



The East Providence Historical Society

Gazette

November/December 2018

Volume XXXI No. 3

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

November

Monday, November 26
7:00 pm
Members' Meeting -
Public invited

**Shadowboxing the
Apocalypse:
The WW1
Correspondence of
Dr. Theo Hascall,
103 Field artillery,
26th Yankee
Division**

Weaver Library
41 Grove Ave,
East Providence, RI

December

Sunday, December 9
1:00 - 3:30 pm
Hunt House Museum
open
1:00 - 2:45 pm
Hayrides

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

President's Notes

By Nancy Moore, President



2019 Conference Update: October 21st - the Rhody Awards

The logo of the East Providence Roller Rink was the focus of the power point at the Rhody Awards. It shows a circular logo with a RI Red on roller skates in the middle. Since the Rhody Awards mascot is the RI Red hen, the conference organizers were delighted to find this logo from years ago. Any of you remember the rink? It was formally announced that EP is the site for the conference - it is now official!

RHODY AWARDS: Pomham Rocks Lighthouse has won a Preservation Project Award for 2018! Nominated by the EPHS, The Friends of Pomham accepted this award to the cheers of all the preservationists present at Belcourt Castle. They were one of six projects honored and the Light will be featured at the April conference. Also part of a winning project team for the Almy School in Providence was Dean Martineau, contractor for the ED Center.

Presidents' Friendly Reminder:

This is the last 2018 installment of the Gazette and covers both Nov/Dec. We will be with you again in March 2019. There are a number of valued members who have not paid dues for the coming year. Please know that we have carried you through the Fall but this will be your last Gazette if we don't hear from you soon. We hear from so many members that they read the Gazette cover to cover so please know that we value your support and hope your late dues payment is just an oversight. We want you back!

And we're trying some inventive ways to cover our new expenses with the Ed Center coming into use. For the first time we will be announcing an Annual Appeal and will also be participating in Giving Tuesday, November 27, on our media sites. There is more information on both of those opportunities in this issue - we hope one of the chances to help EPHS continue make a difference in our community strikes your fancy.

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The Gazette

Is published by the
East Providence
Historical Society

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Nancy Moore *Programs*
Nancy Moore *Publicity*
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President's Notes

Continued from page 1

Kayak Photos:

Dave Robinson of the
Green Jacket Shoal
Project leads tours over
the Shoal for RI
Archeology Month.



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

Public Meeting

Weaver Library

Grove Ave., East Providence 02914

Monday, November 26

Refreshments at 6:30 pm - Program at 7:00 pm


"Shadowboxing the Apocalypse:

The WW1 Correspondence of

Dr. Theo Hascall,

103 Field artillery, 26th Yankee Division"

Author Shawn Pease


Author Shawn Pease is a Seekonk resident who is a computer professional by day and a stamp collector/WW1 history buff the rest of the time. His Great War interests center around the storied 26th Yankee Division and he has authored this book in conjunction with the RI Philatelic Society and the WW1 Centennial Commission. Dr. Hascall was a resident of Riverside and served with the Yankee Division in Europe. The 150 letters which passed between himself and his wife Emma, back home in EP, tell a powerful tale of the 19 months they were separated by war. You will recognize local names and places - the Rumford Rifle Range among them. A wonderful Veteran's day salute. 

Urgent Dues Notice

LAST CALL! If you are not current with dues, this Nov./Dec. issue of the GAZETTE will be your last. We appreciate what you have done in the past to help us and hope you will want to continue membership. We value your time, talent and support of our organization. Just use the form on page 2 OR go to our website (ephist.org) and use PayPal.

Thank you,

Miriam Kenney Membership Chair

401-434-9462 for questions or miriamkenney@aol.com 



We welcome our newest members:


- Daniel Carr
- Paul Gorman
- Denise Lagueux
- Brian O'Connell

FALL "2nd SUNDAY" Open House

November 11:

Hunt's Mills Falls and what is now the Ten Mile River were the traditional fish run areas for the local Native Americans. That fishing right appears to have been honored by the colonists until after the tribes were decimated by the King Phillip War in 1676. Hunt's Mills is now regarded as a Sowams Heritage Site: 45 acres of open land, the falls, walking trails and native plantings.

