



John Hunt House

GAZETTE

RIGHT ON.

VOL. VII NO.10

MAY 1995

“BALLROOM MEMORIES” PROGRAM SERVES NOSTALGIA TO RECORD ATTENDANCE



Jumping to the Oldies at the Beautiful “Wonderland Ballroom”

A new attendance record was set at the April meeting, “An Evening of Ballroom Memories”well over 150 people crowded the floor and reminisced about the old times at the Alhambra and Hunt’s Mills ballrooms.

Riverside Post No. 10, American Legion became the “Wonderland Ballroom” for one night, and Ed Maddern’s “Strictly Sentimental Swing Band” provided authentic period music.

We are very grateful to Post 10 staffers, **Annette Akers**, facilitator and bartender, who assisted with the arrangements, and her husband, **Don**, past Post Commander, who set up the hall and helped out at the event. He was the big fellow who carried six chairs under each arm to accommodate the increasing crowd!

The **Strictly Sentimental Swing Band** is a “rehearsal” band who gets together once a week for their own pleasure, and occasionally, for the pleasure of others. It was definitely OUR pleasure this time.

We are grateful to Society members, **Virginia Berwick**, **Rose Marie Sirenski**, **Lura Sellew**, **Howard Mersereau** and all you others who helped make it go. Special thanks to **Walter Vincent** who helped stage the event and made many of the arrangements.

In answer to the frequently heard question, “When are we going to do this AGAIN? We’ve already booked the hall for April 22, 1996!

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Virginia Berwick, *Chairman*

The Nominating Committee respectfully proposes the following slate of candidates for elected office 1995/96 to be considered at the members meeting May 22, 1995. Further nominations may be made from the floor at this meeting **only**. Election will be at the June 22, 1995 meeting (Annual Picnic)

President	L. Diana McLean
1st Vice President	Leslie Haworth
2nd Vice President	Lura Sellew
Treasurer	Rose Marie Sirenski
Recording Secretary	Elizabeth Soderlund
Corresponding Secretary	Gladys Panzarella

THE CANDIDATES:

L. Diana (Daubney) McLean, a native of East Providence, is Executive Director of the East Providence Chamber of Commerce, past president of the East Bay Mental Health Center, General Federation of Women’s Clubs of R.I., and the East Providence Chamber of Commerce, and past Protocol Chairman of the International General Federation of Women’s Clubs. She is married to Donald Mclean ...they have 2 children and 2 grandchildren.

Leslie Haworth has lived in East Providence for 15 years. He is owner of Atlantic Flag and Banner in Rumford. He is currently chairman of the Society’s Preservation Committee and is a member of East Providence Historic Properties Study Commission, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

Lura Sellew, a charter member of the Society, was Secretary of the “Original Fourteen” in 1966. She was head of the Art Department at East Providence High School, was named Educator of the Year in 1978 and, in 1993, was elected to East Providence High School Hall of fame. Lura is presently Corresponding Secretary of the Society and has served on the Board for 30 years. She is past Secretary of the John Howland Society and past Governor of the R.I. Mayflower Society.

President's Letter

Nancy Moore

Well, as usual, Walter and George were right. They thought that we all have been working too hard, and we needed a night of pure fun and frivolity. This is obviously true, as we sold out the house for the "Evening of Ballroom Memories" and still, they came in off the street. It was a treat for all of us to watch the dancers, a testimonial to the statement, "you're never too old to dance." Howard Mersereau celebrated his 82 birthday with us and danced the night away. Thank you to all who helped out, and a get-well wish to Madeline Vincent who would have loved to have been dancing with us.

Those of you have participated in the Feinstein 5th Grade Project know how gratifying the work with these students has been. Those of you who worked the Earth Day Walk and Tour on Sunday, April 30, had the pleasure of introducing the Hunt House and Bridgham Farm to some of these children's parents. Actually, we asked the students to give their parents the Hunt House tour and they were terrific!

