

Did You Know?

The southern tip of Sconticut Neck, now called Wilbur Point, was a 90-acre farm owned by the Delano Family. It was sold to Edwin Wilbur in 1877¹. Learn about the Delano Cemetery near the end of Sconticut Neck Road.

Fairhaven's Little Delano Family Cemetery - Deeply Rooted American History

By Cathy Delano

Those of you who attended DK reunions in Fairhaven in 2012 and 2018 may have wondered about the small cemetery near the end of Sconticut Neck Road. It was a bit overgrown, forlorn, and forgotten. It was surrounded by an old New England stonewall and a small disintegrating sign, "Delano Cemetery."

You had to wonder about the three headstones with engraved names barely readable after weathering more than 200 years. They marked the deaths of Captain Joshua Delano², his wife Patience, and their daughter, Silvia.

Joshua and Patience had 12 children³ but only one of their youngest daughters, Silvia, has a headstone at this site, probably because she died young (15 years old) on 31 October 1807 and preceded her parents in death.

Although the headstones only reflect their date of death, the earliest records confirm that Joshua Delano was born 29 January 1746/47 and died 20 May 1819; he married Patience Snow on 28 December 1775. Patience Snow was born in 1751 and died 15 October 1829.

Joshua and his large family resided in the southernmost house on Sconticut Neck, now known as Wilbur Point. By all indications, he was not only prolific but industrious. According to his nephew Jabez, Uncle Jousha was involved with farming, saltworks, and whaling. He also had a warfe [sic].⁴

The land on Sconticut Neck (worth incalculable millions today) was owned by the Delanos and there is much history to unearth there. For example, the great gale (hurricane) of September 1815 did tremendous damage to the area. The area known as "Angelico" near the south-west end of Sconticut Point is where Joshua's father, Jethro, allowed the Indians of Sconticut to cultivate. In 1776 he divided his farm consisting of all the southerly part of the Neck, among his children, and which his grandsons, Henry and Charles Delano, had plowed and planted in the spring of 1815. Sadly, the entire shoreline was changed and Angelico was washed into the sea and virtually destroyed.⁵

The Neck, as it is colloquially known, is sublimely beautiful. It is surrounded on three sides by Buzzards Bay, and despite the inevitable residential development, it still has vast tracks of open land for tree farms, cattle grazing, and long stretches of inviting vistas.

The Delano Kindred is grateful to the Town of Fairhaven, especially Doug Brady of the Historical Commission, who championed the effort to replace the old Delano Cemetery sign with a new one – bigger and bolder (see photos). Now, the Delano name has reclaimed its presence and its history beckons.



Brian and Keith with the old and new signs together.



(L-R) Keith Silvia, Town Selectman, with Brian Messier and Doug Brady of the Historical Commission and the new sign.

Considering this little family cemetery, Margaret Delano, of the Delano Kindred Board, said it is humbling and inspiring to reflect on those early Delano settlers and all they endured and accomplished by sheer force of will, persistence, and hard work.

And, because of Muriel Cushing's research, we know more about this Delano family that lived through the American Revolution with their land rooted in the same place as the area evolved from Dartmouth to New Bedford, to the formation of the Town of Fairhaven in 1812.

This small family cemetery is a direct link to early Delano history on the South Coast. It connects us to our past and all that our ancestors helped establish. Our Delano forebears contributed to the shaping of our nation well before the founding of the republic. As we celebrate our 250th anniversary, let us remember them, appreciate the legacy they left us, and contemplate the world we are leaving for future generations.

¹ Source: A Picture Post Card History of Fairhaven. Edited by Joseph D. Thomas

² Joshua was the grandson of Jonathan who settled on the South Coast. Jonathan was part of the Old Dartmouth Purchase, when in 1652 the land was acquired by the Plymouth [SIC] Colony from the Wampanoag Indians. Source: The Old Dartmouth Purchase, New Bedford Whaling Museum

³ Their children's names and birth years: Betsy – 1776; Issac – 1778; Esther – 1779; Seth – 1781; Joshua – 1783; Jethro – 1784; Charles – 1786; Henry – 1788; Alden – 1790; Silvia – 1792; Ebenezer – 1794; and Eunice – 1796. Source: Philip Delano of the Fortune 1621 and His Descendants for Four Generations; Published by the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 2002)

⁴ Source: A Picture History of New Bedford, Volume One, 1602 – 1925, edited by Joseph D. Thomas,

⁵ Source: A brief History of the Town of Fairhaven 1903