

Gazette

March 2013

Volume XXV No. 4

**Dedicated to Preserving the Heritage and Enjoying the
History of Our City**



March

Monday, March 25

6:00 pm

Spring Potluck

7:00 pm

Members' Meeting -
Public invited

FISH - Keith Gonsalves

Speaks about the
herring migration on
the Ten Mile River
Newman Church Hall,
Rumford

April

Sunday, April 14

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Hunt House Museum
open

Hunts Mills Road,
Rumford

Monday, April 22

7:00 pm

Members' meeting -
Public invited

Once around the Bogs
History of Edaville
Riverside Library

CONTACT US AT:

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

Notes from the President's Desk . . .

By Maggie Dooley, President

Hello Friends!

After a short winter break, we are looking forward to the March reopening of the Hunt House Museum and invite you to stop by. While you are at the site, spend a little time looking at the Hunt's Mill Dam and fish ladder. Then plan to join us and Keith Gonsalves of the Ten Mile River Group at our March 25 general meeting for a presentation about the construction of several fish ladders and how fish manage to move up the Ten Mile River to the Turner Reservoir - and why it is important to the river's aquatic ecosystem.

As I mentioned in the November 2012 Gazette, our directors and chairpersons are beginning a process to create a long-range plan for the Society. We have had two planning meetings which enabled us to identify some short-term projects including review and update of the by-laws, standing rules and procedures documents, reorganize work and collections areas in the museum, and refresh the design of the Gazette and website. As we examine our finances and consider our needs, we are discussing and searching for funding opportunities.

In addition, Building Committee members, Jesse Albright, Andy Valerio, Dotty Thornley and Chair Bob Tewksbury spent a Saturday morning conducting a visual inspection of the interior of the Hunt House. The physical conditions of each room were recorded and photographed. We are prioritizing the repairs and in some cases we are seeking additional professional advice. This year we plan to install a new front door.

Continued on page #2

Newsflash!!!

EPHS has just learned that the herring will run at Hunts Mills Dam over the weekend of April 13-14. Now how does Keith Gonsalves of the The Mile River group know that? It's an educated best guess from all the data accrued over the years this group has been hoisting herring over the Omega Dam. So stop by Hunts Mills for Open House on Sunday, 1:00-3:30 pm and learn about the herring migration from experts or stop by on your own during the weekend.

The Gazette

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Historical Society

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Deborah Ormerod *2nd Vice President*
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Pat Henry *Corresponding Secretary*
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Nancy Moore *Preservation*
Nancy Moore *Programs*
Nancy Moore *Publicity*
Reinhard Wohlgemuth *Webmaster*

President's notes - From page #1

We are also forming a Nominating Committee this month and if you have an interest in serving, please contact me or another board member. Some of you may have been thinking about joining the board or perhaps you would like to nominate someone. All of our board members would be happy to discuss the tasks and responsibilities with you so don't hesitate to give us a call.

I hope to see you at our March pot luck dinner and program. Prior to our evening program we will provide an update on the happenings at the Society and Museum. As always, we look forward to your questions and comments. Thank you for your continued interest and support!

Tip Of The Baker's Hat . . .

. . . to the following members who baked for the November 26 members' meeting:

- Patty Hopkinson
- Dotty Thornton
- Billie Arden
- Mona Breault
- Pat Henry



Meet Our New Members

A warm welcome to the new members who joined our group:

- Arnold & Adrith Andrade
- Cathy Garrity
- Phillip Sanford
- Barbara Oceau
- William McWeeney



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

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



Membership Form

- New
 Renewal/Change

Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

\$15 Individual

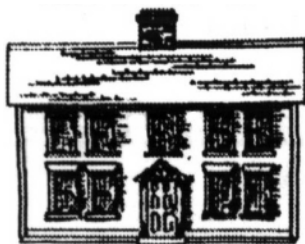
\$25 Family/Business

\$150 Life

Museum News

By Deb Ormerod

Deb has spent some time on these cold winter days participating in a webinar by Connecting to Collections "Caring for Yesterday's Treasures - Today". It was a free 9 hour class offered over 6 days on topics such as storage and handling of materials, mold, pests, humidity, and how to manage volunteers (which was funny since we are ALL volunteers!!). There were over 300 people all over the United States that participated. There was even homework!! Although some of the material was quite advanced and technical, Deb learned quite a bit of useful information. Deb will also be participating in another webinar sponsored by Past Perfect. Past Perfect is a software program that the Society will use to record and keep track of our collections (currently we have a card file system in place) as well as our membership information.



