



*John Hunt House*

# OLD NEWS

## EAST • PROVIDENCE • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY • NEWSLETTER

VOL. VI NUMBER 1

JULY/AUGUST 1993

### NEW BOARD FOR 93/94 TAKES OFFICE AT ANNUAL MEETING/PICNIC



l - r : **Nancy Moore**, *President*; **Lura Sellew**, *Corresponding Secretary*; **Kristine Rose**, *1st Vice President*; **Don Brothers**, *Recording Secretary*; **Edna Anness**, *2nd Vice President*; **Rose Marie Sirenski**, *Treasurer*.

#### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Nancy Moore*

"A Message From The President".....Doesn't that have too much of a formal ring to it!?!.....I'm sure we can dispense with that right away! I'm of course delighted to be the Society president for the coming year and I look forward to broadening my horizons to include *all* the workings of this ambitious group, not just the preservation aspect.

We have made extraordinary strides this past year in the areas of restoration and education. Our presence in the community is solid because of our outreach and preservation focus, through our newsletter, our fundraising efforts and our involvement in pertinent historical community issues. We have happily taken on many projects, and it appears that the busier we have become the happier we have become. So be it!

It seems to me that the size of the heart of a community is directly proportionate to the time and care that its members are willing to give to community organizations such as ours. I KNOW that the historical heart of East Providence is healthy just by taking a walk down Hunts Mills Road, by attending a museum donor tea or by greeting other members in the Council Chamber. We applauded members (and well we should), such as our

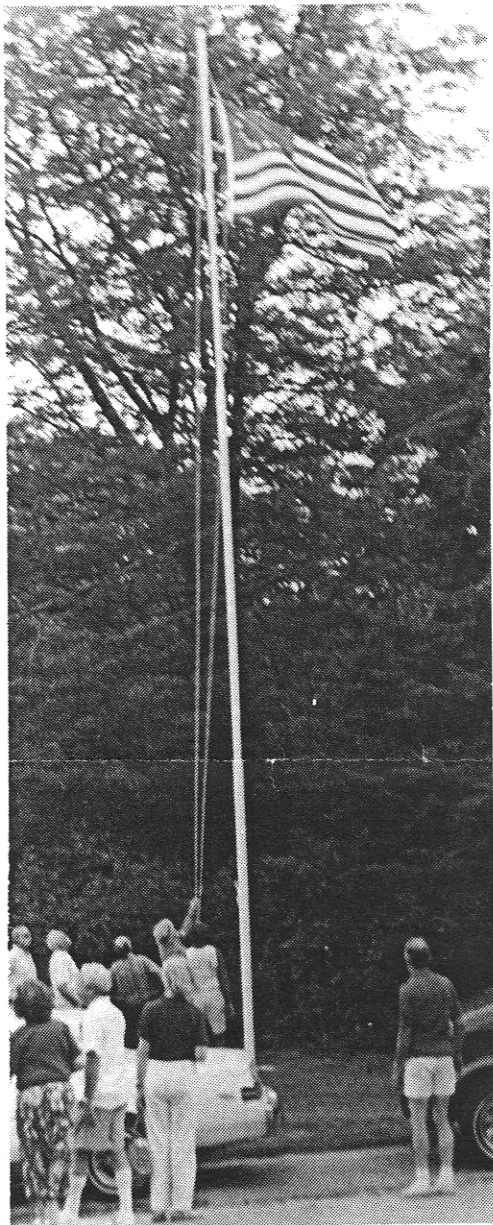
**restoration team**, at the Annual Meeting/Picnic. However, please remember that if you have taken the time to become a member of our Society, we also applaud your dedication to things historical in East Providence.

As I write this, I am very saddened by the recent deaths of two active members, Wendy Plummer and Lew Allen. Both of these members were very proud to have been associated with the Society and we will greatly miss their wisdom, wit and work. To new members: jump right in with both feet or test the waters with your big toe. In either case, we will appreciate **your** wisdom, wit and work!

**Nancy Moore**, a long time member of the Society, has vigorously chaired the Preservation Committee for several years, and is an active member of the East Providence Land Conservation Trust and the East Providence Municipal Land Trust.

