



A PROGRAM ON POST CARDS

As promised, the board has arranged to present to the membership and the public a program showing old post card pictures of the town. You may remember that we have done this once before, some years back, and it was one of our most popular and entertaining programs. Many of our members, including Helen Angell, Jean Dunham, Art Ross, and Bob McMurtry have extensive collections of post cards showing how Dennis looked nearly 100 years ago. Also, with the help of some of these collectors, especially Helen and Art, D.H.S. has a respectable collection which is constantly growing, thanks to gifts by interested members, and purchases made with the advise and help of members of the Cape Cod Post Card Club. Please accept our invitation to be present when the Society holds its next program meeting at West Dennis Community Building, School Street, West Dennis, on Sunday, April 22 at 3 P.M. The post cards will be shown on a screen, using an opaque projector loaned to us by the Mattacheese Middle School, and we have especially invited people who have lived in the town for many years to comment and reminisce about the pictures shown. If you live in Dennis now, or ever have lived here, you will enjoy this program! Refreshments will be served, and as usual with our regular meetings, there is no charge for members or guests.

WE ARE PLANNING A LADY SLIPPER WALK.....

The problem is--WHEN? We hope it will be on the first Saturday in June, as usual, which this year is June 2nd, and Dr. Norton Nickerson has already been contacted and is more than willing to conduct two tours, as in the past years, one at 9 A.M. and one at 10:30 A.M. But we are anxiously watching the progress of spring, as the first weeks have sent conflicting signals. Can you save that date, and anticipate that the May newsletter may contain a change, due to the lateness of the season? Also, bear in mind that we have these worries almost every year, and the Lady Slippers have always come through on schedule. Because of the popularity of this beautiful walk, we MUST ask that you make a reservation, and if at all possible, honor it. Next month we will give you the name of the person at Town Hall who will take your reservation. Remember, we limit the number of walkers on each tour so that everyone who goes has an opportunity to hear what Dr. Nickerson has to say, and a chance to have a good look at what is recognized as one of the state's most spectacular displays of this vanishing wild flower. As always, those taking the walk will meet at the Town Hall parking lot about 10 minutes before their walk begins. Wear comfortable walking shoes, clothes appropriate to the day and bring a camera if you have one. It is a sight of great beauty. More next time.

EAST DENNIS COMMUNITY CHURCH ANNIVERSARY--PART 3

I promised to continue our tribute to the East Dennis Community Church in honor of the 175th anniversary of its founding by telling about some of the ministers that have served this parish. I am hard put to decide which of the many ministers who have served East Dennis to profile, for all had interesting pastorates and all were worthy proponents of their vocations. But in this issue, would like to reverse the usual order of things. Usually, I try to tell you things I have found out which I think you would find interesting. This time I want to ask you to tell me some things that YOU know that I am sure to find interesting. I remember when I was a child a minister of the East Dennis Church who was to me an intriguing figure. He was Dr. Alfred Ray Atwood. I remember some things about Dr. Atwood, and in my research I have found out other things. But as a southsider, I knew Dr. Atwood only through his involvement in youth work, and Old Home Week. I'm sure many of you can remember this man personally and can relate stories of experiences you may have had in which he was involved. Will you take the time to write them down and give them or send them to me? I would like to fill up a file with personal anecdotes about an old school preacher, born in Dennis, known for his flowery style, his use of poetry, his kindly pastoral manner, and his ability to get things done. However small your story is, please send it along.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

In recent months the Board has authorized the purchase of two very interesting Bills of Sale of two early vessels used in this town's fishing and trading industry. One is for the Schooner Nellie, sold by Reuben Hall in 1790, the other is for Schooner Susannah, sold by Benj. Kelley and others in 1800. These documents tell us a great deal about the size and description of the vessels which our mariners were sailing in this period. We have also acquired by purchase the following books:

The Town of Yarmouth, Massachusetts : A History, by Marion Vuillemier
Old Homes and Gathering Places, published by the Historical Society of Old Yarmouth.

See page 2 for another interesting addition to our collection.

CALENDAR

- April 22 3 P.M. West Dennis Community Building. Program meeting,
Old Post Cards of Dennis, featuring members and the D.H.S.
collection. Refreshments.
- May 9 7 P.M. Board Meeting at Dick and Nancy Howes'
- June 2 (We hope!) Lady Slipper Walk. See article, and hope that Spring is on time.
- June 16 & 17 Howes Family Reunion, Ashfield.
- June 24 ANNUAL TOWN OF DENNIS BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON. Lighthouse Inn, West Dennis
Menu and Reservation information next time.

THE GOOD SHIP SOUTHERN CROSS

Another interesting acquisition purchased by the Board is a print of a painting of the Ship Southern Cross, by Fitzhugh Lane. The original painting is in the care of the Peabody Museum in Salem, one of the country's finest repositories of Maritime history. The painting is one of great interest to us, because not one, but two of our native Master Mariners had command of her during her career. She was a medium clipper, launched from the yard of E. and H. O. Briggs in East Boston in 1851, for the firm of Baker and Morrill. This was a firm with strong Cape ties, accustomed to the excellent management that Cape Cod ship masters provided. Capt. Levi Stevens of Truro took her for her first voyage, around the Horn to California, but she failed to live up to her promise on this trip, encountering two separate storms both of which resulted in the loss of all three of her topsail masts. She was luckier under the command of Dennis Captain Thomas Prince Howes. He had recently been in the East India trade for the firm of Howes and Crowell, another of this country's most prestigious merchant establishments founded by Dennis men. He had command of the Ship George Hallett from 1850 to 1855, when he became the master of the Southern Cross. Captain Thomas Prince managed to avoid any serious incidents with this lovely vessel as he continued to circumnavigate the globe, from Boston or New York, around the Horn to San Francisco, then across the Pacific to Singapore, Calcutta, Batavia, England, and home to Boston again. He continued with the vessel until 1859, when he became Captain of the Clipper Ship Alarm, as he had with Southern Cross, but that's another story. The Cape Cod tradition was continued for the Southern Cross. Her new Captian was also a Dennis man--Captian Benjamin Parker Howes. Capt. Ben kept a careful record of his trips, describing the scenes he witnessed, the weather and sea conditions. One of his more interesting accounts describes rounding Cape Horn in gigantic seas, with wind, snow, and hail all making the work of the crew more difficult. But in the skies above they could see the Aurora Australis, a magnificent phenomena which enchanted even the weariest of the hard pressed sailors. Capt. Ben was a careful master, but he was to encounter difficulties which even the best could not avoid. His vessel had been sent to fetch a load of dyewood on the west coast of Mexico to be carried to New York. She had been loaded at Buena Vista in late March, 1863, and had set sail to round the Horn in an easterly direction to return the cargo to its destination. On June 6th she was overtaken and captured by the Confederate privateer Florida. Capt. Howes, his wife, and the crew were transferred to the Florida and watched sadly as the Confederates burned their lovely vessel to the water line. The Howes were put on board the Provincetown whaler V. H. Varnum and transported to Providence, R.I., from whence they made their way back to Cape Cod. The owners later filed a claim for the loss of the Southern Cross and recovered \$55,000.00 for the vessel and \$10,000.00 for the cargo. Capt. Ben also had some exciting, tragic experiences on his subsequent voyages, but that too, is another story. I think that the stories of these two captians is reason enough for the D.H.S. to own a print of this painting, and we hope you all will take the opportunity to see it on display in the new Maritime History room at the Josiah Dennis Manse this summer.

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