



POTS OF GOLD IN DENNIS PORT

Why is it that March always makes us think of leprechauns, rainbows, and pots of gold? This year it may be more than the coming of St. Patrick's Day. For a Dennis family with a name that suggests at least a drop or two of Irish ancestry, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow was some pot! Our congratulations to Bruce and Donna Hegarty and their family of Dennis Port who found a rainbow which led to a pot of gold filled with 26.7 million dollars when they held the winning ticket in the Mass Millions lottery jack pot last month. They will probably go down in our town's history as one of the few families who became multi-millionaires overnight. For a space of time, when you identify yourself off-Cape as a resident of Dennis, you will probably hear the response, "Oh, yes, that's where the latest winner of the Mass millions lives!"

There was another Dennis man who found a pot of gold some years ago, also in Dennis Port. You might be interested to hear that happy story this St. Patrick's season, even though he was not Irish and the pot was no where near as full as that won by the Hagertys.

Some years ago, in the late eighteens hundreds or early nineteen hundreds, there lived in Dennis Port a mariner named Thacher Lewis. He had already earned a fine amount of money by his trade, and hoped to accumulate enough to make a comfortable retirement for himself and his family. But what to do with the cash he had in hand while he was away at sea? The thought occurred to him that, if he buried the gold in his back yard, no one would know its location and it would be safe should thieves break into his home with the intent to steal it. So he found a suitable location and buried his pot of gold. As far as Thacher Lewis is concerned, it seems that was the end of it. Mr. Lewis returned from sea and lived in Dennis Port in his home on Depot Street until he was a very old man. But he never dug up his gold, for reasons which no one I have talked with can explain.

No one else found the gold either, and when the Berry family bought the property, they were told of its existence. Young Franklin was a member of this Berry family and the thought of buried treasure was intriguing to him. He spent some of his time away from studies attempting to locate the hiding spot of Thacher Lewis' gold coins. When Frank found that pot of gold in the early winter of 1931, you can imagine the excitement in the village, and throughout the town. Over night Dennis Port became famous. The pot contained 25 twenty dollar gold pieces, a small fortune in those days. Franklin decided to use it to acquire an education. When he graduated from High School in 1933, Franklin Doane Berry attended college and became a medical doctor. Dr. Berry is alive and well today, living in Westport, Massachusetts and frequently visits his many friends in his home town. I'm sure he has heard of the good luck of the Hegartys and remembers how fortunate he felt when, after much searching, he found his own pot of gold, buried in a back yard on Depot Street, Dennis Port.

THANK YOU, MR. SCOFIELD

Our Bicentennial Mid-Winter Festivity was an enjoyable way to banish those mid-winter doldrums. True to her word, Christine (working up to the very last minute) had her banquet room ready for us at 12 noon. Our guest of honor, Wilson Scofield, was presented with a DHS Certificate of Appreciation for his many contributions to our audio-visual programs. Bill is the person responsible for the fine professional quality of our shows, "Dennis", "Shiverick Ships", and "Indian Lands". He and Josh Crowell-our noted A-V team-have shown the first two programs over 250 times, to over 15,000 people, and covered 5,000 miles in doing so. That's quite an accomplishment! Bill has also given us many other photographic contributions too numerous to mention. Our sincere thanks to you, Bill. The luncheon ended with a period fashion show. The costumes and models were both lovely and charming. What a delightful way to celebrate our 200th year.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I would like to say how much Dennis Historical Society appreciates the time and effort the following people put into the fashion show at the February luncheon to make it a great success: Dee Moore-purchasing and arranging flowers for the models, Gertrude Lailey-candy, pasting pictures on the menus and decorating the tables, Muriel Herlihy-for writing the script, Music-Barbara Shepard, Lilla Smith-arranging, directing, and driving back and forth gathering clothes for the models. Last, but not least the models: Lilla Smith, Harriet Vonderahe, Carol Horton, Dawn Hoyt, Carol Bell, Dale Whitemore, Inge Brewer, Sarah Deck, Isabelle Flynn, Nancy Howes, Lu Crowell, Ruth Knox and Marian Low. My sincere thanks to each and every one of them. Richard S. Howes President February 17, 1993.

