



John Hunt House

Vol. IX No. 13

RIGHT ON.

March 1998

March Members Meeting

Monday, March 23, 7:30 PM

Riverside Congregational Church

Corner of Oak and Bullocks Point Avenues

Bob Billington, Director of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Bureau, and Kevin Klyberg from the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor will explain where East Providence and the Historical Society fit into the programs of these two groups.

On one hand we are included partially in the Heritage Corridor and not at all in the Tourism Bureau, except for advertising. We try to get a presence in both groups' publications and yet can get a listing in only one, but advertising in both. They will explain the conflict.

Refreshments and Business Meeting to follow.



"CRESCENT PARK- CONEY ISLAND OF THE EAST"



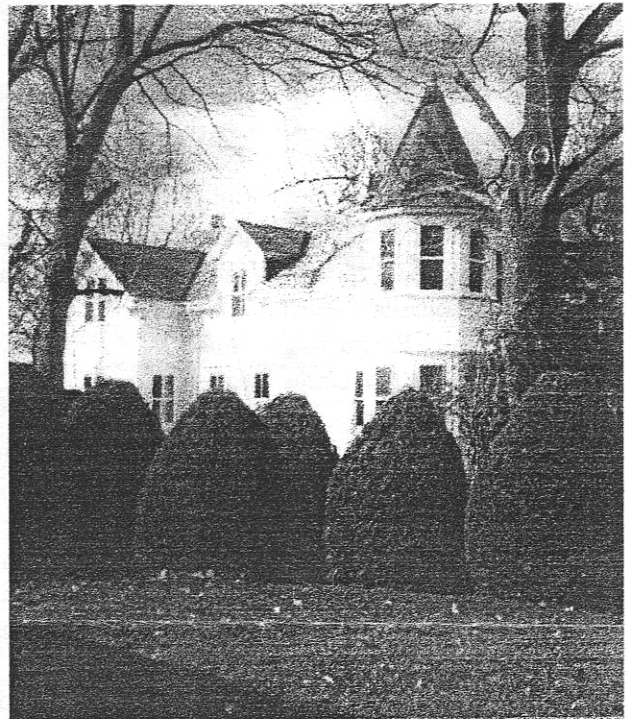
EXHIBITION COMMITTEE MEETING

March 18, 7:00 PM

John Hunt House

Members of the committee are the Museum Committee plus Ronald Joynes, Ed Serowik, Rose Larisa, George Page, Nancy Stevens, Dave Kelleher, Rose Marie Sirenski, Cathy Bliss, George Adams, Amelia Cabral, Joe Kdan, and advisor Prof. Don Wilmeth from the Theater Arts Dept. at Brown University who teaches a course on the history of early amusement parks in America.

ANYONE else who would like a part in the planning is



Victorian Farmhouse Must Be Sold Within 60 Days Due to Rezoning

The following statement was presented at the March 4th Zoning Board meeting:

To Zoning Board Chairman Kenneth Walker:

It has come to the attention of the Historical Society Board that the historical property at 2553 Pawtucket Avenue is in jeopardy. This good example of a Victorian farmhouse now sits on property abutting the Perry-McStay Funeral Home whose owners would like to increase their parking capacity. *(continued on page 3)*

welcome to attend and present new ideas. Artifacts for loan to the exhibition are already being phoned in for pickup in September. **Keep looking in your memory banks. Photos of yourself at the park are good!** Including those taken in the little booths in the Arcade. Remember! They were really awful, but part of history.

Board Briefs

The bulbs are bursting through. The **Grounds Committee's** landscaping plans are on schedule and the **John Hunt House is again open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 to noon.** Volunteers are invited to get involved in the many restoration projects underway. Call the Hunt House, society headquarters, 438-1750.

Bravo! ...to Chef, Ray Anderson, the sous chefs, the cookie bakers, the set-up and serve-up people for the success of the February 21st Pasta Supper. But where were the clean-up volunteers? ...except for **Rose Marie Sirenski.**

Friends of Pawtucket Public Library want you to know about the **National Library Week Author's Luncheon** to take place Thursday, April 23, 12 noon, at the library, 13 Summer St., Pawtucket. **Janet B. Gerba, Ph.D,** author of **"With No Little Regrett"** (yes! Two *t*'s. 18th century spelling, I guess.) will speak about researching and writing the book. It is a historical novel based on the journal of **Madam Sarah Knight** published in 1825. The journal relates the pleasures and hardships of a "sidesaddle" trip from Boston to New York in the early 1700's. A buffet luncheon will be served. Tickets are \$5 and can be reserved by calling 725-3714.

