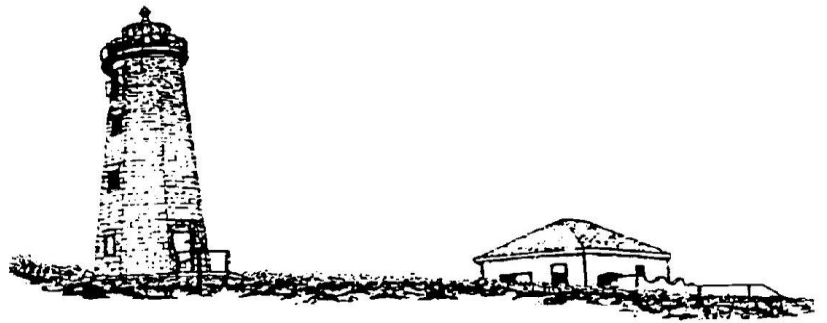


Benton Beach Beacon



July 1996

35th Annual Family Clambake

Saturday, July 20, 1996 @ 3:00 p.m.
Rain Date: Sunday, July 21

Circle the date and plan for an exquisite midsummer highlight on Old Benton Beach: the 35th annual clambake, once again staged by the father-son team, Edwin Benton and Eliot Benton! The fame of their old fashioned New England clambake promises to bring branches of the family down to the Sachem's Head shore from all points of the compass.



Among this year's special attractions are a group of tractor-size inner tubes for water sports (courtesy of D.C.O) and the rowing dinghy. "Hooray" for children of all ages.

We will be rewarded by a high tide at 3:00 p.m.

A 'standard menu includes corn, clams, mussels, and potatoes. In addition, you may order chicken or lobster.



Please bring your own beverage and feel free to bring other food, remembering that stuff to be baked must be placed in the pit by 12 o'clock noon. Plates, napkins, and utensils will be

provided. Children under twelve (12) years of age may pay one half (1/2) price, with the exception of the lobster entrees.

Please send your RSVP/food order to Edwin E. Benton ASAP: 396 Vineyard Point Road, Guilford, CT 06437.

##

Benton Beach Road: A Very Old Road

by Joel Helander

Private Benton Beach Road has hardly changed over the course of almost 200 years. It is the only frontage owned by Benton Beach, Inc., beginning on the public Vineyard Point Road. After half-circling the base of 'Beauty Mountain,' the road shoots through the lush Vineyard Meadow on a low causeway, crosses the Vineyard Creek on a stone bridge, and winds along the edge of upland until it ends at the waterfront. In length, it is about 3/10 mile.

The original purpose of Benton Beach Road has hardly changed over the course of almost 200 years, which is to provide direct access to interior waterfront properties.

Salt meadow haying was one of the seasonal functions of farmers. Even the back country farmers who didn't live near tidal wetlands owned a meadow strip. They mowed the prized grasses (free of weeds) with hand scythes and allowed it to dry before harvest. This often mustered many of the farmers into the meadow at one tie, who hauled their loads back to the barns with wagons and carts. Teams of oxen provided the brute strength to do this, never venturing into the spongy meadow, but staying on an adjacent solid meadow road.

And so the beginnings of Benton Beach Road date to the 18th century and to two brothers, Jordan Leete and Solomon Leete. They owned all the land south of the old Vineyard Road (now Vineyard Point Road) and practiced the lost art of salt haying.

Thomas Leete, a son of Solomon, lived near the ancient dwelling house still standing near the concrete trolley bridge on Vineyard Point Road. Between 1792 and 1814, he acquired upland on both sides of the meadow road that would later become Benton Beach Road. During this same period, Hooker Bartlett, from Guilford Center, acquired 11 acres of lowland or meadow in the rear. Bartlett was another farmer and needed access to his meadow. Leete gave it to him. One of Leete's deeds in the Guilford Land Records grants Bartlett rights "to pass and repass on the causeway [road]...at all times, with teams or cattle..." (1814). After Thomas Leete's death, subsequent owners of the 'Vineyard Lot,' as it was called, extending between Vineyard Creek and Vineyard Road, established a legal easement or right-of-way for the meadow owners (1833).

Eliot H. Benton's Great Grandfather Dan L. Benton, SR. acquired the Vineyard Lot (21-3/4 acres) in which the deed reserves the "right of passage to the highway from the land lying in the rear" (1843). A government topographic map of Sachem's Head district (1885) fixes the meadow road right-of-way in the same location as 1996, including old stonewall lines.

When Eliot Benton sold the eastern end of Sachem's farm to son Edwin (1954), he had the wisdom and foresight to establish the 25 foot wide Beach Road right-of-way so that future owners would have the insurance of beach access.

Past is prologue. Yesterday's future is today's present. Benton Beach Inc. owns Benton acres and Benton Beach Road. They can begin to realize that the value of Benton Beach properties, for generations to come, depends upon this winding strip of land.