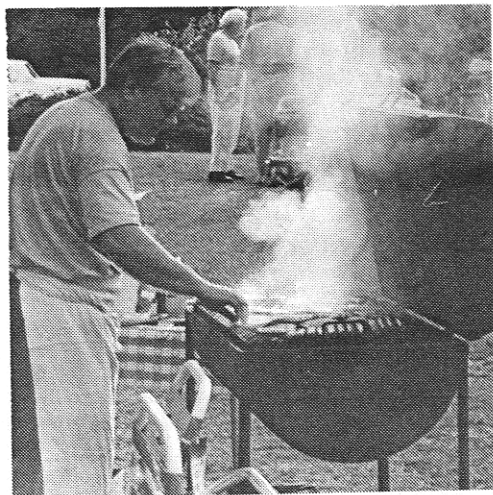
In "real life" she is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, a teacher of piano, and a qualified teacher of the Orff Method of music instruction. She is associated with the music departments of Cordon Summer School and the Wheeler School Conservatory and operates a mail order business in teaching materials.

She and husband Dan have two children, Megan and Jonathan.



Above: Official Flag Tender **Don Brothers** lowers 13 Star Flag.

Below: Official Fire Tender **Bill Simpson** bastes the wieners.



## ANNUAL MEETING & FAMILY PICNIC

### A New Tradition is Established

Those who were among the fortunate people who attended the Annual Meeting / Family Picnic on June 28th agreed that this was the way to hold an annual meeting . . . . hamburgers, hot dogs homemade salads ....and STRAWBERRIES!

The meeting that followed was a very pleasant exchange of the gavel from Scott to Nancy and recognition of the heroes, achievers and accomplisners of the previous year.

The closing with the lowering of the 13 Star Flag while patriotic tunes were softly hummed put a proper cap on the day.

The AMFP Committee has already begun plans for NEXT YEAR'S meeting. We have heard that there might be MUSIC and DANCING! (Who said "FIREWORKS"? Boat Races MAYBE, but NO FIREWORKS!)

Monday, June 27, 1994.  
Be there, if you can stand the pace!

## O L D E N E W S

is published monthly by  
The East Providence Historical Society  
Editor.....George Adams  
EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 4774  
East Providence, RI 02916  
(401) 438-1750

### OFFICERS

President	Nancy Moore
1st Vice President	Kristine Rose
2nd Vice President	Edna Anness
Recording Secretary	Don Brothers
Corresponding Secretary	Lura Sellev
Treasurer	Rose Marie Sirenski

## COMING EVENTS

**Wednesday, September 8**  
**Board Meeting 7:30 p.m.**  
**Hunt House**

**Monday, September 27**  
**Members Meeting 7:30 p.m.**  
**Newman Congregational Church**  
*Program:*

**Rumford Memories Roundtable**  
(see "THE RUMFORD PROJECT" pg. 3)

**AND.....Keep in MIND...**

**Saturday, October 2**  
**visit to the**  
***Florence Griswold Mansion***  
***and Art Museum***  
**and walking tour**  
**of the historical district**  
**Old Lyme, Connecticut**

**Saturday, October 30**  
**AUTUMN SUPPER**  
**Society Fundraiser**  
**Newman Congregational Church**

(details in September OLDE NEWS)

O L D E N E W S

is printed at

**PRONTO PRINT**

1062 Willett Ave., East Providence

# THE "RUMFORD PROJECT"

Edna Anness

Next year marks the 140th anniversary of the establishment of the **Rumford Chemical Works**, an important event in the history of East Providence.

The East Providence Historical Society will celebrate this occasion with a display of Rumford artifacts at the Hunt House museum beginning May 1st 1994. This will coincide with the publication of a history of the Rumford Chemical Works written by **Kevin Plunkett**, a PhD candidate at the University of R.I.

Two special programs in the Spring of 1994 will feature the history of the Rumford company. Professor **Paul Jones**, chairman of the Chemistry Department at the University of New Hampshire will speak at the March meeting about the products of the Company, and at the April meeting **Kevin Plunkett** will discuss the history of the Company and his new book on the subject.

The E.P.H.S. will host the May 14th 1994 meeting of the League of Rhode Island Historical Societies with a visit to the Rumford Chemical Co. display, as well as a visit to the Newman Congregational Church on the occasion of their 350th Anniversary Celebration.

