

John Hunt House

# OLD DE NEWS

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April  
1994

EAST • PROVIDENCE • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY

VOL. VII NO.4

DECEMBER, 1994

## Plummer Collection Feature of Children's Christmas Exhibition of Old Toys at the Hunt House

The "CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS" exhibit opened at the Hunt House with a Tea and Reception on Sunday, December 4.

The feature of the exhibit is the collection of toys, models and special craft work of the late **Bud and Wendy Plummer**.

On special display is the multi-story doll house containing several rooms of miniature period furniture and dressed figures.

The exhibit will remain on display through December...Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m. and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. until noon.

(Closed Christmas)

Admission is Free



Megan Chapman meets Raggedy Ann & Andy



Bud and Wendy Plummer at their 50th Anniversary Celebration in 1992

The lives of Elliott ("Bud") and Wendy Plummer both of whom passed away in 1993, are celebrated in the exhibit of their work now on view at the Hunt House thanks to their daughter, **Nancy Plummer Batty**, who installed the exhibit.

Bud and Wendy were both good friends and valuable members of the Historical Society. Bud was an active volunteer in the Hunt House Restoration Project, and shares the honors of the recent AALSH Award.

A brief biography of the Plummers, prepared by family and friends, is available at the exhibit.

This exhibit of the Plummer's artistry and craft work should be on everyone's *must see* list.

# President's Letter

Nancy Moore

As I edit this letter I realize that I have a bit to add concerning the Children's Christmas Tea and Reception held Sunday at Hunt House. It was a nostalgic, bittersweet day for many, as we listened to Wendy Plummer's taped piano playing and marveled at the hours that she and Bud spent on their various projects. Obviously, the hit of the show was the skyscraper dollhouse, but the train under the Christmas tree was also a great favorite of one little boy who definitely thought that the train needed a tunnel and had a design firmly in mind. Bud would have loved it! Please make an effort to bring your families to this wonderful display of toys for all ages.

You may not have heard, but our Fall Supper was a financial and social success beyond our wildest dreams - \$847 after expenses! Thank you so very much for all your support. The Bazaar and Cafe went well also. There are a few crafts left in the General Store but they are going fast.

And thank you to all of you who voted in support of the Preservation Bond issue. It was defeated of course, but the showing in East providence was very respectable and seems to indicate that the Society has really been an educational force on this issue.

Please plan to attend the Holiday Party at Hunt House on Monday, December 19, at 7:30. Don't forget your gift for the Yankee Swap (George Amaral, maybe you'll get to take home the Reese's Pieces this year.) And please remember to bring a gift for the Hunt House - you'll find a list of suggestions in this newsletter.

## Memorial Fund

The Board voted to make contributions to the *Memorial Fund* in memory of **Barbara Erickson, Isabel Izzo and Hope Jackson.**

Members and friends who wish to contribute to the *Memorial Fund* may make checks payable to the **East Providence Historical Society** and mail to the Society at **P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI 02916**

## OLDE NEWS

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Editor.....George Adams

EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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### COMING EVENTS

#### DECEMBER

December 4 - 29  
"Children's Christmas"  
Hunt House  
Sundays 1 - 4 p.m.  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 9 - 12 a.m.  
Closed Christmas

Monday, December 19  
Christmas Party 7:30 p.m. Hunt House

#### JANUARY

Wednesday, January 11  
Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Hunt House

Monday, January 23  
Potluck Supper  
Newman Congregational Church

## OLDE NEWS

is printed at

**PRONTO PRINT**

1062 Willett Avenue, Riverside

Virginia Berwick  
Museum Chairman

Gifts Received

**Austin Butterworth** - Flatiron, 2 horse hitchers, several advertising tins, an awl, 2 spittoons from Masonic Temple.

**Nancy Stevens Benfer** - "History of Rehoboth" in 4 volumes, "Collected Papers Armorial, Genealogical and Historical", limited edition, "Index to the Early Records of the Town of Providence", first edition of, "R.I. Colonial Money and its Counterfeiting 1647 - 1747", "The Prov. Oath of Allegiance and the Signers 1651-1652", "Daily Records of the Town of Providence",...all by Richard Lebaron Bowen. Also "Two Huguenot Families, Deblois and Lucas" by Frank Fox and a book of Mass. records.

**Ned Connors** - 2 early maps of Phillipsdale, a tape recording of the Rumford Co. 1939 Radio Program, Annual Report of The Town of East Providence - 1913.

**Gladys Panzarella** - Papers and research relating to East Providence schools and education.

**Gordon James** - Early East Providence advertisements.

**Hattie Chaffee Reynolds** - In memory of *Henry H. Chaffee* - 3 early maps of the Town of Seekonk (before 1862 pre-dating East Providence).

