

CAPT. BURKE

81 YEARS OLD

Oldest World War Veteran in the State At York Beach For Summer

Capt. James Burke, oldest World War veteran in this state, and one of the best known men along the Maine and New Hampshire seacoasts, and a former resident of this city, is again occupying his summer home at York Nubble. His winter home is in Wolfeboro, but as he is a lover of the sea, each summer he derives much pleasure by returning again to York Beach. He is in fairly good health for his years and attained his 81st birthday anniversary on Aug. 1.

Each year the birthday event is pleasantly celebrated in their home, but this summer the usual observance was not carried out by Mrs. Burke, as both she and Captain Burke a short time before had fallen. Captain Burke breaking a small bone in his hand, and late Mrs. Burke injured her arch. Now both are much improved.

In honor of Captain Burke a luncheon birthday party was given on his anniversary at the cottage of Rev. and Mrs. Crawford O. Smith at York Nubble, at which a number of his close friends from the summer colony were present. He was well remembered with floral tributes, gifts and cards. A handsome birthday-cake, made and decorated by Mrs. Burke, occupied the center of the table.

Dr. Joseph Conwell of Vineland, N. J., 79 years of age, was chairman of the brief program which followed the luncheon. Congratulatory speeches were made by Dr. David Carlough of Patterson, N. J., P. E. Reid, principal of the high school in Whitings-Mass., Isaac Savage of Concord, who is in his 93rd year and the only living member now of the G. A. R. there, and Rev. Crawford O. Smith, pastor of the largest Universalist Church in Brookline, Mass. The various speakers expressed appreciation of the friendship of the genial and kindly Captain Burke and wished him many more years among them.

Captain Burke was born in Portsmouth, Aug. 1, 1849, the son of David and Hannah Burke. His father came to this country from England and was a mechanic on the U. S. S. Kearsarge, which sank the Alabama during the Civil War. His mother was a descendant of the early family of Ornes, who settled in New Durham. Capt. Burke was educated in the local public schools and attended the high school a year. In early manhood he started out to lead a seafaring life and it was not long before he became master of a sailing vessel. During the years he sailed the ocean as seaman or officer in a vessel he never once happened to meet with any misfortune or accident, although he visited many of the domestic and foreign ports of the world.

Captain Burke began as an apprentice in the lighthouse service in the first lighthouse district in 1867, this covering the Maine and New Hampshire coastlines from Eastport, Me., to Portsmouth. His first station was on Boone Island and from there he was transferred to the lighthouse on Burnt Island at Boothbay Harbor, Me. He was in charge of White Island Light at the Isles of Shoals during the Spanish War. From there he was transferred to the Cape Neddick station at York Beach. Following the outbreak of the World War the Navy Department took over a few of the lighthouses. Cape Neddick was one that was transferred to the Navy Department's jurisdiction and Captain Burke enlisted on April 12, 1917, and was discharged March 1, 1919. After his retirement he conducted a small provision and grocery store at York Beach during the summer season.

He has been a great reader of history and fiction and has had many varied and exciting experiences during his career. His eyesight is so very poor now he can read but little. He is a 32nd degree Mason and a member of St. John's Lodge, No. 1, A. F. & A. M., and Washington Chapter, Royal Arch Masons of this city; also a member of the Methodist Church of Boothbay Harbor, Me., but now residing in Wolfeboro he attends the Christian Church there. He has hosts of friends in this city and vicinity who are always pleased to meet him.

OF ASSOCIATES TO