
HISTORICAL NOTES

Volume 16 Issue 1

JULY 2010

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD
SATURDAY, JULY 31, 2010 AT 11:00 A.M. AT THE UNION CHURCH**

Saturday, July 31st,
2010 - 11:00 AM At
The Union Church
A Celebration!

Join us for our Annual Meeting followed by a 1950s & 60s Celebration featuring period music, a Name That Tune Contest, plus 25 cent hotdogs & 10 cent sodas

At 11:00 a.m., PIHPS will hold a brief business meeting, including the election of officers, a tribute to Mary Lawrence, an update on the progress at The Sand Point Coffee Shop - our new headquarters, and an announcement regarding our capital fundraising campaign. Immediately following the meeting a celebration of the 50s & 60s will take place outside, featuring music, a Name That Tune contest plus hotdogs and sodas at 1950s prices. Please join us for what promises to be an interesting meeting and celebration. You will not want to miss it. Inside, on page 2, are an agenda and some additional information. The Society also will display a number of recent additions to its collection at the meeting with many photos from the 1950s & 60s.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Joe Bains

Many exciting things have been happening with the Prudence Island Historical & Preservation Society during the past year. It is my pleasure to describe some of the highlights for you in the column below.

As you are probably aware, in the autumn of 2009 the Society acquired a building to be used as our new headquarters. This was not just any building, but the former

Sand Point Coffee Shop, a place well remembered by many Islanders who were around Prudence during the 1950s and 60s. Of course, this acquisition could not have been accomplished without the generosity and patience of the donor, Lou Del Papa.

Some activities are already underway at the Coffee Shop and many more are being planned for the future. Be sure to see the article by Society Treasurer, Judi Foster, inside.

Over the winter, Donna Bains & Pat Richard produced an excellent Prudence Island cookbook, titled "Prudence Cooks Then & Now," as a fundraiser for PIHPS. Sales have been brisk since the book went on sale in May. Be sure to pick up your copy today. See inside for more information.

I wish to express my thanks to those who planned and conducted the Progressive Dinner fundraiser, especially Ed & Mary Bishop, Dave & Sharon Homan, and Jim & Kathy Sohar. That was a great time (Continued on page 2) →

Inside This Issue

1 Annual Meeting & Program

The President's Column

2 Prudence Cooks: Now & Then

Preparing For Our New Headquarters

3 Prudence Island in the Old Days

2

(Message from the President – Continued)

for everyone who participated.

Much has been accomplished in the past twelve months, but there is much more still to be done. Help us plan for the future, including the renovation of our new headquarters at the Sand Point Coffee Shop, and development of programs for the organization. If you have an interest in helping out, or an idea to share, please contact us at the annual meeting or any other time.

You can participate in documenting island history with old photos, articles, or even Podcasts on our website. You can help to collect and preserve island memorabilia, and encourage research into island history. You can donate old photos or other island related items, or lend them to the Historical Society to copy for the collection or to be included in future slide shows or albums on our website.

If you are interested in being active in our organization, let us know at the annual meeting, or e-mail us at: PIHPSociety@verizon.net.

I look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting and celebration on the 31st.

Sincerely,

Joe Bains

Annual Meeting – Saturday July 31st at the Union Church, 11:00 AM

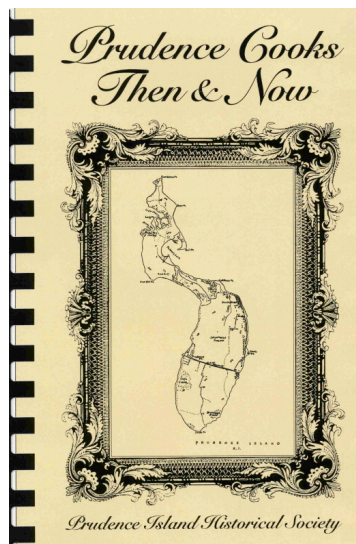
Annual Meeting Agenda

- Secretary's & Treasurer's Reports
- Election of Officers
- Old & New Business
- Capital Campaign
- Introduction of Past Officers
- Tribute to Mary Lawrence

- 50s & 60s Celebration

Prudence Cooks: Then & Now

“Prudence Cooks Then & Now” was compiled by Donna Bains and Pat Richard. It contains more than 400 recipes from the old to the new, plus some wonderful old photos as well as many notes on Prudence history throughout the book. No Prudence Island kitchen should be without this book. Recipes include Coffee Shop Stuffed Quahogs, Prudence Island Punch, a sliced carrot dish called “Copper Pennies,” Indian Pot Roast, Blueberry Dumplings, and hundreds of others. Pick up your copy before they are sold out.



