



John Hunt House

Gazette

Vol. XVI No. 4

January 2004

The Rehoboth Minute Company 13th Continental Regiment

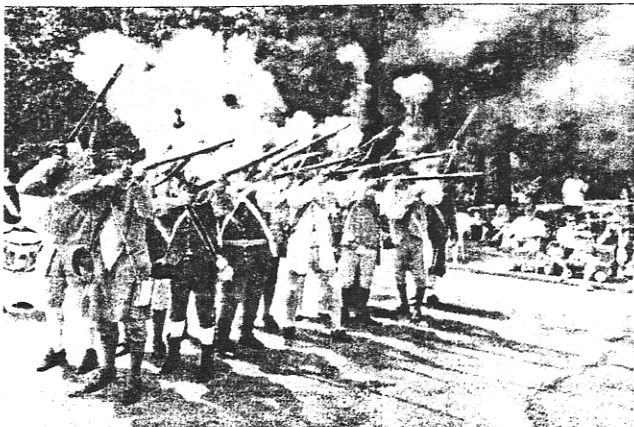
JANUARY MEMBERS MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 26
NEWMAN CHURCH, RUMFORD
POT-LUCK SUPPER 6 PM
PROGRAM 7 PM

On Monday, January 26, 6 pm we will be joined at our annual **Pot Luck Supper** at Newman Church by the members and families of the **Rehoboth Minute Company: 13th Continental Regiment**. Invite them to your table to share stories of how they became involved with this Revolutionary War Reenactment Group.

At 7 pm, **Captain Al Soucy** will present a program on the organization with special attention to the clothing of the period for men, women, and children. (No catalogs or malls then.)

Having seen this program in Attleboro, I hope the weather will cooperate so you can enjoy the Rehoboth Minute Company: 13th Continental Regiment as much as I did.

A business meeting will follow. The Telephone Committee will call the membership for Pot Luck main dishes, salads and desserts.



The Rehoboth Minute Company
13TH Continental Regiment

-Providence Journal Photo

President's Letter

Kris Rose, President

Dear Members,

Happy New Year!! I hope you all had a great holiday season and are staying warm now that winter has truly arrived. Those of us who attended the holiday party in December had a wonderful evening and truly enjoyed the entertainment provided by **Tony the Dancing Cop**. Some of our own members showed off their dancing skills as well!!

The Board has decided to open the John Hunt House Museum on the **second Sunday** of every month from 1-4 p.m. We have gone back and forth on what is the best schedule and this is what we have settled on. **Ginny Berwick** is always looking for volunteers to be host/hostesses when the museum is open. No experience necessary! Please call her, 434-0998, if you are willing to help out.

If you have taken a walk or ride through Hunts Mills lately you will have noticed the changes in the area. The city has continued to clear the area near the river and the falls and by spring it will be a lovely spot to sit, walk, picnic and enjoy.

The **Caleb/Williams Cottage** next to the John Hunt House Museum has been empty since the end of October. The city has boarded it up recently to secure it against vandalism, but we are asking our members to keep an eye on the property if/when you are in the area. If you see anything amiss, please call the police.

I hope to see you at the members meeting on January 26. In addition to a **Pot Luck Supper**, the program will be provided by the **Rehoboth Minute Company: 13th Continental Regiment**.

Stay warm!!

Kris Rose

The Gazette

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EAST ● PROVIDENCE ● HISTORICAL ● SOCIETY
 P. O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI 02916-4774
 Tel: (401) 438-1750 Web Site: ephist.org

OFFICERS

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Edna Anness	<i>2nd Vice President</i>
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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

Membership Form New Renewal /Change

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

Amount Enclosed:
 \$25 Family \$15 Individual \$150 Life

**THE GAZETTE WAS NOT PUBLISHED
 IN DECEMBER, 2003**

Thank You!

October Members Meeting Bakers:

Billy Arden, Marie Brand, Jean Kesner, Ruth Pierce.

