



John Hunt House

Gazette

Vol. XVII No. 3

November 2004

RHODE ISLAND GIRLS' LIVES IN 1799: DIARIES AS HISTORICAL RECORDS

Members Meeting
Monday, November 22, 7 pm
Newman Church, Rumford

Would you like to know how young women in Rhode Island lived over 200 years ago? Dr. Jane Lancaster will bring Rhode Island history to life with personal and fascinating accounts of events and places as recorded in the diaries of young Rhode Island women. Refreshments and business meeting will follow.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Kris Rose, President

Dear members,

As you all know, the historical society is an all volunteer organization. We have a wonderful membership who will step up to the plate when asked. Well.....I am asking now! Recently, we have had two Board members resign for various reasons. Ray Anderson, who has chaired the Grounds and Program Committees for a number of years, has resigned and so has Jeanne Davis, the Recording Secretary. Both have done a remarkable job and I would like to thank them for their contribution to the society. All three of these positions need to be filled. Most of the programs for this year are already in place. A new chairperson can start thinking about programs for next year. The Grounds Chairperson would be someone willing to lead other volunteers in keeping the grounds looking as good as they do now and continue the planning that Ray has begun. The Recording Secretary takes notes at monthly Board and members meetings, types them up and presents them at meetings. (Detailed job descriptions in the society's Standing Rules and Procedures available upon request). I am sure there are many members who could do these jobs. Please consider this to be a personal invitation from me to each of you to fill these positions. The November program sounds like another winner. Please join us to hear about young Rhode Island women in the 1790's through their diaries. In addition, please bring a non perishable food item or two for the RI Foodbank. Hope to see you there.

** HOLIDAY PARTY **

The society will hold a Holiday Party on
Monday, December 13, 6:15 pm,
Newman Church, Rumford.



It will be a family style, catered affair
featuring
baked ham, sirloin of beef, salad, potatoes,
vegetables, rolls and butter,
dessert and beverages.



A magnificent old fashioned Christmas
will come alive with entertainment by
Lisa and Friends.



The cost is \$15 members. \$18 non-members.
Reservation deadline is
Monday, December 6.



The telephone committee will call the
membership for reservations and menu
choice. Otherwise, call the society,
438-1750. or 437-1530. In lieu of a gift
exchange, the society will accept the
following items to be donated to
Travelers Aid: hats, gloves, mittens, scarves.

The Gazette

Is published monthly by the

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

OFFICERS

Kris Rose *President*
Nancy Moore *1st Vice President*
Edna Anness *2nd Vice President*
Jeanne Davis *Recording Secretary*
Arline Butterworth *Corresponding Secretary*
Peter Allen *Treasurer*
Kris Rose *Immediate Past President*

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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

RECOGNITION DEPARTMENT

The tea held at the Hunt House Museum, Saturday, October 23, was a grand success. **Gladys Panzarella**, who conceived the idea, created a beautifully decorated backdrop for luscious tea sandwiches, scones and petite desserts served on English bone china, of course. It was a formal "sit down" affair served by ladies in eighteenth century costumes made by Gladys. One of the guests, **Andy Valerio**, came in a Colonial uniform. It was as if George Washington had dropped by. Gladys thanks all who helped in making the event a success: **Edna Anness, Virginia Berwick and Kris Rose**, waitresses; the same group plus **Jeanne Davis and Helen Smith** who baked and/or made sandwiches; **Jeffrey and Cheryl Faria** who, after the tea, helped ready the museum for the RI Historic Preservation Commission's requested Open House the next day; **Florence Adams, Sophie Fredrick, Louise Healy and Gloria Peterson** who set up telephone reservations; **Lowell Anness** who provided a photo for the East Providence Post. Several guests had never been to the Hunt House Museum before and inquired as to when the next tea would be!?!!

Billie Arden, Sophie Fredrick, Gladys Panzarella, Florence Quigley, Rose Marie Sirenski and Dolores Therrien provided the goodies for the Monday, October 25 members meeting.

Jeffrey and Cheryl Faria, Dave Kelleher and Kris Rose served as docents at the Hunt House Museum on Sunday, October 24.

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

The John Hunt House Museum, 65 Hunts Mills Road, Rumford, will be open Sunday, November 14, 1 to 4 pm Admission \$3; \$1 East Providence Residents; Free Society Members

GIFTS to the MUSEUM

John Agren - Union Grammar School book; Philip Appleby's honor pin from Wilson Grammar School
Charles & Dawn Hall - East Providence tax books, maps and pictures of East Providence police men; membership pin from the Riverside Business Men's Association; pair of pince-nez eye glasses
Florence Quigley: - old deeds; District Nurse pamphlet; 1900 Graves Spelling Book
Ken & Irene Roberts - oil painting of Hunts Mills by Ken's mother, Myra; a Rhode Island School of Design graduate

<u>Membership Form</u>	New	Renewal /Change
Name(s) _____		
Street _____		
City _____ State _____ Zip _____		
Phone # _____		
Circle Amount Enclosed:		
\$25 Family	\$15 Individual	\$150 Life

Preservation Committee

David Kelleher, Chairman

The **RI Historic Preservation Commission** will be announcing grant award winners in early December. Hopefully, our grant proposal (to secure funds for the restoration of the **1905 Amusement Park Office Building** next to the Hunt House Museum) will be one of the winners.

