



November

Monday, November 23
6:30 pm
Members' Meeting -
Public invited

Inside a Postcard Souvenir Folder of Riverside

Riverside Library
475 Bullockspoint Ave,
Riverside, RI

December

Sunday, December 13
1:00 - 3:30 pm
Hunt House Museum
open



CONTACT US AT:

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Historical Society
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The East Providence Historical Society

Gazette

November 2015

Volume XXVIII No. 3

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

President's letter

By Nancy Moore, President



Hello Members and Friends: I don't often write a letter to you all but it seemed the time to bring you up to speed on some decisions made this month by the Board and to give updates on our group right now. **And please note that this Gazette issue is for both November and December.**

1. The Board has made the decision to drop the December General Meeting at Newman Church. The attendance at this event which is usually a dinner/dessert/musical evening has been dropping sharply in the past three years while the interest in our educational evenings has remained very strong and even increased. So we will have a more elaborate December Open House on Dec 13th. If you feel strongly about having this December social event, please speak to a Board member and we will revisit the decision for next year.
2. We are so lucky to have a vital, active library system to collaborate with. This month we will be in Riverside to help celebrate their 10th anniversary at that location and we want you to note that our START TIME is 6:30 pm, not our usual 7:00 pm. We must be out of the building promptly at 8:00 pm - dessert will be set out by 6:15 pm for early comers.
3. We are well on our way to solving the summer kitchen structural beam problem and the Rumford/Hulman pieces will live down there (wrapped) until we have a home for them. The summer kitchen will be off limits until all the work is finished.
4. Cheryl Faria has finished up her work on the new 25 year Hunt House/Ticket Booth/Gazebo lease and it is in the hands of Greg Dias, Assistant City Solicitor. Final work should be completed this month. Cheryl reports that the new City Manager, Richard Kirby, and Ed Catelli, Director of Public Works, have been excellent to work with.

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The Gazette

Is published by the
East Providence
Historical Society

P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI
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OFFICERS

Nancy Moore *President*
Cheryl Faria *1st Vice President*
Deborah Ormerod *2nd Vice President*
Stephanie Poole *Recording Secretary*
Pat Henry *Corresponding Secretary*
Dorothy Thornley *Treasurer*

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Miriam Kenney *Membership*
Karen Panzarella *Museum*
Deborah Ormerod *Curator*
Sandra Turgeon *Marker Program*
Reinhard Wohlgemuth *Newsletter*
Nancy Moore *Preservation*
Nancy Moore *Programs*
Nancy Moore *Publicity*
Becky Ellis *Website Manager*

President's Letter

Continued from page 1

As of the December Open House, Hunt House will be closed to the public for the months of January and February. (If the winter is as severe as last, we will close for March also) We will meet as a Board over that time, as we will hopefully have exciting news to share with you in January about the Education Center. The Keeping Room will be refurbished in anticipation of another exciting spring exhibit. The Gazette you have in your hands will not be issued again until March 2016 which is the start of our 50th year of convening, although we will mark this anniversary with our incorporation date of 1967 - 2017. Please join us at Hunt House for December Open House. 🏠



Jesse Albright



As we go to press, we acknowledge the death of Jesse Albright, a longtime friend of EPHS. Jesse

was a "behind the scenes" person, serving only on the Museum committee, but he did so much more for the Society. If we needed a specific item, he would go looking for it. Many times that item would appear as a gift to the museum. He specialized in postcards and was always giving us a packet of Hunt's Mills cards he thought we could sell. He and Betty would turn up at events we sponsored just to help and talk with visitors. He loved a challenge and his last sleuthing had to do with Hoyt School. We will miss his banter and quick laugh. He was a gift to us all. Thank you Jesse! 🏠

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

☐



We welcome our newest members:

