Row and Then



Magazine

February – March 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 New Residents / Thirwood Century Club / Memoriam
- 3 A City Kid's Life
- 7 The Mystique of Burlesque Theatre
- 10 OOPS!
- 11 An Extraordinary Trip: Getting the Hang of Things
- 16 My Cape Cod Roots
- 19 Early History of Thirwood Place

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NEW RESIDENTS

October 2017	Sally Allen	367AL
November 2017	Alice Blackburn Joan Chaisson Philip & Carol Christophe Ann Green Lee Garofano Therese Hebert	125W 258AL 301W 233E 131E 336AL
December 2017	Rosie Landis Allen Malloy Ted Sheridan	314W 315W 425VP
January 2018	Gigi Casella Rosemary Fuller Philip & Joan Reilly	335E 272AL 153AL

THIRWOOD CENTURY CLUB

Dan Crosby	March 15, 1918
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MEMORIAM

Janice O'Keefe		
Edward Murphy		
Eleanor F. Cunningham		
Jean Santangelo		
Susie O'Brien		

October 18, 2017 December 16, 2017 December 19, 2017 January 3, 2018 January 22, 2018

A CITY KID'S LIFE By Joe Garon

My earliest memory of growing up in New York City during the 1930's was a trip to the hospital. Even in those days the neighborhood center of care was the hospital. This particular visit resulted in an emergency telegram to my parents (we had no telephone then) to come immediately to the hospital because I was in grave danger from having pneumonia. It all worked out fine in the end but, believe me, it was a shock to my parents.

The impact on our lives during the depression was memorable. In the bitter cold of winter, my mother and her friend with their children would stand in a long line, which went around the corner of Fifth Avenue, to receive extra milk from the Heckscher Foundation in order to supplement our meals. This is the closest I came to experiencing the Depression because, fortunately for us, my father was always employed. However, I do remember my father worried about the union activities at that time. He had a non-union job and had to hide when the union toughs showed up to try to force him to join the union.

A happier memory for me is the fact that we lived on Madison Avenue, just one block from Central Park. For my sister and me, it was the center of our childhood. It was a wonderland of nooks and crannies, bushes and trees and other children. My mother was a very wise lady. She always made sure that we played with the children of Thomas Dewey, then the New York District Attorney and prosecutor of Murder Incorporated – a media name given to Italian-American and Jewish organized crime groups. He and his family were constantly protected by detectives from mob threats. Today, I wonder whether this was the best of plans since it put us in a potential line of fire. I didn't spend all my time in Central Park. We also played stickball in the streets with our broom handles, Spaulding balls, sewer covers for bases and the occasional car for interference. Afterward, our efforts would be rewarded by an open fire hydrant. (Here the passing cars were the base runners, and we were the interference.)

Another memory related to safety was when I would wear my cowboy outfit (yes, yours truly in chaps and cowboy hat) while roaming through the badlands of the West (bushes to everyone else). Turns out they were truly badlands since I was held up by other older boys who robbed me of my cowboy outfit. I remember looking for my mother in my underwear, but I was still sporting my six-shooter on my hip!

As my sister and I grew older, World War II became an intruder into our lives. We had practice air raid drills in school, hiding under our desks listening for enemy planes, while clutching our plastic name tags. Luckily the enemy never came.

Years later, when I was in the army and stationed in defense of the George Washington Bridge, I would watch for the arrival of enemy planes on my radar. Here again they never arrived.

During my grammar school days, I took serious violin lessons at a music school on East 14th Street. Because we lived uptown on East 86th Street, it required a subway ride carrying my violin case. The case was almost as big as I was, and it presented a big problem in the pushing, shoving and swaying during the ride. I once landed on the car floor on top of my case, but my precious violin remained safe. My lessons resulted in a concert by the school orchestra at the Town Hall. I cannot, for the life of me, understand how such a motley crew could play together. (The only people who bought tickets were the parents.)

We were a much uninformed group of musicians. I resented playing the second violin, and decided to switch to the first violin music, which I had never even seen before! I don't know why The New York Times didn't review our performance, because our interpretation of what was on the music sheet was certainly liberal enough. This causes me, today, to read The Wall Street Journal.

As I grew older, high school meant less and less free time for me and more time for work on my studies, as well as an evening job as the receptionist at America Magazine. The good part about the latter is that most of the editors who lived at America were Jesuit priests and educators who would help me with my homework.

