



# Brookline Historical Society

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FALL 1987  
NEWSLETTER

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Volume 1, Number 4

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Fall meeting, Sunday, Nov. 1, 2 to 3:30 o'clock,  
featuring **"Professional Management of Historical Societies"**,  
a talk by Robert Hanson and Electa Tritsch of the Dedham H.S.,  
and **"Old Brookline Postcards"**, a slide presentation by Joel Shield,  
at All Saints Parish, 1773 Beacon St., Brookline.  
(Mark your calendars, please. This is the only notice.)

## THE NEW LOOK

This is our first newsletter typeset on a personal computer (pages 1 and 4 only). Let's hope the legibility doesn't suffer and that your president masters the versatility of his "user-friendly" machine, which at this moment is acting very UNfriendly.

You will notice the announcement of the fall meeting above. We're lucky to have a neighboring historical society in Dedham that has confronted some of the same challenges as we have -- the need for professional management to protect the legacy of the society and build on it for the future. The Boston Globe cited the Dedham Society in an article on the growing trend in this direction. Electa Tritsch and Robert Hanson, who helped the Dedham Society through its transition, have accepted my invitation to be our guests and share the benefits of their experience.

Joel Shield is another person who turned up in the newspapers recently. He and his enormous collection of postcards of early Brookline were featured in an article in the

Brookline Tab. Joel has prepared a slide show of the cream of his collection, and that will be shown as the second portion of the fall meeting.

## WHAT'S AHEAD

After nearly two years at this post, I've finally managed to get a bit of a headstart on planning the meetings. Already booked for our winter meeting is a presentation on the history of golf at the Country Club. I suggested this topic because the coming of the US Open to Brookline next year is a reminder of the rich golfing tradition hereabouts. Christopher Smith has offered to prepare a paper for the meeting, and is also helping to make the arrangements to have the club act as our host for the meeting, which is set for Sunday, Feb. 28. More details in the next newsletter.

On pages 2 and 3 is a reprint of the paper presented by Euterpe Dukakis at the spring meeting, giving the early history of her family in Brookline. (continued on p. 4)

#### OUR BROOKLINE FAMILY

When your president invited me to speak before you, I was hesitant, since I am not accustomed to address an audience, particularly such a knowledgeable one. I do appear before audiences but mostly Senior Citizens' gatherings and then only to bring to them the greetings of the Governor. My son is the speaker of the family. However, after thinking it over, I did accept. After all, I have been living the biggest part of my life in Brookline and with great satisfaction. Besides, history and the study of it has been one of my favorite subjects all my life.

Just in case you don't know about our beginnings (they have been publicized enough in the last few months) here they are. I was born in Larisa, Greece of parents born and raised in villages among the mountains of Epirus, a province in northwestern Greece. I was the next to the youngest of six children. Ours is the story of most immigrant families. My older brother, Nicholas, was the pioneer. Seeing no future for him at home, he wrote a cousin of my father's who was already in the U.S. The cousin sent him the money, and Nicholas left Larisa for America. He was eighteen years old, and the year was 1907. Eventually he settled in Brockton. After two years he sent money for my younger brother, Adam, and in 1913 the two decided it would be best if the whole family came since they had no intention of returning to Greece. So father, mother, and four sisters arrived in New York on an immigrant ship. My brothers had decided that we should all settle in Haverhill. They had a flat for us all furnished and ready. I remember so well the first meal we had together. Adam had prepared it -- lamb chops, french-fried potatoes and a salad. That meal was in a way prophetic of my future in the U.S. For me and us, it has indeed been the "Promised Land."

Having had the beginnings of reading, writing and arithmetic in Greece, for I was then nine years old, all I needed was the spoken language. Six months after arriving, my

tongue seemed to have loosened, and suddenly I was speaking English as if I had always spoken it. The same thing happened to my youngest sister. She was six. From then on I quickly went on through the grades, and was ready for high school. I was very fortunate in having a principal at the elementary school and teachers who were interested in me and encouraged me. Mr. Gray introduced me to the reading of books for pleasure, and from then on I was off and running. Louisa May Alcott, Walter Scott, Hawthorne and others filled my leisure hours and my family was pleased too. Bates College followed after high school. I graduated in 1925. Four years of teaching followed, two in a small New Hampshire town, and two in Amesbury, in the junior high school. Then marriage and the birth of two sons, Stelian and Michael -- Stelian in 1930, and Michael in 1933.

My husband, Pano, was an immigrant too. He left his home when he was fifteen and a half. He was born in Asia Minor, in the town of Edremit as it is called now, in Turkey, located between Troy and Izmir. His parents emigrated from the Island of Lesbos, which was inhabited mostly by Greeks, but under the Turkish rule. Panos came to stay with his oldest brother, Arthur, who like my brother had already come to these shores. Panos came with the idea that he was to continue his schooling and study toward a professional career. When he arrived, he soon realized from what his brother said that if he continued with his plans he would have to do it on his own. Opening a restaurant was not what he wanted.

