

The East Greenwich PACKET

A Publication of the East Greenwich Historic Preservation Society

June 2017

Vol. 28 No. 2

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **East Greenwich Historic Preservation Society Meetings Monday, June 19, Ocean State Paranormal** will return to the Old Kent County Jail to reveal the results of the findings from their investigation of our building. Please sign up for this event, as seating in the Marion Fry Meeting Room is limited to 74. Call or email Sue Curado 884-4643 or lencu@cox.net (See page 4)
- **Smith's Castle Strawberry Festival** Smith's Castle's annual Strawberry Festival is to be held on the Castle grounds on **Saturday, June 17** from 12:00pm to 4:00 pm. This yearly event is a fun time for children of all ages. Docents in period clothing will welcome visitors to the first floor of the historic house and assist with colonial games. Pony rides will be available for children, Jesse Liam's Band will provide music, and Dan Butterworth will once again entertain with his marionettes. The rain date is Sunday, June 18, 2017, 12-4pm. Admission: \$10.00 per adult, \$5.00 children 6-12 years. Free for children under 6 years old and Castle members. Senior discount and active military personnel is \$2.00 off admission. For more information please call 401-294-3521 or visit the website at www.smithcastle.org.
- **World War II Rhode Island** On **Saturday, June 17**, 2-3 pm at the Kingston Free Library, **Christian McBurney** will give the first lecture on the new book *World War II Rhode Island*. The state's contribution to World War II vastly exceeded its small size. It included the Northeast's largest naval air station at Quonset Point; a special, top-secret German POW camp based in Narragansett; and civilians, including for the first time many women, who did their part by manufacturing military equipment for warships.

Part Four: East Greenwich Photographers Paul J. "Bucky" Hoeffler



A screen shot from the documentary "Jazz Photographer: Paul Hoeffler" by Albert Wisco, shows some of Hoeffler's photos from the golden age of jazz, including musicians Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday and Art Blakey.

Paul J. Hoeffler (1937-2005) was the son of Wanda Tyburski and Paul Hoeffler. "Bucky," as he was known locally, was born November 1, 1937 in Buffalo, NY, but he grew up in East Greenwich (actually at 230 Spencer Avenue in Cowesett). His father was in the insurance business and his mother was active in local theatre. Former EGHPs President, Marion Helwig, recalls having dinner with the Hoefflers at their home. She says the dining room was painted bright red and their home was like "a page out of a architectural magazine."

His artistic home life must have influenced the young Hoeffler, because his interest in photography began when he was quite

young. An article in the March 1, 1956 issue of the *Rhode Island Pendulum* noted that for the second year in a row "Bucky" was the "top winner in the *Boys' Life* Photograph Contest sponsored on a national scale by that famous boy's magazine." *Boys' Life*, still published today, is the official youth magazine for the Boy Scouts of America. Published since 1911, it contains news, nature, sports, history, fiction, science, comics, and Scouting.

An article in the July 11, 1957 *Pendulum* noted an exhibit of Bucky Hoeffler's photographs at the East Greenwich Free Library,

continued on page 2

Bucky Hoeffler

continued from page 1



SPORTS AND OTHER ACTION. Bucky Hoeffler of East Greenwich, Rhode Island, shot this first place winner with a Speed Graphic on Royal Pan film. Exposure was 1/8 at 1/1000 with telephoto lens.

TOP WINNER IN the 1955 Boys' Life Photo Contest was a repeater from last year's competition, eighteen-year-old Bucky Hoeffler of East Greenwich, Rhode Island. He won first place in landscapes and action of the black-and-white division. And he also earned fourth place in the people class.

With more than eight thousand entries, this edition of the annual photo competition topped all other years in quantity. And, according to the jury of photographic experts which judged the entries, the pictures also topped other years in quality.

Bucky Hoeffler's winning entry in the 1955 Boys' Life Photo Competition.

"compromising some forty-odd pictures, this exhibit is one of the finest ever seen at the local library." Quite lofty praise for a teenager.

