

EAST • PROVIDENCE • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY



G A Z E T T E

John Hunt House

Vol. IX No. 8

RIGHT ON.

October 1997



The History of Girl Scouting in East Providence

The October 27th meeting of the Historical Society will be held at the Riverside Girl Scout House, 351 Willett Avenue. Troop 117 will perform a flag ceremony and talk on the history of scouting in East Providence. George Paige, Society member, will present a history of the Girl Scout House, a former one room school.

The program starts at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments and business meeting will follow.



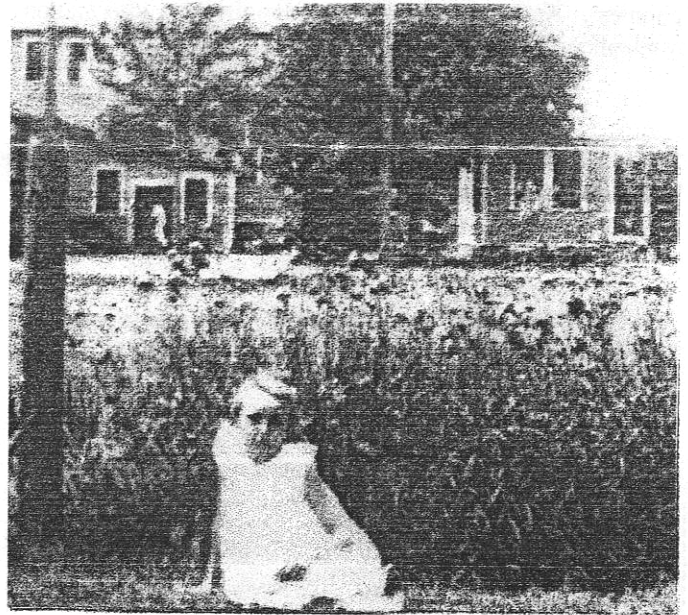
Amelia Cabral at work accessioning in the Hunt House

From the Attic

Edna Anness, Museum Curator

As you all know we have been privileged to have a student intern from Roger Williams University - **Amelia Cabral**. She started volunteering her services in June in a training program in curating and conservation and will provide us with 140 hours of volunteer time before she graduates from

the University this January. She has done about everything - learning, accessioning, storage methods, writing Gift Agreements and doing research in the local libraries for us. We finally have the computer in the Hunt House and this week she started creating a database for our collection. Now instead of searching through our cross-reference files of cards, we can locate our artifacts by computer. Thanks to **George Adams** for creating our museum program for us. When **Amelia** finishes we will miss her very much for she has brought us up-to-date. When **Virginia Berwick** and I have help we quickly "get up to speed". **Amelia** and the computer make work a lot easier.



This photo of John Agren's sister, Gladys, shows the Rumford Churning Company in the background

The Rumford Churning Company

by John W. Agren

The Rumford Churning Company was incorporated July 21, 1920 with capital stock of \$25,000. The business was incorporated: "to make butter and butter substitutes, cream and cream products, and for the sale, exchange, and purchase of any and all kinds of food and dairy products and the manufacture and production of the same, at wholesale and retail".

(Continued on page 3)

Board Briefs

The East Providence Historic Properties Commission made a generous donation to the society's Memorial Fund in memory of **Lura Sellew**, former Commission member and founding member of the East Providence Historical Society.

Saturday night ham and beans don't get any better than what was dished up at the society's supper on October 4th. In addition, home-made brown bread, a variety of home baked pies and **GINNY BERWICK's** not-on-the-menu potato salad contributed to the gustatory gratification. From the table setter-uppers, **Earl and Lisa Berwick**, to the floor sweeper-upper, **Dave Kelleher**, and all in between; **Dan Moore**, Head Chef and his assistants, the **Monday Artsy/Craftsy Ladies** and their decorating skills, the many food servers, ticket takers, dish washers, food buyers, telephone callers and of course all who bought a ticket, we say *thank you* for contributing to the success of this major fundraiser.

Louise Healy has been a 'telephony', telephone committee member, for several years. Due to a different day job work schedule she is unable to stay on. We thank her for her labors on behalf of the society. We're also looking for another 'phony' to take her place and could use two additional 'phonies'. Are you comfortable communicating information by telephone? Call Florence Adams, 437-1530.



