

~ Denmark Historical Society ~

~ Newsletter ~

Vol 1 No. 6

June -July 1994

Celebrate Denmark's Children's Summer Camps

For many years the summer camp industry has been an important part of our town providing local residents employment in various capacities and bringing children from around the country and around the world to the shores of Denmark's lakes and ponds. While people have been vacationing here in camps and cottages, the children of the summer camps are a unique group. Several camps have been established and disbanded. Two are still very active parts of our community. Three of the most prominent names in camping in Denmark are Blazing Trail, Walden and Wyonegonic.

Camp Blazing Trail was the vision of Miss Eugenia "Aunt Gigi" Parker. She was a woman of wide experience and a licensed Maine Guide. In 1930, with the help of Harry Jordan, she put together a program for girls aged 13 to 18 which taught them the arts of living out-of-doors in Maine. The camp property bordered Sand and Hancock Ponds and had rustic cabins where the girls lived. They fashioned much of the equipment which they used and became adept at campfire cooking, canoeing, mapping, wood lore and many skills necessary to function on a wilderness trip.

Over the years the trip territory was expanded to include mountain climbing and canoe trips in the Katahdin, Chesuncook and Allagash regions. Mr. Jordan briefed the girls before leaving on a trip. "Safety, wind and weather, the courtesy of the back woods, "speak civilly to anyone you meet, that is all" - what to do if lost, but don't get lost."

The Second World War curtailed some activities, however, training went on in woodcraft and camping, augmented by chicken raising, bean picking, "Victory" gardening and increased activity with the village children. English girls from war-torn cities were extended hospitality for the summer. Short mountain trips and canoeing on near-by rivers with poling on white water took the place of the long trip of earlier summers.

Blazing Trail continued operating under the able direction of Miss Parker for twenty-five years. She sold the camp to the Boston YWCA in 1955 which maintained the camp through the mid-1970's. At that time the property was sold to a private party. Today it is broken up into smaller parcels.

Camp Walden was started in 1916 by two energetic and determined women from New York who felt that city children should enjoy the natural environment and learn to live simply in a wooded area. These women were Miss Blanche Hirsch and Miss Clara Altschul. They looked at some land in Denmark and liked another piece better. This was being logged at the time and they bargained to pay 25 cents for every remaining tree and \$800.00 for the whole property. That first winter the women planned the layout of the buildings and what they would need for their first season's operation, including the building of an icehouse for refrigeration for the summer and the first bunkhouses.

Many local families have worked at Camp Walden over the 78 years it has been in operation. Irving Hale was the first caretaker and his wife, Elsie, was the first cook. George Wentworth became caretaker in 1918 and stayed in that position for twenty-five years. Laundry was done by Jennie Knight. Other Denmark folks who worked for Walden include Effie True, Abbie Potter, the Sanborns, the Rankins, the Richardsons, the Ingalls, the Pingrees and the Legoffs who built the docks and took care of the camp waterfront.

The first season there were 30 campers, a number that steadily grew over the years to around 150. Walden girls also changed their routine during the war years, picking beans, airplane spotting, rationing gas and food and helping with the campaign to build the hospital in Bridgton. New buildings have been added in keeping with the original plan and to keep pace with new activity programs. Long wool stockings and loose bloomers were part of the early uniform which have been replaced by T-shirts, shorts, tennis socks and sneakers but the traditions and songs from the early summers remain today.

Some things have changed, though. Parents now drive to camp in cars instead of in a horse and buggy. The girls fly to Portland instead of taking the narrow gauge railroad to Perley's Mills. Many things have changed in our world and at Camp Walden but the traditions bring campers back to the shore of Walden Pond (Sand Pond) year after year and generation after generation.



Senior Wiggle 1915



Early Campfire

When Wyonegonic was established in 1902 by Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Cobb it was the first camp of its kind in the country. In 1908 they established Camp Winona for boys in Bridgton. Both camps, located on the eastern shores of Moose Pond, were run from offices in Denmark's lower village and during the first years of operation a fleet of motor boats was the only means of transportation to and from the camps. Provisions, mail and the campers themselves were all carried by these boats. One of the most prominent in memory was the "Richard", built by Hiram Legoff. Roads were constructed later on and the boats were used for camp trips and brother-sister visiting days between Wyonegonic and Winona. During those early years there were practically no other inhabitants on the whole twenty-five miles of lake shore.

