



The East Providence Historical Society

Gazette

September 2018

Volume XXXI No. 1

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

September

Sunday, Sept. 9
1:00 - 3:30 pm
Sowams Day
Hunt House open

Saturday, Sept. 22
11:00 am - 3:00 pm
Smithsonian Free
Museum Day
Hunt House open

Monday, Sept. 24
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Public Meeting

How the Rumford
"barreled" its Baking
Powder
with cooper
Tom Kelleher

Riverside Library

Saturday, Sept. 29
11:00 am - 3:00 pm
Watchemoket Day
Tockwotton on the
Waterfront

October

Sunday, October 14
1:00 - 3:30 pm
Hunt House open

CONTACT US AT:

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Historical Society
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Presidents' Letter

By Nancy Moore

August 20: As the Moore house does not have central AC and my desk is located in the upstairs hall, this is the first day I have been able to comfortably be up here. I trust you all found ways to "beat the heat" and enjoy the summer. Your Board has had a busy summer with Montesorri Field Day (see photos) Master Gardeners Wine/Weeding (even in the heat!)/ Ed Center wrap-up/ Preservation Conference 2019 meetings/ Annual Picnic/ Strategic Planning sessions added to the usual mix. Open Houses have had strong attendance - a great thank you to all the docents who helped out and to the Conservation Commission, Ten Mile group and MG group.

The annual meeting was well attended with about 1/3 of our members represented. It was a lovely evening, pre-heat wave, and we enjoyed getting to visit with one another. Jim Viara's guess of 900 in "split-the-pot" was the closest to the actual number of nails (919) pulled from the summer kitchen ceiling plaster/lath (circa 1995). Jim graciously donated his winnings to the Society - thanks Jim. The slate of officers posted in the Summer Gazette was passed unanimously and this Board will steer us through the 2019 Preservation Conference. The group also passed a motion that dues will be raised as of July 2019: \$25 single/\$35 couple/corporate \$250 Life Member. (If you are thinking of becoming a Life Member, now's the time!) And we've begun to amass the email addresses of our members in preparation for an E-Gazette format which should save us a great deal of money. If you would like to become a Gazette Angel, a gift of \$300 will cover a month's printing, with your name in a special space in that month's issue.

Those of you who joined the Friends of Pomham Rock for the June dedication of the newly restored lighthouse know what a treat it was to get onto the "rock" and inspect both the interior and exterior of Pomham. My vote for best interior space goes to the stairway and the fascinating way it ascends to the 3rd floor, a mastery of 1860's woodworking. Our great applause to the Friends' group for this labor of love on behalf of the whole EP community. And as we go to press, we learn that the Friends group has earned the coveted RI Preservation Restoration Award for 2018 to be given out in October! Well done!



Kara Evans Photo

Children exploring the trail on Montesorri Field Day

The Gazette

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East Providence
Historical Society

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Nancy Moore *Preservation*
Nancy Moore *Programs*
Nancy Moore *Publicity*
Becky Ellis *Website Manager*

**Public Meeting
Riverside Public Library
Monday Sept 24
6:30 - 8:00 pm**

**“How the Rumford
Company “barreled” its
Baking Powder”**

**with master cooper Tom Kelleher of
Old Sturbridge Village.**

When the early Rumford Company tools returned to Rumford from the Indiana State Museum, there was a complete selection of coopering tools with smithing apparatus for making iron barrel hoops. We are very pleased to have a master cooper to show us the use of these tools. Tom Kelleher has been making barrels for over 30 years and is Historian/ Curator of Mechanical Arts for OSV. Up until a century ago, all pails, vats, casks and kegs were made by coopers and every home had a supply of buckets and barrels. Most goods shipped in bulk (Rumford Baking Powder) were packed in easily moved barrels. Tom will present a “hands on” talk showcasing our own Rumford Company tools circa 1860 - 1900. As usual at Riverside, refreshments will be served at 6:30 pm and the program will begin at 7:00 pm sharp.



**Our Newest
Members**

- Diane & Kevin Burns
- Stephen Dickinson
- James H. Morse
- Scott A. Reese & Susan Mazzarella
- John & Elaine Puhacz

Thank you to the following people who have upped their memberships to LIFE

- Jane & Allen Dennison
- Valarie Lawson



**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

President's Letter

Continued from page 1


The September Open House is a special one this year. The Sowams Group (see article) will launch itself at Hunt's as a group dedicated to spotlighting the remaining sites in 8 communities which are tribal (Pokanoket/Wampanoag) and colonial sites from 1600 - 1700. This is a very narrow focus but one that needs extended awareness. Hunt's Mills itself is a very important piece of that focus. Though the land has been logged and farmed, much of the remaining 45 acres has been left to the vagaries of the Ten Mile River and the falls/ rapids/ rock outcroppings and general V-shape of the river would be recognizable to 17th century inhabitants. Please join us at 1:00 pm for the festive kick-off.