The EPHS was recently asked to attend a roundtable discussion sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the RI Heritage and Preservation Commission. This group of twenty five turned out to be a collection of "who's who" in RI on the preservation front, and I have no doubt that we were asked to sit in because of our award and our great reputation for volunteer participation. The essence of the talks centered around how these national and state agencies can help grass-roots groups such as our own become connected with others around the state, and how we can all effect greater awareness of preservation through that connectedness. I learned a tremendous amount about agencies that will be able to help us in the future in many different ways, especially the National Trust, to which we belong. And, I know that contacts made at meetings such as this one will also benefit the Society down the road.

1 ◀ CANDIDATES *Continued*:

Rose Marie Sirenski has lived in East Providence for 30 years, is secretary at Bacon Constructuin Co., East Providence. She is former Treasurer of R.I. Professional Secretaries International, and has served as Society Treasurer for 5 years.

Elizabeth (Calise) Soderlund, an East Providence native, is Data Processing Supervisor at the Providence Visiting Nurse Association. She has served as the Society's Recording Secretary for the past year.

Gladys (Bessette) Panzarella, a native of East Providence, is retired from the East Providence School Department where she served as Teacher's Aid for Special Needs. She has been associated with Girl Scouting for 33 years, and serves on the Catholic Committee on Scouting in the Diocese of Providence. She is married to Stephen ...they have 3 children and 5 grandchildren. She is very active in Society events, and is presently involved in the *Feinstein Project* 5th grade tours, where she teaches 18th century games.

the GAZETTE

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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	Elizabeth Soderlund
Corresponding Secretary	Lura Sellew
Treasurer	Rose Marie Sirenski

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Buildings/Grounds	Walter Vincent
Markers	Kristine Rose
Membership	Madeline Vincent
Museum	Virginia Berwick
Newsletter	George Adams
Preservation	Leslie Haworth
Publicity	Florence Adams

COMING EVENTS

MAY

Wednesday, May 10
Board Meeting 7:30 p.m. Hunt House

Monday May 22
Member's Meeting 7:30 p.m.
Newman Congregational Church
"From Pilgrims to Powwows"

JUNE

Wednesday, June 14
Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Hunt House

Monday, June 26

**ANNUAL
HUNTS MILLS
FAMILY
PICNIC**

the GAZETTE

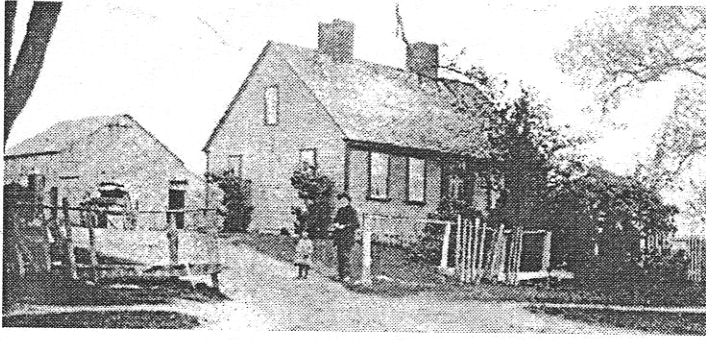
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at



1062 Willett Avenue, Riverside

Reminiscences & Recollections

The McManus Homestead Patricia M. Henry



The house in this picture was my grandfather's (James Edward Mcmanus) it was taken in 1865. The house was located at 331 Newport Avenue, where the Wishing Well now stands. Newport Avenue at that time was nothing more than a dirt road. It extended from Roger Williams Avenue all the way up to where Narragansett Race Track used to be.

What is now called Deer Street, then called Terrance Street, was named after my great grandfather Terence McManus. It was changed after the town of East Providence learned of it because there was already a "Terrace Street," and they thought it would be too confusing.

The older gentleman in the photo is my great-grandfather, Terence James, standing with his son, my grand father, James Edward Mcmanus.