- John C. Dufresne
- Glen Northup
- Janet Reagan

FALL "2nd SUNDAY" Open House

December 13

Open House Exhibit: Early School Days in East Providence

This exhibit continues for one more "2nd Sundays" only so come enjoy Hunt's Mills in the autumn: the new trails (1.5 miles), foliage and perhaps find yourself in the exhibit. Also new in the Hunt family parlor: The Caroline Hunt (1830 - 1851) two page obituary/memorial from September 1851. We are quite sure that the Hunt House ghost is a woman - could Caroline be a candidate? And because of work needing to be done in the Summer Kitchen, the Lieutenant John Hunt headstone from 1716 has been moved to the parlor. This extraordinary work of stone carving features a heart, one of the first times a heart was used on a headstone in New England. 🏠

Education Center Challenge for You All!

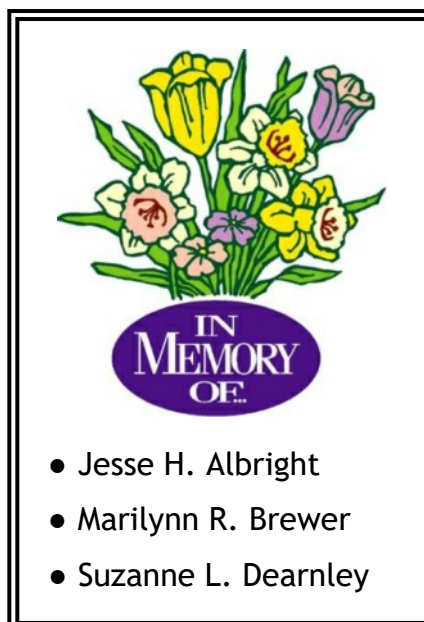
As stated in the last Gazette, the Count/Countess of Rumford challenged you all to a 2 for 1 match for the 1st \$1000 of pledges for the Ed Center at the September meeting. Happily, we can announce that \$1000 has been reached and another donor has come forward to make the same match for the \$510 in additional pledges. The Count made another appearance at the October meeting at Tockwotton where many pledge cards were given out so there may be more money on the way. If you've been meaning to take up this challenge but don't have a pledge card, just send us a note with your pledge to Cheryl Faria - 8 Read Street- Seekonk MA 02771 or to EPHS - Box 4774 - East Providence RI 02916.

And on a very happy surprise note: the Legislative Grant for \$5000 is coming to us with no strings attached. 🏠

Leadership RI Strengths Convention

Cheryl and Jeff Faria, Pat Henry, Nancy Moore and Dot Thornley attended the first ever Leadership RI Convention at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet on October 24. The Board was singled out as being as asset to the E. Providence community and we met with like people from all over the State. After an inspirational welcome from Jim Gallop (of the Gal-lop Poll) each table was given paper, cardboard and tape and was told we had 10 minutes to make some kind of a tent-like structure. Eight of us worked together as a team, although we barely knew each other and our structure met the criteria as did all 50 others. We all agreed that the most

powerful part of the afternoon was Act 2 when we were placed with a table of people from our community, none of whom did we know previously. In that hour, we all talked passionately about our hopes/dreams for East Providence, identifying strengths within the community and listening carefully to ideas for the future. It is affirming to know that others care about historic preservation/education and that those 8 people also chose to live/work/volunteer in East Providence. We were all proud to represent the Historical Society. 🏠



- Jesse H. Albright
- Marilyn R. Brewer
- Suzanne L. Dearnley

On the Road: Indianapolis and the Rumford/Hulman Companies

By Nancy Moore

On Wednesday, Oct 19, my cousin Pam Masterson and I headed from Cincinnati to Indianapolis to load my van with Rumford/Hulman artifacts deaccessioned from the Indiana State Museum. It was an adventure NOT aided by the Garmin but fruitful nonetheless. Todd Stockwell, curator, took us into the bowels of the collection which has rolling shelving and plenty of room for all their needs - a curator's dream. We picked up an oversize pallet with the fork lift and started loading - none of his crew were in sight. After 2 pallet loads, we called it quits but we had loaded all but 5 crocks (we thought) and felt comfortable that those could come in another load. It was fun to ride up and down in the big freight elevators and loading dock equipment. We opened one package when we got back to Cincinnati - it was a very large crockery shallow acid bowl. The others stayed wrapped until "A Rumford Christmas in November" (the Board meeting on Nov. 3). So we have 56 pieces in hand with 21 crockery pieces left behind, and Todd will go through the other suspected Rumford pieces and set them aside for his Board to deaccession in April. He does have an oil of a Rumford girl!

