



OLDE NEWS

EAST ■ PROVIDENCE ■ HISTORICAL ■ SOCIETY
■ NEWSLETTER ■

WHEN HISTORY'S FACT MEETS FICTION

This is a big month on the historical calendar as the country celebrates the birthdays of both Presidents Washington and Lincoln. Unfortunately it seems that the majority of celebration consists of ridiculous advertisements featuring young Washington chopping down a cherry and his honesty in admitting to it. Well I, as well, can not tell a lie. I find the treatment of our history in our society disgraceful. Fiction and myth are treated as fact and fact is swept under a rug when uncomfortable. Did Wash-

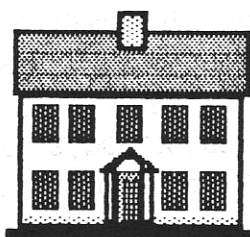
MEETING

THE NEXT MEETING
OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
will be held February 22, 1993
at Newman Church
following the
POT LUCK DINNER
which
STARTS AT 6:00
Eating starts at 6:30

**BROWN BAG
AUCTION TOO!**

**DON'T FORGET YOUR
SURPRISE GIFTS IN
BROWN BAGS**

ington really cut down that tree? We don't know as the first mention of the whole incident was reported years after his death by a imaginative writer intent on glorifying the first president. We do know that Washington liked to drink, dance, dress in the latest fashions, and make money. He also lost more battles then he won. Does this make him a bad person? No, it makes him something we seem to not want him to be... human. What about the Civil War? We seem to want it to be the great war to end the evil called slavery. Sadly the truth is that most people in the north were just as racist as those in the south. They fought to preserve the Union and only opposed the spread of slavery in fear that it would under cut free labor. President Lincoln was attacked in the north as being a radical for wanting to abolish slavery. Yet one does not even have to travel that far back in time to see major contradictions in fact and fiction. The mystique of "Camelot" during the Kennedy Administration has begun to come apart at the seams as book after book docu-



OLDE NEWS

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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.*

ment how JFK's dubious personal life affected his political decisions. Yet his defenders remain staunch in saying that his personal life is nobodys business, even when the man has his finger on a button that with a push would end humanity as we know it. Even when knowledge of his non stop womanizing was used by his enemies to pressure and black mail him into actions that were against his wishes. There is now evidence that LBJ with help from FBI head Hoover used this information to force his way on the Democratic ticket of 1960. Imagine how our history would differ had Johnson not been made JFK's running mate. How would have another man run the country after that tragic day in Dallas. Would there have been a Great Society? How would the Vietnam situation developed. And what about J. Edgar Hoover who in life enjoyed a reputation as a law enforcement super hero. Yet the reality is that the man abused his office in unimaginable ways while all the while protecting his position by collecting dirt on everyone else. And in a grotesque

twist of irony Hoover purposely stalled for decades any investigation of organized crime because the mob supposedly had photo's of him in unprintable situations.

There may be those readers who feel this article was inappropriate in discussing the seamier side of history. I disagree. History is more than dates, names, buildings and antiques. . . it is about people. People are not perfect, they have their strengths and their weakness, their triumphs and their failures. It would be our failure as historic minded people to only acknowledge one side of the coin. As people who care about history we should seek the truth not seek to censure it.

On Washington's birthday I will remember a fascinating man who risked his life to win the war of independence and create a new country. I will not remember a kid with an axe vandalizing a cherry tree.

Michael Charves

MEMBERSHIP

Thanks to everyone who signed up to host one of our general meetings completing the rest of the year. Our membership is now up to 119 and we are of course looking to increase that number. Forms are always available at the general meetings or you may call me at 434-0481.

We welcome two new members: Leslie Howarth and Warren Lundgren. An apology goes out to the Trescotts' for the misspelling of their last name in our Jan. newsletter, which has been corrected in my files.

Your membership cards are still in the making and as soon as completed will be inserted in your following newsletter, at which time maybe we'll have completed a form considered to simplify payment of the yearly dues. "Time sure flies".