Thank God for youthfulness – today I'm tired when I just get up.

Another fond high school memory and at college was marching in the St. Patrick's Day parade each year. In high school, the girls would shout as my school marched by, "Where are your school bags?" (No back packs in those days.) Later in college, the same girls would follow along with the parade admiring us in our ROTC uniforms.

My summer trips to Canada also bring back fond memories. From infancy to puberty, we spent the whole summer on the family farm in Quebec. It was a dairy farm 90 miles from Montreal, and my only work memories were of bringing in the cows for milking. The cows had stronger personalities than I, so it created a problem of who was led by whom. My dominance over the calves, however, remained unchallenged.

When World War II was in progress, the appearance of it was different in Canada than it was in the U.S. There, soldiers walked down

the street clicking their hob nail boots. They would give up their seats to mothers on the busses traveling around town. I would hear the diving of a fighter plane over our haystack on its mission to check us out. This resulted in my uncle diving from the top of the haystack to the ground quickly. I also remember (this may be due to my reaching puberty and not due to the war) the young school girls on the trains flipping up their school skirts before sitting down to save wear and tear on their skirts.

My biggest complaint about the farm was that I was stuck with my sister for three months, when I really wanted to be with my friends in the streets of New York City.

I hope you enjoyed a few recollections of a city boy: I certainly did, both now and then.



Joe, at the age of three, with his parents.

THE MYSTIQUE OF BURLESQUE THEATRE By John Shinas

In the early 1940's, there were two burlesque theatres in New Jersey – the "Empire" in Newark and the "Hudson" in Union City. Why New Jersey? When "Minsky's" and all burlesque theatres were banned in New York City, they simply moved across the Hudson River to the sanctuary of New Jersey. Thus, my friends and I could now avail ourselves of this exciting new experience. My male Central High School classmates and I willingly succumbed to the lure of adolescent curiosity for the exotic. We would "cut" school and go down to Washington Street, line up in the adjourning alley, and await the opening of the box office to see the matinee performance. Upon entering we would occupy the first row right behind the orchestra pit, clutching our brown lunch bags. When the comedians came on stage and saw us seated in the first row, they would remark, "I see that kindergarten is out today." We in turn, would reply, "You're just jealous because you never graduated from kindergarten."

Burlesque theatre in the United States was a unique American creation. Each show contained the same formula acts and music, such as minstrel shows, comedy, songs, vaudeville acts, skits, and striptease. Every theatre on the burlesque circuit presented the same standard performance. Many of the comedians later became stars in movies and on radio: Abbott & Costello, Phil Silvers, Milton Berle, Red Skelton and Bert Lahr, to name a few. W.C. Fields, who was a juggler, and Eddie Cantor and Al Jolson, who were singers, became famous as well.

There was one comedy skit called "The Court Room Scene." Here a judge was seated at a high level, with the prosecutor, defendant's lawyer and a witness all standing just below him. The judge held a

7

cushioned gavel which he continuously used to pound the heads of all three during the course of the trial. When the prosecutor said, "I would like to scrutinize the witness." The judge would shout, "Not in my court you don't!" Then the lights would fadeout.

Then there was the provocative female saying to a prospective client, "meet-cha round the corner in half an hour." Then she gave him a bump, and then the fadeout. Another routine would be the French Farce where a husband returning home opened the clothes closet and four to five "paramours" of the errant wife tumbled out.

Solo performances were also a standard fare in burlesque. There would be singers – traditional and bawdy, poets reciting everything from ballads to sea chanties and naughty lyrics. There were also instrumentalists, using everything from traditional instruments to washboards, sweet potato flutes, harmonicas, sometimes two or three at the same time, and "Penny Whistle" flutes. One such performance remains with me even decades later. A man doing a hand-stand on one hand with his feet high above him would be playing "Yankee Doodle Dandy" on a trumpet held in his other hand, while the audience was shouting "Bring on the strippers."

There would always be a chorus line composed of multi-sized females, who were rarely in unison, following the harmonious music of the orchestra. This became absurdly clear, especially after a late evening performance the night before, when their fatigue would be quite evident. During the matinee performance, this was a humorous feature in itself.

