



The East Providence Historical Society

Gazette

September 2015

Volume XXVIII No. 1

September

Monday, September 28

7:00 pm

Members' Meeting -
Public invited

What Hung in the
Hunt Family Closets?

Weaver Library
41 Grove Avenue,
East Providence, RI

Saturday, September 26

11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Hunt House Museum
open

Smithsonian Day

October

Saturday, October 3

Watchemoket Square
Day

Monday, October 26

7:00 pm

Members' Meeting -
Public invited

What Lies beneath?

Tockwotton

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

Open House Exhibit: Early School Days in East Providence

Did you know that children didn't get out of school until the Friday before the 4th of July? When was that? 1894! Lots more time in the classroom back then. The museum crew has culled a surprising amount of school memorabilia for this exhibit, which has some wonderful photos and mementos you all saved for us, along with school books and administrative pieces. And of course, those Crimsons which stretch back into the 1900's will all be at your fingertips. Come reminisce with our docents about your EP school experience and bring along mementos to share with us. Don't miss the collection of excuses for absence kept by Mr. Sanderson at Riverside Jr. High! If you are/were a teacher or school department employee, please come by and choose a thank you gift from us for your service. Refreshments will feature, what else: apples and cider!

Our thanks to new members Nancy Allen and Becky Ellis for their hours of help/expertise in putting together this exhibit.



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September Members' Meeting What Hung in the Hunt Family Closets?



“Susanna Sweeting Hunt wore an elegant new gown to her son John Jr.’s wedding.”

This statement is fictitious but September’s program looks at what Susanna might have worn on that occasion.

John Hunt Sr. and his new bride took over the mills on the 10 Mile River in 1713 and the family remained there until 1868. What were the fashions hanging on the clothes pegs upstairs all those

years? Karen Antonowicz, an authority on vintage clothing, owner of Nostalgia on Wickenden Street, and teacher of Fashion History at RISD, will take us on a sartorial journey of life inside Hunt House.

Presented in partnership with the Weaver Library, the audience will see Count Rumford once again! He plans to attend to pick up some tips about his own wardrobe.

The meeting starts at 7:00 pm on September 28 at the Weaver Library.



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

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Membership Form

New

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Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

\$15 Individual

\$25 Family/Business

\$150 Life

October Members' Meeting What Lies Beneath?

Please mark your calendars for the October 26 meeting at Tockwotton. If you are a water rat, you may have noticed activity of an unusual nature around Bold Point this past spring/summer. This area of the Bay has been the center of a research project by David Robinson of the URI Graduate Ocean program. Dave will be doing mini-presentations in the theater on WSD. (See that schedule)

Congratulations!!

Long time EPHS member/ former president/ program and preservation chair/ HPC chair and HDC member/ Pomham Rocks president David Kelleher was nominated for the Antoinette Downing Award, that most prestigious RI award. Making the nomination were the EPHS, EPHDC, Friends of Pomham Rocks, Save the Bay and the EP Chamber of Commerce. Although Dave was not the winner this year, we have been notified that he scored so highly that his name will stay in contention for next year's round. A well-deserved pat on the back for Dave - our own "Mr. Preservation"

A wonderful surprise for the EPHS Board: Leadership RI has determined that the Board's actions have been "identified as a great strength and asset to the State of Rhode Island." We have been invited as guests to a convening of like people in the State at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet on October 24. Many thanks to our outstanding Board for all that hard work!

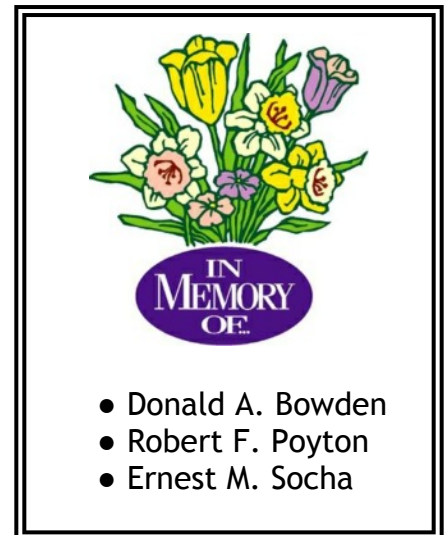
Great things come in 3s? The Indiana State Historical Society in Indianapolis has decided that they no longer need the Rumford Baking Powder items in their collection. Tracing back these artifacts' provenance, they found us, and have offered their entire collection to us for \$1.00. It is such a windfall! And how did that collection get to Indiana? Well, the RBPC sold its patent for the baking powder to a company named Hulman which still manufactures it in Terre Haute. When our Rumford Company shut down, Hulman came and took artifacts used in the processing rooms and made its own museum in Terre Haute. The Hulman execs attended our American Chemical Society award ceremony way back in 1996 and were the source of the recipe books and the hundreds of cans we still have. Obviously that Hulman collection passed into the IN State Archives at some point and will now make its way home over the next year. Our curator, Deb Ormerod, says she's never seen some of the items before. She is so excited to have them home again.

