

THE SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



SUTTON'S STEPPING STONES

SUTTON, MASSACHUSETTS

VOL. III - No. 11

MARCH 1977

I'VE BEEN TOLD . . .

by DONALD A. KING

The story I am about to tell was found in a copy of "The Sentry", a Sutton High School publication dated December 1921. The article was written by Marion Cressy now Mrs. Alexis Chausse of Uxbridge Road.

The school closed as usual for the Thanksgiving vacation, during this time there was a storm that dropped about two inches of rain which froze as it hit the ground. Telephone and electric wires had as much as 2½ inches of ice on them.

Poles were pulled down and wires broke, cutting off communication and power to homes and factories.

Many people were out of work at the mills. [Sutton then had two mill villages, Manchaug and Wilkinsonville.]

The fruit orchards also suffered heavy losses.

School did not reopen for several days after the vacation, due to lack of water and lights. [This made the young people very happy.]

Marion [redacted] wrote a poem about the storm.....

"Every pine and fir and
hemlock
Wore ermine too dear for an
earl,
And the poorest twig on the

cont'd - p 5

NIPMUCKS - INDIANS

by CLIFFORD (KIP) CHESLEY, Jr.

A tribe of Indians called the "Nipmucks" lived in Sutton, Grafton, Oxford, Mendon, and other towns nearby.

They ate birds, bear, deer, fish, small animals and anything they could grow in the ground. Cornmeal was made into a dough, covered with leaves and baked in hot ashes; they also made a cornmeal hasty pudding.

The household utensils consisted of pots, bowls, spoons and dishes made of clay, soapstone and wood. Pails and baskets were made of birchbark, cornhusks and wild grasses. Clothing consisted of the skins of animals such as deer, coon and fox. Fur caps, hoods, moccasins, and snowshoes were used in winter. The men's headdresses were made of turkey feathers, the women wore headbands of colored beads also bracelets and necklaces.

The Nipmucks did not live in tepees but in wigwams similar to the Long House or in an A-frame Lodge. They cut down young trees, peeled off the bark and allowed it to dry then putting it under rocks or logs to flatten. The poles were used in a circle, tied at the top with a hole in the center for the fire smoke. Woven bulrush

cont'd - p 3

HATHWAY SCHOOL

by ALICE CLARK RILEY

*Hill-Dill - Come over the hill,
Or I'll catch you standing still.*



CLASS IN 1921

Back Eleanor Carlson, Donald King, Phoebe Lawrence
Row = Estrid Anderson, Edith Carlson, Dorothy Sylvester
Walfred Carlson, Edwin Anderson

Front Gordon King, Elsie Anderson, Martha Lawrence
Row - Mabel Lawrence, Doris Sylvester

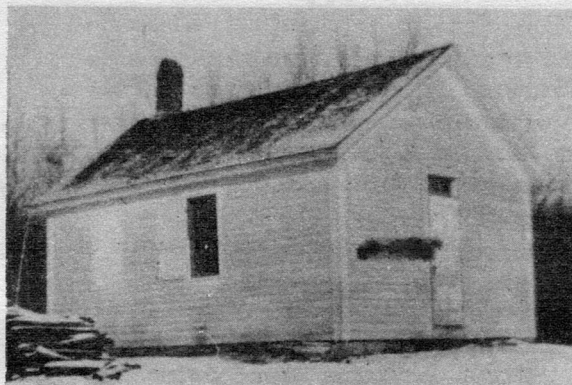
Across the road they run - dashing, diving, plunging, screaming; tall boys, small boys, big girls, little girls, all struggling to reach the goal line the old stone wall enclosing King's cow pasture.

The road? Today we call it Uxbridge Road but away back then it was the road to Hathaway Corner, and if you were venture-some, you continued on to Breakneck, despite the rocks and gulleys and the steep inclines.

Hathway School was probably built in the era 1810-1825. It is of similar construction to the Eight Lots School, still standing but of later construction and somewhat smaller in dimensions. The entrance door faced the east and when a roaring no'easter came driving that way that door was a sore hindrance to education. The teacher, or whoever opened the school, kept an ax or hatchet hidden behind the door rock. With ax in hand the first step towards education was chopping away the ice that bound the door to its frame.