To introduce the **RUMFORD PROJECT** to the members of the Society and to the public, the program at the September 27th meeting will be a "Rumford Memories Roundtable" ! The meeting will be held at the Newman Congregational Church at 7:30 p.m.

We urge anyone who was associated with the Rumford Chemical Works in any way, former employees, relatives of former employees.....anyone who may have anecdotes about the Company...to attend the September 27th meeting and participate in the roundtable.

If you have information about Rumford Chemical or if you would like to work on the RUMFORD PROJECT, please call **Virginia Berwick** at 434-0998, **Edna Anness** at 434-3347 or call the Society at 438-1750 and leave a message.



A clause in the agreement of the Founders of the Rumford Chemical Works, **George Wilson** and **Eben Horsford**, declared their purpose to be that of " *building up a chemical manufacturing establishment of respectability and permanency, such as shall be an honor to ourselves and our children and a credit to the community in which it is located.....*" They delivered that and more. The 140th Anniversary should be a Major Event! *ed.*

# THE *NEW* OLDE NEWS

With the June issue, **OLDE NEWS**, the official newsletter of the East Providence Historical Society completed 5 years of publication!

Started in September, 1988 by **George and Claudette Field**, OLDE NEWS has fulfilled their intention to, "...keep our old members better informed about the Historical Society's new projects and to get our new members more involved in the organization."

Recently, **Mike Charves** continued to inform and involve, in the traditions established by **George and Claudette**.

With this issue, a few changes have been introduced, mainly in the graphic *appearance* of OLDE NEWS and with an effort to maintain the characteristics and premise established by the founding editors.

The most noticeable change is the *size* of the newsletter...enlarged to 11 X 17, conforming to the conventional 8 1/2 X 11 "letter size". This not only allows for more copy, but simplifies the handling and production.

The other departure is the inclusion of *photographs* in an attempt to improve communications and, it is hoped, inform and entertain.

We are pleased to point out that there has been no increase in the COST of producing the newsletter.

**OLDE NEWS** welcomes your comments and suggestions.

With a **deep bow** of grateful thanks to **George and Claudette** and to **Mike** for getting the whole thing to fly! My part was easy.

George Adams  
editor

**1993/94 DUES!!**

**CURRENT DUES** were payable by **June 28** if you have not renewed your membership . .PLEASE do so NOW!

We value your membership and your support.

Please make check payable to:  
**East Providence Historical Society**  
(\$10 individual, \$15 family)

and mail to:  
**Madeline Vincent**, membership  
45 Priscilla Av.  
Rumford, RI 02916

# MUSEUM NEWS

Edna Anness  
Museum Curator

How some artifacts make their way to the museum is miraculous. The following is the saga of the weathervane that was on the roof of the barn behind the Armington House, at 'Armingtons Corners', corner of Wampanoag Trail and Pawtucket Avenue, where the donor, **Charles Tebbetts**, grew up.

Charles, who now lives in Warwick, sent this note:

*Back in '38 when I was still in high school, Lou Farber excused us early from football practice because of the wind and rain. I walked down to Warren Av. and Broadway to get a bus. No luck. One of the Kents, I think it was Garfield, picked me up and took me home. This was the 1938 HURRICANE. The back window of the barn blew out, and being a crazy kid I got a ladder, climbed up and covered it with a big piece of tin. I was alone that night. My mother and aunt were marooned in Child's Restaurant where they used to work.*

*The barn stood but the weathervane had to be put back on the cupola.*

*In 1954, when I lived in Seekonk, the barn folded up in the August hurricane. My uncle, Bill Gange, who lived next door, picked up the weathervane and put it on a rose trellis in his back yard. He died in the 70's and his wife had kids cut the lawn, etc. I trimmed the the hedge and trees. In 1989 just before Aunt Mabel died, I was trimming brush when I found what was left of the trellis, broken and rotted away.*

*I picked up the junk to put on the sidewalk for trash pickup and under the pile was the WEATHERVANE, a little bent but still o.k. I showed it to my aunt and she said to take it.*

*I was the last of the immediate family. A cousin has left the state and had no use for it. I happened to be cleaning out my garage before leaving for Florida last Fall and ran across it.....so you won it!*

*I'm glad the museum will be able to use it.*

That's how the Armington House weathervane came to the museum !