Each camp unit had a rustic main lodge, or wiggle, which had a large stone fireplace. Waterproof khaki tents on raised wooden platforms nestled in the pines along the shoreline, each housing four campers. There were fleets of rowboats and canoes, tennis courts, a riflery range and swimming docks. At the Freeman farm next to the camp road was a riding ring and barn full of horses. Careful organization and supervision saw that all campers enjoyed a happy and healthful outdoor life through participation in land and water sports, nature study, music and dance, campcraft, trips and handicrafts.

Moose Pond shores provided many sites for overnight trips. As the girls became more proficient in canoeing skills they ventured out on surrounding lakes and rivers for extended trips. Pleasant Mountain day trips were always taken in preparation for more lengthy climbs on Mount Washington and other nearby peaks. Sailing was added to the program and campers took part in regattas with other summer camps. One highlight, especially for girls who had never experienced the delights of the seashore, was the annual auto trip to the ocean, the dip in the salt water and the shore dinner afterward.

A summer season was eight weeks long and in 1920 the rate was \$250.00 per camper. The food was brought in from the Portland and Boston markets and milk, cream, eggs, poultry, and vegetables from local farms. Special attention was given to the youngest campers yet all were expected to make their own beds and to keep their tents in order. Mornings were reserved for instruction while afternoon periods were often more recreational. The uniform consisted of white middies, dark green bloomers, sweater and neckerchief. The girls wore a black jersey bathing suit with a jersey overslip and rubber cap for swimming. Woolen hose were listed as desirable for camping and rainy days.

Wyonegonic developed many traditions over the years. Local women put on a bazaar each summer well remembered by the campers for the chance to buy fudge and little green stocking pins and small stuffed animals. Campfires were held down on Teepee Point, the whole camp celebrated the camp birthday, decorating tables for each month, Sunday services were held in the Grove, and the end of the season brought the lovely Candlelight when the whole camp population took to the water in the canoes and rowboats at dusk to sing their farewells and paddle around the bonfire out near Japanese (Fisherman's) Island after dark.

Wyonegonic still has all these things. Girls still come from all over the country and from many other countries to spend their summers on Moose Pond. Wyonegonic spirit remains true to the Cobb's ideals. Although some modern sports have been added to the program and the trip schedule has been expanded to include canoeing on the Allagash and climbing Katahdin the generations of campers have many common memories that bind them together.

Roland Cobb, one of C. E. Cobb's sons, was for many years the director of Wyonegonic assisted by his wife Helen, who passed the directorship to George and Carol Sudduth. Today, Carol and the campers of 1994 maintain the traditions at Wyonegonic now in its 92nd year.

May Meeting Recap

We assembled at the library and after the business meeting Winnie Moore took over the program sharing notes and quotes from T.I. Lowell's journals. Linda Whiting had brought some old maps of Denmark and we found where he lived so we could put the information gleaned into some greater perspective. We found there was much to be learned about the man in his writings and had a good time reading from Winnie's notes. Sue MacDonald had drawn a very good likeness of "Tiddley-I" in pencil and the framed portrait was unveiled and hung on the wall. There was much more to read and discuss about our subject but the time grew late and we decided we should hear more at a later date.

June Trip

The Maine Historical Society's library on Congress Street in Portland behind the Longfellow House was the destination. We each had individual research to pursue but in the course of looking for one thing, we found other items of interest. Winnie found a box with six fat files of Denmark papers. They were odds and ends mostly, papers donated to the library from estates most likely. It appears that they have not been cataloged nor put in any kind of order. Winnie was able to comb through two of the folders in the time we had after their discovery was made. She copied down some of the information to report back to the DHS. It was a productive day and the people were most helpful but the time went by too quickly. The library is open 10 am to 4 p.m. and the fee for use is \$10.00 unless you are a member, then it is free. It may be best to call if you want to use the library as they are doing some renovations this summer and will be closed some days. Phone: 774-1822.

July

At the business meeting July 12th at the library we reported our findings and finish planning the Doll and Dollhouse Exhibit. Henry Banks has okayed the use of the Odd Fellows' Hall for July 23rd. We have several exhibitors lined up to show old-fashioned dolls, bears and miniature rooms and furniture as well as some more contemporary dolls and storybook characters. There will be light refreshments offered with pretty flowers on white tablecloths to give the atmosphere of an old-fashioned tea party. This is to be a delight for the young and the young at heart.

