

village view

by Andrea Leonard

Somewhere in the neighborhood of a thousand people, in mid-1979, will be fortunate enough to acquire one or more copies of a new book about Osterville.

The book, a pictorial view of the village based on a marvelously descriptive letter written in 1877, will be devoted entirely to Osterville and to its people at that time. It will contain five hundred photographs of people and places referred to in the text of the letter, eight detailed maps of the village pinpointing most of the places the letter refers to, as well as a legend to key the photographs to the text.

The letter was written by Mrs. Augusta (Lovell) Rich, a native of Osterville who lived in this village all of her life; it was addressed to her sister, Mrs. Harriet (Lovell) Deane who, after her marriage, resided in Middleboro, Massachusetts. The sisters were two of the fourteen children of Deacon and Mrs. Robert Lovell, Osterville residents.

Because family responsibilities prevented Mrs. Deane from returning to the scenes of her childhood, and probably because she was homesick and yearned for news of people and places that flooded her memories, she asked Augusta to send word concerning "the old folks at home"; Augusta responded in minute detail, describing the several neighborhoods and each area where houses were standing and where people known to both sisters were then living, bringing up-to-date the homely situation of each household.

Although the sisters have long since gone to their rewards, the letter Mrs. Rich wrote to Mrs. Deane has survived, as have many of the houses and scenes described. Also surviving, of course, are many of the descendants of people about whom Augusta wrote. Those of us who trace our families back to an Osterville of earlier days will find much of interest within the covers of this new book.

And whether we are now residents of Osterville or one of the communities nearby- or scattered far and wide over the earth's surface- the book will be a valued and valuable addition to the library of anyone who has family connections with or curiosity about Osterville in an earlier era.

Sparked by the Bicentennial, perhaps, there is growing interest among people of all walks of life about their ancestry. It's a thrilling experience to look upon a photograph of a person who was a living adult a century ago, a person who was your own great-great-grandparent.

Many times when looking at old photos, it's easy to see family resemblances, to recognize the familiar facial expressions, the lilting smile, the lift of an eyebrow, the eagle-sharp glance, and know today that self-same characteristic survives, passed on through genes, in those who walk the same streets, live in the same village and, in some instances, in the same house, as did the person whose picture appears in the photograph. That's what is to be found in the new book.

Although the book is a pictorial view of Osterville village and its people as it was a hundred years ago and is as complete as current resources permit, it shouldn't be considered a complete history. None of the illustrations pre-date 1860 or post-date 1930, and no attempt has been made to establish relationships between those whose pictures appear and their descendants. The establishment of such connections has been left to those who may wish to trace their own family trees; for them, however, the book may provide an invaluable stimulant to their research and study.

Compiled by the Messrs. Paul Chesbro and Chester A. ("Bucky") Crosby, III, "Osterville - A Walk Through The Past" will be published during the summer of 1979 by William S. Sullwold Publishing, Inc., of Taunton, Mass. It will be a hard cover volume approximately the size of your telephone directory; its prepublication price is \$25.

Those wishing to reserve copies must fill out a pre-publication order form and submit it, along with a check payable to Cotocheset Enterprises, in the amount of \$26.25 (\$25 for the book plus \$1.25 tax).

If the book must be mailed to the subscriber, the total check should be for \$28 per copy.

Mail your orders to Cape Cod Bank & Trust, Box O, Osterville, Mass. 02655, c/o Mrs. Harmon. Order forms will be printed in the Village Advertiser and will be available at various shops in the village. The Village Advertiser will keep us posted regarding the release date of the book.

Your name, as a person participating in the pre-publication order, will be printed in the book. All pre-publication orders must be received on or before April 1st, 1979.

Should the edition be undersubscribed, remainder copies will be available to the general public at a higher price after all pre-publication orders have been filled. No second edition is planned.

Both Messrs. Chesbro and Crosby are descended from families whose names are well-known on Cape Cod and have been for generations. Mr. Chesbro's mother, Grace Parker (Crocker) Chesbro, is the daughter of the late Rose (Whiteley) and Willis G. Crocker. The Crocker family dates back to the earliest days of the settlement of Cape Cod.

The Crosby name is familiar, not only the length and breadth of the Cape, but all up and down the eastern seaboard, for Crosbys and boat-building are almost synonymous. The first Crosby to live in Osterville was Jesse whose father,

Ebenezer, was born in Brewster in 1706. Ebenezer's father, the Rev. Thomas Crosby, came to New England with his father, Simon, in the ship SUSAN and ELLEN, in 1635.

Mr. Chesbro has been an avid historian since childhood; his enthusiasm was reinforced, however, when in 1959 while touring the Grand Canyon, he and the only other New Englander in the group, a Mrs. Palmer from Bristol, Rhode Island, discovered a family relationship existed between them. The casual meeting triggered a twenty-year avocation. Upon returning home, Mr. Chesbro set himself to establish the family connection. Once lit, the spark of genealogical curiosity flared to life and has burned brightly and steadily ever since.

Research of family histories, his own and that of others in Osterville, has resulted in a large collection of old photographs of both people and places connected with Paul Chesbro's home town of Osterville, Massachusetts. Not only have many village people permitted copies to be made of their family pictures, but entire collections of old photographs have been given Mr. Chesbro. As an active member of the Osterville Historical Society, he has devoted uncounted hours to identifying the subjects of his collection and has donated the bulk of it to the Society so that future generations may learn of their antecedents.

The search and the research continues. Paul Chesbro's inexhaustible energy and love of collecting leads in ever widening circles, as does his desire to share his enthusiasm with other people.

Mr. Crosby is, at present, a student at Bryan College in Dayton, Tennessee. He and Mr. Chesbro established their mutual interest in Osterville history several years ago, and the book, "Osterville - A Walk Through The Past", is a result of their collaboration.

Anyone desiring copies is urged to complete a pre-publication order form as soon as possible. It is anticipated the one-time edition will be over-subscribed prior to publication date.