



OLDE NEWS

EAST ■ PROVIDENCE ■ HISTORICAL ■ SOCIETY
■ NEWSLETTER ■

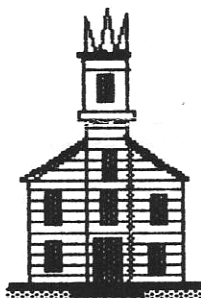
PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Everyone who knows me, knows I have a favorite French saying, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose." Members of the Historical Society have heard it many times before. Roughly translated it means: the more things change, the more they remain the same. A bit cynical, you say?

I don't think the callers who kept our phone sizzling over the Columbus Day weekend would agree with you. It seems everyone was upset that the City had given the gas company permission to tap into the new gas line at Hunts Mills – the one we paid \$8250 to have installed – so that

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MEETING



THE NEXT MEETING
OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
will be held October 22, 1990
from 7:15 pm
at Newman Congregational
Church.

Speaker: Lura Sellevw talks
about tracing our roots.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

cont.

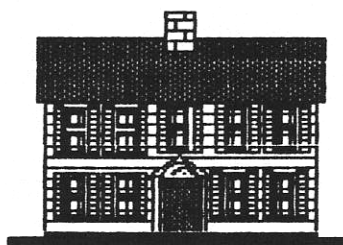
the occupants of the City-owned Caleb Williams house could be heating with gas this winter.

The whole affair is distasteful and insulting. That our City administrator would sink to claiming to be "hurt" and surprised that we are miffed is distasteful; and their contention that *they* deserve total credit for our having gotten the grant that paid for the line in the first place, is insulting.

If you're still wondering what all the fuss is about, remember the gas line affair is only the latest episode in a long series of aggravations. For example, it's taken over a year and a half and cost us well over \$500 in legal fees to get a decent lease on the Hunt House.

As one member said recently "the City is (still) funny about the lease" They are absolutely convinced that the Historical Society is getting something for nothing.

When will the City finally understand that we are not getting *anything* except the "opportunity" to work thousands of volunteer hours raising



OLDE NEWS

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The East Providence Historical Society
Editor George Field, IV

EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, Rhode Island 02916
438-1750

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

cont.

\$200,000. to restore a building that *they* own? Otherwise, the Hunt House would be crumbling as yet another reminder of the City's disdain for its architectural past. (Check out the Weaver House [1862], the Caleb Williams house [1713] and the Pump House [1893] if you need any graphic examples about the City's lack of appreciation for its historic properties.)

At least the State of Rhode

cont. on page 8

*Join the Historical Society
and feel better about your-
self ! (It's tax deductable)*

Join the Historical
Society today! Send this
coupon (with money) to
E.P. Historical Society
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI
02916

NAME (S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Single (\$10) Family (\$15)

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

NEEDED: From your fall house cleaning: bookcases, steel shelving and some flat light gray paint to neaten up the Museum Work Room. We have some tours scheduled this fall and will be putting the showcases which we got from the Carpenter Museum in the Work Room with two exhibits inside.

ALSO NEEDED: More Hosts/docents. We have six and could use six more. "Many hands make fewer hours per month to assist us." So far we have Virginia Whitcomb, Bill Simpson, Kit Rodman, Gladys Panzerella, Nancy Stevens and Carolyn Donahue. How about more men?! Particularly retirees with daytime hours to spare. We will have orientation week the last week in October.

We have been asked to have the Hunt House on the Rumford Junior Women's Club's Holiday House Tour in December.

ALSO NEEDED: More people to help Onna Williams and me with oral histories; again a daytime aid to a worthwhile project.

A copy of Peter Hunt's papers has gone to N.Y. in search of a

cont. on pg. 5

A SUMMER HAVEN

as told to Jewel Drickamer by
Elizabeth Gallup Myer

The history of recreation in East Providence is the choice of the Grant Writing Committee toward a Grant Project. It is hoped that this brief account will encourage others to send us words and pictures about sports, dancing and all the many other types of recreation in East Providence's past.

To a five year old with a dark-haired Dutch bob, East Providence seemed a summer haven, offering a private beach at one end of the street and a wonderful carousel at the other. Of course her memories are selective.

