

John Hunt House
VOL. VIII No. 5

GAZETTE

RIGHT ON.

FEBRUARY 1996

1996 MARKS 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Thirty years ago the East Providence Historical Society was organized. **Lura Sellew**, who was Secretary for many of those years recalls

"... it grew out of a meeting held at the home of **Allen Usher** in Riverside on February 3, 1966. Attending were **Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Flint**, **Mr. and Mrs. Harold Flint**, **Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Whitcomb**, **Mr. and Mrs. Allen Usher**, **Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Howland**, **Mr. and Mrs. C. Dexter Potter**, **Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Sellew** and **Hope Smith**.

It was agreed that we would meet quarterly and that **Fred Bushnell** would be President, **Dixwell Goff**, 1st Vice President and **Lura Sellew**, Secretary. We needed to draw up a set of by-laws, but decided to see if enough people would be interested enough to justify setting up a formal organization. The Society would be open to all East Providence residents and anyone else with an interest in the city. Dues were to be kept low so as not to discourage potential members and, of course, expenses were minimal.

It was a struggle to arrange programs....there was not much interest in the community..."

(See pages 4 & 5 for E.P. POST account)



First Officers: (l-r) **Dixwell Goff**, 1st V.P., **Lura Sellew**, Secy., **Fred Bushnell**, President.

THE "ISLAND CONNECTION" VIEWED BY HUNDREDS OF VISITORS RECEIVED NATIONAL ATTENTION



School children learn about Cape Verdean history and culture from **Virginia Gonsalves (l)** and Museum Chairman **Virginia Berwick**

The "Island Connection", a cooperative project of the East Providence Historical Society and members of the local Cape Verdean community had the largest visitor registration of any exhibition in our history.

The exhibit, which opened December 3 and will continue through the end of February, recognizes the unique culture, history and traditions of Cape Verdeans.

During February East Providence fifth graders visited the exhibition and were provided with a handbook describing Cape Verde history and culture. >3

Beginning with this issue.
the **GAZETTE** will be
published **QUARTERLY**
in February, May, August and November.
Special notices, announcements, etc.
will be mailed when appropriate



SPECIAL 30TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

From The Editor

REFLECTIONS at THIRTY . . . POGO WAS RIGHT

Please read the East Providence Post article on pages 4 and 5, if you haven't already. If you have read it, maybe you should read it again.

My first reaction was . . . "They didn't accomplish much in thirty years . . . they didn't do what they set out to do" Then I remembered words that Walt Kelly had Pogo say a long time ago, "We Have Met the Enemy and THEY is US!" THEY is all the member volunteers who have continued the work and shaped the Society since that gang of fifteen started under great hardship 30 years ago. And they accomplished PLENTYamong other things, they:

- Expanded the membership from a dozen to 300.
- Acquired the John Hunt House for a headquarters
- Won awards for restoration of the Hunt House.
- Turned a collection in a shoebox into the Hunt House Museum.
- Started the "Memories Roundtable" discussions, free-for-all reminiscence brainstorming which generates valuable oral histories.
- Participated in historic properties preservation
- Encouraged community interest in East Providence history.
- Provided a repository for the documents, photographs and artifacts of East Providence history, revealing to young people the roots of their heritage

All this and much more in a mere thirty years! Considering that it took Leonardo DaVinci over 400 years to get to the World Wide Web, that aint bad.

In publishing, the number 30 symbolizes COMPLETION. Perhaps we should dedicate our 30th anniversary efforts to completing the job that THEY, who is US, set out to accomplish . . including the goal of "A Written History" . . the IMAGES of AMERICA - EAST PROVIDENCE a visual history of our city will be published this year!

Let's see what has to be done and do it.

and 30!

MARCH 23: ANNUAL PASTA SUPPER
NEWMAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
(SEE PG. 7)

APRIL 22: NIGHT OF BALLROOM MEMORIES
POST 10, AMERICAN LEGION (SEE BACK PAGE)

MAY 5: OPENING RECEPTION, 1 - 4 P.M
RECOLLECTION EXHIBIT (PG. 6)

MAY 5 - JUNE 30 RECOLLECTION
EXHIBIT AT HUNT HOUSE MUSEUM

Other Events coming up are:
30th Anniversry Memories
Roundtable in May and the
Annual Family Picnic in June

Details in May GAZETTE

the
GAZETTE

is published quarterly by the
EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOCIETY
Editor.....George Adams