Negotiations continue between the American Lighthouse Foundation and Exxon/Mobil to establish a lease for the **Pomham Rocks Light Station**. A meeting was held last week and it looks good for confirmation before the end of the year. When this happens, the next step is to form a local chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation; **The Friends of Pomham Rocks Light Station**.

Work is continuing on the design of a plaque to be placed on the outside of the entrance building to the **Ross Commons** project on Roger Williams Avenue to recognize the site as part of the historic area known as **Phillipsdale**.

The Gazette welcomes "Members Memories" and articles of historical interest.

**Mail to the society: P.O. Box 4774,
East Providence, RI 02916.**

Rainbow Girl

By Doreen Bonney

Every time I pass the Masonic Temple on Taunton Ave. I think of the teenage years I spent inside that opulent building as a "Rainbow Girl". For those of you who don't know the current or past purposes of the Masonic Temple, or have not heard of Rainbow Girls, I will give you a brief description. Affiliated with the Masons and the Order of Eastern Star, it is an organization for girls between the ages of 11 and 20 whose goals include, among other things, service to the community, religion, and peer cooperation. Our meetings were held on the first Saturday afternoon and the third Saturday evening of each month. The Order of Rainbow Girls is still very active today, however the Assembly to which I belonged no longer exists.

When I joined Rainbow at age thirteen I was one of five other 'recruits' who attended an elaborate Saturday night initiation ceremony. I was chosen as the 'star candidate' and represented the other five girls in the initiation. I wore a long white gown (my aunt's size 2 wedding dress). On the evening of my initiation I arrived at the Masonic Temple and walked up the imposing front steps between the Greek-style columns and into the lobby. The plush carpet was dark royal blue, the walls pale blue and the

woodwork a cream color. There were two wooden doors that led into either side of a large main meeting room, and as I peered in I was awed by its grandeur. There was a raised platform at the far end with a podium and several carved 'thrones'. To the left of the platform was an organ. There was a raised gallery of seats for spectators on either side of the room, and in front of each gallery there was a carved throne. As I found out later, there was another raised throne at the back of the room with a choir loft above it. The dark blue carpet continued throughout. At the center of the room was a wooden altar covered by a white cloth, in the middle of which lay an open bible. In a semi-circle in front of the altar seven chairs were arranged, each having what looked like a small gold table next to it. Above the altar the high ceiling formed a large dome painted with blue sky and clouds.

I was led into the women's dressing room where there were a number of girls noisily chatting while changing into their white gowns. Sofas and chairs were arranged around the room, and I was immediately intrigued by a beautiful mural that covered the walls. The sound of an organ cued the girls to leave the lounge and begin lining up at the two doors of the meeting room. At the start of 'Pomp and Circumstance' they made their entrance: two lines of graceful young girls walking toward the front platform on either side of the room, their gowns whiter than white against the background of dark blue carpet. When they met at the front, one line crisscrossed the other and they marched toward the rear of the room. After several more intricate maneuvers that must have looked impressive from the raised galleries, each girl miraculously ended up precisely in front of her own throne or chair.

After a welcoming introduction from the podium by the 'Worthy Advisor', my initiation began. As I was led around the room by 'Faith', we would stop in front of each throne, upon which sat 'Hope', 'Charity', and the 'Worthy Associate Advisor'. Each would recite a lengthy passage from memory which made me wonder how they could possibly remember all that. Then I was brought before the girls seated in the semi-circle in front of the altar, each representing a color of the rainbow. One by one they would recite a memorized explanation of their color's meaning in the Organization. Rolled up in the little gold table next to them was a satin sash in the color they represented. I would carry the sash to the altar and hook it to a ring. When I had finished, a colorful rainbow of sashes radiated from the center of the altar. During the ceremony the choir sang hymns and a soloist performed 'Somewhere Over The Rainbow'.

Rainbow Girls was quite an experience for me and I remained a part of the Organization for four years. I have not been inside the Masonic Temple in forty years, but the memories of that beautiful building and ceremonies held there are still vivid in my mind.

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

Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 14, 1 - 4 pm
Hunt House Museum Open
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford
Admission Charges

Monday, November 22, 7 pm
Members Meeting *Public Invited*
Newman Church, Rumford
Program: *Diaries of 1799 RI Women*

DECEMBER

Wednesday, December 2, 7 pm
Board Meeting *Members Welcome*
Hunt House Museum
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

DECEMBER (continued)

Sunday, December 12, 1 - 4 pm
Hunt House Museum Open
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford
Admission Charges

Monday, December 13, 6:15 pm
Holiday Party *Public Invited*
Newman Church, Rumford
Catered Dinner - Entertainment
\$15 Members - \$18 Non-members
Reservation Deadline: Monday, Dec. 6

JANUARY

Wednesday, January 5, 7 pm
Board Meeting *Members Welcome*
Hunt House Museum
Hunts Mills Road, Rumford