

OPEN HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

Again we are grateful to the Manse Committee, to Susan Kelley and her assistants and to our faithful Board members who graciously entertained at open house at the Manse last month. A special word of thanks to Bill Scofield and Josh Crowell, who improvised some indirect lighting to show off the beauty of the decorations in a better light. It was a beautiful afternoon, attended by about one hundred friends.

VOLUME 10 NUMBER 1

With this issue, we begin our tenth year of sending you our Dennis Historical Society Newsletter. Heartfelt thanks to all those who make the letter possible. These thanks include but are by no means limited to: The Flynns; Janet Adams, our typist; The Ives, our printers; and the Post Office people who help our mail along. Also Josh Crowell, who has the tedious and thankless job of keeping the IRS and the Comm. of Mass. satisfied that we are in truth a non-profit, educational society. I'm grateful for the opportunity to share what I am learning about the town's history with you all, and I thank all of you who have shared with me what you know, especially those of you who have corrected mistakes. I need that!

OF TEA AND POETRY

Thanks to Josh Crowell, we now have in our archives a delightful poem, 1905, which describes the town meeting of that year. The poem begins with a humorous but thorough description of the old Town House, where town meetings were held for many years. Funny how some weeks things kind of come together. Ben Thacher, who did not know the answer to the trivia question, tried to get it out of me by writing a Tea Party poem. So I have two new poems this month, and two tea party stories to relate. Josh's poem is too long for the Newsletter - but Ben's poem is below. (P.S. Trivia answer is: Hope Cemetery, Worcester, MA.)

THE BOSTON TEA PARTY - VERSIFIED BY A FAITHFUL READER

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| 1. Respected Boston merchants
On a frigid winter night
Were gathered in a tavern
Getting talkative and tight.
As sixth, then seventh rum
they quaffed
One fellow said, "I think
That Parliament's gone overboard
To tax the tea we drink.
"Tis law abiding folks we be
But pray, review the facts,
To sip a tiny cup of tea
We must needs pay a tax.
'Though water be a trifle thin
And whiskey is a curse
Each time we brew a pot or two
We fatten Georgie's purse! | 2. There's now three shiploads waiting there,
At anchor in the bay
Let's mask ourselves as Indians
And throw the Stuff away!
So everybody - paint your face
And come along with me.
We'll go and change the harbor
To a King-sized cup of tea.
And when we gather on the deck
All ready to begin
Be sure and fill thy pockets, lads
Before ye dump it in!"
And so they did the dirty deed
And to this very day
You'll find there's garbage floating
Out in Massachusetts Bay.
C. Ben Thacher |
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THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT - OLD STYLE

Do any of you out there remember when no one on the street had a TV set in their homes? Whatever did we do for entertainment? Well, I remember, and very fondly, the good old days when the family gathered around a very different set - the radio. When the chores were done - (What about chores? Does anyone remember having chores to do?) - the young folks could tune in to such favorites as Jack Armstrong and Tom Mix. Then while the supper dishes were done, Dad would listen to the news of the world. Remember Gabriel Heater? "Well, there's good news tonight!" he used to say. I don't hear much good news any more. We young ones then scurried to get our homework done so that we could join dad and mother to listen to such classics as Fibber Magee and Molly, Major Bowes, or one of my all-time favorites, "The Little Theater on Times Square" ("Smoking downstairs or in the outer lobby, please.") Oh, and Saturday night - none of us dared to miss "Your Hit Parade". Can anyone remember how many weeks "I Don't Want to Set The World on Fire" was number one? If anyone can, I'll bet it's Ben Thacher. As most of you know, when not writing poetry, Ben is owner and curator of Old Sound Museum, at Rte. 6A and Rte. 134, East Dennis. His collection is by no means only radio, but includes early records, record players, old movies and old kinds of memorabilia about old-time entertainment. He will demonstrate some of his collection, both audio and visual, and will also give us a guided tour of his unique museum on Sunday, January 11, at 2 P.M. (Snow Date January 18). It's a good family program, so bring the kids. Refreshments will be served. (Maybe tea.)