Once inside the schoolroom the next step was to start a fire in the long box stove. Big boys usually had plenty of shaved kindling sticks ready to catch the blaze from one of the brimstone headed matches torn from a card of many more. The matches were quickly put away in a tin lard pail, then placed atop the few extra books in the "supply closet". (For some reason mice seem to like brimstone.)

By nine o'clock children had gathered from numerous roads of



HATHWAY SCHOOL

the district - Mendon, Fuller, Central Turnpike, Purgatory, Uxbridge and King Hill. Big boys and girls and small tots took seats assigned them according to their height. In those early days a four year old was sent off to school with his older brothers and sisters. Mrs. Milton Holbrook of Sutton Center tells of her mother-in-law, Julia Ann (Crossman) Holbrook, who began her schooling at Hathaway at the age of four. She left the Crossman home on Mendon Road carrying her lunch with her. During the forenoon Julia Ann recited her A,B,C's, did a little counting, and perhaps recited a "Memory gem". Julia Ann spent most of her morning listening to the older children spelling such words as "inconprehensibility", declaiming excerpts from Cicero or Caesar and doing mental gymnastics in solving arithmetic problems. Greatest wonder of all was to see some apt pupil go to the writing table and with pen and ink make those beautiful curves and flourishes on that faintly tinted blue-white paper. Some day she would write just like that.

At noontime Julia Ann ate her lunch, drank some water from the communal dipper, played with her schoolmates and returned to the school room at half past twelve. Having had a full forenoon of listening, watching and participating Julia Ann decided it was time to rest. She stretched out on the wall bench and there she stayed until the dismissal bell rang and she took her way past Hathaway Corner, up Mendon Road to her home.

Time went on. Some years there were not enough children of school age in the district to keep the school open but still the school stood, "a ragged beggar", swampy woods about it on 3 sides, the road and King's pasture in front.

After World War I the owner-

ship of the farms changed and Hathaway School was operating with a fair sized enrollment. To the Kings and Lowes were added the family names of Anderson, Carlson, Heslings, Sacalaski, Siska, Russell [Anglicized], Franceski, and others.

Hathaway School closed permanently in 1930. At a later date the town sold the building and it was transformed into an attractive home for a young family. But the woods still stand and lovely violets and fragile ferns grow in remembrance of the pupils and teachers who found their days at Hathaway School a pleasant place to work, to learn, to communicate and to enjoy their fellow mates.

NIPMUCKS (Cont'd)

mats were placed on this framework and the bark used for the outside covering including door flaps.

A wooden frame bunk six to eight feet square built about a foot from the ground was their only furniture and was used for relaxing and sleeping.

Quahog [clam shells] were made to look like a button with a hole in the middle for stringing white and purple strands, the purple having twice the value for purchasing.

The Nipmucks traveled by foot, horseback and canoe. There were two kinds of canoes, one made of tree trunks which were hollowed out by burning and scraping and the other made on a frame using birch bark.

I am planning to be a missionary to the Indians and would appreciate any information you have concerning the Indians of America.

HOW TO INVEST 9¢ WISELY

IMPORTANT! If you still wish to receive the Bulletin, please forward a postcard with your name and correct address to the Editor.

March 1977

OLD GRAY'S REJUVENATION

by MARION CHAUSSE

Listen! my schoolmates, and
you shall hear of something
that happened one day this
year;

'Twas in the snow and slush
and ice

[I'll tell you now it
wasn't nice].

To continue my tale - one
day this year

We started from school
without a fear of tips or
spills or such mishaps;

We were quite too fearless
I think perhaps.

Our chariot dragged on with
much delay,

Drawn by a long legged
hooked necked gray.

That gray was a dreadful
quiet beast and

Was never startled in the
least

By whips or sticks or even
clubs -

He shook them off with
gentle rubs.

So, we went with the honest
gray,

Moping along in his usual
way.

We chatted and sang and
whistled too.

Indeed! we were quite a
merry crew

When all of a sudden our
hearts stood still.

