



OLDE NEWS

EAST ■ PROVIDENCE ■ HISTORICAL ■ SOCIETY
■ NEWSLETTER ■

FROM HISTORY BOOKS TO COOK BOOKS

The following text is taken word for word from a section of an excellent article titled, "Sifting through History", which appeared in the Portsmouth Herald on March 31, 1993. The story, from research done by Paul Jones, university of New Hampshire Chemistry Dept. chair, discusses the origins of the Rumford Baking Powder Company, and its founder Eben Horsford who invented baking powder.

The story begins near the start of the American Revolution, Jones

MEETING

LOCATION CHANGE!

THE NEXT MEETING
OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
will be held April 26, 1993
from 7:30 pm
at

EAST PROVIDENCE
HIGH SCHOOL

ROOM 148
THE SMALL AUDITORIUM
Please park in the student
parking lot (cafeteria side)
and use front entrance

says, with expatriate American scientist Benjamin Thompson.

History books reveal that the young school teacher from Woburn, Mass., moved to a New Hampshire village and married a well-heeled widow, Sarah Walker Rolfe. By 1775, amid growing suspicion that he was a "traitor to the cause of liberty," Thompson fled to England, abandoning new found in-laws, wife, baby daughter, and their mansion on the Merrimack River. His daughter visited him in Europe, but Thompson would never again see his wife.

Thompson flourished in Europe. His scientific pursuits gained him election to the Royal Institute of Great Britain, the world's first "museum" of science, to introduce scientific advances, including the drip coffee pot and the first light meter.

Among countless other deeds, Thompson lent his name to a professional chair at Harvard



OLDE NEWS

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Editor Michael Charves
Editorial & Spiritual Advisor George Field, IV

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

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*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.*

University that later would be occupied by Eben Horsford. Whether in tribute to Thompson or to the advantages the Harvard position gave him, or perhaps to give his new product respectability, Horsford named his fledgling baking powder company after Thompson. But he didn't call it the "Thompson Baking Powder Company" because, by the time Thompson endowed the Harvard chair, he was much better known by a different name.

It seems Benjamin Thompson was as successful at science as he was at social climbing, Jones says. At one point, Thompson's connections landed him the title Count of the Holy Roman Empire. As such, Thompson needed to choose a title. For reasons that may never be known, he adopted the name of the New Hampshire village where his wife was born. The town was Concord, now the state's capital.

Still, if you've never heard of

Concord Baking Powder either, says Jones, that's because Sarah Walker knew Concord by another name. Concord is what resulted in 1765, when part of neighboring Bow and the village where Thompson's wife grew up were reincorporated to settle a boundary dispute. Sarah Walker Thompson was born in Rumford.

To this day, Rumford is a familiar name around Concord. But thanks to the Count, the Rumford name has spread far and wide. There's a Rumford Street and a statue of the count in Munich, where he spent much of his career. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences awards a Rumford Medal. The Rumford fireplace revolutionized home heating and is still much copied. **And a district of East Providence, R.I. where Eben Horsford located his baking powder factory continues to be known as Rumford.**

Even though the address on the label now says Terre Haute, Ind.,

the red, white and black cans of Rumford Baking Powder still bear the count's silhouette and the name he took from a New Hampshire town that has vanished into history.

ROGER WILLIAMS AVENUE UPDATE

RECONSTRUCTION OF ROGER WILLIAMS AVENUE

RIDOT INFORMATIONAL
PUBLIC WORKSHOP
THURSDAY, APRIL 29
7:00 - 9:00 PM

EAST PROVIDENCE
CITY HALL

ROOM TO BE ANNOUNCED
CALL NANCY MOORE
(438-4299) FOR DETAILS

Aerial mapping of the project area, showing existing topographic conditions, will be on display at the workshop. Project engineers and landscape architects will be present to answer questions and concerns. Written comments will be accepted by mail through May 31st.

MARKERS

The marker program is ready to go but we need members to spread the word to owners of homes or public buildings that ate of historical or architectural interest to the community. If you know of such buildings pleased let the committee know or have the owners contact us. We need to have several orders on hand before we have the markers made up.

Contact: EAST PROVIDENCE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY at P.O.
Box 4774 East Prov., R.I. 02916
or call 438-1750. Call Kit Rodman at 434-4994



DONORS TEA

To be held at
HUNT HOUSE

May 2nd 1-4 P.M.

