



A MEETING WITH JOHN AND LAURA

Members of D.H.S. and friends from the community were all happy to meet Johnny Kelley and his wife, Laura, at our March meeting. Johnny was in good form as he was interviewed by Dick Golden of WQRC, telling anecdotes and sharing his experiences as a long distance runner for 65 or more years. We were especially interested in his comments on how the world of sports has changed in that time. Helen Angell videotaped the evening and the interview will become a valuable part of our oral history library. John and Laura Kelley are now honorary life members of D.H.S. We also presented John with a resolution in his honor, and Mrs Kelley with a bouquet of lovely flowers. If you weren't there, you might meet Johnny running on one of our beaches, or through the paths at Brewster park, where he often trains. You'll recognize him as the only runner who is singing "Young At Heart" as he jogs along.

INTRODUCING THE CAPE VERDEANS

This year our Mass. Arts Council is participating in a nation-wide tribute to "ethnicity". The culture and traditions of the many ethnic groups of America will be celebrated by programs all over the country. Cape Cod was not blessed in it's early history with large scale immigrations, passing it's first 275 years as an area with the purest English heritage anywhere, even England! However, we do have a group of immigrants in more recent years, with a lively, happy culture; that of the Portuguese of the Cape Verde Islands, as well as the Azores, and mainland Portugal. D.H.S. will join in the nation's salute to ethnic groups by presenting a program entitled "Introducing the Cape Verdeans". Rev. Williston Holbert will be our speaker. I have heard Mr. Holbert speak, and I guarantee that our introduction to the Cape Verdean families who settled here in the mid-Cape area in the late 1880's and the early 1900's will be educational and entertaining. Mr. Holbert grew up in the neighboring town of Harwich. He has been active in the affairs of Portuguese communities in Massachusetts, has visited the Cape Verde Islands and has a wealth of good stories. If you have a Cape Verdean friend be sure to invite them. That's on April 28 at 7:30 p.m. at the West Dennis Community Center.

IT'S TOWN MEETING TIME

Aside from the usual business which takes place at the annual town meeting, there is an article on the warrant this year of special interest to those of us who care about the town's past and future. Four years ago, at the request of some residents of Dennis Port, the selectmen appointed a study committee to look into the feasibility of establishing an historic district in that village. After that committee had begun their survey, some citizens of West Dennis petitioned to be included. That hard working study committee has researched thoroughly the history of these two villages, as told by the old buildings there, and have recommended that the South Dennis Historic District be enlarged to include portions of each southside village. The study committee feels that the advantages of historic district protection far outweigh the disadvantages. The southside of Dennis, lacking this protection will continue to suffer economically and physically, instead of enjoying the attractive, orderly growth of Route 6A. Unfortunately, many misunderstand the purpose and benefits of Historic Districts. We need a 2/3rds vote in order for this district to pass. We are appealing to those of you who are in favor of warrant article 14 to be present and vote at town meeting. That meeting is May 3, at 7:00 p.m. at the Nathaniel H. Wixon School. See you there!

THE OLD LOCK-UP

One of the buildings which would come under the protection of the new Historic District is the old Town Lock-up. Now Jim's Pine Shop, on Rt. 28, West Dennis, across from Christine's, it was built as a jail in the present town hall parking lot in 1888. The Yarmouth Register reported that, "The new lock-up at South Dennis presents quite an imposing appearance. The building and furnishings cost the town about \$1500." It doesn't seem to have been used very often, although a Keeper of the Lock-up was appointed each year and paid \$1.50. From time to time a small amount is paid out by the town treasurer for the board of a prisoner, but never is a crime or criminal identified in the town report. In a few years articles begin appearing in the Warrant to either sell the lock-up or convert it to other uses. The Keeper is no longer paid after 1915, and apparently, soon thereafter, the Town Clerk began using the building for an office. Then in 1926, the building was enlarged and designated as the Town Office. It served in that capacity until the present building was completed in 1952. Then it was sold at auction for \$60 to Mrs. Maude Tracy, who moved it to it's present location and used it as her dwelling. Now a business, the Dennis Historical Commission intends to design a suitable identifying plaque, with the owner's permission, to tell it's interesting history.

CALENDAR

- April 26 7:30 P.M. Board will meet with Sarah at the Old Paddock Place
April 28 7:30 P.M. "Introducing the Cape Verdean" Speaker, Rev. Williston Holbert
Folk music of the Cape Verde Islands. West Dennis Community Center
May 28 10:00 A.M. Meet at the Town Hall parking lot for our annual Lady Slipper Walk
June 19 Annual Town of Dennis Birthday Luncheon at the Lighthouse Inn
- May 2 Elections
May 3 Annual Town Meeting. PLEASE BE THERE.

THE WAR OF JENKINS EAR

One of the problems I have encountered in my efforts to write a history of Dennis is the scarcity of information available for the colonial period of 1700 to the Revolution. I studied quite a bit of U.S. history in my school days and I cannot remember learning very much about this period except that there were several "French and Indian Wars". Now, however, I am learning that this period is full of interesting events, which have lead me to a better understanding of the conflict of opinion for and against separation from the mother country. The Colonial Wars were indeed a major factor during this era. The English historian, Thomas Macaulay, has been quoted as having said that in the 75 year period prior to the American Revolution England was at war, preparing for war, or mopping up after a war in nearly every year. Each time England and one of her traditional European enemies went to war on a grand scale, a Colonial War would be fought in America. These frequent wars had a near-disasterous effect on the colonies, most particularly New England, and particularly on the towns on Cape Cod. By 1700, the economy of the Cape towns had become very dependent on maritime pursuits. Cape Codders were involved in a trade with the Carribean islands, which provided a direct and dependable market for our dried fish, and supplied a return cargo of molasses, sugar, lumber, and other things. Some of these were French some Spanish, and some British. Given the fact that the news of a new war was usually six weeks or more in arriving here, it was difficult to know who was the enemy-- France, Spain, or sometimes it seems, England herself. Parliament was constantly changing trading regulations, and forbidding the transportation of certain cargos in colonial "bottoms". As a result, many an independent Cape Cod mariner just stayed away from the east coast ports where news could be learned, and took his chances where and what he wished. This sometimes resulted in the capture and impounding of vessels and crew, but the risk appears to have been worthwhile in many cases. Also, a problem created by these many wars was the need for men to fight them. Most of England's highly trained Regulars were engaged elsewhere, and there were constant calls from England for the colonists to recruit, outfit, and provision militia. Now, with all the men away, who was to protect our very exposed shoreline, who was to man our fishing and trading vessels, and who was to work the farms? One has to wonder how much Parliament understood about the effect on the economy of the colonies by these battles. It seems that every time a new monarch was crowned, a colonial war was staged in honor of the occasion. There was King William's War, Queen Anne's War, and King George's War, all against the French and their Indian allies. And then, there was the War of Jenkins Ear. By all standards it was a minor war, if there is such a thing, fought from 1739-1741, mostly at sea or in the south. But in an interesting way, this war did effect the people of our town, and next time I will tell you how.

MISSING TOWN REPORTS

We are trying to collect a complete set of Dennis Town Reports, so from time to time we will publish the years we are missing. Has anyone a copy of the reports of 1944, 1946, 1947, or 1948 that they would like to donate to our library? Call Nancy Reid at 398-8842 or Phyllis Horton 394-0017.

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660

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