



# OLDE NEWS

EAST ■ PROVIDENCE ■ HISTORICAL ■ SOCIETY  
■ NEWSLETTER ■

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

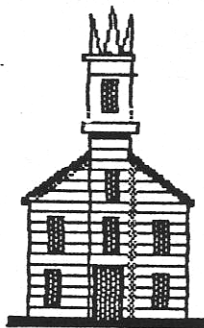
April 6, 1991 was a good day for preservation in Rhode Island and for the East Providence Historical Society as well.

On that day nearly two hundred people from around the state gave up all or part of a Saturday to attend a statewide preservation conference in East Greenwich. The turnout was impressive; Varnum Armoury the site of the event was filled to capacity.

The people who attended represent only a fraction of the preservation-minded people in the state, therefore the importance of so many people spending a gor-

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## MEETING



THE NEXT MEETING  
OF THE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
will be held April 22, 1991  
from 7:15 pm  
at Newman Congregational  
Church.

Panel Discussion  
(see pg. 8 for details)

**PRESIDENT'S LETTER cont.**

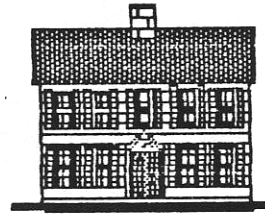
geous spring day indoors discussing preservation issues can not be dismissed. The growing strength of the historical preservation movement in this state is also evident in the new willingness of various groups to share expertise and resources.

As for the East Providence Historical Society, we were well represented at the conference. And members who attended an afternoon workshop entitled "Paying for Preservation" were delighted to hear David King, Executive Director of the Champlin Foundations tell the attendees that the East Providence Historical Society would continue to receive funding from the foundations as long as we have such dedicated volunteers.

Well, we know our volunteers do a great job, but it's always encouraging to hear that someone else knows about the work we've been doing and appreciates the efforts of our dedicated core of volunteers.

This public recognition and ratification of our efforts should

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**OLDE NEWS**

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Editor George Field, IV

EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 4774  
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Markers	Kit Rodman
Membership	Madeline Vincent
Newsletter	George Field, IV
Mailing subcommittee	F. Adams
Preservation	Nancy Moore
Program	Bill Simpson
Publicity	Florence Adams

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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**MUSEUM COMMITTEE**

New arrivals for the collection include a 1937 EP yearbook from Bud Plummer; a 1938 yearbook, a Miller Dairy, Rumford milk bottle, and Rumford Chemical bottles from John Agren; a 1936 EP yearbook, East Providence High School prom and graduation programs and athletic, band and cheer leading letters from Virginia Williams. Included with John's earlier gifts were post-cards of Watchemoket, Six Corners, Crescent Park Beach and Hunt's Mills. There were also some publications including one I had been searching for for two years: "Central Village Seekonk 1870-1910" by Mildred Hokanson Clarke and Esther Hokanson. It's great when surprises like this happen such as when Betty Johnson came to visit.

Betty had been recommended by the RI Historic Preservation Commission as a restorer of old houses. During her visit to Hunt House she gazed across the Museum Room toward our framed drawing of the Hunt House

which the Grosses had given us. "Oh my," she said excitedly, "you have a a Blanding!" Amazedly I asked, "What's a Blanding?" Well, it develops he was an amateur artist who in 1848 drew from memory old buildings which he recalled from his youth in 1784 and wrote little stories about each and put them in a folio, a copy of which is in the Trim Room at the Goff Memorial Library in Rehoboth. Dr. Blanding was a teacher and his sister had married Allan Hunt in 1814. Betty has a "Blanding" too for Allan's uncle Nathaniel Hunt had married Polly Spaulding, and Betty lives in the Spaulding House in Pawtucket.

I checked in at the Goff Library and sure enough, the drawing style and penmanship are one and the same as our picture. You never know when someone is going to show up with a valuable piece of information to round out our history.

East Providence yearbooks: we have 1920 through 1941 except for 1925,'28,'34,'39 and '40.

cont. on next page

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS, cont.**

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Check your book cases please!

We now have reached 600 artifacts in our collection. And we have a great set of storage shelves in the back storeroom thanks to Charlie Jackson who assembled them and Walter and his crew who moved them up from the basement.

*Edna Annes*

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**PRESERVATION**

LET THERE BE LIGHT (or a new light pole at least!)