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OFFICERS

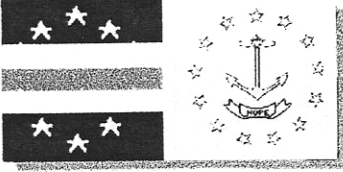
President	L. Diana McLean
1st Vice President	Leslie Haworth
2nd Vice President	Lura Sellew
Recording Secretary	Elizabeth Soderlund
Corresponding Secretary	Gladys Panzarella
Treasurer	Rose Marie Sirenski

the
GAZETTE

is printed
at

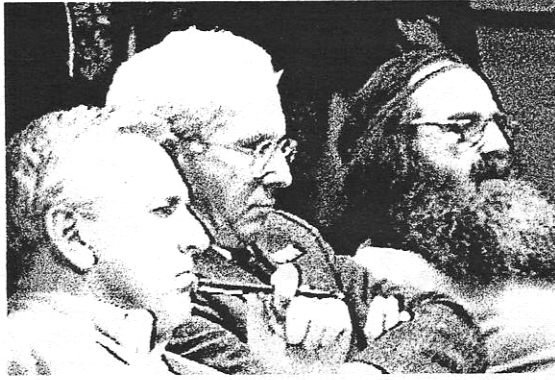


1062 Willett Avenue, Riverside



ISLAND CONNECTION

Scrapbook Selections



Startup...The Roundtable



Key Speaker, Ray Almeida, "An affable bear of a man" (*Providence Journal-Bulletin*)



Edna Anness, photographer Ron Barboza and wife Helen, Yvonne Smart



Singer Vicki Viera, at Opening Reception

East Providence Scrapbook

Page 2

THE EAST PROVIDENCE POST

A Written History Is Their

Historical Society Stresses Importance Of Community's Past

Where is Hog Pen Point?
Who was the first school
teacher in East Providence?

Do you know the name of
the coach stop-over station on
Pawtucket Avenue which serv-
iced wagons and passengers
travelling from Newport to
Providence a hundred years
ago?

If you don't know the an-
swers to these questions, don't
worry. Not too many other
people in East Providence do,
either.

But, if Harold N. Flint of
Riverside has his way, it won't
be too long before the East
Providence community is aware
of its rich, colorful history.

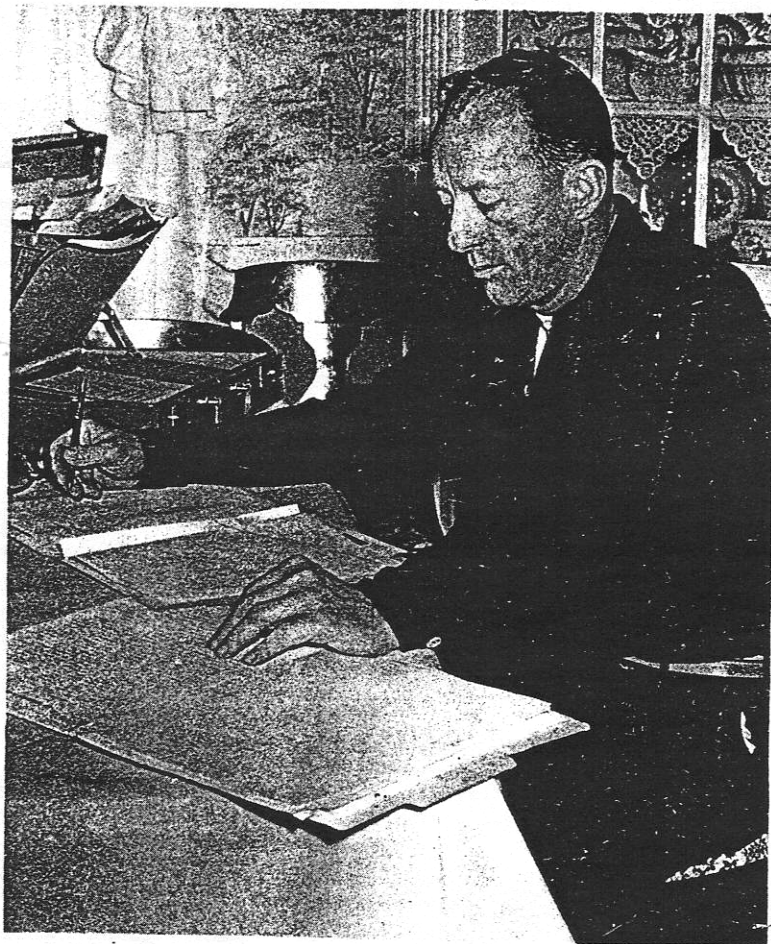
Mr. Flint, who lives at 113
Turner Avenue, is one of a hand-
ful of people who are now orga-
nizing a group which will be
concerned with this commu-
nity's heritage — the East
Providence Historical Society.

