



DENNIS REMEMBERED - SCHOOL DAYS

Lively discussion, lots of laughs, and the good old days at school lovingly remembered. A message from the school superintendent read from the annual town report of 1929 gave us all a lot of insight into just how times have changed from then until now. Many of our old pictures remain a mystery, however. We may schedule another such meeting on a Sunday afternoon in the fall so that some of our older friends may attend.

TOWN BIRTHDAY TO BE CELEBRATED

Due to the popularity of the Lighthouse Inn for weddings, there will be a slightly different schedule for our annual birthday get-together. We will meet on June 28 at the Lighthouse Inn in West Dennis at 5 P.M. for sociability, with dinner to be served at 6 P.M. The menu is: Appetizer, Choice of Haddock Supreme or English Cut Prime Rib of Beef, Vegetable, Salad, Rolls, Potato, Beverage and Dessert. The total cost is \$11.50 per person, and you must make a reservation. Send the coupon below and your check to: JOSHUA CROWELL, P.O. Box 963, Dennis 02638, and please indicate your choice of entree. Tickets are limited, so make your reservation soon. For entertainment we will hear the Cape's German American Band and our tables will be set in the West end of the dining area, facing the sunset. Hope to see you there.

AMONG OUR NEW MEMBERS.....

Kathleen Byron, Gemma Bardi, Anna R. Murphy, Robert C. Eldred, Jr., Rev. and Mrs. Edward A. Walker, Pauline Warren, F. James Carr, Jr., John A. Boyd, Emma F. Rudine, and Dr. and Mrs. Leroy Houck. Welcome them when you see them.

ARE YOU A DUES PAYING MEMBER?

Most of you are, but some of you are not. It is time for us to revise our membership list, and we must assume that those who have not paid dues no longer wish to be members of the Dennis Historical Society. If you are in arrears but wish to continue your support of D.H.S. in its efforts to preserve and teach the history of this town, please send your check to: Isabelle Flynn, P.O. Box 607, So. Dennis, 02660. Not sure if you have paid or not? Call Isabelle, or better yet, send a check anyway. If you are current, it will be credited to next fall's dues. Remember that dues run from September to September, and are \$ 5 for an individual, \$7 for a family, and \$100 for life.

A RECENT ACQUISITION

Have you ever gone shopping for something and come home with an entirely different purchase? That's what happened to Josh Crowell recently. He went to Eldred's auction house to look at a clock, which reportedly came from one of our old schoolhouses. However, there was no way to be sure it had, and it needed a lot of work. But a very plainly framed, dark watercolor caught his eye, and instead, he made a bid on that, and got it for D.H.S. The picture is a 'mourning' piece, in memory of Capt. Noah H. Crowell. He was lost, with all of his crew, on the schooner Bride, in the Great October Gale of 1841. The mourning picture will serve not only as a memento of this important storm, in which 20 men and thousands of dollars in damage was done to local fishing vessels. It also serves to remind us of the dangers facing the mariners who in years past were the background of the Cape's economy. Good shopping, Josh!

THE SEAL OF THE TOWN OF DENNIS

Those of you who attended the annual town meeting in May may have noted that the podium from which Mr. McDowell conducted the business looked somewhat different than usual. The Nobscusset blue banner, with the seal of the town, was wrapped around it. Usually the podium is not draped in this manner, but displays a handsome wood carving of the seal. That carving was done in 1963 by Mr. Robert Cummings of Dennis Port, and has been on the moderator's podium at town meetings for these many years. At the special meeting in the fall it was noted that the seal had developed a crack and needed refurbishing. The Dennis Historical Commission took it to Mr. Odd Lilyheil, a master woodworker, who proclaimed it a fine carving and well worth restoring. So that work is now under way, and the seal will be back on the platform soon. This gives us an opportunity to thank Mr. Cummings for this lasting gift to the town and the Wixon School. It is an impressive guardian over the doings of Dennis citizens in town meeting assembled, and shall continue to be so for many years to come. A trivia question: The town will be celebrating the 194th anniversary of its incorporation in June. Do you know when the seal was adopted and who designed it? Answer next time.