Right at the foot of
"Putnam Hill"

Old Gray, with a long
forgotten thought

Had bounded forth in a
leaping trot.

The thought was so sudden,
and the two so fast

We were all spilled out -
unto the last.

The driver stood in wonder-
ing awe -

Wondering what Gray was
running for.

But quite as suddenly as the
thought

Old Gray returned to his
snail like trot.

We have never seen the like
again -

We always hope, but it seems
in vain.

However, we shall all
remember the day

When the [old] gray horse
almost ran away.

"The Sentry" published this
poem in April 1923. It was a
true incident in which I was
involved that prompted me to
write the poem at that time.
The transportation in the winter
from Manchaug over Putnam Hill
past Shaw's home was by a one
horse drawn sleigh. It had
three wide seats with the backs
four inches high. I customar-
ily sat on the outside edge of
the rear seat as I was one of
the first to get off.

I'VE BEEN TOLD (Cont'd)

elm tree

Was ridged inch deep with
pearl."

I looked in the Sutton Town
Report for the year 1921 and
found that Mr. Franklin Putnam,
the Road Surveyor, spent over
\$1200 clearing roads of trees.
That was a lot of money for that
time.

So you see, Mother Nature has
been putting people out of work
with her storms for years.

THE SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

PO Box 127, Manchaug, MA 01526
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Editor- Carilyn E. Philbrook

Please submit articles of his-
torical content, memoirs, old
photographs, letters and other
ideas for future issues to the
Editor.

EUROPEAN COLONISTS IN AMERICA BEFORE ...??

by MALCOLM PEARSON

At the February 8, Historical Meeting, an unusual lecture and slide presentation was given by James P. Whittall. The large group which included invited guests were intrigued by the many comparative references shown by a split screen technique. This demonstrated graphically the numerous instances where existing evidence indicates a most convincing theory that Phoenician, Celtic, and Libyan cultures are present in the Americas.

Briefly, they consist of inscriptions (Egyptian hieroglyphs, Celtic Ogam, Iberian Punic and Basque script), man-made stone structures, symbols of worship and related artifacts.

To mention one specific item is the existence of anforeta jars found off the coast of Maine at Castine and Jonesboro. These jars are similar to Libyan design which became obsolete around 750 AD.

In the man-made structure category, beehive shape stone houses exist not far from Sutton, Upton, Webster, Thompson, Conn., and a reported one in South Uxbridge. An inscription claimed to be on a ledge in Grafton will be investigated this spring. A coin dated 1420 was found not far from the Upton Site.

James P. Whittall has field researched many archaeological locations here in America and the Mediterranean area. The inscription translations are the epigraphic efforts of Dr. Barry Fell, a Harvard professor.

Ref. "America B.C." by Barry Fell, Quadrangle/ the N.Y. Book Co.

"Who Really Discovered America", Reader's Digest, Feb. 1977, "He Finds Old World in the New", Blackstone Valley Tribune, Feb. 12, 1977

WHAT IS THE SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY?

The Sutton Historical Society is an organization that exists to promote research and learning in the history of the town of Sutton, Massachusetts; to acquire, protect and preserve property, historical documents, relics and objects; and promote celebration of patriotic and historic anniversaries.

We own and currently are preserving and protecting a turn of the century blacksmith shop in Sutton Center. The shop is open to the public on Saturday afternoons during the summer.

We meet monthly for various programs of historical significance. The public is cordially invited to attend any of our programs.

We are governed by a Board of Directors consisting of twelve persons.

All persons who love the town of Sutton and who wish to see its historical character preserved are welcome to become members of our active and growing society by submitting the application below.

To: The Sutton Historical Society
Mr. Keneth Hoover, Treasurer
Box 127
Manchaug, Mass. 01526

I/We are interested in joining the Sutton Historical Society.

