



John Hunt House

Vol. VIII No. 8

G A Z E T T E

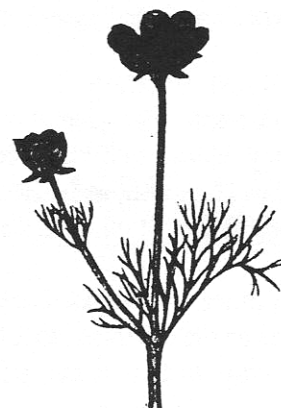
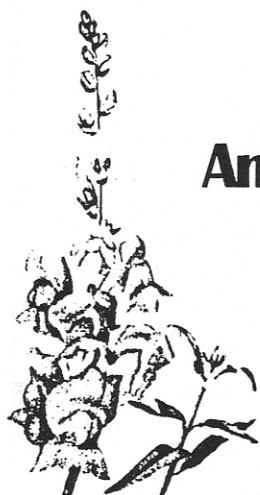
RIGHT ON.

October 1996

Historic Dyeing Techniques - How Our Ancestors Dyed Their Wool and Cotton Cloth

On October 28th, 7:30 P.M. at Newman Church, our speaker will be **Helen King**, one of our members and a specialist in historic dyeing of woven materials. In the "olden days" our ancestors used mineral, animal, and vegetable color as ingredients for dyeing. These techniques were becoming lost over the years. In 1979, while Helen was pursuing a Master's Degree in Environmental Studies out west, she met some Native American women in her Botany class. Together they worked on obtaining dye from onion skins, and Helen later had success with twelve other plants. Her goal is to obtain dye from one hundred different plants, and she is almost there. Many of the techniques are to be found in ancient folklore.

Helen lectures on weaving, dyeing and herbs at the Slater Mill, Audubon clubs, historical societies and garden clubs. She found this new specialty after spending many years in the teaching profession. She was President of the former Fiber Artists Co-op at the Slater Mill. Come early and get a good seat to watch her demonstration.



Board Briefs

It sure was a treat to start off the season early with a ham and bean supper. Many of our regulars were away or out of commission, but the supper details went smoothly, the loose ends picked up by other volunteers. Many thanks to the setup and decorating crew, to the many pastry cooks and the master chef, **Dan Moore**, and to the servers and clean-up crew. It was a tasty beginning to our year's festivities. Thanks go to the Board members who organized the event and a special thanks goes to our youngest volunteer **Lisa Berwick** (Ginny's granddaughter) who helped out even though her grandmother couldn't make the supper. Thanks Lisa!

APPLAUSE! APPLAUSE! APPLAUSE! APPLAUSE!

Perhaps you are one of the members who joined the Historical Society because you thought the newsletter was a great read or you thought the pictures were intriguing. Perhaps you grabbed a free copy at the library because it caught your eye. Well the man responsible for grabbing your attention, **George Adams**, has decided to devote his full attention to the publishing of the Society's new project: a pictorial history of East Providence. This new book has turned out to be a very time-consuming project, one which commands utmost care and precision (George's forte). Thus, the newsletter has passed to the capable hands of **Doreen Bonney**, who marks this issue as her second. The Society warmly thanks George for his many hours at the computer, his attention to detail, his ingenuity with technical matters, his wit and his patience. George, you tugged and pushed us into the 20th century and that was a good thing!

The Board welcomes Doreen aboard, and we know that she will add her own style to this ever-evolving newsletter. You, as members, can contribute your ideas, articles, and comments through any Board member. Please do so.

BITS AND PIECES:

At the September general meeting it was voted to elect **Nancy Moore** to fill the Vice-President position vacated by **Les Haworth**, as he assumes the President's duties during **Diana MacLean**'s absence.

And there was light! in the firmament of the EPHS office as the old vault door became a window. Such a welcome change - come and see!

The GAZETTE

is published monthly by the
EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOCIETY

EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916-4774
(401) 438-1750

OFFICERS

President (Acting)	Les Haworth
1 st Vice President	Nancy Moore
2 nd Vice President	Lura Sellew
Recording Secretary	Betty Soderlund
Corresponding Secretary	Gladys Panzarella
Treasurer	Rose Marie Sirenski

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Buildings/Grounds	Earl Berwick
Markers	Chris Rose
Membership	Mona Breault
Museum	Virginia Berwick
Newsletter	Doreen Bonney
Preservation	Les Haworth
Publicity	Florence Adams
Museum Curator	Edna Anness

The
GAZETTE
is printed at



1062 Willett Avenue, Riverside

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Annual memberships are due the anniversary month that each member joined. We suggest that you check the mailing label on your newsletter for that date. *Example: 9707 translates to July 1997. 9710 is October 1997.* Your prompt payment will reduce the cost and labor involved in mailing reminders.