## MUSEUM GIFTS

Virginia Berwick  
Museum Chairman

**Howard and Louise Mersereau**-Books, "The First Hundred Years" and "Our Heritage as the Bicentennial Begins"

**Hiram Wood**-Photo of Dean School

**Marjorie Welt**-Matchbook from Jacques Lunch and 2 handmade nails from Riverside's John Brown House.

**Rumford PTA** c/o Pamela Goulet-PTA scrapbooks.

**Rolland Grant**-Handcuffs.

**Louise Healy**-Her mother's silver engraved napkin ring.

**William MacIntosh**-20 folding chairs.

**Agnes Thompson**-Book, "History of Costume".

**Lowell and Edna Anness**-Antique wooden commode chair.

## EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MARKER PROGRAM

Your home may be eligible for a **MARKER**.



(example)

**Any building in the City of East Providence which contributes to the historical development or architectural character of the city is eligible to be considered for a historical marker.**

**Help promote an appreciation of the heritage of East Providence.**

**Send the coupon below to:**

**The Marker Program  
East Providence Historical Society  
P.O. Box 4774  
East Providence, RI 02916-4774**

I am interested in receiving information about the East Providence Marker Program

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(The following article was printed in the first edition of OLDE NEWS September, 1988. It was written by Lura Sellev, from an article in the East Providence Post. OLDE NEWS thought it appropriate to include it in this edition of the newsletter) Ed.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The first mention of the East Providence Historical Society appears in the February 10, 1966 issue of the *East Providence Post* in an article entitled "A Written History is their Goal, Historical Society Stresses Importance of Community's Past".

The article begins with three questions. They are: Where is Hog Pen Point?; Who was the first school teacher in East Providence?; Do you know the name of the stopover station on Pawtucket Avenue which serviced wagons and passengers traveling from Newport to Providence a hundred years ago? Not many in East Providence (or elsewhere) know the answers, the article reassures us.

The paper goes on to say that Harold Flint, pictured in the article, is one of a handful of people who were organizing a group which would be concerned with this community's heritage . . .the East Providence Historical Society. He felt that there was so much important history in East Providence that the public should be made aware of it.

Mr. Flint was one of the original fourteen people who attended an informal meeting of the group at the home of Mr. Allen Usher. The group agreed that there is a great need for compilation of facts and a written history and that there were enough people interested in local history to form an historical society.

It was felt that interest and willingness to work, rather than the time spent living in the community were the most important factors for those wishing to join the Society.

Research to rediscover the History of East Providence was to be the main task of the Society. Plans to contact members of long-time families in the city, the collection of genealogies, pinpointing dates of historical events and obtaining information about the oldest homes, churches and commercial buildings were some of the activities suggested. A factor which would add to the confusion that often accompanies research would be the fact that parts of East Providence were at different times part of Seekonk, Rehoboth and Swansea, Massachusetts.

It was noted that the research would take patient effort and be a source of personal satisfaction to those who became involved in setting the records straight.

At this meeting, Allen Usher was appointed temporary chairman and Mrs. Clinton W. Sellev became secretary of the group. An enrollment and information committee consisting of Mrs. Sellev, Mrs. Harold Flint and Mrs. Herbert Howland was formed.

The questions posed at the beginning of the newspaper account were answered at the end of it. They were: Hog Pen Point is the area near the present Barrington Parkway (Veterans Memorial) where the Massachusetts Bay Colony built a fort. John Flagg was the first school teacher in East Providence. Bullocks Point Tavern was the Stop-over station.

*Lura Sellev*

Do your friends and relatives belong to the  
**East Providence Historical Society**  
?

If not, INVITE them to join.  
Show them this newsletter  
and the coupon below . .

### The East Providence Historical Society

is dedicated to preserving the heritage and enjoying the history of our city.

If you are not a member, we invite you to join now.

Annual dues are: \$10 per year, individual or \$15 per year , family.

Please fill out the coupon below and mail with your check to:

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

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### EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ @ 10.00 individual, 15.00 family

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

PRDV RI #02904\* PM 07/27/93 18:00 #10



# Allens Drug Store 1928

*Jess Welt Photo*

Home-Made Ice Cream and a Lime Rickey at the glass top tables  
and pick up a dozen Eclairs at **Stevensons Bakery** next door.



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