PLEASE take the time to drive through the intersection of Pleasant Street and Pawtucket Avenue to ogle the new black, fluted pole and arm. Granted, it doesn't have a finial or a skirt but we're working on that, folks. A quick check in the records finds September 11, 1989 as the date the traffic light "discussion" began. Year and a half - not bad!! As we pointed out to RIDOT, at least there is a mechanism for change however slowly that may happen. Let's hope we proved the point that historic overlays are

not drawn up to be ignored.

• **GREENWOOD MANOR**

UPDATE: The Planning Board will meet this month to hear an application by that developer to re-zone the former Burlingame property from I (industrial) to R-6 ( 1 or 2 family homes on 5,000 square feet). This is good news as the density will drop from over 20 units down to 6-7 units. It is the Society's hope (and it will make this point at the hearing) that any new construction will be sensitive to the historic district which surrounds that property and that a good place to start would be to consider the mill house character and style of the neighborhood.

*This just in:* The zoning board approved the zoning change for the Burlingame property with the recommendation that the developer work with the Historical Society on the project design.

• **410 NORTH BROADWAY**

UPDATE: As of last month, the Planning Board voted to rec-

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commend a zone change from R-4 to C-2 for this property basically on the strength of the historic easement (the front part of 410 can never be altered) which has been taken by HPC on the property. The Council votes this

month on that recommendation and the Society will be there to speak in favor of the change for this reason: not only is the Philip Walker House protected as a result of the easement, but the Joseph Fitts

House (#410) is now protected as well, something that could not have been accomplished before.

• **BRIDGHAM FARM UPDATE:** This precious parcel of land is slated for auction on April 18, and we all anxiously await the outcome.

• **UNION PRIMARY UPDATE:** The Society has sent a set of

guidelines to the City for use in the restoration and preservation of the school. We stressed the fact that our own work on Hunt House led us to realize how valuable guidelines can be and that we hoped that the City would in-

form us that guidelines were already in hand. Please call 438-4299 if you would like to see those guidelines.

On a disturbing note, this committee has learned that variances were granted at a recent zoning

board meeting allowing the demolition of a Victorian cottage on Terrace Avenue. We realize that no law or historic district zoning exists to protect a piece of our history and we apparently must let this one go. However, it is sad to lose a building such as this - perhaps it is time to seri-

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Join the Historical Society today! Send this coupon (with money) to  
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Single (\$10)  Family (\$15)

## HUNT HOUSE UPDATE

### PLEASE WATCH YOUR STEP

Please exercise due caution if you pay a visit to the Hunt House anytime soon, especially if you are going upstairs. Walter, Bud, Earl and Co. continue to unearth the handsome staircase that was hiding under coats of dark brown paint, and to replace or repair the missing spindles on the bannister and second floor landing. At present, the spindles have all been removed. This, combined with the dark walnut of the bannister makes it look as though there is no bannister at all, which is a bit disconcerting if you are making the steep climb up to the Museum to visit Edna (who would love to see you incidentally).

### STEPHEN MACK

As billed in the March issue of OLDE NEWS, Stephen Mack, "provider of fine historic structures", toured the Hunt House on Monday, March 25 and shared his observations with the Society



that evening at our monthly meeting. He bravely explored areas where no man had gone before, found some artifacts for the Museum and

had some interesting opinions about the age and construction of the Hunt House.

His opinion is that the Hunt House was *not* built in 1750 as tradition has maintained, but was built later, perhaps 1790 at the earliest. Mack bases this on several factors: the height of the ceilings, the molding details, particularly in the parlor, and the inclusion of closets, which he feels are original.

He was most impressed with the basement and attic areas, which he stated to be in an unusually high state of finish. There were no unused areas in the house, no undefined "cellar" or "attic" areas. Every part of the Hunt House basement was used for something: there were generous areas for food storage and preparation. He realized that the corner of the cellar by the ell was

in fact a brick floored buttry, with the remains of the original shelf supports still visible. He speculated that the floor in the summer kitchen might also be brick underneath the existing concrete.

Moving upstairs, he used a crow bar to dislodge two bricks in the keeping room chimney to reveal the old ash drop into the pit below. The workmanship of the chimney also impressed Mack. "Whoever he was, (the mason) was the best in the business in this area." The chimney was finished off with plaster even in the inaccessible areas in the attic and the interior of the ashdrop.