BICENTENNIAL BITS

The Bicentennial Pizza Party at Wixon School was a huge success. A mountain of pizza and salad from Pizza Hut in South Dennis was consumed in a short time by just under 300 people. James Coogan of the Bicentennial Committee coordinated the event. The diners were treated to a slide show of old pictures of Dennis. Thanks, Jim, for a fun time!

March is being celebrated as Village History Month by our libraries. Stop by your local library to see their display. Better yet...visit all of them. Each one is distinctly different and very interesting. See you in the stacks!

CALENDAR

March 10 7:30 P.M. DHS Board meets at Josh Crowells.
March 17 Happy St. Patrick's Day. May you all find a pot of gold at the end of your rainbow!
April 18 2:00 P.M. A History of America through Its Flags presented by Mr. Edward Gelsthorpe. Carleton Hall, Dennis.

CONCERNING DOG BILLY

According to an old Cape Cod saying, a man's best friends are an old dog, an old wife and ready cash. My (old) spouse is blest with two out of three. The old wife you are well acquainted with. Some of you also know the old dog. He is "Reid's Schultz", a black and tan dachhund who has recently celebrated his fourteenth birthday, which places him somewhere in his nineties by human standards. Shultz has had some interesting experiences for a dog of his breed. Since we have been sailing the sloop Seareid Schultz has been designated second mate. Those of you who know dachhunds intimately will understand why he is often referred to as "The Admiral". He has assigned certain tasks to the rest of the crew. If he wants his dish filled, he asks the First Mate. If he needs to go ashore while we are at anchor, he asks the Captain. But he's never been arrested. This story is about a sea dog who almost did get arrested. When Captian Joshua Sears of East Dennis was preparing to go to sea in the Ship Orissa one of the crew members who signed on was Billy. He was not an able seaman, not a member of the Boston Marine Society, he was just a big brown dog, not even identified as to breed. He seemed to take to the life of the ship readily, acquainting himself with the routine with ease. In no time he was even able to recognize the difference in rank between the captain and the mate, much to the mate's dismay. Billy would readily obey the orders of the mate, Cyrus Sears of West Yarmouth, when his watch was on deck and the captain enjoyed a period below decks. But when Captain Joshua appeared, Billy would not respond to the mate's command, but would answer only to the captain. The dog was equally ready to obey the Captain's wish that the Sabbath should be observed with decorum. On Sunday Billy would escort the helmsman to and from the wheel at each change of watch, in a quiet, dignified manner. On no other day did he follow this ritual. It may not have been merely that the dog could keep track of the days of the week. Sunday was the day when fresh chicken or pork was on the menu, and Billy always shared what the crew had to eat. His trouble with the law occurred while the Orissa was at her mooring in Madras. While the crew ate dinner, Billy was on watch above decks. An Indian merchant pulled up to the mooring and came aboard the vessel, looking about to see what he could see. Billy watched his every move, and being suspicious of his intentions, began to dog the merchant's footsteps as he walked about the ship. The merchant got a bit nervous, and decided to abandon ship. As he neared the gangplank he broke into a run, and Billy grabbed him by his flowing robes. The merchant shouted in alarm, the crew came out on deck and freed him to go on his way, more frightened than injured. A day or two later, the local police officer, called the chokador, appeared on the Orissa with a document a yard long, decorated with a large blue seal. It was a warrant for the arrest of dog Billy! Mr. Sears was blessed with ready wit, and decided to let Billy have a say in his own fate. "Billy, you have been a bad boy, and this man has come to take you away," said the mate. Whereupon he told the chokador he could take the dog. But Billy wasn't game to go. Every time the officer approached him, he bared his teeth and emitted a low growl. He grabbed the long robe of the policeman and shook it furiously. At this the officer felt it prudent to retreat. But the affair was not over. After a week had past, Mr. Sears was summoned to appear in the court at Madras. He was charged by the irate chokador with keeping a dangerous and vicious dog on the ship. After telling his side of the story, the English judge dismissed the case and invited Sears to his chamber. They had a chuckle together and the judge asked to keep the warrant to add to his collection of unusual legal documents. It was the first time in his career that he had ever seen a warrant for the arrest of an animal. Billy remained with the ship for a complete circumnavigation of the globe. But when Captain Joshua was appointed captain of the new Shiverick vessel, the Wild Hunter, Billy lost his place as mascot to the Captain's daughter's pony. That's another story.

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