

DENNIS FESTIVAL DAYS

By the time you receive this, we will be in the midst of the annual celebration of Dennis Festival Days. As usual, the Dennis Historical Society and the House Committees of the town's two historic centers have planned events which emphasize the historic heritage of the town. A listing of some of these events is in the Calendar. More can be found in the complete listing of the week's activities. We hope that you will enjoy some of these events.

CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting and election of officers for the Dennis Historical Society will be held on Monday, Sept. 10 at the Senior Center at 7:30 P.M. In addition to the usual business conducted annually, the Board of Directors is proposing two by-law changes. They are:

1. To create a new class of members, called "student", by inserting under Article III Membership and Dues a new section (1a) to read:

"1a Student - upon payment of the requisite dues, any student may become a member. Student membership does not confer voting rights."

And by inserting in section 6 the word "student" so that the section reads:

"Delinquent Dues-- If the annual dues of any individual, student or family member are not paid by the annual meeting...."

2. To generalize the date set for the annual meeting to allow it to be scheduled any time in September, deleting in ARTICLE VII: Annual and Special Meetings, in the first paragraph, the words "On the second Monday."

Please be with us on this date to help us decide this and other important matters.

"COME WALK WITH ME"

Following the business of the annual meeting, there will be the presentation of life membership certificates, recently designed under the direction of Gail Hart, and the ceremony, if it can be so called, of the breaking of the mold for our cup plate of the town seal. Then we will have the privilege of taking a stroll through familiar and not so familiar areas of the mid-Cape, with Leonard Willcox, well-known lecturer and photographer. Guests are welcome. No admission charge.

TAKING THE WATER CURE

Many of you know that I am by profession a nurse. In that capacity, I occasionally have the privilege of teaching a course for men and women who are preparing for health careers. You will probably not be surprised to know that a part of my first class is devoted to a brief history of Western medicine. It is surprising to most to learn how recently accepted medical treatments have been developed in our own lifetime. Early colonists here relied on folklore and herbal medicines to cure their diseases, and this was the state of medicine through the time of the Revolution and into the nineteenth century. But in the early 1800's, some enlightened minds began to acknowledge the correlation between environmental conditions and health. People who lived in rural areas, away from the smokey air of the city, were less likely to develop lung problems. Epidemics which devastated urban areas sometimes skipped over the outlying countryside altogether. A philosophy of clean air, clean water and clean bodies was being preached all over the world, though many hearers remained skeptical. In Europe, this interest in sanitation led to the founding of a school of medicine which came to be called Hydropathy. Marvelous claims were made for the effectiveness of "natural and only safe treatment of disease," the use of healthful water both externally and internally. In the 1850's there were two Hydropathic Institutes that I know of here on Cape Cod, and one was here in Dennis. The house was built in 1847 by Dr. Alexander Poole, and still stands on the east side of the town landing, north of Scargo Lake. In 1854, after Dr. Poole had sold the house, Dr. Edward O. Nye announced to those served by his practice that he was removing to the Hydropathic Institute in Dennis and should henceforth be contacted there. Patients were solicited to come and stay at the Water Cure Establishment to be cured of whatever ills they complained of, rates being from \$6 to \$9 for a week of room, board and treatment. Many of the businessmen of the town invested in the Water Cure (including Capt. Dean Sears), and the stock paid dividends for many years. In 1857 the village report for Dennis says, "The Dennis Water Cure of Dr. Nye is in flourishing condition. The place and its surroundings look decidedly attractive to both well and sick folks." The waters of Scargo Lake served medicinal purposes for perhaps 10 years or less, for Dr. Nye died while only a young man in 1861, and the house was sold by the shareholders in 1864. I'm sure a daily swim in Scargo Lake would still be of benefit to your health, but check with the Board of Health before taking internally.

CALENDAR

- August 26 7 P.M. Showing of the slide show 'Dennis' followed by talk by Admont Clark on 'the Lighthouses of Cape Cod'. West Dennis Community Building. No charge.
- August 27,29,31 2-4:30 Jericho House open. Quilt Exhibit, exhibit in the Barn Museum about the Nobscusset Indians, with slide show.
- August 28,30 2-4 Josiah Dennis Manse open. Flower exhibit by the Village Garden Club. Old West School House also open.
- August 27 10 A.M. Bicycle Tour. Meet at West Dennis Community Building. About 2 hours, easy ride around the village. Follow in a car if you like, stops at historic spots.
- August 31 1:30 Josiah Dennis Manse. Old-fashioned games for kids, on the lawn. For other Festival Week's events, see complete program, available at the Chamber of Commerce or at Post Offices.

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- Sept. 10 7:30 Dennis Senior Center ANNUAL MEETING D.H.S. Followed by an illustrated talk by Leonard Willcox, 'Come Walk with Me'. All welcome.
- Sept. 13 1 P.M. County meeting of Historic Societies at Eastham. Call Nancy Reid for information.

Coming in October - Talk by Jim Cogan, 'Women Who Went to Sea'

Also of interest to our members: Bus Tour and Boat Ride to Martha's Vineyard, for a visit to the Duke's County Historical Society, Gay Head and the Windmill Farm. Sept. 15, \$28. Call Paula 394-5739.

PORTRAITS ACQUIRED

Congratulations to the Josiah Dennis Manse Committee, Maree Galvin, Chairman, on the acquisition at auction of the portraits of Capt. Dean Sears and his 2nd wife, Rosanna Sears. The Manse Committee is pondering the feasibility of using these portraits as the nucleus for gathering a Dennis Marine History exhibit, certainly something which has long been desired in this town with its splendid marine heritage. Capt. Dean is a worthy example of the local mariner, who like so many local boys, could reef, steer and box the compass before he could read and write. He had a creditable career as a deep water man, as master of the George Hallett, then for many years was Captain of the Boston to East Dennis packet. Capt. Sears ended his days in the village of East Dennis, where he died in 1875, much lamented and honored for his service to the community. We are grateful that the Manse Committee has assured the citizens of Dennis that such solid citizens of our old town, as Capt. Dean and his wife most surely were, will be remembered by us and our posterity.

"COMPLIMENTS OF D.H.S."

If you are not presently a member of the Dennis Historical Society, you are receiving this edition of our newsletter with our compliments and as invitation to join. To do so, send dues - \$4 an individual, \$6 for family, or \$100 for life - to Isabel Flynn, P.O. Box 607, So. Dennis 02660. If you do, you will continue to receive the newsletter each month, with announcements of activities and articles about the history of the town.

THE YEAR OF THE INDIAN

1984 may be so remembered in our annals, for it seems that quite a lot of time and energy has been spent this year on the subject of our local Indians. The most important effort has been our support of the Historic Commission's archaeological survey along the banks of Bass River. We should soon have an in-depth report of the artifacts recovered there. In the meantime, the audio-visual team is working on a slide presentation based on a poem 'The Indian Lands', written by Walter Morley. This poem describes what we know of the lifestyle of the Nobscussets, with a setting on our Indian Land Conservation Area. This has been a real challenge as there is little available depicting this life style and the habitat and clothing worn by our local tribe. In addition, D.H.S. has worked in co-operation with the Jericho House Committee to present a modest exhibit about the Nobscussets which includes actual Indian artifacts found along Bass River, through the courtesy of Pauline Derick. During Festival Week, the audio-visual committee will show the segment from our 'Dennis' slide show about the Indians. If you are interested, try to see this exhibit and short slide presentation.

Dennis Historical Society
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