A Reminder . . .

Did you forget to pay your dues?? If you received a bill in July and have not yet paid, please use the form on page 2 and mail your check to the post office address indicated. If you have any questions, you can contact me at
401-434-9462 or
miriamkenney@aol.com

Thank you in advance for taking care of this!

Miriam Kenney
Membership Chair



We welcome our newest members:

- Nancy Allen
- Rebecca Ellis
- Daniel Hazard
- Robert Leighton
- Rebecca Travers
- Marianne P. Walsh
- William Webber

Call for Volunteers

Members have supported our effort for Watchemoket Square Day beautifully over the past 4 years. Once again we need people at the Marketplace booth, in the exhibit space, at St Mary's for the family music show.

Email
<nancykmmoore@gmail.com>
or call 438-4299 if you can help.

Don't miss any . . .

Fall 2nd Sundays

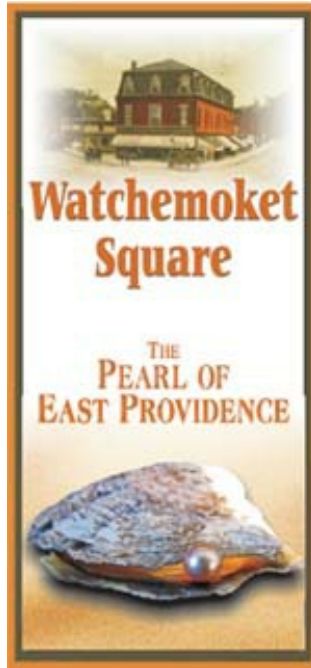
Hunt House Museum will be open on the second Sunday every month from 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm for the rest of 2015.

- September 13
- October 11
- November 8
- December 13

National Smithsonian "Free Museum Day" Saturday, Sept. 26 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

EPHS joins other RI museums for this highly successful day to spotlight our collections and sites.

No donations/fees required to visit the Hunt House Museum.



Watchemoket Square Day

October 3rd - 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

The EPHS offerings this year are growing fast:

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

EPHS and Monroe Dairy will co-host a dairy exhibit at Tockwotton Cafe. Watch for the Monroe Dairy truck outside Tockwotton at the Marketplace for free samples

11:00 am / 11:45 am / 12:30 pm

Our famous boat tours with Planning Director Jeanne Boyle (Please note: no early reservations taken this year)

11:00 am and 1:00 pm

Walking tours of lower Warren Ave commercial area with new tour guide Kara Evans.

12:15 pm / 1:15 pm / 2:15 pm

Waterfront Commission development updates with Chairman Bill Fazioli in the Tockwotton theater

11:30 am / 12:30 pm / 1:30 pm

Mini presentation by David Robinson of the URI Grad School of Oceanography about his research into the 24 wrecks which lie at the bottom of the upper Bay around Bold Point in the Tockwotton theater (the boat tours will head out over this research area)

NEW THIS YEAR!!!! 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

"MUSIC AT ST. MARY'S" headlined by the Marching Milkman Band, courtesy of Monroe Dairy. This band has been the headliner for the Bristol Parade and will lead the WSD Parade also, ending up at St. Mary's sanctuary for a concert. Lots of fun with this group (the tuba player's grandparents were married in St. Mary's)

Puppet Shows 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm / Singalong – 1:00 pm

Chris Monti and friends: "The Carrot Salesman"- interactive puppet theater and family sing-a-long in St. Mary's Parish Hall starting at noon. Shows are about 40 minutes long. A cafe for snacks/drinks will be open at the church during the day.

And, after the Parade, don't forget the Marketplace on the waterfront and the Hot Rides Classic Car Show with Jim Viera's vintage fire engine apparatus.