So he worked behind a lunch counter during the day, attended evening school at the Lawrence YMCA and saved his money. When he had enough he enrolled at the American International College in Springfield. In those years it made a specialty of teaching English to the foreign born. He too, like me, found teachers and professors who encouraged and advised him and became his life-long friends. On graduation, he

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enrolled at Boston University for the premedical course, but he missed the campus life which he so enjoyed at A.I.C. He transferred the following year to Bates College in Maine, and after a year's study there was accepted at Harvard Medical School. With five years of internships and residencies he was ready to open an office. This he did on Huntington Avenue, in general surgery and obstetrics. He was very busy -- afternoon hours, evenings, Sundays, holidays -- loving every moment of it.

The apartment across the corridor from his office was vacant, so we took it and lived there for four years. Our Stelian was born in 1930. It was a very good arrangement for us beginners, for I was able to help my husband in so many ways.

However, when Michael was to arrive in November of 1933, we had to move to larger quarters. Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Dunphy, our friends, were living in a very nice apartment in a two-family house on Boylston Street, Brookline. So when they told us that they had bought a house and were moving, we decided to make the move. So we did in September. The flat was spacious and just right for us and we were able to invite Mother Dukakis to live with us. For the last four years she had been living in a suitcase, spending time with each of her three sons, all married and with children. Ours became her home. She, too, liked Brookline.

The boys grew fast, and Stelian was ready for kindergarten. A few of us mothers in the neighborhood got together and requested Mr. Caverley and the School Committee to organize a kindergarten in a corner of the high school which was not being utilized. It would be so much nearer for us. The request was granted and Miss Kilbourne was installed as teacher. It was a very successful idea. Michael and many other children attended. It was in operation for many years. Miss Kilbourne is retired now and lives in Rockport. Michael and Kitty called on her last summer to the delight of all three.

Our neighborhood had enough children for their playing. Edwina Burns, the niece of John Moran, our wonderful landlord, lived next door. Two houses down lived the Nyhans and the Hughes family with Jack just Stelian's age and Dotty, Michael's.

According to the census of 1930, there were 115 Greeks of foreign birth and 59 native born. There are many more now but so many are temporary residents being students. We never had a community as such; we belonged to the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of New England off Huntington Avenue near the Museum and the Wentworth Institute.

What has given a tremendous boost to the importance of Brookline, Massachusetts, for the Greek population of the US and Canada is the founding of Hellenic College - Holy Cross Theological Seminary at the Weld Estate on Goddard Avenue. Father Katre will tell us about this.

When we moved to Boylston Street it seemed like and was a fairly safe place for our children. Every house had a yard, the traffic was not heavy, not what it is today. A trolley to Worcester was in the middle. However, there were plans for a change. The tracks were removed, the street widened, buses were the public transportation and large trucks, as they appeared to us, but certainly not what they are today, were very noisy. It was no longer a pleasure to sit on our screen porch and enjoy summer evenings.

In 1940 we found a house, a new house, finished six months before, and wonder of wonders, not sold yet (it was the Depression), large enough for me to take care of, enough land and trees for a little privacy, a back lawn for the boys' play, a fine school nearby, and not too far to my husband's work.

The boys were ready for the Baker School. They made friends, although Stelian missed his friend Jack Hughes, but this was a boys' neighborhood and they were happy.

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In three or four years they were ready for a basket on the garage wall, and every spring bicycles were sprawled all over the lawn, to our Dad's concern over the lawn's welfare. But he tried to be understanding. I miss those joyous voices today.

Our boys went on from the Baker School to our high school. They did well, and then Stelian went to Bates, and Michael to Swarthmore. Life has been a very busy one for us all, and like life for all of us, it came with its joys and its sorrows.

When we were contemplating the purchase of a house, I wanted us to go to Hingham or to Wellesley where the boys would grow up in a small town. My husband wanted definitely a two car garage, a shower in his bathroom (that we did not have in the apartment) and most emphatically just 15 minutes drive from his office. Still I thought we would do better in a small town where the boys would lay roots.

How poorly I foresaw the future. Our roots are strong right here. How often I have blessed my husband and been grateful to him for insisting on the 15 minute limit.

Brookline is and has been the best town in the world for the Dukakis family.

-- Euterpe Dukakis

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We haven't made any visits to historic houses in the last two years, but I hope to have news of some interesting ones in the months ahead.

#### OUR LEADERSHIP RANKS...

...Have been greatly diminished in recent months. Bea Carlson, who moved to Needham, has resigned from the Board of Trustees. She gave unfailing service and will be missed.

Also, David England will not be able to continue as vice president because of an unexpected burden of new responsibilities in his business and private life. He has agreed to stay on as a trustee, and I hope to have announcements of additional new appointments at the next meeting.