



THE MINISTER AND CRANBERRY CULTURE

Many of the men of the cloth who have served this town have had a great influence upon our growth and development, especially those in the early days, when town and church were virtually one entity. This month I want to tell you about a minister who served in our town who was admired as a spiritual leader, a neighbor, and a friend, but who also was instrumental in advancing the economic interests of the community. His name was Benjamin Eastwood. He was born in England--probably educated there--but before 1853, he and his brother, whose name was Eastwood Eastwood (really)--emigrated to the United States. One source which I have read states that they came on the clipper ship *Flying Cloud* but records of this famous vessel fail to mention that passengers were boarded in England on her early passages. However, we do know that the Eastwood brothers did come to the United States from England and that, in 1853, Benjamin Eastwood became the minister of the Dennis village Reformed Methodist Church, now the Dennis Union Church. He served that parish until 1858--a rather long pastorate in that era when 2-3 years was the average time a Methodist parson spent in one parish.

Eastwood left Dennis in 1858, presumably to serve another Methodist Parish, but we have not been able to clarify just where he went. But in 1861, Mr. Eastwood was back here, serving the Methodist Parish in East Dennis, (now East Dennis Community Church) where he remained for two years.

Mr. Eastwood's success in Dennis no doubt was based upon his pastoral care of his parishioners. But a part of his success was as a result of his interest in his parishioner's interests, which at the time of his pastorates was the new industry of cranberries as a cash crop.

Very early in his ministry at Dennis village, Mr. Eastwood involved himself in the study of cranberry culture. He corresponded with the serious cranberry growers, including Hiram (son of Cranberry Henry) Hall, Eli Howes (developer of the still important Howes Berry), and Alvin Cahoon, who had taken a lesson from the experience of Henry Hall and started the scientific development of cranberry growing in our neighbor town of Harwich. His correspondence evolved into a series of articles published in the *New York Tribune* which he signed with the pen name "Septimus". His articles were intended to increase interest in the new crop now being cultivated only on Cape Cod, but it was also intended to raise hope that other areas of the country would develop an interest in this new form of agriculture, and, by the way, purchase cuttings from Cape growers. And they did just that. There was so much interest in the subject, that in 1856 Mr. Eastwood published his articles in book form, entitled The Cranberry and its Culture. It was the very first book on cranberry culture ever published. DHS owns a copy which is in the Pauline Wixon Derick Library at the Manse.

CAPE COD CHERRY PIE

Now that the cranberries are in-gathered, we need to do some cooking. After stirring up a major batch of cranberry sauce, and baking a loaf or two of cranberry nut bread, there should still be enough berries left to make Cape Cod Cherry Pie.

I like to think that this recipe was an original of my grandmother, Alice Sears (Hall) Thacher. Grandmother's recipes were strong on flavor, but short on directions. My mother, who was from away, found it very difficult to duplicate his mother's cooking for her new husband. The family recipes were passed down from mother to daughter, and in Mother's case daughter-in-law, but the rules were mostly verbal. "Brown up a few onion slices"--"But Mother Thacher, how many?" "Well, just use your judgment," Grandmother Thacher would reply. As a result, my father allowed that, while his wife's cooking was passable, it wasn't just like Mother used to make. Some of Grandmother's recipes--or receipts, as she called them-- include instructions such as --" a lump of butter the size of a walnut," " beat up an egg in a tea cup and fill it up with cold water," " use a small pinch of cream of tartar and a bigger pinch of baking soda," and (my personal favorite), " beat the batter for as long as it takes for you to sing two verses of The Old Rugged Cross." Of course, everyone knew at least two verses of that old hymn! But let's get to Cape Cod Cherry Pie.

Make up enough pastry for whatever size pie plate you are using. Line your pie plate and heat up your oven [400 degrees]. Mix in a bowl fresh washed cranberries and thin slices of green apples--enough to fill your pie. Add one cup of sugar, half brown and half white, for every cup of cranberries. Stir in 1/4 tsp. cinnamon and 1 tabsp. corn starch. Stir it all up real well, and fill your pie plate. Dot with butter and cover with a lattice top crust. Bake for five minutes, then reduce your oven [350 degrees] and bake until the fruit is soft [about 30 minutes.]

And there you have it--Cape Cod Cherry Pie. "Ummm, it's Sooo Good." I'd better get baking before my significant other reads this newsletter.

CALENDAR

Nov. 11 VETERANS DAY Be sure and hug a veteran and thank him or her
Nov. 11 7 P.M. DHS Board meets at the Manse
November 26 Happy Thanksgiving to all

Coming in December

December 5 Historic House Tour, Quivet Neck 1-5 P.M. Benefit Friends of Strings
Tickets on the day of the tour, Jacob Sears Memorial Hall
December 13 Christmas Open House at Jericho 2-4 P.M.

OF LEAF RAKES AND SNOW FLAKES

Seems to me, the way the wind's been blowing straight out of the northwest, most of us can think about putting the rake away. All the leaves will be ending up in Dennis Port. (Sorry Phyllis). But when you go to put the old rake away, don't forget to take out your snow shovel. Winter is not far away, and when we start to think Winter, we think Christmas. DHS has some fine suggestions for gift giving this holiday season--you received a list of items which we have for sale in one of your recent newsletter. If you've a mind to give a little history away this holiday, call Phyllis 394-0017 or Kitty 394-6114 and they will arrange for a time when you can pick up your selections at the Manse or Jericho.

AND SPEAKING OF CHRISTMAS.....

It's Jericho's turn to be our Open House for Christmas this year. The decorating committee is already busy spotting nice greens and red berries and will soon be putting together the bows and finery we love to see in our historic centers. If you are interested in helping, call Susan Kelley 385-3300 and she will set you to work. Or if you want to contribute some goodies, call Nancy Howes, 385-3528 and she will be happy to put your name on the list. Whether you can help or not, please mark your calendar and plan to come to Jericho on Sunday December 13 from 2 - 4 P.M. to greet your fellow members and friends and to get into the Christmas Spirit.

WE TAKE TO THE POLLS

I'm sure that the voters of Dennis will turn out in force for Election Day, 1998. We have always done pretty well in getting out to vote and also to attend Town Meetings. Our precinct votes at Wixon School, and I love those little booths with red, white and blue curtains. It makes us feel really patriotic as we connect those little arrows. Some towns have open booths for voting, and one Cape precinct which was pictured in a photograph recently had voters sitting at a table in the middle of the room.

Citizens of Dennis have not always voted in this private manner. Our ancestors, or at least the male ancestors, did not use a written ballot. Election of town officials was conducted at Town Meetings. In most instances voting was done by "ayes" and "nays" or by show of hands. If the moderator wanted to make a real point he would ask those in favor to "stand up and be counted." In Massachusetts Bay Colony, in 1643, a secret method of voting was adopted. Each voter was given a handful of white and black beans. To vote for a candidate, a white bean was placed in the plate with his name on it; if voting against him, a black bean was used. I don't know if this system was ever used in this county.

The practice of electing town officials at Town Meeting continued here until 1923. That year, the town was divided into five precincts and voting took place on the Monday before Town Meeting by Australian ballot at five polling places. This schedule continued until 1991. Since that year, the Town Meeting has been held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of May, but town elections are held on the third Tuesday after the first Monday of May. This change was made so that a special election would not be necessary should Town Meeting pass an article which would require a Proposition 2 1/2 override. Watch for a special exhibit about the history of voting in Dennis next summer at the Jericho Barn.

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