Watch the Post/Reporter and <watchemoketsquareday.org> for a complete schedule

On the Plate

At the September meeting, the Board voted unanimously to continue on its quest for funding for the Education Center (the Ticket Booth/Meter House building) by submitting a request for a State Cultural Facilities Grant. Our letter of intent submitted by VP Cheryl Faria, a professional grant writer, was immediately responded to with an acceptance which puts us into the 2nd round of dotting i's and crossing t's. A little history on this project: the little 1895 building which sits right off the Hunt House side door has been in the Board dreams for at least ten years. In 2005, with what was left of the original Champlin grant for HH (that savings mostly due to hours of volunteer work from our membership) Dean Martineau, now head of EPHDC, and his crew roofed and painted the exterior of the building and the foundation under the addition was reworked. The building was secured and weatherproofed for future use. With the need for ADA compliant meeting/teaching space very important for EPHS's next 50 years, it seems appropriate to celebrate our 1st 50 with this project. Some of the grants will need matching funds which we will raise and others will be outright gifts such as our Champlin Grant. Volunteers will be very important on this project also and you will be hearing about the many ways you can contribute.

Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- With our past month a very dry weather, many perennials, shrubs and trees are stressed and in need of watering. Try slow watering early in the day, deeply into the root zone so that water runoff is kept to a minimum.
- Plant or transplant needle-leaved evergreens and broadleaved plants before October 15.
- Fertilize lawns with organic fertilizer, such as, sifted compost, chicken manure or bat guano to stimulate winter root development.
- Remove and compost spent annuals, overgrown perennials and fallen leaves. Do not compost plant material that has diseases or heavy weed seeds.
- Prune roses to removed diseased or damaged canes and fertilize them one last time with a balanced fertilizer.

Native Plant Highlight

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

Nasturtium

These fragrant old-fashioned annual flowers bloom profusely all summer long. It grows



best when sown directly into the soil. Rich soil favors leaf growth and it does best in well-drained soil. It can act as mulch amongst other plants. Both the leaves and the flowers are edible. The flowers have a very spicy taste and are delicious when added at the end of cooking to almost any dish! Both the leaves and flowers are especially beautiful atop a bowl of salad.

- Divide daylilies after blooming and also early spring blooming perennials now.
- Continue to propagate herbs and transplant them into pots for winter use.
- Revitalize lawns by over seeding and maintaining moist soil through germination.

Memories of Walking in 1940s to Grove Ave. School

by Marilyn (Sinclair) Lewis

After completing third grade at the James Street School, in the late 1940s, I went to the “first” *Grove Ave. School* for the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. This two story gray wooden school building was located on the same land as today’s “second” Grove Ave. School (built in 1958, 100 Grove Ave., corner of John St.).



(photo by Daryl Hardern, May 1957)

From my home on Vine Street, I walked the opposite way to Taunton Ave., without my mother, because I was a big girl now! Mr. Irving W. Moody, a policeman for 33 years, was always there to cross the kids. School was 8:30 am to 11:30 am. At that time we were dismissed for lunch and walked home to be back to school around 12:30 pm.

On the corner of Vine St. and Taunton Ave. was Arthur E. Allen’s *Drug Store*. There were glass tables to sit at and ice cream was five cents for one scoop and ten cents for two. Also you could pay your utility bills there.

Next door was *Stevenson’s Bakery*. The smell of jelly donuts cooking, especially on a Saturday morning, just filled the air. George Donovan remembers their Swedish coffee bread was as delicious as the bread his mother and Swedish grandmother baked.

Next, in 1942, was the “*Ben Franklin Store*, 5 cents to \$1.00”. In 1946, it had the name “*Franklyn’s*”. It was owned by Mr. Frank B. Swartwout and Mr. Anthony Folkman. The penny candy was plentiful and we would stop in there to get something for recess. Also games downstairs like jacks and jump ropes. They sold the oilcloths that everyone used on the kitchen table. It was cut by the yard as needed. Christmas was the best time. The kids all bought Mom and Dad’s Christmas presents there. “*Evening in Paris*” perfume for one popular gift.

Next to Franklyn’s was the *Providence Public Market* with fresh vegetables, eggs, cheese and meat.

Next on the west corner of Ivy St., in 1951, there was the “*Weenie joint*” as everyone called it (owned by Mr. James T. Kanelos). My father, John Evan Sinclair, was a bus driver for the UER/UTC (United Electric Railway, later known as the United Transit Company). He ate there once in a while after work and brought home Evergood jelly donuts.

On the east corner of Ivy St. was the *Hollywood (Bomes) Theatre*. I used to go on Saturdays for twelve cents. There were two features usually cowboy shows on Saturday, a newsreel and cartoons. It was open in the evening for regular feature films. Movie theatres were popular before televisions. This building was torn down after July 2008.

Next to the Hollywood Theatre was Fred B. *Halliday* and son’s *Hardware Store* (1874 ~ 1953). Claiming to be the oldest business in town, it sold feed, farm tools, and hardware, and house wares.

