# MATTAPOISETT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

*Presents "Old Mattapoisett Tales"*

# RECENTLY DISCOVERED DOCUMENT

Mattapoisett's Historical Commission was recently given a collection of "Old Mattapoisett Tales" which had been collected between 1970 and 1971 by the Mattapoisett's Women's Club Antique & Historical Study Group.

On these webpages we'll share some of those stories painstakingly gathered...enjoy

# "THE ANCHORAGE BY THE SEA"

*...(about 1925) the veranda and the water side of the tea room was made of glass panels which folded back leaving the w ide expanse of the ocean in full view of the guests as they enjoyed delicious dinners and lunches at amazing prices compared to today: broiled swordfish/$1.00; steak and french fries/$1.00; Lobster salad/$1.25, steamed clams/.35; lobster sandwich/.85; chicken sandwich/.65...*

## The Gift Shop at the Anchorage By the Sea…

*…a gift shop filled with imported glass, linens and all kinds of interesting things from around the world was a mecca for vacationing gift hunters. (The Anchorage By the Sea was owned by Mrs. Barrows wife of Arthur Barrows the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ebenezer Barrows)*

*…in September 1938 disaster roared in – a hurricane which completely demolished this beautiful eating place along with many waterfront homes and boats.*

The Anchorage reappears …

*…not to be frustrated by this terrible loss, Mrs. Barrows turns the lower rooms of her home on Main Street into another tea room and gift shop…it had white shutters on the windows and the yard was filled with colorful flowers enclosed by a white picket fence. She was also an excellent cook and her chefs were specialized in their work. Her restaurant was endorsed by Duncan Hines and renowned for its cuisine…*

# MATTAPOISETT IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

The Mattapoisett Improvement Association was started in August 1904 to take on a variety of projects and address some of the social needs of the community in the early part of the 20th century. The first objectives of the organization were as follows: improving and ornamenting streets, public spaces, tree planting, and to encourage and collect local historical information and materials.

The first members were Mrs. Charles Hamlin (whose foresight brought on the establishment of the association), president; Mr. Isaiah Atsatt, vice-president; Mr. Nathan Mendell, secretary and Mr. Harry Griffin, treasurer. There was also an executive community of fifteen members, six of which had to be female. By the end of the first year there were 200 members paying $1.00 dues per year. There were 12 members who signed on for life paying $25.00 for that privilege.

By the end of the first year the association's annual report noted amazing achievements such as: management of the public bathing beach including 15 bath houses and swimsuit rentals; street watering (to keep done dust); and several committees – rubbish, trees, parks, bridges, fences, cemeteries, and seeds and gardens. The association worked on the practical needs of residents as well as the aesthetics of the town.

The impact of the Improvement Association's hard work was far-reaching and impactful for sixty-two years. The residents who felt strongly about the health and social well being of the town, who had joined forces by becoming members of the Improvement Association saw their efforts bear fruit. So important was the work they had done that by 1966 the majority of the projects the association had been handling were being managed by town offices and local government departments. In 1966 the organization dissolved but their efforts can still be seen today in our tree lined streets, clean community and continued focus on the beauty and well being of the community and its residents.

# THE POST OFFICE

*1639 – 1850*

*Part One*

As early as 1639 the General Court of Massachusetts designated Richard Fairbanks' house in Boston as the place to receive and send letters: *"…which are brot from beyond the seas, or are sent hither…he is to take care that they are to be delivered or sent according to the instructions…"*

One penny per letter was the fee.

By 1673 mail service between New York and Boston was provided by mounted messengers via the Post Road through Hartford, CT.

Benjamin Franklin became one of the first postmasters appointed by the Royal Postmaster of England.

The delivery of mail on horseback through Indian country was very hard duty with many messengers being killed. And the weather over rough country depending on the season brought its own level of difficulty.

So uncertain was completion of the task that payment was made by the recipient on receipt of the letter not paid by the sender.

The fist postage stamp appeared in England in 1840 and 1847 in the American territories. But they were not required until 1857.

Around 1850 mail was delivered to Mattapoisett by horseback riding messenger, John Atsatt while Captain William Rogers rode for Fairhaven and Rochester. The location of the first space used for sending letters was a room in the Soares Home on River Road. Latter Wilson Barstow was had the first official Post Office located in Sam Sturtevant's store located on the wharf.