



*John Hunt House*

# OLD NEWS

## EAST • PROVIDENCE • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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### ANNUAL MEETING Monday June 28

*Gladys Panzarella*  
Chairman, Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is pleased to submit the following list of names to be placed in nomination as officers of the Society for 1993-94:

<b>President</b>	<b>Nancy Moore</b>
<b>1st Vice President</b>	<b>Kristine Rose</b>
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	<b>Don Brothers</b>
<b>Corresponding Secretary</b>	<b>Lura Sellew</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Rose Marie Sirenski</b>

There were no nominations from the floor at the May meeting.

Thanks to **Don Brothers** for agreeing to stand for the office of Recording Secretary. Thanks also to **Ginny Berwick** for her efforts in arranging to fill the slot.

We urge **all** to turn out for the **Annual Meeting** (and **PICNIC!**) To greet our new officers and enjoy a pleasant evening at Hunt House.

**PICNIC**....begins at **5:00 p.m.** with a Social Hour. Food will be available around **5:45**.

**BUSINESS MEETING and ELECTION 7:30 .**

### PRESERVATION UPDATE

*Nancy Moore*  
Chairman, Preservation Committee

By now some of our members may have heard a rumor that Bridgeham Farm is safe. In some regards it is, but caution is still the name of the game for the Land Trust. As of June 5, the bank agreed to accept the Land Trust's final offer for the property. However, many details still remain to be worked out, not the least of which is how to pay back a \$400,000 DEM loan. All parties involved are proceeding slowly and carefully with cautious optimism the rule. A call of support to Land Trust president Bill Simpson would be greatly appreciated, we're sure.

For those members who acted as "house sitters" for the Providence Preservation Society's house tour, it was a night to revel in detail. Our East Providence contingent was based at the Nightingale-Brown House and got a first hand look at what \$8,000,000 will do. The house is in magnificent shape and well worth your visit.

Ordinarily the Society does not get into the business of selling houses. However, a call from a couple with a historic house for sale prompted a further look. They were referred to our group by RI Historic Preservation, who thought that we ▶

►might be interested. And we were! It is so seldom that one sees a house that has been allowed to keep its original charm intact for 250 years. The house, known as "The Miller's House", sits at 855 Arcade Avenue in Seekonk, beside the Grist Mill Country Store. Built around 1750, this double house has doubled in size twice that we can tell. The first single room dwelling, with its massive cooking fireplace, became part of a full fledged cape in the latter part of the 1700's. The cooking fireplace in this addition is more like that in the keeping room at Hunt House and must have been much more efficient to use. The second addition, which now holds a kitchen and bathroom, was added in the early 1800's. The three parts were skillfully tied together with the look of an extra long cape. Of great interest to our work crew (Walter Vincent and Charlie Jackson) was the treatment of the original windows and locking mechanisms. They also measured the upstairs floorboards and found many to be 16-18 inches wide. One was 20 inches! The house also has two single bedroom wings attached at each end, the last perhaps from the mid 1900's. It is truly a historic house lover's dream, if you like dirt cellars, low ceilings on the second floor, lots of working fireplaces (4), spectacular panelling and lots of nooks and crannies. Charming it is! And the acre: mature plantings and perennial gardens which slope down to the Runnins River and Old Grist Mill Pond. The house appears to be very solid for its age, and well cared for. It is in need of "freshening up" on the inside and a lot could be done concerning period colors and papers. The couple has turned to the Historic Society for a little publicity, because even when they advertised in the Historic House section of the Journal, they were getting responses such as, "Wouldn't it be nice to tear this down and build something you could really live in.....", or, "Can this land be subdivided?".....If you know of someone who may be seriously interested in a bona fide *historic house* please tell them to contact **Joseph Krawczyk** at 336-6238. ●

## OLDE NEWS

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	Scott Booth
1st Vice President	Nancy Moore
2nd Vice President	Bud Plummer
Recording Secretary	Kris Rose
Corresponding Secretary	Lura Sellow
Treasurer	Rose Marie Sirenski

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Buildings/Grounds	Walter Vincent
Markers	Kit Rodman
Membership	Madeline Vincent
Museum	Ginny Berwick
Curator	Edna Anness
Newsletter	George Adams
Mailing	Florence Adams
Preservation	Nancy Moore
Program	Bill Simpson
Publicity	Florence Adams

## MEETINGS

**June 28, 5:00 p.m.**

Family Picnic, followed by  
Annual Meeting/ Election 7:30 p.m.  
Hunt House

**July 13, 7:30 p.m.**

Board Meeting, Hunt House

## OLDE NEWS

is printed at

**PRONTO PRINT**

1062 Willett Ave., East Providence

## MUSEUM

*Virginia Berwick*  
Museum Chairman

The Society has received more than 20 gifts since the last newsletter. See list below.