Across the street was the *East Providence Town Hall* and next to it was the *Police Department*. Every day at noon the whistle blew so everyone knew it was time for lunch. [In January 1976, when the E. Prov. City Hall and Police Department burned down, my brother, Captain Ronald “Sinky” Sinclair, was one of the first



firemen at the scene to battle the blaze. The photo on the bottom of the previous page shows him being promoted in rank during his 30 years of service to the EPFD].

After Hollywood Theatre, there was the *Wayside* furniture and fabric store on the corner of James St. and Taunton Ave. Across on the east side of James St. was *Lynwood's Pharmacy*. When purchased by Julian and Leo Greene, they kept the name. It had a lunch counter where you could sit down on spinning metal stools. All of the pharmacies in East Providence (before the 1980s) were considered "Mom and Pop" stores. They were all run out of business by the big chain drug stores.

Next was Haven Church. After a fire burned the wooden church down in 1929, today's present building was dedicated in 1931. The carillon played music on the hour. It upset the neighbors so the music was reprogrammed to play only at noon and 6:00 pm. On Sundays in the 1970s, during the 11:00 am service, the congregation would hear the music interrupt the minister's long sermon.

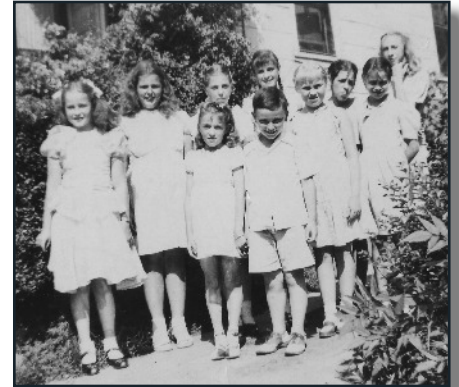
On the Town Hall side, before we walked down Grosvenor Ave., we stopped to look in the window of *Rich and Horton's* coal and wood heating and electrical appliance store to see a black and white television (TV) set. I recall seeing the "Howdy Doody" show with Buffalo Bob, John Cameron Swayze tell the news, and Sherri Lewis with puppet Lamb chop.



As we walk down Grove Ave., we pass the Weaver Memorial Library on the right and come to the school on the left. The front door was on Grove Ave. behind where these teachers are sitting in the photo (photo by M. Lewis, June 1949). Looking south across the street, one could see St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church on the left and Albert Pierce Hoyt School at the end of N. Carpenter St., between Freeborn St., School St., and Lyon Ave.

My fourth grade teacher was Miss Pilo Daniels. She had a wooden leg due to polio and walked with a limp. My fifth grade teacher (and the principal) was Miss Gertrude O. Kelley (on right). Miss Kelley was a teacher in the EP School system for 45 years. She served as the principal at both Grove Ave. schools until she retired in 1970. Miss Ethel A. C. Johnson (on left) was my sixth

grade teacher. I remember she became very ill with chicken pox and was out of school for some time. Girls wore dresses with bows in their hair. Boys did not wear jeans, but dress pants with a polo shirt.



(photo by M. Lewis, 1947)

What I remember most is when we had "penmanship". White lined paper was passed out to us. We had holes in our desks to hold containers of ink and wrote by dipping a long wooden handle pen with a metal tip into the ink. Also, on Fridays after school, we visited the school supply closet to buy for 5 cents as much paper (arithmetic and lined paper) as we wanted to use at home, to play school with our friends. After graduation from the sixth grade, I attended junior high at the Central Jr. and Sr. High School building located in the triangle between Taunton Ave., Broadway, and Wheldon Ave.



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

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"Tommy's Wife"

The farce comedy "Tommy's Wife" given by the pupils of the High School was a source of great pride to the school. The cast was drilled by Miss Trumbull, assisted by Miss Knowlton and Miss Goff. The short-comings were not the fault of the directors.

Ellis Hawkes, as a young artist, was good but much too serious. His love making was an improvement over last year's. He and Miss Horton were, no doubt, profiting by their former experience.

Alice Munster was extremely clever at her part but her lover Harold Barney was more or less embarrassed before so large an audience. That accounts for his haste in his love scenes.

Mildred S. Adams played the part of the wealthy society woman well but had considerable trouble with her lorgnettes. Was

she a ? Her sternness leads us to believe she was.

Helen Canfield as the impressible daughter played her part a bit soberly. Miss Canfield would make a good deaconess.

Thomas Hull made an excellent Frenchman but was a bit too ardent in his love for one so young.

Miss Purinton was a very good charity worker. She appealed to all her audience.

Marion Horton could possibly been eclipsed by Miss Burr had she attempted the part of the pretty model but the result was not bad.

East Providence High apparently shines more brightly in theatrical productions than in work on the Athletic field.

-Marion B. Horton

This review of a school play was copied from the 1912 Crimson