MID-WINTER FESTIVITY RESERVATIONS FEB. 14 CHRISTINE'S - WEST DENNIS

Please make reservations for _____ people.

I enclose a check for \$_____ (\$9.50 per person)

Choice of entree: _____ Chicken _____ Lasagna _____ Fish

Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope and send to: Mr. Joshua C. Crowell
Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638

CALENDAR

January 11	2 P.M.	Old Sound Museum, East Dennis, Rte. 6A at Rte. 134 "Old Time Entertainment" illustrated talk by Ben Thacher, followed by a tour of the museum. SNOW DATE - January 18.
January 13	7:30 P.M.	Board will meet with Phyllis.
February 14	12 noon	MID-WINTER FESTIVITY. <u>Reservations necessary.</u> Christine's, West Dennis. Entertainment by Mostly Medieval Carollers.

SOME ODD DOINGS DOWN TO PUNKHORN

Newcomers may wonder where in the world Punkhorn is. But us old-timers know. That's the area where Dennis, Harwich and Brewster come together at Setucket, Airline and Slough Roads. There are a lot of new homes in the area, but it is in fact an old neighborhood, although few of the old houses remain. Punkhorn folks were mostly farmers, hardworking, honest folks they were, with good credit at the East Dennis country stores, where they traded their produce for necessities. In the late years of the last century and the first of this, there also lived down at Punkhorn a number of "transient men". They had drifted down to the Cape seeking employment. Such a one was Robert Stone, who boarded for a spell with Mrs. Keziah Walker. He came from the West it is said - which could be any place from Plymouth to California. He was honest and hardworking all right - paid Mrs. Walker every Saturday night and all. But with what was left from his week's wages after his board was paid, he was likely to celebrate in honor of the upcoming day of rest. Of course, you know, that the town of Dennis year after year voted "Nay" almost to a man on the matter of allowing liquor to be sold in the town. But then, as now, those who wanted to could come by just about anything they wanted to make their Saturday nights jolly. So, on this particular weekend, Mr. Stone invited the other young men of Punkhorn to his room for a "pink tea", as such an affair was called. The evening seemed to be a great success, until the host, who tended to get nasty when under the influence of contraband liquid refreshment, started an argument with one of his guests. He drew out a pistol, and when one of his guests took it from him and threw it out of the room, he obliged his friend by breaking a chair over his head. Since the sociability of the evening was obviously at an end, the guests scurried for their nearby homes, and most arrived safely. But William McAnistan was followed by his late host, wielding a rifle in addition to the retrieved pistol, and shooting at trees and houses along the way. Quite a hullabaloo for quiet little Punkhorn! William reached home and alarmed by the rantings of Stone about taking his blood and such like threats, he took the family's shotgun and fired at Stone's legs. The hint was sufficient and the battle of Punkhorn ended. Dr. Hart was summoned and removed 30 pellets from the attacker-victim's legs. Stone recovered and departed - perhaps back to the West - and old Punkhorn resumed its ordinary quiet. It is hoped that the affair had a good effect upon the young men, and that Pink Teas were eliminated at least for a while. Another thread of color woven into the tapestry of the town's history - this one a delicate shade of pink!

WHAT DO WE DO IN THE WINTER TIME?

Since 1978 many of us have brightened our winter days by attending the Dennis Historical Society's Mid-Winter Festivity. This year we will meet for a social hour at 12 noon at Christine's in West Dennis. Luncheon will follow at 1:00 and a fine entertainment is planned. It will be presented for us by the Mostly Medieval Carollers, a group from Sandwich who combine music, dancing and drama to entertain and delight. The luncheon will cost \$9.50, reservations are necessary and should be prepaid. Simply fill out the form and mail. As usual there will be door prizes. Also during the festivities, the first Certificate of Appreciation will be presented to the owners of Basketville on Main Street, West Dennis, for their efforts to preserve the old Dr. Horatio S. Kelley house and incorporate it into their business. More about Dr. Kelley and his house in the next issue.

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660

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