



The East Providence Historical Society

Gazette

November/December 2013

Volume XXV No. 3

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

November

Monday,
November 25, 7:00 pm
Newman Church Hall
100 Newman Ave,
Rumford
EPHS General Meeting
Speaker David Norton
"King Phillip's War Sites"

December

Sunday, December 8
Hunt House
Open House
Teddy Bear hunt

Monday, December 16
Newman Church Hall
6:00pm Holiday
Turkey Dinner
Followed by
Concert Handbell
Ringers of Wheeler
School at 7:00pm
Dinner by reservation
438-1750
Concert is free and open
to public

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Rededication of Count Rumford: Back to Square One!

By Nancy Moore

In 1939, the Rumford Company, flush with world-wide success, commissioned an internationally known Belgian sculptress named Suzanne Silvercruz to make a bust of the baking powder namesake, Count Rumford (born Benjamin Thompson of Woburn, MA). She took her model from the larger than life-size statue of the Count which stands at the front gate of the Woburn library, which in turn is a copy of a statue in Munich, Germany.

The original dedication took place at the Rumford in June 1939 and the bust stood proudly beside Building 38 for many years. But the fortunes of the company took a bad hop and the doors closed in the 1960s. The Count was offered to the East Providence Library system and he was moved to the side yard of the Rumford Branch, where he quietly passed the time with curious children.

But once again, doors closed on the Count. The library branch went up for sale last spring and soon will be a private home with no need for a Count "in residence." The Library Board offered his bust to the EP Historical Society and the Society quickly took him in, knowing that the newly renovated Rumford Center would have just the right spot for him. So join us at the back entrance of Seven Stars Bakery for the rededication of the bust of the "Father of Nutrition." He's as close to a stove (he invented the stove) and a coffee cup (he invented the percolator) as we could get him!

Rededication Ceremony

Thursday, November 21 @ 10:00am

Rumford Center

20 Newman Ave, East Providence



The Gazette

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East Providence
Historical Society

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The “Teddy” (Roosevelt) Bear Hunt

2nd Sunday Open House – Dec. 8

As some of you may know, we have the toy called a “Teddy” bear because of a hunting incident in which Pres. Theodore Roosevelt refused to shoot a bear. (For details, see Wikipedia) In 1903, an enterprising toy manufacturer capitalized on the incident and the rest is fun and games. What does a Teddy bear hunt have to do with December Open House at Hunt House? Well we could state the obvious: HUNT House, but of course the connection goes deeper than that. One of East Providence’s famous sons was Joseph Bucklin Bishop, born and raised on Pleasant Street at the Bishop farm. Joseph went to Brown, became a journalist and caught the attention of Pres. Roosevelt. The two became confidantes and Bishop was eventually put in charge of the Panama Canal project. They were lifelong friends. Bishop’s great nephew, Chip Bishop, was raised in Woonsocket and heard many stories of this famous uncle. Several years ago, he wrote a critically acclaimed book titled “The Lion and the Journalist” which tells the tale of this friendship. With the Panama Canal turning 100 this coming year, we have asked Chip Bishop to revisit EPHS in April after his return from Panama. It will be wonderful to make that final connection to Joseph Bucklin Bishop.

So bring yourself and any child you can find (the one within?) to Hunt House on Dec 8th for a bear hunt. These bears will be waiting for you in the thickets and bushes (weather permitting) – don’t be afraid. And for those of you who wish to stay safely inside, there’s the Presidential ornament tree to find.



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

**Dinner “With Bells On”:
EPHS Presents the Wheeler School Ringers
Monday December 16 – Newman Church Hall
Dinner 6:00pm – Concert 7:00pm**



EPHS proudly presents the Wheeler School Ringers as its holiday dinner concert. This group of high school students is well known in the New England area for their high quality of musicianship and ability. Led by Dan Moore of Rumford, they have performed nationally and head to Denver on tour in March.

This concert is free and open to the public: attendance at the dinner before must be by reservation – 438-1750

Three New Historic Districts Proposed for East Providence

Through funding by a State Preservation Grant, the EP Historic District Commission was able to hire Kathryn Cavanaugh, expert in identifying districts and properties for National Register status, to examine areas of the City for inclusion as historic districts. As of last spring, the areas bounded by Waterman/Taunton/ Valley Street, Pawtucket Avenue south of Warren to Willett Avenue, and Willett Avenue, from the Whitcomb Farm to Fenner Avenue had been examined for remaining intact historical structures. The first two areas have been reduced to less than 30% integrity for intact structures but the Willett Avenue site produced three possibilities: Whitcomb Farm Plat, Elm Tree Plat and Rose Land Park Plat. But one might point out that these plats were developed in the 20's and 30's – is that historical? Well it seems that we've all grown older suddenly and these plats are nearly 100 years old now, which does in fact makes them eligible.

