



Uncle Barney Baker

In the extensive search to trace the history of the house which once stood on Uncle Barney's Road in West Dennis and was moved in November, we have had to do some work on the genealogy of the family of Judah Baker. This is not an easy task, as Judah was a popular name in the south side Baker family. Coincidentally, the many Judahs seemed to choose to marry a Mercy or a Mary, thus making the search even more difficult. The Judah in which we are interested was Judah (5) born in 1742/3 and died in 1810. He was the son of Judah (4) and Mercy Burgess. He married Mary Look of Tisbury and they were the parents of four daughters and eight sons. Six of the sons lived to marry and have families. One of them was also named Judah, and he married Mercy Howes. Do you see what I mean?

Judah (5) was a farmer and a trader. He built a windmill atop the hill near Pinefield Lane, South Dennis, the same mill now moved to South Yarmouth and presently being restored. He was described by his great-great-granddaughter, Mrs. Lucy Bray, in the 1940's in this way: "He was very shrewd. He owned a great deal of land. In his time he built or bought a total of six houses and when he decided to settle his estate, he drew up six deeds, conveying the six houses and the land to his six married sons, but he kept the deeds in his own pocket until he died, September 29, 1810."

From the records, it appears that the sons and their families lived in their soon-to-be-inherited houses soon after each married. We could devote the next dozen or so newsletters to the development of the six south side neighborhoods which were affected by the lives and fortunes of these six brothers. But our purpose here is to expand on the history of the neighborhood of the little house which stood for so many years at 100 Uncle Barney's Road. The deed which passed to Judah (5)'s son Barnabas was the nucleus of this neighborhood.

Barnabas was Judah and Mercy's middle son. Born in 1771, he married well, taking for a wife Thankful Winslow. They were married in 1797 by the Rev. Mr. Stone and became the parents of six children. Barnabus and Thankful raised this family in the graceful south-facing full Cape still standing on the banks of Bass River. As the children matured they settled around the parents and their children did the same. In the series of articles about street names which we did some years ago, I said that the Uncle Barney's Road was probably named by someone who lived there and was related to Barney. Now it appears that EVERYONE who lived in that neighborhood for several generations was related to Barney! Daughters and sons, grandchildren and even some nieces and nephews lived in the homes along the way. But it seems that it was not officially Uncle Barney's Road until 1924 when the town voted to accept the name and erect a signboard. Here's how Article 22 of the Annual Town Meeting for 1923 describes the road: "...leading from Bass River Lower Bridge along the river to so called Wrinkle Point, as far as the woods...". Today those "woods" are the site of several dozen homes.

HERITAGE DAY AT THE MANSE

The 1736 Josiah Dennis Manse Museum opened for the season with a special exhibit for Heritage Week 1998. Heritage Week is a part of Heritage Cape Cod, a non-profit organization promoting the culture, heritage, and environment of Cape Cod. The Heritage calendar spans year-long events, ending with the DHS Christmas Open House held this year at Jericho House on December 10. The theme for this year's Heritage Week was early trades and occupations of Cape Cod. The Manse chose school teaching in 1700's and 1800's in the 1770 Old West Schoolhouse. Adults and children alike learned to "make their manners" to the school mistress, and some tried writing with a quill pen—not as easy as you might think!

An antique sampler exhibit in the Manse called attention to the exquisite needlework executed by Dennis girls, age seven to twelve, in the late 1700's and early 1800's. DHS is fortunate to own ten of these "examplars" wrought by our early ancestors.

JONATHAN BREWSTER COMES TO SCARGO

The DHS celebration of our town's birthday was held at the Scargo Cafe. A very pleasant time was had by all, and especially by some members who had not seen each other since high school, a few (perhaps quite a few is more like it!) years ago. After an excellent luncheon, Ray Urquhart, our new program chairman, introduced Jonathan Brewster of Plymouth Colony who arrived here in November 1621 on the Fortune. Jonathan, first son of Elder William Brewster who had come on the Mayflower, told us how it was to live in Plymouth in the early years. It sounded like a rigorous life, which, if it didn't kill you, would at least have built strong character and work ethic. However, one fact he stated made me wonder how they ever accomplished anything. He said the average person consumed a gallon of beer a day! In real life, Jonathan is David Goglia, an interpretive guide at Plymouth Plantation. Thanks, Ray, for arranging an interesting afternoon.

