

EAST • PROVIDENCE • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY



John Hunt House

Gazette

Vol. XVI No. 2

October 2003

History of Funeral Practices in the United States

October Members Meeting
Monday, October 20, 7:00 pm
ONE WEEK EARLY!
Newman Church, Rumford

Stanley Larson, Juhlin-Pearson Funeral Home, Providence, will present a program on the 'History of Funeral Practices in the United States'. Stan is a former president of the *National Funeral Directors Association*.

With Stan's great sense of humor, we are sure to have a lively presentation of a serious subject that impacts us all.

Refreshments and business meeting will follow.

President's Letter

Kris Rose, President

Dear Members,

I hope you enjoyed the presentation, *Making 'Waves': Women in World War Two*, (September 22 members meeting) as much as I did. Thanks to **Ray Anderson** for putting it all together.

The chairpersons of the various committees have been busy.

Building: **Bob Tewksbury** has agreed to be chairperson of the Building Committee. The repair of the 'Meter House' (on the grounds of the John Hunt House Museum) is at the top of his list. He is still hoping to have the construction class at East

Providence High School involved in replacing the roof.

Preservation: **David Kelleher** has agreed to be the chairperson of the Preservation Committee. As you all know, Dave comes with a great deal of experience in this area. He reports that the *Weaver House* (next to Weaver Library) is to be used by the Substance Abuse Council for their offices. At this time there is \$175,000.00 available for restoration. That will not be enough to complete the job, but it will be a start. Two members of the American Lighthouse Association will be touring the *Pomham Lighthouse* soon. We are still hopeful that the lighthouse will be restored and that the society will be involved.

Grounds: **Ray Anderson** reports that he met with **Steve Connors**, *R.I. Community Gardens*. They discussed a joint venture with the society in developing the vegetable garden in the back of the John Hunt House Museum.

Membership: **Mona Breault** reports that we have a total of 217 members. That includes 74 families and 143 individuals.

Markers: **Kris Rose** reports that the owners of houses that currently have *Historical Society Markers* will be asked for permission to put a picture of their houses on the web page as a means of advertising the markers program. We would also like to put pictures of the houses in the Gazette.

Publicity: Continue to check the *Providence Journal*, *East Providence Post*, *The Times* and our web site (ephist.org) for "society goings on".

Program: **Ray Anderson** reports that the October 20 members meeting program (*a week early*) will be interesting and 'seasonally appropriate'! (Halloween and the macabre!) The program is on **funeral practices in the United States**.

In addition, we could use help setting up chairs before each meeting. So if you can arrive about 6:30 on the night of the members meetings and help set up, it would be appreciated. Hope to see everyone at the October 20 meeting (**a week early!**).

Kris Rose

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OFFICERS

Kris Rose	<i>President</i>
Nancy Moore	<i>1st Vice President</i>
Edna Anness	<i>2nd Vice President</i>
Jeanne Davis	<i>Recording Secretary</i>
Arline Butterworth	<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>
Peter Allen	<i>Treasurer</i>
David Kelleher	<i>Immediate Past President</i>

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Bob Tewksbury	<i>Buildings</i>
Ray Anderson	<i>Grounds</i>
Kris Rose	<i>Markers</i>
Mona Breault	<i>Membership</i>
Virginia Berwick	<i>Museum</i>
	<i>Museum Curator</i>
Doreen Bonney/Florence Adams	<i>Newsletter</i>
David Kelleher	<i>Preservation</i>
Ray Anderson	<i>Program</i>
Florence Adams	<i>Publicity</i>
Reinhard Wohlgemuth	<i>Webmaster</i>

*Warm Welcome to our
 New Member:*
ARTURO RODRIGUES

It was decided by the Board to open the John Hunt House Museum **one Sunday a month**. Families with children and those who work would be able to visit. It was decided to open the second Sunday of each month except for October 12 which is a holiday. Sundays open are: October 19, November 9 and December 14 from 1-4 pm. **Virginia Berwick** and **Edna Anness** will be at the museum on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-4 working on the collection but not for tours, so **call before you come to make sure they are there**. If you wish a special tour call for an appointment.

