



ANNUAL BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON

We are lucky this year in being able to hold our 195th birthday luncheon on the very day that Gov. John Hancock signed the act which incorporated our town as a separate municipality in 1793--June 19. We are also very fortunate in other ways. We can once again hold our birthday luncheon at the Lighthouse Inn, than which there is no finer place to commemorate our history. And also, we are most fortunate to be able to enjoy the talent of a celebrated Chanty Master, who will bring to us his fine renditions of sea chanties and other New England folk songs. Tom is well known for his mastery of this almost forgotten folk art, and it is a real treat we have in store for us. RESERVATIONS ARE NECESSARY! Deadline is June 13th. Please see last months newsletter for menu and reservation form. Please be with us for this guaranteed-to-be-excellent luncheon and entertainment.

SCHOOL TRIPS ONCE AGAIN A GREAT SUCCESS

The Ezra H. Baker School has once again joined us in sponsoring field trips to the historic centers, which both school and DHS feel are very worthwhile in helping our children appreciate their heritage. We must especially thank the committees of the Manse and Jericho for their--not just co-operation--but real assistance in making these trips possible and successful. It is impossible to name everyone who helped. Please know that your efforts were appreciated, and the program would now have succeeded without each of you. About 350 children of grades 3 and 4 now have a deeper understanding of their town's history than they had before. I'm sure they would like to thank you, too.

SUMMER EXHIBITS PLANNED

"Man may work from sun to sun
But women's work is never done."

This familiar bit of verse provides the inspiration for special summer exhibits for both of our Historic Centers. The Jericho Barn will feature "Making a Living on Cape Cod in the 19th Century". There are many mementoes of the better known occupations on permanent exhibit in the barn already--the maritime activities, cranberry farming, and salt making. Perhaps you did not know that at one time people earned a living here in Dennis by working in overall factories, shoe factories, and a straw hat factory. These and other lesser known ways of providing for the family will be shown in the Jericho Barn, open on Wednesday and Friday, 2-4:30 P.M. in July and August.

At the Manse, it's "Women's Work". One has to wonder at the versatility of our pioneer mothers, and the long days of almost constant toil they spent to keep their families clothed and fed. The Manse exhibit will show some of the antique implements our "foremothers" used to make thread, weave cloth, make candles, soap, butter, cheese, --and to perform many other daily chores. Also included will be improved "machines", like a washing machine, circa 1895, and irons heated by charcoal. The Manse will be open on Tuesday and Thursday, 2-4 P.M. beginning June 28. When visiting the special exhibits, you will also be given a guided tour of the Historic Centers. Come and bring a friend. It's Free!

ATTENTION HOWES DESCENDANTS

If you have not joined the Howes Family Association, now would be a good time to do it. A newsletter is being prepared, and members who have paid their dues of \$12 per annum will be on the mailing list. Send dues to: Howes Family Association, P.O. Box 904, Dennis, MA 02639 and include your name, mail address, and phone number.

ANOTHER TALE FROM THE COLONIAL WARS

This is a story which was told by Geneva Nickerson Eldredge. Born in 1877, she was a gifted story teller who recorded the tales she heard from her ancestors. This incident is probably from King George's War, and whether true or not, it's a good story. The vessel Bethel from Cape Cod, Isaac Freeman of Harwich, Master, sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar one day in 1754 bound for Boston. As the sun lowered, a large ship, which the Captain judged was Spanish, appeared on the horizon. The Captain was prepared for this possibility and he put his plan into action. All hands were sent below to fetch hats and jackets from their sea chests. Then oars and staves were dressed in these clothes and propped along the gun'ales to make it appear that the vessel carried a large crew. Lanterns were hung as high in the mast as possible, to make the vessel seem larger. Half of the crew were Quakers, who did not believe in fighting, so the vessel carried only six real cannon. But stored along with them were six more "Quaker cannon", made of wood. This was a trick often employed on ships which carried Quaker crews. The Captain ordered all of the cannonreal and Quaker, to be placed in the gun ports. As darkness closed in, it was determined that the approaching Spanish ship was the Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Across the water Capt. Freeman announced through his trumpet, "This is the vessel Bethel, full-armed and full-manned, out of England. Will you yield or fight?" The Spanish Captain, fooled totally by the camouflage, surrendered without a shot being fired, and was deeply chagrined to discover he had been tricked. P.S. There is a Quaker Cannon on display here in Dennis. Can anyone tell me where?

