



#### WE ARE PLANNING A MID-WINTER FESTIVITY

Once again we will try to brighten up February with a luncheon get-together, featuring some local history, as well as a pleasant meal and good company. We will meet at Christine's Restaurant in West Dennis on Feb. 10, social hour at noon and luncheon at 1:00 P.M. Watch for news of our program and the mail-in coupon in the January letter.

#### OPEN HOUSE WAS NICE

Jericho looked lovely as we gathered to inaugurate the holiday season on Dec. 3, and as usual a large group attended, and enjoyed the ambience, the company, and, of course, the delicious refreshments. Our thanks to the board members and friends who contributed to the afternoon in any way, especially the Jericho House committee, Georgia Reyburn for her charming music and the West Dennis Garden Club for making the house so beautiful. It was a nice occasion.

#### IF THIS HOUSE COULD TALK

This town is blessed with several hundred houses of great antiquity, and D.H.S. is preparing to develop a slide show about some of them and the history they have shared with those who resided in them. The house whose history I will tell you today has not only been a part of the lives of several generations of one family, it has been home to several families, and has witnessed many blessed and solemn events. The inside walls echo with joy and sorrow, and the outside walls have been witness to the parade of history in two widely different villages of Cape Cod.

It was built in 1721, or perhaps earlier, on Church Street in Yarmouth Port, where it was surrounded by equally fine homes of merchants and sea captains. Today it sits on a small knoll on Chase Avenue in Dennis Port, where it is surrounded by summer businesses--motels, restaurants, and beaches. Bob and Debbie Kremp have a Bed and Breakfast Inn there, and it is called the House of 1721, for the date which is on the chimney. Its original owner is thought to have been Capt. John Hedge, who married Thankful Lothrop of Barnstable in 1699. Their first child, Abigail, was born in Barnstable, but the remaining eight were born in Yarmouth, so it is a possibility that the house is even older than the chimney date. John was probably a sea captain, as his name is not listed as an officer of the militia, but we cannot rule military service out, as Cape men were very much involved in the Colonial Wars and the Hedges were frequently military men. John's position as a leading citizen is evident by his election to serve in the Colonial legislature for 3 years (1719-1721) and subsequent appointment as Sheriff of Barnstable County from 1731-1734. The old house heard much of the political discussions of the day, including disappointment at the lack of aggressive action against the French in Canada and fear of a French invasion by water. At Capt. John Sr.'s death the house passed to his son Capt. John II. He also served his native town, serving Old Yarmouth as selectman 1758-1760. John II married Desire Hawes and had four children. One of them was Capt. John III, master of a privateer in the Revolution, who died as a prisoner aboard a prison ship in New York Harbor. This son's descendants were the Hedges of East Dennis, some of whom still live on Quivet Neck. It was John's brother Elisha who kept the family homestead, and the sad events which befell his children that the walls of the old house remember. Elisha had married a neighbor, Mary Gorham, in 1759--just two years before his father's death. They were the parents of a promising family of eight, all of whom survived the rigors of infancy and grew to acquire fine educations for the day. Desire married and moved to Nantucket, Isaac married and remained in Yarmouth. Elisha Jr. went a-whaling. James trained with Dr. Samuel Savage in medicine. His twin brother Edward took to the sea as did Abraham, who soon was master of his own vessel. Mary remained unmarried, caring for her parents throughout their lives, and of John--I just can't say, for the several John Hedges of the day are not easy to separate. The joy of this fine family was soon crushed. In 1801 Abraham was drowned off Chatham, and was buried the same week that word was received that his brother Elisha had also drowned, off Cape of Good Hope, on a whaling voyage. Edward died in the West Indies, probably with Yellow Fever. In 1805 Samuel, the seven year old son of Desire and her husband, was "Killed by a windmill". Isaac also died young, leaving a widow and one son, whose future is not recorded. When Elisha Hedges folded his hands for the long sleep, only four of his children survived him and two grandchildren had died. How could a single family sustain so much tragedy? However, life is never totally without joy. The walls of the old house were to ring once more with the laughter of children. More about The House of 1721 next time.

## CALENDAR

Jan. 4 7:30 P.M. Board meets with Pres. Nancy Howes  
Feb. 10 Noon Mid-Winter Festivity Luncheon at Christine's Restaurant  
Watch next month's newsletter for information and reservations  
Promised and hoped for--Another evening of Post Cards of Dennis. Look your old ones up.

### ELISHUA AND I

It may have been a mistake for me to have invited Elishua Crowe to visit me from the 17th century during the holidays. Thanksgiving---well, not too bad. It was quite easy for her to relate to a whole day spent in the kitchen preparing a meal. We peeled vegetables, baked pies and visited happily. I came away with a better insight into the parent-child relationship of the colonial period. Elishua put some very pointed questions to me. Since my husband was a minister, why were none of our sons following that noble calling? What about my grandsons--would any of them go to the college at Cambridge to take holy orders? She also bluntly told me that she thought it very strange and neglectful of me to allow my granddaughters to play with magnetic letters when they visited me, or for me to read to them, when not one of them can knit or spin. Elishua's sense of smell had certainly been gratified by our day of cooking. Then I made the mistake of taking her to church. People come from all over the world to see the simple New England style church--right? Well, Elishua was shocked! First of all, the minister was wearing a robe, and so were the choir members, and some of them were women! When we sang, the melodious tones of the organ startled her out of her little white cap. On the wall was a painted picture of creatures with wings, ---and the men and women were seated together. The sermon, moreover, was very short, (I didn't think so!) and the prayers were read from a book, as is the Anglican custom--for shame! What kind of a New England church is this? Surely, we must all be dissenters and not good Puritans at all. I hustled her home to bed, and the next day she really enjoyed our Thanksgiving meal. But then, someone mentioned Christmas and the real trouble began. Surely the family of a minister was not going to observe that pagan holiday? Did any one of us know where the birthdate of Jesus was mentioned in the gospels? Not anywhere, she said emphatically, and those who celebrate Dec. 25th as Christmas are following the example of the wicked pagans who used the occasion for frolic and merrymaking. I have to admit she had me there. But our family is not about to give up our holiday, even if it has its basis in the traditions of pagans. So I decided that if we were to remain friends, and perhaps meet again, it was time to beam Goodwife Crowe back to her own century. We shared one last cup of the herbal tea in front of the fire, and Elishua confided that she probably would keep most of the details of her adventure to herself, lest Mistress Howes and Goody Sears think she'd gone a bit daft. Do you know what she said? Since she knows that I am attempting to write this town's history, she will try to think of a way to take me back in time to experience the lifestyle of her century. how I wish she could--what a sense of history that would give me. Till then there's always Plimouth Plantation. Good-bye, Mistress Crowe, and happy voyage.

### HOWES FAMILY WILL MEET AGAIN

There being so many Howes descendants among our readers, we have been asked to announce that there will be a Howes family reunion on June 16 and 17, 1990 in Ashfield, MA. If you are not yet a member of the association and would like to be at this reunion, you may contact Mrs. Edward P. Russell, P.O. Box 211, Charlemont, MA 01339, phone 413-773-8893. Anyone interested in discussing arrangements for a bus or sharing transportation, might contact Nancy Howes, 385-3528.

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