



The East Providence Historical Society

Gazette

September 2020

Volume XXXIII No. 1

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

September

Sunday, September 13

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Museum open
Hunts Mills Road,
Rumford

October

Sunday, October 11

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Museum open
Hunts Mills Road,
Rumford

November

Sunday, November 8

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Museum open
Hunts Mills Road,
Rumford

December

Sunday, December 13

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Museum open
Hunts Mills Road,
Rumford

CONTACT US AT:

East Providence
Historical Society
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI
02916-4774
Tel. (401) 473-0677
Email: info@ephist.org
Web Site: ephist.org

President's Letter

by Cheryl Faria, Co-President

Welcome to the end of Summer! Despite the many COVID-19 restrictions, we have had a fairly busy summer season. Here are some updates since the last Gazette was published.

John Hunt House Museum

The John Hunt House Museum was open on the 2nd Sunday of the month in June, July and August. We wore masks, practiced social distancing, limited numbers of visitors in the museum and had a one-way traffic flow. It was wonderful to see so many of our old friends! Thank you to our faithful docents for making it happen including Nancy Allen, Carole DiFabio, Sandi Barber, Dot Thornley, Pat Henry, Deb Ormerod, Eric Underhill, Sandra Turgeon and Tom Warzeka.



Thank You to Our Open House Sponsors



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P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI
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Web Site: ephist.org

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Nancy Allen *Recording Secretary*
Dorothy Thornley *Treasurer*
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Nancy Allen *Museum*
Reinhard Wohlgemuth *Newsletter*
Nancy Moore *Preservation*
Nancy Moore *Programs*
Nancy Moore *Publicity*
Deborah Ormerod *Website Manager*

A Notice Regarding July Dues Payments!!

We have several members who still owe dues that were payable in July! If you received a bill and have not paid, please use the form on this page OR go to our website (ephist.org) and use PayPal. Any questions may be directed to miriamkenney@aol.com or 401-434-9462.

Thank you in advance for your continued support of our organization!

Miriam Kenney, Membership

Membership News!

A warm welcome to our new members:

- Dorothy Campbell
- Todd Clarke
- Kenneth Rix
- Meredith Swan
- Kip and Elaine Tarpley
- Paul Williams
- Kevin Zona

Thank you to a current member who upgraded to Life:

- Paul Gorman

**In Memory Of
Jean Henderson**



Sadly missed...fondly remembered

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 \$25 individual, \$35 family or business, or a Life Membership for \$250.

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: _____

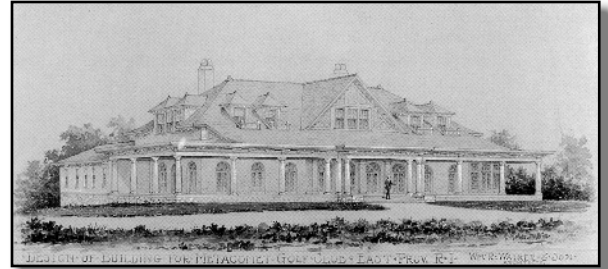
\$25 Individual

\$35 Family/Business

\$250 Life

Metacomet Country Club - A Brief History of the Area

For nearly 100 years as a golf club, but most likely for 100s of years before, the backside of Fort Hill has been a delight to look at in all seasons. Bordered on the west by the Veterans Parkway (old Barrington Parkway) and on the east by the southern end of South Broadway, in the area known as Kettle Point, we know this area today as Metacomet Country Club. The old Native American trail which forded the Seekonk River at Watchemoket wound its way down the East Bay shoreline to Bristol and the colonists used that trail also. Some of East Providence's oldest buildings are along this route and there is ample evidence that Native Americans, primarily the Pokanokets, used the site extensively for at least 500 years prior to colonization. The Sowams Heritage Area group has published research about the Jones Pond area just across Lyons Avenue from Metacomet with photos of the remains of one of 11 hearths there and a grave of an early indigenous man (1). The site appears not to have been a permanent settlement but rather a seasonal base to take advantage of the rich shell fishing as there is also evidence of a shell midden at the pond. There does appear to have been a small settlement at Kettle Point. Jones Pond is now a protected area as part of the Pierce Field complex, but it could perhaps be argued that the entire top of the hillside is a sensitive early site and should certainly be treated as such, no matter the outcome of the present discussions.



descendants of the Walker Point family, who also designed First Baptist Church in Rumford and the Turner Avenue School. The history of Metacomet Country Club itself has been well documented in its 100th anniversary publication, "Metacomet Country Club: 100 Years : 1901-2001" The early years, 1901-1918 and the dual use of Agawam Hunt acreage is a fascinating chapter. A copy of this book is available for reading at the EPHS ED Center library. Our thanks to the Sowams Heritage Area group for their link to the early history prior to colonization.

