

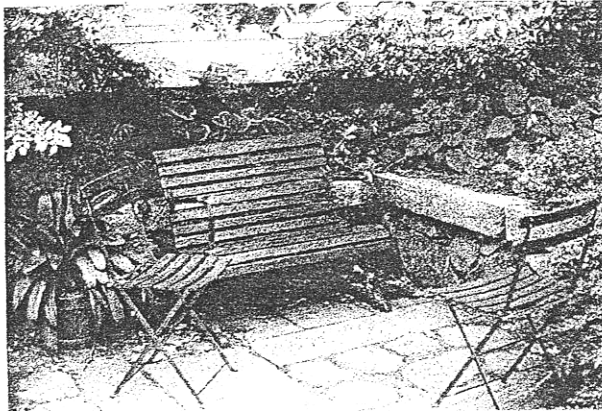


John Hunt House

Vol. IX No. 5

RIGHT ON.

May, 1997



### "Historical Gardens"

At this time of year, we look around in wonder at the color and freshness of Spring. Leurina "Lala" Searle plans and plants that color in such well-known garden spaces as Shakespeare's Head, the John Brown House, the Nightingale/Brown House, and Trinity Church in Newport. At our May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, as the last in our series of homelife topics, Lala will give a slide presentation about her projects and answer general gardening questions.

Lala is a graduate of Rhode Island School of Design and now teaches there, while also running a landscape design business with her husband. Their own home on the East Side is a restored 1847 farmhouse and the gardens there are a visual and aromatic delight. Lala first came to the Society's attention as the consultant for the Coggeshall Farm exhibit at the 1996 Rhode Island Flower Show. When contacted about speaking to the Society, Lala expressed a great wish to see the Hunt House project and its setting. She was most impressed by both after her late April visit. Lala's special interest in historical landscapes and gardens should give our group valuable insights into our own Hunts Mills site. *Please join us!*

### Barbara Marr of Channel 6 TV

is looking for anyone who had to sell their home when Route 195 came through East Providence. Call Edna Anness if you would like to be interviewed about the displacement caused by the throughway. {434-3347}

## From the Attic

Edna Anness, Museum Curator

More history on the building known as Kronquist's Store pictured in last month's *Gazette*: the store itself was built in c.1885 by Nelson W. Britton on Elm Ave. around the corner from its current location. Elm Ave. at that time was called Newman Ave., which went by the Newman Church, west, swung around the rear of the Rumford Fire Station location, crossed the railroad tracks and went south down to Roger Williams Ave.. When the railroad bridge was built in c.1912 the store had to be moved around the corner to Greenwood Ave. because the store was below the road level of the new approach to the bridge. The stretch between the bridge and Bourne Ave. was then named Elm Avenue.

Now, back to the store building. Charles Britton, who ran a livery stable in Providence, opened a hay, grain and feed store in his new building. Charles sold the store in c.1915 and moved to Florida. Enter the Kronquists.

The store was one of three buildings in a complex. The large white house was built in c.1871 by Charles' father, Nelson W. Britton. It was designed in an 18<sup>th</sup> century style with Italianate Victorian decoration. Charles converted the barn into a small cottage for his son, Raymond Britton in c.1922. Bruce Britton and his brothers grew up there. In the 1920's, Helge Holter, Helen Smith's father, eventually bought the white house at 61 Elm Ave. and Helen grew up there. The barn/cottage in the rear stayed in the Britton family until the 1970's. (*From taped oral history of Bruce Britton; interviews of Don Britton and Helen Holter Smith; railroad map from the Rumford Collection in the Museum, and the 1976 R.I. Preservation Commission Report on East Providence*)

## More "Squares and Corners"

Isabel Rich reminded Edna Anness that Kent's Corners in Riverside had been omitted from last month's "Attic" article. Metropolitan Park Dr., Willett Ave., and Crescent View Ave. form this "Corner". Also, she reminded us that Six Corners is also "Legion Square", although few ever call it that.