The Board is reviewing the process and policy for accepting, accessioning, and deaccessioning items for the museum collection.

Thank you for your continued patience as we consider materials to be added to the collection from last year. The purpose of the Museum is to collect facts and material objects relative to the history of East Providence and such portions of the adjacent towns as have at any time become or were a part of East Providence and to increase the interest of the citizenry in their heritage. The Museum Committee met in March and will continue to meet throughout this year. You will be notified as to what has happened to the item you offered to the Society as a donation. If you have any questions, please feel free to call (401-438-1750) or email (info@ephist.org). We will get back to you in a timely manner.



In Memory Of:

Hope Yeau



Sadly missed...fondly remembered

'Footsteps in History' Quilt

By Rose Marie Sirenski

This is a picture of the quilt square featuring the Hunt House which is incorporated into the "Footsteps in History" quilt. This quilt will showcase 24 squares representing different cities and towns in the Blackstone Valley. The discussion of putting this quilt together started in November 2010. The East Providence Historical Society was asked to provide a quilt square. In discussion with Edna Anness, it was decided to take a photograph of the Hunt House with the East Providence Historical Society sign. I printed the photo onto fabric and framed the square; it was mailed to the coordinator, Diane Calvano, in May 2011. The quilt was finally completed by a guild in November 2012. It will be showcased on April 6, 2013, at The Depot in Woonsocket, RI. The title of the exhibit is "A Patchwork of Communities".

East Providence Hall of Famer: Our Own Dave Kelleher

This year's inductees to the EP Hall of Fame included an honorary inductee, longtime resident and educator David Kelleher. But we here at EPHS know Dave in a special roll, that of avid preservationist. Dave has served as president of our group and served on the Board for many years. He ran bus tours of the City and has reprised that talent on Watchemoket Square Day. David served as principal in many of our schools but he had a special fondness for Union Primary and helped spearhead a restoration and reuse. We know he keeps his ear to the ground about current uses for the building. David also led the Historic Properties Commission and now sits on the Historic

District Commission which has taken its place.

The current preservation effort which consumes Dave's energy these days is the Pomham Rocks lighthouse. He is a founding member of that Board and has recently become president. Dave has taken his "dog and pony" show anywhere he has been welcomed: schools, retirement centers, civic and church groups, Save the Bay tours. On one of those school talks many years ago, he inspired an elementary student to make his future senior project about Pomham Rocks. So congratulations Dave! We're proud to have you as part of EPHS!

March Members' Meeting

Potluck and 'Fish'

Our winter hiatus comes to a close with our gathering at Newman Church for a pot luck supper. As usual, the telephone committee will be contacting members. Non-members: please call 438-1750 if you would like to be included in the supper; the meeting at 7:00 is open to all. And, if it is March already, the herring will be appearing at the mouth of the Ten Mile River at the Omega Dam sometime in April when their biological clock strikes. Member Keith Gonsalves, leader of the Ten Mile River Group which scoops the fish over the dam, will speak at our March meeting about the two new fish ladders available for use as of this year. EPHS

members have noticed how interested the public has been in the ladder at Hunts Mills Dam and the huge Reservoir Dam ladder is now ready for the run too. Come hear Keith and company talk about the progress on the last ladder at Omega Dam and the plans for counting the fish as they "run" the ladders.

The finished fish ladder at the Hunts Mills site. The herring will now be able to work their way up from the turbulent water below the dam to the relatively calm of the mill pond. From there they continue their journey to the dam at the reservoir to fight their way up that ladder.



Dot Thornley photo

Down Memory Lane in East Providence: McCormick QUARRY

Every so often we get a request for information that is truly intriguing from many standpoints. We got one this month from Susan Cady who occasionally writes for this Gazette. She has unearthed some facts about the McCormick Quarry here in town which operated from the 1880s -1930s. And further research turned up the following data about a calamite found at the quarry.

The later-formed coarse sandstones of the Narragansett basin contain few fossils, but have casts of horsetails and club mosses. One of the largest discovered had a trunk diameter of sixteen inches, and was possibly fifty feet in height. Its linear-grooved bark was buried in the muds and sands hundreds of millions of years ago, and was revealed when the McCormick sandstone quarry in East Providence was opened. Not far away, in a ravine leading to the Seekonk River, can be found growing today the dwarf eighteen-inch descendants of these past giants.