James married Gertrude Loretta (Monahan) at Saint Margaret's Church in 1903, with the reception being held back at their house at 331 Newport Avenue. They bore seven children. The first, Margaret died at birth, Terence, who was a chemist at Washburn Wire, Alice Elizabeth (my mother), Edward a caddy master at Agawam Hunt before moving to Sakonnet, William, who worked for the East Providence Water Department, Theresa, who worked for Memorial Hospital and Marie, who married and lived in Pawtucket. Marie is the last living member from the immediate family and has helped me to fill in what she remembers as a little girl on the farm.

The house itself consisted of four main rooms downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs, with lots of nooks and crannies and plenty of storage in the eaves. The double chimneys opened up into the two front rooms as fireplaces and also the kitchen. The cellar was made of dirt, stone, and shelves for preserves and jams. The house was lighted by kerosene lanterns in the early '900's. I remember my mother telling me how it would be her job to refill the lanterns when the oil was low to the cries of her brothers and sisters "Al, the lights went out."

On the property, I can remember the foundation where the barn once stood. My sister Loretta, and I would play house there with hand-made doll furniture our Uncle Bill had made for us. I also remember a chicken coop in the back and to the South, May O'Connell's gladiola farm, with rows and rows of beautiful flowers. You could buy a bunch of gladiolas for one dollar.

I remember as a little girl sitting on the front steps and watching my

father and my uncles digging the cellar for my uncle Ed's three room house across the street. After the hard days work, everyone ended up in the back yard celebrating with a hot dog roast.

Life on the farm when my mother was a young girl was quite different than life today. Her mornings, before school, consisted of taking the cows to graze. They would travel the dirt road to where Building 19 now stands, the cows would graze and she would return picking blueberries along the way. Fresh bread would be cooling on the window sills, to be served for breakfast along with the hand-picked berries. The boys would feed the chickens and then off to school they would go.

My aunt Marie remembers that if it snowed, her brother, Terence was allowed to drive them to union Primary in the horse-drawn sleigh. She also remembers winter days skating on the farm. There were many ponds on the property; one large one where Nyman Manufacturing now stands and another at the corner of Newport and Ferris avenues.

Aunt Marie was four when her father died, and it was necessary that her mother work to support her family of six. She was a midwife to many of the women in that area of town. After she helped with the delivery, she would stay with the mother until she was able to get along on her own. Aunt Marie remembers being taken along on one of the deliveries. Her mother told her to wait by the brook and she could take her shoes and socks off and dabble her feet in the water. Times have certainly changed.

As time went on, Gertrude found it necessary to sell the cows and parcels of land, which demised the size of the farm. When she died in 1956, Teresa and Bill lived there until it was sold to the Wishing Well in 1971.

I have a few of the antiques that were in the house at 331 Newport Avenue. One item being a 1925 oak hoosier, a tall kitchen cabinet with flour sifter and work surface. It was in my Nana's kitchen, and I'm sure plenty of pies and fresh bread were made on it. I took the challenge of restoring the hoosier and now it graces my kitchen with all its memories.

The big black cast iron pot that sits in the front of my house, overflowing with petunias, was also from the farm. The horses would drink from it then, but now it stands as a memory of life on the farm. Times have certainly changed.

In the April GAZETTE Clint Sellew described the McManus Homestead in his "East Providence Scrapbook". He suggested that Pat (McManus) Henry might be able to provide some more historic information. She could and did!

The GAZETTE welcomes *reminiscences and recollections* and all other material relating to East Providence history and preservation.