November Members Meeting Bakers:

Virginia Berwick (subbed for Edna Anness who was ill), Jeanne Davis, Jean Henderson, Barbara Pray.

DAFFODIL LEGACY THANK YOU

Ray Anderson, Grounds Chairman

Thanks to the effort of St. Margarets' Girl Scouts and historical society members **Mona Breault, Dave Kelleher and Kris Rose**, 1,000 daffodils await spring on Hunts Mills Road. Let's see if visitors to Hunts Mills will "*Follow The Yellow Daf Road*" come winter's final days.



Warm Welcome To Our

New Members:

Rosemary Prisco
 Virginia Woodruff
 Ann Mc Bride

And Our New Corporate

Members:

Fogarty Auto Body
 Gregg's Restaurant
 Gripnail Corporation

JOHN HUNT HOUSE MUSEUM

The John Hunt House Museum,
 Hunts Mills Road, Rumford,
 is open to the public the
 second Sunday of the month, 1 to 4 pm.
 Admission: \$3. East Providence Residents, \$1:
 Society Members, free.

George Newman Bliss

By Edna Anness

Does the name Bliss sound familiar? It should! The former Bliss School on Orlo Avenue was named for him in 1924. It has since been replaced. Bliss was a veteran of the Civil War and as a Major was taken prisoner by the Confederates after he charged through the Black Horse Troop squadron line "sabering" many men and leaving them wounded. He received three stab wounds from a sword, had his horse shot out from under him and was taken to Libby Prison. As a result of his valor he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Born in Tiverton, he graduated from Brown University and Albany Law School and moved to East Providence after the War. He became a prominent attorney, a state legislator and town solicitor of East Providence, also serving on the School Committee for twenty-five years. He was superintendent of schools for thirteen years. He helped found the Soldiers' and Sailors' Historical Society of Rhode Island and was the first Grand Master of the Rising Son Lodge of Masons on Taunton Avenue. The Watchemoket Public Library owed its beginning to his efforts, as did the United Congregational Church of East Providence. He was also chairman of the RI Public Utilities Commission.

I was invited to the Old Benefit Street Armory to accept a certificate of membership awarded to him by the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame on last November 16th. I was asked to say a few words about him. And so I told a story told by Major Bliss to my husband's grandfather who served with him on the School Committee. It seems Major Bliss always believed his life was spared because, as he was surrounded by the enemy, he thought, "I've got to think of a way to save my life. Some of these men may be Masons and if they knew I was too, they would probably spare my life." He was right. After showing the enemy the Masonic hand signal of distress, the officer in charge had him spared and taken for medical help behind enemy lines. As Captain Payne of the Fourth Virginia Cavalry wrote later,

he saw from the signal that he was "a widowed mother's son." *

After the presentations at the Armory a man approached me and introduced himself as the Grand Master of all Rhode Island Masonic Lodges. He had seen publicity about the event and had come to tell the story during the program. He was quite taken back when he heard the story being told to him instead. Major Bliss' army jacket was on display with a sword hole through the back of the left shoulder. Major Bliss (later known as Judge Bliss) died in 1928 at the age of 92.

The certificate is being framed because the East Providence Historical Society was requested to have it on display. It can be seen in the parlor of the John Hunt House Museum along with other Civil War artifacts.

**From the book "House Undivided" by Allen E. Roberts, Macoy Pub., P.225*



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**

THE ICE MAN

By John Agren

This is an excerpt from "RUMFORD" copyrighted 1996 (not yet published)

After the near loss of a finger at Whittet and Higgens, I heard about a job on an ice truck. The pay was 35 cents per hour. I accepted the job and went right to work. The hours were similar to those at the machine shop except that it was a really fun job. There were a bunch of other East Providence High School boys working for "The Bailey Ice Company." These included Phillip Appleby, Richard Carpenter, Douglas Crook, Gene Kimball, Charley, David and Archie Kinnear and Ben Milner. It took no time at all for me to realize that Mr. Ross K. Bailey was a special man to work for.