Mona Breault, Membership Chairman, Thanks you!

AROUND THE HOUSE

Christmas at the Hunt House

This year the Museum Committee has decided to use the Hunt House as a backdrop for an interior Christmas decorating contest. It is open to Society members and members of the East Providence community at large. The various backdrops for decoration are six fireplaces, eleven windows, five table centerpieces, the front door, the front staircase and four trees. Natural materials such as flowers, fruits, vegetables, plants and greenery appropriate to the period of the house are the materials of choice.

If you desire to participate, call and leave your name at the Hunt House along with your phone number. You can select your "spot" by visiting the House between November 21st and 28th. You will set up the display on Saturday morning, December 7th. The entries will be judged by an impartial jury that afternoon. Ribbon awards will be made and the House will be open for a TEA AND RECEPTION on December 8th from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The display will be open every Tuesday and Thursday for the rest of December and on Sunday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**HELP MAKE THE HUNT HOUSE BEAUTIFUL,
HAVE FUN, AND WIN RECOGNITION FOR
YOUR TALENTS AS WELL.**

Call the Hunt House at 438-1750 and leave your name and phone number. You may also contact Virginia Berwick at 434-0998 or Edna Anness at 434-3347.



Accessions - Gifts

RECENT GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM:

Norma Allen - Set of East Providence postcards.

Dr. Paul Jones - Hand press which produces the seal of the "RUMFORD CHEMICAL WORKS, RHODE ISLAND, 1854". Prof. Jones was a guest lecturer who came down from UNH and spoke on Horsford and his baking powder invention in March, 1994.

Virginia Ripley - Four reference books: two on "how to's" for historical societies, and one each on the Pawtucket Diamond Jubilee and EARLY AMERICAN MILLS.

Jane Dryer of Chelsea, MO - HOUSEHOLD HANDBOOK published by the RUMFORD CO.

Austin and Arlene Butterworth - Blacksmith tongs, wooden well bucket, a Camp White wooden mallet, iron dipper, wooden wall clothes dryer, haying tools, a tile from the Second Baptist Church.

Howard Mersereau - Magazine THE TIME MACHINE.

Andy and Alice Valerio - Antique china pitcher and wash bowl.

THANK YOU ALL

NEW MEMBERS

Warm Welcome to Our New Members

Ruth V. Blomstadt

Peggy Carter

Natalie Clancy

Virginia Neves Gonsalves

Christopher Morra

Gloria N. Peterson

John & Joan Potter

Building and Grounds

The vault door is no more. The new window is in and makes the office more pleasant and warmer to work in. Howard Mersereau is in room 408 at St. Joseph's Rehab. We miss his every effort to help in any way he can.

Drop him a card:

St. Joseph Hospital for Specialty Care
21 Peace Street
Providence, RI 02907

Earl Berwick

*"If you're feeling a little gray,
We'll send a greeting card your
way."*

So says Gladys Panzarella, Corresponding
Secretary. We also add,

*"If you know that someone is ill,
Gladys will send a non-prescription
"pill".*

Call her at 434-5116.



Finished window at Hunt House 10/8/96 - 10/10/96.

David Johnson, Contractor

OCTOBER

Events

Monday, October 28, 7:30 p.m.

Member's Meeting, Newman Church

Program: Helen King

Historic Dyeing Techniques



NOVEMBER

Events

Saturday, November 9, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Christmas Shop at Hunt House

Lunch 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Monday, November 25, 7:30 p.m.

Member's Meeting, Riverside Cong'l Church

Program: Edna Anness

"It All Comes Out in the Wash" - How to
Care For Your Antique Textiles.

The Three Railroads of East Providence

By Brookes Porter

In an issue of the "Gazette" in the summer of 1995 there was an excellent article written about Crescent Park. There was, however, one error. The author used the word "trolleys" to describe the cars crossing the trestle to the east of Crescent Park. These were not trolley cars. They were the passenger and freight trains of the then **New Haven Railroad** which were originally the trains of the **Consolidated Railroad**.

