



John Hunt House

Gazette

VOL. XII No. 7

APRIL 2001

EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOCIETY

Annual

Ballroom Memories

Concert and Dance

Featuring the

Strictly Sentimental Swing Band

Monday April 23, 7:30 p.m.

Post 10 American Legion
830 Willett Avenue, Riverside

Donation, \$5.00 per person

Tickets on sale at Post 10
or telephone the Historical Society for reservations
(401) 438-1750 or (401) 437-1530
Tickets will be held at the door

Annual *Ballroom Memories* Concert and Dance at April Members Meeting

You are invited to attend the concert and dance described in the poster on the left. This event is a fund raiser for the Historical Society and the Legion's **Gilbert/Kremp Scholarship Fund**. We will be contacting members to provide desserts to go along with **Kris Rose's** "Rainbow Punch"

One doesn't have to dancewatching, listening and socializing will result in an enjoyable evening which will also benefit the Society and the Scholarship Fund.

Speaking of Ballroom Memories



Charlie Weygand and the Alhambra Ballroom Band 1950

The Gazette

is published monthly by the

EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOCIETY

P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI 02916-4774

Tel: (401) 438-1750 E-Mail: ephist@home.com

OFFICERS

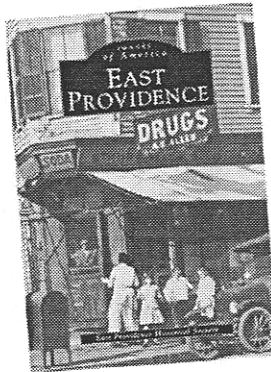
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Nancy Moore	<i>2nd Vice President</i>
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Gladys Panzarella	<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>
Peter Allen	<i>Treasurer</i>

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Ray Anderson	<i>Grounds</i>
Kris Rose	<i>Markers</i>
Mona Breault	<i>Membership</i>
Virginia Berwick	<i>Museum</i>
Edna Anness	<i>Museum Curator</i>
Florence Adams	<i>Newsletter</i>
Les Haworth	<i>Preservation</i>
Ray Anderson/David Kelleher	<i>Program</i>
Florence Adams	<i>Publicity</i>

Around The House

- The **John Hunt House Museum** is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 AM to Noon, and by appointment. For appointment telephone the Museum at (401) 438-1750.
- The Hospitality Committee thanks **Pat Henry, Mona Breault, Virginia Berwick and Florence Adams** for providing the "goodies" at the March 26 meeting.



"IMAGES of AMERICA EAST PROVIDENCE" is back in stock.

Visit the past for a mere \$18.88 (tax included) at the Hunt House Museum Store

NEW MEMBERS

Warm Welcome to Our New Members:

Barry Geary
Andre & Linda Papineau

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, \$15 family or a Life membership for \$150.

Please make check payable to: East Providence Historical Society

and mail with form below to:

Mona Breault
34 Josephine Avenue
Rumford, RI 02916-3018

New Renewal/ Change
EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Name(s) _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip (+4) _____ Phone _____

Amount Enclosed: \$15.00 Family \$10.00 Individual \$150.00 Life

From The Attic

Edna Anness, *Museum Curator*

By sheer coincidence last week on the day of the indictments of Providence City Officials we received in a gift to the Museum a pamphlet entitled "REPORT of the INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE of EAST PROVIDENCE-elected February 21,1878". The donor suggested I read it immediately as it was very timely. Now remember, in 1878 our then Town was only *sixteen years old*. We had a Council of five elected members running the Town.

For this story we will leave out names, for they really do not matter here. What is of interest is the familiarity of the type of investigation.

Article Two of the report reads: "Purpose-To see if the Town will elect a committee with power to send for persons and papers, to examine the accounts, doings and proceedings of the town officers, or any one of them, to ascertain if all the funds received and properly belonging to the town have been paid into the treasury, or belonging to other parties have been promptly paid to said other parties, and to ascertain who if any of the said officers have received from any parties money or other considerations to perform certain acts, and if the pay of said officers or any of them have been in excess of law or in any instance unreasonably large, and also to ascertain if any property rightfully belonging to the town has wrongfully been converted to any officer of the town, and also to ascertain if all persons having business with any town officer, have at all times been respectfully treated, and report such officers as have not faithfully performed their said duties said examination of accounts, doings and proceedings to date back to the close of the financial year A.D.. 1873." (We had only been in business for eleven years!!)

The main investigation was into a matter between the Town council and the Providence & Worcester Railroad as to whether to lay the tracks at ground level or build a bridge over the tracks at the Pawtucket Avenue crossing near Bishop Avenue.

A second problem was the Town Surveyor hauling town gravel with Town teams to his own personal property and rocks to a friend's property. A third was to investigate who was collecting the taxes at the time and why the Town is paying his lawyer while this investigation is going on.