December 9:

We welcome you all back to the wildly popular hyride with horses from Rebello Farms and co-sponsored by the family of Ward 1 councilman Bob Britto. This is the best way to get into the holiday spirit. The gazebo will be decorated with free refreshments for all. Please remember to bring a non-perishable item to donate to the Newman Church food pantry. These are the last few times that the extensive Rumford collection will be on view - don't miss it! And if you haven't taken the "Hikes at Hunt's" tour with Ernie Germani, plan to do that also. 

Shadowboxing the Apocalypse – the WW1 Correspondence of Dr. Theo Hascall, 103rd F.A. 26th Yankee Division

By Shawn A Pease

I have put my hand to the plow and must finish the furrow, no matter what it may mean.

Dr. Hascall to his wife Emma

The new book “Shadowboxing the Apocalypse - the WW1 Correspondence of Dr. Theo Hascall, 103rd F.A. 26th Yankee Division” begins with a brief introduction to the Hascall family and to Riverside, Rhode Island at the turn of the 20th century. From there the reader is quickly brought into the lives of Dr. Theo Hascall and his wife Emma and their three children - through their actual letters. Over 150 letters were discovered in 2017 in a box destined for the trash before they were recovered by the Rhode Island Philatelic Society. Working in conjunction with the RI WW1 Centennial Commission, the letters have been completely transcribed and put in date order. They are further divided in to chapters corresponding to the sectors in which the 26th Yankee Division served.

Both Theo and Emma are well educated people of the time, and their exceptional letter writing and communication skills are a treasure. The contents offer an unparalleled glimpse of their family and their struggles through the Great War. Dr. Hascall also “self-censored” his own mail and carried a small portable camera. Several of his photos survived and are published in this book for the first time.



Their journey begins on the shores of Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island, where Dr. Hascall has been assigned to the coastal artillery defenses of the state, protecting the ports against submarines. As a father of three young girls under the age of eight, Dr. Hascall envisions a long term assignment close to home, but this posting along the shore is very short and is just the start of his adventure.

Disaster, death, and disease, like the proverbial apocalypse, would follow close on the heels of Dr. Hascall - and indeed the entire 26th Yankee Division - right from the outset. Somehow he would prevail. He narrowly missed the great munitions explosion at Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1917. His ship avoided the submarine threat on the Atlantic. In February 1918 he and the 26th Yankee Division moved out of their sector just ahead of the great German spring offensive of 1918. These events were just in the first six months of his wartime service.

In short order the global influenza pandemic would hit the men of the Yankee Division and the city of East Providence, Rhode Island very hard, while the final weeks of the war would see Dr. Theo Hascall serving with his gun batteries and being gassed in the “open-graveyard” like trenches near Death Valley, northeast of the city of Verdun. These events and more are captured in the actual letters between this amazing couple.

The following are some short excerpts from the letters.

27 August 1917 Boxford, MA - Dr. Theo Hascall to Emma upon being transferred from Ft. Greble to Camp Curtis Guild.

.....I finally found the Lieutenant Colonel of the 103rd and reported to him; he turned me over to Lt. Mason, a young doctor here, and as Lieutenants are not allowed a full tent to each we decided to live together. We are not settled as yet for we have been pretty busy all day. I have my trunk unlocked and my cot set up under the fly. Suppose when we get crowded in together I will sleep under the tent which I hope will be warmer than it was out in the open last night. Coldest night I've seen in a long while. I thought Greble was cool but this was terrible. I had to get out in the middle of the night, put on my sweater and socks (would have put on my bathrobe but it was ringing wet with dew, so I put it on top of the bed with my overcoat; then piled a pillow on top of my head to keep the bald spot warm and managed to get off to sleep again.....

19 - 27 Mar 1918, Somewhere in France, Dr. Theo Hascall to Emma regarding their early adventures at the front

Now that we have left there I can tell you something of our doings. The whole of the 26th Division occupied the lines with the French in the famous Cheuiur des Daures district, northeast of Soissons. According to the French reports they did excellently - the Infantry making several daring and successful raids, the Artillery ably supporting them and all other branches working together well. There were quite a few losses - but our Regiment didn't lose a man, although one poor fellow is not expected to live having been hit by shrapnel back by the Echelon during and air raid one night and another got a couple of shrapnel wounds but is doing very well. Two others were slightly gassed and that was all. Sickness was practically nothing either.