Museum Curator, **Edna Anness**, is away on vacation and hopes to return by the first week in July. She left the museum in good shape and I think I now know how to take care of gifts while she is away.

I have continued taking pictures of all the interesting events going on at Hunt House!

If you haven't visited the House lately, please do. The fireplaces are being worked on and they look wonderful!

We have had communication from **Prof. Paul Jones, U.N.H.** He has written an article about Rumford. Edna wrote to ask him if he would be willing to present a talk to the Society. He agreed to do it in the near future.

The garden planted by **Lura Sellew** is looking real pretty. Thank you, Lura.....it does improve the area around the sign.

## MUSEUM GIFTS

**Louise Healy**- Book, "George Washington and R.I.", silver water pitcher with cover, blue dish, silver napkin ring.

**Helen Smith**- Central Junior High School 1929 class picture.

**Virginia Berwick**- Two pictures of White Rock Farm, Wampanoag Trail 1924, First Baptist Church booklet.

**Agnes Thompson**- Glove stretcher.

**Charles Tebbetts**- Assorted E.P. High School articles.

**East Providence Police Department**- Two framed pictures of police.

**Claire Sullivan**- Wooden snow shovel.

**Bruce and Anna Britton**- Assorted articles from First Baptist Church, Newman and Wannamoisett.

**Russell Coit**- Assorted articles...household tools, five "Crimsons", WWII maps.

## THANKS, MIKE!

To **Mike Charves** our THANKS fo producing **OLDE NEWS** from August 1992 to April 1993.

Mike did a great job of editing and setting up the Society newsletter. Writing many of the articles himself, and providing the graphics, he produced a consistently interesting and attractive newsletter.

The pressure of activity in Mike's life precluded his maintaining a high level of quality and integrity in the newsletter, so he regretfully resigned as editor ( after recruiting a replacement).

Stay in touch, Mike, have a happy life and when things settle down, come back to OLDE NEWS.

## DUES!

Save the telephone committee some calls and the 'accounting department' the cost of stamps.

**Pay your membership dues today!**  
**(past due as of June 28)**

Please make check payable to:

**East Providence Historical Society**

\$10 individual, \$15 family.

mail to:

**Madeline Vincent**, membership

**45 Priscilla Av.**

**Rumford, RI 02916**

## MEMBERSHIP

*Madeline Vincent*

Chairman, Membership Committee

### **DUES! DUES! DUES! Are Due!**

Many people responded to the 'pink slips' sent out with the May newsletter....but we are still lagging in our payments.

To those who have been so prompt I apologize for not getting your membership cards to you. The last newsletter slipped out without cards enclosed (trying to save on postage!) I've had to wait for this month since some of you cannot attend our meetings

I am happy to report four new memberships since May.....Welcome:

**Richard and Arlene Hauck**  
**Anna Frances Apep**  
**Alice A. Benson**  
**Gardiner and Alice Jameson**

Again I'd like to thank the Hostesses who volunteered to serve at the monthly meetings. The same program will be in effect for next year. Each person should expect to host one meeting.

I look forward to seeing **everyone** at the PICNIC!

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

If not, INVITE them to join...whether they live in East Providence or used to live here or **wished** they lived in East Providence.....

Please give them the coupon on the opposite page so that they may participate in enjoying our history and heritage!

## BUILDING RESTORATION

*Walter Vincent*

Chairman, Building Committee

The work on all the fireplaces and the chimney repair in the cellar is coming along fine. With the installation of the flu dampers, the job will be near completion in a about a week or so.

The problem we've had with the windows, which has caused a delay of a couple of weeks, has been resolved. Our goal is to have six of the windows installed in the front of the house by the time of our vacation at the end of June. Of course the boys and girls are still scraping and sanding in the two upstairs bedrooms. "No end to this!"