August

On Tuesday August 9th, we will have our formal business meeting and election of officers. The Annual Meeting and potluck supper will be held the following Tuesday evening, August 16th, at the Denmark Arts Center. Our new officers will be introduced and the past president will give a recap our activities during her time of office. We have come a long way as an organization and have acquired a number of new items. These new resources will be mentioned briefly so all will have a better idea of what we do have. Herbalist Corinne Martin of Bridgton will be our guest speaker of the evening. She is experienced in many facets of herbal lore and practice and will have much of interest to share with us. Don't miss it!

Putting Things In Order

Currently the Denmark Historical Society has a set of shelves filled with documents and files at the Denmark Library. Winnie Moore has been cataloging these things and making booklets on various subjects. She has collected information on old houses in one book, cemetery records in another, summer camp photographs and literature in another, school programs and graduation notes in still another. There are boxes of papers and photographs, files of many facets of Denmark's past, long past and recent past. We have collected clippings about Denmark events and people. If you have any papers or photos you would like to donate or if you would like to pass on your remembrances of how it use to be, please give Winnie Moore a call at 452-2352 or leave word at the library for her. If you need assistance finding that elusive ancestor she might be able to find him or her in our growing genealogy file, too!

Denmark High School 1951 - Keeping With The Season

The boys' baseball team showed progress last spring under "Frankie" Bucknell as captain and Sherwin Valley, manager. Other team members were Roger Bucknell, Philip Richardson, Arthur Barton, Lucien Hamilton, Everett Qualey, Gerald Burnell and Alfred Barton.

Scores of the seven games were:

Denmark 9, Bridgton 12 at Bridgton
Denmark 11, Bridgton 19 at Denmark
Denmark 37, South Hiram 7 at South Hiram
Denmark 19, South Hiram 0 at Denmark
Denmark 15, Hiram 2 at Hiram
Cornish at Cornish - game called (rain)
Denmark 6, North Conway 7 at North Conway

The girls' softball team, under Ruth Barton as captain, got off to a good start at Fryeburg where they tipped the balance with a score of 21 to 15. During the game, Phyllis Sawyer, Ruth Barton and Dotty Osgood hit home runs. The score in the return game on the home diamond was 62 to 10, another win for us.

Special Studies at Denmark High School in 1951

Rural Problems

"For some years there has been a tendency to add the "Practical" to the curricula of our high school. This has been a national trend. Some have advocated replacing the "intellectual" but, as a rule, the movement has been only to supplement. In a measure our new course, Rural Problems, is an outcome of this new manner of thinking.

It is designed primarily for those students who do not intend to pursue their education beyond high school and to enable them to gain knowledge which will be of value to them in their future years in a rural community. In this first year we are considering the following:

1. Forests - their care and cultivation - an attempt to show how proper attention will enable one to harvest an annual "crop" of trees and also aid in the conservation of our woodlands

2. Elementary woodworking and farm repairs - a project not only to show how to make repairs but also to show the economy and efficiency resulting from keeping all equipment in excellent condition.

3. Soil - their composition and fertilizer requirements - emphasizing the economic cost of erosion and the ways and means of preventing its occurrence.

4. Finance and Accounting for the farm and household - placing special stress on modern business principles.

5. Elementary farm management with consideration of the most important ideas in modern planning and operation.

It is hoped that future years may permit the inclusion of laboratory work and field trips to typical poultry, dairy, and truck garden farms in our general area."

Home Making

"Our class in Home Making, new this year, has an enrollment of seventeen girls, including the grammar school girls, and two teachers, Mrs. Schmidt and Miss Ingalls.

Besides the textbook work which teach us the rights and wrongs on all subjects connected with a happy home, we have made practical use of the information. We made a notebook entitled "My College Wardrobe". We had a lot of fun locating and cutting out correct clothes to wear at different occasions during our first year in college. We also made a notebook on "Our Dream House". All of us had different ideas on the style of our house and its furnishings. If we could only have these things, it would be a dream. But who knows, perhaps we can some day!

We are learning to knit, crochet, and tat, making such articles as tams, sweaters, doilies, handkerchief borders, chair sets, a bed spread, etc.

For Christmas, we made crazy-quilt aprons, all by hand, for our mother's present. Then we learned patching - we should be able to patch any kind of tear, even a moth hole type.

During the remainder of the year, we shall be taught good grooming, including general fitness, facial skin care, dental health, hand care, good posture, clothes care, and good taste in clothes.

