

RARE BOOK "SHOW AND TELL"

We were privileged to have Mr. Ben Muse come from Parnassus to talk with us about the books that have been written on Cape Cod and its several towns. We note with sadness that Dennis is not among those towns which have a good local history in print, but hope that that deficiency will be overcome. Mr. Muse invited those present to show books which they had brought and he told about their literary and money value to the surprise of some and disappointment of others. But as "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder," so also is value, and we can all still feel free to value the books we love, even if the literary world places a relatively small price upon them. Our thanks to Mr. Muse for an informative and very pleasant evening.

BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON IS PLANNED

The Annual Dennis Birthday party will be held on June 20 at the Dennis Yacht Club in East Dennis with a social hour scheduled at 12 noon and buffet luncheon at 1 P.M. Reservations must be made for this event by sending a check for \$6 per person and a self-addressed envelope to Mr. Joshua Crowell, Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638. The buffet will consist of Shrimp Canapes, Raw Vegetables with Dip, Chicken Salad Veronique, Molded Cranberry Waldorf Salad, Hot Rolls, Garnishes, Coffee, Tea or Sanka, and our traditional decorated Birthday Cake. As is most appropriate to the location on Sesuit Harbor, the program will be a presentation by Barbara Eastman, Mary Aseltine, and Florence Bennett on the Shiverick Shipyard. Weather permitting, we will also visit the area of the yard where the Cape's only clippers were built, and see where John Burt, Jr. discovered a "ship's knee," which had been shaped for the yard and not used. It sounds like a very pleasant way to celebrate our town's 189th anniversary. Hope to see you there. As usual, we will have attractive souvenir menus and door prizes. So, make your reservations today.

JUNE IS THE MONTH FOR BRIDES

I have a pretty story to tell you about a bride and a clipper ship. Mercy Caroline Howes was born in Dennis in 1842, the daughter of Captain Daniel Howes, who died at sea when Mercy was but one year old. As she grew up, much of the interest in the town was centered upon the growing differences between the North and the South over the question of slavery. When she was eighteen she became engaged to a distant cousin, Henry Francis Howes, and her heart was deeply saddened when war broke out and Henry enlisted in the Union Army. He became a second lieutenant in the 5th regiment of Mass. Volunteers. Mercy no doubt joined the other women in town at their meetings at the district schoolhouse to prepare packages to send to the troops, while she dreamed and planned for her wedding when Henry returned. Her brother, Daniel Willis Howes, was at this time the mate aboard the Shiverick Clipper Hippogriffe. He seems to have taken a fatherly interest in his young sister, for on his return from a voyage to Calcutta, he presented her with a bolt of fine silk to be used for her wedding dress. This story has a happy ending, for Henry did return safely from the war and he and Mercy were happily married in 1863. Her lovely wedding gown of aquamarine silk has been presented to the Manse and can be seen when you visit there. By the way, Mercy Caroline is also remembered as the first president of the Dennis Ladies Aid.

MORE ON THE BELLE OF THE WEST

Capt. William Frederick Howes of Dennis had the honor to be named Captain of the Belle of the West for her maiden voyage. He was an experienced mariner, well-known to Christopher Hall and Prince S. Crowell, the main financial backers of the Shiverick yard, as a steady, practical man. Although his leg was broken by a flying hawser at the launching, he recovered sufficiently to sail the Belle out of Boston Harbor in 1853 on her maiden voyage to California, a passage which took 132 days. He was the master of the Belle for six years, dealing largely in East India Trade, then turned her over to his brother Allison in 1859. A third brother, Levi, had joined Hall and Crowell as backers, but the Belle, like so many vessels, was owned cooperatively in shares by many Dennis residents. A portrait of Capt. William hangs at Jericho House, and his spacious home, built in 1845, is now the auction house of Robert Eldred.

The Belle of the West established no sailing records, but seems to have set a record for beauty of line and proportion. Don't forget to take advantage of the opportunity to become a shareholder in the newly built model of this romantic vessel, a symbol of the peak of maritime activity in the United States. For information, call Paula Bacon at 394-5739 or send a check for \$10 to: Belle of the West, c/o Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, South Dennis, MA 02660.

CALENDAR

June 16 7:30 Important meeting of Executive Board, home of Donald Bacon
June 20 12 Noon-Annual Town Birthday Party. Dennis Yacht Club.
For reservation information see article on first page.
July 21 7:30 West Dennis Community Building. A preview showing of the
Dennis Historical Society's media production
Aug. 29-Sept. 6 - Dennis Festival Days

Also of interest to our members:

June 30 3-5 P.M. Jericho House opening Silver Tea
Jericho is open on Wed., Fri., and Sat. from 2-4:30 all summer
Josiah Dennis Manse is open Tues. and Thurs., 2-4 all summer
June 23 and 24 Tour to visit the Tall Ships
August 11 (By request) Visit to the Museum of Fine Arts "New England Begins" exhibit.
Call Paula Bacon for information - 394-5739.

IT'S NEARLY DONE!

Oh, my goodness, folks, you just can't imagine the number of hours of work that go into producing a slide show about the history of the town! We have people taking pictures, drawing pictures, writing scripts, and music, recording sound and voices--and there still is a lot of work to be done. But we are getting the thing into shape. All of us are soberer and wiser, and miraculously still on very good terms with each other, and still very enthusiastic about the project. We are proud to announce that the D.H.S. Media Show will premier on July 21 at the West Dennis Community Building at 7:30 P.M. Plan to be among the first to view this exciting production. We think you'll like it!

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Each year in July and August complimentary copies of the D.H.S. Newsletter are sent to perspective members, with an invitation to join. If you have the name of a potential member, please call Elinor Slade at 394-0908 or Isabel and Bill Flynn at 385-2966. You are also reminded that your dues are due before September 1st. We would appreciate it if you would send your check and a return stamped envelope to Elinor Slade, Box 607, So. Dennis 02660. It will save us billing costs. Dues are \$5 a family or \$3 a single. A lifetime membership is also available at a one-time cost of \$100. A fair number of life memberships would go a long way toward providing us with a small capital fund for such projects as publishing. Please consider this option when you pay your dues.

WHAT DO HANCOCK N.H. AND DENNIS, MA. HAVE IN COMMON?

At first glance, not a great deal. Hancock is a picture-perfect New Hampshire town, nestled into a valley surrounded by mountains. Dennis stretches across sandy Cape Cod from sea to shining sea, flat except for our one outstanding hill, and cooled by ocean breezes. But if you are interested in local histories, you will find a kind of relationship. First of all, both have active Historical Societies. Secondly, as best as I can ascertain, John Hancock never slept in either town. But he did play a small part in the history of each. Hancock was the heir to a large fortune, including large land holdings in this area of New Hampshire. The town fathers generously named the town for him, but as he was a typical Yankee merchant, he does not seem to have donated any of his wealth to the townfolks. Now, as to Dennis, John Hancock was the governor of the Commonwealth when the town was incorporated, so our Act of Incorporation bears his signature, written with the same boldness with which he signed the Declaration of Independence. Isn't it a small world? I recommend Hancock, N.H., as a nice place to visit if you are ever heading that way. Stop in at the Historical Society, right next door to the John Hancock Inn, and see if any one there knows what our two towns have in common.

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

Postal Permit No. 2 South Dennis Mass. 02660