Thanks, Isabel. Or as we used to say in our newsletters:

**APPLAUSE, APPLAUSE!**



## Board Briefs

The well kept secret of the **Strictly Sentimental Swing Band** is out! Nearly 160 members and non-members danced the April meeting away at the Willett Avenue Legion Hall. The age mix was wide and the dance floor pleasantly crowded, with the listeners having just as good a time. And, one person asked if we knew exactly what date this event would be next year so she could put it on her calendar right away! Thanks to all members who baked for the evening and provided homemade cookies and bars. They received raves. Special thanks to **Nancy Moore** and **Kris Rose** for the liquid refreshment. Thanks also to the greeters, **Billy Arden** and **Rose Marie Sirenski**, and especially the phone committee. And a very special thanks to songstress **Florence Adams** who made all the contacts this year with the Legion and did such a terrific job with publicity. The Legion welcomes us with open arms each year and we greatly appreciate that support.

A photo display of the **John Hunt House** and **Hyde-Bridgham House** restoration-in-progress can be seen at City Hall May 11<sup>th</sup> through May 17<sup>th</sup>. It is sponsored by the East Providence Historic Properties Commission.

## Nominating Committee

*by Florence Adams, Chairman*

"The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for presenting a slate of candidates for elected office for the ensuing year at the May members meeting. **NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR SHALL BE ACCEPTED AT THE MAY MEETING ONLY.**" (Section IV, Standing Rules and Procedures).

We urge you to check the list of officers on page 2 of the Gazette. They have served us well. However, every year it is incumbent upon the membership to consider eligible members for elective office along with the Nominating Committee's recommendations. Be sure to attend the May 19<sup>th</sup> members meeting for the Nominating Committee's report and to nominate your choices. Elections will be held at the Annual Meeting/Family Picnic, Monday, June 23, 5:00 P.M., John Hunt House, Hunts Mills Road.

### Reminder!

**"IMAGES OF AMERICA: EAST PROVIDENCE"** will arrive soon. Members will be able to buy the book at the John Hunt House **for 10% OFF THE LIST PRICE**

## New Members

**Warm Welcome to Our New Members**

Barbara Anderson  
Ernest & Betty Socha

## The GAZETTE

is published monthly by the  
**EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOCIETY**  
P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI 02916-4774  
(401) 438-1750

### OFFICERS

President	Les Haworth
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Nancy Moore
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Lura Sellew
Recording Secretary	Betty Soderlund
Corresponding Secretary	Gladys Panzarella
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### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

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

The  
GAZETTE  
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1062 Willett Avenue, Riverside

## Building & Grounds Committee

*Earl Berwick, Chairman*

Roger has cleaned the cellar. It looks great...come and see for yourself. He also has picked up all debris outside the House and what a difference in appearance. The metal bookcases have been reinforced with wood. The second floor closet now has ten new shelves for storage badly needed.

**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 check payable to:

**East Providence Historical Society**

Mail to: Mona Breault  
34 Josephine Avenue  
Rumford, RI 02916

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## The Rumford and the Depot Square Grocery Stores

By John W. Agren, with help and input from Gladys Kronquist Bradley, Ralph Bradley, Walter Swanson and Clint Sellev

**The following are memories of the Rumford Store and the Kronquist brothers by Walter Swanson, who lived near the Store and worked for the brothers:**

The first time I was a customer of the Rumford Company Store was in 1938 when I was around five. I was sent across the empty fields by my friend Peter Carlson who was then in his seventies. Peter's order was for a can of "Red Copenhagen" snuff and a piece of gum. The gum was for me.

When I gave Lars my order he said, "Aren't you a little young to be using snuff?" I said, "Oh, it's not for me. If you will look out the back door Mr. Carlson will wave his approval." Peter did this from his house on North Broadway.

The Kronquist Brothers Grocery Store was located on Greenwood Avenue, across from Don Avenue. Don and Catlin Avenues were open fields until about 1940. My brother John started work there in 1941 and I worked in the store after school from 3:30 till 6 P.M. and all day Saturdays. I started in 1947 and left to go to Korea in 1952.

