



John Hunt House

Vol. X No. 11

July/August 1999

Preservation Report

By Dave Kelleher

I am glad to report some good news concerning two historic properties.

The Joseph Luther House C.A. 1870

Providence Country Day School is now in the process of restoring the Joseph Luther House. This is the farm house on the PCD property near the entrance to East Providence Senior High School.

The house was beginning to deteriorate quite badly.

Due to the interest of the Board of Directors, especially Mr. Bazar, Chairman, and a Mrs. Martin, board member, a Senior Project was begun.

Some of the members of the senior class were trained in historic restoration methods by Mr. Sullivan, a contractor whose stepson, I believe, is a senior.

Mr. Sullivan is generously giving of his time to the project. A new roof, gutters, porch, and exterior painting have now been completed.

Plans are now in place to bring the inside to some level of improvement so that possibly some teachers on the staff could live there.

We are very pleased with the restoration of this piece of property.

The James Dennis House C.A. 1870's 3120 Pawtucket Avenue

Recently, the James Dennis House was bought by John and Krista Jarrell and Brown Alumni '88 & '91.

They have renovated the upper floors of the house and have opened it as a bed and breakfast. It is now known as Victory Inn.

As of now the inn consists of five guest rooms and a dining area. The rooms all have names: William Brewster - second floor, Corrie Ten Boom, John Bunyan, William

Tyndale - all on the third floor, and Esther's Tower - located in the fourth floor peak of the tower.

The East Providence Historic Properties Commission, at the invitation of Mr. & Mrs. Jarrell, will hold the September meeting at the Victory Inn on September 9th.

The Philip Walker House

A showing of the Philip Walker House was arranged by Dave Kelleher for members of the East Providence Historic Properties Commission.

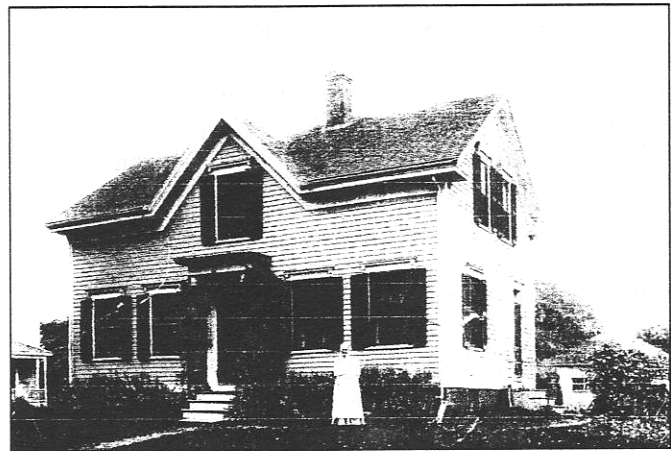
Some members of the East Providence Historical Society and the East Providence Planning Department were also invited to attend.

The R.I. Heritage Trust is continuing its plans to do something with the house to prevent further deterioration.

At this time it appears that the Trust is considering having the house as a *working museum*, leaving the interior 'as is' for use as a laboratory for historic purposes.

The Trust had an inventory done on the important furniture, valued at \$50,000. They plan to sell the furniture to help finance improvements to the house.

I will keep you informed on the progress of this project.



Christine M. Hammarlund, born in Sweden in 1851, stands in front of her home on Newman Avenue in Rumford.

Story on Page 3

Board Briefs

Bob Tewksbury was elected president of the Society at the Annual Meeting in June. He officiated at the July board meeting with the following re-elected members: **Nancy Moore**, 1st Vice President; **Dave Kelleher**, 2nd Vice President; **Betty Soderlund**, Recording Secretary; **Gladys Panzarella**, Corresponding Secretary; **Rose Marie Sirenski**, Treasurer. Check the masthead for the dedicated committee chairmen who are also willing to serve yet another term. **BUT...** we have been operating without a Finance, Program, or Ways and Means Chairman. The Board has collectively been taking on these duties. Perhaps this is the year you will consider a further commitment to the Society. We can provide you with the job description. **Call the Society, 438-1750.**

The John Hunt House will be open Sundays through July and August from 1 to 3 p.m. The house, headquarters of the East Providence Historical Society, has a vast collection of East Providence memorabilia.

Annual Memberships

Annual memberships are due the anniversary month that each member joined. We suggest that you check the address label on your newsletter for that date.

**Example: 9907 translates to July, 1999
2003 translates to March, 2000**

Your prompt payment will reduce the cost and labor involved in mailing reminders.

Mona Breault, Membership Chairman, thanks you.

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 with form below to:

Mona Breault

**34 Josephine Avenue
Rumford, RI 02916**

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ANNUAL PICNIC

Kris Rose, Chairman

Thanks to all who joined us at the Annual Picnic in June. The food and company were enjoyed by all!

One thing that would help the picnic run smoother is an additional **charcoal grill**. If anyone has one they would like to donate to the Society, and it is a minimum of 24" long, please call **Kris Rose** at 434-5581.

The Hammarlunds of Rumford

By Anna Hammarlund Agren

Hokan Carlson Hammarlund was born in Smoland, Sweden, October 11, 1846. **Christine Magnuson** was born in Smoland May 5, 1851. Hokan came to America in 1873 and started working at the **Rumford Chemical Works** that year. Christine came to America a year later. They were married on November 6, 1875. They had eight children.