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

New Renewal Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

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❁ **IN MEMORIUM** ❁

A donation was made to the Society's Memorial Fund in memory of
Lura Sellew
Sadly Missed... Fondly Remembered

The GAZETTE
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MARKER PROGRAM
 Your Home May Be Eligible for a MARKER



Any building in the City of East Providence which contributes to the historical development or architectural character of the City is eligible to be considered for a historical marker.

Send the coupon below to:
The Marker Program
 East Providence Historical Society
 P.O. Box 4774
 East Providence, RI 02916-4774

I am interested in receiving information about the East Providence Marker Program

Name _____
 Address _____

The Rumford Churning Company

(Continued from Page 1)

Officers of the Rumford Churning Co. were: President, Henry Murphy; Manager, Lawrence A. Murphy; Treasurer, James F. Corcoran. The incorporators of the company were James F. Corcoran, Louis E. McGowan and Joseph B. Fanning. The receiver in 1940 was forfeited to the state.

The Rumford Churning Co. (we called it the *Butterine*) was in business at 160 Pavilion Avenue from 1920 until around 1934. The building was demolished between 1934 and 1936 and must have been built between 1920 and 1924 so the *Butterine* was active for only a few years. After the company went out of business and before the building was demolished, my father expressed an interest in the property...he wanted to fill the building with Brown & Sharpe automatic screw machines. At that time Pa was foreman of the threading department at the Haskell Manufacturing Co. in Pawtucket.

The Rumford Churning Co. property was maintained by Mr. Lamson, an improviser, mechanic and engineer. Mr. Lamson designed, installed and maintained the company building and equipment. The Lamson family lived in a house next to the factory. Their house, owned by the company, was leveled when the factory was torn down.

The *Butterine* product was light in color, almost white. The taste and appearance of the product could be greatly improved by the addition of a coloring substance, supplied by a separate package. I have been told by reliable sources that a Connecticut salesman sold pre-colored Rumford Churning Co. oleo as butter, which resulted in a lawsuit and caused the company to suffer because of the legal ramifications of his illegal act. Butter people were vigorously defending their market against the encroachment of substitute products. Another possibility for the demise of the *Butterine* is that the company was a victim of the Great Depression. We really do not have any definitive reasons for the failure of the company.

My sister, Olga Rholand, writes the following about the *Butterine*:

"The *Butterine* Factory consisted of a large box-like, two story building with a one story building attached. There were many windows on both floors, letting in plenty of light. When the sun went down in the west we could see sunlight shining through the *Butterine* windows from our front porch."

Why a building of this kind was built in this location and who designed it, I never knew. There was a platform in front of it on Ray St., where small trucks would load and unload. The platform was high enough so that we kids could play "off the earth". There was a second platform where big trucks would load and unload milk cans and cartons of the finished product. On this platform there was a rope hanging used to lift material to the second floor. A long rope was sometimes left hanging when the workmen went home, which was a perfect invitation for us kids. We

would grab the rope, kick the side of the building, give a push and have a great ride on the rope.

When workmen went home for the day the building was ours, a place where we could engage in many activities. The floors were greasy and slippery so we could slide from one side of the building to the other, like sliding on ice in the winter. There was a large room with large vats which we kids could spin around. Sometimes one of us would get into the vat and be spun around by other kids, making us very dizzy. At a corner of the building was a coal pile and near this was an opening to the building. Mr. Lamson was always shoveling coal into the furnace through this opening. We would sometimes see flames jumping inside of the big cast iron furnace which heated the entire building. A tall chimney carried the black smoke skyward.

The picture is of my sister, Gladys Agren, and shows the building in the background. Under a maple tree near the Lamson house can be seen a panel truck.

The Rumford Churning Company, like the Rumford Chemical Works and the section of East Providence called Rumford, also honored the memory of Count Rumford.



We thank John, who with the help of his sister, Olga Rholand and Clint Sellew, solved the oft-asked question: "Where was the oleo factory?"

ACCESSIONS - GIFTS

Anita Corrigan - Reproduction 18th century ball gown

John Agren - Gold Star pin worn by his mother when his brother, Edgar, was killed during World War II, plus Edgar's picture and a certificate of recognition from General Arnold

Tom Stringfellow - An old bill sent to Fiske Dairy

Marilyn Brewer - Girl Scout book, Watchemoket photo, mini city directory and drawing of Riverside Hotel

Lewis White - Four Turner Avenue School registers dated 1900 - 1905 given to his grandfather who was on the School Committee

Rev. Stanley Nakowicz - Christmas records made by the choir of Our Lady of Loreto Church

Caroline Hurdis - framed sampler dated 1807 made by the mother of the girl who did the first sampler given by Caroline last April

Ethel Coyle - collection of the "Rumford Revue" and "The Works", Rumford silver programs, and History of Heyden Chemical who took over Rumford Chemical Works

Thank you.