The earliest settlement in Rehoboth/Seekonk/East Providence was at the Back Cove (Omega Pond) up to Walker's Point (an important Sowams site) and inland for about 1.5 miles. Rev. Samuel Newman brought his group from Weymouth to establish the Ring of the Green in 1643. Much of this new settlement called Rehoboth was low lying land but defensible by placing cannon at what is now called Fort Hill, the front part of the Metcomet area, guarding the entrance to the Seekonk River and Providence Harbor, an effective strategy as the area became more prominent. The Rehoboth area became famous for its produce raised in the Seekonk Plain and the entire area was thriving and eventually involved in the Triangle Trade. The Providence Journal details an account of the auction of 23 slaves by a John Lyons on that very same Metacomet back hillside in 1763 (2).

After the Civil War, East Providence became well known for its beautiful coastline and bucolic playgrounds. Hunt's Mills, Squantum Woods, and Crescent Park were favorite places and the stretches of open land caught the eyes of men who loved the game of golf. From 1895, three courses were opened, all named for Native American massasoits (great leaders): Agawam, Wanamoissett and Metacomet. All three clubs eventually contracted with the famous Scotsman, Donald Ross, to design or redesign their layouts. Ross was in high demand, completing 97 courses just in New England alone, 11 of them here in RI. From 1914 to 1924, Ross worked here in East Providence building the vistas that we have come to treasure and admire. Golfers have high praise for his work and for Metacomet in particular. The Lyons stock farm, purchased by the Metacomet Board in 1918, was originally 105 acres but the Club has increased its acreage to 140 over the years. The gracious historic clubhouse (3), built for \$12,000, was designed by William R. Walker and Sons,

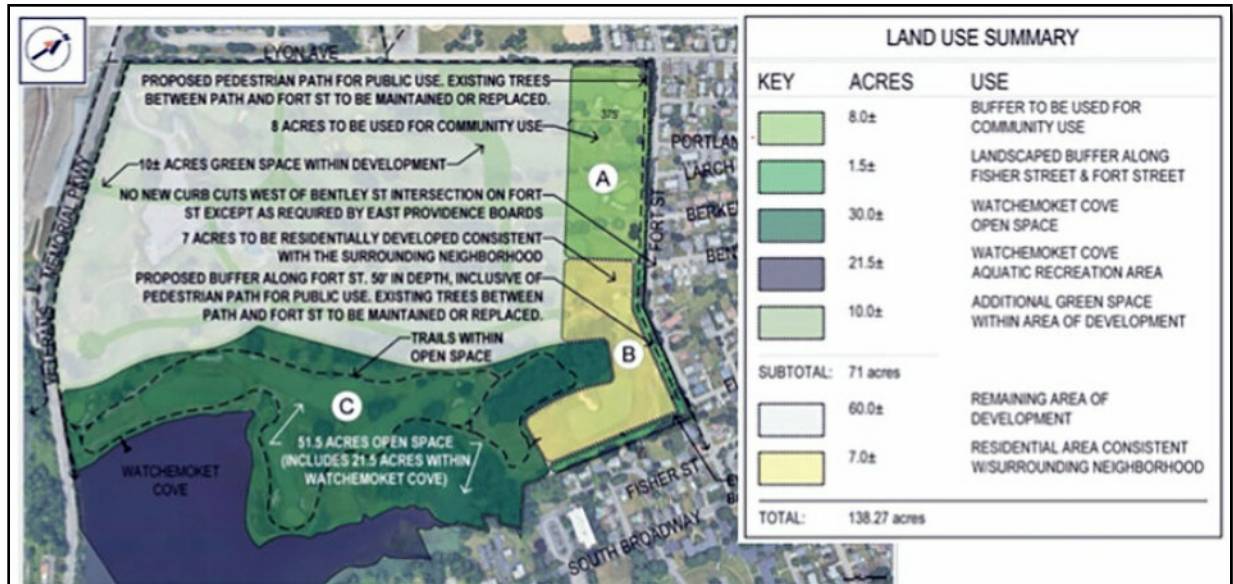
1) <http://sowamsheritagearea.org/wp/jones-pond>