CRANBERRY MOMENT

Haven't the bogs been lovely? Now it all depends on how the bees are doing their job. Some growers have their own hives of bees, but more often than not, the bees are rented for the season, to do the job of pollination. Keep your eyes on the bogs! (and on the bees!)

CALENDAR

July 8 7:00 P.M. Board meets at Jericho

July 23 9:30 A.M. Bike Tour of Dennis village. Meet at Carleton Hall.

Rain date July 24th

COMING IN AUGUST

Aug. 15 to 23 **DENNIS FESTIVAL DAYS**

Aug. 15 Colonial Open House at the Manse

Aug. 16 Everyday Life in the 1800's at Jericho

Aug. 19 Walking Tour of Old South Dennis

Aug. 20 "Yesterdays in Dennis"--slides and lecture, Senior Center

WE HAVE A POT BELLIED STOVE

The June newsletter ink was hardly dry when we received a call from DHS member Don Swain announcing that he had a pot bellied stove for us to use in the schoolhouse exhibit. Dick Howes and John Burton of the Manse Committee checked it out and determined it was just what we needed. They repaired and painted it and set it up on the 1800's side of the school room. It's perfect! The response from our members when we need something is always gratifying. Thank you, Don, and thanks also to Dick and John.

THE RAGGLE-TAGGLE GYPSIES

When we were children, one of my mother's dear friends gave us, as an annual Christmas present, a bound volume of the issues of a British children's magazine, called, I think, Youth's Companion. It contained stories and poems, which mother read aloud to us. The book was fascinating because it was written for English children, not Cape Codders. I especially remember the series about the Gypsies in England. They travelled in groups in wagons pulled by horses. They would camp in a village, set up their wares consisting of jewelry and baskets, and remain for a while. Then they would pack up and travel on. In the British stories, sometimes a child would either be kidnapped by the Gypsies or would run away from home to join the Gypsy wanderings. The tales of these children who joined the Gypsies were both scary and intriguing.

One of the reasons we found this series so interesting was because of the similarities between the Gypsies in the stories and the Gypsies we saw on the Cape. Every summer, in the 30's and 40's the Gypsies would come to town--"Some in rags, some in tags and some in silken gowns." Not only was their garb strikingly different from what we were used to, but men and women alike were bedecked with beads and earrings. They arrived in ancient automobiles or trucks, men, women and children by the scores. The youngsters, I remember were invariably barefooted and noisy. The Cape Cod Gypsies also set up business to sell baskets and jewelry. In our town, their camp was near Swan Pond River, on Lower County Road. They would string lines between trees and hang their large variety of baskets on display. In the fall, just before they departed, the Gypsies would peddle their wares from house to house. If you bought a basket, you could have your fortune told. The Gypsies seemed both mysterious and frightening.

Our mother disciplined her brood with a mixture of firmness and humor. "Be a good girl," she would say, "or I'll give you to the Gypsies." Of course we knew she was teasing --(wasn't she?) But I will confess to you, the thought of travelling with these carefree people; of crossing those brand new silver bridges over our canal; of heading for--who knows where?--but NOT back to school and NOT wearing shoes--well, sometimes after a Gypsy had visited us, I would lay awake and think about it. To go with the Gypsies-- what an adventure that would be! Still, lying in my snug little bed, it seemed like an adventure to dream about, but not to experience. I liked school and I would miss my family, if I left with the Gypsies. Falling asleep to the sound of the whip-poor-will in the pine woods behind our house, I was glad to stay right where I was. Anyway, Mother was just joking. She wouldn't give any of us to the Gypsies no matter how naughty we were--(would she?)

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