"It's an awful shame when
the only landmark listed for
East Providence on literature
of the Rhode Island Develop-
ment Council is Crescent Park.
Why, there is so much history,
so much important history in
East Providence that it's in-
credible how little most people
know about the community's
past," Mr. Flint declared.

The fact that the public,
generally, is unaware of this
section's history is one reason
for the formation of the his-
torical society.

If there is good response
to the plea for enrollment in
the group, and if enough people
are willing to spend the time
to find out about this commu-
nity's past, the important signifi-
cance of East Providence in
Rhode Island and New England
history will be revealed.

Fourteen people attended an
informal meeting of the group
last week at the home of Mr.
and Mrs. Allen Usher, 31 Aber-
deen Road. Those attending
wholeheartedly agreed on two
points: 1) There is great need
for a compilation of facts for
a written East Providence his-
tory. 2) There are enough people



HAROLD N. FLINT of Riverside studies maps and data dealing
with East Providence. Mr. Flint and several other area people met
recently to discuss plans for the East Providence Historical Society.

— Post Photo by Larry Lawrence

in the city who are interested
in local history to form an
historical society.

"What we need in the so-
ciety," Mr. Flint said, "is the
membership and cooperation of
everyone with an interest in
this type of organization. It
doesn't make a bit of difference

whether members have lived
here for a year or for all
their lives. Interest, en-
thusiasm, and a willingness to
work are the most important
factors," he said.

East Providence history has
fascinated Mr. Flint for years.

With his father, Leroy C. Flint,
he has long been interested in
the restoration of ancient Little
Neck Cemetery in Riverside.
Both are members of the ceme-
tery commission which last De-
cember urged action to control
future burials in the land.

Restoration and beautifying
of this cemetery area would
make it an attractive historical
site, Mr. Flint believes.

Ancient Little Neck is the
burial place of many important
persons. Captain Thomas Wil-
lett, first English mayor of
New York City is buried there.
So is Elizabeth Tillie Howland,
believed to be the first English
woman to step ashore in New
England. Also located there are
the graves of numerous Revo-
lutionary War veterans.

Burial control in the ancient
cemetery is viewed as a neces-
sity by Mr. Flint who points
out that numerous persons em-
ployed in the digging of graves
have related the experience of
coming upon the remains of
some person previously buried
on the same spot.

Hours spent in research to
re-discover East Providence
history will be the main task
of the historical society.

The society hopes to con-
tact members of older families
in the city, secure genealogies,
pinpoint dates of historical hap-
penings, and obtain information
about the oldest homes and
buildings in the community.

From all of this data, a
history of East Providence will
be written.

Members of the society do
not pretend that this will be an
easy job. The research involved
will take effort as well as time.
East Providence has not always
been just East Providence. Sec-
tions of the community have
been part of Seekonk, Rehoboth
and Swansea over the years.
Just to complicate matters fur-
ther, sections of East Provi-
dence were once part of Mas-
sachusetts.

Although Mr. Flint has con-
centrated on Riverside history,
he declares considerable inter-
est in the history of all sections

This "informal" meeting was held on February 3, 1966

Goal

of the city. He is anxious to learn more about the early days in the Rumford-Phillipsdale area.

The entire task of learning about our community's past will take a long time.

"We intend to take it slow and easy. What we want to accomplish will take patient effort. Certainly there's no glory and financial reward involved. But there will be a lot of personal satisfaction for everyone who takes part," Mr. Flint said.