No matter that she lived in Groton, Connecticut where older children could go swimming all day in the Thames River; the big special treat in the summer was Narragansett Terrace, Riverside, East Providence, Rhode Island. No matter that a ferry ride at home could take them to the metropolis of New London and the trolley cars went north all the way to Providence, it was Crescent Park which set the scene for a holiday.

There was salt air at the end of the car line where the motorman lifted up the handle and took it to the other end of the car and reversed its course. There was a place to get shore dinners and a great array of rides, but the small girl had eyes and ears only for the prancing horses of the carousel and their loud and cheerful music.

The cottages, one of them rented by her uncle, were lined up on a terrace which edged toward the beach. Each cottage had a wooden walk on the water side which led past a small wash house. There was a zinc sink and a wringer, for washing sand from feet and wringing out bathing suits as well as clothes washing. The walk led on to the beach and every household boasted a small rowboat.

Out front were lovely trees and bushes to keep the cool and a sidewalk along which a mailman rode his bicycle twice a day. The bike had a basket for the mail and a bell which he rang to call cottagers for their letters.

One of the best treats for the

little girl was to tag after the bigger children for the excitement of a ride on the carousel. Her favorite horses were the bright colored ones which went up and down as well as around.

But the sight of Narragansett Bay also beckoned. The tides were sometimes very high and very low. This led to her greatest adventure. Early one morning, the small girl walked alone down to the water and found that the raft which other children swam out to was floating in low water so that she could walk right out to it. Scrambling aboard, she sat in lonely glory as the tide swiftly rolled in. She reveled in the bobbing motion and the feel of the morning sun.

Suddenly there were cries from shore. Her mother and sisters had discovered her, riding high in deep water. She could not yet swim. "Stay, sister, stay," her mother shouted to her.

A neighbor went quickly to his boat and rowed her mother out to her and there was rejoicing over the rescue. She hadn't been afraid. For her, nothing could go wrong at Narragansett Terrace, Riverside, East Providence, Rhode Island.

DUE THE RIGHT THING!

If your Dues are
overdue, send them in today!
And remember, they're
pro-rated if you joined in
1990!

NAME (S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

Single (\$10) Family (\$15)

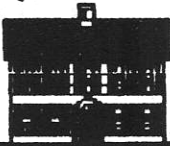
MUSEUM COMMITTEE *cont.*

publisher. More news later. A copy is in the Museum workroom if anyone would like to borrow it to read. They remind one of the letters read during the showing of *The Civil War* on P.B.S.

By the time you read this the Museum Committee will have met to accept six more gifts to the Museum. REMEMBER: ANYTHING (gifts or equipment) YOU GIVE US IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

Thank you Elizabeth Andrade for the sheets and packing cloth. They are always welcome.

Edna Anness



HUNT HOUSE UPDATE



A great deal has happened at the Hunt House in the past month, some bad, and some very good indeed. First the bad news: ***I Hear Ya Knockin' But Ya Can't Come In***

On Sept. 24, the evening of our September meeting, a person or persons unknown attempted to enter the Hunt House uninvited, by means of a large iron bar applied to our newly restored back door. They were unsuccessful, but still badly cracked and damaged the door which, as we reported last month, had been lovingly restored by Charlie Jackson and Earl Berwick.

They then turned their attention to the basement door, and after prying apart the padlocked hasp, gained entrance, only to be greeted by the burglar alarm going off, which caused them to retreat hastily. Police responded, but failed to notice the gaping basement door, which stayed open until Walter Vincent and Company appeared on the scene the next morning. The alarm was

still active, however, and any further entries into the building still would have been detected. Now some good/bad news:

Gas At Last

The gas line has finally been laid all the way up to the Hunt House, and is ready to be connected to our new heating system when it is installed. That's good. The bad news, as reported in the President's letter, is that the City has seen fit to tie into our line (price \$8,250, thank you) to heat the Caleb Williams house with gas, virtually for free (or for \$100 depending on who you talk to.) This is especially galling since we had approached the City about their performing the excavation for the line to help reduce its cost and were turned down. Apparently the administration is convinced that since they "helped" us get the grant that paid for the line, they are entitled to "help themselves" to its benefits.

The Wall

The reconstruction of the wall

once dividing the parlor into two rooms is progressing. The studs are up, and the door way connecting the two rooms roughed in. Extra pains were taken to insure that the original 4" thickness of the wall has been recreated

We're In The Money

As reported in the President's letter, we have been awarded a \$44,400 grant from the RI Historical Preservation Commission. Some of the projects we can now contemplate are: Demolition of the leaky vault, repairs to house wall and window replacement after the demolition, exterior painting and repair, masonry and structural repairs to our troubled chimney, and a new heating system.