Be sure to notice our the FLAG waving at the June 28 picnic. We were very fortunate to have this flag donated to the Historical Society by **Leslie Howarth** of *American Flag and Sign Center*. Sincere thanks, Les. **Don Brothers** has had the honor of raising the flag every Tuesday and Thursday before our work begins.

The Hunt House will not be open for restoration on Tuesdays and Thursdays during July and August. The volunteers will be on vacation.

A big thanks to **Ginny Berwick** and **Edna Anness** for our morning coffee breaks. Your snacks are most appreciated by the group.

Happy Healthy Summer to All!



# FAMILY PICNIC

*Bill Simpson*  
Program Chairman

The Society will hold its annual Family Picnic on Monday June 28th. The fire will be lit at 5 o'clock and we can eat at about 5:45.

We will cook until the last person has eaten.....so if you cant get there until after 6 o'clock, it will be O.K. !

For members the 'charge' will be a **salad** or shortcake/cookies. For non-members there will be a charge of \$2.00.

Hot dogs, hamburgers, condiments and beverages will be provided by the Society.

At 6:45 we will have our strawberry shortcake ....make your own! Served with coffee, etc., we can sit and enjoy ourselves during the Annual Meeting.

Rain (which wont happen) or shine....we will use either Mr. Hunt's front lawn or Mr. Hunt's Great Room, Just as John Hunt did 200 years ago!

## ABOUT THE PHOTO.....

The photograph on the back cover, of Watchemoket Square during the 1924 Fourth of July Parade was taken by **Jess Welt**.....who commented, ".....I took some pictures down in the Square, then I went up Taunton Avenue to Bennys and took some more.....that was a BIG parade....lasted a long time...!"

**Jess Welt**, born in 1890 came to East Providence in 1899, when the population was around 10 thousand. He became unofficial photographer and historian (and *official* constable), whose photos have been published in books, magazines and postcards. Jess died in 1981 at the age of 91, leaving a rich legacy of photographs and oral history of Watchemoket and East Providence.

**OLDE NEWS** will be publishing more of Jess's photos in upcoming editions.

For further information about **Jess Welt's photographs**, contact:

**Marjorie Welt at (401) 438-5986**

### 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. 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 (+4) \_\_\_\_\_

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

# EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## MARKER PROGRAM



(example)

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

**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 following form to:**

**The Marker Program  
East Providence Historical Society  
PO Box 4774  
East Providence, RI 02916-4774**

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

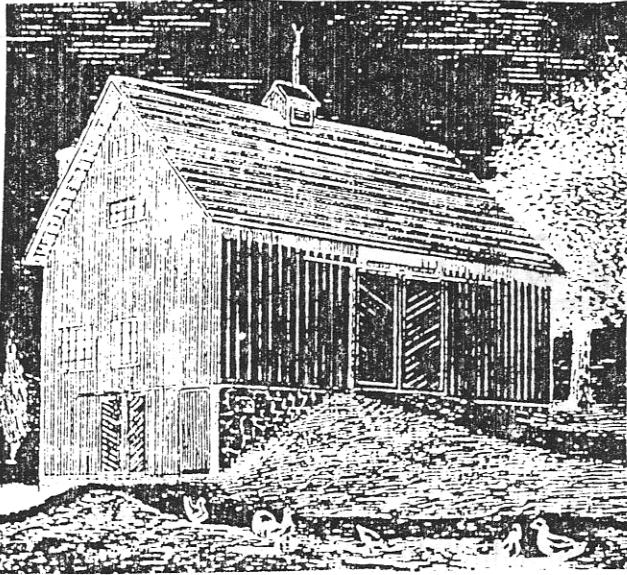
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Reminiscences and Recollections



The woodcut above reminds me of the barn which was located to the right of the house at 980 Pawtucket avenue in Rumford when my family moved there from Providence around 1923.

The ramp went straight out to the street, and to the right of the barn was the privy, lilac bushes and grape vines. What grapes !

That was before the street was laid out (by my grandfather, Valentine Reynolds) to give access to the house lots behind 980. The diagonal road passes directly over the site of the old barn even though it starts to the right of the site.

Actually "our" barn wasn't as high as the one shown. There was a large cellar which had to be filled after the barn was

taken down, so numerous farm implements were used to help fill the hole. The manure spreader and some other heavy things were stored under the barn and may still be there.

