

Benton Beach Beacon



October 1998

This Was A Real Nice Clambake

by Kasha K Benton

Sunday, July 12, 1998 dawned a perfect Clambake day - sunny, warm, and high tide at 1:30. What could be better?! Edwin, Roger, and their special 1998 helper, Missy Fales, had all the preliminary preparations done: Hole dug, lined with stones, seaweed gathered and some native clams, mussels and oysters captured for the event. The fire started at 8:00 a.m. and fed till noon when the food was put on, everything covered with seaweed and plastic. Eliot and Daniel joined the others during this phase as some of the distaff looked on and took pictures.

The clan began gathering then and continued until 3:00 when the pit was uncovered, and the serious eating began. If the head-counters were accurate, there were 73 people an attendance, the youngest being Juan Victor Cabrera at 21 months and the oldest being a tie between Grace Scranton and Hazel Ricketson, both 92. Juan Victor spent more time running around while Aunt Grace and Aunt hazel enjoyed themselves by chatting and visiting. As far as anyone knows, this was the largest number of people attending a Benton clambake in recorded history.

People brought a wide variety of carry-in dishes, everywhere from soup to nuts; well, I *know* there was soup (clam chowder), but I'm not sure about the nuts. There was homemade ice cream, thanks to David and Lisa Ott, salads, eggplant parmesan, delicious desserts, including birthday cake in honor of 3 year old Rachel Benton.

We were even buzzed by a private plane, flying low and dipping his wing - Matt Falvey? Scott Falvey? We weren't sure.

Edwin announced that after 31 years, this would be his last year in charge of the clambake. He has enjoyed doing them but feels it is time for the next generation to carry on if they wish. He was presented with a

“gold” clamshell medal, which read, “Benton Clambake: 1961-1998 - EED,” and we sang a round of the song from Carousel, “This Was A Really Nice Clambake.” Roger, Peg and Missy researched the song and found the words for us. Roger and Holly led us in song and as the song says, “we all had a real good time!”

One closing thought: To those who were absent - we missed you, but we recalled times past when you could be a clambaker, and we felt your spirit.



Edwin Benton is the Clambake King!

Summertime, Benton Beach, and Family

by Ellen Fales

The Fales-Schaefer families once again spent the most enjoyable days of their summer at Benton Beach. For a few days at the end of June and then again at the beginning of August, home was the dome tents set up at the beginning of Roger's Island. June brought fine weather, chilly but very refreshing swimming and a chance for the cousins to spend some time together after a long school year. The kids found baby lobsters out in the rocks, a few clams and we watched the ospreys closely through our binoculars, delighting in watching them fish right in front of us.

August found only the Fales camping. The Schaefers came for one day while Sandy recovered from gall bladder surgery the week before. The swimming was warmer but with a few jellyfish - we set up jellyfish spotting patrols! The full moon added to our nighttime fires and boat rides from Joel were the highlight of our days. We even had a visit from the Good Humor truck, courtesy of Joel! A baby bunny that Melissa named Lydia spent most of every day eating grass next to the shower tree and the baby osprey finally flew from the nest. It was with great sadness that we finally packed up, knowing it will be June 1999 before we can enjoy the beach again for more than just a few hours. How lucky we are to have Benton Beach.

An Indian Story

by Joel Helander

The late Eliot H. Benton's Grandchildren went Indian-mad in the early 1960's. During the summer vacations, Jill, Heather, Kenneth, and Joel spent long hours riding their bicycles or playing in the fields and woods of Sachem's Head. It would seem as if Jill's imagination had been fired up by a unit in school on the Eastern Woodland Indians, or else she had been reading too many comic books. I'm not sure and it may not matter. The fact is, Jill set the fashion for our rage on Indians. When the Indian craze passed in our early teens, we started up the "Turkey House Gang" and finally, "The Willow Club," but these are stories for another time.

