



### CELEBRATING THE PAST--LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

On June 19th, 1993 as the clocks in the towers of Dennis strike one, the largest parade ever to pass through the streets of town will step off to march along the Main Street of South Dennis. It will be two hundred years to the day since John Hancock affixed his famous signature to the Act of Incorporation which made the East Precinct of Yarmouth a separate and distinct town, "with all the powers, privileges, and immunities to which Towns within this Commonwealth are or may be entitled." Ah, but with power and privilege comes responsibility. The first order of business was to settle affairs with our sister town of Yarmouth. Any taxes which were in arrears must be collected, common lands divided, and the care of the indigent assigned. All debts of the town of Yarmouth as of the date of separation must be shared, all debts due to the town divided proportionately. Atherton Hall, Esquire, was empowered to serve a warrant to a "principle citizen", directing that the warrant should be posted, warning the inhabitants of the town to meet together sometime in the month of March or April next, that is in 1794, then and there to choose "all such officers as towns are required to choose" and conduct the business of the new government. Atherton Hall, Esq. was the son of Deacon Daniel Hall and the second of Daniel's three wives, Sarah (Hough) Doane. He had served the East Precinct of Yarmouth in several capacities and was a student of the law. The "Principle citizen" to whom he chose to issue the warrant was Jeremiah Howes (1743-1834) known as "Squire Jeremy". He had served as a lieutenant of the militia in the Revolution and was now a justice of the peace. Squire Jeremy posted the warrant at the meeting house and the first meeting of the voters of the Town of Dennis was called to order on March 3, 1794 at 1 of the clock. Jeremy was chosen to act as moderator, Elisha Bassett as Clerk and Treasurer. Squire Jeremy, Mr. Jonathan Bangs (1760-1846) and Lt. Joseph Sears (1756-1836) were the first Board of Selectmen. They had all served in the militia during the Revolution. Together they served a total of thirty-six years as selectmen of the town. Squire Hall and Mr. Bassett, however, were participants in government for a very brief period. Atherton Hall removed to Vermont the following year and Mr. Bassett joined other East Precinct families in Ashfield. The voters job was not finished with the election of selectmen. Towns in the Commonwealth had a long list of officers which they were required by law to maintain. A Constable, 4 Surveyors of Highways, 3 fence viewers, 3 hog reeves, a pound keeper, and 3 field drivers were also elected to help the town run smoothly. The voters then appropriated 600 pounds, or thereabouts to be raised for the expenses of the town, and adjourned. Town meeting 1993 was a lot more exciting than that. But remember, Dennis was a very different place then than it is today. Less than 200 taxpayers were listed on the rolls and not all taxpayers were voters. There were fewer than 100 dwellings north of Setucket Road, only barely 100 on the south side of town. In between lay an uninhabited woodland, more than half of the town's area. There was no need for planning boards and finance committees, no shopping malls or commercial zones. Perhaps it behooves us on the 200th birthday year to dwell a bit on the great changes time has wrought. What if Bangs, Sears, and Howes had established a Planning Board and created a Finance Committee? What if, in addition to fence viewers and pound keepers the voters of 1794 had elected a Conservation Commission, and created an historic district? If the Board of Selectmen had had the time and forethought to look ahead, how different would our town be today? And will we, in 1993, now take time to look ahead to the next two centuries? What can we do to make the future better so that two hundred years from now our descendants will honor our memory and be grateful for their heritage?

### BICENTENNIAL DINNER

Tickets are going fast for our 200th birthday dinner at Lighthouse Inn on June 20th. We have even had reservations (by phone and letter) from Florida! We have been counting down to this Very Special Time for six years and it's finally here! Get your reservations in to Josh Crowell ASAP. Don't miss this Once-In-A-Lifetime event--and we've ordered a super spectacular sunset over Nantucket Sound, just for you! P.S. Please note the Trivia questions on the other side and study up. Quiz on the 20th. Come prepared!

### CAPE HERITAGE '93

DHS is joining 55 other Cape Cod non-profit organizations in presenting some special programs to highlight Cape Cod's rich and diverse cultural, historic, and environmental heritage from June 19-27. Our goal is to heighten public awareness of the unique diversity of our region. The very first event was a Native American Festival held at Cape Cod Community College on June 4th where over 700 people watched our first Americans celebrate their culture with song and dance, crafts, and some great food. Dennis has made many contributions to the world through our inventors, ship builders, sea captains, and just plain ordinary citizens. Come visit one of our events during Cape Heritage Week. We have a great town and we want everyone to know it! Check the calendar (on other side) for local events or the Cape Heritage brochure for Cape-wide special events. Do take advantage of these special 9 days. They were planned especially for Cape Cod residents to discover all the very interesting places that are right here close at hand. So go, do, enjoy--but start it off on the 19th with a parade.

