

~ Denmark Historical Society ~

~ Newsletter ~

Vol. 2. No. 3

May - December 1995

Summertime Blues and Greens

Come the end of May kids usually start to get more restless in school and start thinking about summer vacation. Of course, there were events at the close of the school year that were anticipated. Some were fun, some more formal. How about the class trip or the class picnic and sports day. They were fun. And if you were leaving grammar school for high school or high school for the world at large there was the graduation ceremony, suit and tie or maybe a new white dress for the occasion. I remember getting in line for the bus ride home on the last day of school. Everyone had at least one roll of crepe paper to tie out the bus window and we would drive out of the school yard looking like a great big moving rainbow. It was the one time we were allowed to make as much noise as we wanted and we did, singing, shouting, calling to our friends. No one was sad on the last day of school.

My parents rented our house for the summer to people who thought we lived in the country. June was a very busy time as my father finished up his teaching duties and the rest of us packed everything away for the summer and got ready to leave. When we were very small we stayed with my grandparents at the beach, then, as we got older, we spent the summer months at camp with kids from all over the country. We thought we were pretty lucky not having to stay home all summer.

Times have changed a lot with regard to activities for children. Today there are many ways to fill the summer days. Many towns have organized swimming lessons and most have Little League baseball teams. There are movies and amusement parks, playgrounds and organized play programs. Towns with water access usually have a town beach and boat ramp. Many families have a motor boat and water skis or "surfing" tube so even

if you don't live "on the water" you can still enjoy water-related activities. One of the big summer pastimes is shopping in the air-conditioned stores of the Mall or North Conway. What we don't have at hand we can easily drive to in a short time, but what was it like in earlier times?

Denmark village once had several mills run off Moose Brook. Cyrus Ingalls built the first dam at the outlet of Moose Pond in 1792. The lake was used primarily for moving logs and cutting ice. It was not foremost for recreation. What is now our town beach off Lake Road was once known for its "bushes and bloodsuckers" not as a sandy-bottomed swimming area. Most kids did not go swimming every day the way we often do today. Village children would sometimes slip down the path to swim off Indian Point but most children who did not live near the water waited for the Sunday School picnic at Lovewell's Pond or the Eastern Star picnic to do their swimming. Consequently, many children never learned how to swim.

Children often made their own entertainment when young. As they got older they were given chores at home to help out or found ways to make a little spending money. Sometimes this involved having a garden to tend as there were several canning plants in the area and pickle factories in Hiram and South Paris that would send trucks to purchase cucumbers at local farms.

Although mothers were occupied during summer months with home gardens and canning food for the winter and did not have cars to drive their children places, summer was a time when there were opportunities for women to make a little extra money. Three summer camps in the area generated a good bit of laundry and employed women to

wash, iron and fold at home or at the camp laundries. Denmark shores were not lined with vacation homes but several large homes and farms were opened for summer visitors. These employed women to cook and clean and take care of the guests. At one time, Denmark was home to four hotels. The most prominent in town was the Denmark Inn near the Moose Pond dam. It had four formal columns along the front double-decker porches where stagecoaches and later motor cars picked up and deposited many summer visitors. Young women often found their first employment at the local tearooms serving light refreshments and ice cream. In the early days a single scoop cost five cents, then seven, ten and up to twelve cents.

Working was the common summer activity. Younger generations, when asked today, "What did you do in the summer after school got out?," most often answered "Work." Many remember the two weeks of Vacation Bible School, the twenty-five cent movies at the old State and Mayfair theaters in Bridgton and some recall the three ring circus held in the field where Northern Cumberland Memorial Hospital now stands. Occasionally there were pick-up ball games with teams from Hiram, Brownfield and Baldwin, public suppers at the Odd Fellows Hall and Saturday night dances. One of the most often recalled memories was the Friday night sing held at the Community House where Emma Lord, Miriam Blake or Edna Wentworth played the piano.