I thought it would be a good idea to bring to the readers of the "Gazette" a short but hopefully interesting article about the three railroads of East Providence. I bet that most of you never knew that there were three separate steam railroads operating in what is now the City of East Providence, RI.

The Boston & Providence Railroad Not long after the first railroad, the **Baltimore & Ohio Railroad**, was built in the USA, the **Boston & Providence Railroad** was chartered in Massachusetts in 1832. It took three years to complete the railroad.

In 1832 and until 1862, the land east of the Seekonk and Providence Rivers belonged to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and at the time of their construction, each of the three railroads were built within the boundaries of the Town of Seekonk. Now the citizens of Seekonk were tough Yankees. Before the Boston & Providence could build tracks in the Town of Seekonk, it would have to reach a settlement with the town. I now quote the minutes of the Seekonk Town Meeting of the 10th of November, 1834, as follows:

"The freeholders and inhabitants of the Town of Seekonk voted that if the Boston & Providence Railroad would build a bridge over the Seekonk Commons and cause all roads leading to the railroad to be built at its own expense and to give the town a bonus of \$1000, the Selectmen are authorized to sign a contract with the railroad.."

Later, at the March, 1835 annual meeting it was voted to reconsider the vote of November 10, 1834. But it was not until May, 1837 that the town finally voted to rescind the original motion. In the meantime the railroad was completed, but the Town was continually fighting with the railroad over damages to the **Seekonk Commons**.

Now, where was Seekonk Commons? I could not find any record of it at the Town Hall. It was suggested that I contact Dr. John Erhardt, who was considered to be the Town of Seekonk and East Providence historian. He confirmed my thinking that the **Seekonk Commons** was the "**Ring of the Green**", which was located in what is now the Rumford section of East Providence. In fact, the railroad did then and still does cut through the Ring of the Green between Greenwood Avenue and Pawtucket Avenue.

Once the track was completed in the summer of 1835, the railroad began running three trains each day from Boston to Providence at 7 a.m., 1 and 4 p.m., and three trains from Providence to Boston, the first at 7 a.m., the second upon arrival of the boats from New York and the last at 4 p.m. These passenger trains ran through what is now East Providence until the middle of the 19th century when the **Providence and Worcester Railroad** decided to build **Union Station** in Providence. The Boston & Providence Railroad then constructed a new line from East Junction, just south of Attleboro, to Boston Switch in Central Falls, where it joined the Providence and Worcester line to continue on to the new Union Station. From that time on, the old main line of the Boston & Providence became a freight-only line. It continued to be used until the early part of the 20th century when the line was abandoned north of Ferris Ave., Rumford. However, the line continued to serve the **Rumford Chemical Works** for about 100 years.

In 1935, the line was re-opened to serve the new **Narragansett Race Track**. During the hey-days of the race track, as many as three trains a day from Boston, one from New York and one from Waterbury, CT via Woonsocket used the old Boston & Providence main line through the central and northern parts of East Providence to serve the race track. After the race track closed in September of 1978 the train track was once again taken out of service north of Nyman Manufacturing Company on Ferris Ave., but the track was left in place and is still there today.

Continued Next Issue.

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, individual or \$15, family.
Please make your check payable to **East Providence Historical Society**, and mail with coupon below to:

MONA BREault
34 Josephine Avenue
Rumford, RI 02916

East•Providence•Historical•Society NEW RENEWAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____
NAME(S)

STREET

CITY

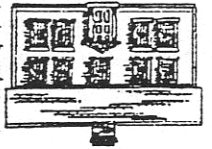
STATE

ZIP

PHONE

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Providence, RI
Permit # 2712

EAST • PROVIDENCE
HISTORICAL • SOCIETY
P.O. Box 4774, EAST PROVIDENCE, RI 02916

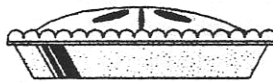


Christmas Shop at Hunt House

November 9th 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.



PLANT TABLE



BAKE TABLE



PERSONALIZED



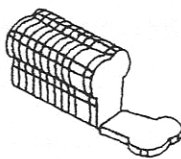
ORNAMENTS



UNIQUE HANDMADE GIFTS

RAFFLE

GARDEN FLAGS AND WIND CHIMES



Enjoy lunch with your friends.

Delicious Home-made Soups, Breads, Desserts and Beverages.

LUNCH 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.