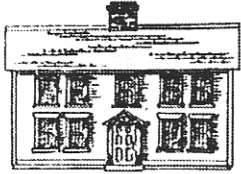


EAST • PROVIDENCE • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY



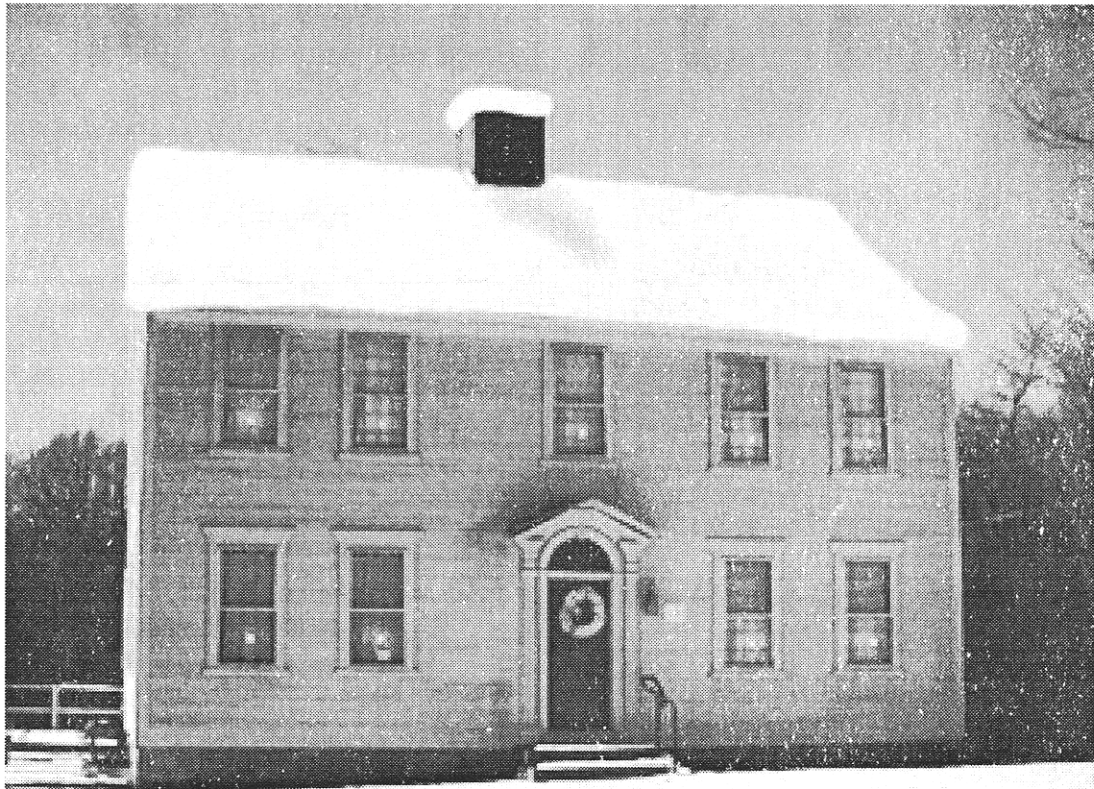
John Hunt House

VOL. XIV No.4

Gazette

DECEMBER 2001

Welcome



Visit the Eighteenth Century at the Historic
John Hunt House Museum

Open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, December 16 and 23 from 1-4PM
(see "from the Attic", Page 4)

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

David Kelleher	<i>President</i>
Nancy Moore	<i>1st Vice President</i>
Raymond Anderson	<i>2nd Vice President</i>
Jo Marchi	<i>Recording Secretary</i>
Gladys Panzarella	<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>
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Robert Tewksbury	<i>Immediate Past President</i>

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Ray Anderson	<i>Grounds</i>
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Virginia Berwick	<i>Museum</i>
Edna Anness	<i>Museum Curator</i>
George Adams	<i>Newsletter</i>
Les Haworth	<i>Preservation</i>
Ray Anderson	<i>Program</i>
Florence Adams	<i>Publicity</i>

**The John Hunt House Museum
is Open**

Tuesdays and Thursdays and
Sundays, December 16 and 23
from 1 - 4 PM

or by appointment.