Bim and Mike Easton from Vineyard Point greatly contributed to the Indian rage. The Easton brothers seemed half Indian to begin with; at least they could be as wild as Indians on the Benton property. They were the ones who built dugouts near the beach and set up a wonderful wigwam in a little glen on the lot

now owned by Uncle Edwin. It was fabricated from long poles and blankets, but of course we called the blankets bear skins. This secret fort was out-of-view from the world and accessible by only narrow cow paths.

Bim and Mike sometimes wore only loin cloths and carried big hickory bows with homemade arrows. They went out on hunting parties, spearing snakes and frogs in the swamp. Using bright paints, Jill marked a granite ledge with Indian sign language. It all looked just like a sketch of an Indian village in our history books.

The cousins divided into war parties and painted themselves with blackberries; they made attacks upon each other with wild war whoops hideous enough to frighten a real Indian. Martha or Holly had a doll with a wig, and in the raids made upon the Indian party to which she belonged, this doll was always taken and scalped.

Eventually, she got the wig back, only to have it carried off in the next skirmish. The poor doll was as bald as a cue ball. It's wondrous that we didn't dismember it or try to eat its gizzard. In Deforest's *History of the Indians of Connecticut*, there is an account of the Pequot Indian, Uncas, who did just that.

Jill prepped her hair a la Indian - with dainty plumes (probably seagull feathers) and beads - and dressed the scalped doll like an Indian princess.

But our crowning delight was to have our Grandfather Benton tell us true Indian stories. He told us that his Grandfather Dan moved down to Sachem's Head District from Nut Plains District in the year 1810. He told us about Indian tribal warfare on Bloody Cove Beach in the year 1637 that resulted in the beheading of an Indian chief (or sachem). This happened on Uncas Point, we learned, and thus was christened the place name of "Sachem's Head."

He told us that his grandfather remembered the stump of the ancient oak tree that had borne in its fork the grizzly head of the Indian sachem. He told us about secluded Shaumpishuh Cave over an old Indian living in it.

We enjoyed Grandpa's vivid memory; we always delighted in the halting manner of his story-telling; we appreciated his farm tales as well as his true Indian tales. We always thought that he was right; and we sometimes tried to reenact his stories.

My favorite reenactments related to the savage Pequot Indian Nation and the English campaign to exterminate them. The final scene was at Bloody Cove and Uncas Point. Uncas shot the sachem with an arrow and beheaded him.

By the time my mother and father came down to the Head to bring me home, if Jill's head had really been cut off as many times as it had in the character of the sachem, she would not have been more than one inch high.

In 1998, the actors have changed, but the scenes have not. The Indian craze hit the Helander family after Lorri and Forrest brought their girls to the new, extraordinary Pequot Indian Museum in Ledyard, CT. During their family camp out in Sachem's Head, the Helanders biked to several locations to sift for Native American artifacts. Their most prized find was a result of 10 hours of sifting: a Susquehanna broad point (spearhead) which was made 2800 - 3400 years ago.

A Proposal

by Tim Chemacki

About a year ago, Sharon Tito and I went for a pleasant hike in Westwood Trails in Guilford. During our hike, we watched the sun sink low across the tidal salt "pond" from a rock at the water's edge. Ever since then, Sharon has expressed interest in visiting this rock again. Well, On August 3, 1998, she got the chance.

After having lunch with my parents in Madison, Sharon and I headed into the Westwood trails for a long-awaited hike. When we reached the rock overlooking the water once again, we sat down and enjoyed the serenity. After a few minutes, I pulled a small velvety box from my knapsack, opened it to reveal a diamond ring, and asked Sharon if she would marry me. Her expression of genuine surprise and joy was priceless - one I will never forget. Then she softly said...yes!

As of right now, we have not set an official date for the wedding, though we think it will probably be in about a year.