The information about the calamite turns up in a little book called, "Rhode Island: a Guide to the Smallest State." This was a Federal writers project (Part of the WPA projects of the late 30s?) Our main post office has WPA paintings and recipes from this area were collected for inclusion in a Federal writers regional cooking project which was never finished.

Susan received further information about local calamites from Michael Kieron, the assistant curator at the Museum of Natural History & Planetarium in Providence:

The McCormick Construction Company had several sandstone quarries in East Providence. From what I understand, one was at what is now Pierce Field and the other worked a series of ledges from Warren Avenue (now a DPW yard) to Amaral Street (the street bends around the former quarry right after Hemingway Drive). I have also seen advertisements from the company in early city directories.

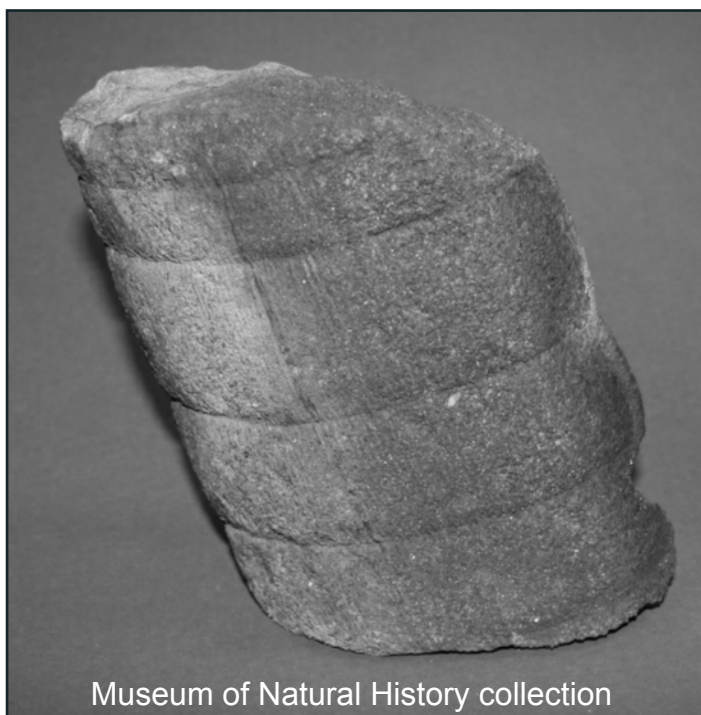
The quarries worked sandstones, conglomerates, and mudstones from the Late Pennsylvanian (~300 million years ago) and comprise the upper part of the

Rhode Island Formation. The sediments were lain down by braided rivers flowing down from the ancestral Appalachians during seasonal floods.

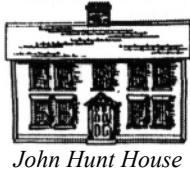
The Museum actually has several hundred Calamite casts in its collection, none 16 inches wide. A sandstone cast that large probably would have been heavily fractured and may have been left in the quarry. I'm enclosing two photographs of Calamite casts from the collection that I have at hand. Any credit will go to the Museum of Natural History if they are used.

So, now it is your turn to weigh in about what you know about this site. Where was it? What did they mine there? Did anyone you know work there? Was it a swimming hole in its later years?

Susan would appreciate any information you could provide; you can email her at nctmk@hotmail.com.



Museum of Natural History collection



East Providence Historical Society
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Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- * Choose seeds from plants such as peas, chard, kale, arugula, beets and lettuce that you can plant during March. Amend and prepare your soil on a dry day when the garden is not soggy. Sow the seeds according to the package directions. Getting an early start may prove to be bountiful if our spring is not harsh. Do not use all the seeds in the package in case you need to wait two or three weeks!
- * With the heavy snows of February many ornamental trees have become damaged. Assess the damage to your trees and determine whether you can prune out the broken branches or you need to hire a professional to remove certain trees that have excessive damage. This will be a good year for nurseries who sell trees.
- * Any seeds that you have that need an eight week window before being planted outdoors should be started this month. Start the seeds in a growing medium and place them in a warm sunny location.
- * Apply a balanced fertilizer to all emerging bulbs such as crocus, daffodil and tulip to invigorate the plants and create stronger blooms.
- * There is still time to look through catalogs and pick some unusual plants and flowers for your garden this upcoming season.