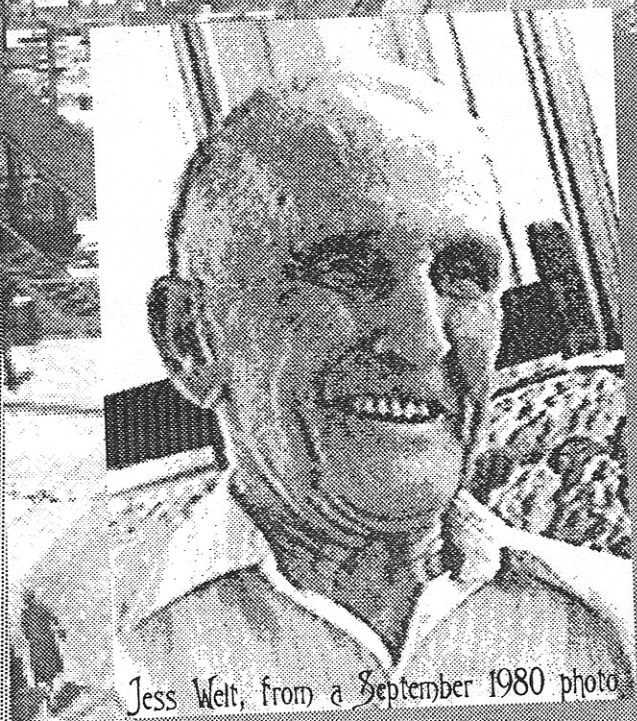
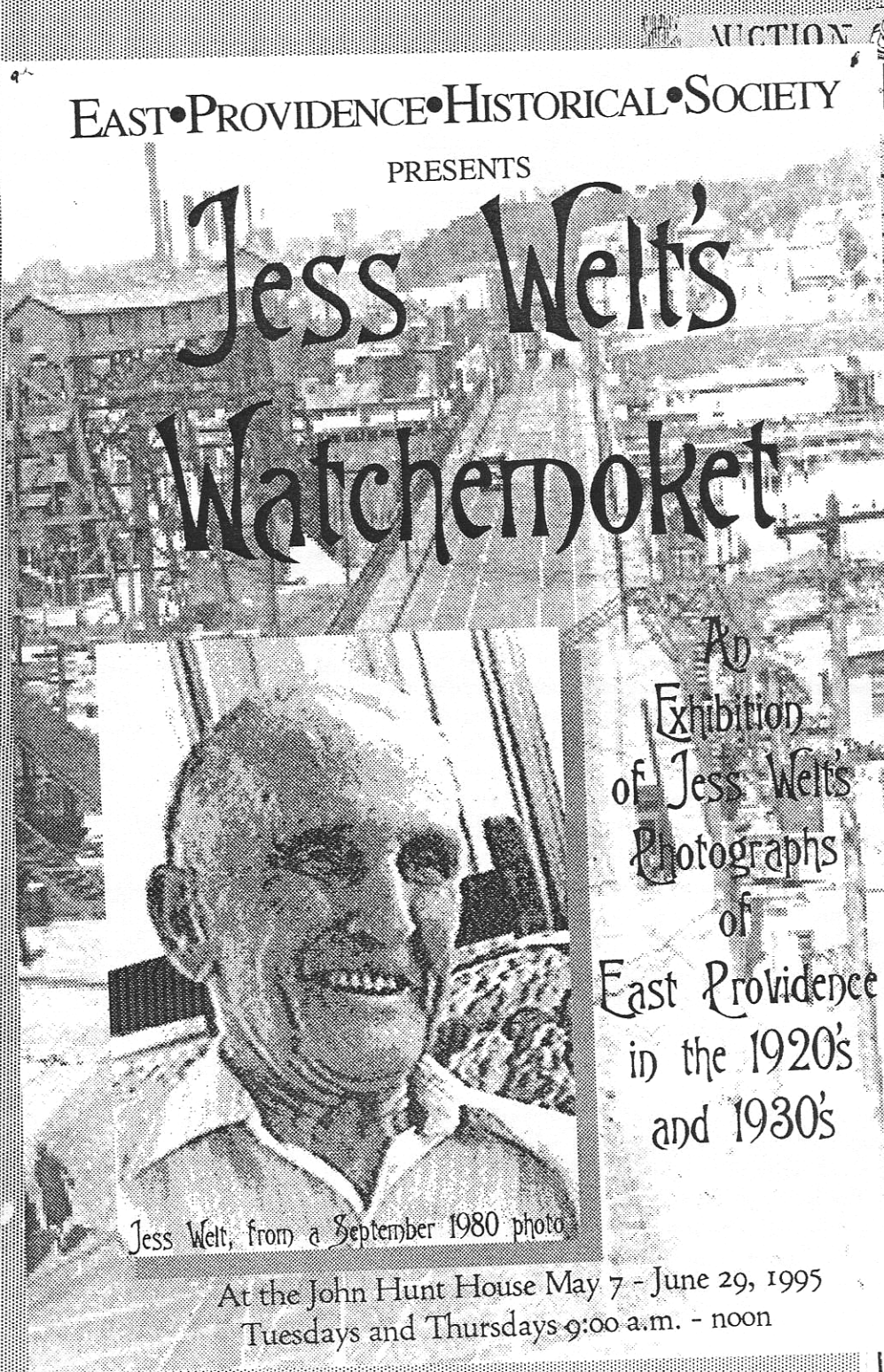
Please submit text **typed** on clean, untextured paper. Photos may be black and white or color, print, negative or slide. Mail to the editor:

