

# VILLAGE VIEW

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As has been brought forcefully and painfully to the attention of most of us in recent weeks, we're not only Cape Codders but citizens of the Commonwealth as well, and are subject, as such, to taxation for the support of the Old Bay State. We live here by choice, however, and no one denies us the right to haul our hooks and sail away to ports beyond her borders; so, if we stay, we do so of our own free will.

As citizens of this state, what do we know about her? Her name? It comes to us from an Indian tribe that roamed the Great Blue Hills that rise south of Boston. (The first time I saw them, I was greatly disappointed. They looked as green as any other forested hills; I couldn't understand why Father was amused with I said they didn't look blue to me. I'd expected to see either blue leaves on the trees or bare hillsides as brightly blue as Vineyard Sound on a clear summer's day.)

The state motto, adopted during the restless days preceding the initial battles of the American Revolution, is a Latin phrase meaning "By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty."

Since the motto's adoption in 1775, Massachusetts has garnered to herself a number of emblems to call her own. The Morgan horse is our Horse Emblem; the cheerful chickadee, our state bird; the cod, naturally enough, the state fish. The mayflower (*Epigaea repens*), which is probably in bloom this minute, is our state flower; the American elm, fast disappearing now from ravages of Dutch Elm disease, the state tree; cranberry juice (pucker up) is our state beverage, and we even have a state insect, the ladybug!

At the beginning of the War of Independence 300,000 people lived within Massachusetts Bay Colony; a hundred years later nearly two million called it home. By the time we celebrated our Bicentennial five years ago, just short of 6,000,000 souls were occupying our 7,840 square miles, resulting in an average density of almost 1,000 people for every square mile of land.

Massachusetts is famous for its firsts: first Thanksgiving, first public park (Boston Common), first American public secondary school (Boston Latin), first American university (Harvard), first printing press in America (1638), first American post office (Boston, 1639), first American ironworks (Saugus, 1650), first American public library (Boston, 1653).

The list goes on to include the first regularly issued newspaper in America, our country's first lighthouse, the first battle of the Revolution, and the first U.S. Naval ship commissioned. The country's first railroad was built in Quincy, Mass., and Elias Howe invented and presented in Boston the first sewing machine. There, too, was printed the first American Christmas card, and demonstrated the first telephone as well as the first transformer. Even the first subway system and the first successful gasoline-powered automobile, the Duryea, are claimed by our Commonwealth.

More recently, Dr. Robert Goddard launched the first successful liquid fuel rocket (in Auburn, Mass.); the first computer (non-electric) was developed at M.I.T. by Dr. Vannevar Bush, and the first automatic digital computer (electric) was developed at Harvard by Howard Aiken.

Authors such as Horatio Alger, Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Amy Lowell and James Russell Lowell all came from Massachusetts. And so did John Greenleaf Whittier, Edgar Allan Poe and Henry David Thoreau. So also did Edward Bellamy, Robert Benchley, E.E. Cummings, Erle Stanley Gardner, Jack Kerouac, and Anne Sexton.

Other native sons and daughters who have achieved international recognition include Leonard Bernstein, Ray Bolger, Better Davis, Arthur Fiedler, Georgia Gibbs, Robert Goulet, Tammy Grimes, Jack Lemmon, and Lee Remick.

All this trivia could be expanded to booklength, given

adequate research, time and space. Three-hundred-sixty years of history guarantee no dearth of material exists for compiling statistics, biographical data, and tremendous amounts of information, important and unimportant, that might or might not be worth adding to a citizen's store of knowledge. And, as evidenced by the quantity of printed material that daily passes through the portals of the average Massachusetts home, quantities more of the same are added to the potential store with every passing week.

Yet do we ever stop to ask ourselves why we live in Massachusetts and try to "make it" here? For some, there are no choices. The very young must live with their parents. The very old in many instances have neither the resources nor the energy, even given the desire, to change their residences. Between these two extremes lies everyone else — at least 4,000,000 of us — who apparently stay here by choice.

Yankeeland does have its appeal, of course; there are the four seasons, each differing widely from the others, yet progressing in a predictable fashion through each year, providing a variety of weathers, a change of scenery without a change of location; there are among us some people who like New England winters! Still, there are five other New England states offering similar changes of season as well as tax relief.

Yankeeland also holds jobs for millions of its residents. Economic opportunity may well be a deciding factor for many Bay Staters. It does take courage, and often a bankroll, to get established in new territory.

Friends and family, an established place in the social fabric of life, may well persuade large numbers of Massachusetts residents not to wander far from home. Personal relationships and the securities of familiar territory — as well as the obligations involved in those same elements — may influence some people to stay put.

Fear of change, of the unknown, of the new and different, can be immobilizing; or simply a lack of information about options is enough to keep a lot of people from making changes. In spite of the old "grass is greener" urge that probably accounted for much of this country's growth and expansion beyond our ever-extending western frontiers, there were always those who remained behind, "better safe than sorry."

And so, for all that's wrong with Massachusetts, millions of us stay. We stay in spite of taxes we wouldn't have to pay if we lived in New Hampshire; in spite of weather like that of this past January; in spite of political corruption that's become almost synonymous with "Boston" and that, it often seems, is now filtering down to local levels; and in spite of the area's well-deserved reputation for being one of the most expensive places to live in the entire nation.

It's truly astonishing there isn't a mass exodus. That there is not may be evidence that the spirit of adventure is fading in at least some Americans. Not all, though; not all.

Population shifts from Northeast and North Central states to Southern and Western ones, revealed by the 1980 census, have been great enough to affect Congressional seats to such an extent that in 1982, for the first time in our nation's history, the Sunbelt will rule Congress.

Not everyone who's gone south will find greener grass in those sunnier climes, and there'll be those who left who'll return, those who'll yearn for the hills of home, and those who'll regret ever having made the move. And then there'll be those who'll praise the day they upped anchor and set sail for warmer and gentler climes.