The Michigan/Missouri/Louisiana Gangs

Three different caravans of E.H.B descendants (and friends) converged to Sachem's Head, independently and spontaneously, August 11-12, to spend time in the homeland. Jill Benton represented the Michigan gang; Aaron Perkins represented the Missouri gang; and the four Peaks: Jason, Andrew, Kim, and Elizabeth represented the Louisiana gang.

Despite an eerie show of lightning over Long Island on the evening of the 11th, it never stormed, and the campers enjoyed a cool and dry night under the Perseid meteor showers.

The Summer of '98 and the Third Generation of Second Cousins

If we think of Mabel and Eliot H. Benton of Sachem's Head as the family patriarchs and their six children as the first generation, we can refer to their grandchildren as the 2nd generation and their great-grandchildren as the 3rd generation.

Although the third generation of cousins live in all quarters of the United States and may feel as if they hardly know some of their cousins, invariably they come back to the Sachem's Head homeland for visits. Benton Beach is like the old beehive.

Some of the third generation now have families of their own; some of them are potential future shareholders.

In an effort to re-acquaint cousins with cousins, these vignettes have been prepared to summarize their activities during the summer of '98:

Cousins of the third generation are presented according to the birth order of their Benton grandparent, i.e., Marjorie Benton Spalding, Dorothy Benton Perkins, H. Milton Benton, Carolyn Benton Helander, Edwin E. Benton, and Roger W. Benton.

David Ott (Guilford, CT) works as a broker for the Equitable Company in Hamden, managing retirement and investment plans for teachers. This summer, he and his wife, Lisa, and their two children, Emily and Peter, made a day trip to Newport, RI for a Huhn family reunion. Two times they made weekend trips to visit David's father on Long Island. The Otts have enjoyed their new backyard bluestone patio with outdoor shower and shade canopy. Emily attends the Community Nursery School and Peter is pre-school. **Tim Chemacki** (Denver, CO) works as an engineer for the Hewlett-Packard Company in nearby Englewood, providing technical support (pre- and post-sales) for electronic test and measurement equipment. In his spare time, he is Editor-in-Chief and producer of the Benton Beach Beacon. Tim's big news this summer is reported in another column. Congratulations, Tim and Sharon! **Todd Chemacki** (Madison, CT) works as a state police dispatcher with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). He dispatches the boating authority, state fire fighters, HAZ-MAT inspectors, biologists, and the radiation team. In August, he and his girlfriend, Kim, climbed Mount Katahdin in Maine. **Matt Falvey** (Killingworth, CT) manages The

Falvey Construction Corporation headquartered in his hometown. In August, he brought his daughters to the family camp in Rangely, ME and brought Erin on her first camping trip on remote Richardson Lake. One day, the family drove by car to Megantic, Canada to have lunch and then drove back again. Robin is pre-school and Erin is in the 4th grade at the Killingworth Elementary School. **Scott Falvey** (Ivoryton, CT) works for The Falvey Construction Corporation and, like his brother, works long days. He and his wife, Emily, are engaged with many improvements on their beautiful farm, which includes two horses, a cat, and a dog. This summer, they visited Emily's grandmother in Cape Cod. **Eric Spalding** (Wayne, ME) did a lot of bicycle riding with his good friend, Reid, and also spent time fishing in Pickerel Pond this summer. He has a new GT mountain bike. On the family's trip West this summer, he enjoyed the glacier the most. Eric is in the 9th grade at Maranacook Community School. **Bryce Spalding** (Wayne, ME) also loves to talk about the family's three week vacation to Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado. He tried out for travel soccer and made the team as well as attended the Ladd Center day camp. Bryce is in the 5th grade in Wayne Elementary School. **Aaron Perkins** (Arnold, MO) reports that his summer highlight was driving 1150 miles from St. Louis to his Dad's home in Killingworth, CT (with girlfriend Kelly) and then joining his Peak first cousins for a campout on Benton Beach. His summer job was at the Imos Pizzeria in Arnold, where he is reputed to be the fastest pizza-maker west of the Mississippi. In early August, he attended church youth conference in Kansas City. Aaron is a senior at Seckman High School in St. Louis. **Abbra Perkins** (Arnold, MO) went to Rangely, ME in Don Falvey's airplane in August to surprise her good friend Geanette Falvey. Abbra and Geanette attended kindergarten together in Killingworth. In Rangely, she enjoyed horseback riding, boating, and water-skiing. At home, she took YMCA swim classes for six weeks. Abbra is in the 8th grade at Seckman Junior High School. **Amber Kerner and Heather Kerner** ("the twins") climbed Mt. Katahdin in Maine in July, criss-crossing the same trek made by Todd Chemacki a few weeks later. Last Spring, **Amber** received her Master's Degree in speech pathology from the University of New Hampshire. She lived at home this summer, preparing for a 9-month clinical fellowship at a private practice in Portland, ME, which started in mid-summer. Her brother Michael gave her a gift membership in a local rowing club so that they could row together while she was home. **Heather** is working as a pediatric occupational therapist at Blythdale Children's Rehabilitation Center in Vahala, NY. She gets 6 weeks of vacation time and was able to arrange visits to Washington, D.C., Boston, New Hampshire, and Maine this summer. She sews and spins and recently acquired a spinning wheel. **Michael Kerner** (Brunswick, ME) spent his sixth summer managing Holbrook's Snack Bar in Cundy's Harbor, ME. He