The June 10th issue of the Cape Times will have a Cape Heritage brochure insert. Take a few minutes to read about all the things available for you to do. Many of them are free. Pick a place you've always thought about going to, but never have, a do it.

### CALENDAR

- June 19 ALL DAY HAPPY 200th BIRTHDAY, DENNIS!!  
1:00 PM Bicentennial Parade, Old Main Street, South Dennis. There will be no parking along the parade route. Shuttle busses will be provided with parking at: West Dennis Beach, Tony Kent Arena, field on Theophilous Smith Rd, Wixon Middle School, and the Cape Playhouse/Cinema Complex. Bring a folding chair so you can relax while you watch the parade. Your bus will pick you up where they dropped you off.
- June 20 5:00 PM DHS 200th Birthday Dinner at Lighthouse Inn, West Dennis. Reservations at 385-3689.
- June 22 2-4 PM Cape Heritage '93. Open House at Josiah Dennis Manse. "Shiverick  
24, 26, & 27 Ships" show each day at 2:15 and 3:00.
- June 23 2-4 PM Cape Heritage '93. Open House at Jericho House and Barn Museum.  
25 & 26 "Cape Cod Thru A Quester's Eye" show each day at 2:30.
- June 25 7:30 PM Steam Heat. 3 vocalists accompanied by piano, drums, and bass, doing songs from the 20's, 30's, and 40's. Wixon School. Admission.

### DENNIS TRIVIA

This being our long awaited anniversary celebration, your newsletter staff thought that a Dennis history trivia quiz was in order. A prize will be awarded at the Birthday Dinner at the Lighthouse Inn on June 20th to the person who turns in the most correct answers. In the case of a tie, additional questions will be asked at the dinner to determine the winner. Some of the answers to the questions below have appeared in DHS newsletters, others have not. Please note that Historical Commission members are not eligible for the prize. So get out your quill pens and try your luck.

1. Name the first female selectman elected by the Town of Dennis.
2. Give the full name of the Dennis resident who patented a flying machine in 1862.
3. Where in Dennis is Finnegan's Meadow?
4. What year was the Cape Playhouse founded?
5. What and where was the Dennis Hydropathic Institute?
6. Who was the town's first official Fire Chief and when was he appointed?
7. What year was Dennis designated as "All-American Town"?
8. How many times did East Dennis resident Johnny Kelley run in the Boston Marathon?
9. Where in Dennis is the memorial to Charles and Francis Tobey?
10. What was the name of the Indian tribe which lived in the area now Dennis when the English settlers arrived in 1639?
11. What was a previous name for Liberty Hall in South Dennis?

### A CRANBERRY MONUMENT FOR DENNIS

The Dennis Historical Commission and the Josiah Dennis Manse Committee are cooperating with the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association and Ocean Spray Cranberry Cooperative to erect a monument to the start of the cranberry industry. The monument will be placed near the Manse and will commemorate the fact that Henry Hall of Nobscussett was the first to attempt to cultivate the wild cranberries which grew in swamps all over Cape Cod. His "cranberry grounds" were north of Whig Street, so the Manse is an appropriate place for this marker. A dedication ceremony is planned for the Fall. We will keep you informed.

### LOOKING AHEAD--HOWES FAMILY TO MEET IN THE FALL

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the circus in America and the Howes Family Association is planning to commemorate the part which that family has played in the development of the circus, by holding a reunion in Brewster, New York in October. Moody Howes of the East Precinct of Yarmouth moved to Brewster in 1748 and his descendants were among the first American circus showmen. If you are interested in receiving information about this "colorful" event, contact Nancy Howes at 385-3528, who is treasurer of the association and she will tell you all about it.

### OOPS!!!

Last month's newsletter made note of our new members. Among them was Mr. and Mrs. Charles Chamberlain. That is not so...the Charles Chamberlains have been DHS members for many years. What we meant to say was Welcome Aboard Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Chamberlain. Our apologies to you all.

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