



DENNIS FESTIVAL DAYS '94

Dennis' venerable Festival Days will celebrate it's 36th year from August 20 to 28. This fun-filled 9 day festival sponsored by the Dennis Chamber of Commerce was organized by Dennis businessmen Bob Briggs of the Wee Packet Restaurant in Dennis Port and Bob Stone of the Lighthouse Inn in West Dennis in an effort to extend the tourist season that seemed to lag at the end of August. The two Bobs would station themselves on Route 6 and "kidnap" a newly-wed couple headed down-Cape for a free honeymoon in Dennis. How they could tell honeymooners from other lovers is still a puzzle, but they always came back with a couple wearing shiny new wedding rings! The concept grew with each passing year into the exciting celebration we now enjoy. Bob Briggs has announced his retirement after 36 years of hard work promoting the Town of Dennis. Well done, Bob, and many thanks!

DHS will participate with several events aimed towards telling the interesting history of Dennis. The Dennis Village Garden Club will hold their Annual Flower Show at the Josiah Dennis Manse on Tuesday and Thursday (23rd and 25th). The theme this year will be "Weddings" and will feature an antique wedding gown in each room, including the newly-acquired 1915 wedding gown of Mrs. Percival Sears, nee Priscilla Alden--a direct descendant of Priscilla Mullin and John Alden--you remember--"Speak for yourself, John!" The other gowns will be from the weddings of Eunice Paddock and Capt. Carleton Howes, Dec. 1, 1836, Thankful Howes and Harvey Howes, Nov. 18, 1823, Mercy Caroline Howes and Henry Francis Howes, July 12, 1863 and Blanche Linwood Howes and Seth Crowell, June 24, 1896. Do come to see this interesting collaboration of the Manse and the Village Garden Club. On Wednesday and Friday (24th and 26th) Jericho Historical Center will be open from 2-4 P.M. featuring the Barn Museum--a treasure trove of interesting things from our past. Also on Wednesday morning at 9 A.M. George and Catherine Wilson will lead a narrated bike tour of Dennis Village, starting from Carleton Hall and lasting approximately two hours. This is always an enjoyable ride and I feel sure the weather should be a little nicer. The Wilsons request helmets on your heads for safety. Then--on Wednesday night DHS will host a program featuring some of the hundreds of old post cards from our collection. Josh Crowell and Phyllis Horton will tell you what they know about the cards they've selected and you are invited to add what you know about any of these special places in Dennis. You are also especially invited to bring your Dennis post cards. It's very possible you have one we've never seen, or perhaps we can identify one you've not been able to place. For some reason we have very few photographs of early Dennis. Our best record of early architecture, sites, etc. comes from post cards which date back 100 years or so. On Saturday, the 27th, from 1-4 P.M. the Josiah Dennis Manse will take you back to the 1700's. Costumed guides will demonstrate colonial skills--weaving, quilting, early American food, butter and ice cream making. The 1770 one-room school house will feature children in early education. Children's games will be played and you can learn about Dennis' first residents, the NobsCUSset Indians. P.S. Post card show--7:30 P.M., West Dennis Community Center.

WISH LIST--ALMOST COME TRUE....

Our wish list published in June's newsletter has produced some wonderful results. The Cranberry Culture book by Benjamin Eastwood came up for auction in July and DHS purchased it. The Jacob Sears Memorial Library in East Dennis gave us the Capt. Seth Crowell telescope. Inscribed on the telescope is: "Presented by the British Government to Captain Seth Crowell, Master of the American Ship 'Robin Hood' in testimony of his humane services to the Shipwrecked crew of the 'Verbena' of Newcastle on the 25th November 1860." Also included were the letters pertaining to the presentation. Phyllis Sears of East Dennis and Peru, South America has donated her mother Priscilla Alden Sears' wedding gown (see Festival Days article), and also loaned us to copy a picture of her mother wearing the gown and the Alden Family Genealogy. Elinor Nickerson Roy found two featherbed mattresses for us in her attic--so now we only need one more, and Rev. Edward (Ted) Walker gave us his father's telescope, circa 1850, made in England, to go in the Maritime Wing. Our request for genealogical information on some of the old Dennis families who left here and settled elsewhere has had a good response. Mrs. Francis T. (Florrie) Hall gave us a great collection of Hall pictures, poems, and other memorabilia which will provide information for some future newsletter articles. Peter Flanagan of Washingtonville, NY sent us an updated genealogy of descendants of John and Bethia Hall who left Dennis in the early 1700's and relocated to other parts of Massachusetts, then to New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York. Gertrude Howes Storm, granddaughter of Capt. Calvin Howes sent us a picture of her father, Levi Howes, on round-up and a newspaper article about him. Capt. Calvin left Dennis in 1880 with his family and established a ranch on the Tongue River, in Montana. Three years later they relocated (due to overcrowding!) on Otter Creek, MT where Capt. Calvin and his sons built the Circle Bar Ranch--still being operated by the Captain's great-great-granddaughter and her husband. Carolyn Goodspeed Frojen of Missoula, MT send some pictures of her father Wendell Howes Goodspeed of Dennis and her mother Esther Kerien of Dennis Port who also went to Montana to work on the Circle Bar--and the family stayed on. All this information gives us a good perspective concerning the migrations of Dennis people. Thanks to those who responded and we still hope to hear from many others.

