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How little we 'natives' know

By DAVID SOUZA

In recent months I have devoted much of my time to researching Gloucester's past. I have read, skimmed and awed my way through a time of people and events that one otherwise would never have imagined, and soon came to realize just how little the majority of Gloucester "natives," including me, actually know about our city. In my opinion, its history and heritage is surpassed by none.

Once you begin to read a book by one of Gloucester's many historians it becomes very hard to put the book down. Authors such as Garland, Babson and Proctor generate such interest that I found myself getting up in the middle of the night to read those last few pages!

How many of you know that "Stage Fort Park" had the name of "Fort Conant" and how many people knew about the Fort at Eastern Point?

"The History of Eastern Point" by Joseph Garland is an amazing story all its own! The story of Captain Patillo is one that would stir anyone's feeling of pride in his own heritage. The account of Howard Blackburn, Gloucester's greatest hero, is one that makes us wonder what has happened to the respect and

My view



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concern for our fellow man in today's world.

As I look about town I see the absence of a lot of Gloucester's past and what does remain is slowly dwindling away. This city's heritage is a natural resource not only for its historical value but for revenue as well. With more rigid regulations on the preservation of what we have and more emphasis on restoration, we may find that caring more about the past could very

well prove profitable for the future (i.e. tourism).

I think everybody born in Gloucester has blood flowing through their veins that is blended with the salt air and that blending makes each of us long for the sea and its life.

One source of preservation sometimes goes uncredited: The Gloucester Daily Times articles. The facts and accounts preserved on microfilm, at the Sawyer Free Library, are a virtual storehouse of knowledge and a link to our past.

Praise should be given to people such as Ron Gilson of Union Hill Coffee Shop and Joe Orlando of Orlando and White, and the owners of the Blackburn Tavern. These people took the time to restore Gloucester's Heritage rather than hide or change her natural beauty.

Last, but by no means least, a personal "thank you" is due Emery Santa Paul, one of Gloucester's dying breed of truly great master shipwrights. He opened my eyes and mind to an appreciation of Gloucester's past.

David H. Souza