George Adams
3632 Pawtucket Ave.
Riverside, RI 02915-4215

EAST • PROVIDENCE • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY

PRESENTS

Jess Welt's Watchemocket



Jess Welt, from a September 1980 photo

An
Exhibition
of Jess Welt's
Photographs
of
East Providence
in the 1920's
and 1930's

At the John Hunt House May 7 - June 29, 1995
Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 a.m. - noon

AUCTION \$100

QUALITY

CASH



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Join the
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olunteer RES
Call the Hunt
or Walt Vir
Keep busy...have
Walt's

~~REWARD~~ \$50 REWARD

EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOCIETY
Annual

HUNT'S MILLS FAMILY PICNIC

Monday, June 26 5:00 p.m.

A GRAND CELEBRATION

FEATURING LOCAL CELEBRITIES & NEAR-FAMOUS PERSONS

THE HUNT HOUSE MUSEUM OF HISTORIC ARTIFACTS

&

Jess Welt's Watchemoket

an Exhibition of Jess Welt's Photos of The 20s & 30s

Exotic Foods Imported From the Four Corners of East Providence

(Hamburgers & Hot Dogs)

& The Famous Hunt House

Strawberry Shortcake

Made with REAL WHIPPED CREAM and Rumford BAKING POWDER BISCUITS

HOMETOWN BRASS BAND CONCERT

By The

Rhode Island

Brassworks

All Are Welcome

Admission by Donation



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FO

ANT
OU

award-winning
T HOUSE

TORATION GROUP

House at 438-1750

cent at 434-0481

fun...and have some of
great coffee!

HOW IT HAPPENS Part II

Last month we showed some of the activity that takes place in order to get the GAZETTE delivered to your front door.

We presented some of the *inside* people who write and compose the newsletter.

In this issue we introduce you to the folks who prepare the GAZETTE for mailing, and make sure that it gets to **your mailbox**.

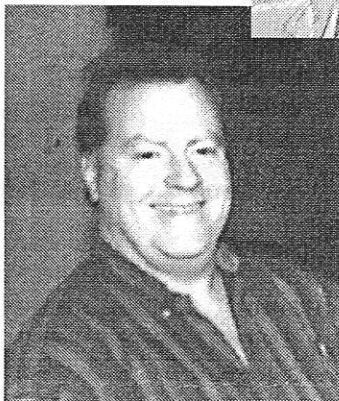
It doesn't just *happen* it HAPPENS!

Fran Gross (l) and Helen Smith collate and fold the newsletters, apply the mailing labels and sort into zip code bundles . . . accompanied by



Billie Arden (l) and Florence Adams ...

Florence takes the bundled mail to the Main Post Office ▶



◀ **Dan Cullen**, jovial postperson sends the mail to *your* Post Office....

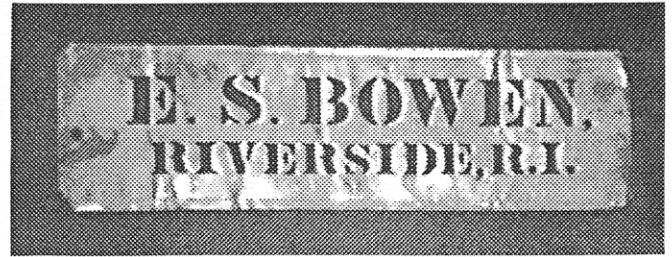
(Don't believe those stories about disgruntled P.O. employees.....they are among the most *gruntled* people around!)