Gifts to the Museum

Edna Anness - early suitcase-type cell phone
Marilyn Brewer - telephone from 1920's, East Providence High School graduation programs, news items relative to East Providence

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 \$15 individual, \$25 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**

Thank you to the following members who provided refreshments for the September meeting: Florence Adams- Mona Breault - Pat Henry - Jo Marchi - Helen Smith.

Membership Form New Renewal /Change

Name(s) _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone # _____

Amount Enclosed:

\$25 Family **\$15 Individual** **\$150 Life**

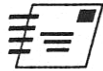


IN MEMORY OF

George Rodrigues

Who passed away in September.

Sadly missed... fondly remembered.

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Luella Holmes (Clifton) Mountain
425 Westminster Avenue #166
Hanover, PA 17331

August 27, 2003

Dear Virginia Berwick,

(continued from September Gazette)

In this day and age it may be difficult for you to realize that when Earle (Mountain) and I were young, Catholic and WASP, kids didn't mingle much and if they did the relationship was not usually welcomed by their families, nor more especially by the Catholic church. While my family welcomed Earle in our home and became very fond of him (indeed, in later years when I dated others, my mother would frequently ask, "Whatever became of that nice Mountain boy?") but I think she never even knew he was seeing me.

All of which is apropos of your inquiry about a Jimmie and Ray whom your husband (Earl) knew. I don't recall hearing of them, although Earle's brother, Maurice, was doing a genealogy and had contacted some Mountain distant cousins in R.I.

I have fond memories of summer days at Hunts Mills as a girl when we used to walk out from East Providence on a Saturday or Sunday, just to loaf around under the trees. Walking was a common date for teenagers in our time when the Depression had already made it nearly prohibitive for our escorts to pay for an evening at the movies or dancing to the Big Bands, which we all loved.

Although I had no children, my nieces asked me to "tell us about the olden days," and I, thinking they meant the tales my mother (who lived to over a hundred with a clear memory of the past) had told me, did indeed write these for them, only to realize that they had meant they wanted to know about their father's and my youth! So now I am writing my memoirs. Am only up to my forties so you know there is a long way to go to the present! Incidentally, the first part about my parents' memories and their life stories ran into 160 pages, so you will realize that this will be quite an opus when it is finally concluded.

My traveling days are over and I am sorry not to be able to visit the East Providence area once more. And because everyone asks, I will tell you that I am in Hanover because my only sibling and his daughters are in the Philly area. I do not like big cities, but sought a retirement place nearer to them than Cape Cod. I live in a cottage in a very nice retirement community just on the outskirts of this Pennsylvania Dutch town - not too far from Gettysburg.

Hoping I have not bored you, but thinking that anyone associated with a historical society would be interested in some reminiscences, I have been my usual long-winded self in a very late reply to your letter. By the way, you may be interested to know that I am going to talk to the men's association here in a couple of weeks on "Genealogy Is Fun" - the result of an evenings conversation with one of its members over dinner when he became intrigued with my tales of research and the amusing things we discovered and experiences we had. ** (My former husband and I spent much of our retirement in our RV doing research in Pennsylvania and New England in compiling our family histories,)

Sincerely yours,

Luella Holmes (Clifton) Mountain

**For instance - I've a Hussey and a B----- (hand writing indecipherable) and possibly Tom Thumb's midget wife in my family tree - not to mention Sparrows, Pigeons as well as Woods! And how about the two Oliver Wendell Holmeses? Some of the Mountains from Pawtucket worked at the Rumford Baking Powder plant back in the early 1900's.

Thomas Manchester Reed

In reading the (September) newsletter, on the back page there is a letter to Ginny (Berwick) from an old time East Providence resident, Luella Mountain. In it, she mentions as a youngster marching in the Memorial Day parade from Six Corners to Rumford. Leading the parade was a Mr. Reed from Walnut Street riding in an open car, the last veteran of the Civil War. This was my great grandfather, Thomas Manchester Reed. (see picture on page 4) He was wounded at the battle of Manassis and left for dead.