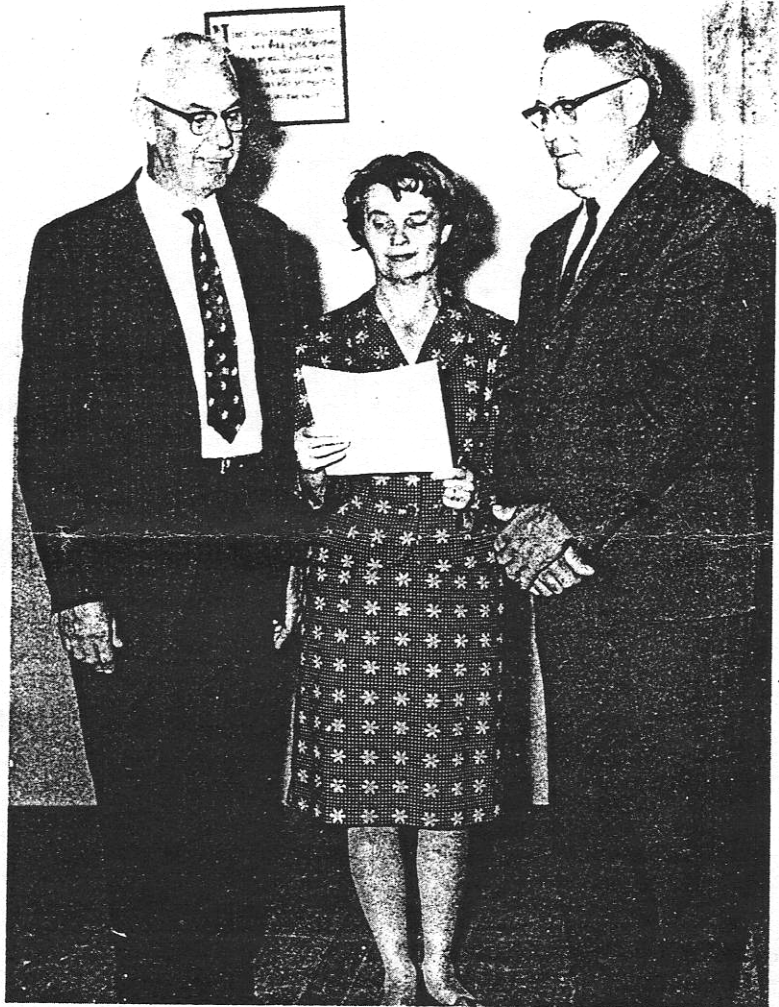
Mr. Usher was appointed temporary chairman and Mrs. Clinton Sellew secretary of the group at the initial meeting last week. An enrollment and information committee has been formed which includes Mrs. Sellew, Mrs. Harold Flint, and Mrs. Herbert Howland.

Plans call for a second meeting on April 25, probably at the Rumford Community Center. All residents of the community who are interested in the society and its objectives are invited to attend. Those attending and enrolled will become Charter Members of the society.

East Providence residents who do join the Historical Society are bound to be more knowledgeable about the past of the city in which they live. They are also certain to gain an appreciation of the pioneers who blazed the trails, built the houses, and struggled to survive in the infant community.

And, to answer the questions we posed at the beginning of this story, they will learn something about John Flagg, the first school teacher in East Providence, about Hog Pen Point, the area near the present Barrington Parkway where the Massachusetts Bay Colony built a fort; and the Bullocks' Point Tavern, where travelers rested on their way to Providence.

East Providence is filled with history, and residents of this city now have an open invitation to learn more about it.



Historical Society

FIRST OFFICERS of the recently organized East Providence Historical Society were elected at a meeting held Monday night at the Roger Williams Grange Hall. Left to right are Dixwell Goff, first vice president; Mrs. Lura Sellew, recording secretary; and Fred M. Bushnell, Jr., president. Other officers, not in photo, are Walter Martin, second vice president; Mrs. Beverly Erickson, treasurer; and Mrs. Isabel Izzo, corresponding secretary.

—Post Photo by Larry Lawrence

The first organizational meeting of the East Providence Historical Society was held on Monday, April 25, 1966

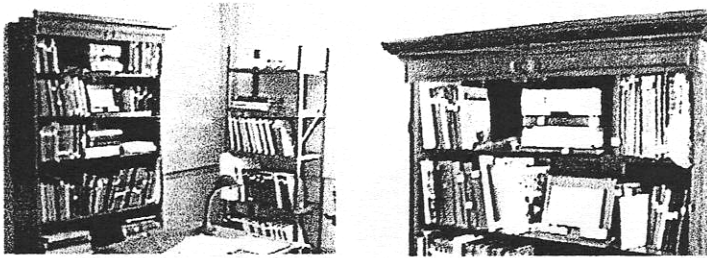
(Reprinted with the permission of THE EAST PROVIDENCE POST)

AROUND THE HOUSE....MUSEUM ACTIVITY

From the Attic

Edna Anness

Museum Curator



Behold, our new library/reference room on the second floor of the Hunt House. This room was finished the week before our exhibition opening on Dec. 3rd. Walter Vincent and his "crew" were ecstatic that week. Not only was the painting completed, but the "new" antique mahogany bookcase had been refinished by Walter and Earl Berwick and installed in the room. Books were quickly transferred from the storage room and voila!- our new library. Those of you who had seen the room before the over haul can appreciate the miracle that took place in the restoration of this part of the house. It had taken over two years to complete. Since January 1st new steel shelves have been installed and there is room for more later.