While times have changed things considerably, children still rejoice when school lets out. There are more organized activities and more things to do away from home. More children learn to swim now and, although many mothers work, families have more opportunities for recreational activities together. Gardens still grow in back yards; youngsters still look for ways to make spending money; some activities have been replaced, but there are others to take their places. Summer will continue to be a time of warm, sunny days that will find Denmark's children playing, working and growing, carrying on traditions and making new ones for future generations.

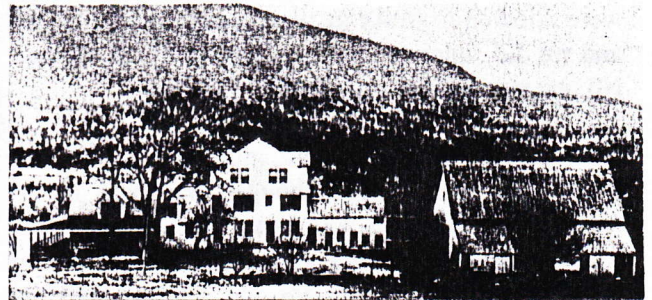
Students at the Colby School on the West Denmark Road. Probably, about 1909. Left to right - seated: Edith Wentworth, Jennie Orcutt, Kenneth Lord, Bennett Moulton, Imogene Demings, Standing: Teacher Willic Dresser, Edith Orcutt,



Haying on the Harnden Farm, in West Denmark.



The Denmark Inn just east of Moose Pond Dam taken prior to 1912.



Grand View Farm on the Lake Road.



Alvina Richardson, Walter Davis, Gervain Demings, Mildred Jordan, Beryl Dresser, Leon Wentworth.

Old Time Garden Rescue Tips

No matter where you live, if you plant a garden, you are bound to be troubled by deer, raccoons, woodchucks, bugs, worms or birds. There's no way to escape them all. Some use chemicals; some use companion planting; some use a variety of contraptions guaranteed to chase the pests away or in some way minimize the damage.

We planted three kinds of sweet corn this year and some ornamental corn as well. In years past, getting water to the seeds was the major problem, not pests. When a few crows showed up we set out the obligatory scarecrow and figured the dogs would chase the brazen birds away. We eagerly awaited the straight, green spears that meant our sprinkling system had worked. We were dismayed to find very spotty growth and very few corn shoots. At the very base of our hapless scarecrow was a circle of green about a foot in diameter. The crows had had a feast before the little shoots had had time to take their first breath of air in the sunshine! Time for drastic measures.

Sadly tilling the whole cornfield, we prepared the ground to accept new seed. All the odd collections of bird netting were laid out over the new seeds. More was needed to cover the area but it was buried somewhere in the barn. We set short stakes around the perimeter of the field and criss-crossed the area with very thin yarn from a cone left behind by the former owners. With every little breeze the ground appeared to shimmer and shake. Aha! The crows did not know what to make of the phenomenon. So they left the new corn alone and concentrated on the squash, pumpkins, gourds and early beans. Despite the presence of three patrolling dogs, they flew up and sat in the tall trees surrounding the field and laughed their beaks off!

So what did our forebears do to keep the pests from their produce? My cousin sent something she found in papers belonging to a shared ancestor. It prompted us to do some digging. Here along with old Rufus' remedy for crows in the corn are some old time tips that may work for you.



“The way to prepare corn to plant so the crows will not pull it. To take a gill of coal tar and 1 tablespoon full of pine tar, put both in a pan. To them put a pint of almost boiling water. Stir thoroughly - put this into 4 quarts of corn. Stir until the kernels are all black. Then put in plaster enough to absorb the tar so that the kernels will separate.”

Another source suggested steeping seeds of turnip in a pint of warm water for two hours, in which is infused one ounce of saltpeter. Dry the seed and add linseed oil sufficient to wet the whole. Afterward, mix with plaster of Paris, so as to separate and render it fit for sowing. This will prevent attacks of flies and fleas.

Soaking corn in a saltpeter brine was suggested to keep crows away. Once they had a taste, they would “forsake the field”. Put a tablespoonful of saltpeter in a bucket of water and water your squashes in a little well around the plant. Keeps those squash bugs under control and off the plants.