**Myrtle Veno** - Crescent Park cranberry glass souvenir cup, 1928 Crimson.

**Diana McLean** - In memory of her mother, *Bertina French Daubney* - 1919 Wilson Grammar School class pin.

**Edward Adams** - Early East Providence election poem.

**Marion and Ed Coop** - 2 Rumford cookie cutters.

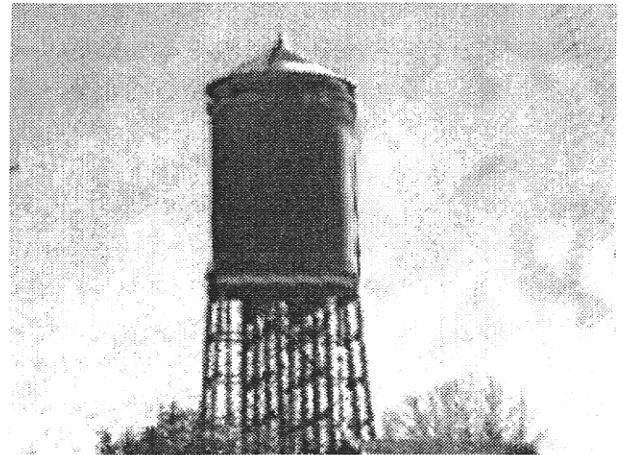
**Hope Ivers** - Music book belonging to her mother, *Lucy Wilcox*, and a Closing Exercises program from A.P. Hoyt School, 1897.

**Louise Healy** - 2 coffee pots.

NEEDED: East Providence CRIMSON Yearbooks, 1985 and 1986.....(1994?)

Clint Sellew

The East Providence Standpipe



One of the most commanding landmarks in East Providence is this immense standpipe of the East Providence Water Works located at Kent Heights. On a clear day it may be seen from nearly all sections of the state.

The base of the tower, which is 70' square is 376' above the water line. The framework is 165' in height and the tank itself is 70' tall, 50' in diameter at the top and 65' at the bottom, with a capacity of 1,000,000 gallons. The whole structure weighs 5228 tons. It is the second standpipe that has occupied the site, both being part of the East Providence Water System and used for the purpose of giving sufficient pressure for the south end of the town.

The original standpipe was of somewhat different proportions, the tank being 142' high, but with a diameter of only 40', resting directly on the ground without any trestle work. It had a capacity of 1,200,000 gallons. It was erected by the Cunningham Iron Works of South Boston and cost \$30,000.

About 8:00 o'clock on the night of January 19, 1894, the tank burst with a crash that was heard for a long distance. The force of the great volume of water, about 800,000 gallons, in its escape wrenched and twisted the iron plates and girders into curious and fantastic shapes. The roads were flooded as were the fields on the opposite sides of the highway, and a barn on the estate of Alfred J. Kent, who lived in the house beside the tower, was demolished. After long litigation the new tower was erected.

# From the Attic

Edna Anness  
Museum Curator



The original owner of this earthenware jug, which was received into the collection in September, was MISS PAGNY. We hear of Miss Pagny again! I'm sure that she would be surprised at the attention she has received at the Historical Society. She has been written about many times before. Miss Pagny was a school teacher in East Providence for many years. In the 1882 Annual School Report she was teaching elementary grades at P.S. #2 in Rumford. It is mentioned in a later report that she had requested a transfer so that she might experience teaching on other sections of the Town. Most remember her as the teacher in the one room school at Armington's Corners, P.S. #5. The school was elevated and a volunteer fire department was built below it. Later the building was torn down..

The late Eunice Russell was a pupil of Miss Pagny's around 1910. They later became friends and Eunice had fond reminiscences of her former teacher. Miss Pagny had given her this little jug. When we were collecting donations to the yard sale, Beverly Chalko brought in the jug with a story attached relating its connection to Miss Pagny. Needless to say, the jug didn't make the yard sale but is safely displayed in front of the Keeping Room fireplace. Later it will be on display in the restored Summer Kitchen when it is completed.

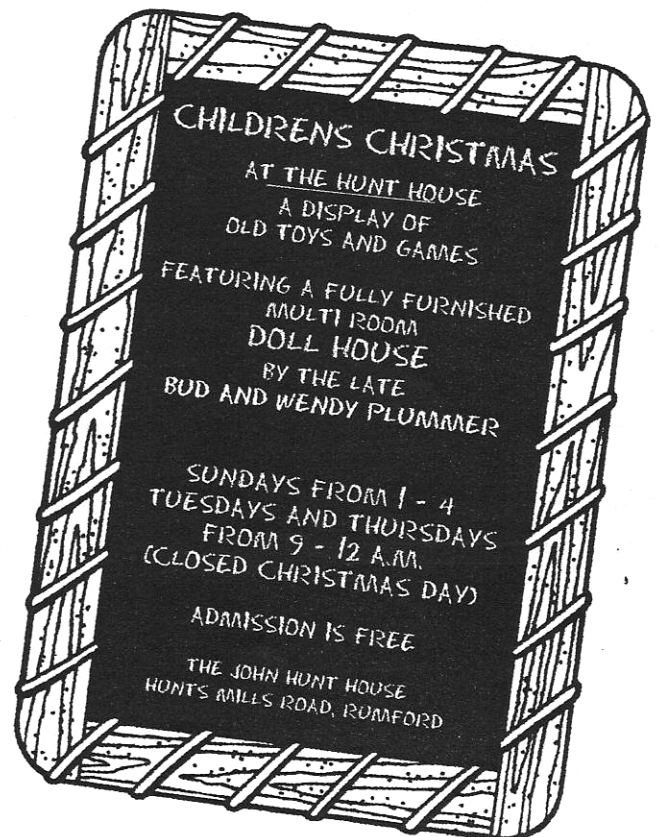
Many of the articles in our collection have very interesting stories. In future "News From the Attic" we will tell some of those stories.

