

"DENNIS" PREMIERE GOES WELL

Our first showing of the slide and sound story of Dennis history opened to rave reviews. Some of the comments: "Terrific!" (Paula Bacon), "Sounds great!" (Ben Thacher), "I'm very pleased." (Wilson Scofield), "I'm tired!!" (Nancy Reid). Of course, these people had a vested interest in the production. Others, who came just to see the slides, also voiced their approval. Fact is, folks, it's a "Good Show"! As you know, a grant of \$1,000 from the Mass. Council of Arts and Humanities was received, but you may not know that the excellent equipment which recorded and projected the entire production was purchased with a gift from the Marguerite Ickis estate. Without this fine equipment, all of our hard work and effort would never have resulted in such a polished finished product. We are grateful for this gift of \$2,000, and hope that our effort may in some way be a tribute to the late Marguerite Ickis, reflecting her interest in art, education, and history. I think she would have liked our show. I can't begin to name all who helped to bring it all together, so let's just thank everyone--writers, photographers, artists--everyone who contributed even so much as one slide, or the perfect phrasing for one line of the script. The finished product is the work of many and if you are one who contributed a picture which was not used, or information which was not included, you will be glad to know that your effort was not in vain. Some of the cuts made were painful, but had to be made in the interest of balance, time, and sustaining interest. But original scripts have been preserved and all slides not used are being carefully sorted and labelled. We plan to produce shorter slide shows, focussing on one subject only, and every bit of information already gathered will be utilized. In the meantime, if you missed the premiere showing, "Dennis" will be shown again on Sunday, August 29, at Liberty Hall South Dennis at 4 and 5 p.m. and on Tuesday, August 31, at Carleton Hall following a talk by Admont Clark about the Shiverick Shipyard, which is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m.

CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

Members of the Dennis Historical Society are hereby notified that the annual meeting and election of officers will be held, as per the bylaws, on Monday, September 13, at 7:30 p.m. at the V.I.C. Hall, Depot Street, Dennisport. Dues for the year 1982-1983 are now due, and we would greatly appreciate it if you would either pay your dues at the annual meeting or by mail, enclosing a stamped envelope, which saves billing and postage for the society. If you are not a member, but would like to be, send dues to Elinor Slade, Box 607, So. Dennis, 02660. Dues are \$5 per family, \$3 individual, or if you would like to help the Society to establish a capital fund, \$100 will buy a life membership.

THIS HAS GOT TO BE CALLED A FUNNY BUSINESS

In this land of Cod and Cranberries, who do you suppose convinced the Cape Cod Capitalists that Overall Factories were a good investment? It seems an unlikely industry here, considering our lack of raw materials and energy sources. Yet, I know of at least four overall factories at work in the late 1800's on the Cape--one in Orleans, and three right here in Dennis. Kelley's Overall Factory in Dennisport seems to have been the earliest. The Yarmouth Register of March 27, 1880 says that it was in "flourishing condition" with many orders and sufficient material on hand. This establishment employed 15 people at the "steam factory" and 75 families outside. The outside employees were mostly women who earned their sewing machines upon completion of 200 pairs of overalls. In South Dennis, the first overall factory was built by Eleanor Baxter Young, about 1895 on the north side of Cove Road. Her success encouraged Edmond O'Brien, better known in later years as "Pop," to build a second factory just south of Heir's Landing Road in South Dennis. Flannel shirts, jackets, and pants were also manufactured. Our only physical reminder of these factories is a spool of khaki thread from the Young factory, perhaps indicating that some of the orders were for military uniforms. That the industry was important to the town's economy is shown by a vote at town meeting of 1897 to remit Mrs. Young's taxes and again in 1901 to offer the same encouragement to Mr. O'Brien. I don't know the fate of the Kelley factory, although I have seen suggestions that it was moved to West Dennis and became a store. Mr. O'Brien's building burned in 1904 and Mrs. Young's was torn down in 1910. Thus ended our brief excursion into the manufacture of clothing. The sewing machines earned by local ladies still exist in many attics and as far as I know, so does the local record for production, held by Mrs. Elsie Chase of Dennisport. On one Monday in May, 1880, she stitched 48 pairs of overalls--for the week, 217 pairs, for an average of 36 1/6 pairs daily. "Someone beat this, and 'wear' the laurels," says the reporter to the Register.