And by now you have all heard that EP will host the 2019 RI Preservation Conference next April 6th. (Formal announcement at the Oct. awards ceremony.) By September, all the large meeting sites for this group, which could number 600, will have been selected in the center of the City and satellite lunch sites in the north/south areas. The fun of choosing which fascinating aspects of EP's history will be spotlighted goes to the RIHPHC chairs Sarah Zurier and Janet Balletto. We've given them the full tour - it took two days!

This promises to be such an exciting year for the EPHS. Don't miss it!

APPLAUSE! APPLAUSE!

"All Quiet on the Rappahannock Tonight" wins another award! The NE Museum Association has awarded the EPHS publication second place in the Publications category. We were in the running with such museums as the Isabella Stewart Gardner, Yale U. Art Gallery, and the Peabody so this is indeed an honor. Congratulations once again to Sandra Turgeon and her crew for splendid work. Please recommend this book to your friends - it makes an excellent gift.



Publications Competition Award

presented to

**John Hunt Museum
East Providence Historical Society**

*All Quiet on the Rappahannock Tonight: The Civil War Letters
of Lt. Peter Hunt*

Second in Books

Project Director: Sandra Turgeon
Designer: Create Space

Green Jacket Shoal Update

The RIHPHC advisory committee for nomination to the Nat'l Register of Historic Places has just informed the East Providence GJS nomination steering committee that it will present a case for including the Shoal as an historic marine archeology site to the State Review Board on Oct 1st. This is a big step forward. If the Board accepts the request for nomination from the committee (Jeff Emidy and Charlotte Taylor), the EP Historic District Commission will submit a request for a Certified Local Government Grant to hire a consultant to write up this nomination which will then go to the National Parks Service. (WHEW!) There are other historic marine sites on the East Coast but none as special as the Shoal. We will update you as the process commences. By the way, the hearing is public: Oct 1 - 9:30 at RIHPHC headquarters - 150 Benefit Street.

FREE – FREE – FREE

Smithsonian Day

Saturday, Sept 22

11:00 am - 3:00 pm



Some of you have already taken the opportunity to visit Hunt House on a Smithsonian FREE National Museum Saturday. We welcome those who like the Saturday time and although we are technically "Free" all the time, there will be no subtle requests for donations. Come enjoy the 45 acres of Hunt's: family friendly trails, picnic area, natural falls, fish ladder, wildlife, historic gardens, Rumford tool room, children's room, Lt. Peter Hunt artifacts, and immersion in one of the 17th century Sowams sites.

Continued on page 7

2nd Sunday Fall Open Houses

September 9
Sowams Day

October 14

November 11

December 9
Hayride Day

The John Hunt House
65 Hunt's Mills Road
Rumford, RI 02916

1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

"Hikes at Hunt's"

1:30 pm at the Gazebo
September - December

Master Gardeners' Talk

October 14 @ 2:30 pm in
front of the House
"Harvesting and Preparing
for Winter"

Montessorri Field Day at Hunt's



Kara Evans Photo



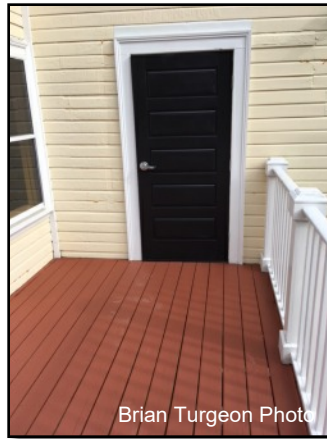
Kara Evans Photo



Kara Evans Photo



Kara Evans Photo



Brian Turgeon Photo

Getting close to opening the doors of the new Education Center



Brian Turgeon Photo



Deb Ormerod Photo



Brian Turgeon Photo

Annual Picnic and Election Vignettes



Becky Ellis Photo

Nancy Moore and Cheryl Faria, the seasoned yet new co-leaders of the successful EPHS



Deb Ormerod Photo



Deb Ormerod Photo

Did you ever come to a picnic where there was NOT enough food? That seems to be impossible looking at the tables.



Becky Ellis Photo



Deb Ormerod Photo



Cheryl Faria Photo

Master Gardener Valerie Begin giving a talk on medicinal and culinary plants at the Hunt House open house on Sunday, August 12. Looks like the new Ed Center will be a nice addition for us.

For those of you who remember ‘picking’ pears and apples as children. And do people have rhubarb patches still?