CALENDAR

- June 19 Town of Dennis Birthday Luncheon 195th birthday Lighthouse Inn, West Dennis
Sociability at 12 noon, Lunch at 1 P.M. Tom Goux at 1:45 P.M.
- June 24 2:00 P.M. Opening tea at Jericho House. All welcome.
- July 13 7:30 P.M. Carlton Hall The Story of the Cape Cod Canal
- Aug. 25 7:30 P.M. V.I.C. Hall The Cape Playhouse--A Reminiscence
- Sept 20 7:30 P.M. Carlton Hall Annual Meeting

A STRANGER IN TOWN

My husband and I are very fortunate to have several of our grandchildren living on the Cape. I get to borrow one every once in a while for a trip to the park or to climb the Indian Rock. Just recently I spent a day with Billy. He is a little over two and a half, and is now learning the rules of social behavior outside of the safe haven of home. On my way to return Billy to his Mom, I stopped for a few things at the supermarket. As I considered the offerings on the shelves, I could see Billy out of the corner of my eye, watching a gentleman on the opposite side of the aisle. When I placed my purchase in the cart, Billy looked at me solemnly--at least as solemnly as a blue-eyed, blonde boy with a big dimple in his chin can look. He said, "That man is a stranger. I shouldn't talk to strangers. That's one of my rules." Yes, dear Billy, and it's a rule we must teach our children. But it occurs to me that if we all followed that rule, some of us might go a whole day without talking to anyone! In a town of over 13,000 we live in a world of strangers. The small town where every one knows everyone else is a thing of the past. It may surprise you to consider that there is a distinct possibility that the few families who founded this town were also strangers to each other. The first-comers who applied to Plymouth to "take up their freedom" on that part of the Cape Cod which was incorporated as Yarmouth in 1639 seem to have come from widely different parts of Great Britain. They appear to have arrived on different vessels. They first settled in different plantations in Massachusetts Bay. I cannot find any real evidence that shows a common thread which binds them together. But I'm still looking. Perhaps we started out as strangers, and we are strangers again today. But in between things were very different. The neighbors in the settlement of Nobscusset worked out their differences early and soon became fast friends. When the old timers prepared to pass the torch to their sons and daughters, they referred to those appointed to be executors of their wills as "dear friends" and "esteemed neighbors". By the second and third generation, they were also relatives, as Bakers married Chases, Nickersons married Kelleys, and Crowells married Howes'. Apparently they liked it that way. There appears on the record a statute which allows the old-timers to "warn out" newcomers who did not come by invitation or recommendation. The new-comers were informed that if they got into any difficulty--health-wise, financially, with the law, or with the ministry, they would have to leave town. Thus, throughout most of the colonial period, this town grew by virtue of the large number of children in each family, and not by the arrival of new settlers. Now and then a new name appears, and when it does, I have fun trying to find out from whence the stranger came, and why he chose to come here. Of course, Josiah Dennis was a stranger, and as the town approaches the 195th anniversary of the decision to use his name for the town, we might consider how he came to be here. The eastern part of Yarmouth had asked for and received the right to be a separate precinct, with the hope of establishing a separate parish and building a church. The time had come when this was accomplished, and a minister for the new church must be found. For a people anxious to be independent, they took quite a while in settling a pastor. The first call was issued to the Rev. Greenleaf, already a pastor of the old church at Yarmouth. Swift suggests that this was just a courtesy. I wonder if it was in the feeble hope that he would accept, and no stranger need be approached? Next to be considered was Josiah Crocker, who had grown up in Yarmouth. But Josiah decided to go elsewhere. Third to be considered was Samuel Dexter, who visited, preached, and was approved by the neighboring clergy. But the deacons waited so long to decide, Mr. Dexter was forced to accept the urgings of Dedham to settle there. At last, in 1725, a call was issued to Josiah Dennis. Perhaps he was not so much a stranger as might be supposed. Although brought up in Wenham or Ipswich, he had attended Harvard College with young David Hall, son of Deacon Joseph of this parish. Something of his personality and nature was certainly known. Happily, Rev. Dennis accepted the call and served the parish well, until his death in 1763. Though he came to town somewhat as a stranger, through his teaching, his sense of humor, and his devotion to the people, he earned their undying love and respect.

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