Another project will be etiquette, covering the little niceties in introductions and their acknowledgments, the use of such polite phrases as thank-you, please, excuse me, I beg your pardon; etiquette at dances; thank-you notes; table manners; and such little things which make life more pleasant.

Perhaps, in connection with table etiquette, we shall have a tea for our mothers in order to exemplify some of these things which we have learned in our first Home Making class."

Act of Incorporation 1807 *

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the year of our lord one thousand eight hundred and seven

An Act to incorporate certain tracts of land in the county of Oxford into a town by the name of Denmark.

Sect. 1st Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled and by the authority of the same that all that part of the Academy Grant, Pleasant Mountain Gore and Foster's Grant in said county of Oxford and all the land contained within the following boundaries, viz.: -- Beginning at the northeast corner of Fryeburg and running south by Bridgton to the Baldwin line, then south sixty degrees west, six hundred and one rods to a beech tree marked "IIEBJADH 1808," south eighty seven degrees west, thirteen hundred rods to a red oak tree marked 1808 DJAIPH standing on the bank of Saco river opposite to Brownfield line, the up by said river to a pine tree marked thus ANoISIFB, thence north twelve degrees west, eight hundred and fifteen rods to a maple tree by Pleasant Pond, thence northward by the pond afore mentioned to Fryeburg line, thence north forty-three and half degrees east by Fryeburg to the first bound, together with the inhabitants thereon, be and hereby are incorporated into a town by the name of Denmark, and the said town of Denmark is hereby vested with all the powers, privileges and immunities which other towns do or may enjoy by the constitution and laws of this Commonwealth.

The act also provided for the calling of a meeting of all legal voters to organize town government.

Approved by the governor, Caleb Strong, Feb. 20, 1807.

The warrant calling the first town meeting was issued by Joseph Howard, and directed to Cyrus Ingalls, Esq. The meeting was called to assemble March 23rd at the school house near Cyrus Ingalls, at one o'clock in the afternoon.

At the state election held April 6 following, forty-nine votes were cast, Hon. James Sullivan receiving 47 and Governor Strong, 2 votes for governor.

On this day the remaining town officers were chosen, and appropriations for town uses made. \$1000 was voted for roads, to be worked out at \$1 a day for labor. \$300 was raised for schools. \$100 for defraying town charges.

Cyrus Ingalls was chosen surveyor at Ingall's mill and Jedediah Long at Harndon's mill; Benj. Harndon, Thos. Pingree and Dean Osgood, fence viewers; Cyrus Ingalls, pound keeper; Ichabod Warren, Jr., and Elias Berry, field drivers; Benj. Harndon, Jedediah Long John Whidden, Wm. Berry and Joseph Walker, hogreeves.

A vote was taken not to raise any money for preaching this year.

Cyrus Ingalls and Joshua Ames were chosen a committee to settle with Brownfield and Hiram.

The first town house was built on the lot near the Congregational church. In 1891, this was taken down and rebuilt into the present house on the side of Mill Hill, on the old school house lot.

In 1847, a portion of Denmark and a part of Fryeburg were annexed to the town of Bridgton.

* from The Town Register, 1907

Population Figures 1825 -1970

1825	800
1840	1,143
1850	1,203
1860	1,171
1870	1,069
1880	904
1890	755
1900	634
1910	596
1920	576
1930	474
1940	532
1950	447
1960	376
1970	397

(In 1976 there were well over 400 registered voters.)

DENMARK BUSINESS DIRECTORY 1907

POSTMASTERS - Augustine Ingalls; East, Mrs. Ida Beck

SELECTMEN - East, A.D. Fessenden, G.W.

Moulton; E. Fryeburg, P.O., C.E. Smith

CLERK - Alfred W. Belcher

TREASURER - Geo. W. Gray

COLLECTOR - East, Maynard M. Wentworth

ROAD COMMISSIONER - East, E.P. Fessenden

SCHOOL COMMITTEE - H.F. Lord, S.H. Smith,

Chas. Pingree. Supt.- Mrs. Florence Jewett

BOARD OF HEALTH - A.W. Belcher, Sec.

CHURCH - Cong., pulpit vacant

JUSTICES - Geo. W. Gray, Feb. 12, 1908; Jas. N.

Smith, Jan. 23, 1908; I.H. Berry, Feb. 22, 1912

MERCHANTS - E.W. Berry, general store; W.W.