Save that dog hair. Place tufts of it among your garden plants and the deer will not eat them.

Moth balls are said to keep skunks from digging in your vegetable beds.

Plant lamb's quarters between your garden and the woods and the deer will eat them instead.

Keep one of your dogs staked in the garden at night.

A spoonful of malt placed here and there and covered by a flower pot would attract slugs and they would assemble around the bait to be picked up in the morning and dispatched. Next to malt, grated carrots were found to be an attractive bait.

To rid young cabbage plants of black fly, apply dry road dust, soot, or plaster dusted on early in the morning while the dew is still on the leaves. Repeat several mornings until the fly is exterminated and the plants have grown to size. To get rid of cabbage worm, sprinkle the loose leaves with tar water. Make tar water by stirring tar in a barrel of water. When the tar has settled, dip water from the top and sprinkle. The water should have a decided taste. Tar water was also used on squashes and cucumbers and was said to be death for Colorado potato beetles.

Soot and lime worked into the soil around carrots keeps the soil free of grubs.

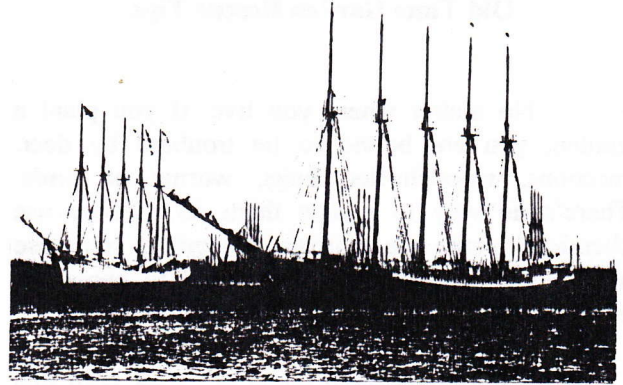
A mixture 2 to 1 of sulfur and finely ground tobacco was found to minimize the damage from bugs on squashes and other vine plants.

Evidently some of the old farmers had tired of tending each crop separately and chose an overall remedy for their gardens by sowing tobacco-dust, mixed with road-dust, soot ashes, lime, or the dust of charcoal, in the proportion of half a bushel per acre every morning, until the plants were free or secure from the attacks of the numerous insects bothering the garden.

However you tend your garden, may it be pest-free and may you be blessed with sunshine and rain, for without the co-operation of the elements, we have a tougher row to hoe.

Yankee Schooners

At our July 11th meeting at the library we were treated to a lively talk on "Yankee Schooners" by William Fowler from Northeastern University's history department. From the "Virginia", Maine's



The *William C. Carnegie* of Portland and the *Jennie French Potter* of New York laden with coal, Boston, 1900.

earliest schooner, Mr. Fowler gave us a detailed account of the changes in hull shape and rigging to get the most speed and stability from the schooners. There was one, the "Thomas W. Lawson", that had seven masts. Ten were built with six masts, but it was found that five masts sailed the most satisfactorily. One of the busiest shipyards was that of Percy and Small in Bath, the sight of the present Maine Maritime Museum.

These were working ships, well-made but not fancy. They sailed to and from many ports around the world discharging one cargo and loading up with another, for example, taking ice to southern ports and bringing coal back to Maine. Many, such as those which carried Maine granite and limestone, were worked very hard, often until they could no longer sail safely or until they foundered in storms or were shipwrecked. If some cargoes got wet there was eminent danger of losing the ship and the sailors were directed to "pump or die".

In the latter half of the 19th century steamships began to replace schooners as the prime carriers of bulk goods. This was because steamers were able to carry passengers as well as cargo. They could move bigger cargoes faster and more cheaply on towed barges with less manpower than the schooners could. By 1906 the demise of the coastal schooner as a cargo carrier was assured, but they were given a new lease on life. In 1936 Frank Swift began carrying tourists on the first "dude boat". He was followed by Captain Havilah Hawkins and the

"Mary Day" out of Camden. Today there is a fleet of coastal schooners in Maine that attracts many tourists longing to know the feel of a deck beneath their feet and the rolling of the boat in the swells as she heads Downeast under full sail.

