



October

Saturday, October 19
10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Watchemoket
Square Day
Watchemoket Square
and Tockwotten

Monday, October 28
7:00 pm
Members' Meeting -
Public invited

Ned Connors:
Watchemoket -
Commercial Gateway
to East Providence
Tockwotten
500 Waterfront Drive

November

Monday, November 25
7:00 pm
Members' Meeting -
Public invited

David Norton:
King Phillip's War
Newman Church

CONTACT US AT:

East Providence
Historical Society
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI
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Dedicated to Preserving the Heritage and Enjoying the
History of Our City

The Life and Times of Count Rumford

Born Benjamin Thompson

By Nancy Moore

2014 marks 160 years of continuous retail for Rumford Baking Powder even though it is now made in Terre Haute IN by the Hulman Company. In honor of this milestone, and to acknowledge the gift to EPHS of the Count Rumford bust by the EP Library Board, we present a series of dialogues with the Count relating his life's story. The bust of Count Rumford, designed by renowned Belgian sculptress Suzanne Silvercruz and dedicated in 1939, is resting comfortably at Stanley Granite Company, thanks to Dave Czwonka and his crew. And thanks to the Rumford Company folks, the Count will be set in cement at the Rumford Complex later in the month. The great unveiling will take place later in the fall - watch this Gazette for details. At our September EPHS Smithsonian night, the Count (sometimes called the Father of Nutrition) made a



surprise visit and seemed delighted that his name has become firmly attached to a cooking product still in use. We hope you enjoy these dialogues with the Count about this life. He will be making further surprise visits to our meetings this year and will definitely be on hand to remove the veil from his bust.

Count Rumford Dialogue

Hello Count. Tell us about your early life.

I was born in Woburn MA in 1753 to a farming family. My father died when I was very young and when I was 15 I was indentured, first to a dry goods salesman in Salem and then to one in Fanueil Hall, closer to home.

Continued on page #3

The Gazette

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East Providence
Historical Society

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Smithsonian Day and Evening

By Nancy Moore

Thanks to all the docent volunteers for a splendid fall day at Hunts Mills. We were busy all day long with keen interest from our visitors and appreciation for the warm welcome.

A number of people stopped by because of our Smithsonian evening at Weaver which turned out to be one of our funniest presentations ever. (Are we noted for being funny?) A surprise visit from Count Rumford née Benjamin Thompson sparked lots of witty commentary and, with a little prompting; he gave us a brief dialogue of his early life in Woburn, MA and Rumford, NH. The memory gets rusty after 200 years and he even had trouble remembering his given name.

The evening was rounded out well with a history of the Rumford Company by writer Chris Martin, a look at Rumford collectibles by EPHS Curator Deb

Ormerod and information from Treasurer Dot Thornley about other retail sidelines which the Rumford had going besides baking powder. But the Count most enjoyed the end of the program which concerned his bust. President Maggie Dooley and Stanley Granite owner Dave Czwonka assured the Count that his bust is safe and nearly ready to be trucked over to the Rumford Company for its (hopefully) final resting place in the area behind Building 38 and 7 Stars. From placement beside Building 38 in 1939, to the Rumford library, to Stanley Granite this summer and now back to Building 38, the Count has come full circle.

If you'd like to meet the count, watch for an announcement of the unveiling of the bust in this Gazette or perhaps he will visit another meeting.

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

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Renewal/Change

Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

\$15 Individual

\$25 Family/Business

\$150 Life

Count's Dialog – From page #1

How did you like that?

I wasn't very good at any of it. I spent every spare minute thinking about how things work and reading. One day, I tried making a rocket and nearly blew the place up so I got fired.

So you were how old by then?

17

With no way of earning a living?

Well, a Dr. Hay in Woburn took me on as a helper and I got a lot of time to read his books and experiment in his lab. And then I got on a schedule for my days and my learning. I even attended a few lectures at Harvard.

So you never actually went to Harvard?

Nope. But by the time I was 19, I was able to get jobs substitute teaching and I got by. I was working on a perpetual motion machine and electricity back then as I recall.

What took you away from Woburn to NH? Rumford NH that we call Concord now?

As luck would have it, a Rev Walker was preaching in Rumford NH and he was from Woburn so he knew I had done some teaching. When they needed a new teacher he asked me to come and apply. So I did and I got the job. This was in 1772.

A fine set of circumstances got you out of teaching pretty quickly and into a marriage. Tell us about that.

You see, Rev Walker had a friend Mr. Rolfe, and they were about the 2 most powerful men in Rumford. Mr.