FREEBIE!!

Come to the October meeting and you can get a lovely brochure from the RI Historical Preservation Commission "Help for Your Historic Home" at ABSOLUTELY NO COST OR OBLIGATION TO YOU !!

PRESERVATION

TRAFFIC LIGHT UP- DATE:



According to Ted Coleman of the DOT Traffic Division, "This project is moving on - slowly, but it is moving" At present, the shop designs for the new pole are with the design consultants who determine if the pole meets all technical and structural needs. Approval is expected by late October. The design then goes to the manufacturer who has asked for two months leeway. That takes us to late December. The good news is - when the pole arrives, installation time will be minimal, as all electrical work is done. And that's the latest from the DOT!

BRIDGHAM FARM:

Just when you think you've turned over all the rocks another one crops up. It has been learned that there is still money left in the grant funding from this year and that fact makes it imperative that the Land Trust inquire as to

PRESERVATION (cont.)

the feasibility of making an arrangement with the City to deed use of the City's 50' strip along the reservoir as water access for Bridgham Farm. (The ownership of the strip along the water was the stumbling block in the previous application.) It has also been learned that money for farmland is up for vote on the November ballot. This money should also be available for Bridgham Farm. PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS TO VOTE "YES" ON THIS QUESTION. Another long session of grant writing and waiting seems to be in store, but time and economics are on our side.

Nancy Moore

PRESIDENT'S LETTER (cont.)

Island understands the importance of Hunt House. We learned on October 12 that we will receive the \$44,400. grant we applied for last March from the RI Historical Preservation Commission. The money is part of the three million dollar Preservation Bond issue that passed last November. The state (and Antoinette Downing) recognize that this house type is extremely rare in East Providence. While there are other five-bay Colonial homes dating from this period, most have been altered or drastically changed over the years. The Hunt House remains virtually intact. That's very rare indeed.

I wonder who's going to try to take credit for *this* grant?

See? Nothing changes.

Claudette



DON'T FORGET! THE E.P. HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S
**4th ANNUAL HARVEST
 SUPPER**

Saturday, November 10, 1990
 at Newman Congregational Church
 6:00 p.m.

Call 434-0481 or come to the October 22nd meeting
 for tickets

I M P O R T A N T D A T E S

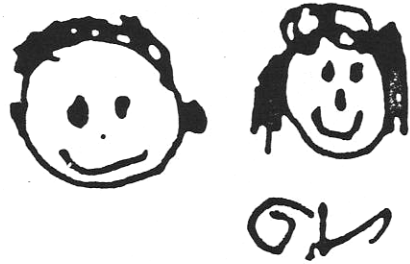
- Saturday, Oct.20 **League of RI Historical Societies:**
Autumn Meeting. Phenix Baptist Church,
Phenix, RI. 9am»3pm. lunch, \$10.50
- Monday, Oct. 22 **E.P. Historical Society:** October Meeting
at Newman Church, 7:15 pm
- Saturday, Oct. 27 **Carpenter Museum,** Rehoboth, MA:
Gravestone Rubbing workshop for
children. 10:00 am
- Friday, Nov. 2 **Carpenter Museum,** Rehoboth, MA: Folk
& Saturday, Nov. 3 Art, Antique and Craft Show
- Saturday, Nov. 10 **E.P. Historical Society:** Harvest Supper
at Newman Church (see ad in this issue)
- Monday, Nov. 26 **E.P. Historical Society:** November
Meeting at Newman Church, 7:15 pm
- Sunday, Dec. 2 **E.P. Historical Society:** "A Victorian
Christmas at Hunt House" Open House and
Christmas Boutique
- Saturday, Dec. 15 **Rumford Junior Women's Club:** Holiday
Homes House Tour

Don't forget: Workdays at the Hunt House are Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:00
a.m. to 12 noon.

And remember: If you are planning to make items for the Christmas Open
House & Boutique, call Claudette Field at 431-0257..

Rumford Morning School

Nursery
Education



NANCY R. STEVENS, Director
434-6808

4 Newman Avenue Rumford, Rhode Island 02916 (401) 434-1315

OLDE NEWS

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