At the first community meeting on Oct. 24 held to disclose the findings, Ms.Cavanaugh pointed out that each of these plats has an integrity rating ranging from 45-75%. “The Elm Tree Plat is a bungalow museum,” she said and knows of no other plat of its type in RI. Rose Land Park has the highest integrity and has a charming mix of English Cottage, Cape, and Colonial Revival styles. Whitcomb Farm, anchored by the 1805 Pearce Allin House is the largest, having been developed in the 20s and then again post WW2. Rick Greenwood, chief of State Preservation, explained the details of living in an historic district and the Planning Department was on hand to talk with homeowners.

There was little homeowner response to the notification of this first meeting but the EP Planning Department will be holding other meetings in the Riverside area as the projected nominations go forward. If you are a homeowner in on of these plats, please watch for these meeting announcements.

**November EPHS
General Meeting
All Welcome
Newman Church Hall
100 Newman Avenue,
Rumford – Monday
November 25, 7:00pm**

EPHS presents the program “King Phillip’s War Sites” with speaker David Norton, retired engineer and member of the Seekonk Historical Commission. Mr. Norton is an avid amateur historian and has identified many sites in our area (then called Rehoboth) which were devastated by this 1675-76 conflict. Join us to find out how Rumford’s “Ring of the Green” and other early settlers’ sites here in East Providence fared.



Happy Holidays

Holiday greetings to all
members and friends!



Happy holiday, happy holiday
While the merry bells
keep ringing
May your every wish come true

Happy holiday, happy holiday
May the calendar keep bringing
Happy holidays to you





A warm welcome to our new members . . .

- Kathy Dias
- Sharon DuBois
- Bob Dufresne & Kathy Riker
- Tom & Anne Marie Enderby
- Robert Gandolfo
- Margaret Gidley
- Leon Long
- Tracey Moline
- Albert & Sandra Pointe
- Stanley Granite (Dave Czerwonka)
- Bruce Tanner
- Polly Walker.

**. . . we are honored
you joined us!**



A Midwinter night

By George 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 engine house door. To this day I

Continued on next page

A Midwinter night *Continued*

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.

Reprinted from website

Treasurer's Report for October 2012 through September 2013



Thank you, Historical Society members and friends for your donations and prompt dues payments. We took in a total \$8,545.74 from dues, donations, and sales this year and a bequest for our Memorial Fund of \$9,500. Our total expenses this year were \$10,414.57. Fortunately, with previous years donations, we have been able to paint two sides of Hunt

House and put in a new alarm system. This next year we are planning to paint the other two side of Hunt House, fix the front door, install screen/storm doors on the exterior doors, and some other projects we are discussing to preserve the House. Thank you again for your generosity!

EPHS Fall "2nd Sunday" Open Houses at John Hunt House:

Sunday - November 10

Special Holiday Open House – December 8
open 1 - 3:30pm- 65 Hunts Mills Road



Did you know that Count Rumford held the title "Father of Nutrition" way back in 1785? Or that the Horsford/Rumford Company disturbed the Pleasant Valley neighborhood in Providence with explosions as it perfected the formula for baking powder? Come have a late Fall walk at Hunts Mills: 3 full-color interpretive signs which tell you about the site you are looking at. And on view inside the Hunt House is the special 160th anniversary Rumford Baking Powder Company exhibit. Perhaps the Count himself will be in attendance.

Ring in the Holidays

with family, friends,
a delicious turkey dinner
and the
Concert Handbell Ringers
of Wheeler School

The East Providence Historical Society will host a holiday turkey dinner at the Newman Congregational Church Hall on Monday, December 16 at 6:00pm. A full

turkey dinner, prepared by the fine cooks of the Society,

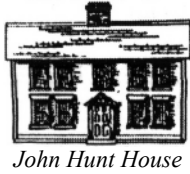


will be served at 6:00pm. At 7:00 p.m. enjoy a variety of desserts while listening to the talented and dedicated Concert Handbell Ringers of Wheeler School.

The public is warmly welcomed; reservations are necessary! Tickets are \$10 for members and \$12 for guests. RSVP by telephone (401) 438-1750 or by email info@ephist.org. Please provide your name, telephone number, and number of members and guests who will join us.



There will be no members' meetings during January and February. We look forward to seeing all of you again in March 2014.



East Providence Historical Society
P.O. Box 4774
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Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- Wait until early spring to cut back your ornamental grasses. This way, the leaves will provide a place for beneficial garden insects to over winter.
- This month's full beaver Moon on the 17th, should remind you to check gutters culverts and drainage ditches for blockage by falling leaves.
- Add a small layer of compost to your bedding plant areas and roses just before the ground begins to freeze. Waiting will reduce rodent harborage.
- Every few days, turn your windowsill houseplants 90° to keep even growth. Also look for colorful amaryllis during the holiday season to bring bright and cheerful colors into your home all winter.

Native Plant Highlight

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

Our plant focus this month is Borage
"borago officinalis"

Borage has a reputation for invoking courage and was a favorite among soldiers during war. It has a cucumber taste and can be used raw, steamed or cooked and is believed to improve poor spirits. The bright blue flowers can be used in salads or as a garnish. Legend has it that young ladies slipped borage into the drink of prospective husbands to give them the courage to propose marriage.