The mahogany bookcase had been a gift from Judith Sharpe last year. It had stood in her home on Pleasant Street for many years, the house that is known as Lyceum Hall. In addition to Judith's generosity in donating it, she had also stored it for us for over a year until the room was ready.

We have sections reserved for Rehoboth, Seekonk, East Providence and Rhode Island history, genealogy, house restoration plus a complete set of RUMFORD cookbooks, EP High School yearbooks from 1912, annual reports of the Town of East Providence, scrapbooks, papers from the EP District Nurses, Rumford and Riverside Junior Women's Clubs and Ann Ide Fuller Library. We have about ten years of EP Posts and several years of the RUMFORD CO. monthly newsletter, etc., etc., etc.

In May, much of our collection will be "brought down from the attic" for our 30th Anniversary RECOLLECTION Exhibit and will be on display through June.

(The Museum will be closed in March and April)

Accessions - Gifts

Virginia Berwick

Museum Chairman

GIFTS RECEIVED SINCE NOVEMBER

- Ralph Bradley - Slide of his wife at Hunt's Mills.
- Donald Bowden - Thirty four photos of East Providence
- Clinton Sellev - 1899 loving cup given at the Pomham Club by the American Electrical Works.
- Fales Peirce - Four Rumford Co. envelopes and Hayden Chemical Co. letterhead.
- Gladys Panzarella - Photograph of St. Francis Xavier Church.
- Susan Abrams - Victorian chair.
- Barbara Crocker - History of Riverside Congregational Church.
- Bernard Hurley - Book, "Rhode Island - A Guide to the Smallest State"
- William and Margaret Valerio - Front light for the Hunt House.
- Anna Frances Slade - Old E.P. Posts, receipts and pogs (bottle caps) from Bradley Dairy Farm.
- Delores August - Thirteen Lenox commemorative plates "Thirteen Original Colonies"
- Katherine Perkins - Book of Remembrance from United Congregational Church.

THANKS TO ALL!

EAST • PROVIDENCE • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY

30th
Anniversary

RECOLLECTION
Exhibition

The Hunt House Museum

•

Artifacts, Documents, Furniture
Tools, Photos & etc.

May 5 through June 30
JOHN HUNT HOUSE

Opening Reception Sunday, May 5, 1-4 p.m

AROUND THE HOUSE... MEMBERS AND FRIENDS



A
30th
Anniversary
Event

ANNUAL PASTA SUPPER

Saturday, March 23, 6:00 p.m.

Newman Congregational Church, Rumford

Pasta, Meatballs, Salad, Dessert

Donation: \$6.00 adult, \$3.00 child

call Kris Rose (401) 434-5581 for tickets
(also available at the door)



MAESTRO DAN MOORE, CHEF

NEW MEMBERS

WARM WELCOME TO OUR RECENT NEW MEMBERS:

Kathleen M. Blasi
Tim & Maryann Bryan
Gloria E. Cady
Joaquim DaFonseca
E. Norman Humphreys
Daniel Kahn & Family
George & Mildred Page
Karen L. Panzarella
John Rao
Raymond & Beverly Simmons
Charles H. Stevenson

History is FUN

tell your friends

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

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

EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOCIETY

NEW RENEWAL

NAME (s)

STREET

CITY

STATE

ZIP

TELEPHONE

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

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Annual
Evening of
Ballroom
Memories

*Dance to the music of the thirties, forties & fifties
with the seventeen piece*

Strictly Sentimental Swing Band

Monday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.

Post 10, American Legion, 830 Willet Avenue, Riverside

Donation \$5.00 per person

Admission will be by paid ticket onlyno mail or phone reservationsTickets will be available at John Hunt House and Post 10 after March 27. Tickets will also be available at the Pasta Supper , March 23, and the Society meeting March 25.