



DENNIS, CAPE COD: FROM FIRSTCOMERS TO NEWCOMERS 1639-1993

The author, Nancy Thacher Reid, reports that the history of our town will soon be available to grace your coffee tables. She hopes your tables are sturdy, for the volume contains 976 pages, with over 300 photographs, as well as maps, graphs and lists for those who like that sort of thing. But primarily the book which Dennis Historical Society members and friends have published is the story of a unique town and its people. It follows the joys and vicissitudes of our citizens for over 350 years.

For purposes of organization, the story is divided into 7 periods of approximately 50 years, each of which begins and ends with an event, discovery, or political decision which causes a change in every day life. We learn of the religious, economic, educational, social and cultural lives of our predecessors in each period, beginning with the Puritan, Anglo-Saxon farming families and ending with the multicultural, semi-urban residents of today--the Newcomers and the descendants of the Firstcomers as they struggle to live together productively in a modern, dynamic municipality. It's exciting! Interwoven with the sea stories most of us never tire of hearing are quotations from old diaries, tales of heros who fought for our country, of strong-minded, strong-bodied women, and of the history of local landmarks, such as the Bass River Lighthouse, the stone island off West Dennis Beach and the Dennis Hydropathic Institute. You will meet inventors, schoolmasters, doctors, members of the clergy and those who served in war and politics--both men and women. You may be surprised by some of the ways folks have attempted to earn a living, amused by the arguments of those who favor and those who oppose changes. You may also be led to conclude that times change, but people and the problems they face are similar from age to age. It is the way in which the problems are faced which makes an era great.

The book concludes with a short epilogue which begins with a quotation from philosopher Reinhold Niebur:

"We do not belong to ourselves;
we belong to that from which we have come."

Please read the story of "that from which we have come". Hopefully, it will lead you to understand and appreciate the ordinary and extraordinary men, women and children who have shaped the character of our town.

PRE-PUBLISHING OFFER

With appreciation to the author, Nancy Thacher Reid, the Dennis Historical Society proudly offers the book "Dennis, Cape Cod: From Firstcomers to Newcomers 1639-1993" for a one-time only pre-publishing price of \$44.95 plus tax and postage/handling.

In order to take advantage of this one-time offer, your order form and check must be received by **December 31, 1996**.

Special note to our Sponsors: You will receive your book(s) as soon as they arrive, and we thank you for your patience. If you wish to order extra books please see form below.

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CALENDAR

Dec. 6		Happy Hanukkah
Dec. 8	1-5:00 P.M.	F.O.S.S. House Tour at the Manse. See article below.
Dec. 11	6:30 P.M.	DHS Board meets with Brendan and Maureen Joyce.
Dec. 15	2-4:00 P.M.	Christmas Open House at Jericho. See article below.
Dec. 25		Merry Christmas to all.
Dec. 31		Happy New Year and best wishes for a happy, healthy 1997!

A HOUSE TOUR AT THE MANSE

On December 8 from 1-5:00 P.M. the 1736 Josiah Dennis Manse will participate in a house tour to benefit the Friends of String Students in Dennis and Yarmouth. The tour will feature ten houses in the two towns including the Manse and Bray Farm in Yarmouth. Tickets may be purchased at the Manse on that day. More information is available by calling 394-1813.

CHRISTMAS AT JERICHO

This year's holiday festivity will be held at the 1801 Jericho Historical Center. For those of you who have not yet seen the Jericho restoration after the fire this will be a good opportunity to enjoy our full-Cape captain's house with it's best foot forward. The latch string will be out from 2-4 P.M. on December 15. Do come and bring some friends for a bit of Colonel Negus Punch and some special goodies while you view the talented decorating handiwork of the West Dennis Garden Club. They always do such a lovely job at Jericho. We'll meet you there! Please remember to park at Ezra Baker School. Thanks.

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

A catalog arrived the other day filled with Christmas gift ideas. Whoever sent it must have some idea of my age because almost every item listed was something from my childhood or earlier. One item that caught my eye made me think of the Christmas program at the West Harwich Baptist Church. It was a reproduction box of Barnum & Bailey Animal Crackers.

Every year just before Christmas all the church families would go to church in the evening for The Christmas Tree. That was the first thing you saw when you entered the Sunday School. It was a big swamp cedar that reached nearly to the ceiling and was alive with color. There were a few hand-made decorations, some light, rope tinsel and glass balls--no doubt purchased at W. T. Grant's in Hyannis--but hanging on nearly every branch was a red box of Barnum & Bailey Animal Crackers. The picture on the box resembled a circus wagon full of wild animals and had a string handle. About three-fourths of the kids in Dennis Port attended Sunday School there--it was just across the town line within easy walking distance. After everyone had assembled the Christmas Pageant began. Selected ones would recite a piece or sing a song while their parents and grandparents beamed and the rest of the audience accepted the missed lines, inaudible recitation and off-key notes with good grace because they'd heard it before and would hear it again next year. Some of the performers did grow up to have very good delivery and good pitch--and were enjoyed by all. The pageant concluded with the manger scene. As I recall the only cast members that changed over a several year span were the angels because they grew too big for the costumes and the Wise Men and shepherds because those boys finally grew old enough to refuse to put on a costume. Every year there was a certain amount of tomfoolery among the oldest boys (probably 12-14 years old) while Mary Elland Gage made disapproving noises. The following year those same boys sat in the audience making semi-muffled remarks that incited that years 13 year olds. Meanwhile all the little ones were getting squirmy waiting for Santa Claus to arrive. Isaiah Higgins was Santa and if you remember Ike it took a lot of padding to make a believable Santa, but the kids watched him with rapt attention. Each child got a gift, a small box of ribbon candy and a box of animal crackers from the tree--and memories. Happy Holidays to each and every one of you.

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