He died Memorial Day 1932. In his obituary, it was mentioned that this (Memorial Day parade) was done every year on the holiday late in his life and that he was indeed one of the last veterans (perhaps William Laird survived him. Not sure)

All the neighborhood children would gather on his porch and listen to his tales of the great war. Although he was born in Adamsville in 1843, he lived in East Providence after the war and was employed as a house carpenter by the Ray Construction Company and helped build many of the buildings around Watchamoket.

My grandmother, his daughter, married William Howe and they lived in lower Riverside behind the Car Barn (street car) on Knowlton Street. He was a carman on the Crescent Park run extending to Bristol. My son and his daughter live directly across the street from where the barn was.....six generations later.

Jeffrey Howe, Riverside (society member)



Thomas Manchester Reed



Belated Thank You #2

*The telephone committee includes Sonia Zell.
An omission last month. We just had to tell.*



UPCOMING PROGRAMS

November 24 *Cooking 1790 – 1850*

Barbara Cook of Johnson & Wales Culinary Museum.

December 7 *Christmas Dinner Party*

with "Tony the Dancing Cop".

January 26 *Pot Luck Supper*

with the Rehoboth Minute Company, 13TH Continental Regiment.



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

Jean F. Barnett
2725 Country Club Circle
Independence, KS 67301

August 25, 2003

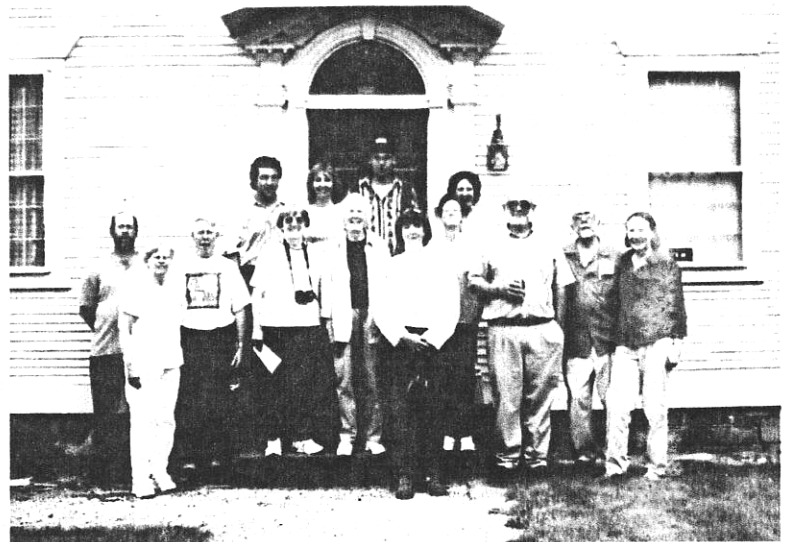
Dear Earl and Ginny Berwick,

Thank you so much for giving the Paine family (reunion in Rehoboth) a tour of the (John) Hunt House. You both were delightful and we all enjoyed it so.

Enclosed are pictures: (1) the group of the Paine family (I'm the one with the camera around my neck). (2) the two of you. (3) you with the Farias.

Hope you enjoy them.

Jean



Members of the Paine family, who enjoyed a recent tour of the John Hunt House Museum with Ginny and Earl Berwick.



Ginny and Earl Berwick.



Ginny and Earl with the Farias.

Letters Of Interest From The East Providence Post

Published 9/18/03

Editor, *The Post*

There has been much brouhaha over the construction of Freedom Green Park on North Broadway.

Our East Providence City Council went to great effort to get a grant for thousands of dollars for its construction. Councilman Rogers claimed that it was in recognition of the historic heritage of the northern part of the city, the birthplace of our city.

Meanwhile, about 10 house lots down North Broadway to the south, no ripples occurred politically when the 200 year old Georgian Ide House was bulldozed into the ground.

Maybe it would have been more appropriate to have the East Providence Community Chorus perform their summer concert on the Ide property in front of the bulldozer and piles of brick to celebrate the destruction of our historic heritage.

All the parks in the world cannot replace these architectural treasures and reminders of our early history.

Why can't anyone see this contradiction of philosophies regarding the recognition of historic heritage? Why do we continue to allow this to happen?

What exactly does our East Providence Historic Properties Committee do to justify itself?