2) "Metacomet Country Club": page 79

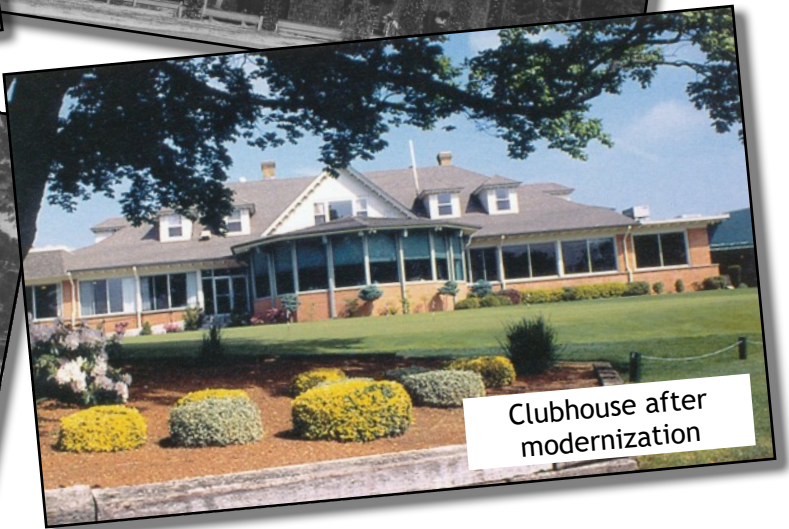
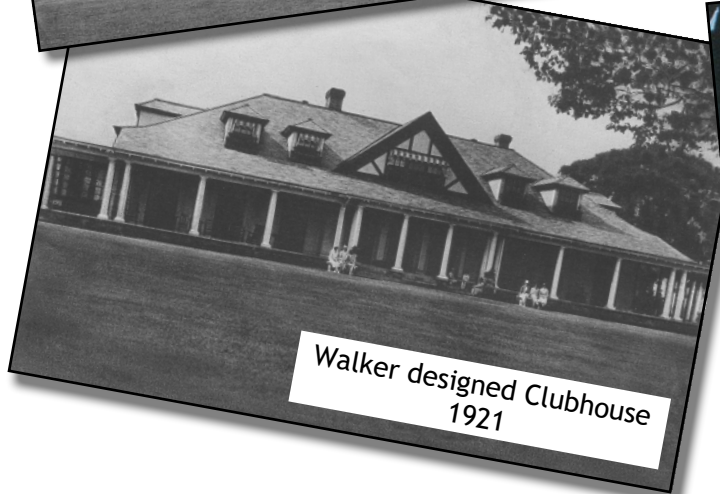
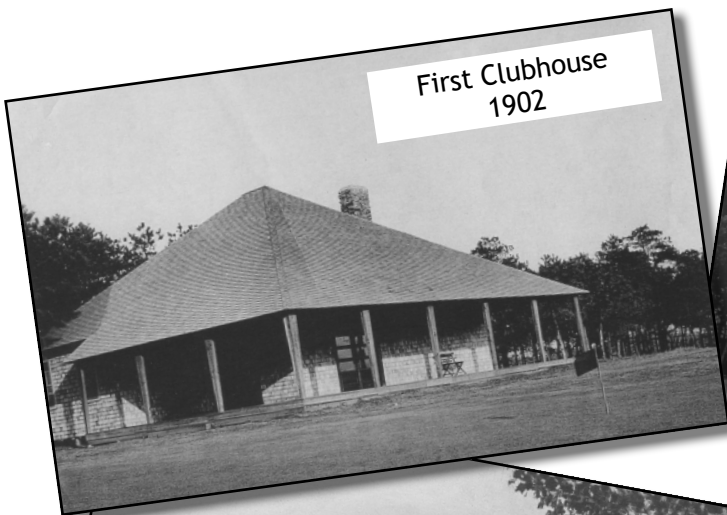
3) "Metacomet Country Club": pages 64-66

At this time, the developer, Marshall Corporation, a local company, has offered to put 50 acres into land conservation with open area buffers on the Parkway. It appears that development would be concentrated along Lyon Ave. and Fort St., now all open land. The EP Planning Board has provided a positive recommendation to the City Council to amend the Comprehensive Plan and change the zoning from Open Space to a new sub-district of the Waterfront District, known as the Metacomet Sub-District. The EPHS has put together this re-printable insert for use by the public during the discussions surrounding the sale/rezoning/development of Metacomet Country Club. Please feel free to share this information. This insert is available at our site: ephist.org and our Facebook page.