The Washington administration had frozen hourly wages but the boss classified us as "Learners" (.35/hr.), "Second class ice men" (.40/hr.), "First class" (.50/hr.) and "Drivers" (.60/hr.) in order to get away from the Washington administration's pay ruling. Our pay was time and a half if we worked over forty hours a week, over eight hours a day or if it was raining! Thus, there were times when we received double our hourly rate of pay.

Working on the ice truck was something else: it was not a job. We worked hard. The rows of three story houses on Central Avenue and at other East Providence locations were demanding. Often we started up the three flights of stairs on Central Avenue with two hundred pounds of ice. We dropped some off at each floor on our way up to the third deck. I ran between all truck stops and between customers, carrying empty ice bags with razor sharp ice tongs hanging on our shoulders. It's a wonder that no one ever was seriously injured.

There was a big old apartment house on Warren Avenue which we labeled "The Long Haul." There were three customers in the building, on a hill, and we usually carried two hundred pounds to the door. At the first customer, we chopped the bigger piece into the desired sizes and delivered them to each customer. At times, on the way to the apartment, we had to wait with a load of ice on our right shoulder and a full bag of ice in our left hand until traffic permitted us to cross busy Warren Avenue. It was, indeed, a long haul.

Before we started on 'the long haul', we stopped at 'Mary's Diner'. Mary was a big, jovial, older lady who must have been a recent new-comer to East Providence. Her pleasant restaurant featured fine hamburgers and hot dogs along with coffee and delicious homemade pies of

every kind. Mary was an ice customer of Bailey's and she had a great new record playing machine with all of the latest music. At Mary's, we heard: 'When The Feuhurer Says "We Are The Master Race" We \$%#@\$. \$%#@\$. Right In The Feuhurer's Face" and other Spike Jones classics of war time. We heard "Johnny Got A Zero", "There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere" as well as "White Christmas" and other early 1940's music. It was also possible to place a bet for Narragansett Race Track at Mary's and we often accomplished this while enjoying the music and having a cup of coffee and a piece of pie.

The 'boss' (Ross K. Bailey) loved to have a good time and he was always trying to find ways to make our job enjoyable. Every year he took us to Fenway Park for a Red Sox ball game. Every Christmas we received a bonus! We all liked the horse races and if he knew we were going to Narragansett on our day off, he would have us place a bet for him. If his pick won, the money was ours.

Mr. Bailey was a great teaser. There was a strange lady up on Sixth Street, East Providence, who cried if anyone cut her ice into smaller pieces. The boss, of course, knew this but he would send the new ice man up with a piece of ice that he knew would be too large for the lady's small top loader. The new 'kid' would have to cut the ice to make it fit the small freezer compartment. The minute his pick hit the ice, the lady would start to cry and carry on. On return to the back of the truck, the 'boss' would have the face of a saint and he would very seriously ask, " How did it go?" (He knew how it went!!) When the troubles of the new iceman were told, Ross would break into a big belly laugh! His pipe would dangle precariously, ready to fall out of his mouth with laughter at the trouble he had created! His eyes would water profusely. He'd slap his sides and avow that he didn't know the piece of ice was too big for the box. It was great fun! When one of us went into the service (military) another would be initiated into the life of this wonderful man.

(to be continued)

**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**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



JANUARY

Monday January 26
Members Meeting *Public Invited*
Newman Church, Rumford
6 pm Pot Luck Supper
7 pm Program: *Rehoboth Minute Company*
13TH Continental Regiment

FEBRUARY

(continued)

Sunday, February 8, 1 - 4 pm
John Hunt House Museum
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford
Admission, \$3: EP Residents, \$1:
Members, Free

FEBRUARY

Wednesday, February 4, 7 pm
Board Meeting *Members Welcome*
John Hunt House Museum
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

Monday, February 23, 7 pm
Members Meeting *Public Invited*
Newman Church, Rumford
Program to be Announced



John Hunt House

East • Providence • Historical • Society
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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.