Well we got away from my town yesterday morning (Bucy-le-long_) in good season reaching Regimental Hdq. At St. Marguerite in time to wait 2 hours for them to be ready to move. Then we marched (on horseback) to Soissons having about 3 P.M. We heard today the town, especially the neighborhood of the station, was shelled at 3:30 but we had gone from there and knew nothing of it.

21 July 1918, Somewhere in France, Dr. Theo Hascall to Emma regarding the successful counterattack in July 1918



Robert Grandchamp Collection
Somewhere in France, soldiers of Battery B stop to read the Providence Journal

My very dear Emma,

This is one of the happiest days of my life. Fritzie is on the run and the 103d F. A. has played its part.



Just how far he has run or how soon he will stop we don't know, but everything is hunky dory at present. We are all packed awaiting our horses ready to move forward. Fritzie is off of our operations map and the advanced observation posts can no longer see our advancing infantry.

Fritzie has his pants in his hand and is on the run. Thank God! Let us hope it is the beginning of the end.

The town assigned for our new Battalion Headquarters was in Fritzie's hands yesterday morning - and when you consider Artillery is 3 or 4 kilometers from the front line, you get some idea of how far we have gone. Whoops, my dear! I'm fairly incoherent. Food supplies just beginning to come in well (after being there 2 weeks) - so we had a bang up dinner today. Had a good sleep last night - so my cup of happiness is full to overflowing.

Continued on page 6

Shadowboxing the Apocalypse

Continued from page 5

06 October 1918, Riverside, RI - Emma Hascall writing to her husband in France during the Influenza pandemic

All schools and theatres and public gatherings are closed in ever so many cities and towns and all camps are quarantined. The number of deaths is increasing rapidly at present but next week is expected to be the worst here. Lillian Whitman of the Star, you remember, died yesterday after less than a week's sickness. She had two children about nine and seven. She celebrated her tenth wedding anniversary a week or so ago.

The very next letter - October 1918, Riverside, RI - Emma Hascall writing to her husband in France.

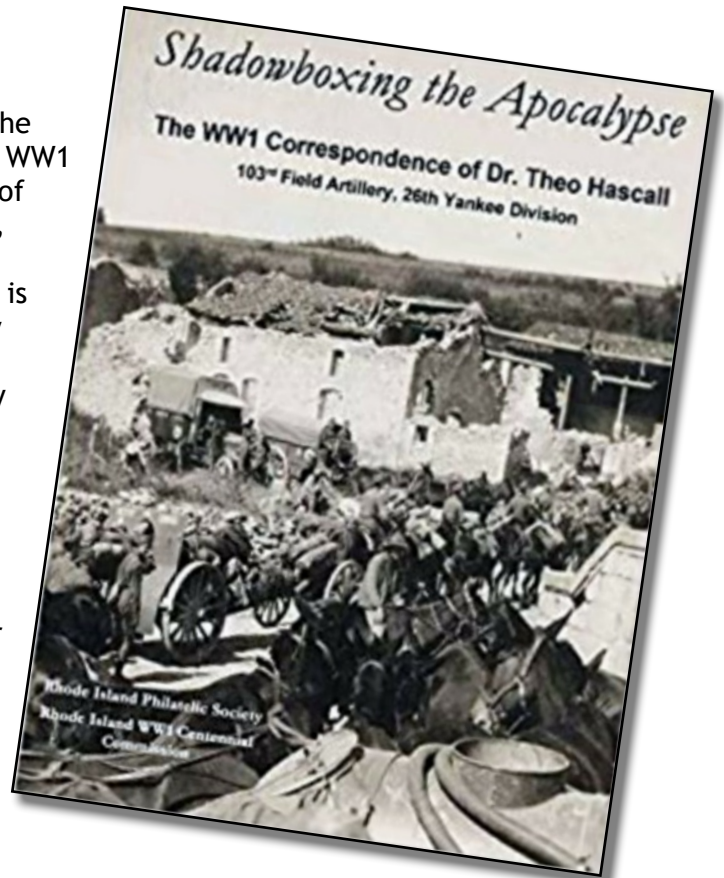
Oh, Charlie Roundy's wife Hope died from influenza this last week, leaving the two year old boy and the baby boy only two months old. Isn't it dreadful? I believe he had it himself first and she probably became tired out taking care of him and she was very likely none too strong from her confinement. They were in the house during that cold rainy spell we had, too, and that was none too good for any of them I imagine.