The store had a beautiful electric National cash register which was never plugged in. This register had a beautiful marble shelf over the drawer. Two revolutions of a large black and brass crank on the right hand side were required to open the cash drawer. A new eighty-five horsepower Ford panel truck, that could go like the wind, was used for pick-up and deliveries. No computers or calculators, all figures were quickly and accurately totaled up with paper and pencil.

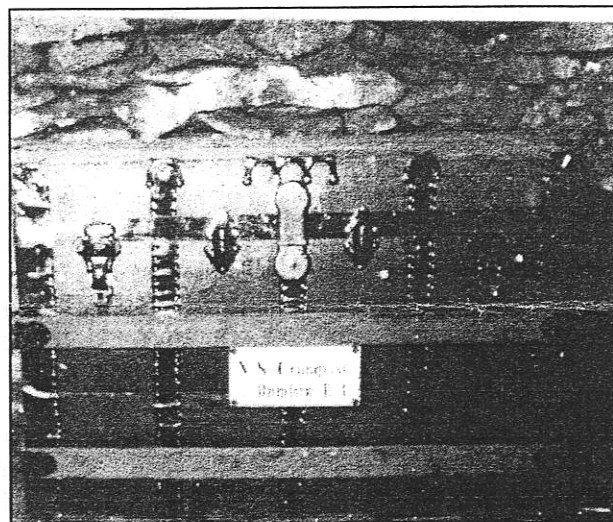
The store had a great smell because there always was a pot of coffee cooking on the fire in the back room where Frank did the bookkeeping. A large coffee grinder on the bench behind the meat counter added to a wonderful aroma in the store.

Working with the brothers changed my life in many ways, one of which was by waiting on Clarence Milligan Saturday mornings. He told me that if I ever needed a recommendation for a job to let him know. In 1955 I did that and was hired by New England Telephone on Mr. Milligan's recommendation. I stayed with the phone company for thirty years!

Lars was the happier and more outgoing of the two and Frank paid more attention to business. I learned a lot about life and have fond memories of my years with the Kronquists. Working with these fine Christian gentlemen provided me with a work ethic, sense of morality, discipline and dedication more important than the wages I earned.



*Frank and Lars Kronquist*



*"Cronqvist" travel trunk*

### ACCESSIONS - GIFTS

- Virginia Ripley** - A set of history books for the library
- Helen Whipple** - Sword carried by James B. Hudson of Watchemoket during the Civil War; the Hudson bible; framed testimonial to Hudson signed by Gov. Burnside; Hudson's marriage certificate.
- Carolyn Hurdis** - An 1837 Family Register Sampler by Mary Gray when she was 12; several photographs.
- Martha Vaillancourt** - Photo of a James St. School class, c.1906.
- From the old Washburn Wire building** - A large display case with all types of wire made at the factory plus "end product" items made from steel. City Manager Paul Lamont recommended that it come to the Museum.

# Events Calendar

## MAY

Monday, May 19, 7:30 p.m.  
Members Meeting, Newman Church  
Speaker: Lierena Searle,  
*Landscape Architect*  
Subject: "Historical Gardens"

## JUNE

Wednesday, June 4, 7:30 p.m.  
Board Meeting, Hunt House  
*Newsletter Deadline*

Monday, June 23, 5:00 p.m.  
Annual Meeting/Election of Officers  
*Family Picnic/Strawberry Shortcake*  
**HOMETOWN BRASS BAND CONCERT**  
John Hunt House, Hunts Mills Road

### Upcoming Events Delivered to the Community

May 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> Historical Society Photo Exhibit  
at EAST PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL *plus*

May 14<sup>th</sup>: Edna Anness & Virginia Berwick  
2 Slide Programs: "Early History of East Providence"  
for Science and Technology Week

May 22<sup>nd</sup> School Bus Tour of Historic City Sights  
with Guide from the Hunt House  
Grade 4 - Orlo Avenue School - 9:00 A.M.

May 23<sup>rd</sup> 11:00 A.M.: Slides and Lecture, Edna Anness  
"Early History of East Providence"  
**PAWTUCKET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**



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