Rolfe was pretty well along but he had married Rev Walker's daughter, Sarah who was only 30. Well Mr. Rolfe died soon after I arrived and Sarah was a wealthy woman and needed a new husband. She thought I'd do just fine. We were married four months after I arrived and I took over the management of her estates which I liked since I was a bit of an efficiency nut.

One thing led to another didn't it? Tell us how you met the Tory Governor Wentworth.

Well I was always interested in the intellectuals pursuits, you might say, especially science and technology, and some of the agricultural changes I was trying on our property caught the eye of the Governor. I proposed that we do a survey of the White Mountains and he thought that was a splendid idea.

Was that all you and the Gov talked about? There were rumors that you were a traitor to the patriot cause.

After a while, the Gov did see fit to make me a major in the army so that made me privy to some interesting conversations. You see, he was a Royal Gov and that meant he was trying to help the British. I had a lot of men working for me and I heard things that would be helpful to the British and I didn't particularly care for one side or the other, so I

went where the money was, if you catch my drift.

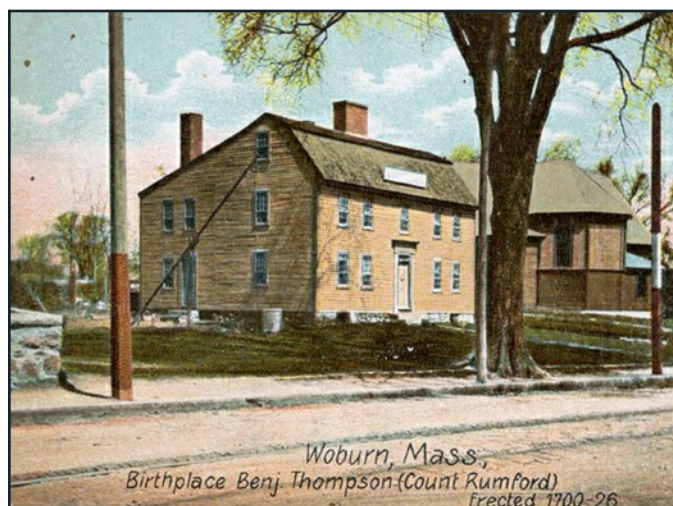
How long did that work out?

Not very long. In 1774, the Rumford Committee on Safety put me on trial for treason but they couldn't prove anything. But a week before Christmas I heard they were coming for me again so I got on my horse, left my wife and baby and headed back to Boston.

How was the spying business in Boston?

I worked secretly for Gen. Gage for a year, but it was pretty clear that the Brits weren't going to win the war. When they cleared out for Halifax in March of '76, I went with them. I never saw my wife and child again.

Well Count, thanks for that glimpse into your early life. You remember things quite clearly for a man who's been dead for 200 hundred years! We hope you'll visit us again as we've heard that the rest of your life story is as fascinating as the beginning. And don't forget to be on hand for the unveiling of your bust at the Rumford Center.



EPHS Fall "2nd Sunday" Open Houses

John Hunt House Museum

October 13 – November 10 – December 8
(Special Holiday Open House)

Something new at Hunts Mills: 3 full color interpretive signs which let you learn about the area while looking at the site you are reading about. And on view inside the Hunt House is the special 160th anniversary Rumford Baking Powder Company exhibit – did you know that Count Rumford was a Tory and sold Patriot secrets to the British? Or that the Horsford/Rumford Company sold "cures?" Come have a colorful late fall picnic in the Hunts Mills picnic area beside the Ten Mile horseshoe dam.

October members' meeting:

"Watchemoket – Commercial Gateway to East Providence"

If you attended last year's EPHS Watchemoket Series lecture, "195: the Making of East Providence?" you learned how, in the name of "progress," the highway cut right through the heart of this city's financial district and forced the relocation of homes and businesses. In this third presentation in the series, Ned Connors, industrial architectural historian and chair of the East Providence Historic District Commission, will explain the factors that naturally drew commerce to the Watchemoket area. Ned's presentations are always humorous and contain little known facts. Tockwotten warmly welcomes EPHS members and the public to its new facility. Arrive early for a good seat. And don't forget to check the Watchemoket Square Day display at City Hall in the month of October and come on down to the "Square" on Saturday October 19.

This meeting will on Monday, October 28 and begin at 7:00pm at the Tockwotten Home located at 500 Waterfront Drive.

Help needed!!!

The membership has been incredibly supportive of all of the fall events (35 of you helped with WSD last year!) A nucleus of the Board mans these days but we always need more faces to meet and greet and generally spread the good word about EPHS. Opportunities for you to help out on WSD are:

Saturday, October 19
10:00 – 12:00am and 12:00 – 3:00pm
Tockwotten Foyer

Of course you can come for less or more time or just drop in and lend a hand on the spur of the moment. CONTACT NANCY MOORE: 438-4299
ride8908@ride.ri.net

More Help needed!!!