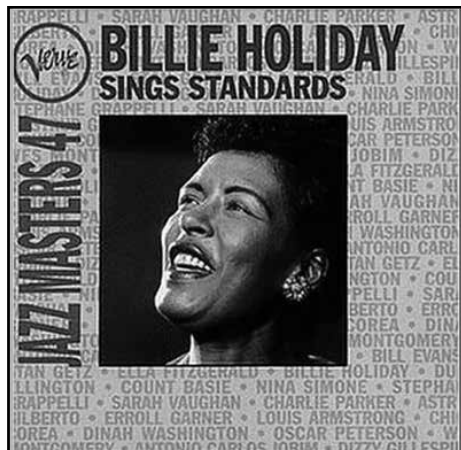
The article went on to mention that the "highlight of the exhibition were photographs taken at the Newport Jazz Festival last summer." It goes on to list the subjects of his photographs: Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong, Gene Krupa, Dave Brubeck and Ella Fitzgerald. The writer also noted that Hoeffler's photos varied in subject matter, "One especially interesting picture showed Donald Rhodes, Billy Brennan and Dick Bradshaw at the nozzle of the good old pumper 'Volunteer' during a muster."

Bucky, a graduate of the LaSalle Academy in Providence, entered the Rochester Institute of Technology in N.Y. in 1955, at the age of seventeen. He was employed by the Providence Journal Company during the summer months, where he honed his photography skills. While at R.I.T., Bucky began photographing the hip 1950s Jazz scene in Rochester.

In the article "*Rhapsody in Black and White: Paul Hoeffler Retrieves A Lost World*" by Ron Netsky, we get a glimpse into Bucky's early years in Rochester, "As a teenager studying photography at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Hoeffler documented some of the greatest musicians of the 20th century

with the reverence of a jazz aficionado and the aesthetic elegance of a master photographer." Netsky's interview with Hoeffler reveals great details of those early years "One of the first musicians Hoeffler photographed was Nat King Cole, who was chatting with Mel Torme before a show. Hoeffler began shooting, unobtrusively," Hoeffler said, "He looked over at me and said, 'You might want to have a more formal picture.' He put his arms on the back of the chair and posed for me."

The Paul Hoeffler "Rochester Jazz" photographic print collection was purchased by the University of Rochester in May 2002. The Rare Books and Special Collections Department notes in their Background and Scope of Collection: "The Paul Hoeffler 'Rochester Jazz' photographic print collection provides a unique commentary on Rochester history in the 1950s and 1960s." "Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Nat King Cole, Lee Morgan, Carmen McRae, Chet Baker, Dave Brubeck, Stan Getz and Sonny Rollins are just a few of the jazz artists visiting the Rochester clubs at this time and all captured on film by Hoeffler."



Hoeffler's photo on the cover of Verve Records' "Billie Holiday Sings Standards."

It was also noted that "Hoeffler went on to work as the photographer in demand for art work for the New York recording studios Verve, Prestige, Mercury, and the Blue Note. His work was prominently featured in the Ken Burns documentary Jazz and it was Hoeffler's images that were selected by Burns to promote the series."

Hoeffler moved to Toronto, Canada in 1971, and taught photography. He passed away from cancer on July 30, 2005, at the age of 67. He was survived by his wife, Claire, and their son, Bret.

Part One: East Greenwich Photographers (Vol. 26 No. 2 - June 2015) featured the story of photographer Allen Hoxie. Part Two: (Vol. 26 No. 3 - September 2015) featured the Briggs



Bucky Hoeffler self portrait from the EGHPs Archives.

Brothers Photographers and Lucius B. Tibbits. Part Three: (Vol. 26 No. 4 -December 2015) featured C. Jessen & Co. and William P. Blaney. We will feature other known local photographers in the future, namely Emil Stevens, Parker's Studio, Aylsworth's Studio, Carl Gunderson, and any others who come to our attention.

Secrets of Our Museum



In an article entitled "Rhapsody in Black and White: Paul Hoeffler Retrieves A Lost World" by Ron Netsky, Hoeffler noted that he was "drawn to photography by his love of vanishing locomotives. Using his dad's Argus C4, he chased steam engines." We are fortunate to have a collection of Bucky Hoeffler's photos in our archives, including some of those trains.

The Remarkable Clark B. Wells

Clark Bowen Wells (1863-1969) led a remarkable life. He was born March 3, 1863 in West Greenwich, RI, to Jabez and Susan (Carpenter) Wells. He passed away 106 years later on March 13, 1969. It is quite remarkable that a child born during the Civil War would live to see the Space Age.

