



City of New Bedford
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City of New Bedford
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Date: May 14, 2014
For Immediate Release

P R E S S R E L E A S E

City to Celebrate First Annual Ricketson's Day at Brooklawn Park

Organized by the Department of Parks Recreation & Beaches (PRB), Brooklawn Park History Society and the Wilks Public Library Branch in partnership with local historians, artists and naturalists

New Bedford, Massachusetts— On Saturday, May 17, 2014, from 10 A.M. until 3 P.M. the public is invited to join the Department of Parks Recreation & Beaches (PRB), the Brooklawn Park History Society and the Wilks Public Library Branch to celebrate and commemorate Daniel Ricketson, a native New Bedford naturalist and former owner of Brooklawn Park. Ricketson wrote the first history of New Bedford, and held gatherings of notable contemporaries including Thoreau and Emerson at the “Shanty”. The Shanty was a wooden shack located a short distance from Ricketson’s house at Brooklawn and served as a retreat for quiet reflection.

Activities planned during Ricketson Day at Brooklawn Park will include performances and interactive opportunities. Guided nature walks throughout the day will include the opening of a new trail system at the park. Participants will learn to identify native plants and learn how native ecosystems support the bird population including the migrating birds traveling through our area now. Families may also participate in Nature Scavenger Hunts, and "Rural Calendar" counts by recording bird counts and bloom times—carrying on a Ricketson tradition.

The Marion Institute is sponsoring a talk on proper pruning of fruit trees at the site of the newly planted orchard. The public is invited to visit the Wilks Public Library to browse their collection of Ricketson related material and artifacts.

Live acoustic musicians will lead the crowd in a Sing-along Picnic featuring popular tunes in the mid-nineteenth century and particular favorites of Ricketson, who loved sing alongs. "Shanty Play," an original play by Carl Simmons, will be performed at the site of the original Shanty, briefly depicting Ricketson and his love of nature. The play features large masks worn by performers to represent Ricketson, Thoreau and other notable visitors to the Ricketson Shanty.

Guest speakers will give visitor's more information on Brooklawn Park and Ricketson with 'Ricketson- A New Bedford Naturalist' and 'A Brief History of Brooklawn Park'. The event will end with the Henry David Thoreau Dance Party. The Dance party is inspired by an actual event that occurred on site. Thoreau is said to have created a dance based on local Wampanoag dances and inspired by nature. We will invite participants to dance their own dance of nature.

The First Annual Ricketson's Day is part of a nationwide grassroots movement to discover America's parks through play with hundreds of thousands of children nationwide participating. We will commemorate National Park Trust's (NPT) fourth annual National Kids to Parks Day at this Saturday, May 17 event.

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