I broke up my trip home with a stop at relatives in Cleveland - thus I easily combined business and pleasure.

Just inside RI, so close to home and in the area of the State Police barracks, I got stopped by a trooper for going 53 in a 45 mph zone. I told him that I had had a long trip from Indiana and he asked what was in the van. I then asked if he knew what Rumford Baking Powder was and he answered, "The little red can with the old guy on it?" After a three minute mini-history lesson, he waved me on. Thank goodness he had heard of Rumford Baking Powder! 🍪



Count Rumford appeared at the last board meeting and quickly changed into Santa Count to pass out presents. Even he was wondering at times after members removed the wrappings, "What is it?"

Read the Curious Curator to find out what this is part of.



Several board members were so taken in by their 'gifts' that they were offering a place in there home for the item, just in case there was no room at the museum. Here is Pat Henry with her old crock.

Rumford Collection Background

By Todd Stockwell

Hi Nancy,
Glad to hear that you and the artifacts arrived home safely. I'm glad the Statie let you go. That's a great story.



Deb Ormerod Photo

As we've discussed, we have very little in our accession files on the Rumford artifacts; but the little we do have does match up with other known circumstances, enough to trace many of the items donated to our museum by Hulman & Co. as having originally come from Rumford. Hulman & Co. of Terre Haute, Indiana, purchased the rights to east coast competitor Rumford baking soda around 1950. It looks like Hulman's Clabber Girl baking soda had become the leading brand by then throughout most of the country, except in the northeast where the Rumford brand remained strong.

Although we do not have any first-hand accounts about the Rumford historical artifacts also being acquired by Hulman around the time of the Rumford brand acquisition, we do know that Tony Hulman was aggressively collecting American antiques around the same time, storing them in warehouses in Terre Haute. There are stories that he planned to build a history-centered theme park inside the giant Indianapolis Motor Speedway race track in Indianapolis to make more use of that facility year around. So, because of Mr. Hulman's interest in Americana, we are guessing that he spotted the artifacts in the Rumford Museum and arranged for them to be shipped to Terre Haute.

In late 1980, Don Foltz of Hulman & Co. found the Rumford items in a warehouse in Terre Haute and offered them to the Indiana State Museum. Mr. Foltz was appointed director of the Indiana Department of Conservation in 1961 and, among many



Deb Ormerod Photo

An exhausted Santa Count Rumford relaxes on the couch with some of the 'presents' given to the board members.

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Rumford Collection Background

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accomplishments, was key in moving the state museum collection out of the basement of the state capitol and into its own building (the old Indianapolis City Hall on Alabama Street) in the early 1960s. Mr. Foltz had then gone to work for Tony Hulman after a change in state administration. It makes sense that Mr. Foltz would have wanted to help build the collection of the state museum since he had played a key role in its establishment as a stand-alone institution. The ceramic items and tools came to the Indiana State Museum in December 1980. Various pieces were put on exhibit occasionally. Many of the tools were featured in a temporary exhibit on vintage wood working tools. The accession included four 1930s era black and white photos that I have previously described to you that show barrel making and blacksmithing tools from the Hulman donation inside the Rumford Museum building and therefore help greatly with documenting the provenance back to Rumford. Several other items appear on a one page list of items from the Rumford Museum. Other items then match up with those documented Rumford items by association. The ceramic items and tools that have maker's marks are all for

eastern manufacturers of those items, further indicating that they originally came from Rumford in Rhode Island.

