



OLDE NEWS

EAST ■ PROVIDENCE ■ HISTORICAL ■ SOCIETY
■ NEWSLETTER ■

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

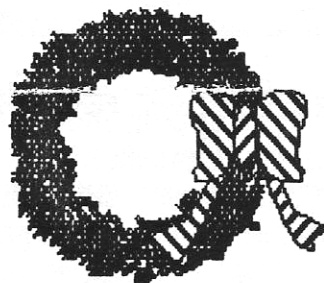
The attendance and the comments overheard during the Victorian Christmas at Hunt House on December 2 were truly gratifying; East Providence residents who toured the house were delighted by the improvements to their building.

Hopefully when we have our Federal Christmas at Hunt House next December visitors will notice improvements fueled by the grants which we have been awarded.

For example the state wants most, if not all, of its preservation grant applied to outside painting and wood repair, those projects alone will create a dramatic difference to the appearance of

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MEETING



THE NEXT MEETING
OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
will be held January 28, 1991
from 7:15 pm
at Newman Congregational
Church.

No Meeting in December.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (cont.)

Hunt House.

The Champlin Foundation grant is for the new heating system which will eliminate radiators and steam pipes allowing the inside restoration to progress without encumbrances.

It's so exciting we can hardly wait to begin!

Claudette Field

**MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR,
PART III**

This month, we are pleased to report the appointment of Bill Simpson as Chairman of the Program Committee. Bill's first official act is to have organized a Society trip to Blithewold this December, in lieu of our December meeting. The cost is a mere \$5.00 per person (\$4.00 per person if more than twenty people come), and it will take place on Saturday, Dec. 29. We will gather at the Hunt House and leave for Bristol at 12 noon.

If you want to come along (and Blithewold is especially beautiful when decorated for Christmas) call Bill at 438-0623 before Thursday, Dec. 27.

**OLDE NEWS**

published monthly by

The East Providence Historical Society

Editor

George Field, IV

EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 4774

East Providence, Rhode Island 02916

438-1750

OFFICERS

President	Claudette Field
First Vice-President	Scott Booth
Second Vice-President	Ginny Berwick
Secretary	Rose Marie Sirenski
Corresponding Secretary	Lura Sellew
Treasurer	Martha Rivas
Board Members-at-Large	Billie Arden Ellen O'Hare Nancy Stevens

SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Building	C. Field
Hunt House Restoration	Walter Vincent, Earl Berwick

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Artifacts	Edna Anness
Grant Writing	Jewel Drickamer
Membership	Madeline Vincent
Newsletter	George Field, IV
Mailing subcommittee	F. Adams
Preservation	Nancy Moore
Program	Bill Simpson
Publicity	Florence Adams

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

The second floor museum room was ready for the Open House thanks to Charlie Jackson for his carpentry, Lowell Anness for puttying and gluing up the sheet cork, Virginia Berwick and Lowell for helping me paint the room with paint donated by Pat Millette, and Walter Vincent for helping me move equipment.

The first floor back room was fitted out as a Victorian sitting room with period furniture and decorations. Thanks again to Nancy Stevens for helping me furnish the room and set it up. Nancy also made the four new pairs of tab curtains in the Keeping Room. Thanks also to the docents who manned the rooms: Carolyn Donahue, Bridget Anness, Bill Simpson, Kit Rodman, Nancy Stevens and Lowell. Thank you, Virginia, for making the Christmas cake for the reception, and Lura Sellew who "scripted" the donor list.

New gifts accepted into the collection are: a wall cupboard from the Rumford Chemical Co. from Fales and Ruth Peirce, Rumford tins and glass from the lab at Rumford from Virginia and

Earl Berwick, A.P. Hoyt School class pictures and a Camp White poster from Len and Barbara Erickson, a commemorative envelope from Ellen O'Hare and school mementos from Lowell and me.

If you missed the Open House do come visit us any Sunday in December from 1 to 4 p.m. The only thing missing from then will be the slides of Crescent Park, Boyden Heights and Vanity Fair which Dave Kelleher loaned to us and were shown continuously all day. The exhibits of the Hunts Mills Restoration and East Providence amusement areas at the turn of the century will remain on display through the month of December.

Edna Anness

The Peter Hunt letters have already made a slight contribution to historians' understanding of the Civil War. Jacqueline Damian, who is in the process of trying to convince Norton to publish the collected letters of our very own Civil War hero, lent a sampling of letters to a Civil

cont. on next page

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

cont.

War buff in Virginia. He in turn was excited to find a reference in the text about the Union's use of surveillance balloons at a date earlier than was previously suspected. This of course should encourage Norton, who will be more interested in the letters if they are proven to have some historic significance.



MAC ATTACK!

It's gray, it's warm, it hums and it has a pet mouse. Wrong, it's not Nigel, the editor's eccentric cat but the E.P. Historical Society's (slightly) used Macintosh SE computer and ImageWriter II printer, upon which this month's newsletter is being written even as we speak.

Ultimately, the computer will live at the Hunt House, where it will be accessible to anyone who

needs to use it. Beyond being used to produce the newsletter, our new toy can be put to many other uses including general correspondence, maintaining the membership list, updating the floor plans for the Hunt House and perhaps even creating a data base describing and cross referencing the museum's ever-growing collection. The uses it can be put to are limited only by the ideas from the membership.

We chose this type of computer because Macintoshes are easy to learn, fun to use and relatively portable (so it can be removed from harms way during the restoration).

In addition several of our board members have Macs of their own and were already sharing information on disk, so we have a strong base of expertise to draw upon.