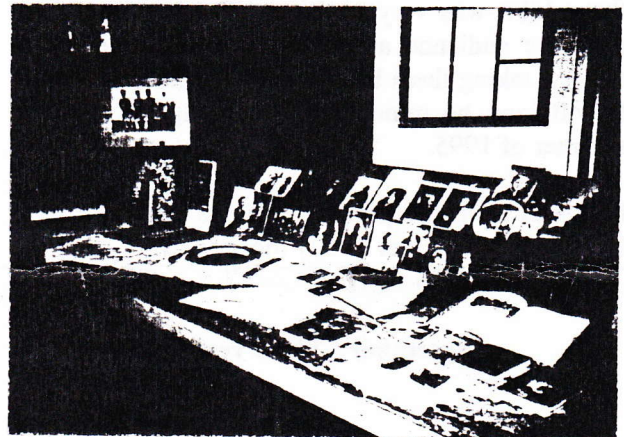
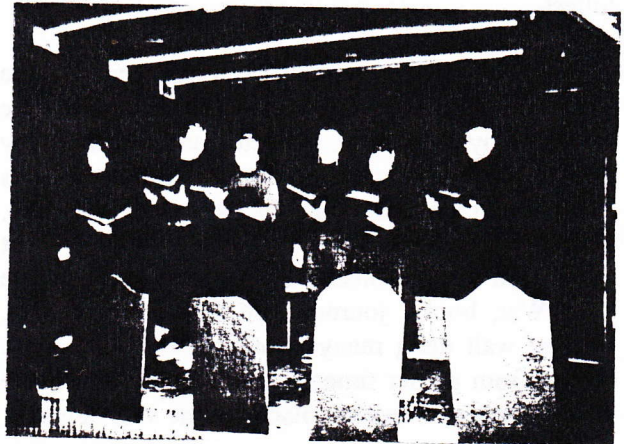
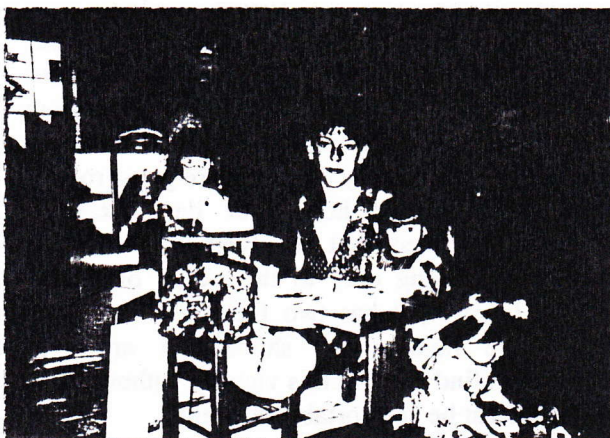
We thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Fowler's words and pictures as he painted a vivid portrait of a rich segment of Maine's past and the present state of the Yankee schooner.

Second Doll and Miniature Show

The Denmark Arts Center was the site of the Second Annual Doll and Miniature Show on July 22nd. Once again the teddy bears were having tea and there was a variety of things to see. In the center of the room were displays of dolls and stuffed animals. One table held Carey and Eliza Simoneau's collection of American Girl dolls and their many period outfits. Along the side wall were miniature rooms that folded into their own boxes, and dollhouse furnishings of every description. Down in the right hand corner by the stage, the many personalities of the porcelain dolls of Janet's Bazaar held court next to the Indonesian shadow puppets collected by Mari Hook. Tables of model trains and accessories wooed female as well as male visitors with the sound of the lonesome whistle.

Many people of all ages came to enjoy the day with these representatives from play land and proved, once again, that dolls and trains and stuffed animals will always bring delight to hearts young and old.

Proceeds from the show were donated to the Denmark Arts Center for the purchase of tables.