Are you a talented amateur or do you know someone with plumbing experience? Even a professional?

The old bathroom sink in the Hunt House needs to be replaced with a new one and we are looking for someone willing to do the work pro bono. If you are a professional we will be happy to advertise your business in the next Gazette.



Laura McNamara - Photo

Part of the display at City Hall showing old Watchemocket and also advertising the Historical Society. The work was done by Nancy Moore and Laura McNamara – Thank you, ladies.

EPHS at Watchemoket Square Day

Saturday, Oct. 19, 10:00am – 3:00pm
Tockwotten and the Square

By now, you may have noticed that WSD is a happening event: a parade, bazaar, car show, kiddie events, historical house/ boat tours and presentations, discounts/ specials at your favorite restaurants and just plain neighborliness. People who were raised in the area but moved away have started coming back to see what's new and to share memories. There's a lot of civic pride emerging and the EPHS is in the thick of things. This year EPHS will be based at Tockwotten's new facility on Waterfront Drive and we will present old Watchemoket in the lobby. The Waterfront Commission and the Village on the Waterfront will display plans for proposed improvements in this area and you will be able to tour the Tockwotten facility and the revitalized Oyster House. And those of you who collect WSD t-shirts will love the new color for this year.

While you are in the old Square, please take time to stop by the entrance of Odd Fellows Hall to view an exhibit of the interior upstairs space and stop by the bazaar at St. Mary's, a gem of a Gothic revival Episcopal church built in 1872. And lastly, if you find yourself with an hour to take a walk, check our web site www.ephist to print out self-guided walking tours from previous years.



November
December
Meetings

King Phillip's War

November 25 – Newman Church Hall

Burning and pillaging, murder and mayhem: the King Phillip's War has the makings of a movie plot. Not many buildings in what was then Rehoboth were left standing after this rampage. Seekonk historian, David Norton, will explain the series of events leading up to this Indian war which engulfed our area in 1675-76.

!!Newsflash!!

Free Boat Tours on Watchemoket Square Day

In place of the usual EPHS neighborhood walking tours, the Historical Society is very pleased to announce that EP Planning Director Jeanne Boyle will lead free BOAT TOURS of the waterfront from the EP Yacht Club dock at 19 Pier Road leaving at 11:00am, 11:45am and 12:30pm. These tours are sponsored by EPHS, EPYC and the Village on the Waterfront. There are exciting, ambitious plans for the EP coastline in the Upper Bay, and the view from the water will be very informative. The history of this area is rich indeed! Boat seating is very limited - only 14 seats per tour. Please call 438-1750 to reserve a space. If you miss those tours, Providence River Boat will continue to offer boat rides during the afternoon. Please see your local paper for details about parking and time of afternoon rides.

Tip Of The Baker's Hat . . .

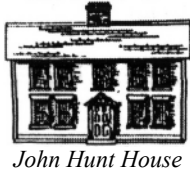
. . . to the following members who baked for the September members' meeting:

- Linda Agresti
- Ginny Berwick
- Mona Breault
- Pat Henry
- Dotty Thornley
- Anthony Valerio
- Miriam Kenney
- Nancy Moore



Holiday Dinner and Concert December 16 – Newman Church Hall

The public is welcome to join us for our annual turkey dinner cooked by members of the Society. The Wheeler School Hand bell group will present a concert at 7pm. Reservations are necessary for the dinner – the concert is open to all. Please check your Nov/Dec Gazette and local press for details about reservations.



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Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- Continue to enjoy your garden through the early fall season. Cover your flowers or tender vegetables if frost is predicted to continue enjoying this bounty.
- October is a great time to plant garlic cloves for next summer's harvest. Wait until after the full moon on the 18th for below ground crops such as garlic. Plant each clove about 2 inches deep and 5 inches apart, cover with soil and mulch. They will over-winter and continue growing next spring.
- Don't rake crab grass in fall. It only spreads the seeds. Sow grass seed right among the dead crabgrass. When the grass grows it will shade out the crabgrass seedlings next spring.

Native Plant Highlight

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

This is a new column where Jeff will introduce us to some of the heritage plants used by the early settlers. Many of them will also be found around the Hunt House today.

Bee balm, Oswego tea, Monarda didyma

This native North American plant was brewed for tea to drink and for medicinal purposes. White settlers began brewing the tea for themselves and it was especially popular during the Boston tea party when tea was taxed. The colonists also enjoyed the beauty of the flower for its ornamental value.