Tea and Crumpets
Every one welcome

MUSEUM

There will be a new display, "For the Public Good" - East Providence Police, Fire Depts, and District Nurses.

Who sent in the donation of the 1924 EPHS graduation program with no return address or name of donor?

Does anyone have an antique bureau/chest that we could borrow for the upstairs bedroom?

The E.P. Boys Club came April 13th and 15th for a tour of the Hunt House and picnic. Gladys Panzarella has put together a new program of 18th century games. Her husband Steve made the wooden toys for the project. Louise Healy found 2 rolling hoops for games. Gloria Tomasso helped Gladys with the games.

The newly restored bedroom on the second floor will be furnished for the Open House. The mu-

seum will move downstairs while the other bedroom is refinished.

Hunt House Museum will be open Tuesdays and Thursday is May from 9 - 12 noon.

VIRGINIA BERWICK
Museum Chairman

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)

PRESERVATION

If you will pardon a slight bit of soapbox standing, this committee member would like to throw roses at another Society member for her speech concerning the historical aspects of the area surrounding Omega Pond at the Coastal Resource Management Council hearing March 31st. As we all know, the historical aspects of an area do have bearing on how our society should look to the future. In times like these, when money and greed threaten our precious resources, it is comforting to know that people from our group have the will to stand and be counted. (Not only that, but to speak intelligently also!) If you are interested in the text of Edna Anness's remarks, please speak to her at one of our meetings. In point of fact, there were many familiar faces from our group at the hearings, people interested in tracking this torturous Newbay path. Good to see you there, and great to hear such

clear, knowledgeable, non-emotional testimony from our fellow citizens. We were proud, we night owls, burning the midnight oil. (NOT COAL!)

Along the Greenway Trail

This notice comes a bit after the fact, but did you know that the Society helped sponsor the 1993 Ten Mile River Greenway Trail walk on Sunday, April 18th? The Hunt House was open for the tours, with various members enthusing about the work that has been done. The Land Trust, along with the City Planning Department and the EP Shoreline Improvement Association, led guided tours along the Ten Mile up to the top of the Turner Reservoir, showing off the falls, the dam, historic Bridgham Farm, the 400 year old oak, and the tremendous natural beauty of the area along the way.

April Speaker:

April appears to be the month of the Ten Mile River, as we introduce guest speakers, Don

Doucette and Clyde Sprague from the Ten Mile River Alliance, a group of Attleboro citizens concerned about the river's future but also attuned to its past. Don and his wife Nancy have been members of our Society for two years and love coming to our suppers. Don also is an amateur archeologist and has become fascinated with the Bridgham Farm area and Hunts Mills. (He has found some great artifacts along the reservoir.) Both Don and Clyde have explored the Ten Mile extensively and have garnered much knowledge. Please be sure to come hear about their exploits and their plans for this river which is our river too.

**NANCY MOORE
PRESERVATION
COMMITTEE**

BAN ON PARKING

The Providence Preservation Society has asked for our help in passing a bill which is before the R.I. State Senate. The bill (S-0131) would finally ban parking on the marble terrace in front of

the State House. The cars are an aesthetic and visual blight on our State House. After spending more than \$5.5 million on restoration at the State House already, the people of Rhode Island should not tolerate this destructive and costly behavior. Our Senator Paul Tavares is on the Committee on Special Legislation, which must approve the bill. Please contact him and let him know how you feel about this issue. In a letter from Wendy Nicholas, Executive Director of the Providence Preservation Society, five key reasons for supporting the ban are made. They are: 1. Parking cars on the Terrace has destroyed the marble and brick pavers and damaged the retaining walls, requiring costly repairs. 2. Parking on the Terrace is an affront to the architectural importance of the State House. 3. The weight of cars is killing the trees. 4. A parking lot in the State House's front yard ruins the tourists' experience. 5. There are alternative parking options.

ELECTION NOTICE

TO ALL QUALIFIED MEMBERS OF
THE EAST PROVIDENCE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY WHO
WOULD LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED
FOR AN OFFICE BY THE
NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR
THE 1993-1994 TERM PLEASE
CALL 434-5116.

GLADYS PANZARELLA NOMINATION CHAIRPERSON

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P.O. Box 4774
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