Denmark Readers Theater Production

Six players of the Denmark Readers Theater under the direction of Penny Morris proved that words can be as powerful as pictures. In their adaptation of Edgar Lee Masters' Spoon River anthology, taking on the personas of many characters, the three man, three woman cast gave us insights into the activities and personalities of some of the people of Spoon River, Illinois in the period following the Civil War until 1915. With the use of a few simple props, they became children, soldiers, wives, husbands, lovers, people of many occupations and desires. All of these characters were of the spirit world come back to set the record straight, to tell us what really happened to them, to

tell us that we must really live our lives to the fullest.

The two evening performances at the Denmark Arts Center on August 18th and 19th were enhanced by an exhibit, collected and displayed by the Denmark Historical Society, of timely articles and photographs covering the period of the play. There were children's toys and small clothing, sheet music and various instruments, items used in the Civil War, books, journals and household articles. On one wall hung many photographs of Denmark people from earlier times and in another area were photographs of Denmark places, some still standing, others long since changed or gone.

On the whole, response to both the play and the exhibit was very positive. The two combined gave the audience a special evening immersed in history, taking them back to another place and time. It will long be remembered as a highlight of the summer of 1995.

Proceeds from the production were donated to the Denmark Arts Center to buy more chairs.

September Cider Pressing

Saturday, September 30th, was one of those perfect sunny Fall days with a brilliant blue sky, warm temperature and just a little breeze. It was just right for making cider. A small press was set up behind the barn at Netherfield Farm and folks arrived with bags and boxes of apples ready to try a new experience. You can use any apples to make cider but the apples from well-tended trees have more juice than the old small ones from untended trees. All you have to do is quarter the apples and put them into the hopper. Once the burlap-lined cylinder is full, you fold in the burlap and set the pressing board on top. Then you take your turn at the screw. Wax was poured over the press base to fill cracks so that the cider would flow out only where it was supposed to flow, right into the waiting container. Some people just came to watch, but those who made their own cider had a really enjoyable family experience and some tasty cider to take home.



The Pleasant Mountain House

The Pleasant Mountain House Revisited

"The Pleasant Mountain House on the summit of Pleasant Mountain, and on the highest peak, known as Green Pinnacle, is again open to the public. This announcement will be received with pleasure and satisfaction, for it has been a matter of regret, often and generally expressed, that property costing so many thousands of dollars, should be doing no good. A year ago the house was thoroughly renovated and put in first-class condition and furnished entertainment for a short period during the summer, for the first time in nineteen years. Its generous patronage, coming without advertising and general information that the house was open, demonstrates that this mountain and house have lost none of their old-time popularity, when the latter was owned and managed by the late Hon. Charles E. Gibbs.

The general idea of a "tip-top" house, perhaps, is that it is small with cramped apartments; not so this house. The parlor, office, dining-room and piazzas are pleasant and capacious. There are twenty-six rooms, twenty of which are guest rooms. The capacity of the house for day guests is practically unlimited; but it advertises to furnish comfortable lodging only to the extent of twenty rooms. However, it has two fine open attics, the size of the house, and should an army of excursionists find itself in this vicinity without tents, it could at least be comfortably sheltered.

At this altitude it is always cool, and the locality is free from dust, flies and mosquitoes. The atmosphere is exceedingly invigorating, and here no one is troubled with hay-fever nor asthma. The cuisine is first-class in every particular, the house supplied with pure mountain spring water, and every attention for the comfort of visitors will be given.

The house is reached by a road on the westerly side of the mountain a few rods northerly of the Mountain Aqua House of Warren Bros., at the base of the mountain. This road is about two miles in length. Those who are not able or do not care to make the climb can be transported to and from the summit for 50 cents each way. A telephone connects the Mountain house with the Mountain Aqua House, and inquiries concerning entertainment can be made at the latter.