02 Mar 1919 Pontvallain, France - Dr. Theo Hascall to his wife Emma as they prepare for the voyage home.

Oh I saw Sgt. Tucker today. He has just rejoined the Regiment. You

know seven or eight of C Battery were captured at Seicheprey last April and he has just got back to us. Wonder if you remember Tucker. He is that big .T. man who took you in a taxi from the Union Station to the Frat house on class night four or five years ago. As C battery is not in the 1st Battalion I did not know but one of the others captured and that was Walter Wolf of Riverside. He rejoined us at Vicq the first of the year and has a nasty scar on one arm as a souvenir of that days' scrap. The Boche medicos paid no attention to his wound except to wrap paper bandages around it and change them every 5 or 6 days when it got to smelling too badly. It's a wonder he did not lose his arm!

“Shadowboxing the Apocalypse - the WW1 Correspondence of Dr. Theo Hascall, 103rd F.A. 26th Yankee Division” is self-published by the Rhode Island Philatelic Society in cooperation with the RI WW1 Centennial Commission. It is available on-line from the preferred vendor Lulu.com.



<http://www.lulu.com/shop/http://www.lulu.com/shop/shawn-pease/shadowboxing-the-apocalypse-the-ww1-correspondence-of-dr-theo-hascall-103rd-fa-26th-yankee-division/paperback/product-23783571.html>

It can also be found online Amazon.com and BarnsandNoble.com



#GIVING TUESDAY!!

Tuesday, November 27 is Giving Tuesday, a kickoff to the holiday giving season.

Check out our Facebook page to follow what we're up to!



The Historian's Circle

We have recently completed a three-year Strategic Plan, have lots of ideas and plans for new initiatives and welcome your support and involvement! With your Historian's Circle level gift, you will make a profound difference in the achievement of the Society's annual, strategic vision and endowment goals.



Volunteer Corner

Would you like to be more involved with the East Providence Historical Society? We certainly would welcome your help!! Your help can be on an as needed basis for specific projects or as an active member of one our committees, or somewhere in between!

Please visit our website at ephist.org and review the many opportunities listed in the Volunteer Opportunities link.

Or contact:

Cheryl Faria at
cherylafaria@verizon.net;
 401-419-8682

Nancy Moore at
nancykmmoore@gmail.com;
 401-438-4299.

We look forward to hearing from you!



HISTORIAN'S CIRCLE GIVING LEVELS

- _____ Hunt's Mills Park: \$500
- _____ Crescent Park: \$250
- _____ Vanity Fair Park: \$100
- _____ Boyden Heights Park: \$50
- _____ Other

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Mail to: P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI 0296-4774

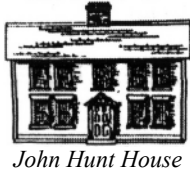
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P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916

John Hunt House

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- You may amend your soil pH by adding ground limestone up until the ground freezes. Spread at a rate no greater than 50 pounds per 1000 ft.².
- Harvest your herbs for delightful fall projects such as potpourri, herbal salts, spicy jams and jellies. I like to add lemon balm and mint to my tea! They both also freeze well.
- Although you want to clear grassy areas of fallen leaves they provide pollinators with the secure winter home. Reserve some areas for leaf and branch litter.
- Any fall planting or trans-planting of trees and shrubs should be heavily mulched with straw, leaves, etc. to keep the ground temperature moderate and prevent heaving on sunny warm winter days. The soil will stay frozen and not encourage the plant to break dormancy before spring.
- Mulch your young garlic and strawberry plants when the ground freezes.
- Leaving carrots, parsnips, turnips and beets in the ground can extend your harvest. Mulching them with straw or leaves will allow you to dig them through December. Keep an eye on forecasts of early cold snaps that may freeze the ground solidly.
- Clean up your garden beds and make notes of plants to add, remove, or divide for next year.