Berry, flour, grain and groceries; Isaac Berry, implements, paints and oils; C.I. Smith, confectionery; D.S. Perkins, groceries. East, James Beck, grain and groceries.

MANUFACTURERS - I.H. Berry, wheelwright (also carriages); Augustine Ingalls, stave and shook mill; S.W. McCusick, F.W. Wells, smiths; A.P. Merrill, E.S. Head, undertakers; Burnham & Morrill Co., corn packing; Fred Sanborn, long lumber, spool strips and grist mill; W.W. Berry, stave and shingle mill; Leon H. Ingalls, jeweler; Guy Hazeltine, axe handles.

RFD - E. Brownfield No. 1, Warren Bros. grist mill; Portland Packing Co., corn packing.

BARBER - C.I. Smith.

ASSOCIATIONS - Masons -Mt. Moriah, Wed. on or before full moon; Eastern Star - 1st and 3rd Thurs.; I.O.O.F. - Denmark, No. 50, Tues.; Silver Rebecca - No. 19, 2nd and 4th Thurs.; P. of H. - Crystal Spring, No. 150, 1st and 3rd Sat.; K.O.T.M. - Moose Lake Tent, No. 104, every other Sat.

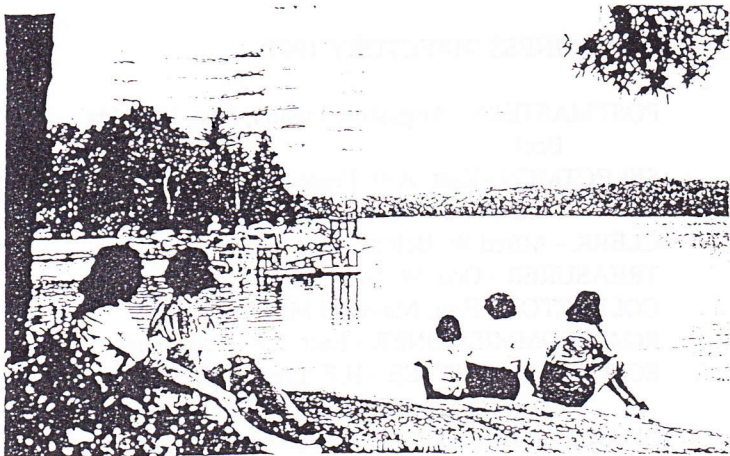
HOTELS - Maplewood House, A.H. Jones; Bartlett House, Mrs. H.N. Bartlett; Lake View, Mrs. O.F. Richardson.

For Membership Application Information:

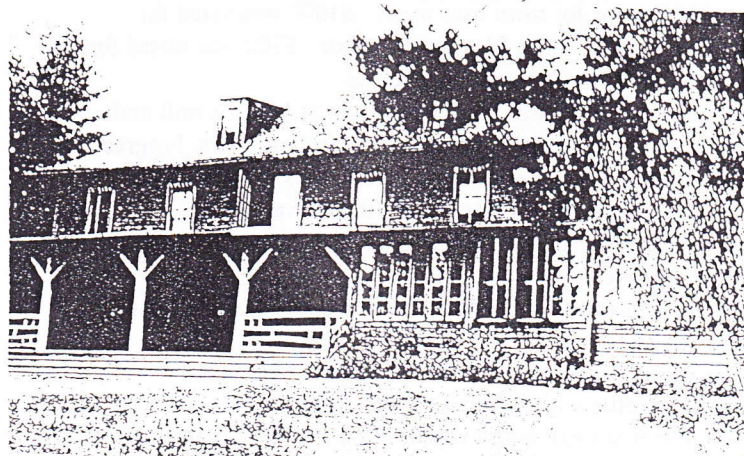
- Yearly Dues -

Sent to: Denmark Historical Society:
Denmark, Maine 04022

Single \$ 5.00
Couple 7.50
Life 100.00



Waterfront at Blazing Trail



Main Lodge at Camp Walden

Denmark Historical Society
P O Box 240
Denmark, ME 04022-0240



Do you remember when the corn shop burned?
Do you know why there were five meetings to discuss
the Civil War monument?
Did you know the soldier once wore a pumpkin on his
head?
Did you know Denmark's population was once double
what it is today?
Do you know that Fessenden Hill Road use to be the
main road and Rte 117 was put in later to connect
Denmark to Bridgton?
Do you remember when Rte 117 was a dirt road?
Find out about these and many other interesting aspects
of our town
JOIN THE DENMARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TODAY!