On February 12, 1885 at the age of 20, he married Julia James Spencer in Warwick, RI. Their first child, Lulu Mildred, was born October 10, 1885 in East Greenwich. The couple also had Charles E. born 1891, Ruth E. born 1893, Lester C. born 1895, Coroline P. born 1897, Rose C. born in 1900. Julia died at age 38 on July 2, 1902, leaving Clark with two young children. They had previously lost 3 of their children. After Julia's death, he married Anna Jeanette Potter.



Julia J. (Spencer) Wells

Clark B. Wells was in East Greenwich advertising his blacksmithing services in the 1890s on the corner of Main and Spring Streets. Interestingly it noted he was "Blacksmithing in all its branches."

Wells was elected as a member of the Kentish Guards in 1896. He served during the Spanish American War. He is listed on the "Militia Enrollment of the Town of East Greenwich, 1898" recorded by Town Clerk, George A. Loomis: "Wells, Clark B., 35, Reynolds St., West Greenwich, RI, Blacksmith, 2 years in R.I.M."

His second wife Anna (Potter) Wells died June 27, 1935. She was 75-years-old. But Clark didn't slow down or give up living a productive life. When he was 86-years-old on October 13, 1949, it was reported in the *Pendulum* that he had "eluded" death. "Capt. Clark Wells narrowly escaped serious if not fatal injuries Tuesday evening when his car was struck by the west bound passenger train at



Clark B. Wells (1863-1969)

the Rocky Hollow Crossing. The front of the car was sheared off, but Captain Wells walked away just about as chipper as ever. He suffered a cut on the nose, a scraped hand and complained of a bruised hip. However, he did not feel that the accident would interfere with any of his activities and he said he would be on hand to parade with the Kentish Guard October 29th, when that organization celebrates its 175th anniversary. He is the oldest member of the Kentish Guards."

It is interesting to note that the article mentioned he was delivering his day's haul of quahogs when the accident occurred and that "in spite of his age Captain Wells is very active and each day performs a man's work. It is said that he was working on a job

of house painting up until five o'clock."

Erma (Wood) Peirce (mother of EGHPS member Rachel Peirce) recalls seeing Mr. Wells and hearing of his escapades. She says "when he was quite old, he painted the steeple of a church in Crompton. No one else would take the job, because it was so dangerous. But he willingly did it. I think he must have been about 89-years-old when he did it." She also recalled him attending dances with her best friend's mother. She recalls seeing the "very aged" gentleman sitting in the back seat of Mrs. Helen (Hinson) Reinhardt's car awaiting his ride to a dance. Obviously aging didn't stop Mr. Wells from enjoying life.

The June 23, 1960 *Pendulum* reported: "Mr. Wells for many years had a blacksmith shop on Main Street, and shoed horse for several generations of East Greenwich farmers, carriage owners and haulers. He lives on Fountain Street in Crompton, and celebrated his 97th birthday." "He has been a familiar figure at Pawtuxet Valley square-dances for many years and is still active in light carpentry work and a little smithing. A few summers ago he shingled a friend's roof, and often repairs furniture and children's toys for the neighbors."

An article which ran nationwide reported him to say, "Keep busy. Don't just quit work and do nothing." It noted the former blacksmith "makes fireplace bellows and in good weather likes to garden and go fishing and clamming. When the weather is bad, he keeps busy making colorful braided rugs and patchwork quilts, having completed six during the past few months."

In the late 1960s, he moved to Long Island, NY, to be with his granddaughter, Mrs. Mildred Schmitz, daughter of his daughter, Mrs. Rose (Wells) August. But he returned to East Greenwich to join the Kentish Guards in the Memorial Day Parade each year.

The front page of the March 6, 1969 *Pendulum* announced "Clark Wells celebrates his 106 birthday." But just a week later, he was gone. The editor of the *Pendulum* reflected, "We all died a little last week when we heard that Clark Wells had passed on at age 106. For Clark's 'extra' years kindled within each of us a momentary leap of hope that we, too, might defy the inevitable." "Too bad Clark never understood how much those 'extra years' meant to thousands around him, the 'lift' that came to others through him.