For appointment, Telephone (401) 438-1750
or E-mail: ephist@home.com

SPECIAL THANKS

To; Virginia Berwick, Gladys Panzarella,
and Jo Marchi

for providing refreshments
at the
November 26 meeting

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 MEMBERS

Welcome to our recent new member:

Mary Hughes

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

President's Letter

David Kelleher

Dear Members,

Two dehumidifiers are now working successfully in the John Hunt House Museum. The many historic documents that are stored in the house are being protected from moisture.

I have been contacted by a plumber to inspect the furnace at the Hunt House in order to submit a contract for the maintenance of the system. The cost of the contract will be taken care of by the city.

The City Council has approved a request of the *East Providence Historic Properties Study Commission* to investigate the possibility of developing a master plan for the Hunts Mills Area. The commission has contacted the University of Rhode Island to see if a class of students will help with the project. The city planning department will also be involved. Funds for the project are now being sought from the Blackstone River Valley Corridor and from Preserve Rhode Island.

Following last month's meeting, Don and Nancy Doucette are establishing a group to begin a project to restore and relight the Pomham Rocks Lighthouse. The group plans to meet in December to get the project going.

The open house of the John Hunt House Museum on Veterans' Day was very successful. About 25 guests came to view the house and its many artifacts.

The board is continuing to look into ways to increase revenues and decrease expenses for the society. Some of the proposals are; increasing membership dues to \$15, \$25 for families; charging admission to the John Hunt House Museum Out of towners \$3; E.P... residents \$1; Members and children free; publishing the Gazette quarterly. All of these proposals will be voted on by the general membership at the January Meeting.

The new roof for the Meter House is about to be started by Bob Tewksbury and the students from the high school. **3**

Dr. Ella Sekatau was very well received at the November meeting. Her talk was informative and her delivery was warm and charming.

I hope that many of you will be able to join us for the Holiday Dinner Party. It sure looks like it will be a very pleasant evening.

Happy holidays to everyone, and may the best of health and happiness be with you in the new year.

Sincerely,
Dave

In Memory of

*Donations were made to the Society's
Memorial Fund
in memory of:*

Frances Collins

Betty Davis

Sarah Gray

Helen King

Fales Peirce

Virginia Ripley

Sadly Missed . . . Fondly Remembered

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 02916-4774

FROM THE ATTIC

Edna Anness, *Museum Curator*

When you visit the John Hunt House Museum this month you will see an interesting display of dolls, children's toys, miniature furniture and model autos along with a standing Victorian dollhouse. We have brought out the **Bud and Wendy Plummer** Collection and have added **Marjorie Chase's** doll and toys which are new to the Museum, **Alice Valerio's** rocker, eighteenth century style toys which **Gladys Panzarella** has provided and some toys on loan.

What you won't see are elaborate Christmas decorations. To get back to basics we are decorating in the usual eighteenth century New England style consisting of greens, holly, fruit, nuts and flowers. And of course candles in the windows.

Early in our country's history the celebration of Christmas varied greatly according to geographical location. Historians believe that the first Christmas was celebrated in 1609 in the Jamestown Colony in Virginia when the colonists took time out to hold a prayer service. The Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam (New York) brought with them the custom of parties, open houses and the children leaving their shoes out for Saint Nicholas to leave gifts. All business stopped between St. Nicholas Eve until December 5th or Twelfth Night. During the American Revolution the Hessian troops brought the custom of erecting a Christmas tree and the first one was put up on the battlefield near Trenton. In New England on the other hand the Pilgrims celebrated their first Christmas with work. They had stern Puritan ideas against celebrations of any kind. They lived pure lives according to the Bible and it was not written that Christ's birthday should be celebrated. A year after their arrival some few refused to work on December 25th. This continued until finally in 1659 Governor Bradford issued an edict that the observance of Christmas would be officially banned and anyone celebrating would be fined 5 shillings if caught.

In the eighteenth century in Virginia a big dinner or an open house would be held with dancing, games and the bringing in of the Yule log (Norse custom). Holly, fir and mistletoe would decorate the doors and mantles. Meanwhile in Massachusetts Christmas was still a work day and if someone wanted to have a dinner in the privacy of their home, so be it. Some few families brought in greens and holly and fruit for the table and mantle. The idea of decorating a Christmas tree did not become popular until German settlers brought the custom to America around 1860. At first real candies

were clipped to the branches which to us today was foolhardy. Tree decorations were made by hand or jewelry, dolls and other toys were used.