WE HAVE SOME NEW MEMBERS

A hearty welcome to Mr. and Mrs. William B. Atwood, Jr., Jim and Pat Doolin, Lucille Fitzgerald, Thomas E. Kelley, Mr. and Mrs. Edward F. Parker, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond M. Urquhart, George Young, Shirley Loud Putnam, and Mr. and Mrs. George F. Watkins. Long time member Ben Muse has become a Life Member. We hope you will enjoy being with us. Do take part in our activities. We're a pretty nice group and we love making new friends.

CALENDAR

Aug. 10	7:30 P.M.	Board meets at the Manse.
Aug. 23 & 25	2-4 P.M.	Village Garden Flower Show at the Manse.
Aug. 24	9:00 A.M.	Bike Tour of Dennis Village. Meet at Carleton Hall.
	7:30 P.M.	Old Post Cards of Dennis at West Dennis Community Center, School Street, West Dennis.
Aug. 24 & 26	2-4 P.M.	Jericho Historical Center Open House.
Aug. 27	1-4 P.M.	Open House at the Manse.
Sept. 1		Remember!--your dues are due.
Sept. 18	2:00 P.M.	DHS Annual Meeting at Jacob Sears Memorial Library, East Dennis.

SUMMER VIGNETTES

The hot and humid days we have been experiencing may not have set any meteorological records but about everyone I've talked to feels it has been a personal record for them--and this is after just last winter when we all vowed never to complain about the heat of summer if we could only survive the snow and ice! We seem to have short memories. After attending a meeting recently at the National Seashore where it was hot--we had expected cool breezes on the lower Cape--then returning to Dennis where it was equally hot, we passed through several shady spots along Rte. 6A where the trees meet overhead and it was like driving through a cool green tunnel. What a pleasant relief it was, and it reminded us of the days when that was the norm for most of the Cape. Route 28 in West Dennis and Dennis Port truly was a green tunnel with orioles nesting in almost every elm tree. Main Street in South Dennis was the same, as was Rte. 6 (now 6A) and many streets in the villages. Unfortunately, hurricanes, Dutch Elm Disease, road widening, and development raised havoc with these stately giants, but they live on in memory and old photographs. We started thinking of what it must have been like in the 1800's when Cape Cod was mostly clear cut. Surely they must have had a summer like this one--but they did it without the electric fans, air conditioners and comfortable clothing we now enjoy. I can just picture my great-grandmother Phebe Chase Murray wearing a long dress and petticoat putting up preserves on the wood burning stove in July. We've come a long way, baby!

The other summer story comes to us through the courtesy of Rev. Joshua L. Crowell of Dennis and Essex, CT. A number of years ago a fire call came into Dennis Fire Station #2, next door to Dennis Union Church where Sunday morning service was taking place. It being summer, and the fashion of the times, most of the men in the congregation were handsomely attired in white linen suits. When the alarm came in all the volunteer firemen in attendance, led by Deputy Chief Josh Crowell and Norman Hallett who were ushering that day, rose as one and answered the call. The fire was at the home of famed British actress Gertrude Lawrence who lived on Old Town Lane, East Dennis. The company had responded to a grass fire which was dispatched in proper manner. While they were preparing to leave Miss Lawrence approached and asked in her lovely English accent, "Gentlemen, are you always properly dressed for these affairs?" Needless to say--the one who benefited most was the dry cleaner!

A PREVIEW

Josh Crowell who will be narrating the post card show has one of his stories for us: On August 24th one of the post cards will depict "Farmer's Exchange--F. D. Gage, Prop." This was a predecessor of the Dennis Public Market and occupied the self same spot. In today's language this operation would be considered a Mom and Pop store. In addition to groceries, etc. Freddie Gage had a barber shop, the entrance to which was from within the store, which was presided over by Mrs. Gage, better known as "Hattie B.". Fred was not adverse to conducting a livestock trade in the back yard or near-by barn. A story in which Fred played a leading role concerned a trip somewhere within the village in a horse-drawn vehicle. For some long forgotten reason the horse decided to run away and Fred jumped clear and let the inevitable happen. At the post office afterwards the boys verbally chastised Mr. Gage for not endeavoring to prevent the ensuing disaster, to which Freddie replied, "There will be plenty more horses, but only one Fred Gage." Come to West Dennis Community Center on Wednesday the 24th at 7:30 and Josh will no doubt have a lot more stories to tell.

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