The Pear Tree

by Andy Valerio

In my youth, between the ages of 5 and 11, I almost never saw fruit in the house except at Christmas time when we all got a tangerine in our stocking. Due to raising seven kids and Pa working as a laborer for the government in 1937 for \$13 dollars a week (which comes to about 32½ cents an hour) fruit was a luxury we couldn’t afford. My sister, 6 years older, said we always had bananas for our Quaker Oats cereal but probably only ½ of one. She also remembers taking a brown bag lunch to Jr High and sometimes the sandwich was bananas.

I roamed the neighborhood, checking out peoples’ yards for apple and pear trees and grapevines. I have a vivid 5 year old memory of standing in our apartment kitchen on Juniper Street holding a stalk with a big leaf attached, asking my mother what it was. She looked at it and said, “It’s rhubarb.” “Is it good to eat?” I asked. “Yes, where did you get it?” she asked. I pointed across the street to Mrs. Bettencourt’s yard. A little terror entered her voice and she said, “You shouldn’t have taken it. It was stealing. Did anyone see you?” “I don’t think so,” I answered, “because I didn’t hear anybody say anything.” She then took the rhubarb, cut off the big leaf, rinsed the stalk under the water faucet, handed it to me and said, “Wait.” She got some waxed paper, put some sugar on the paper, dunked the end of the rhubarb in the sugar and took a bite. “That’s how you eat it,” she said. She told me to go in the backyard next to the entrance stairs where no one could see me and eat the rhubarb. “Don’t come in until you eat it all and don’t tell anyone about it and don’t go into Mrs. Bettencourt’s garden again!” I never did! I think she had me eat all the rhubarb to get rid of the evidence but that didn’t stop me from wandering the neighborhood looking for other fruit to eat.

I was six years old and in the first grade at the Mauran Ave. School at the corner of 6th Street. Today that school is gone and a park takes its place. At times, I would take the long way home to check out the yards. This one day, I walked south on 5th Street in the direction of Pierce Field. I crossed Juniper Street and then took a left onto Quarry Street. On the right corner of the street I saw a one story house, and as I passed the house, I looked in the backyard and there was a single pear tree. I knew it was a pear tree because kids showed me other trees that looked like it. I was told that pears didn’t show until the middle of the summer, and in September, when we went back to school, the pears would turn yellow and be ready to eat. There was no fence and I wanted to get a closer look at the tree, so I took a couple of steps into the yard. Then I heard a voice say, “What are you doing there?” I stopped in my tracks, looked to my left and to my right and didn’t see anybody so I took another step. The voice came back a little louder and stronger and it seemed to come from above. I looked up and in the second floor window of the house next door; a man was looking down at me. I bowed my head, took a few steps backward onto the sidewalk and walked on home. I thought about that pear tree - there were pears on it. They were ready to eat but the problem would be how to get a pear without the watchdog

seeing me around the tree a lot. I reasoned that if he saw a lot of me, he would know I planned to raid the tree and he would always be looking out for me. I hit on this



plan: instead of coming into Quarry Street from 5th Street where he could see me walk in, I would come into Quarry Street from 7th Street. I would be approaching him and the tree from the opposite direction. I would be on his back side because he was always looking forward down Quarry Street to 5th Street. I also noticed that there was a three stall garage right on the edge of the sidewalk which blocked my view to the 2nd floor window where the watchdog was sitting. If I couldn’t see him, he couldn’t see me! I had to peek around the corner of the garage to see him and I was in back of him. Once in a while, he would turn toward the inside of the room so I assumed there was somebody up there with him. When he would turn to talk, that would be the time for me to run the 20 feet into the yard and get under the tree. I would be able to see him through the leaves of the tree but if I didn’t move, he couldn’t see me. When he turned to talk I would grab a pear. I would wait until he turned once more and then run back to the corner of the garage, making no sound as I was running on grass. With the pear inside my shirt, I would walk toward 7th Street and once safe, that pear would come out and I would have a feast. I had a few pears that season without him knowing it. Around the last week of September, I was at the corner of the garage ready to raid the pear tree. I looked around the corner of the garage and up - the watchdog was in the window. But when I looked at the tree, something was missing.

There were no pears on the tree! Over the weekend, all the pears had been picked. What a disappointment!

I knew of other pear trees on the way to school. On the corner of Mauran and 7th, there were 3 trees right on the edge of the property, with no fence. The pears were not as popular as the single pear tree because it was a different type of pear. I learned the difference between the types of pears by talking to other kids. The tree on Quarry Street was a Bartlett pear. In September, the brown color would change to yellow which meant it was ripe and good to eat. The trees on Mauran Ave. were Bosc pears and the color always stayed a dark tan, even when it was ripe. It was called a winter pear. If put in a cool place like a cellar floor, it might not get overripe and rot. Within a week or two, there were no pears. They had been picked off those trees also. And that is how the season ended. No more pears until late next summer.