And then came the main event which the audience was eagerly anticipating, "The Strippers." There were usually two or three, who

preceded the "Star." They would glide across the stage gyrating to the tune "Harlem Nocturne," waving either feather fans or multi-colored veils. Then, as the house lights dimmed, they would dart off stage dropping their fan or veil. But this wasn't certain because, again, the lights went dim.

The "Star" stripper would come on stage with a different musical accompaniment. This act was different, however; it would end the same as the others, but before darting off stage with multi-colored lights, it "seemed" as if she was bare from the waist up. However, in reality she wasn't. Thus the "illusion!" Some of the most famous of these "Star" performers were Tempest Storm, Lili St Cyr, Gypsy Rose Lee and many others.

And finally, there were the "vendors" who would traverse up and down the aisles. Among the staples was the unique pitch that in every tenth box of "Cracker Jacks" (which was caramelized popcorn) you would find a glass cube which, when turned around to a light, would show an object which would "warm the cockles of your heart." For the gullible who purchased the "Cracker Jacks," when the glass tube was rotated, the viewer would see his own face from a mirror cube.

We, as teenagers, were indeed fortunate (even by cutting school) to have seen burlesque at its prime. Today none of the famous Burlesque Theatres exist. Who needs them now when films and television produce nudity and obscenity that in prior years would never have been allowed.

OOPS!

The first year that I taught second grade, I learned a lot. To start with, I was substituting for a teacher who was quite ill and about to retire. All of the elementary teachers at Center School at that time were nearing retirement. Just listening to them talk among themselves in the Teachers' Lounge was instructive and helpful to me as a beginner. The first grade teacher, Mrs. Long, was especially helpful because she knew most of the children in my class very well, having had them the year before.

We sang songs from our second grade songbook almost every afternoon for fifteen or twenty minutes. The children really enjoyed singing, and they really liked certain songs such as "Columbus Sailed the Ocean Blue." The boys liked the "Yo Hos," and would sing them with gusto!

One afternoon I asked if they knew where Columbus sailed from. No one seemed to know, so I tried to explain where Italy was and what it looked like on the globe. I called on several children, one at a time, to come up front to find that tiny "boot" on our globe.

Another day, I stressed how long ago Columbus had sailed. The inside wall of the classroom had a long blackboard which I used to show a time line. As I tried to explain this concept, Tom raised his hand, and pointing to the beginning of my timeline asked, "You were here, weren't cha?" "No," I said. Then Hannah, who was *extra old* for her years said, "Surely, Mrs. Long was here!" I quickly realized that a boot for the shape of Italy was a concept more readily understood by second graders than was a line on the board representing the lapse of a long passing of time.

Sylvia Marble

AN EXTRAORDINARY TRIP: GETTING THE HANG OF THINGS By: Tony Dick

Dedication:

Ten years ago a biking friend and I planned to ride the East Coast Bicycle Trail to Richmond, Virginia. I don't remember why, but we cancelled this ride. Today my friend of twenty-five years is seriously ill with cancer, and is no longer riding his bike. Amato, I dedicate this ride to you and look forward to a time when we will be once again riding alongside each other.

Chapter 1

Day 1 – Saturday, May 26, 1990

The day was cloudy, rainy and 47°, when I embarked on my eleven day, 848 mile biking trip to Richmond, Virginia to visit my brother Roger and his family. The weather forecast was not good, but I was psyched up and could not stand the thought of waiting another day. But at 5:10 am when I left Westboro, MA, the sun was now shining and I was on my way. This day took me over a beautiful section of Connecticut on Route 197 and Route 190. I had lunch in Suffield, CT at a great little deli called "Someplace Special." When I reached Torrington, CT at 4:00pm (108 miles), I was exhausted. The Connecticut hills (especially west of Granby) are well known for depleting the energy of many cyclists. I was no exception. Although I had ridden 900 training miles up to this point, it was my first century (100 miles) of the year and I was suffering.

I checked in at the Yankee Peddler Inn only to find out there were no rooms. Apparently, there was a big car race at Lime Rock and all rooms for miles around were taken. Nevertheless, the friendly lady at the desk, seeing my dilemma and disappointment, searched around the building and found a room. She also sent me to a terrific Italian restaurant called "Anthony's" where I stocked up on pasta for the next day's ride.

Day 2 – Sunday, May 27, 1990

I left the Yankee Peddler at 5:30am, and felt surprisingly strong after the previous day's hard ride. I had breakfast at an all-night diner and was ready for a new day. Little did I know this day would be my longest of the 11 day trip.

