



CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

Each year our Christmas party is held at one of the town's historic centers. We are grateful to the committees of these two centers for their assistance and co-operation which makes this possible. This year's party will be at Jericho House. You will be greeted by Christmas carolers as you approach the friendly back door, and we know you will feel welcome. Please come, and if you have a friend or neighbor who has never visited our historic center, there is no prettier time to introduce them to this fine 1801 house. Don't forget Sunday, Dec. 13 3-5 P.M. at the Jericho House, Old Main Street at Trotting Park Road, West Dennis. We respectfully request that those with good walking legs park in the Ezra H. Baker School parking lot.

SPEAKING OF CHRISTMAS.....

....Do you have a friend who is interested in the history of our town but does not belong to the Dennis Historical Society? A year's membership might be an appropriate gift. For someone really special you might consider a Life Membership, which costs \$100. Contact Isabel Flynn, P.O. Box 607, South Dennis, MA 02660.

SPICING UP OUR CAPE COD WINTER

It's not only our warm Christmas punch that adds spice to the winter for D.H.S. members. We're "spicing up" January--actually "herbing"--with a program to be presented at West Dennis Community Building on Tues. Jan 12. We will have as our speaker Darlene Bouvee, who is a horticulturist at Plimouth Plantation, who will talk about herbs. Members of the West Dennis Garden Club and of the Village Garden Club have been sent a special invitation to attend. But Ms. Bouvee's talk is not only for gardeners. She will tell us some of the folk lore connected with common and not so common herbs and their many ancient and modern uses. Darlene is an entertaining speaker and we know you will enjoy the program.

REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR

December 7--"a date that will live in infamy". All of us who are over fifty years of age have a searing memory of the day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. At school here in Dennis on the following day, we listened to Pres. Roosevelt on the radio, as he addressed Congress. The terrible prospect of war faced us all. I remember feeling very much afraid--not so much of the Japanese who had drawn us into the war. Japan seemed very far from Cape Cod. It was the European enemies which struck fear into my young heart. We had heard such terrible tales. In truth, there was little in the following days to calm these fears. The Cape was considered vulnerable to an Axis air attack, because of sprawling Camp Edwards, and the strategic Cape Cod Canal. The school immediately began to drill us in how to protect ourselves in case of air attack. There were three scenarios. The first assumed that an attack was possible, but not imminent. In that case, we would evacuate the school and wait in the designated areas of the playground until buses arrived to take us to our homes. The second assumed a warning of approaching unidentified aircraft, far enough away to allow us all to pour down the stairways of the school, at least safe from flying debris, but surely doomed in the event of a direct hit on the school. The third, and most terrifying was that enemy planes had been spotted over the Cape. Each student was to get under his desk and protect his face with his arms. Scary stuff for a sixth grader! I still get a chilly sensation when I remember practicing these procedures. Away from school, Civilian Defense drills were no less threatening. First, we had a "brown out". All outdoor advertising lights, and many street lights were extinguished, high beam auto lights painted black. Remember that in that war we were without radar and early warning systems. The enemy could find us by skyglow, and so we must be ready to hide in the dark. Then came practicing total black-outs. There must be absolutely no light visible. Each neighborhood had wardens to patrol the street and check for the tiniest crack of light. Ours was Richard Hall. Dad made panels which fit into the dining room windows. They were a wooden frame covered with black roofing paper, I think. When the whistle sounded an air raid drill, these frames could be clamped into the windows and we could keep a light on in that room and continue with our home work until all clear was sounded. At first we were warned of air raid drills, but later we would not be told whether the wailing siren was a drill or an actual attack. We really didn't think of all this as history in the making. Now a whole generation of adults have taken their place in the community who have no memories of the forties. Perhaps those of us who do should begin recording our experiences for this new generation. As an historical society, we should be gathering recent history as well as early history. Please consider getting your memories of Cape Cod during World War II into our archives, either written or on tape.

CALENDAR

- Dec. 10 Board meets at the home of Josh and Elinor Crowell
Dec. 13 3-5 P.M. Christmas Open House at Jericho
Jan. 12 7:30 P.M. West Dennis Community Center Darlene Bouvee of Plimouth
Plantation
Feb. 13 Mid-Winter Festivity Christine's

PORTLAND GALE CONTINUED--THE FATE OF THE JAMES B. PACE

The moon was also full over the port of Philadelphia on the night of Nov. 24, 1898. Was there also an ominous ring around that moon? Capt. John D. Garfield of West Dennis was in Philadelphia that night. The day before he had bid farewell to his good friend Capt. Mark Holmes of New Haven. Capt. Holmes had finished supervising the loading of his vessel the Sch. Howard H. Hanscom, with 1,100 tons of bituminous coal, and had cleared for Providence. On the following day, Capt. Garfield would guide his vessel, Sch. James B. Pace, out of port en route to Boston with 1,200 tons of coal. Neither vessel would arrive at it's destination. They were to be among the victims of a giant late fall storm, now known as the Portland Gale. On Cape Cod the local newspapers printed on Monday, Nov. 27 had but few details of the disastrous week-end storm. Telegraph wires were down, and travel at a standstill. In the following edition, however, there was much news. Reports were given on the narrow escape of the crew of the Sch. Calvin F. Baker, rescued when she went aground near Cohasset. The Sch. M. E. Eldridge although demasted, had had the good fortune to make port at Vineyard Haven. Sch. Wesley F. Oler was ashore at Provincetown, but all the crew was safe. Word was coming in about the terrible fate of the Steamship Portland. But no news had been heard of the Sch. James B. Pace. As the weeks went by, this sad fact is oft repeated. Fear has been expressed for the safely of the Pace. The worst is expected. No news. For how many weeks do you suppose the family and friends of Capt. Garfield kept alive a little hope? Through Christmas perhaps? Or over the New Year celebration? In Dennis Port, the family of Dannie Nickerson were also deeply distressed. Dannie was Capt. Garfield's mate, a devout young man about whom his eulogist said, "None knew him but to love him, none named him but to praise." As his young wife cared for their 8 months old son, surely she was able to keep hope alive for a time. But the truth must be faced. As days and weeks went by it became less and less likely that any vessel could have survived that awful storm. Some one in the busy maritime corridor of the east coast would surely have spread the word of the rescue of any survivors. The families must accept their loss, and go on as their ancestors had done. There is, however, another chapter to this story. Not, unfortunately, a happy ending, but a final word, at least. Government divers, working off Montauk Point in Dec. of 1899, found the hulls of two schooners, side by side. Investigation showed that they were the Schs. James B. Pace and Howard H Hanscom. They had apparently fouled each other while scudding along before the 60 mile winds of the Portland Gale. Lashed to the riggings of these ill-fated vessels were the skeletons of their crews. This was no doubt an emergency measure, taken to prevent the men from being washed overboard. The vessels must have collided so unexpectedly that the hapless seamen had no opportunity to even attempt to free themselves. The bones of these lost sons were released from their watery tomb and interred in the warmer bosom of Mother Earth. Thus, the mystery of their fate was known at last.

ADDING SOME SPICE TO FEBRUARY

We will once again join together in a Mid-winter festivity, for luncheon at Christine's at West Dennis. The date is Feb. 13 and the theme will be a patriotic one, in honor of our great presidents. So make a note of the date, and I will tell you all about the menu and program next time.

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