



PRESENTS

The 2020 South Shore History Symposium
Myth, Meaning & Memory: Commemoration on the South Shore

Date: Saturday, March 28, 2020

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (Registration opens at 9:00 a.m.)

Location: Spire Center for the Performing Arts, 25 ½ Court Street, Plymouth, MA

Registration Fee: \$20/person, includes refreshments and five presentations

Make checks payable to: Back Roads of the South Shore (or BRSS)

Mail checks to: Plymouth Antiquarian Society, P.O. Box 3773, Plymouth, MA 02361

Contact & Tickets: Anne Mason, Plymouth Antiquarian Society

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Website: <https://brss.org/current-events/>

The year 2020 marks major milestones in American and local history, including the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment and the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the *Mayflower*. The way we choose to interpret and commemorate such significant historical events—as well as the people impacted by them—can provide valuable insights into contemporary society. The Back Roads of the South Shore is pleased to present the 2020 South Shore History Symposium, *Myth, Meaning & Memory: Commemoration on the South Shore*. This annual conference offers an exciting opportunity for regional historians to present research and share behind-the-scenes projects happening at local museums and historic sites.

This year's presentations will explore the legacy of the *Mayflower Compact*, the indigenous perspective of the settlement of Plymouth, the evolution of succotash as a commemorative dish, and the fight to secure women's right to vote. **Keynote speaker** Stephen Kenney, Director of the Commonwealth Museum, will examine the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian immigrants arrested in the spring of 1920 for murder in a South Braintree payroll robbery. The case, which has many South Shore connections, gained international attention and continues to fascinate historians 100 years later.

Back Roads of the South Shore is a consortium of 20 non-profit organizations operating over 25 historic sites in 12 towns along the South Shore of Massachusetts, from Weymouth to Plymouth. The group is dedicated to celebrating the history and spirit of the region.

Symposium Schedule

- 9:00 AM **Registration & Refreshments**
- 9:30 AM **Welcoming Remarks**
Anne Mason, Back Roads of the South Shore Co-Chair
- 9:45 AM ***Mayflower Compact: Short-Term Expedient or Lasting Precedent?***
David A. Furlow, Editor of the *Pilgrim Isaac Allerton Society Journal*
Was the Compact merely an expedient solution to a temporary crisis? Or did it have lasting consequences for Plymouth, New England, and America? This talk explores the Compact's roots in English law, its flowering in Plymouth Colony, and the seeds of democracy, constitutionalism, and the rule of law.
- 10:15 AM **The Critical Backstory to *Mayflower***
Paula Peters, Member of Plymouth 400 Wampanoag Advisory Committee
This year's commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower voyage seeks to illuminate the perspective of the indigenous people who were here in 1620 and who still remain. Two groundbreaking exhibits in the US and the UK, "Our"Story: 400 Years of Wampanoag History and Wampum: Stories from the Shells of Native America, are challenging earlier narratives of colonialism.
- 10:45 AM **Food of the Fathers: The Story of Succotash**
Paula Marcoux, Food History Writer
How did a 17th-century Wampanoag staple food come to be a durable symbol of cultural identity for the descendants of Plymouth's English "forefathers"? A commemorative dish of great longevity, succotash has provided the culinary centerpiece for Forefathers' Day celebrations over the entire documented history of the holiday—from 1769 to the present day. An investigation of this foodways tradition over the course of its evolution reveals much about Plymouthans' changing needs to both memorialize the experience of their ancestors and to come to grips with polarizing contemporary events.
- 11:15 AM **Coffee Break**
- 11:30 AM **Summer Suffragists: Woman Suffrage Activists in Scituate, Mass.**
Lyle Nyberg, Independent Historian and Scituate Historical Society Member
Scituate was the summer home of a surprising number of nationally known leaders of the women's suffrage movement. This talk tells their little-known stories as suffragists and summer residents of Scituate.
- 12:00 PM **KEYNOTE PRESENTATION**
One Hundred Years Later: Re-examining the Case of Sacco and Vanzetti
Stephen Kenney, Director of the Commonwealth Museum

In the spring of 1920 two Italian immigrants were arrested for murder in a South Braintree payroll robbery. Their anarchist political beliefs became central issues in the case. The trial of Sacco and Vanzetti gained international attention in the 1920s and continues to fascinate legal historians and armchair detectives today. Highlighting trial documents and artifacts held at the Massachusetts Archives, this lecture examines the case, its many South Shore connections, and the continuing question of fairness in the trial.

12:50 PM **Conclusion**

Speakers

David A. Furlow, J.D., has won important First Amendment, voting rights, and commercial cases in trial and appellate courts, the Texas Supreme Court, the Fifth Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court. He founded the *Texas Supreme Court Historical Society Journal* and has served as its Executive Editor since 2011. He is Editor of the *Pilgrim Isaac Allerton Journal* and a Trustee of the Pilgrim Society.

Stephen Kenney has been Director of Massachusetts's state history museum, the Commonwealth Museum, since 2002. He holds a Ph.D. from Boston University and has taught and held administrative positions at several colleges, including serving as Interim President of Quincy College. The exhibits he's curated at the Commonwealth Museum include *A Tale of Two Colonies: "Plimoth" and Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century* and the *Suffragist of the Month* centennial commemoration with Suffrage100MA.

Paula Marcoux is a Plymouth-based food history writer who has spent considerable time exploring local archives in search of ancient food scraps. As author of *Cooking with Fire* and food editor of *edible South Shore & South Coast*, she is committed to bringing local food history to cooks, readers, and eaters.

Lyle Nyberg is an independent historian who documents historic houses, and writes and gives public talks about Scituate history. He is currently working on a book about the summer suffragists of Scituate. A retired attorney, he graduated from Dartmouth College and Boston University School of Law. He is a member of the Scituate Historical Society, a volunteer for the Scituate Historical Commission, and a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Paula Peters is an independent indigenous scholar and member of the Wampanoag Advisory Committee for Plymouth 400. She is the owner of SmokeSignals, a creative agency based in Mashpee, Mass.

For more information about the South Shore History Symposium or to register, please contact Anne Mason of the Plymouth Antiquarian Society at 508-746-0012 or director@plymouthantiquarian.org. If space permits, tickets may also be purchased at the door with cash or check.