ALSO...Les Haworth, Historical Society president, suggests the following book: **"THE NAME OF WAR: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity"**. According to Barry O'Connell's Boston Globe review,

"Boston University historian, Jill Lepore's remarkable first book is about the significance of what cultures see, what they remember and what they forget. Between June 1675 and August 1676 when Philip, leader of the Wampanoags, was killed, the allied Indian nations destroyed more than half of the English settlements in New England. Thousands of Abenakis, Wampanoags, Nipmucks and Narragansetts were killed in the fighting: perhaps equal numbers died from disease and starvation. "THE NAME OF WAR" deserves many readers."

New Members

Warm Welcome to Our New Members
Ray and Betty Germershausen



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 _____



The GAZETTE

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East•Providence•Historical•Society

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 _____

Phone _____

Rezoning *(continued from page 1)*

The EPHS Board strongly opposes the razing of this building for the following reasons:

1) All buildings, and their surroundings, of historical value must be protected whenever possible to maintain the visual sequence of building in our city.

2) In areas of mixed residential/commercial use, it is of great importance that the residential character remain constant and not get squeezed into smaller space.

It is our opinion that this property represents an important structure in that neighborhood. We ask that the Zoning Board deny the request for re-zoning.

Respectfully,

Nancy Moore
V. President

A majority of property abutters and the city's Historic Properties Commission also opposed the rezoning request. **Unanimous approval for the rezoning was granted.** The house is being offered for sale for \$1. It must be dismantled and /or moved within 60 days. Contact Perry-McStay Funeral Home, 2555 Pawtucket Avenue. (434-3885)



Call For Candidates

According to the society's Rules & Procedures, a call for qualified candidates is to be placed in the March newsletter. If you consider yourself a qualified candidate, 18 years of age or older and in "good standing" with an aptitude for the office you seek, call Florence Adams, newly appointed Chairman of the Nominating Committee (437-1530). A minimum of three members will serve on the committee. At press time, the full committee is not complete. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates for office at the May meeting. **NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR WILL BE ACCEPTED AT THE MAY MEETING ONLY.** Election of officers will be held at the June Annual Meeting/Family Picnic.

ALHAMBRA BALLROOM MEMORIES

Dancing & Listening

Monday April 27, 7:30 PM

featuring the

Strictly Sentimental Swing Band

of *Riverside*. Ed Maddern. Leader

Post 10, American Legion
830 Willett Ave., Riverside

Tickets: \$5. Limited Capacity
Tickets go on sale Monday, March 23
Call 438-1750 or 437-1530 to reserve





The building that was to become known as the Alhambra Ballroom was built originally as an exhibition hall in 1903 for the Second Annual New England Association of Arts and Crafts, Inc. Exhibition. The name is seen here painted over the main entrance.

(excerpt from the book "Images of America: East Providence")



From the Attic

Edna Anness, Museum Curator

Next month we'll be dancing to the **Strictly Sentimental Swing Band** at the Post 10 American Legion "ballroom", Riverside. The point of the evening is to recreate a Friday or Saturday night in the forties and fifties when we would drive to **Crescent Park** for some dancing at the *Alhambra*. The younger generation will probably ask, "The Alhambra?!! What's an Alhambra?" It's time for a trip to the attic for memories.

The Alhambra is pictured here as it first appeared after being constructed in 1902 at Crescent Park. In the winter of 1901-02 a group of men from the industrial, commercial and artistic interest in Rhode Island formed an association to promote an exposition of arts and crafts in New England. It became an annual affair. The **Hope Land Company** which owned what had been formerly **Bullock's Point Farm** in Riverside offered a site for a suitable building. In view of the fact that the largest portion of the farm was occupied by the largest and best-known shore resort in New England, namely **Crescent Park**, and "that its transportation facilities are equaled by no other similar resort, that the annual attendance at the Park is many times larger than at any other Eastern public pleasure park, and that its superb location upon the beautiful shores of Narragansett Bay renders it especially attractive to visitors to Providence, seemed to leave no room for doubt that its selection for the location of the Exposition fully met the ideal of every essential of an undertaking of this character."

The architects were **Wright and Ingraham** and the building contract went to **J.W. Bishop Co.** of Providence and Worcester. Ground was broken April 16, 1902 and the building was completed on June 1st. Three-thousand incandescent lights decorated the exterior of the building along with flags by Allen-Bates Co. of New York and awnings by L.F. Pease Co. of Providence. The Secretaries of War, the Treasury and the Agriculture Departments allowed (for the first time ever) exhibits from their departments to leave their primary site. **U.S. Senator Nelson Aldrich** was the prime mover of the exhibition.