The day was lovely and the ride between the rivers (Connecticut and Hudson) took me through some of the most scenic parts of the trip.

Just outside Pine Plains, NY, I met another cyclist – Bobby Goldberg. I did not know it at the time but this encounter would prove to be vitally important later in my venture. I was following some old (1980) East Coast Trail maps and Bobby was following a newer version of these maps. They had written instructions as well as graphic maps to follow. They proved to be absolutely critical in my trek through Pennsylvania. Bobby was just finishing a cross-country trip he had started three months ago, and had no further use for these so he offered them to me. Bobby also told me he had difficulty crossing the Hudson River. Bikes are not allowed to cross on most of the bridges. The one bridge they are allowed to cross (Poughkeepsie) was under construction and they suspended this privilege. So I went north to cross at the Rhine Cliff Bridge near Kingston. This bridge also did not allow bikes but, after a twenty minute wait hitchhiking, an amicable fellow from Texas took me across the Hudson River in his pickup. Once on the other side it would be the first of many days I would have to negotiate city traffic. Kingston, NY was the beginning and it was not fun.

I got to New Paltz, NY at about 3:00pm and started looking for a camp site, but everything was taken. There was an arts festival at the fair grounds and the area was saturated with people. I ate dinner and kept riding. I thought surely I would find an open field to pitch a tent, but the area was more congested than I had thought, so I continued

riding to Bloomingburg, NY. There was a camp In Wurtsboro, NY, but it would mean a climb over a 1000 foot mountain. It was now 7:30pm and I had peddled 116 miles. I was not about to climb this mountain. After making a few phone calls, I located a motel in Middletown, NY, just 4 miles away. The room was a real bummer, smoky and near a noisy highway. Also, people kept checking in all night and my room was right near the front desk. The late arrivals kept their motors running and their lights on, which made it tough to sleep. Nevertheless, it was a place to rest my weary bones, and I welcomed it.

In closing this day, I was struck by how congested the Northeast is. I had envisioned this area of New York to be remote and rural. Humans have spread themselves everywhere. They will build a house in almost any geography and on any geological spot. We must do better to preserve open space and control human sprawl. This East Coast Bicycle Trail would have been ideal to do ten years ago. Today, it is congested and the area more developed. But in spite of this, I did find some remote areas which I highly prized and, at this point, hold no regrets for making this ride.

Day 3 – Monday, May 28, 1990

I woke up to a lovely morning. It was cool (48°) but refreshing. I got a late start (6:30am) due to the late arrivals the night before. I was awake at 3:30am, but it was too dark to ride, so I went back to sleep. The next thing I knew it was 6:30am, late for me.

Today's ride would take me to Mt. Hope, Otisville, Port Jervis, and be the start of the Delaware Water Gap. Most of these towns along the way looked poor and run-down. The streets and buildings are in pretty rough shape.

At the junction of Route 521 and Route 206 in NJ, I almost made a

wrong turn. Fortunately (and this was to be the general rule all 11 days) a local biker showed up at just the right moment. The map was not clear at this point. His directions proved vital for it got me on an undiscovered back road that was absolutely beautiful with no traffic. It took me through the Delaware Water Gap National Park just south of Montague, and to the quaint artisan's village of Peters Valley. I also passed Dingmans Ferry. This is the name given to a tiny bridge that crosses the Delaware River. It is owned and operated by an old man who opens and closes the bridge on his schedule, to the frustration of locals. I continued on the Old Mine road to Walpack Center, Flatbrookville, and over a very steep climb to Millbrook Village. I thought about walking this hill but I didn't. It had a grade of 8%. (An 8% grade rises 8 vertical feet for each 100 feet traveled or 424 (53 x 8) vertical feet in a mile.) My pace on this hill was that of a walker, and my speedometer showed that I was traveling 4 miles per hour. Thank goodness for "granny" gears.

Peters Valley is a unique village of in-resident skilled craftspeople. The village lies within the park. The work done by these artists is unusual and of superior quality. They also conduct workshops for budding artists. There is only one retail shoppe in town made up entirely of hand-made crafts and artwork.

Millbrook Village, also within the park boundaries, was a rural community that flourished during the mid-19th century. The village and its activities attempt to re-create life as it was conducted 100 years ago.