Madeline Vincent

GIFT TABLE

The Board of the East Providence Historical Society has decided that it would be a good idea to have a gift table with items related to the Hunt House or the EPHS so that guests to the house could buy souvenirs. If you have any suggestions (some have already been made) please bring samples or ideas to the newt-meeting and see Lura Sellew.

Lura Sellew

PUBLICITY

In the East Bay edition of The Providence Journal-Bulletin on Thursday February 11, 1993 appeared an article on the East Providence Historical Society. The article by Peter E. Howard was well written provided excellent publicity. The article discusses the restoration of the Hunt House, the plaque marker program, credits Lura N. Sellew as the plaque designer, and con-

tains some excellent quotes from Virginia Berwick. Public exposure like this is priceless. Let us keep up the excellent job of spreading the word.

NEWS

In a letter from Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer to J. Michael Bennett, Chief Civil Engineer - Road Design, RIDOT, Sanderson discusses "Pleasant Street's intersection with Pawtucket Avenue", which "lies within the Rumford National Register Historic district. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation recently improved the visual character of this intersection and made it more compatible with its historic setting by installing decorative traffic signals. As a result of our review and communications with East Providence officials, it is our conclusion that the design of the traffic islands should be modified in response to the historic setting by incorporating brick or stone

paving in place of or in addition to the proposed concrete. Provided that such modifications are made to the plans, the proposed work will have no adverse effect on the Rumford National Register Historic District.

Claudette Field

MUSEUM

Edna is still working hours at the Hunt House on the museum gifts-accessioning and storing them. Between Jan. 1992 and Dec. 1992 72 gifts were received - totaling 385 individual artifacts. I help her when I can and find it very interesting. Edna also does much of her work - (typing) at home. Among the gifts received are: **Lura Sellew** - from Rowena Bowen estate-a Riverside Grammar 1914 graduation program, dried flowers from a dance in 1915, and a Bowen family bible started by Wm. A. Mauran and Harriett Tuckerman in 1864 including silk page markers. **Joseph Vincent** - a photograph album. **Gardiner Jameson** - a

large photo of Hunt's Mills, matted and framed. **Helen Brush** - "Eighty Years of Baking Powder History". **Edna Wilcox** - several copies of Journal Bulletin of the 1938 hurricane and John Kennedy's assassination in 1963. **Charlie Jackson** has loaned us a framed Town of East Providence map from the 1895 RI Atlas. The map is currently on the parlor mantle. The business display will come down the last week in Feb.

Edna's traveling slide show will go to the Riverside Girl Scout House on Feb. 23rd for 2 Girl Scout Troops doing "Learning about Our Past" badge. They will tour the Hunt House on Feb. 27th.

I know I have said this before but it is worth repeating - Our society is so fortunate to have Edna as our Curator, she knows what to do with the articles given to us for safe storage. Thank you Edna. I enjoy working with you. Also our crew of workers on

Tues. and Thur. are careful when moving things. I have been taking pictures of the progress of the restoration and we have one album filled and another half filled. Have to work fast to keep up with those workers.

Virginia Berwick

RESTORATION

A building committee meeting was held at the home of Earl and Ginny Berwick on Sat, Feb. 6, Earl incidently is coming along fine and looking forward to getting back on the bandwagon and joining the boys in the restoration of the Hunt House.

The new Building Committee now consists of Walt Vincent, Nancy Stevens, Dan Brothers, Earl Berwick, and Claudette Field. These are some of the decisions made and other projects considered. The wallpaper tho the rooms on the 2nd floor was selected and ordered. The committee also decided to have the new windows primed before delivery and we will then do the

finish painting and installation.

There was also a discussion on the problem we have with the front step icing up as there is no gutter on the front of the house to prevent water from dripping and freezing. The RI Preservation society has been called on this matter and asked about an alternative or any other recommendations. We are now waiting for a reply.