Edna Anness,
East Providence

Published 9/25/03

Editor, *The Post*

As chairman of the East Providence Historic Properties Study and Designation Commission, I would like to respond to a question raised in the *Post* by Mrs. Edna

Anness concerning the justification of our commission.

The commission was formed to act as an advisory committee to the city council to inform them of the many historic properties and areas in our city. The commission is there to help whenever possible to preserve and protect these properties. The commission has tried very hard to inform the council and the citizens of the city of these properties by publishing a booklet of some of these properties with the help of a legislative grant from Sen. Irons.

Over 3,000 of these booklets have been distributed to all our public libraries and schools. The commission has made the public aware of a number of properties by awarding the owners of these properties with certificates of appreciation at our annual Preservation Week Award Ceremonies. Displays have been put in city hall to demonstrate the various projects that the commission has been involved in.

The commission has been involved with many projects over the years and here are some of the efforts of the commission at this time: the restoration of the Weaver House (after almost 10 years of meetings and communications with the city, the courts and the family) with a \$175,000 commitment from the city; developing a master plan for the Hunt's Mills area (two years of work and effort so far and progress is being made); helping in the design of a fish ladder to be put in the area of the dam at Hunt's Mills; working with Preserve Rhode Island in developing plans on the future use of the Philip Walker House and beginning the process of establishing some historic districts in the city beginning with the Roger Williams Avenue area.

Patrick Rogers, our liaison to the council, is informed of all our efforts and has been most helpful.

(continued on page 7)

Letters Of Interest From The
East Providence Post

(continued from page 6)

As far as our efforts to save the Ide Farm House, here is a short summary: when we were aware that the owner of the property had put the property on the market we contacted the real estate companies that were involved to inform them that the house was historic and it should be advertised as such.

The house was priced around \$400,000 at first. When the house did not sell as a private residence and it was sold to a developer (due to the fact that the front of the property was zoned commercial), we worked hand and hand with the city planning department to make sure that all permits were requested, so that the plans of the developer were all legal.

The new owner fulfilled all the permits as was his right and the city could not prevent his plans from going forward.

Two members of the commission attended the last zoning board meeting to continue our displeasure and we believe that because of our presence and a letter from Mrs. Anness that the developer offered a way to save the house. He stated that he would contribute \$5,000 to help move the house off the property.

A few weeks later I attended a visit to the house together with planning director Jeanne Boyle and other officials to evaluate the possibility of moving the house. Seeing that it was possible, Mrs. Boyle and her staff began the lengthy process of seeking finances and support for the project. However, due to shortness of time and the many other projects that the city's planning department was working on, the package could not be put together.

One other step that the commission took was to have an article about the Ide House published in the newsletter of Preserve RI to see if there was someone out there that would be interested in taking up the offer to move the house. The article was in the

newsletter two months ago. I was contacted just last week about the property, but unfortunately, it was too late.

The commission feels very badly about losing this piece of our heritage and we understand Mrs. Anness' frustration. Maybe our future efforts to establish historic districts in our city will prevent this from happening again.

As far as Freedom Green, the commission was pleased that Councilman Rogers contacted the commission for input into the name of the park connecting it to the Ring of the Green. The fact that the land for this open space was given to the city was helpful. I hope that I have answered the concerns of Mrs. Anness as to the justification of our commission.

David J. Kelleher
Chairman
East Providence Historic
Properties Commission

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.

*Request information by sending your name,
address and phone number to the*

Marker Program

East Providence Historical Society

P.O. Box 4774

East Providence, RI 02916-4774

***The society received 12 e-mails and 3
telephone calls during the month of
September. All received a response.***



John Hunt House

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P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER

Monday, October 20, 7 pm
Members Meeting Public Invited
Newman Church, Rumford
Program: *History of Funeral Practices*
In the United States

Stanley Larson, Juhlin-Pearson Funeral
Home, Providence

NOVEMBER

Wednesday, November 5, 7:00 pm
Board Meeting Members Welcome
John Hunt House Museum
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

Sunday, November 9, 1-4 pm
John Hunt House Museum
Open to the Public

Monday, November 24, 7 pm
Members Meeting Public Invited
Newman Church, Rumford
Program: *Cooking 1790 - 1850*
Barbara Cook, Johnson and Wales
Culinary Museum

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.