Proposed Land Use after Re-zoning of the Metacomet Golf Course



Evolution of the Club House



President's Letter
Continued from page 1

Looff on Tour



On Saturday, August 8, we were proud to host artists participating in the East Providence Arts Council's annual celebration. The

museum was open and we had artists on the grounds from 12-6pm including painters, novel and poetry writers, an accapella singing group and belly dancers. It was a beautiful day!



Hunts Mills Community Gardens

East Providence's first community gardens are beginning to come to life. We are grateful to have received a grant from the RI Foundation to transform the basement of the Education Center into a Garden Center, build 18 raised beds behind the Museum and feature a "Three Sisters Garden" with the Sowams Heritage Area group. We have also recently received the good news that Representative Katherine Kazarian has sponsored a Legislative Grant in support of the community gardening project. Our plan for this year is to create the Garden Center, build the garden beds and begin taking applications from community members interested in renting a garden space next year.

On four Tuesday mornings in July, volunteers including Nancy Moore, Keith Gonsalves, Ken Rix, Danny Penengo, Jeff Faria and Cheryl Faria cleared out and cleaned the basement of the Education Center, and prepared some existing shelving to be made into a workbench. After that, Milton Chow built the front door and insulated the front door and secured the ceiling with Tyvek. Other plans for the Garden Center are to open up the existing windows, put in a utility sink and install additional lighting.



The Great Rumford Bake Off



We have postponed the 2nd annual Bake Off until we can safely meet in large groups.

Hunt House Front Door Damaged

I am sad to report that on an evening in August some youth decided to kick in the front door of the Hunt House Museum. Fortunately, East Providence Police quickly responded to the alarm and were able to apprehend the vandals as they fled the scene. Also fortunately, Dean Martineau quickly secured the doorway and is now having Adam, his finish carpenter, rebuild the historical door.



On four very (!!) hot Tuesday mornings in August, more volunteers worked to install the fencing that

Volunteer Corner

Mayor Bob DaSilva arranged to be delivered from the old ball fields. Helping with the repurposing of the fence were Ken Rix, Danny Penengo, Jack Brisson and his nephew Jacob, Dean Martineau and his helpers Patrick, Xavier and Benny, Eric Underhill, Jeff and Cheryl Faria, Nancy Moore, Rod Annis and Traci Grow. Thank you to Nancy Moore for providing lunch and drinks each day and a big thank you to everyone for your dedication and help. This fall we will be working on installing the raised beds and we welcome more volunteer help!



Would you like to be more involved with the East Providence Historical Society?

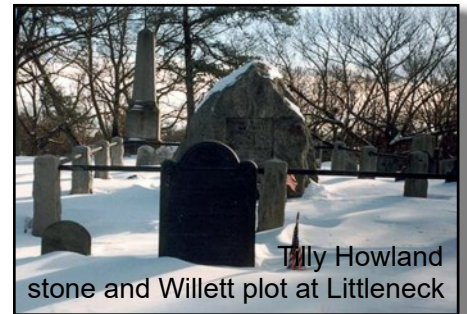
We need help building 18 raised beds for the Hunts Mills Community Gardens being established behind the Hunt House Museum. We also have need for a volunteer to help Danny Penengo manage this worthwhile endeavor and coordinate and communicate with the gardeners. Please contact Jeff Faria at 401-556-6804 or cjfarria@verizon.net to get this plan off the ground. If anyone would like to have a garden plot, please also contact Jeff.

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

We look forward to hearing from you!

Littleneck Cemetery - an Update

In June, our Facebook page received some inquiries about the status of Little Neck Cemetery, specifically, its care and upkeep. Photos that residents took showed a place which appeared not to have been mowed since last fall - quite untidy. Then there was the question of just who was responsible for the upkeep: the City or the private group which owns the back (nearest the houses). A quick note to William Abbood of the Parks Dept. got the mowing done and another note to Patrick Hanner of Planning set the ownership question to rest. The City owns the original famous resting place of early settlers like Tilly Howland and the Chinese Christian Church has deed to the part which backs up to the Elinora Historic District. Mr. Abbood has stated that for now, the City will continue to maintain the entire cemetery. Our thanks to both men for their prompt responses.