was able to break away for a couple of days to visit friends in Rhode Island. He is a senior at the University of Rhode Island majoring in fisheries technology and aquaculture. He will again be rowing for the crew team. **Jason Peak** (Slidell, LA) worked this summer as a galley cook on the "Delta Queen" cruise boat on the Mississippi River. This cruise line made the passage between New Orleans and St. Louis every seven days, He left the job on August 3 to join three of his siblings for a trip to the Northeast in a Dodge Caravan. This trip culminated with their attendance at a big rock concert (the group Phish) in Limestone, ME. Jason is in his junior year at Louisiana State University. **Andrew Peak** (Slidell, LA) completed his sophomore year at Webb Institute in Glen Cove, NY on July 1 and flew down to visit his family before making the Northeast trek with three of his siblings. Andrew reports that he had a "relaxing" summer. He returned to Webb to continue his studies in naval architecture and marine engineering. **Kimberly Peak** (Slidell, LA) graduated from high school in May. This summer, she lived in Jacksonville, Wyoming with a friend and worked in the laundry department of a hotel. In early August, Kim joined three of her siblings for a trip to the Northeast. She will live with Margie Tuckerman in Haddam, CT until November and hopes to secure a job with a nursery or floral shop. In 1999, she plans to attend the Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina. **Elizabeth Peak** (Slidell, LA) visited her sister Kim in Wyoming for 10 days this summer and went to Yellowstone Park with a friend. In Slidell, she worked in sales in a little trendy store called "Gadzooks" and met a lot of interesting people. Elizabeth joined three of her siblings for a trip to the Northeast in early August, driving non-stop for nearly 24 hours. She is a junior in North Shore High School. **Katherine Peak** (Slidell, LA) spent the summer as a full-time "nanny" in Slidell for two children aged 2 and 4 years. She came to Killingworth with her brother Joshua and parents in late August. Katherine is a sophomore at North Shore High School and plays the French Horn in the marching band. **Joshua Peak** (Slidell, LA) enjoyed his short visit to Benton Beach in August and frolicked on the ledges/tidal pools. This summer, he took both piano and trombone lessons, proclaiming that he likes piano the best. He also enjoyed playing basketball in a city league. Joshua accompanied his father in bringing Kim to Wyoming. He is in the 8th grade in Boyet Junior High School. **Claudia Collinson** (Killingworth, CT) participated in her school's "Wet and Wild Camp" this summer, which involved fun-filled trips to Lake Compounce, Riverside, Misquamicut Beach, and Playland. She also did a lot of baby-sitting. Claudia is in the eighth grade in the Haddam-Killingworth Middle School. **Laura Collinson** (Killingworth, CT) went to day camp for one week this summer and also visited Benton Beach as a student of the Platt Nature Center, where the children examined the salt meadow and combed the