The first Swedes who came to Rumford were **Andrew Hokanson** in November 1871, **Peter Peterson** in September 1872, **Nels Swenson** in June 1872, **Hokan Hammarlund** in January 1873, and **Peter Wenberg** in May 1873.

One of the first preachers was **Knut Ostergren**, who was the man who encouraged the young Swedish folks to come to the Chemical Works. He was studying at Harvard. He went to Boston, put a tag on them and sent them here.

In 1885, **Carl V. Holm** preached in Providence and Rumford. The first meetings were held in **Newman Congregational Church**. The women organized their sewing circle to defray the expenses of the minister. The women held their meetings and even held their auctions in their homes. At that time their men worked in Rumford Chemical Works for nine and ten dollars a week.

The new Americans had large families, so most of their pay went back to the company grocery store, and as they lived in company-owned houses, the rent went back also. The wives had very little money to spend, but kept up making quilts, aprons, etc. for their annual auctions.

Most of the families owned their own cow and chickens. The extra milk, chickens and eggs were sold to the neighbors and made extra income. Many of the women took in boarders, usually "green horns", as the new arrivals were called. All extra space in the house was filled, even the cellar was fixed up for the poor Swedes to live in until they could find better quarters and work.

This wonderful article was submitted by Anna Hammarlund Agren's daughter Olga Agren Rohland. The house pictured on Page 1 is located at 251 Newman Avenue in Rumford and received a plaque from the East Providence Historical Society last year.

Gifts to the Museum

Alcott Corporation - Barber's Dairy bottle rack and bottle cap.

Dennis Mullervy - Framed picture of list of past presidents of the Riverside Businessmen's Association and news article about Philomena Bucci, the original owner of the picture.

Lowell Anness - Narragansett Race Track uniform.

George Page - Two milk bottles from local dairies, Read Dairy and Berry Farm.

Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Andrade - Milk bottle from Bayview Dairy

Ken Roberts - Two milk bottles, Maplehurst Farm and Bayview Dairy.



Applause! Applause!

Grounds Committee

by Ray Anderson, Chairman

The Grounds Committee is actively seeking financial assistance from a state charity. These funds would be used for construction costs associated with the left side Hunt House cottage garden and the extensive rear yard renovations and construction.

In the meantime, donations for memorial flowers for the cottage garden are still needed. These funds will be used solely to purchase and/or replace, as needed, memorial plants for the gardens.

Should you care to remember a special person or just make a contribution to the *cottage rock garden*, make checks payable to

East Providence Historical Society
and mail to the Society at
Box 4774, East Providence, RI 02916, Attn:
Ray Anderson.

Recent donations have come from **Richard and Barbara Bushnell** and a memorial to **Mildred "Pinky" Page** from **George Page**.

Renaissance of Riverside

Riverside is an old East Providence community that brings out a fierce loyalty among residents, present and past. Its business center is Riverside Square, a throwback to the time when you could walk from your house to buy a stuffed quahog, get your lawn-mower blades sharpened, or dine on a meatball sub. Though gloriously unpretentious, Riverside Square can nevertheless use some sprucing up. A local business group is on the case. The Riverside Business Owners' Association deserves the support of citizens and local government.

East Providence has already applied for a \$275,650 grant from the state Department of Transportation. The money would be used to improve Riverside Square's street lighting, plant trees and other landscaping, add new crosswalks and install better signs for area businesses.

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Events Calendar

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday, September 8, 1999 7:30 p.m.

Board Meeting (Members Welcome)

John Hunt House, Hunts Mills Rd., Rumford

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

Members Meeting

Newman Church, Rumford

**Program: Edna Anness/Dave Kelleher/
Gladys Panzarella**

**Follow-up on success of fifth grade student tour of
the Hunt House, Bridgham Farm Walk and Early
American games played.**

Renaissance of Riverside (continued from page 3)

Riverside Square is at the intersection of Pawtucket, Turner and Bullocks Point Avenues. The association also asked the city to help out, and last month the East Providence City Council obliged. The council agreed to provide \$20,000 for improvements to common areas and up to \$10,000 for professional design work. The city also offered to pay matching

grants of as much as \$2,000 to business owners who pay to improve facades on their properties. We assume that the city will grant the association's most reasonable request, which is to clean up several small city-owned parcels in the area.

(Special thanks goes to Four Town Farm in neighboring Seekonk, which helped the association run a successful fund-raising plant sale in Riverside. Four Town Farm supplied the plants at wholesale prices and allowed the association to sell them on consignment.)

Riverside has so much going for it. It is a wonderful jumble of intimate narrow streets bordering on Narragansett Bay. The popular East Bay Bicycle Path winds right through Riverside Square, and the vintage carousel at Crescent Park is just down the road. Proposals to improve the business center's links to the bike path and improved bus stops along Bullocks Point Avenue are part of the DOT grant proposal.

Rhode Island is blessed with a number of distinctive old villages that need just a little attention to restore their faded charms. Pawtuxet Village in Cranston was fixed up with great success. Similar improvements are being made on Apponaug Village in Warwick. These unique places, all surrounded by healthy communities, lost some of their economic strength as consumer tastes moved toward big shopping strips outside the center of town. Those trends, however, seem to be reversing as more of us seek the warmth of village life. All that's needed to help these places come back to life is some simple attention - fresh paint, better traffic planning, etc. Riverside would seem an excellent candidate for renaissance.

(Re-printed from the Providence Journal - June 8, 1999)