In his talk at the Society's March meeting he gave the opinion that the basement area, if properly restored, could well put the Hunt House in books and magazines in the future. He stated that while there were many houses of this vintage with Federal details such as found in the parlor, there were few with cellar areas that were as well finished or with such original details. He talked about the back stairs, an unusual feature in a

house this old. He felt that access to the cellar was originally down stairs that opened off the door to the right of the keeping room fireplace, and that the existing stairs to the cellar were a much later addition.

Those who attended the March meeting received some fascinating insights from someone who literally knows old houses inside and out.

Bill Simpson is organizing a trip to Stephen Mack's Chace Hill Farm later this Spring. Call Bill for details at 433-0623.

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### PRESIDENTS LETTER cont.

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spur Historical Society members on to even greater heights. But if you aren't a member of the Society or if you were in the past but are no longer a member, wouldn't this be a good time to re-enlist? Everyone likes a winning team, why not become part of this hometown effort?

For information about the Society call 431-0257; to join call 434-0481.

*Claudette Field*

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.**

ously consider doing something about it, like historic district zoning?

*Nancy Moore*

**MARKERS**

The Markers Committee will soon decide on a design for markers made from "sign ply" material that measure 5" by 15". Sign ply is a laminated material consisting of plywood sandwiched between layers of metal which are painted a white semi-gloss. The edges are sealed with many layers of paint, resulting in a very durable marker.

We are certain that there is much talent and many ideas in the midst of our membership and encourage members of the Society to submit sample designs to the committee.

Designs should include some kind of logo or lettering identifying the EP Historical Society, and have space to identify the building being marked along with its construction date. They should be completed drawings, with some indication as to letter-

ing styles and colors. We would like to receive them during the month of April. For more details you can call me at 434-4994.

*Kit Rodman*

**PROGRAM**

Presidents from four local Historical Societys are coming to the April meeting to discuss their common problems and share their different views with us.

They will be:

**Claudette Field**, East Providence Historical Society

**Guy Lefebvre**, Coventry Historical Society

**Fred Love**, Preservation Society of Pawtucket

**Philip Terzian**, Barrington Historical Society.

*The field trip for this month to the Phillip Walker House, the Lippitt House, and the John Brown House will be postponed, since the Walker House will not be open until May. We will keep you posted.*

*Bill Simpson*



## NOMINATIONS FOR 1990-1991

The Board of Directors of the Historical Society voted at its March meeting to adopt a provisional set of guidelines set forth by the Bylaws Committee for the election of officers.

In accordance with these guidelines, Edna Anness was chosen as chairman of the Nominating Committee by the President at the March meeting and she has appointed David Kelleher and Gladys Panzarella to serve with her on the Committee for the 1991 elections.

The Nominating Committee is requesting that all candidates and interested members place their suggestions for officers of the East Providence Historical Society before the Committee.

The Nominating Committee will meet before the May general meeting to contact the candidates and to prepare a slate of officers to be presented at the May meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at this time.

The incumbent officers are listed on page 2 of this newsletter.

## IMPORTANT DATES

Tuesday, Apr. 16 **Income Taxes Due** midnight at all local Post Offices

Monday, Apr. 22 **E.P. Historical Society:** April Meeting.  
7:15 pm at Newman Congregational Church.

Monday, May 27 **E.P. Historical Society:** May Meeting.  
7:15 pm at Newman Congregational Church.

*Don't forget: Workdays at the Hunt House every  
Tuesday and Thursday 8am to 12 noon*



## *Christmas in May? Yes!!*

It's never too early to think about Christmas, so we invite anyone interested in creating crafts for our annual Christmas Open House to come to an organizational meeting on Wednesday, May 1, at 10AM. at Hunt House, 65 Hunts Mills Rd. (off 114A in Rumford).

Gladys Panzerella, the Chairman of the event, will hold craft

workshops at Hunt House every Wednesday from 10AM to 1PM from May to December (except July and August). We urge everyone (even those working at home) to bring their craft ideas to the first meeting. The Society is full of crafty people, but non-member are also welcome. Come turn Hunt House into Santa's workshop!

*P.S. Plan to stay awhile. Bring a bag lunch, drinks will be provided.*

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P.O. Box 4774  
East Providence, RI 02916

