



# OLDE NEWS

EAST • PROVIDENCE • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY  
• NEWSLETTER •

## OLDE NEWS DEBUT

The publication of *OLDE NEWS* marks a new era for the East Providence Historical Society. We have grown tremendously in the past year and now have over one hundred and twenty members.

With *OLDE NEWS* we hope to keep our old members better informed about the Historical Society's new projects and to get our new members more involved in the organization.

### REMINDER!

The September meeting of  
the E. P. H. S. will be on  
Monday, September 26  
at 7:15PM

## DINNER

The Rumford Grange will be serving their tasty dinners before the East Providence Historical Society meetings again this year.

The first dinner, at 6:30PM September 26th, will feature

### Baked Chicken.

Reservations may be made by calling Ginny Berwick (434-0998) or Martha Wade (433-2237) before

### September 22.

The complete dinners are still only \$4.00. Those reserving a dinner are responsible for the cost even if they do not attend.

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## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The first mention of the East Providence Historical Society appears in the February 10, 1966 issue of the *East Providence Post*, in an article entitled "A Written History is their Goal, Historical Society Stresses Importance of Community's Past".

The article begins with three questions. They are: Where is Hog Pen Point? Who was the first school teacher in East Providence? Do you know the name of the coach stop-over station on Pawtucket Avenue which serviced wagons and passengers traveling from Newport to Providence a hundred years ago? Not many people in East Providence (or elsewhere) know the answers, the article reassures us.

The paper goes on to say that Harold Flint, pictured in the article, is one of a handful of people who were organizing a group which would be concerned with this community's heritage—the East Providence Historical Society. He felt that there was so much important history in East Providence that the public should be made aware of it.

Mr. Flint was one of the

original fourteen people who attended an informal meeting of the group at the home of Mr. Allen Usher. The group agreed that there is a great need for compilation of facts and a written history and that were enough people interested in local history to form an historical society.

It was felt that interest and willingness to work rather than the time spent living in the community were the most important factors for those wishing to join the society.

Research to rediscover the History of East Providence was to be the main task of the Society. Plans to contact members of long-time families in the city, the collection of genealogies, pinpointing dates of historical events, and obtaining information about the oldest homes, churches and commercial buildings were some of the activities suggested. A factor which would add to the confusion that often accompanies research would be the fact that parts of East Providence were at different times part of Seekonk, Rehobeth, and Swansea, Massachusetts.

It was noted that the re-

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search would take patient effort and be a source of personal satisfaction to those who became involved in setting the records straight.

At this meeting, Allen Usher was appointed temporary chairman and Mrs. Clinton W. Sellow became secretary of the group. An enrollment and information committee consisting of Mrs. Clinton W. Sellow, Mrs. Harold Flint and Mrs. Herbert Howland was formed.

The questions posed at the beginning of the newspaper account were given at the end of it. They were: Hog Pen Point is the area near the present Barrington Parkway where the Massachusetts Bay Colony built a fort. John Flagg was the first school teacher in East Providence. Bullock's Point Tavern was the stop-over station.

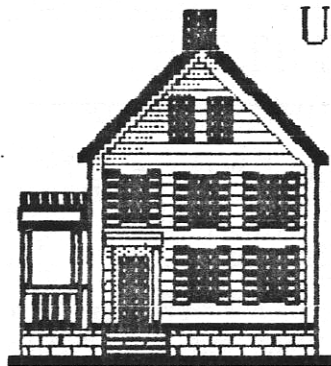
*Lura Sellow*

### BY-LAWS

The by-laws committee met during the summer to update and revise the current by-laws. An amended set of by-laws will be presented at the annual meeting with a discussion to follow. A vote on the proposed changes will be taken at the October meeting.

*Mary Moore*

## WEAVER HOUSE UPDATE



The Historical Society has fulfilled its responsibility to the City Council as to a recommended use of the Weaver House. As of July, the Council received a packet including the Blackstone Valley Weavers' proposal and a cover letter from the Preservation Committee representing the E.P.H.S. The packet was acknowledged as correspondence at the Council meeting of September 7<sup>th</sup>. No action was taken in the proposal at this time, as the City is considering using the Weaver House as part of an expanded library complex. However it was considered very important that the Society fulfill its responsibility to the Council and to the Blackstone Valley group before a new year had begun.

*Mary Moore*

## WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

The forty-three T-shirts sold at the Heritage Days Festival celebration was a bit disappointing, especially to those of us who sat for hours watching the approach of people who seemed uninterested in our booth. We are looking forward to a better site and more helping hands next year to display our wares.

Since Heritage Days, twelve more shirts have been sold for a total of fifty-five.

Remember that these shirts will be available at the Society's forthcoming functions. The next one will be the important meeting on September 26<sup>th</sup> and following that the E.P.H.S./ Rumford Juniors Yard Sale at Newman Congregational Church on Saturday, October 1, from 9

a.m. to 2 p.m.. You may also make purchases by calling "The Vincents" at 434-0481.

The Ways and Means Committee is also making plans for a Harvest Dinner on the 1<sup>st</sup> week of November. The Committee will be looking for your support.

*Hedeleine Vincent*

### Nominating Committee Report

At the August meeting of the Board of Directors of the Historical Society, Arnie McConnell informed the members of the Board that he would like his name removed from nomination for President of the Society.