=BLACKSMITHING=
 —IN—
ALL ITS BRANCHES.
 ...**CLARK B. WELLS**...
COR. MAIN & SPRING ST

A FRIGHTENING NIGHT IN JAIL!

Date: Monday, June 19, 2017
Place: The Olde Kent County Jail
 110 King Street
 East Greenwich, RI
Potluck: 6:30pm (R.S.V.P. to Susan Curado
 884-4643 or lencu@cox.net)
Program: 7:30pm
Speaker: Ocean State Paranormal

The Ocean State Paranormal investigators return to the Old Kent County Jail to reveal the evidence of their investigation. Tour the "Hotspots" and conduct EVP sessions with OSP investigators.

Please remember to sign-up for this evening's meeting.



Acquisitions

With many thanks we appreciate receiving the following:

1. From Rachel Peirce, group of photographs purchased on eBay: 1913 East Greenwich Football team with names; East Greenwich Football Team sitting on steps of grammar school; East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce, 1920, with list of names and diagram; Delegates of Trade and Business Men's Association of R.I., Guests of East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce, June 3, 1926, taken in front of the Greenwich Hotel; Col. Dyer; 1909 Champs with diagram and some names included; American Legion East Greenwich Post No. 15; Banquet Dinner with Dr. Taggart, possibly of the Varnum Continentals; Class of 1913 Standing in front of Eastman Hall with Principal Edwin Noyes; Spring Street School, 1928, Grade 1 with names; Class Of 1910 in front of Administration Building with Edwin Noyes; Class Of 1912 with names and diagram; Class of 1910 with names and diagram; Eldredge School Class of 1935.

New Reading Material

1. *Rhode Island Roots*, Vol. 43, No. 2, June 2017
2. *Westerly's Witness*, June 2017

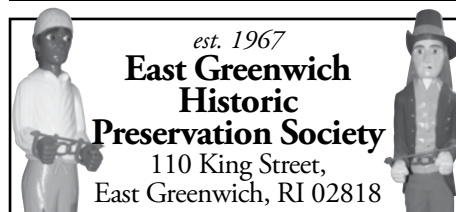
May Meeting Update

Our meeting May 15 at the Jail was again filled with good fellowship and good food. Our 2017-18 slate of officers was presented. There will be no changes to the current Board. We have new options for parking spaces closer to the Jail. In the last month we have hosted two "Reveals" by the Ocean State Paranormal Group, hosted Bruce MacGunnigle's Walking Tour of 5 historic East Greenwich properties, toured the remains of the Dry Salter Mill with the East Greenwich Historic District Commission and attended a Disaster Planning session hosted by the Rhode Island Historic Society.

Speaker at our meeting was Professor Margaret Ordonez from the URI Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design. Using photos from their archives she educated us about the importance of the Bleachery and the Dry Salter Mill in 18th century East Greenwich. We learned about various fabrics made locally and how they were printed. In addition to discussing the patchwork quilt that was recently donated to the Society, Professor Ordoñez and Susan Jerome, Collections Manager, dated and discussed the making of several quilts that were brought in by Society members.

Clean Up at the Jail

John Pierson and Joe McGinn recently spent an afternoon cleaning out some old junk at our headquarters, including disposing of some old microwaves and televisions which have been cluttering up the office. We are working on cleaning the front office to open it up as a research and reading room. It needs a lot of work. We are looking into some grant possibilities. Volunteers are welcome!



Board of Directors

President: Virginia Schmidt Parker
 Vice President: Gene Dumas
 Recording Secretary: Gloria DePaola
 Treasurer: Joseph McGinn
 Historian: Rachel Peirce

Officers 2016-2017

Archives: Rachel Peirce
 Corresponding Secretary: Open
 Hospitality: Susan Curado
 Programs: Open
 Property Management: Joyce McGinn
 Publicity: Gloria DePaola
 Members at Large: Thomas Casey Greene Jr.
 Teresa Romano

Website: Marlene Haglund-Hatch

Committees:

Newsletter: Marion Helwig
 Obituary Files: KarenLu LaPolice

Website: www.eghistoricpreservation.org
 e-mail: eghps1677@gmail.com