

Parsons Park – The People Speak...Again

The bicentennial had been the greatest celebration this town ever had – three days of pure joy and appreciation and it was due in part to the generosity of Esther Parsons who made her field available for most of the events. But afterwards the reality set in – Esther wanted to move back to her native Illinois and her property was put up for sale – a lovely old pre-revolutionary house, a huge eight acre field and 40 acres of great forest right down to the salt marsh and all this in the center of town. Everyone knew developers would snap it up and large house lots would soon be the reality. But Esther's generosity did not stop with the Bicentennial. A group of concerned citizens that ultimately numbered 151 families approached Esther and asked her if she could wait to see if they, after forming the Parsons Park Corporation, could raise the \$50,000 down payment. Esther waited and the goal was accomplished and then came the struggle to sell the property to the town for public use. The town narrowly voted down the whole purchase, but in the next two years they bought the field and forest; the house was sold privately and years later the property was made permanently secure. This has to be one of the most original and successful grassroots community conservation efforts on record and deserves to be celebrated as much as the spirit of the bicentennial that inspired it. Patriotism comes in many forms; if the actions of these families to defend the rights of the group, to risk their investment for the good of the whole town isn't patriotic then we don't know what is!