



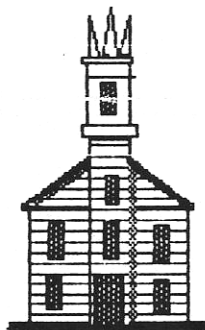
OLDE NEWS

EAST ■ PROVIDENCE ■ HISTORICAL ■ SOCIETY
■ NEWSLETTER ■

RAZING ELL

The September meeting of the East Providence Historical Society was a reserved and ordered affair. For awhile anyway. The turning point came when the subject of the ell was brought up. The brick structure attached to the back of the Hunt House since the 1930's has long been a point of disagreement among the membership. It was announced at the meeting that now that grant money had been received for the purpose of taking down the ell, plans for the actual event had been made. This news was

MEETING



THE NEXT MEETING
OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
will be held October 26, 1992
from 7:15 pm
at Newman Congregational
Church.

not received well by those members who supported the keeping of the ell. The meeting soon turned into a heated debate as passionate arguments from both sides were aired. EPHS president Scott Booth called for a special meeting to be held within the week for the express purpose of settling the issue once and for all. At this well attended special meeting, held at the Hunt House, all opinions were heard. The pro-ell members argued that the structure served a useful purpose as a storage area for tools and supplies. It could also be used, they argued, as a fire proof vault for the more valuable of the EPHS's artifacts. They also defended the ell on historical grounds, claiming that the structure represented an important part of the Hunt House history, the period of time in which the Water Department resided in the house. The pro-removal members pointed to the opinions of several historical architectural



OLDE NEWS

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President Scott Booth
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Second Vice-President "Bud" Plummer
Secretary Kris Rose
Corresponding Secretary Lura Sellev
Treasurer Rose Marie Sirenski

*The
East Providence
Historical Society meets every
month on the fourth Monday
except for holidays and the
months of July and August.*

*Meetings are free to all and
all are welcome.*

specialists who favor removal of the ell not only on esthetical grounds but in fear that the ell was causing rain water damage to the Hunt House. They also pointed out the fact that the wooden building (or shed), located to the rear of the Hunt House could be utilized to become a storage area. On the historical issue they argued that many unwanted items from the Water Department era, such as paint, shelves, and even walls have been removed resulting in a return to the true original style of several rooms. These rooms are true show pieces of what the EPHS can do. The stone Pump House, next door to the Hunt House, is a much better historical representation of the Water Dept. era, argued the pro-removal members. The final argument brought up was the fact that the whole issue of the fate of the ell was decided on in a vote taken over three years ago. Since then grant money has been received

and contracts entered into concerning the removal of the ell. The issue, they argued, has already been settled. Days after this special meeting, and before you could say, "Where the ell did it go?", the ell was gone. Several members were upset, feeling that more debate and voting should have been undertaken before removal of the ell. In the final analysis the ell is gone. We as a society must now deal with the future. We must put aside our differences on this issue in the realization that only by working together as a team can we confront the many pressing issues that lie ahead. As a society we should be proud of the way we fought passionately on both sides of the ell debate. Let us be equally proud of the way we put our differences aside, and work together as a viable society should. As some one once said, "A Hunt House divided cannot stand". Or something like that.

Michael Charves

What follows is a memorandum from Virginia Hesse, Principal Historical Architect, RIHPC to Scott Booth, president of EPHS concerning the Hunt House and the brick ell. The memo is dated October 6, 1992.

On October 6, 1992 I visited the John Hunt House at the invitation of Claudette Field, Building Committee chair to assess the condition of the brick ell attached to the back of this late eighteenth century house.

I understand that there is some concern on the part of certain members of the Board and the Building Committee that the ell, which is not a part of the house but merely attached at certain strategic points, may have caused damage to the fabric of the rear wall of the house by allowing water to seep into the wall unabated for years.

I have read the recommendations

by Clifford M. Renshaw Architects in the Report on Existing Conditions and Recommendations for Restoration at The John Hunt House, August 1988 and in the 1989 Memorandum by Don Faxon. Mr. Faxon's report states: "I would tend to agree with Mr. Renshaw's suggestion that the best way to address the leakage problem caused by the poorly flashed opening connecting the house to the ell would be to remove the ell and replace the outer wall structure of the house."

Four years after Mr. Renshaw made his recommendation that the ell be removed, this unsympathetic addition remains and continues to do harm to the Hunt House. The ell is damaging the building both aesthetically and structurally. I believe that the ell should be removed sooner rather than later, and any damage be repaired before winter.

CRAFTS

CRAFTS and THINGS for our 25th Anniversary Open House.

The Craft people are working at the Hunt House Wednesday 10 -

1. Come over and work or just to visit and have coffee or tea. We are working on a raffle. Tickets are \$1.00 - 6 for \$5.00. **First Prize** is a hand made quilt 90"x 103", (in the tying stage). **Second Prize** is a dinner for two at Red Lobster. **Third Prize** is a Carousel cloth horse on a wooden stand, 14"x14".

A donation of wood for hand made ornaments for the tree was recieved from Ken Kazarion.

Virginia and Earl Berwick will cut them into shapes. We need paint and painters.

Don't forget your token gifts (new), you might have around the house , for Santa's chimney.