The Nominating Committee met again and has endorsed the following slate of officers for the 1988-89 membership year:

- Claudette Field** - President
- Mike Charves** - 1st. V.P.
- Bill Wade** - 2nd. V.P.
- Lura Sellow** - Recording Secretary
- Virginia Berwick** - Corresponding Secretary
- Martha Rivas** - Treasurer
- Ellen O'Hare** - Board Member-at-Large

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## THE RENSHAW REPORT

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On August 22, Clifford "Jack" Renshaw, a well-known restoration architect, surveyed the Hunt House and submitted his preliminary report to the Society's Officers a week later. Reading the Renshaw report was an eye-opening experience. Although the house is in very good condition for its age, Mr. Renshaw has made many recommendations that will involve a great deal of time and money to implement. He emphasized that the restoration of a house like this will be an on-going and long-term affair, and that the Society must realize this and assign priorities to the many projects involved. Some of them are relatively minor and can be performed by the Society members, and some are a great deal more complex and will have to be dealt with by professionals. Complicating all of this is the status of the Society as the lessee of the Hunt

House and not the owner.

Although he found the house to be structurally sound, Mr. Renshaw did find the huge center chimney of the Hunt House to be a cause for concern. Sometime in the past, a hole was cut into the chimney in the basement which was improperly supported and this has caused the chimney to settle, in turn causing the hearth beam to sag. In addition, he noted that the flashing around the chimney has pulled away, leaving gaps through which daylight can be seen, although he detected no signs of serious water damage as yet.

The architect also recommended that the brick ell added to the house by the Water Department be pulled down, because leaks around the joint between the ell and the house were starting to cause rot, and because the ell was "inappropriate to the almost intact form of the ex-

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THE RENSHAW REPORT  
(cont.)

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terior". Other costly recommendations were the eventual replacement of the existing windows with more historically accurate ones, the reconstruction of a wall torn down on the first floor, and the restoration of the original pine floors, which have been covered with successive layers of oak flooring and linoleum.

Mr. Renshaw emphasized that he was not a 'purist' regarding restoration. He observed that some consideration must be given to future use of the building, and that compromises may have to be made to accommodate these uses. A specific suggestion was to completely restore one room in the house down to the original flooring, and leaving the other rooms with oak flooring and even carpeting for areas which may see a great deal of wear.

He warned that care must be taken when working on an old house, because improper

tools and materials can cause permanent damage. He included guidelines from the Department of the Interior with recommendations regarding the proper procedures to follow in the preservation and restoration of old buildings. The general emphasis of all of this information was to encourage the preservation of as much of the the original finishes as possible. They are important to the building's authenticity, and they help to preserve surfaces that are hundreds of years old. He recommended that an analysis of the house's paint be performed to discover its original color, and offered the surprising opinion that the Hunt House may well have been colonial yellow at one time!

Copies of the Renshaw report will be available for members to peruse at the September meeting. It makes fascinating (and sobering) reading.

*George Field*

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## HUNT HOUSE UPDATE

This past summer the Historical Society made some essential repairs to the Hunt House. The city of East Providence had drained the heating system when the Water Department moved out, leaving the house unheated for the past four years and causing some damage to the water pipes. Thanks to Bill Wade and Walter Vincent the cold water pipes to the boiler have been replaced and the plumbing in the large lavette on the first floor is now working. We are waiting for a heating check, so that they can crank up the boiler.

In addition Bill and Walter destroyed twenty-two wasp nests in the attic so that they could rebuild the damaged windows (and hopefully keep

the wasps out of the house in the future).

Arnie McConnell spent many Monday evenings in July and August removing the old paint from a portion of the front of the house.

We would like to thank those who gave up their time to work on the house this summer. It was a first step in a long project.

Now that we have Jack Renshaw's (see the **Renshaw Report**) written recommendation and guidelines, the Society will have a better idea of the proper way to attack the restoration of a 250-year-old house. Hopefully this new information will give us the confidence and impetus we need to really tackle the Hunt House project during the coming year.

### TREASURER'S SUMMARY

ASSETS AS OF SEPTEMBER 12, 1988	
General Fund (checking)	584.62
Building Fund (savings)	6750.40
Certificate of Deposit	2711.30
Credit Union Share	5.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$10051.32</b>

### NEXT MONTH IN OLDE NEWS

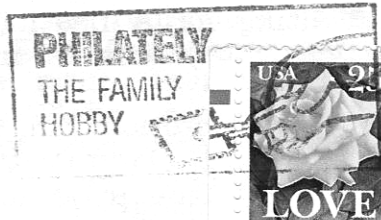
What is the East Providence Historic District Commission?  
Nancy Stevens explains.

# LAST CALL FOR RUMMAGE SALE

There's still time to clean out the cellar or attic  
before the Rummage Sale on  
Saturday, October 1  
at Newman Congregational Church.  
All donations are welcome! Call 434-0481 or  
431-0257, if you have questions.

The church hall will be opened from 6 to 10 p.m. the night  
before the sale and at 8 a.m. the morning of the sale  
for your last minute donations!

OLDE NEWS  
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SUCH NUMBER  
at Charlotte BR 33957

