we invite  
you to join now.**

Annual dues are \$15 individual, \$25  
family or business, or a Life  
Membership for \$150.

Please make check payable to:

**East Providence Historical Society**

and mail membership form to

**Mona Breault, 23 Case Street,  
Rumford, RI 02916**



### Membership Form

New

Renewal/Change

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 Individual

\$25 Family/Business

\$150 Life

## Fall Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- Continue watering sensitive trees and newly planted shrubs until the ground begins to freeze. Root growth continues well into the fall, even as foliage dies.
- Clean up your gardens of dead plant material. Compost only non-diseased plants so you do not spread spores of such common diseases as mildews, leaf-spot and fungi.
- Mid-October is the best time to plant garlic. It is easy to do and will give you some early scapes (unfurled flower shoots) next spring. Mulch them with straw or grass, lightly at first, then more heavily before the ground freezes. They will be ready for harvest next July!
- Rake up most leaves before winter, but leave some for a protective mulch in beds and borders. Many leaves can be mowed with a mulching mower and left on the lawn to break down.
- Continue to enjoy your gardens and the late season flowers and veggies until the killing frost. Then clean up the garden, add compost and mulch for winter protection.

## Historical Marker Program

Your home may be eligible for a marker. Any building in the City of East Providence which contributes to the historical development or architectural character of the City is eligible to be considered for a Historical Marker.

Request information by sending your name, address and phone number to the

### Marker Program

East Providence Historical Society  
P. O. Box 4774  
East Providence, RI 02916-4774

## Watchemoket Square Day



If you are a history buff or a long time resident of East Providence, you know that Watchemoket Square was “where it was at!” Everyone went to the Square for business, banking and being seen. And then, 195 West came barreling through the Square, changing it forever.

On Saturday, October 29, the businesses and residents are bringing back the hustle and bustle of the old days. Come and enjoy the waterfront, the eateries, the history, walking tours, antique cars, kids’ activities and much more.

## Tip Of The Baker's Hat . . .

. . . to the following members who baked for the September members' meeting:



- Dot Thornley
- Ginny Berwick
- Mona Breault
- Kris Rose
- Pat Henry.



- David LaCharite
- Jennifer Vinnitti
- Albert Lee
- Christine Wynne

## Volunteers Needed For Watchemoket Square Day!

We need volunteers to meet and greet people at St Mary's Church between 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on October 29, where we will have an exhibition about the old Square, film presentations and various information about the Society. You can sign up for as much time as you'd like and have plenty of time to explore the area yourself. Please call Nancy Moore at 438-4299 if you can help.

Friends of Hearthside Present



## *Gone But Not Forgotten*

### **VICTORIAN FUNERAL AND MOURNING CUSTOMS**

A Special Month-long Exhibit Depicting the 1873 Funeral of Hearthside Homeowner, Simon E. Thornton.

Draped in black, Hearthside becomes a house in mourning with Victorian funeral décor, mourning fashions, jewelry, antique coffin, embalming table and equipment, and post-mortem photography. Exhibit concludes with a mock funeral complete with horse-drawn hearse and a séance to connect with homeowners who have passed.

Sat. Oct. 15	Gravestone Carving/Tour	1:00-5:00 pm
Sat. Oct. 22	Candlelight Tour	6:30-9:30 pm
Sat. Oct. 29	Mock Funeral/Tour	1:00-5:00 pm
Sat. Oct. 30	Séance	6:30 & 9:00 pm

Historic Hearthside

677 Great Road, Lincoln, RI 02865

Call 401-726-0597 for reservations for Candlelight Tours and tickets for Séance.

[www.hearthsidehouse.org](http://www.hearthsidehouse.org)

## A Midwinter Night

By G. E. Kent

As we fast approach the long, dark, lonely nights of winter, I find that with all the strife and hatred in the world, I spend much of my time living with my pleasant memories of boyhood past. One of the most pleasant of all these are the times I spent with my father. Not only was he the most compassionate man I ever knew but also the most interesting. His kindness, concern and care of the many animals on the farm was something not often seen.