(Note: the Smithsonian is called "America's Attic", so it follows that we are East Providence's attic.....but be assured that we do NOT literally store our treasures in the attic!)

The CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS exhibition is open at the Hunt House and will continue through December 29th. Admission is free. The exhibit is open Sundays from 1 - 4 (except Christmas) and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. until noon. If anyone would like to arrange a special visit outside of normal hours, for groups or families, etc., call 434-3347 for an appointment.

Many thanks to the family of Bud and Wendy Plummer and especially to Nancy Plummer Batty who put up the exhibition...and to friends and family who prepared the Biography which is available at the door.

Thanks also to the Rumford Garden Club, Lura Sellew, President for the floral decorations on the mantels.....to Florence Adams for the publicity..... George Adams for posters and newsletter coverage....Walter and Madeline Vincent who hosted the opening Tea...and Walter, Howard Mersereau and Don Brothers who prepared the house for the exhibit. Thanks to Les Haworth for the signs at the road entrance and to Dr. Daniel, Superintendent of Schools for permitting our posters in the classrooms of East Providence.....and to those who loaned additional toys to complement the exhibit...the Berwicks, Nancy Stevens, Ted Adams, Rose Marie Sirenski and the Vincents.



## MEMBERSHIP

Madeline Vincent  
Membership Chairman

NEW MEMBERS.....WELCOME!

Florence Calondrelle  
Robert and Jean Clarke  
Guido and Constance Del Gizzo  
Anna Gibbons  
Dorothy F. Hammond  
Phyllis Morrell  
Dianne Pinault  
Kelly E. Viana

### VOLUNTEER HOSTS/HOSTESSES NEEDED!

Hosts / Hostesses are needed for the February, April and May meetings. Volunteers are asked to serve at only ONE meeting a year. Meetings are held on the 4th Monday of the month.

Please call Madeline at 434-0481. Anytime.

## Annual Christmas Party

Monday, December 19....7:30 p.m.

Hunt House

Goodies and Refreshments

and the popular

Yankee Swap

(Please bring a wrapped gift for the Yankee Swap)

and.....a Gift for John Hunt (House)

here is his Wish List.....

cotton batting•4X6 file cards•steel shelving•tags  
•\$5- for marking pens•large map files•\$ for stuff•  
unbleached cotton•vacuum cleaner•dish detergent  
•push broom•paper towels•paint brushes•trash  
bags•dustpan & brush•rubber gloves•glass cleaner  
•dustcloths

& etc.

January 1, 1995.....  
Out With the OLDE ..  
In With The NEW....

EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOCIETY  
GAZETTE  
RIGHT ON.  
JANUARY, 1995  
VOL. VII NO. 6  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Beginning with the January issue, we will introduce this new banner to the Society newsletter...the new name and design is intended to present a nameplate to our readers that has a historic graphic appearance which will communicate our purpose and attitude.

Along with the name "Gazette" (which means 'newspaper'!) is a new artistic rendition of the Hunt House facade by Lura Sellew, which will appear on all of our graphic devices.

RIGHT ON.

The motto, "Right On" although thought to be a contemporary slang expression employed by today's young people, thought so even by *learned lexicographers*, actually goes back over 200 years! It was the motto of the *Providence Daily Tribune*, which was published in the 1850's.....and it was from that newspaper that the ed. stole adopted it. It was listed in Wright's *Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English* published in 1857.....with the same definition that it has today ".....a downright and positive exclamation of encouragement, support or enthusiastic agreement....."

The GAZETTE will carry our newer features, including *From the Attic*, by Edna Anness, stories about treasures of the Museum and Clint Sellew's *East Providence Scrapbook*. In January he'll tell us about the history of *Washington Bridge*. Do YOU know how *Washington Bridge* got its Name?..... Read all about it in the January GAZETTE...!

RIGHT ON.

Ed.

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## From Our House to Your House



*(From the CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS Exhibit)*

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