President's Letter

Continued from page 1

Sowams Heritage Area to Be Launched on September 9th

The Sowams Heritage Area, a project to bring the 17th century to light across eight communities in the East Bay and nearby Massachusetts, will be launched at Hunt's Mill in Rumford, Rhode Island at 1:00 pm on September 9, 2018. The event will be part of the monthly open house at the John Hunt House Museum, home of the East Providence Historical Society at 65 Hunts Mill Road. Project coordinator Dr. David Weed of the Warren Preservation Society will announce the project with East Providence Historical Society co-chair Nancy Moore. The Sowams Heritage Area includes Barrington, Bristol, East Providence, Providence and Warren, Rhode Island as well as Rehoboth, Seekonk and Swansea, Massachusetts.

Organizations that have been involved in the development of the project include the Pokanoket Tribal Council, Historical and Preservation Society representatives from Bristol, Warren, Barrington and Swansea, as well as staff from the Carpenter Museum in Rehoboth, and members of the Warren Conservation Commission. The public is invited to learn more about the project and obtain maps of over fifty historic locations in the region. An extensive web site will also be revealed that includes descriptions, maps and links to videos about the project. For more information, email drweed@cox.net.



Looking for a place to walk with your family and/or friends, or with your dog? Hoping to spend time in the outdoors on a trail that is ADA accessible? Or maybe you have a canoe or kayak but don't know how to find safe canoe launches. You'll find information to satisfy all these needs, and more, with maps to each trail head, inside this book. The river travels through Plainville, North Attleboro, Attleboro, and Seekonk, MA, Pawtucket, and East Providence, RI, before reaching the Seekonk River at Omega Falls.

To order a copy of the book, please visit <https://www.amazon.com/Easy-Walks-Paddles-River-Watershed/dp/1985377012>

Watchemoket Square Day

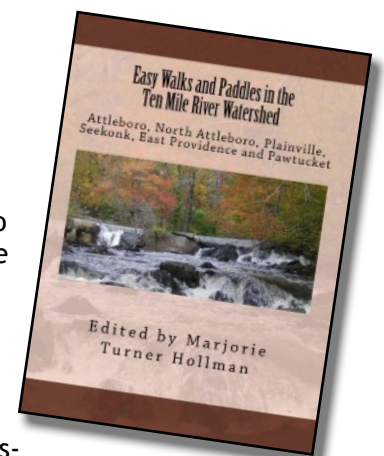
"Crossing to Sowams"

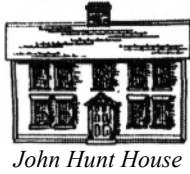
Saturday: September 29

11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Tockwotton on the Waterfront
500 Waterfront Drive

The EP Chamber of Commerce and the EPHS celebrate the new local preservation group called Sowams as we welcome this group to Tockwotton and WSD. "Crossing to Sowams" is the title for this year's exhibit as Watchemoket (place of the big smell) was the very spot where the Native Americans "crossed to Sowams," which means the south country. John Brown took note of this fording place and built his first wooden bridge on the spot. We now "cross to Sowams" on the Washington Bridge. The trail from the ford led down the East Bay through what is now East Providence, Barrington, Warren and Bristol and was joined from the east by trails through Swansea, Seekonk and Rehoboth. Dave Kelleher will be on hand for walking tours from Tockwotton to the Washington Bridge, Dave Robinson will bring us the latest on Green Jacket Shoal and there will again be the popular "minis": short up-dates on things concerning the EP waterfront and the Sowams group. Enjoy Watchemoket / Sowams exhibits in the Tockwotton Cafe and chowder/ desserts from the Tockwotton kitchen. Find out more at: facebook.com/watchemoketsquareday





East Providence Historical Society
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Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- Keep weeding. Try not to let weeds set their seeds. Remember, 1 years weeds equals 7 years seeds!
- Set up 4 or more rain barrels at the corners of your home. Connect them to your downspouts. Use for watering your plants during the season, and before a heavy rain, drain them. Allowing them to drain into the sewer system before a huge rain event, and collect rainwater when we have several inches of rain, will help sewer systems handle the overflow and prevent storm water runoff directly into the bay.
- Check your soil pH at our EPHS open houses! Generally, adding 50 pounds of lime per 1000 ft.² of lawn will help it next season.
- You can use your fingernail to test for ripeness of winter squash. The rind will be hard. Always leave about a 2 inch stem on your harvested winter squash to give it longer storage life.
- Prepare now to plant your seed garlic in late October. After it has sprouted, cover it with 4 inches of mulch before the ground freezes.
- Pot up your herbs, and bring them indoors before a hard frost, for use during the winter.