And THAT'S How it Happens!

From the Attic

Edna Anness

Museum Curator



Edward Bowen, a Seekonk native, Moved to Anthony St. in East Providence in 1893. He ran a small icehouse during the summer on Turner Ave. in Riverside where the brook crossed Arnold St. When the ice house burned in C. 1897 Mr. Bowen followed the brook up to Willett Avenue where it crossed and rented some acreage there from the Armington sisters. The brook was named Mosskettash Brook and rose on the Tripp Farm, near where Tripp's Lane is today, and emptied into Bullock's Cove.

Mr. Bowen used oxen and horses to pull wagon loads of dirt that was excavated from the site. A small dam was built on Willett Ave., the site was filled with water, and Bowen's Ice House Pond was born. A large four story ice house was built on the eastern side of the pond. The ice reached ten inches of thickness in those days in winter. When harvested and stored in the ice house it would last almost though the summer. The thick walls were filled with woodchips and hay. Mr. Bowen moved his little family (William and Rowena) to Turner Avenue across from St. Brendan's Church. He had a large business selling ice to the summer residents, hotels, shore dinner halls, bars and markets Rowena trained to be a teacher and was Assistant Principal of Arthur E. Platt School when she retired.

Bowen's Pond is now known as Willett Pond. When Rowena died her cousins gave some Bowen memorabilia to the museum such as Mr. Bowen's stencil for signs and boxes (above), price lists for ice, a receipt stamp and numerous photos of the ice house and pond.

MUSEUM REPORT

Virginia Berwick

Museum Chairman

MUSEUM GIFTS

Received in April

Barbara Casartello Crother - Welt photo of Rich and Horton Store, trolley tickets and two photos of the Navy Rifle Range at present site of Narragansett Shopping Plaza.

Austin and Arlene Butterworth - Rumford packing box, 2 straightedge razors and a tobacco box

**SOME ORGANIZATIONS USE UNUSUAL
COLLECTION METHODS
(we dont)** →



SPECIAL PARKING PRIVILEGES ARRANGED

MEMBERSThe new dues cycle begins in JUNE !
In June 1994 we changed our dues cycle from ANNUAL, payable in June, to a SEQUENTIAL system, payable on the ANNIVERSARY date of membership. All those who were members at that time **still** have a June membership.

The MAILING LABEL on your GAZETTE displays a date on the top line, the first two digits the **year** and the second two the **month**

9507 indicates July, 1995, and is the date that the name will be **removed** from the active list if dues are not paid. (this allows for a 30 day grace)

We urge all those whose dues are payable now to send in their check for renewal, with the coupon below, to **Madeline Vincent** at the address below. This will save the Society the expense of postage and save wear and tear on the Membership Chairman! This invitation is not limited to June members**ALL** are urged to send in payment to **extend** membership for a year.

Continue to receive the GAZETTE, participate in Society activities and enjoy our East Providence HISTORY and HERITAGE.

History is FUN

tell your friends

and show them the G A Z E T T E and this coupon

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. Dues are \$10.00, individual or \$15.00, family.
Please make your check payable to East Providence Historical Society, and mail with coupon below to:

Madeline Vincent, membership
45 Priscilla Avenue
Rumford, RI 02916

EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOCIETY

NEW RENEWAL

NAME (s)

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CITY

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AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____ @ 10.00 INDIVIDUAL 15.00 FAMILY

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The East•Providence•Historical•Society *Presents . . .*

FROM
PILGRIMS
TO
POWOWS
A LOOK AT NATIVE AMERICAN
LIFE IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

Susan Esons, PhD. candidate in Anthropology at Brown University
with slides and artifacts from The Haffenreffer Museum, Bristol
MONDAY, MAY 22, 7:30 p.m.
NEWMAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, RUMFORD