After the dust from the heating system installation has settled, and the computer is safely ensconced in climate controlled splendor in the Hunt House, we will hold a series of training sessions for members who need access to the computer for Society business.

OPEN HOUSE

The December 2nd Open House netted \$1400 and paid for the Society's 'new' computer system! (See "Mac Attack" elsewhere in this issue.)

See what we can do when we all pull together?

I was forced into being acting Ways and Means Chair to get this affair going but much to my surprise it was a relatively painless. A few phone calls, two brief meetings and *voilà!* a Christmas sale was in the works.

Why was it all so easy? Because we had a lot of wonderful volunteers and we have a Ways and Means bible detailing the history of these events and we have Walter and Madeline Vincent.

Madeline, Walter and their friend Ann Reynolds (who deserves a gold star as new volunteer of the month for December, because she also helped paint the keeping room, floor and all) spent days at the house getting the place ready for the sale.

Virginia Berwick did every thing from soup to paint to help with the sale. Florence Adams organized the Telephone

Committee and baked and served. Pat Millette painted ornaments and her father Bill Rix provided the greens; together they earned 21% of the profits!

In addition to those already named who worked at the sale, the following people also donated items to the sale and manned the fort throughout the day: Mary Anthony, Helen Smith, Fales and Ruth Peirce, Bill Simpson, Jewel Drickamer, Lura Sellew, Jane Sander, Gladys Panzarella, Rose Marie Sirenski. Lois Driscoll came to help for an hour and stayed for the day and were delighted to have Martha Rivas organizing our finances for the day thanks to her father who babysat Christopher!

Finally a heartfelt thanks to everyone who baked, wove, knitted, needlepointed, crocheted, hammered, sawed, painted, and glued our way to a successful day.

Special thanks to Edna Anness who worked hours and hours getting the Museum ready for its first exhibit and to Nancy Stevens who made the keeping room curtains and planned and executed the lovely Victorian room with Edna. *Claudette Field*

HUNT HOUSE UPDATE

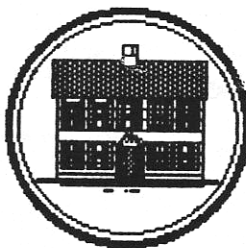
OPEN HOUSE

The 1990 Christmas Open House was another artistic and financial success, due entirely to the efforts of the membership.

Despite the lack of a Ways and Means Chairman, (Santa, are you listening?) enough people volunteered and committed the time to make our Victorian Christmas a well attended and profitable event.

The Museum Committee wrought a minor miracle and turned the back room on the first floor of the Hunt House into a cosy Victorian parlor, complete with tree and authentic ornaments. Walter and his Merry Elves wrought a miracle of their own, and created a whole new room with the new wall in the parlor, and painted the keeping room.

It is always a surprise to people who come into the house after it has been decorated, to see how a place can be transformed with



the addition of a little furniture and people. Those who have seen the Hunt House during its renovation process tend to think of it as, well, sort of a pit to

be blunt. It's nice to see that the old place (like some of our members!) "cleans up well."

TAKING THE KING'S SHILLING

There was a saying back in the Napoleonic wars: "Taking the King's Shilling". (I know this from reading scores of Horatio Hornblower epics during my mis-spent youth) It referred to the practice of giving recruits in the king's service a shilling. Accepting it meant you also accepted the conditions of serving in his Majesty's armed forces. (Invariably in the Hornblower stories this involved bloody fights on the high seas with the French Navy, replete with clouds of cannon smoke and desperate saber duals on the quarterdeck.)

In a like manner, the Society's

acceptance of a grant from the RI Historical Preservation Commission means that we must abide by their standards and recommendations. It means that the Society now must shoulder obligations and responsibilities that would have been unthinkable even a year ago.

(Also, now more than ever, we need the City's cooperation. The state will not hand over the \$44,400 to the Historical Society until the City signs a preservation easement with the state on the Hunt House.

This requirement was a part of the grant application which was formally approved by the City Council and signed by the City in February, but we still need to have the requirement fulfilled before the money will be forthcoming.)

We will be spending a lot of money in the next few months, and making some major decisions on the future of the Hunt House. And we will be held accountable for the consequences of those decisions.

The Society is growing up.

LEMUEL BROWN HOUSE

The City of East Providence has formally requested that the Lemuel Brown House (a.k.a. the Caleb Williams House) be opened to the public to coincide with the dates the Hunt House will be open during December. The Brown House (c. 1812) was built on the site originally occupied by an earlier dwelling of Caleb Williams, a cousin of Roger Williams. The current building was constructed by Allin Hunt for Lemuel Brown, who operated the mills on this site for Hunt.

The City-owned house is currently leased to John and Gloria Garvin.

As a reminder: the Hunt house is open every Sunday in December from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. The remaining dates this month are December 23 and 30.

The displays are described in detail pg. 3.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Sunday, Dec. 23 Hunt House Open, 1-4 p.m.
- Monday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve: no Historical Society Meeting
- Tuesday, Dec. 25 *Christmas Day*
- Saturday, Dec. 29 **E.P. Hist. Society:** Trip to Blithewold, leaving Hunt House at 12:00 noon.
- Sunday, Dec. 30 Hunt House Open, 1-4 p.m.
- Tuesday, Jan. 1 **New Years Day- 1991**
- Thursday, Jan. 10 **E.P. Hist. Society:** Board Meeting, 7:30PM
- Monday, Jan. 28 **E.P. Historical Society:** January Meeting

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