The Historian's Circle

Hunt's Mills Park: \$1,000+

Nancy Allen
Cheryl and Jeff Faria
Laurie and William McWeeney
Nancy Stevens
Dotty Thornley

Crescent Park: \$500-\$999

Susan Cady and Gloria Cady
Pat Paulson McGrail
Nancy and Dan Moore
Lois Williams

Vanity Fair Park: \$200-\$499

Richard R. Bushnell and Paula Perkins
David E. Czerwonka
Woods Heating Service

Boyden Heights Park: \$100-\$199

James Robert Boyd, Jr.
Carole DiFabio
Jane and Allen Dennison
Virginia Gonsalves
Wendy and Gordon Hubbard
David and Eleanor Kelleher
Katherine Kazarian
Wendy Edwards and Jerry Mischak
Tracey Moline
Kathy and Jack Richer
Miriam Kenney
John Puhacz
Norma and Michael Reynolds
Ed Serowick

Friends - \$1-\$99

Norma and William Conley, Jr.
Joanne Perella and Eric Crook
Stephen Greenleaf
Mary and Richard Harrall
Pat Henry
Elizabeth Ingraham
Valerie J. Lawson
Ruth McCarthy and William Mitchell
Barbara Barnes and Beverly Pettine
Mark Saunders
Rose Marie Sirenski
Charlene Underhill
Andy Valerio
Mary Ann and Robert Walsh
Tom and Missy Warzeka
Gary Zunda

Thank you to those who donated to our Annual Fund. With your Historian's Circle gift, you are helping to make a profound difference in the achievement of the Society's annual, strategic vision and endowment goals.

If there are any errors or omissions in this list, we apologize and ask you to please let Cheryl Faria know so we can correct it for the next issue of The Gazette.

401-419-8682
cherylafaria@verizon.net

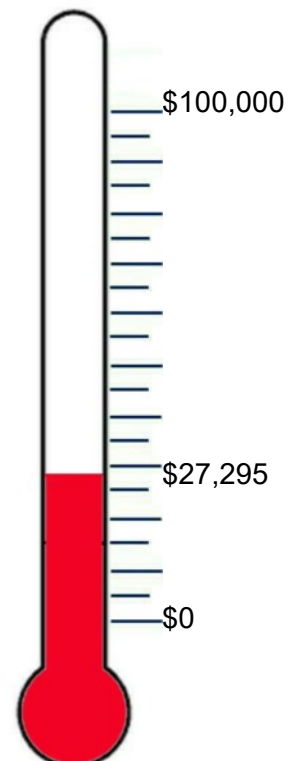
EP Historical Society Endowment!!

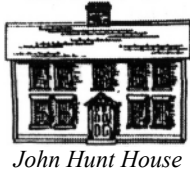
We have set a goal to raise \$100,000 to establish an endowment for the East Providence Historical Society. Once established, we plan to use the annual draw to offset costs and hire a part-time employee.

So far we have raised \$27,295 towards that goal. If you can help contribute to this goal, please make your check payable to the East Providence Historical Society with a note saying Endowment in the memo line.

Thank you for considering this!

Endowment Fund Progress





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

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Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- Late summer and early fall are the best times to plant grass seed to create or rejuvenate the lawn. With this very dry summer we have had, most grass plants have gone dormant and will recover. However, some areas may have died, so unlike in the spring, weed seeds will complete less with grass seed. Scatter the grass seed, lightly rake it in and water it regularly.
- It is best to divide and transplant daylilies after they have finished blooming. This is the case with many perennials.
- House plants will benefit in a new pot, no more than 2 inches larger in diameter than their current pot. You can leave them outdoors in their new home for a couple of weeks in a mostly shady area. Water regularly and check for insects before bringing them indoors.
- Many gardeners have excess produce at this time of year. Preserving your bounty by drying, freezing or canning is fun and easy. You may also get vegetables from neighbors or a local farmers market. My new favorite is canning tomato soup with other vegetables and herbs. Follow safe canning recipes and procedures. Best of all the canning jars don't take up valuable freezer space and they store well for over a year. Whole tomatoes and cut up peppers are easy to freeze, raw. Lay them out on a cookie sheet and freeze them. Then seal them in plastic freezer bags for easy portioning later on.
- We dry herbs and grill vegetables marinated in homemade Italian dressing, followed by freezing them in freezer bags. They taste fresh off the grill in January!
- I'm getting hungry!!