To find out the results of the investigation, visit our Flint Library at the John Hunt House Museum and finish reading the pamphlet. And browse around the library. We have several interesting reference materials. People who have visited stay for hours.

Gifts and Accessions

Ray Anderson - Three iron shoe molds with cobbler's stand, cobbler's hammer and pliers, two chisels, pair of calipers.

Virginia Berwick - 1956 calendar from Ben Brown Dairy and Farm Supplies Store

George Chalko - Fireplace broom, Iron corn dryer, popcorn popper for over an open fire, four hand dipped candles, book of tax payers in East Providence, 1937, pamphlet "Report of the Investigating Committee of East Providence - 1878", several graduation programs from East Providence High School c.1910 and ticket to Graduation, A.P.. Hoyt School, 1908.

Seth Kent -1925 photograph of the old Wood's Service station, corner of Warren and Pawtucket Avenues.

Helen Smith - early map of East Providence.

EAST•PROVIDENCE• HISTORICAL•SOCIETY

Historical 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

For information, send the coupon below to:

The Marker Program

East Providence Historical Society

PO Box 4774

East Providence R02916-4774

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

Name _____

Address _____

Members' Memories

BABCOCKS DEPARTMENT STORE IN RIVERSIDE SQUARE

Ned Clark

That store was one of a kind! Mr. & Mrs. Babcock had been circus performers and had travelled almost everywhere. They were both quite short, he with glasses and balding hair, she with very black straight hair. She had more than enough makeup on her face and the clothes she wore made you think of a gypsy lady. Both were pleasant and were very patient as customers looked around. They would tell stories of their travels if you asked.

They lived upstairs over the store so when the bell on the entrance door rang, one of them would come down to meet their customers.

On entering their store, you were greeted by a parrot on it's perch to the left of the door. The store was wall to wall with the widest assortment of goods one could imagine, penny candy, many types of costumes and clothes, china ware, bric-a-brac, kid's games, old pictures, circus memorabilia, flags, and old funny books for a nickel. The variety went on and on.

If you thought something was overpriced for you, they would listen to some bargaining and sometimes lowered the price. I went there once to buy a birthday present for my Mother and saw a nice china bowl with a price tag of 50 cents. When I told them I only had 35 cents to spend, they let me take it home at that price.

That store was a fixture in town for many years and they were nice people to remember. ●



COUNTING SHEEP

Luella Mountain

Those nights come to everyone. You just can't fall asleep, so lots of you count sheep jumping over fences or in the field. Not me! I start at Waterman Avenue and walk up Walnut Street, trying to name the residents who lived there in my youth. Is there anyone who can stroll with me and jog my memory of the twenties?

On the northeast corner, the large house had a family whose daughter's dates were the talk of the street sometimes... especially when she met that handsome chap with the Oriental look - at Brown, too! (How provincial we were in those days!)

The next was, I think, a two-tenement house whose occupants I can't recall. But was Pendergast's original news store next and did they sell penny candy too? In my walk, the next front-porched home was the Reids. I was told he was a Civil War vet. My brother declares it was another war, but Mr. Reid was the oldest vet in E.P.. and always rode in uniform in the car that led the Memorial Day parade out to the Newman Church cemetery.

Hookers were next. She made those mouth-watering barley sugar lollipops in shapes for each holiday, Santa Clauses, turkeys, other animals. She also dipped chocolates, I think, but we kids weren't interested in them anyway. Next door were the Goffs in whose large yard Marion's wedding reception was held and we all worried because it looked as though Eleanor Bearce Donnell might have her baby on the spot! (She didn't!)

Ingersons were next. In their backyard was what is now called a gazebo but we knew it as The Clubhouse for the boys in the neighborhood. When we girls finally gained unlawful occupancy one day, we found the walls papered with pictures of the stars of that New York radio show we all listened to Sunday nights And in a corner was a large pile of Saucy Stories or Smart Set, or some semi-forbidden magazines, the cover of one of which I have never forgotten. It was pretty risqué for our times, showing a lovely young girl in a decorous full-skirted outfit but lighted from behind and captioned: Wait Til the Sun Shines Nellie.

There were no children in the next house, where the cement walk started, giving us a great place to play

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

hopscotch, and start our roller-skating run down into Ingersons' driveway, out again, past Goffs' and into their garage area. Not that we didn't skate on down the street and around the corner into the grocery store on Waterman on errands for our mothers. We were darned good on macadam too!

Poolers were next - parents and married son who kept his car in the garage on the lot next to our house. Didn't Sammie, the black cat, belong to them? He actually thought that entire end and side of Walnut Street was his and stayed wherever he chose whenever he wanted to! He was OUR cat - just as Muggins was OUR dog. Who did HE belong to?