Other projects discussed was the restoration of fireplaces and chimney repairs in the cellar.

Walter Vincent

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

Thanks to the sharp eyes of Armand Ladeira, the Society was able to intervene on behalf of the historic property at 6 Garfield Avenue in the Philipsdale section. This storey and a half house was originally a one room saltbox (ca. 1750). It was joined to a 4 room storey and a half in the early 1800's and an entry stairway was added at the joining point. The front of the house faces the back of the lot and must have had a panoramic view of the neighborhood. One of the unique features of this facade are the eyebrow windows which appear to have original windows. The sills are exceptionally deep, much woodwork remains, especially upstairs, and the chimney mass appears intact although both fireplaces have been covered up. The house has been well cared for, is dry and snug with updated mechanicals, and has much to recommend it as living space in general.

The series of events concerning this house fell in this way: Monday's meeting - Armand reported his concerns. Tuesday - the Preservation Committee, with Armand's guidance, looked over the property and called the realtor. Late Tuesday afternoon, members toured the house with the realtor and discussed with him the historical value of this property and the need for preservation. The realtor stressed that he already had offers on the house and expected it to be sold very soon. He did agree to pass on our concerns and offers of experience to any prospective buyers.

As we go to press, the realtor confirms that the house has been sold and that he has given the Society's name and number to the buyer. As an additional precaution, this committee has asked photographer Michael Charves to take pictures of this house from all angles for a current record should the house be altered. All members must be aware that the Society has no recourse except for gentle persuasion in these

matters and can only hope for the best. Many Garfield Avenue home owners are taking great pride in their historic area. If you live in the area and notice new owners, please stop by and introduce yourself. With our own restoration experience to pass on to a new owner of a precious historic home.

NANCY MOORE

RAFFLE

A winner's choice raffle will be held March during the Pasta Dinner at Newman Church. The purpose of this raffle is to raise money for the general fund expenses -lights, telephones, nails, etc.

The raffle committee is asking for raffle/door prize donations. With your help we hope to have approximately thirty raffle prizes and five door prizes to raffle off on March 27th. Attention: Crafters who are members, we also need your craft projects as prizes. If you wish to donate and/or recycle a new unused gift you

received and /or intended to give but didn't, please bring it to the Feb. 22nd Pot Luck Supper.

Prizes can be general - household, male, female or for a child. If you wish to donate but are not coming to the Pot Luck Supper you can call Billie Arden at 438-4904 for pick up, or Louise Healy at 438-1389 after 6 pm.

The Raffle Committee

Louise M. Healy

Billie Arden

Helen Smith

BOARD MEETINGS

The March Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, the 10th, 7:30 pm, at Hunt House. Board members are **expected** to attend to make reports and contribute to society decisions. The meetings are open to members to present ideas or to have input in the decision making process. Non-board members may exercise their power of persuasion but only board members may vote.

Florence Adams

CALENDER

SPECIAL INVITATION FROM THE BARRINGTON PRESERVATION SOCIETY Sarah C. Gleason, author of the book *KINDLY LIGHTS*, a history of the light house service in Rhode Island, and expert on the Beavertail Light, presents:

"A HISTORY OF LIGHT-HOUSES OF SOUTHEASTERN NEW ENGLAND"

Thursday, February 25th, at 7:30PM at the Peck Center/Barrington Library. Ample parking-handicapped accessible.

Nancy Moore

The **Warwick Historic District Commission and the RI Historical Preservation Commission** will sponsor a conference on Saturday, Feb 20, at Warwick City Hall Auditorium, 3275 Post Road, entitled **ARCHAEOLOGY AND LOCAL PLANNING**. The conference is free of charge. Coffee and registration at 8:30 am.

Florence Adams

REMEMBER THE PASTA DINNER

It's coming on March, 27th
At Newman Church at 6:00

Tickets will be available at the Feb.22
Pot Luck Supper Meeting

Adults....\$6.00
Children....\$3.00

Deadline is March 12

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