We're glad that the Rumford items are returning home. The second group of Rumford items proposed for deaccession will go before our museum board in the spring, probably in March or April.

Todd Stockwell
Curator of Agriculture, Industry and Technology
Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites
650 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-8270
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The Curious Curator

By Deb Ormerod, Curator

As mentioned, the Indiana Historical Society donated many items that were used at the Rumford Chemical Baking Powder.

The item featured in the Curious Curator is called a retort. Thanks to some research by Brian Turgeon, we have learned that a retort is a device used in a chemical process for distillation or dry distillation. It consists of a spherical vessel with a long downward-pointing neck. The liquid to be distilled is placed in the vessel and heated. The neck acts as a condenser, allowing the vapors to condense and flow along the neck to a collection vessel placed underneath.

In the chemical industry, a **retort** is an airtight vessel in which substances are heated for a chemical reaction producing gaseous products to be collected in a collection vessel or for further processing.

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retort>

Stay tuned for details about more items from the Indiana Historical Society as well as when the items will be on display. 📷



Deb Ormerod Photo

Sea Grant Talk

The fascinating idea of a local marine historic district is intriguing indeed and one that has not been raised before, at least not in recent memory. The fact of so many undocumented, sizeable crafts laying on the bottom in the Green Jacket Shoals area, several of immense size and thus of maritime importance, should give all groups involved with this sensitive area pause before any dredging or disturbance is done. We think David Robinson has definitely laid the groundwork for further research to identify as many vessels as possible and their work in these waters. Signage at the Bold Point site would be a quick, easy start to alert the public to the significance of what lies beneath their view. Providence River Boat and Save the Bay boat tours could easily begin including a pass over the area with a short narrative. The Ten Mile River Alliance leads kayak tours in the area and plans for the Village on the Waterfront just south of the site include a kayak dock. At the very least, the extensive marine history of East Providence and its working waterfront needs to be fleshed out and the idea of a marine museum “floated” here in town, with both land and water tours. The East Providence Historical Society has begun this work in conjunction with the City Planning Dept and the Waterfront Commission with its emphasis on the waterfront in presentations at the Tockwotten Home on Watchemoket Square Days and its October public meeting. As the waterfront of East Providence enters a time of resurgence, it definitely is time to begin laying the groundwork from an historical perspective. 🏠



Postcard view of the once busy waterfront — could one of these vessels still be down there? Just imagine the possibility.

November Members' Meeting

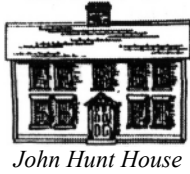
Inside a Postcard Souvenir Folder of Riverside



It is rare to have an early postcard set survive intact but that's what was found in the EPHS archives. The speakers for this evening were delighted to find this set as the scenes are varied and allow our presenters a lot of leeway for taking this talk further afield. And did you know there was a John Brown house on Willett Avenue? News to us but not to Jeff Howe, our presenter. Join Jeff, Dave Kelleher, Nancy Moore and Reinhard Wohlgemuth for a look at what was, may still be, and the story behind the photographs.

The location for this meeting will be the Riverside Library on November 23 at 6:30 pm. There will be early refreshments at 6:15 pm.

The library is located at 475 Bullockspoint Avenue in Riverside. 🏠



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

Non-Profit Organization
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Providence, RI
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

Mulch plants such as roses, garlic and strawberries soon after the ground has begun to freeze. This will deter rodents.

Continue to water newly planted shrubs, trees and plants as root development continues until the soil temp falls to 40°.

After draining outdoor irrigation and faucets, store hoses on a flat surface, not hanging from nails.

Set up windbreaks of burlap or snow fences for evergreen shrubs and protect susceptible plants from branch breaking snow loads with wooden A-frames.

Use a wire brush, followed by a light coating of mineral oil on rusty garden tools before storing for winter.