(Check one of the below)

Family membership at \$5 per yr _____

Single membership at \$3 per yr _____

Junior membership at \$1 per yr _____

(under 18 years of age)

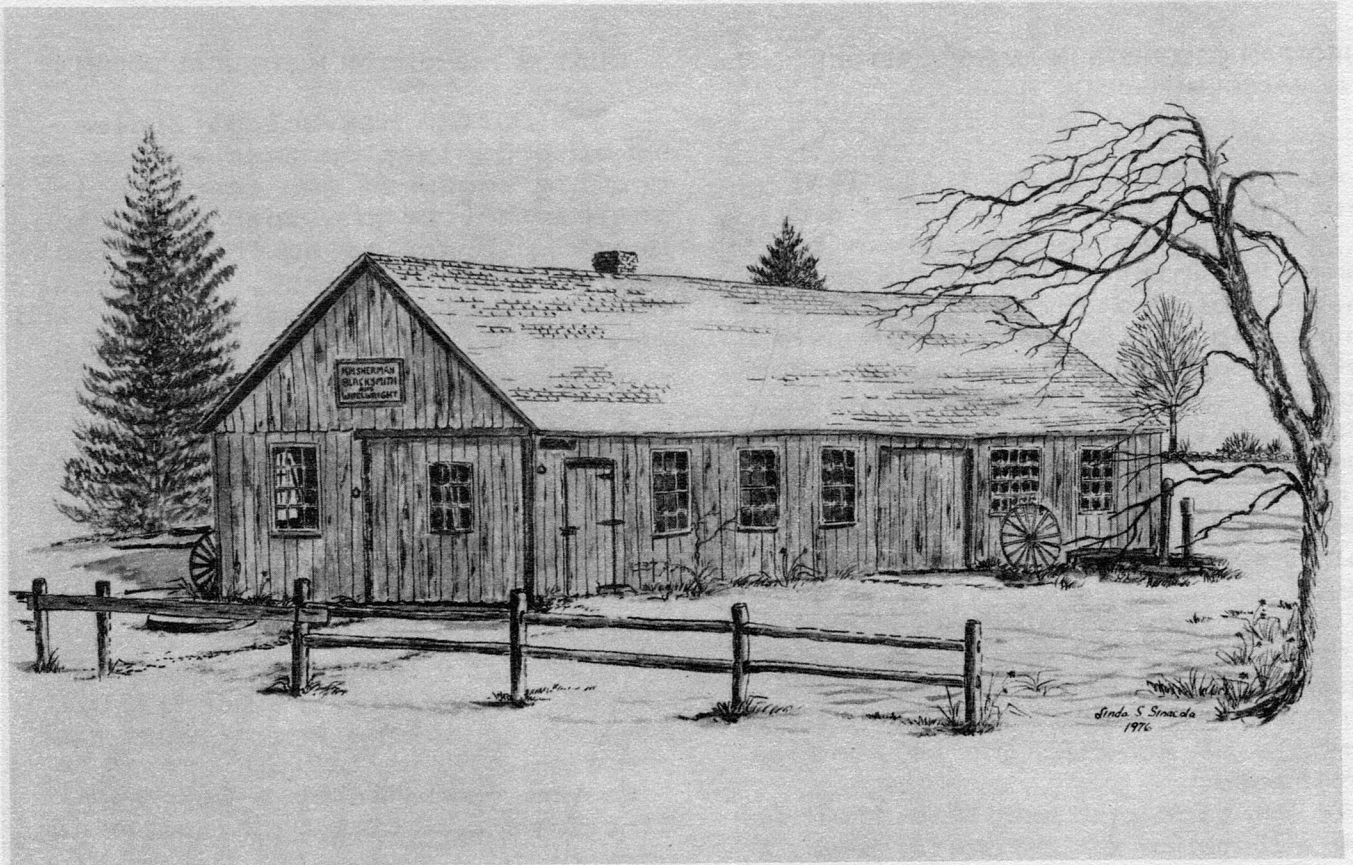
Signature _____

(Please print) Name _____

Address _____

Please make checks payable to the Sutton Historical Society

March 1977



SHERMAN BLACKSMITH SHOP

The original of the above photo was drawn by Linda Sinicola.
It was presented to Rae and Marjorie Johnson at the December meeting by the Society.

From
SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Box 127
Manchaug, Massachusetts 01526

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