The Irish and the Dutch put lighted candies in their windows in the old country to welcome the weary traveler. The first time this custom of a candle in the window in was used in Rhode Island was when the old State House on Benefit Street was decorated for a visit of the French General Rochambeau. Every window in University Hall at Brown University was lit for the visit of General Washington to the troops stationed there during the Revolution. The lights are still on there on Commencement weekends and other special events ... And so ... we also follow the tradition and light the candles at the John Hunt House Museum to welcome visitors during December and on other special events.

References: "Christmas in Colonial and Early America" *Worldbook 1975*

"Evolution of Christmas Trees" 2001 *Christmas.com, 1998-2001*. "Santa Claus" *Microsoft Encarta Online Encyclopedia 2000* "Christmas Traditions Around the World" *Australian Media PTY, LTD 1997-2001 Docent Training Course Notes-RI Historical Society, 1981*.

GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM

Edna Anness - metal pouring spout for packaged goods that pour- made by the *Singer Mfg. Co*, North Broadway, Rumford (Remember the Singer Tea Market?)

Marilyn Brewer - 16 census cards, 1973 and 1976 East Providence High School graduation memorabilia, Program from "Maytime" at Bliss School-1983; Three Old Stone bank history books; 1974 East Providence High School linen calendar towel.

Bert Chace - 36 pogs for our milk bottles

Marjorie Chase - Armand Marseille Doll; 2 doll highchairs and swing; 2 doll trunks with doll clothes; child size phonograph with records; 2 child size tables; 2 candle shades with brackets; 1920s flatiron; old can of *Borax*; match holder and 2 hand hooked rugs made by donor.

Joan Hanlon - Hand hooked rug on loan.

Mary Tyler Hughes - Photographs of Tyler Ice House on Central Pond and views round Rumford Center; Ice tongs and horse bell from Ice House.

Metacomet Country Club - Book written by Norman Greene about the 100th anniversary of the Club.

Weaver Library - Large collection of books pertaining to the Laws of Rhode Island.

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 • 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

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information about the East
Providence Marker Program

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Address _____

TAKE THE TROLLEY TO THE SHORE

A ride to Rocky Point, Oakland Beach,
Buttonwoods and all the stations
in between

From 1900 until October 1935, this wonderful 13 mile trolley line was there for all to use. And over the course of time, millions did. The question is asked, "What if this line had survived? How would it have affected our lives today?" A ride on an open car is just a dream today. How refreshing it must have been as one rolled along the shore in Warwick Cove, crossed the trestle and swing bridge and squealed to a stop at Oakland Beach Station. For in those days, there were many hotels, shore dinner halls, restaurants and all sorts of amusements. People from all over New England and beyond came to enjoy the salt air of our wonderful Rhode Island.

If one wanted to travel farther down the line, the trolley would hum along through the sun and sand and arrive at Brushneck Cove and the Longwood pile trestle that carried one across a stunning body of water to the end of the line at Buttonwoods.

We have saved the most exciting for last; Rocky Point. Countless millions traveled there by taking the trolley. There was a branch line at Grant's Station where one could switch to ride the trolley to the park. The way we move people makes a difference.

If you close your eyes, you can almost feel the rocking of the car and smell the salt air. I feel that we have lost something wonderful. Getting there was part of the fun.

Enjoy the Fun ... at the members meeting
Monday, January 28, 7:30 PM
Newman Church, Rumford

A special presentation by
Everett A. Chapman

(Potluck Supper at 6:00 PM
members will be phoned for contribution)



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RETURN
SERVICE
REQUESTED

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

Monday, December 10, 6:15 PM

Newman Church, Rumford.

HOLIDAY PARTY

January

Wednesday, January 2, 7:00 PM

Board Meeting *members welcome*

John Hunt House, Hunt's Mills Road, Rumford.

Monday, January 28, 6:00 PM Potluck Supper

7:30 PM Members Meeting

Newman Church, Rumford. *Public Invited*

Program: **Everett A. Chapman**

"Take the Trolley to the Shore"

CHANGE of ADDRESS

The Society has a "Return Service Requested" arrangement with the Post Office.

There is a CHARGE every time we retrieve an undeliverable mailing Please advise the Society of all changes, temporary or permanent. Thank you for helping us save money.