tidal flats for interesting marine creatures. Laura is in the 5th grade at the Killingworth Elementary School. **Claudia and Laura** accompanied their parents on a family trip to Washington, D.C. and then on to the Maryland shore for camping. They especially enjoyed seeing the wild ponies on Assateague Island. **Pumpkin Helander** (Sachem's Head) has enjoyed stalking the Vineyard Point Road, sitting on the great granite boulder, and making surprise visits to Benton Beach when campers are in residence. **Ben Whelan** (North Marshfield, MA) had to read five books this summer as part of his Montessori School assignment, where he is now in the 7th grade. At the August 29 outing on his family's

North River Camp, he caught five Striped Bass. **Tyler Whelan** (North Marshfield, MA) saved up \$145 from working at the family camp for his parents to be used towards the purchase of a new stunt bike called "The Fat Boy." Tyler is in the 5th grade at Furnace Brook School. **Ben and Tyler** traveled with their mother and friends for a 10-day vacation to Nova Scotia in July. They also enjoyed fair weather during their family camp out on Benton Beach. **Juan Victor Cabrera** (Guilford, CT) is two years old and loves his cat, Tommy. He also loves listening to the trains as they pass through Guilford station, especially when it means that his father ("papa") is coming home from New York. Juan Victor still looks forward to evening camp fires on Benton Beach, where he has been going regularly since he was four weeks old. **Hope Helander** (North Madison, CT) says that the highlight of her summer was riding the water flume at Storyland in Conway, NH during a family trip. She did a lot of swimming this summer, alternating between Benton Beach, the association lake, and her grandmother's pool. Hope is in the third grade at Jeffrey Elementary School. **Jova Helander** (North Madison, CT) enjoyed Santa's Village the most on her family's trip to New Hampshire this summer. During their family camp out on Benton Beach, her favorite adventure was riding on her uncle's boat, the "Goose Island Express." Jova attends the Community Nursery School in Sachem's Head and is lucky to be in

Emily Ott's class. **Kate Fales** (West Kingston, RI) graduated from her 8th grade class as valedictorian and now attends Chariho High School. This summer, she tried out and made the school soccer team; she also played competitive fast-pitch softball. During the family's campouts at Benton Beach, she earned the

title of "champion clammer." **Melissa Fales** (West Kingston, RI) went hiking in the White Mountains with a friend this summer, spending the nights in Appalachian Mountain huts. She also spent a weekend at Helmsley Hotel in New York City with a friend and watched Beauty and the Beast on Broadway. Melissa owns a Hampshire sheep named "Veta" and shows her at 4-H fairs. She is in the 7th grade at Chariho Middle School. **Andrew Fales** (West Kingston, RI) played rec soccer this summer and spent a lot of time swimming in the family pool. His favorite pastime however, was the family campout on Benton Beach, when he could hunt crabs with Cousin Dan. An East Haven boy found Andrew's message in a bottle and wants to be his pen pal. Andrew is in the 4th grade at Richmond Elementary School. **Mike Schaefer, Jr.** (Dayville, CT) worked for a landscaping company this summer, specializing in stonewalls and patios. He went up to Canton, ME with friends for a little vacation, but the high point of his summer was spending time with Saara, his Finnish girlfriend, who came to Killingly High School on the Rotary Foreign Exchange Program. Mike is a freshman at Eastern Connecticut State University. **Dan Schaefer** (Dayville, CT) worked for his Grandfather Benton in Sachem's Head for two weekends this summer. He took driver's ed class, went up to York Beach, ME with a friend, and attended one week of band camp, which involved 4 hours of daily marching. Dan plays the tuba. He is a junior at Killingly High School. **Cassie Schaefer** (Dayville, CT) practiced her trumpet a lot this summer and managed to get away for a trip to New Hampshire