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Birthday Dinner Reservation  
Lighthouse Inn, June 28, 6 P.M.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve: \_\_\_\_\_ Haddock \_\_\_\_\_ Beef Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$11.50 per person

Please enclose check and stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Mail to: Joshua Crowell, P.O. Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638.

CALENDAR

- June 8-12 Ezra H. Baker School Field Trips. Can you help? Call Phyllis 394-0017 or Lilla Smith 398-3367.
- June 19 Happy Birthday dear Dennis! 194 years young.
- June 28 Lighthouse Inn. Birthday dinner. Reservations necessary.
- June 23 Board meets at Phyllis'.
- July 15 West Dennis Community Building. The Indians of Dennis. George Stillson. Coming in September - 26th Howes Family Reunion, Carleton Hall, 9 A.M.

SUMMER IS A'COMIN'

Did we have spring yet? I think I missed it. I must have been working that day. The way time flies, next thing you know it will be the Fourth of July and summer will be half over. I was speaking with Virginia Van Vorst recently about the Fourth. You all know Virginia. She's the Mayor of Dennis Port - a wonderful girl who has accomplished much good for this community. Virginia has a dream. It is that the Dennis Port Village Green on Hall Street will be completed with a bandstand, so that a real old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration can be held there this year. She's talking about a community picnic, band concert, and the works. When I got home, I pulled out the file on Fourth of July to see exactly what went on for the Fourths of yesteryear. In many years it certainly was a grand celebration for the entire community. Take for an example 4 July, 1859. A committee planned to have a convocation for the patriotic residents of West Dennis and South Dennis. Because there was no band in Dennis at that time, the Finney Band was brought down from Plymouth. Early in the day, the band was loaded onto a two-horse carriage and escorted through the streets of the two villages, by the Grand Marshall of the day and his aides. They "discoursed some of their sweetest music to the villagers," so the reporter states. Then at half past ten, the citizens of the two villages met at their respective churches and formed processions. Led by the children and youth, they proceeded down each end of Cove Road, toward Bass River, where a bridge joined the two sections of the road and linked South and West Dennis together. The South Dennis line of march crossed the bridge, and passed the West Dennis line, to bring up the rear as the entire parade made for the South Dennis side. The marchers were led by the band, the Chief Marshall, Harrison G. Alexander, and his aides, the three oldest citizens (whose age totalled 250 years, says the reporter), and the dignitaries who were to speak. On Long Neck, benches had been constructed and a platform set up, and the ladies had prepared a collation. Things went very well - apparently too well - much to the astonishment of the Committee on Arrangements. You see, the day was planned as a neighborhood get-together of South and West Dennis families. You can imagine the committee's amazement when 3000 persons showed up for the celebration. Wow, that refreshment committee must have been stunned! The reporter, who unfortunately was too modest to sign his correspondence to the editor of the Yarmouth Register, says, in what is certainly a typical Cape Cod understatement, "The great number gathered on the occasion, while it was not larger than our hearts, was larger than our accommodations." Many of the group had to stand or sit on the ground, and the speakers, without benefit of amplification, were certainly tested. The Declaration of Independence was read and an oration by the Rev. Mr. Hebard of Harwich Port enthusiastically received, after which, "The collation was disposed of in a short time." Following lunch, order was restored and a series of eight formal toasts was offered and responded to by the leading citizens of the two villages. A long series of volunteer toasts then was offered, one to the band, one to the Cape Cod sailors - "Can't be beat!" - and another to the ladies of Cape Cod - "more bewitching than the Salemites ever were." As the day ended, it was voted to adjourn until the 4th of July, 1860. Let's hope the refreshment committee was better prepared for that one.

Yes, Virginia, there really were good old-fashioned Fourth of July celebrations in this town. But if you model yours after the 4th of July, 1859, it might be tough, even for you, to carry it off. Good luck with the completion of Dennis Port Village Green.

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

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