Established as a meadow road, it was overhauled as a Beach Road in 1953 by Milton Benton. For generations since, the roadbed has been carefully maintained to serve our needs. In 1962, leftover concrete was poured into the

shoulders of the meadow causeway; drainage pipes have strategically laid; regular installments of traprock and processed stone have levelled sunken areas; potholes have been plugged with garden rocks; the bridge over the creek has been stabilized with granite abutments.

Many of us appreciate Benton Beach Road for more than a route of transportation. It is a three season hiking and biking trail; a cross country ski trail in winter; a vantage point for enjoying wildflowers and wildlife; a place for pilgrimage and get-a-way from some of the exacting annoyances and buzz of society.

Long live Benton Beach Road!



##

Fales and Schaefer Families Camp at Benton Beach

The Fales and Schaefer families spent a wonderful five days camping at Benton Beach the last week of June.

Each day started at 5:15 a.m. with several screeches from the beach pheasant. After the screech he would flap his wings loudly. What a wake-up call! His perch was a flat rock three feet from our tent. The first day we were

chasing him away - it was just too early! We were also visited nightly by a raccoon who left lots of prints. Sandy met him in person one night at 2:00 a.m. Pumpkin was our favorite animal visitor, announcing his dawn arrival with a loud meow, his signal for us to let him into our tents.

Every day brought different visitors. Kathryn, Justin, and Jared spent two lovely, leisurely days with us. The highlight of one day was a visit by uncle Milton and Martha the day everyone got to assist Joel in a turtle tagging operation. Each evening campfire had a different guest, too. Our dad and grandpa (Roger), Joel, Emily and David. The nearly full moon together with the high evening tide made each campfire spectacular.

Great weather, fun field trips, no bugs at all, and wonderful visitors, both animal and human, made our week what Andrew Fales called "the best vacation in my whole life." We all agreed.

##

Notes

• Calendar of Events:

July 20	Family clambake
July 21	Rain Date for family clambake
July 23	Platt Nature Center. Host: Heather C.
July 24	41'ers picnic. Host: Carolyn H.
August 11-17	Whelans' family campout
August 24	GHS class reunion picnic. Host: Ellen F.

Please call Donna Chemacki (203-245-2998), Benton Beach, Inc. secretary, for scheduling a special beach event. This is not necessary for small, spontaneous gatherings.

- Please submit any articles or family updates to Tim Chemacki for incorporation into the next issue.

Timothy Chemacki
83 Mansfield Rd., Unit 325
New London, CT 06320
(203) 443-0409
email: tchem@mindport.net

The following is an excerpt from the *Commemorative Biographical Record of New Haven County, Connecticut, Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens, and of Many of the Early Settled Families*, J.H. Beers & Co., Chicago, 1902.

PREFACE.

The importance of placing in book form biographical history of representative citizens - both for its immediate worth and for its value to coming generations - is admitted by all thinking people; and within the past decade there has been a growing interest in this commendable means of perpetuating biography and family genealogy.

That the public is entitled to the privileges afforded by a work of this nature needs no assertion at our hands; for one of our greatest Americans has said that the history of any country resolves itself into the biographies of its stout, earnest and representative citizens. This medium, then, serves more than a single purpose; while it perpetuates biography and family genealogy, it records history, much of which would be preserved in no other way.

In presenting the *Commemorative Biographical Record* to its patrons, the publishers have to acknowledge, with gratitude, the encouragement and support their enterprise has received, and the willing assistance rendered in enabling them to surmount the many unforeseen obstacles to be met with in the production of a work of this character. In nearly every instance the material composing the sketches was gathered from those immediately interested, and then submitted in type-written form for correction and revision. The volume, which is one of generous amplitude, is placed in the hands of the public with the belief that it will be found a valuable addition to the library, as well as an invaluable contribution to the historical literature of the State of Connecticut.

THE PUBLISHERS

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HERBERT LOUIS BENTON, a farmer and dairyman in Guilford, was born April 16, 1843, and is a native of that town. The first of the name in Guilford was Edward Benton, a native of England, who died in Guilford in 1680. His wife, Anna, died in 1671. They had the following children: Edward; Daniel; Andrew, who married Elibeth Rolfe; Hannah, who married Robert Ackerly; Mary, who married Samuel Thorpe; John, who died young; Tabitha, who married Simon Simpson; Elizabeth; Sarah, who married Thomas Wright; and Zacheus.

Daniel Benton, the second child in the family of Edward, was born in 1638, and died June 10, 1672. He was a farmer and land owner, and belonged to the church. A man of character and standing, he ranked well in his day. He married Rachel Goodrich, who died in 1685, and they were the parents of four children: Joanna, who married John Turner; Ebenezer, mentioned below; Beltzah; and Rebecca, who married Joseph Halsey.