with her parents to attend a wedding. The trip turned out to be a mini-vacation, but ironically, Cassie's favorite part was shopping at the Enfield Mall on the way home. She is in the 6th grade at Killingly Middle School. **Alicia Schaefer** (Dayville, CT) started cheerleading for the midget football team, "The Patriots," for the Town of Killingly. She loves her video games and learned how to play Nintendo 64. The favorite part of her summer was a family campout at Benton Beach at the end of June. Alicia is in the 3rd grade at Killingly Central School.

Justin Benton-Smith (Killingworth, CT) had a wonderful summer at home with his brother. He took YMCA swimming classes and did a lot of swimming in the family pool. Justin is on the Mini-Marlins Swim Team at the Westbrook Y. He is in 3rd grade at Killingworth Elementary School. **Jared Benton-**



Andrew Fales in the third generation.

Smith (Killingworth, CT) also did a lot of swimming this summer, including the YMCA in Westbrook, which is as special as it is convenient because his mother is a swim instructor there. Jared can do 50 yards of the front crawl and also the back stroke. He is in kindergarten at the Killingworth Elementary School. Sarah Waugaman (Bellingham, WA) went to one week of Montessori camp with an overnight camp out on the last night. The highlight of her summer was traveling to Park City, Utah where her family will soon be relocating. Sarah loves bicycling and picking blackberries near the community beach. She is in kindergarten at the Bellingham Montessori School. Rachel Benton (Clinton, CT) enjoyed swimming at Chatfield Hollow State Park this summer and takes great pride in helping her mother with the in-home day care business. her favorite getaway was the outing at Whelan family camp on North River in North Marshfield, MA, where she played with the goats and reeled in a large fluke, thanks to Stan Chemacki's assistance. Rachel is 3 years old.

Some Ideas

By Tim Chemacki

I'd like to run a couple ideas by everyone. Please provide me with feedback.

First, I would like to compile a Benton family directory including names, spouses, children, professions, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, home pages on the Internet, photos, important dates, brief biographical backgrounds, etc. of the descendants of E.H.B. If there is a level of interest, I can create this document and provide it to anyone who is interested for whatever it costs to print and bind it. Update sheets can be inserted annually, and the entire directory updated every several years. This would be an excellent record to preserve our family's history. Additionally, I may also be able to provide this document in electronic format (*NOT* on the Internet), maybe on CD-ROM.

Second, I would like to have some regular columns in the Beacon, such as family recipes, positive attitudes, environment, family history, family traditions, poetry, things to do at Benton Beach, or whatever - but things that focus on the family, the people, the issues. These could either be written by the same person every time, or can be switched off. I would also love to receive more family updates from everyone.

Notes

• Acknowledgments

Very special thanks are in order to those who contributed to this final summer issue of the Beacon. Thanks to Kasha Benton for "This Was A Real Nice Clambake" and to Ellen Fales for "Summertime, Benton Beach, and Family." Also, thank you Joel Helander for your contributions, "An Indian Story", "The Michigan/Missouri/Louisiana Gangs," and especially for your considerable time and effort required to compile "The Summer of '98 and the Third Generation of Second Cousins."

• Internet

I have taken the Benton Beach Beacon off of the Internet due to the concerns of some family members. Unfortunately, the web-space provider I use does not allow password protection of websites. I do still have the Beacon in electronic format (including back-issues), and will email any issues to anyone who would like them. One benefit of having the electronic format is that some of the pictures are color.

• Address Changes?

If there are any family members who have moved, moved away from their parents, are at a college address, etc., please let me know. I can send copies of the Beacon to each of these individuals at their new addresses.

• Calendar of Events:

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.

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