Dues Reminder

Please take a moment to complete the enclosed 2010 PIHPS membership renewal form. Individual memberships are \$15. Family memberships are \$25. A Sponsor level membership is available for \$50. Your dues help to fund the Society's activities and programs. Please help us to preserve Prudence Island's rich

HISTORICAL NOTES

history by returning the enclosed form along with your check today. Membership information is also available at our web site: www.prudencehistory.com.

Or contact us via email at: PIHPSociety@verizon.net.

Preparing For Our New Headquarters

By Judi Foster

The PIHPS officers have initiated a number of activities to prepare for the responsibilities involved in renovating, operating and maintaining the Coffee Shop as the Society's Headquarters. In March 2010, the By-Laws of the Society were revised and approved by a majority of members. The revisions increase the number of Board Directors to include two new officer positions and three directors and allow more freedom for adjustment of membership dues. A new slate of officers and directors will be voted on at the annual meeting on July 31, 2010. The Society's financial records and reports have been reorganized. The Treasurer now maintains all records on QuickBooks and these files are reviewed annually and reported to the IRS by a certified accountant firm. The annual IRS form and Profit and loss reports are available to the public on our website. In addition, the President and Treasurer have appointed a Financial Committee (Mary Bishop, Gerry Cutter, Bob Elser and Shawen Williams) who will meet with the Board of Directors annually to review the past fiscal year's report and proposed budget for the coming fiscal year. In order to generate funds for the Coffee Shop renovation and operation, a number of steps have been taken. These include: submission of a grant proposal for replacing the septic system and installing a climate control heat

pump system; establishment of an endowment fund for operation; publication of an island cookbook; and sponsorship of a progressive dinner. All of these activities were made possible by the generosity of islanders volunteering their time and talents. We are especially grateful for the efforts of Donna Bains, Pat Richard, Mary & Ed Bishop, Cathy & Jim Sohar, Sharon & Dave Homan, Therese Marzullo, Lincoln Mossop, Donald Deignan and Billy Silvia. Thanks to David Brewster and Chris Curry, we have developed an overall plan for renovating the interior of the Coffee Shop. Allan Bearse is helping us develop an overall cost of the renovations and an itemized list of materials that must be purchased. We plan to initiate a fund-raising drive in August. In the interim, a group of volunteers, headed by Jim Lyons and Paul Collette, have been working to clean the Coffee Shop and remove the interior ceilings, walls and floor coverings. We plan to begin the renovations next spring with the hope of completing the interior by July 2012.

The Prudence Island Progressive Dinner Fundraiser - May 15 2010

You had to be there. You just had to be there, really. The Progressive Dinner event on May 15, 2010 was an event not to be missed. Featured were three cocktail party locations, all with spectacular views; eight dinner locations, each with fabulous food; plus everyone together at one dessert location with marvelous pies, cake and coffee.



Stimulating after dinner discussions at the Bishop's during the Progressive Dinner

Prudence Island in the Old Days

Some Stores and Restaurants on Prudence Island

By John C. Thresher

Sand Point Tea Room – Located on John Oldham Road in the 1920s, near Sand Point Hill, in a building owned by John D. Sawyer, who rented it out for the summer.



Homestead Casino from the dock – c. 1950

Homestead Casino – Built in 1911 by B. L. Lindley when there were fewer than a dozen cottages on the east shore. Madison Cram soon purchased the business and operated it for a few years, followed by William A. Locke and then Stephen C. Gay. The Homestead Post Office was also located here. Victor I. Miller and Clarence Palmer took over the business some time in the 1920s (the

HISTORICAL NOTES

business was listed as Miller & Palmer, or Miller & Palmer Casino Store, even after Miller's death in August 1929). In addition to groceries, they had a lunch counter here for a few years as well Regular customers could order a full meal in advance.

Miller and Palmer also built the Alta Vista in 1928. Located on top of the hill, several hundred yards south of Pier Road, it was used for dances, parties, and other functions. Later, the Alta Vista was moved down the hill and placed at the back of the Homestead Casino. Dances and occasional movies were held there until both buildings were washed away by the hurricane on September 21, 1938.