3 O'clock in the Morning



It's three o'clock in the



morning, we've danced



the whole night through,



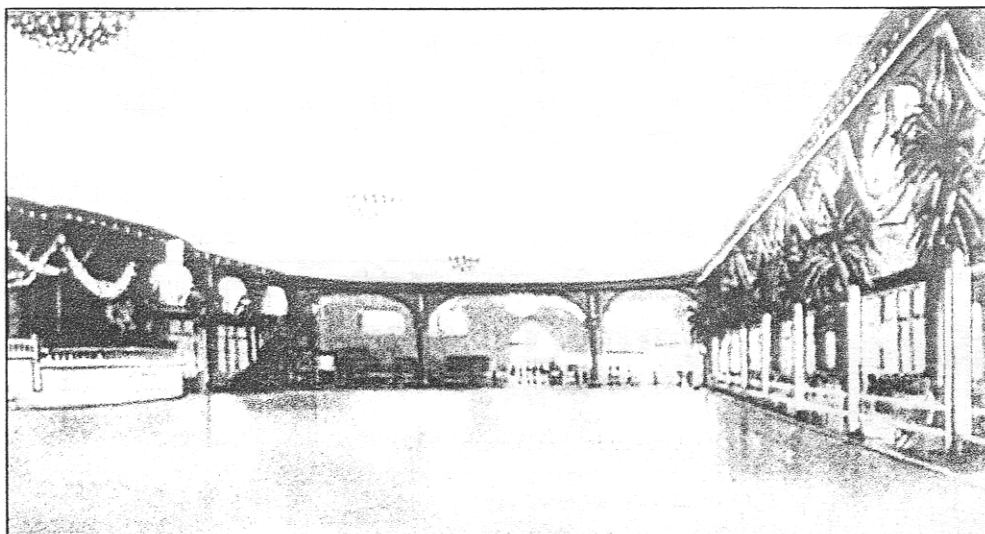
and daylight soon will



be dawning... just one



more waltz with you.



In later years the large hall became a ballroom where very significant social events were held. A very large bar was installed on the south wall and elaborate decorative sparkly draperies were hung from chandeliers and walls. A beautiful porch extended along the cove side of the building where couples would gather to admire the twinkling night sky and view. Yours truly remembers public weekend dances to the big band sound in the 40's and 50's. During intermission one could catch a short ride on the carousel or have a picture taken in the Arcade. Anyone remember the **Annual Firemen's Ball?**

So on April 27th, close your eyes, sway to the music, imagine sparkling drapes and the cool breeze coming off the cove. You will almost taste the salt in the air.
(photo courtesy of Ed Serowik. Ref. And quote from "Arts & Crafts Official Souvenir of the Exposition of the New England Assoc. of Arts & Crafts" First Edition. Providence: A.M. Thomas 1902. Dates of Expo: June 14 to Sept. 15, 1902)

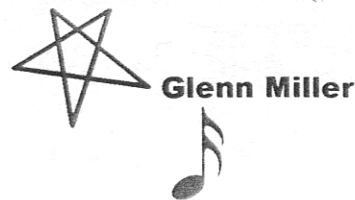
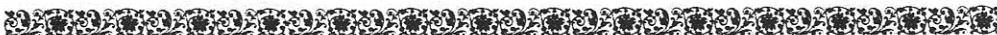


Letters

For those who are lucky enough to be of Swedish ancestry there is an organization to help you find your Swedish ancestors. It is called **SARA**. **SARA** stands for **Swedish Ancestry Research Association**. It costs twenty dollars to be a member. Meetings are usually held monthly and, obviously, members are interested in finding their Scandinavian ancestry.

The address, by e-mail, is Cgsullivan@aol.com. The mailing address is:
P.O. Box 70603, Worcester, MA 01607-0603. Meetings are usually held in the Worcester area, are informal and are usually followed by coffee and Swedish pastry. There is a monthly newsletter. In the recent past we have had slides of Sweden, lectures on the Vikings, and stories of Swedish customs.

Yours truly,
John Agren



Glenn Miller



Harry James



Benny Goodman



Gene Krupa



Desi Arnaz





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Events Calendar

MARCH

Wednesday, March 18, 7:00 p.m.

**"CRESCENT PARK-
 THE CONEY ISLAND OF THE EAST"**
Exhibition Committee

John Hunt House
 Hunts Mills Rd., Rumford

Open to all interested in the planning.



Monday, March 23, 7:30 p.m.

Members Meeting

Riverside Congregational Church
 (corner Oak & Bullocks Point Aves.)

Program: Representatives of Blackstone Valley
 Tourism Bureau and Blackstone Valley National
 Heritage Corridor

APRIL

Wednesday, April 1, 7:30 p.m.

Board Meeting
 John Hunt House
Newsletter Deadline

Thursday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.

**East Providence Historic Properties
 Commission**

East Providence Community Center
 (Union Primary School)
 1320 Pawtucket Avenue, Rumford



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

Alhambra Ballroom Memories
Strictly Sentimental Swing Band
 Post 10 American Legion "Ballroom"
 830 Willett Ave., Riverside