The memory that popped up the other day as I was putting up Christmas decorations was a night about this time before Christmas when I was about 3 years old. The day before the night I recall, I had gone to the icehouse with mother to take his lunch to him. In those days the harvesting of ice was powered by a steam hoist. The boiler for this was a rented boiler that had to be transported from McCormic on Taunton Avenue then through the woods to be set up in the engine house. My mother and I stayed until this was completed and the boiler brought up to pressure and the equipment tested. By this time the other uncles had left to start the evening chores at the farm. The fire was banked for the night and on the walk home father cut a tree for our Christmas.

The boiler was fired with soft coal and unless tended the fire would not last until the next morning when everyone

returned after morning chores were finished. That meant that my father, being the engineer, had to get up about 2:00 am and walk about a mile through the woods to do this. I was intrigued by his telling of the stars and sounds of these mid-winter walks and I begged him to take me on one of them.

This came about on a night after our Christmas tree was set up in our living room at 270 Marten Street. He came into my bedroom sometime after midnight, waking me he said "If you really want to go with me this is the night we should do it". While I was getting dressed in my warmest clothes he went down and made cocoa. When I came down to the warm kitchen with the black iron stove fired up, he took me in to see that the tree had been trimmed the night before. With thoughts of Christmas Morning, and a cup of hot cocoa to warm me, we left the house to walk through the woods to the icehouse.

It was a cold, clear, star bright night with no wind. We had had a light dusting of snow the day before and the iridescent light off the new snow made the night as bright as an overcast day. My father kept me from noticing the cold with stories of what Christmas was like in his day. In spite of this I was chilled through when he opened the enginehouse door. To this day I can recall the smell of soft coal, valve oil and heat that met us.

While he worked on the boiler I sat in his engineer's seat and for the first time in my life heard the booming of the ice forming on the pond; one of the sounds he had mentioned. After banking the fire we left to return home and back to bed. On the way we stopped at the top of the big hill to admire the still night and the bright starlight. As we gazed at the wonder of this a fox barked below us. I had never heard this and would not have known what animal had made it. He explained that it was one of several red or gray foxes that lived in the woods of the farm.

When we returned to the warm kitchen I went back to bed with thoughts of how lucky I was to be part of a wonderful family with Christmas on the way and my having such a great man as my father.





*John Hunt House*

East Providence Historical Society  
P.O. Box 4774  
East Providence, RI 02916

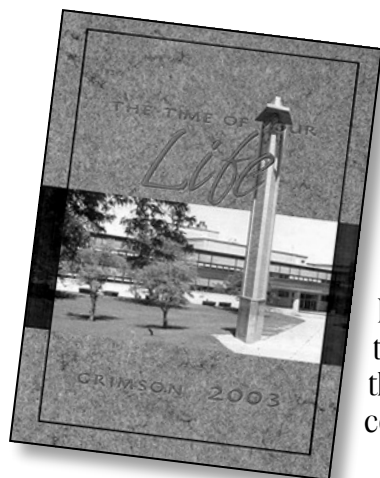
**Non-Profit Organization**  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
**Providence, RI**  
**Permit #2712**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

---

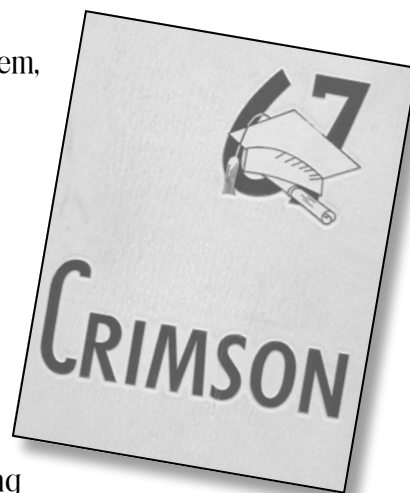
## The CRIMSON: East Providence High School Yearbook

We used to be able to say that we had every yearbook from 1912 onward until we stopped getting them, for the graduates were too young to want to dispose of their yearbooks. Today we have none past 1998.



I contacted the high school a few years ago and was told we would have to buy the yearbooks. The Historical Society does not have the money to buy them every year.

By the way, visitors to the Museum spend literally hours going through the yearbooks. It is one of the favorite parts of the Library. So stop by and browse our yearbook collection and maybe drop off a yearbook after 1998.



Edna Anness, Curator