

Remarks for the visit to the Deacon John Done Home Site.doc
Thursday July 26th

Some of you are here at the home of our common ancestor for the very first time, and others are revisiting. But we are **all** here today in the midst of reminders of our forefathers: the Daniels, Johns, Josephs, Israels, and so many others. We gather here to perpetuate these common bonds.¹

Some history: Deacon John moves to Nauset

Deacon John and his family moved here from Plymouth in 1644. He was joined by Governor Thomas Prence and five other families: Snow, Bangs, Cook, Higgins, and Smalley. At the age of 55 he had left his home and associations of almost 15 years to help start a new community (Nauset later named Eastham). * Tradition says that this was the site of his home. It passed down through his descendants until 1850 when Sylvanus Doane sold the land to Benjamin Higgins. In 1869 John Doane, Esq. of Orleans purchased the rod (15.5 ft) of land that became the Doane Homestead Plot from Benjamin Higgins. In that year there was a gathering and a slab of granite was placed to mark Deacon John Doane's home site. The inscription on the slab reads:

DEA JOHN DOANE BORN 1590 - HERE 1644 - DIED 1685 (1869)

My Grandchildren Clara and Carlos Rogter – 12th generation Doanes, will now read an excerpt from a poem by Heman Doane, written for the dedication of this site in September 1869:

From England's shores our Fathers came
In days of long ago;
But not for wreaths of earthly fame,
Or sordid fortune,--No.

For brighter visions lured them on
To brave the ocean's war,
And seek a resting place upon
New England's savage shore.

A land of liberty they sought,

¹ *Mr. Alfred Alder Doane on the occasion of the Deacon John Doane Memorial Exercises, Wednesday, August 21, 1907.*

Where persecutions cease;
To break the chain by tyrants wrought,
And serve their God in peace.

From seed our Fathers planted here
A mighty tree has grown;
The fruit it bears from year to year
O'er all the land is strewn

I have read that at this time there was still some evidence of a dwelling in the form of a cellar. (In your bus handout there is a picture of the original house of Governor Thomas Prence, who moved here with Deacon John. While we don't know what the Deacon John's house looked like – perhaps this is somewhat similar.) John Doane Esq.'s son, Thomas Doane, whose heirs bequeathed the plot to the Doane Family Association in 1937, inherited this plot. At some point after acquiring the land, the DFA had a cement border placed around the granite slab, in 1951 three trees were planted around the cement border to honor particular pioneering women of the DFA. Later two additional trees were planted in the front of the cement border. In 1994 the DFA placed a granite stone with a bronze tablet commemorating the 350th anniversary of the English settlement at Nauset. Since then it has been somewhat neglected and become very overgrown with pines, poison ivy and bittersweet. So following our family's long tradition of caring for this special site, last year James Thomas Doane met with representatives of the NPS to discuss what might be done to restore the area to something closer to it's original condition. Since 1961 our rod of land has been completely surrounded by the Cape Cod National Seashore, hence we must coordinate. This spring a solution presented itself when a Boy Scout named Grant Putnam needed an Eagle Scout project. He organized the work with the help of the NP Fire Crew, the boy scouts and some Doanes- James, Elizabeth, Judith, Ralph and yours truly. For several days work crews cut brush and trees, hauled the debris, and built a very large fire to dispose of it. We Doanes all got poison ivy. But the land looks much more like it did in the old days. The picture on your bus handout shows what it looked like in about 1930 when my grandfather Charles Northam Doane visited and the land was still clear. While we didn't achieve that level of clearing we were still very gratified to once again be able to see the Nauset Marsh and Coast Guard Beach.