Your generosity is appreciated very much.



Markers

by *Kris Rose, Chairman*

If you are a homeowner with an East Providence Historical Society historic house marker that was given out before 1993, we would like to offer you a new marker at cost. At the present time, ten homes in East Providence have "new" markers, and we are looking to add more houses/buildings of historical value to our program. The cost of a replacement marker is \$50. Please call **Kris Rose** at **434-5581** if you are interested.



Grounds Committee

Ray Anderson, Chairman

The Executive Board of the East Providence Historical Society voted to establish a Grounds Committee to oversee and recommend to the membership, landscaping around the John Hunt House in keeping with the 1790's era. I will chair the committee with the able assistance of **Nancy Moore** and **Billy Arden**. We have met with **Lierena 'La La' Searle**, Landscape Architect, who will provide us with a design, cost estimate and suggested materials appropriate to the 1790's.

We welcome others to join us, especially those who know a dandelion from a daffodil. Call me at **438-2464**.

Buildings & Grounds Committee

Earl Berwick, Chairman

Another year is starting. Our ninth. This year we will be working in the basement to start things off. **Les Haworth** is seeking bids to repaint the outside of the John Hunt House. The newly donated file cabinets are in place and all set to be used.

Andy Valerio is painting the second floor storage closet and door. The heating system is being relocated from the third floor to the basement, eliminating water leaks that have been a problem in the past.

Any help around the house is appreciated.

Museum Committee

by *Virginia Berwick, Chairman*

The ham and bean supper was a great success *because* we had many helpers to prepare the food and serve it. **Dan Moore** and **Kris Rose** did the food shopping. Dan also prepared the ham, beans and cole slaw with help from **Ray Anderson** and **Dave Kelleher**.

Ginny Berwick and **Helen Smith** made the potato salad with a few dashes of spices from Dan. Some members made brown bread and pies - all were delicious. Servers were **Ray and Paula Anderson**, **Nancy Moore** and **Billie Arden**.

Andy Valerio, **Earl III** and **Lisa Berwick**, and **Florence Adams** put up the tables. **Andy**, **Earl**, **Lisa**, **Sophie Allen**, **Helen Smith**, **Virginia Ripley** and **Gladys Panzarella** set the tables.

The centerpieces were scarecrows made by the Monday Craft Group: **Helen Smith**, **Mona Breault**, **Gladys Panzarella**, **Ginny Berwick**, **Alice Hurd** and **Trudy Lima**. We had fun making them and they were auctioned off after the supper...and we made over \$100.

The cleanup crew consisted of **Nancy Moore**, **Rose Marie Sirenski**, **Pat Henry**, **Virginia Ripley**, **Paula Anderson**, **Helen Smith** and **Ginny Berwick**. **Dave Kelleher** dry-mopped the floor, leaving the hall in ship-shape condition.

Thanks to all who helped in any way!



MEMORIAL FUND

The Society's Memorial Fund was established in 1993 in memory of past members for "the betterment of the Society and with no specific purpose."

The Memorial Fund is a qualified endowment administered by the executive committee.

Members and friends wishing to contribute may make checks payable to the **East Providence Historical Society** and mail to the Society at:

Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916

Events Calendar

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 18, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Quilting Exhibition & Demonstration

John Hunt House

Monday, October 27, 7:30 p.m.

Business Meeting

Program:

Girl Scout Troop 117

Flag Presentation & History

George Paige: History of Girl Scout House

Girl Scout House, Willett Ave., Riverside

NOVEMBER

Wednesday, November 5, 7:30 p.m.

Board Meeting

John Hunt House

Saturday, November 15, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Holiday Bazaar/Open House/Cafe

John Hunt House



Monday, November 24, 7:30 p.m.

Business Meeting

Program:

Rhode Island Flint Corn/Jonny Cakes

Newman Church, Rumford

DECEMBER

Wednesday, December 3, 7:30 p.m.