The Browns were next to the Poolers and we kids knew that their only son had been struck and killed by a car in front of his house as his mother watched, and that the driver was a woman who lived on Walnut Street. But that had been before our memories so we never realized in those days what it must have cost Mrs. Brown to put on the party she gave us as our last stop on Halloween. There we first bobbed for apples, tried to eat marshmallows hanging on strings from the ceiling, devoured cookies and doughnuts and drank cider. On that night, she was Mrs. Brown to us all, but during the year for some reason, never explained, we kids always called her Old Mrs. Brown when we spoke to each other of her. Their back fence had a gate that gave access for us of the Walnut St. Gang to members who lived on Anthony (as did a gate at Goffs or Ingerson's).

Nearly asleep now, I am almost home too. Between us and the Browns are the Boyces. It is a combined household, the parents, Capt. and Mrs. Boyce, her two daughters, and her mother, widow of Capt. Dyer with whom she had occupied the large yellow house on the corner of Walnut and Cross Streets.. diagonally across the street from us. Capt. Boyce for many years was the captain of the ferry out of Pt. Judith. Norma, the younger daughter, whom I considered quite grown up (four years my senior) later was to become a dear friend as we met and remet in several states east of the Mississippi to which our husbands' companies moved us over the years.

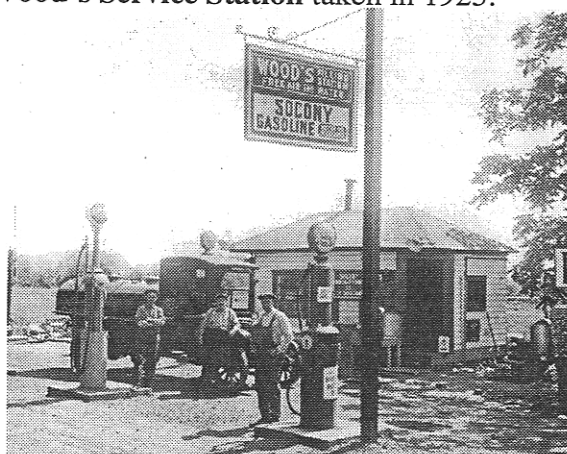
By now, I am almost asleep. You may have dropped off some time ago. We have only covered one side of half of Walnut. I still need help starting with the former Dyer house at Cross St. and wending my way down the elm shaded road back to Waterman Ave. on the other side of the street. But I hope someone stayed awake and can verify or amend this stroll of the twenties, I'd get to sleep faster in the future if I knew the sheep - make that houses - had been there where my memory places them. ●

One Picture is Worth

G. Adams, *photo curator*

We recently received an E-mail from Society member **Bill McWeeney** trying desperately to find a photo of an Atlantic Service Station that his father ran from 1960 -1970 ... it would be the picture that he didn't take like some of the best pictures that were never made and are literally *priceless*.

One of the gifts listed on page 3 is this photo of **Wood's Service Station** taken in 1925:



Did anyone take a picture of the *recent* Wood's Service station? If not ... it's *TOO LATE!*

Look through the pages of "Images of America: East Providence" (for sale at the Hunt House Store \$18.88) to see many of the places and structures that are no longer with us.

PICTURES can be revisited.....

If anyone knows of a photo of the service station that was at the intersection of Ferris and Pawtucket Avenues Bill McW would be very grateful..

EVERYBODY has a cameraUSE it!

The Gazette ...

Welcomes
"Members Memories" and articles of historic interest.

mail to:

Ray Anderson,

32 Algonquin Road,

East Providence, RI 02916-3502



EAST•PROVIDENCE•HISTORICAL•SOC

P.O. Box 4774

EAST PROVIDENCE, RI 02916

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

RETURN
SERVICE
REQUESTED

APRIL CALENDAR OF EVENTS MAY

Wednesday, April 18, 7:30 PM,
"Lighthouses of Rhode Island"
Dave Kelleher, presenter.
Rumford Grange, 125 North Broadway.

Thursday, April 19, 7:30 PM
*East Providence Historic Preservation
Study Commission.*
City Hall, Taunton Avenue
Patrick Rogers, *Councilman*
Jean Boyle, *Planning Department*

Monday, April 23, 7:30 PM
Strictly Sentimental Swing Band
American Legion Post 10, Riverside.
(fund-raiser)

Saturday, April 28, 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM
"May is Museum Month" museum expo
R.I. Mall, Warwick

Wednesday, May 4, 7:30 PM
Board Meeting (members welcome)
John Hunt House Museum,
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford.

Thursday, May 19, 10 AM - 1 PM
Hourly walking tours of the Bridgham Farm area
John Hunt House Museum
10 AM - 2 PM, Museum tours.

Monday, May 21, 6 PM
Newman Church, Rumford
Spaghetti Supper, Nominating Committee report
"Experience Architecture", Jim Barnes.

JUNE

Sunday, June 3, 2 - 5 PM
Dedication of the *Phillip Walker Room* and Open House
Hunt House Museum, Rumford