I got to Worthington State Park, NJ, 73 miles further at 3:00pm. My campsite was very secluded and alongside the swiftly flowing Delaware River. It cost \$7.00. The gypsy moths were very active in this area and doing a lot of damage. This was the first time I got to pitch my tent, and the weather reports predicted rain.

After setting up camp I took the 2.5 mile ride into town, crossing the foot-bridge the Appalachian Trail (AT) hikers use to cross the Delaware River. This crossing was a momentous occasion for me because I have a love affair with the AT. The thought that I was on it with my bike was gratifying. The Delaware Water Gap was my first major goal of the trip. I am one third of the way to Richmond.

The Delaware Water Gap village, like the many others I passed, is run down. I saw only one fellow fixing his house. All the others were badly in need of repair. I ate at the Greek Diner in town, and bought all my postcards there. The "boss" admired what I was doing so he did not charge me taxes on either the cards or the food. The road from the park was recently graveled and this made for difficult cycling. The thought of having to do this road tomorrow with a heavily loaded bike did not thrill me; but the fact that I was camped along this lovely river, and the AT was on the ridge just above me, was enough to sweep all my worries away. I was in my element.

I closed the day at 6:00pm and 82 miles. I also had my first of three accidents. The bike and equipment weighed approximately 65-70 lbs and it is awkward to move around. The front wheel has a mind of its own. At one point, while straddling the top tube of the bike, the front wheel spun out of control, the bike lunged forward, and the big front gear (chain wheel) gouged into the back of my right leg leaving seven deep cuts; one for each gear head. There was blood everywhere. Fortunately, it was not serious. I treated it and was on my way.

Chapter 2 will be in the May/June 2018 issue.

MY CAPE COD ROOTS By Jane Davenport

I grew up in Plainfield, New Jersey, and my husband's family came from the north shore of Boston. However, he was born in Atlanta where the family was living at the time.

Each of our families had a summer home on Cape Cod – Pete's family in South Yarmouth and my family in South Dennis. Although we lived only a mile or two from each other, we didn't meet until we were both in college.

Pete's father suggested it was time for his son to take on some more responsibility, so Pete decided to lease a gas station to run. One summer, Pete hired my brother to pump gas at the station, and it was my brother who introduced us.

We began dating the summer of 1951, and fell madly in love. We quickly decided to get married after knowing each other for only 8 weeks. I was 18 and Pete was 19. Of course, both families were totally against our decision. They pleaded with us to wait until after Christmas, hoping the attraction would have cooled off by then. We would not be dissuaded. So I started to research how we could make this happen.

Blood tests were required, so I went to my family doctor. Puzzled by my request, he asked, "For what purpose do you need a blood test?" I hesitated somewhat, and he then asked if it was for a marriage license. I quietly answered, "Yes." Pete, on the other hand, went for his test to a doctor in Hyannis that he didn't know. There also was a five day waiting period after obtaining the marriage license. In the meantime, our families were contemplating the possibility of a Christmas wedding, and knew nothing of what we were planning. Another hurdle we had to overcome was the age of consent. In Massachusetts, the age of consent is twenty-one. However, in New Hampshire, the age of consent is eighteen for women and nineteen for men. We were all set. In August 1951, we eloped to New Hampshire.

After the five day waiting period, we arrived at the Nashua town hall. The town clerk asked for the location of our wedding ceremony. We thought this was supposed to happen at the town hall. Not so! The only person available to perform the legal ceremony was a local hairdresser. So off we went to the hairdresser's shop. The proprietor had to ask two of her customers to come out from under the dryers in order to witness our marriage. At last the deed was done.

Finally, we shared with our parents the great news – "We're married." Both families were upset with us, and set down some goals we had to meet before we were allowed to live together. That was fine, as we both felt it was worth all the hassle. I do remember one special moment when Pete's dad came over to me, shook my hand and welcomed me into the family. From that moment on, I always felt accepted. It was a gracious, loving thing for him to do.

That fall, I quit my college and enrolled at Colgate where Pete was attending. Pete later went on to Harvard's Graduate Business School. We also added two sons to our family during that time. After graduating he was offered and accepted a job in New York City. It was very expensive to live there, even in the mid-1950's. So we were quite excited when "Dad" called one day and asked us to come back to the Cape to help him start a new business. He would provide the financing and Pete would provide the expertise. "Dad" had reached the age of fifty-five and wanted to take things a little easier. For us, it meant the beginning of our involvement in a variety of business enterprises – like

general construction, owning and managing resort properties and the building of a retirement community.