The House Will Open July 10, for the Season of 1902

Rates

\$ 3.00 per day
\$ 1.00 for dinner
\$.75 for supper, lodging and breakfast, each
\$15.00 per week, one person occupying one room
\$12.00 per week, two persons occupying one room

All inquiries should be addressed to

Manager - Pleasant Mountain House
Bridgton, Maine, until July 10, 1902;
After that date, East Fryeburg, Maine "

These notes are from a Pleasant Mountain House brochure printed in 1902.

In 1845, Caleb Warren built the first guest house on the top of the mountain, nothing more than a rude shelter from the weather, but it stood there as is for five years. Believe it or not, in 1850 Joseph F. Sargent converted it into a bowling alley and a new building of two stories with an ell was constructed. This was more worthy of the name "hotel", but, alas, it was destroyed by fire in 1860.

Warren regained ownership of the property at this time and later, in 1872, he sold twenty acres to the Honorable Charles E. Gibbs. It was this area, known as the "Green Pinnacle", where construction of the "Pleasant Mountain House" began in 1873. Built by Jesse Murphy of Bridgton, the two story main building was 40' x 75' and had a 36' x 40' ell. With music provided by Boston's Carter Band, over three hundred guests attended the grand opening on July 4th.

In 1881, the hotel closed indefinitely. Charles E. Gibbs died in 1899 and his property was sold to Edward C. Walker, Mellon Plummer and Charles A. Scribner. They formed the Pleasant Mountain Co., Inc. in 1900, had the hotel completely renovated and reopened it in 1901. A telephone line connected the hotel to a base station at Warren's guest house, "Mountain Aqua". Stage coaches and wagons carried guests and supplies to the top of the mountain by a two-mile long roadway.

The hotel did not operate in 1903 and was leased to Charles E. Cobb in 1904. John Pike of East Fryeburg bought the buildings in 1908 and tore them down. "Green Pinnacle" and its right of way was sold to the Appalachian Mountain Club as a public reservation in 1909. A fire lookout was erected by the Maine Forestry Commission in 1920 and still stands atop the peak where it can be seen from many places in Denmark.



An early-year Camp Wyanogonic trip up Pleasant Mountain

Ice Cutting

With regard to the response to the article in last winter's newsletter, the idea was proposed to have our own ice cutting this winter. We are trying to decide if there is enough interest to do this. First, we must determine a good place to cut the ice where there would be little danger of anyone falling into the water afterward. Second, we want the place to be accessible so as many people who wish will be able to participate. Third, if we do cut ice we will want to save it packed in sawdust in a small ice house. The sawdust is not a problem, but we do not have an ice house and would have to have some volunteers and materials to build one. These can be scrap lumber but we must build the house relatively soon in case we get some heavy snow.

The idea is to plan a cutting day when the ice is right and weather not too bad, some time in February probably, to cut the ice and bring it in for storage. It would be a good time to have a hot lunch ready and waiting for the ice cutters and their families. Phase two would come in the spring or early summer when we would get together for making homemade ice cream with the ice we had cut from the pond in winter.

If you have any ideas about this and/or would like to participate, please call Dan or Linda at Netherfield Farm - 452-2687.

The Denmark Historical Society
Post Office Box 803
Denmark, Maine 04022-0803

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting was held at Netherfield Farm on August 27, 1995 with 20 members in attendance. President Winnie Moore conducted the business meeting giving a run down of activities and a report of acquisitions and expenditures. Attendees enjoyed a pot luck picnic in the August twilight, capped by coffee and dessert and stories of yesteryear.

~ *Remember - Your 1996 dues are due!* ~

The Denmark Arts Center

This Fall a steering committee was formed to help the Arts Center advance to its second stage of growth. The committee includes several members of the historical society as one of the plans is for the society to have storage and display space in the future. We are currently planning fund raising and community activities to continue renovation and provide a congenial meeting place for public and private gatherings. The first fund raising project is to be an auction Friday, December 8th at 7:30 PM to be followed Saturday, December 9th by a rummage sale from 10:00 until 2:00. Don't forget the coffee house, "Cafe Elsinore", Saturday evening from 7:00 until 9:00 featuring "Shemora", a four woman group performing mostly original music.