



### **WE BEGIN OUR 21ST YEAR**

When the decision to print a monthly newsletter was made by the board of DHS in 1979, we weren't thinking in terms of twenty years of production. Over this time, many people have assisted in producing and mailing DHS newsletter. Would we dare to count how many hours have been spent in folding alone? Isabelle and Bill Flynn were for many years in charge of labelling, sorting and mailing to a list of members and friends which now consists of over 200 addressees. During the years (and years and years) when I was working on the town history, Phyllis Robbins Horton became "Ye Olde Editor" and she and Josh Crowell turned out some memorable issues. Josh was a great story teller. We are so lucky to have some of his best stories in print. Others who have helped are our son Peter and Sarah Krueger. Now the ball is carried by Lura Crowell and her helpers. And surely I've forgotten someone. But you know who you are. Thank you all!

### **FOLLOWING UP ON CHRISTMAS**

The Christmas celebration at Jericho welcomed many, in spite of the many activities taking place on December 13th. We are very grateful to the Jericho Committee and the Friends of Jericho whose creativity and hard work enabled the Dennis Historical Society to have their annual open house. Those who took part were: Eve Carlin, Pat O'Donnell, Joan Monteiro, Marge Martell, Joyce Appen, Mimi Williams, Lillian Jenkins, Lorraine Methe, Ann Chalmers, Rosemary Mailhot, Midge Holwartz, Jean Goheen, Barbara Murphy, Dee Moore and Kitty McNamara.

CM

### **COVERED DISH LUNCHEON**

If you are around my age you probably have some fond memories of covered dish (or pot luck) suppers. They were a mainstay of just about every Dennis church and social organization in my youth. Then, as now, our town was abundantly blessed with many good cooks and a few exceptional ones. When anyone paid their 50 cents and pulled up to one of the trestle tables they were assured of getting more than their money's worth. Even after 60 years I can fondly remember Ethel Enos's apple pies and Grandmother Nora's baked beans.

DHS is going to revive those days by having a covered dish luncheon for our annual Mid-Winter Festivity. It will be at 1:30 P.M. on Saturday, February 13 at the West Dennis Community Building. Get out your recipe box or favorite cookbook and decide which of your special dishes you'll bring to tempt us. Of course, if you're an old-time cook you'll pull it right off the top of your head. I can do that to some degree but not like my mother or grandmother. That was an art! Gentlemen, please take note: it is well known that some DHS men are superb cooks and you are invited to dazzle us ladies with your epicurean delights. Remember to put your name on the bottom of your dish.

Expert appraiser and DHS member John Schofield of the Eldred Auction Company will be on hand after the last tasty morsel has disappeared to conduct our own version of the Antiques Road Show. Dust off that funny "whatsit" you inherited from great aunt Emma and let John tell you what it's really worth. Most of all, come prepared to have some old-fashioned fun. We'll have some prizes and surprises!

PRH

### **OLD FORT FIELD**

The Dennis Historical Commission has recently selected several historic sites which will be marked with plaques around the town. One of these sites is the Old Fort Field in Dennis village.

No sign of the Old Fort remains, but the site is well documented. Frequent mention of the "Fort Field" is found in wills and deeds. The fort was one of two built in the plantation of Old Yarmouth by order of the General Court of Plymouth in 1643. They were ordered for the protection of the settlers of this town at a time of an unrest among the Native Americans in the colony of Connecticut. The forts were constructed like a garrison, with the first floor walls reinforced with stone and an over-hanging upper floor, with slits in the walls through which muskets could be fired. The committee which was to decide where the two forts would be built took a long time to make their decision. Finally, the fort in the western part of town, that part which is still Yarmouth, was built near the meeting house, at the present site of the Ancient Cemetery. The fort for Nobscusset was built on what is now called New Boston Road, a site most likely chosen by Nicholas Simpkins who was a member of the committee, as it was very near his homestead.

How long the fort stood in Fort Field we do not know. As far as can be determined, it was never needed, as the Nobscusset Indians remained peaceful and friendly, being more friend than foe to the English. But for many years, deeds for land in the area refer to the land opposite the Conservation Area near the Thomas Prince Howes homestead as Old Fort Field.