CALENDAR

DENNIS FESTIVAL DAYS--August 29 - September 4--see flyer by Chamber of Commerce

- Tues. & Thurs.: Josiah Dennis Manse, 2-4, Flower Show, Antique Toys
Wed., Fri., & Sat.: Jericho House, Barn Museum and Driftwood Zoo, 2-4:30
Sun., Aug. 29: Antique Car Parade, Jelly Bean and Cheese Cutting contest
Dennis Village Mercantile; Old South Dennis Village Assoc. Lawn Party
including historical exhibit and showing of "Dennis," at 4 and 5 p.m.
at Liberty Hall; Concert at South Dennis Congregational Church, 7:30.
Tues., Aug. 31: Lecture by Admont Clark, showing of "Dennis," 7 p.m.,
Carleton Hall.
Thurs., Sept. 2: Bike tour, meet at Carleton Hall, 10 a.m., walkers and
cars also welcome; Old fashioned games at the Manse, No charge, 2 p.m.
Fri., 3 p.m.: Sea chanty singalong with Don Bacon at Jericho, no charge.

DENNIS FESTIVAL DAYS

Our Calendar lists most of the events which the D.H.S. has helped to plan, but many more events are scheduled, so pick up your Chamber of Commerce flyer. Once again we are privileged to help sponsor a concert on the historic Snetzler organ in South Dennis, an opportunity to hear two fine musicians in a truly beautiful setting. Tickets are \$2 and are available at the door. On Tuesday, we will have the opportunity to hear the "man who wrote the book" on the Shiverick Shipyard, Capt. Admont G. Clark who will talk about the Shiverick Yard. Following his talk, you will have the opportunity to buy a share in the Model of the Shiverick's most beautiful clipper ship, the Belle of the West. We have chosen this method of raising donations for this purchase because it was the traditional way for local vessels to be owned, each family having one or more shares. You may see the model at the East Dennis branch of the Cape Cod Cooperative Bank through August, and at the Jacob Sears Memorial Library during Festival Week. It will also be displayed at Liberty Hall on Sunday, August 29 during the OSDVA Lawn Party.

A BELLE OF EAST DENNIS

"Never dance with the mate if you can dance with the Captain,"--a sage bit of advice often given to their daughters by Cape Cod fathers. But not all of the nearly 90% of Dennis men employed in maritime activities in the mid-1800's were officers, or even seamen. For every one that went to sea, half a dozen worked in sea-related trades, like sail making and ship building. While their lives were not as glamorous, they were the stable backbone of the community, taking care of affairs at home while their neighbors were in foreign places. Such a man was Joseph Howes, who apprenticed at the Shiverick yard in 1852. He loved his work and the beautiful vessels he was privileged to work on. But, as is the way with young men, he also had his cap set for a beautiful girl. She was Abby Sears Hedge, of the Quivet Neck family. When the launching of the Belle of the West was at hand, Joseph took courage and invited Abby to attend with him. And how could she refuse? A launching was a great celebration and it is reported that 2 or 3 thousand people congregated on the banks of Sesuit Harbor on Friday, March 26, 1853 to see this spectacular vessel launched. When Joseph called for Abby he found her dressed in her best with full petticoats and bonnet. But one thing was missing. Abby was barefooted. Being a practical Cape girl, she knew better than to risk spoiling her shoes crossing marsh and sand. So, shoes in hand, they walked across the little Quivet bridge, pausing to dress her feet as they approached the Shipyard. The great crowd that had gathered that day was disappointed for the Belle could not be started. Impressed by her combined beauty and good sense, perhaps Joseph asked for another date, for the Belle was launched on the following day, and Joseph and Abby were launched on married life soon thereafter. Some of their descendants still live in Dennis, and on the walls of their home hangs a picture of the Belle of the West, to remind them of the beginning of their ancestor's romance.

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