Board Meeting

John Hunt House

Monday, December 15, 7:00 p.m.

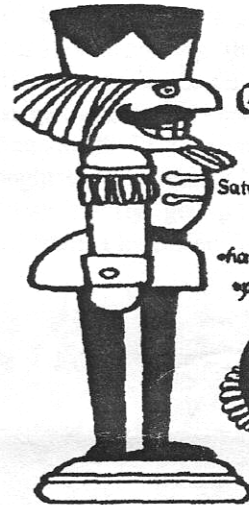
Members Christmas Party

Newman Church, Rumford

Coming Events

On November 24th at the regular meeting, a plaque commemorating Harold Flint's efforts at starting the Historical Society and his extensive research will be presented to his widow and his daughter.

The plaque will hang in the library at the John Hunt House and the room will be name the **Harold Flint Library**. The society voted to dedicate a room to Mr. Flint in 1976 and now we finally have a room ready.



Annual Gifts & Treasures Sale

Saturday, November 15 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

John Hunt House

•handmade items •crafts •unique gifts
•plants •baked goods... •raffle



Holiday CAFE

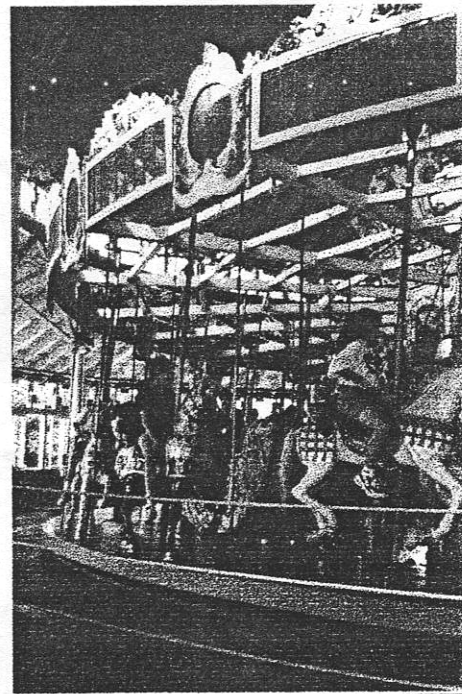
from 11 until 2

Homemade Soups

Bread

Beverages

Desserts



*Bring back some memories...
go for a ride on the Loeff Carousel*



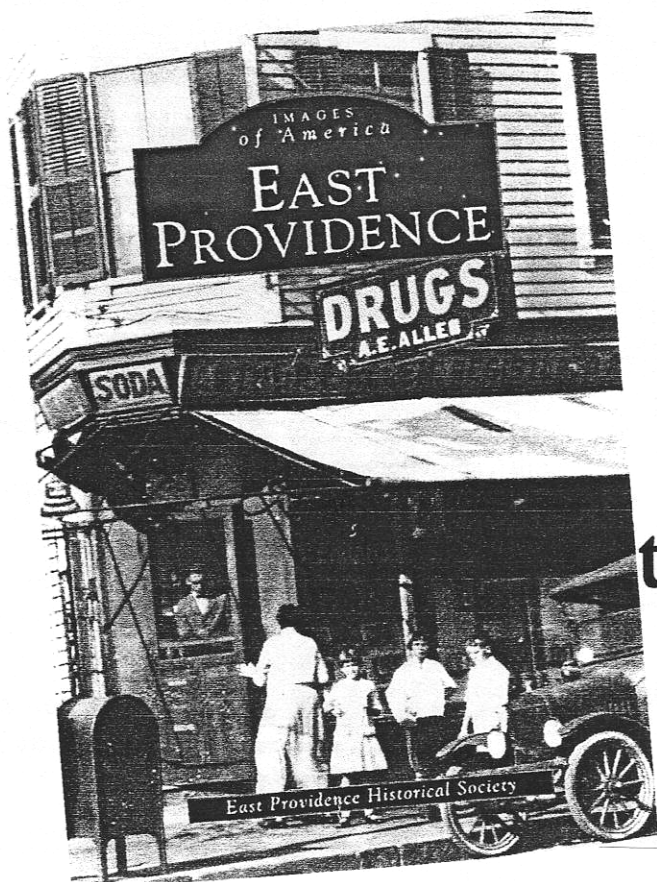
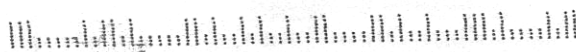
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