The barn had long been neglected and it was dangerous to play around it so it was off limits to us kids. In fact, the danger it represented was one reason that it was dismantled

We converted the house....my father did the work and my grandfather paid the expenses.....installing plumbing in the pantries and kitchens, upstairs and down, and put in electric lights and steam heat with other amenities, so the barn and privy were signs of a period we had passed.

My grandfather, Val Reynolds, was the superintendent of the Colored Worsted Mill on Pitman Street in Providence, now the site of the Salvation Army Thrift Store. He owned a home on Florence Street in Providence before buying on Pawtucket Ave. He lived a few days after suffering a stroke at work in the late 30's. The family dispersed during the Second World War.

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This "recollection" was sent to the Society by **Joe MacDougald**, who now lives in Wrentham.

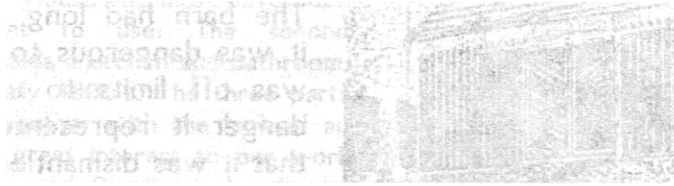
**OLDE NEWS** welcome and encourages such recollections of times past.

# OLDE NEWS

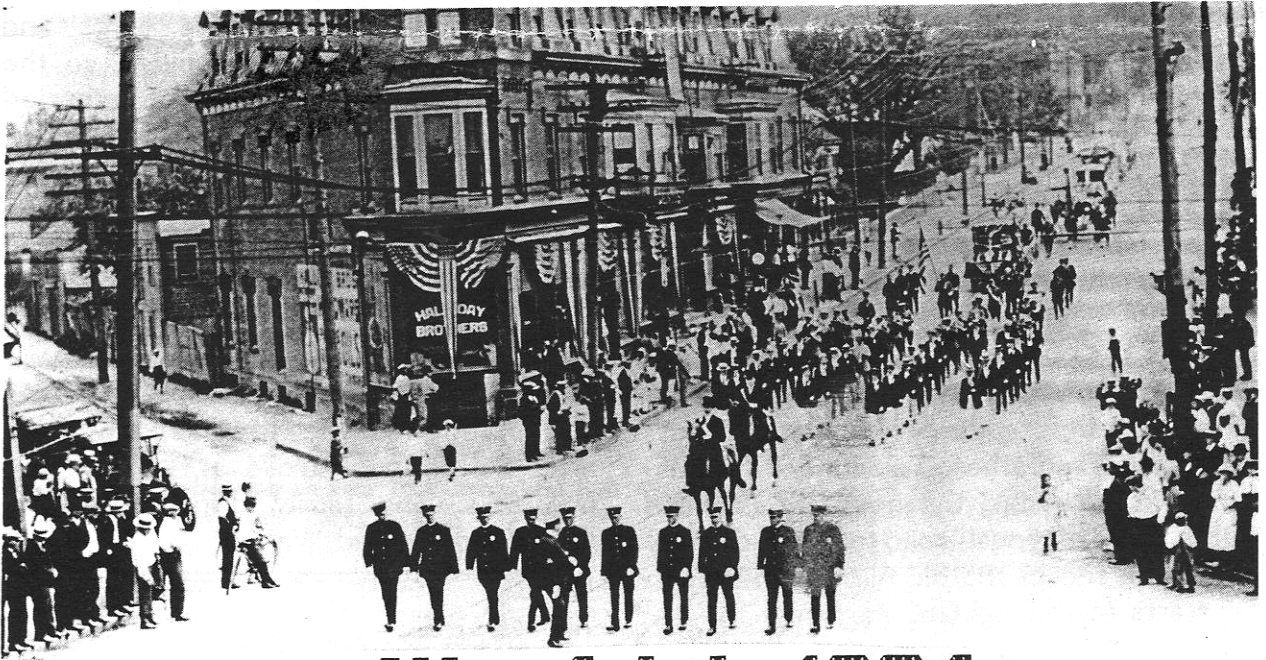
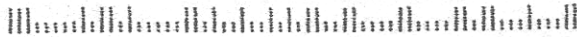
East Providence Historical Society

P.O. Box 4774

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4th of July 1924

Jess Welt Photo

Watchemoket Square