Gladys Panzarella

MEMBERSHIP

Hope your enjoyable summer was the only reason for your delinquent "92" - "93" dues. Please get in touch with me should there be any questions. Walt and I were among those who didn't realize how time flies. If not paid up, you will receive a pink slip in your newsletter.

Now that summer is over, let's get back to business. With craft workshops now under way, and members being asked to chair a regular meeting, our aim is to get more people involved in our social events.

How about being a good member and volunteering your services to host just one of our monthly meetings. Please call me for details - 434-0481.

Thanks,

Madelíne H. Vincent

PRESERVATION

Well, the Society has come of age down at RIDOT! Last week we received a letter soliciting our opinions concerning an upgrading of Roger Williams Avenue from North Broadway (Agawam Hunt) to Pawtucket Avenue (Wanamoissett Club). This committee has been in touch with RIDOT and has learned that Michael Herbert, in charge of all historically sensitive projects, has already walked the property and is well aware of the wealth of historic gems here. (In fact, it was mentioned that this area seemed prime for historic district status!) The two problem spots, the RR arch and "dead man's curve" are of course the main focus. At present there are no plans to widen the road. An 'on site' meeting will be scheduled if need be. Please watch this column for further details.

Nancy Moore

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

As the new chairperson of the Museum Committee I would like to make a few remarks about the Museum. First, we have a good start on a collection of artifacts pertaining to East Providence and articles about people and happenings in our city, (and town).

I want all the members of our Society to know how fortunate we are to have Edna Annes as our curator and former chairperson of the Museum Committee. She has and is doing for our Society what some societies have not done - cataloguing all our gifts and storing them with reference numbers by donor, geographics, and years.

Edna not only goes to the Hunt House on most Tuesdays and Thursdays but works at home, typing and researching. On occasion she gives slide presentations to other historical societies and groups, thus getting the word out about the restoration

project.

Working with Edna is a pleasure and an education in the accessioning of gifts for the society. If I have a problem she is there to help. I will do my best.

Virginia Berwick
Museum Chairperson

CURATOR'S NOTES

Gifts received this past month:

Marijoan Bull/City Hall donated Correspondence from the old East Prov. Water Co., 1905-1908, much of it in regards to equipping the Pump House and Hunt's Mills Recreation Park.

Virginia Berwick donated numerous news clippings. **Lowell Anness** donated World War II Ration books. **Fales and Ruth Peirce** donated a Rumford Store ad and two pictures of original Rumford factory building. **Charlie Jackson** donated a book, "Picturesque Rhode Island". **Bud Plummer** donated a Union School model and a book, "Colonial Rhode Island". **Don and Cathy**

Britton donated two pictures of members of First Baptist Church in Rumford from around 1900.

A slide presentation of the Hunt Restoration and old historic buildings in EP will be at the Mr. and Mrs. Club of Haven Methodist Church on Oct 10th.

This summer I asked if you knew that the Willet Arms was on the site of the old Thomas Willet House in Riverside (per info from *"Our Heritage: A History of East Providence"* published in 1976.) Virginia Whitcomb called to correct that information. She states that the site of the old Thomas Willett House is at 787 Willet Ave, a house which her father bought and restored some years ago. This Willet House was across from the Stockade which stood approximately where the Legion Hall is today. The Willett Arms must take its name from the street name, unless some one can update the update.

Sydney Paine of Greensboro, NC visited us this month. He is a

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descendant of Stephen Payne - one of the original Seeconk Planters who settled this area in 1643. Research in Taunton had taken us back to 1671 with Isreal Sabin and Stephen Payne operating a sawmill at the dam at Hunt's Mills. Mr. Paine (modern spelling) researched farther back in Plymouth records and found that the early Planter, Stephen Paine, had built the original mill and left it to his son Nathaniel's son Nathaniel and his grandson Stephen III. Israel Sabin bought Nathaniel's share and from that point in our story "*A Hunt House History*" printed in 1990 the story thus far is the same. Sydney greatly enjoyed his ride around the Ring of the Green as it appears today. New research is exciting and one never knows from where a new view back in time will be discovered.

Edna Anness
Museum Curator

EVENTS

Golden Days: Narragansett Terrace 1920-1938 is the topic on which Mr. Norman Case Jr. will speak; on Nov. 8 at 3 p.m. at Aldrich House, 110 Benevolent St., Providence. The Rhode Island Historical Society is sponsoring the event. The lecture is free.

Narragansett Terrace, which is a peninsula located at the southern most end of East Providence, mainly contained summer cottages from the 1890's. Mr. Case is the son of former Rhode Island Governor Norman Case (1928-1933) who was a summer resident of the Terrace.

Save Our Sites There will be tours on Oct. 25 from 1 to 4 p.m. of 52 historic landmarks from all around Rhode Island. The tours are to promote passage of the **Historic Preservation Bond Issue #7**, to be voted on November 3rd. Of the many sites there are three from East Providence. They are the **Hunt House**, the **Philip Walker House**, and the **Crescent Park Carousel**. Be sure to visit them all.

**ON NOVEMBER 3RD
VOTE**

YES ON BOND ISSUE 5

**To save the old Shepard's Building
and to create a RI History Center**

YES ON BOND ISSUE 7

**To provide grants and loans to save
and preserve historic sites in RI**

**Please also vote yes on the local
issue to establish a Municipal
Land Trust For cases like Brigham Farm**

**SPREAD THE
WORD
TO A
FRIEND**

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

NAME (S) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

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

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