Clarence Palmer rebuilt the Homestead Casino by using wood from the cow barns at the Garland Estate. It was damaged by a hurricane in 1944 and repaired, but it was wiped out by Hurricane Carol in August 1954. Elizabeth Palmer, who took over the business after Clarence died in September 1952, built a new store next to her house atop the hill on Pier Road. She operated it for about 10 years. By 1964, Michael and Marcy Bachini purchased the property and took over the business. Renamed Prudence Variety, the store operated at this location until about 1970 or 1971, and then was relocated back down the hill by Homestead dock in an enlarged building originally built in 1955 by Michael Bachini. The Post Office was relocated here in the mid-1980s.



Kathy Shea at the counter of Marcy's Prudence Variety on Pier Road about 1965

Dawson's Store – A store on Pier Road in the mid-1920s. Historical records of the Union Church referred to this store during the “First Election of Officers and Annual Meeting” on July 18, 1927, when those in attendance voted unanimously to accept Madison Cram’s “offer of two lots on Pier Road across from Dawson’s Store.” This store may have operated only for a few years. The 1926 tax book does not list a Dawson, but he could have been a tenant. James Bains, who is listed as the owner of the property at that time, used the building as a cottage. Recently, the house was renovated and given the name “Rhumb Front.”

Store near Homestead – Owned by John J. Oliver, this store was first listed in the 1930 Tax Book, although it could have been in operation earlier. According to the 1934 Tax Book, this was on Narragansett Ave., midway between Pier Road and Herreshoff Lane (on Lot B of the Lombardy Camp Plat). The tax books show Oliver operating this store through the mid-1940s; he sold the property to Domenic Capone by 1945. Capone, an optometrist from Bristol, ended up naming his summer home “Optic View.”



Wm. Smith's Sand Point Pavilion about 1917

Sand Point Pavilion – Located at Sand Point, south side of Landing Lane, this business was operated in 1920, perhaps earlier, by William A. Smith, with the property owned by his wife Gertrude A. Smith. The building was originally a barn, which was moved to this location from Prudence Park. William also owned two lots on the north side of Landing Lane. By June 15, 1933, Clarence Palmer had purchased the property. According to Todd Farnham, he ran it under the name of Miller & Palmer. Palmer rebuilt this store after it was destroyed by the 1938 Hurricane. He operated it through most of the 1940s. By 1948, Rodger Grant acquired the property and made the building his house. This was destroyed by Hurricane Carol in 1954.



Sol Kaiman's Friendly Store at Sand Point about 1952

The Friendly Store – Located on the north side of Landing Lane, this store was built there about 1940 by Nicholas Herlein, according to Todd Farnham. Herlein also cut ice and stored it at his farm for delivery. By 1940, Herlein had acquired these lots,

HISTORICAL NOTES

along with two others just south of Landing Lane, from Gertrude Smith, who owned all four lots after William died. (Herlein could have been operating a store there before acquiring the property. Throughout the 1930s, the Smith family was assessed a tangible personal property tax on two lots north of Landing Lane. This could mean a business was located there in that decade.) The Friendly Store ended up selling meat, vegetables, books, magazines and hardware, in addition to groceries, whereas the Miller & Palmer store there only sold groceries. Herlein died in mid-April 1947 after a long stay at Newport Hospital. His wife, Emmie, ran the business for a couple of years before the Herlein’s son-in-law Sol Kaiman took it over about 1949. The Friendly Store also had a recreation hall, where movies, music and dances were held. This business also was washed away by Hurricane Carol on August 31, 1954 and not rebuilt.

Sources:

Tax book for the Town of Portsmouth (various years); Farnham, Norman Todd, *The Old Days on Prudence, 1920-1960*, PIHPS, 2006; *Historical Notes* (PIHPS newsletter) July 1998; Maytum, Charles G. Paragraphs on early Prudence Island, privately published, 1964; HeritageQuest Online (1910 and 1920 U.S. Census); Arlene Cram Butler (scrapbook); letter postmarked April 18, 1947 (dated “Thursday eve.” [April 17]) from Clifford E. Thresher, Sr. to PFC Clifford E. Thresher, Jr.; photos and post cards, PIHPS collection.