NTR

## CALENDAR

January 13 7:00 P.M. DHS Board meets at Jericho House

### *Coming in February*

February 10 7:00 P.M. DHS Board will meet AT JERICHO once again, due to work being done at the Manse

February 13 1:00 P.M. Mid-Winter Festivity West Dennis Community Building  
Covered Dish Luncheon and antique appraisal-- see article

### UNCLE EDWIN'S DESK PART II (Continued from December)

Aaron and Polly were the parents of 12 children, 8 of whom survived to become adults and productive citizens of this town. They were sons Aaron, Noah H., William, Edwin, and Urbana, and daughters Huldah H., Mary H., and Rebecca. They lived on what is now the Old King's Highway, in a half-Cape cottage built about 1802, probably by Aaron himself. The house is so small, it is hard to imagine it housed so large a family. At the time it was built, our King's Highway was just a path from one home to another. The main road down Cape was what is now Scargo Hill Road. Aaron's property went from the path down to the edge of Scargo Lake, then called Flax Pond because it was the place where flax was "retted", or soaked prior to the long process of making linen cloth. Working flax through the many processes needed to prepare the fibers for spinning was but one of many tedious tasks which women of Polly's generation were required to know how to do. Along with bearing and rearing so many children and providing with her own hands for their every need, Polly also had to withstand the pain of grieving for those lost babies. Our foremothers were women of remarkable strength..

The oldest son of Aaron and Polly was Aaron Jr., born in 1806. He married Fear Hall, who was the daughter of Jesse and Eunice (Howes) Hall. Captain Jesse piloted the Dennis packet from NobsCUSset Point to Boston and was one of the men responsible for building the wharf which used to stand at Corporation Beach. Aaron and Fear both lived long and useful lives, raising a fine family of five children. They began housekeeping in a double house on Route 6A, occupied in the other side by Aaron Jr.'s grandparents. But in 1836 Aaron Sr. and Polly moved into her late parents's home on Whig Street and sold their home to Aaron and Fear. Aaron Jr. was a stone mason by trade and often found work off Cape with another stone mason named Leavitt. Accordingly, his son was named Aaron Leavitt Crowell, the fifth Aaron in a direct line. Although Aaron Leavitt lived away much of his young life, even marrying a girl with no Cape Cod connections at all (good heavens!) he was nevertheless extremely devoted to his town and his Cape Cod roots. The family moved back to Dennis in 1896 and Aaron Leavitt Crowell served the town in many useful capacities until his death in 1919. Most notably, he served the town as a selectman for 16 years.

The other four sons of Aaron Sr. and Polly Crowell went to sea. Noah Howes Crowell, born in 1810, married Johanna Gorham in 1838. It was no doubt in her honor that the schooner *Bride*, launched from Asa Shiverick's shipyard in June 1839, was named. Moses Howes and Frances Howes had sponsored the schooner, but in 1840, Noah and his brother William became owners. She was used in the fishing industry and taken on coasting trips southward and up the Hudson River, with Noah as her master. In October of 1841, the *Bride* was one of thirteen fishing vessels which sailed from NobsCUSset on the final fishing voyage of the season. It proved to be a fatal decision. The fleet was struck by what became known as The Great Gale of October 1841. In this one storm, five of the thirteen Dennis schooners were lost along with the lives of twenty young men. Among them were two of the sons of Aaron and Polly Crowell--Captain Noah Howes Crowell and his young brother Urbana. Noah's bride for whom the vessel was named was left with two tiny daughters, Huldah Howes Crowell, born in 1838 and Johanna Olivia Crowell, born in May of 1841.

The entire crew of the *Bride* was found drowned in the cabin of the schooner when she came ashore at Provincetown. But the sturdy hull was intact. She was towed across to the shipyard at Sesuet where new masts were stepped and new rigging secured. Johanna was now owner, and with her brother-in-law Edwin, had the courage to set her sailing again. With Edwin as her master, she continued to be an active vessel in the NobsCUSset fleet for many years. More next time.

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