The first ground-breaking for Thirwood Place began on November 5, 1987, and opened for its first residents in January 1989. I had fortyeight wonderful years with my husband until his death in 1999. Our life together was always exciting and adventurous. Now my life has come full circle: for here I am, a resident of the very community my husband and I began building thirty years ago today.*



Jane, at the age of six, fishing at her family's Cape Cod home.

*Jane told her story at Thirwood's "Meet Your Neighbor Forum" on November 5, 2017.

EARLY HISTORY OF THIRWOOD PLACE

■ The groundbreaking ceremony for Thirwood Place began on November 5, 1987. It was attended by "Mr. D" (John K. Davenport), his son Palmer "Pete" Davenport, grandson John C. Davenport and Chick Megargel. The first "tree cutting" had begun nearly two years earlier.

■ Thirwood Place welcomed its first resident, Bertha Miester, in the middle of January, 1989. Bertha was joined by 12 others living in the West Wing as the original 13 "pioneers" in the Pioneer Club as they were known.

■ The first meal was served in March, 1989. In the beginning, the dinners were cooked and served in Apartment 221 where the pioneers dined together until the June 29th opening of the new dining room, which was followed by the official Grand Opening of Thirwood on July 1, 1989. At that time, the entire exterior of the building was completed and landscaped. The interior was broken up into 8 "blocks" with 3 of the blocks completed by the grand opening and the remaining 5 completed by the end of 1989. Each block was named after a bird that could be found on Cape Cod.

■ Fun activities were scheduled from the beginning, including a carnival, Halloween party, dog show and dancing lessons. There were also foliage trips, concerts and even a "mystery play" performed by the staff. Special guests attended events, including marathon runner Johnny Kelley. In addition to ongoing activities which still take place today, another thread of continuity from day one to the present is the ongoing connection of residents and staff as one big family.

On May 1, 1992, a portion of the East wing was opened as Assisted

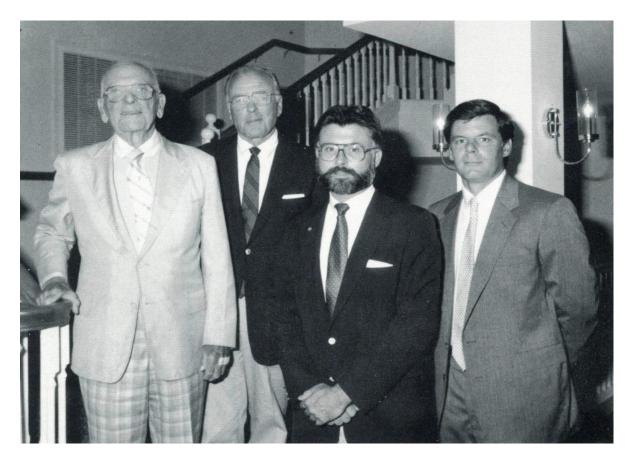
Living and on September 1, 1999 the village residences were opened. The Village residences were built in just 4 months, following a challenge by company executives to the Thirwood team.

■ The name Thirwood comes from the first name of Mr. D's wife, Thirza, and the woods where Thirwood was built. "Thir" + "wood" = Thirwood.

Gerry Street was the first General Manager and Seth Martin was the first Sales & Marketing Director. Ken Smith, who opened Thirwood as the Operations Manager and later became the Assistant General Manager, still works for the Davenport Companies, currently as the Vice President of Red Jacket Resorts.

Thirwood Place, Mayflower Place and King's Way's Heatherwood all opened in Yarmouth the very same year.

Ben Stacy was the first President of the Residents' Association, which has been in place since the opening of Thirwood Place. They recommended the building of a portico at the main entrance which was quickly added but, on the day of the portico dedication, someone accidently drove onto the sidewalk, knocking down 2 of the posts. Luckily, the dedication had just been completed and neither attendees nor the driver were injured, and the portico was repaired the next day.



The Davenport Family. Mr. John K. Davenport, Mr. Palmer Davenport, Mr. DeWitt Davenport and Mr. John C. Davenport. Archives 1989-1990: The Thirwood Voice, Vol.2 No. 3 CAPE COD SUMMER 1989