Ebenezer Benton was born in October, 1663, in Guilford, where his entire life was spent, engaged with farming. He was a prominent citizen, especially in church matters. He died on

his farm June 22, 1758, and was buried in Guilford. His wife, Abigail, was born March 6, 1670, and died April 13, 1753; she was buried in the Guilford cemetery. They were married June 14, 1694, and their children were: Daniel; Elizabeth, who married Samuel Buell; Ebenezer, who married Esther Crittenden; and Caleb, who married Sarah Stone.

Deacon Daniel Benton was born in Guilford June 1, 1695, and was a deacon of the Congregational Church. He died Aug. 25, 1756. In 1728 he married Elizabeth Stone, who was born Oct. 6, 1706, died in 1753, and was buried in Guilford. For his second wife he married Mrs. Sarah Seward, who died March 12, 1762. His family consisted of the following children: Sarah; Daniel; Eli; Samuel; Jared, who married Eliabeth Collins; Silas, who married Abigail Lindsley; Nathan, who married Rachel Chittenden; Ann, who married Philip Mann; Elizabeth, who married Rufus Graves; Daniel James; and one that died in infancy.

Silas Benton, who was born July 25, 1739, was engaged in farming throughout his life, and died March 19, 1828. On June 6, 1768, he married Abigail Lindsley, who was born in 1743,

in Branford, and died in 1811. About the close of the year 1811 he married for his second wife Widow Lois Plant. He had the following children: Abigail; Daniel, Who married Fannie Eliot; Joseph; Isaac, who married Sarah Robinson; Dan Lindsley; Julin; and Silas.

Dan Lindsley Benton, the grandfather of Herbert L. Benton, was born in 1780, and was a lifelong farmer. He was a well-known citizen and a member of the church. He died June 18, 1859, and was buried in the West cemetery. On March 11, 1805, he married Betsy Seward, who was born in 1788 and died Aug. 20 1865. They had the following children: David Merrick; Betsy Ann, who married Eli Parmelee; Dan Lindsley; Harriet, who married Samuel Davis; Clarissa, who married Nelson Hotchkiss; Lydia, who married Henry Rankin; Mary Elizabeth, who married Charles Landon; Ella Maria, who married Charles M. Stone; Richard Henry, who married Charlotte E. Parcus; John, who married Catherine L. Kelsey; Martha Seward, who married Deacon Edwin O. Davis, of Guilford; and David Merrick (2), who married Frances S. Smith.

Dan Lindsley Benton, father of Herbert L., was born March 5, 1810, on the Guilford farm, where he received a good common-school education, and was reared to farming, which was his life business. He owned a large tract of land at Sachem's Head, on which he made extensive improvements. In politics, he was a democrat. He died in 1894, and was buried in the West Cemetery in Guilford. In 1833 he married Martha M. Norton, who was born Nov. 20 1811, and died June 12, 1835. They were the parents of one child, Darwin M. For his second wife Mr. Benton was married, May 30, 1841, to Elizabeth Blakeslee, who was born June 29, 1818, in North ford, and is still living. To this union were born three children: Herbert Louis; Charles Lindsley, who resides on the homestead; and Edward W., also making his home on the homestead.

Herbert Louis Benton was born on the homestead April 16, 1843, attended the district school and Guilford Academy, and remained on the farm until after his marriage, when he began farming on the place where he is now located. Mr. Benton has also been a carpenter and a boatbuilder. He is a hard worker, and is much respected for his industry. In religious connection he is a member of the Episcopal Church, where he officiates as a vestryman. His political affiliation is with the Democratic party; he has never sought an office. Mr. Benton was

married, in Guilford, June 11, 1885, to Miss Fannie M. Eliot, daughter of Louis R. and Fannie (Griswold) Eliot, both of whom are deceased, and is the father of two children: Eliot H., born Sept. 16, 1889; and Ruth E., born Oct. 15, 1892.

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The following is an excerpt taken from *Genealogy of the Descendants of John Eliot "Apostle to the Indians" 1598-1905*, Copyright 1905 by Wilimena H. (Eliot) Emerson, The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Press, New Haven, CT.

- 373.** LEWIS ROSSITER⁷ (Charles⁶, William⁵, Nathaniel⁴, Abial³, Joseph², John¹). Farmer in Guilford. He married first, Dec. 5, 1847, Fanny Griswold, b. Oct 27, 1823; d. Dec. 24, 1856. He married second, Nov. 17, 1858, Catherine, dau. of Sherman and Anna (Griswold) Graves., b. May 16, 1824.

CHILD, BY FIRST WIFE.

567. i. FANNY MARIA⁸, b. Mar. 26, 1853, in Guilford. She married, June 11, 1885, Herbert L. Benton.

CHILDREN.

1. Eliot Herbert, b. Sept. 16, 1889.
2. Ruth Elizabeth, b. Oct 15, 1892.

CHILDREN, BY SECOND WIFE

568. ii. MARY ELIZABETH⁸, b. Apr. 27, 1860.
569. iii. EDWARD⁸, b. Oct. 14, 1861.