



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 23 Number 2

March 2000

**Board Meeting
Wednesday
March 8th
7:00 PM**

Jericho House
All interested
members are
invited to attend!

**Thursday
March 23rd
Carleton Hall
7:00 PM
Colonial Dance
Training**

Join us for a night of
fun! We're all
beginners.

**SAVE THIS DATE
April 8th**

We will meet at noon at
the Olde Inn
at West Dennis
348 Main St, Route 28
for luncheon and to hear
Arthur Katz of Lexing-
ton speak on "What
Really Happened on
April 19th."

See reservation form on
page 3

RED FLANNEL HASH

Phyllis Robbins Horton

Celebration of St. Patrick's day focuses the usual attention on green beer and corned beef dinner. I can't speak for green beer, but a good corned beef dinner is worthy of some note.

Growing up in Dennis in the 1930's and 40's we never heard of St. Patrick and a corned beef dinner was known far and wide as a New England Boiled Dinner, or mostly, just boiled dinner. Corned beef, or a picnic ham which was also used for boiled dinners, was about the cheapest meat available. The cash resources of most Cape Codders in that era were rather slim, so a boiled dinner was on the menu with some regularity. In the hands of a capable cook this inexpensive, utilitarian cut of beef brisket could be turned into a rare culinary experience.

My dear mother-in-law, Millie Rogers (Gage) Horton, cooked some of the best corned beef I've ever had. If she could get a brisket corned by Rufus Foss at the Economy store in Dennis Port that was fine, but many times she made her own. The accompanying vegetables were whatever had been "put down" in the round root cellar. In the fall she layered potatoes, carrots, turnips, parsnips, etc. with garden soil in wooden boxes. Onions were hung in mesh bags from the ceiling and cabbages were in bushel baskets. Whoever went down cellar for the veggies also brought back a jar of beets she had preserved. They made a good side dish to the corned beef, but more importantly—the next day or two we could count on having red flannel hash.

Cooking a boiled dinner takes several hours of keeping the pot at a slow simmer so the meat is nice and tender and the vegetables and meat marry into each other. That's plenty of time to savor the aromas coming from the kettle and anticipate the meal ahead. No one had to be called twice to dinner!

Better still was when she made hash. She ground or chopped everything left from the boiled dinner with all the blended flavors, included chopped beets and mixed all together into a pink-tinged hash. The big iron skillet went on the stove with some lard to melt, then the hash. She cooked it over a me-



An old Glenwood Stove...
by Martha Crowell Doolin

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RED FLANNEL HASH

(Continued from page 1)

dium heat until it was crispy on the bottom, turned it over and cooked the other side to the same degree.

The heaping platter of hash she placed on the dinner table was regarded with reverence for maybe 3 1/2 seconds and then someone bailed right into it* with pleasure and passed the platter along. The last one to be served watched with impatience as the platter slowly made its way around the table.

I seem to remember that regardless of how much red flannel hash she made there was never any left over. That's a great testament to what a good Cape Cod cook could do with a few down home ingredients.

PRH

*"bail into" is an old Cape expression still used by a few old die-hards.

Marion Baker Remembers...

On a lovely fall afternoon, Jean Goheen, Joan Martin and Kitty McNanara had the pleasure of having tea with Marion Baker who had celebrated her 95th birthday the previous week.

Marion captivated us with her recollections of life in Dennis way back when.

She remembered the South Dennis School (Grades 1-5 downstairs on the left, Grades 6,7, and 8 downstairs on the right, and high school upstairs). Graduation was at the Captain's Church with daisy chains picked in the nearby meadow and strung on the two aisles of the church.

She mentioned Ed O'Brien's overall factory on Main Street between Heir's Landing and Willowford Way, which burned down in the early 1900's.

Marion remembered Miss Emma Baker who lived in Jericho her whole life and who belonged to the local sewing circle. Emma often visited Marion's mother, Luella, known as Lully. Emma's sister came summers and visited Emma.

Anna Nickerson was Marion's teacher for grades 1-5. Anna's father was a Sea Captain who traveled the world and Anna showed the children bandages that had been used to bind the feet of women in China.

Marion talked of the school bus from Dennisport which was really an open truck with long benches on each side and the curtains used to keep out the cold in winter.

Marion told of Helen and Captain Obed Baxter and his death at sea. Helen commanded the ship home, preserving his body in a pickle barrel so that he could be buried in the family plot in South Dennis.

Judah Baker's daughter, Marion, entertained us for a pleasant afternoon. Thank you Marion!

Kitty McNamara

Join us for our April Luncheon

We will meet at *The Olde Inn at West Dennis*, 348 Main Street (Route 28) on April 8th at noon for luncheon. Owners *Dermit Quin* and *Phelim Mehan* tell us the building dates from the very early 1800's and that a *Captain Studley* was the first owner. Originally a private home, it became an inn in 1980. The building has Colonial features, but because of its shed dormers, it is classified as a "Wellfleet Cape." There is ample parking in the rear. Luncheon will be served promptly at 12:30.

April Luncheon Reservation

April 8th

The Olde Inn at West Dennis

Please make reservations for _____ people. Enclosed is a check for \$ _____ (\$15.00 per person) payable to the Dennis Historical Society.

Choice of : _____ Chowder _____ Soup

Entrée: _____ Haddock with Sherried Bread Crumbs

or _____ Cape Cod Chicken (stuffed chicken breast with light sauce)

Dessert - Tea or Coffee

Please enclose a self addressed, stamped envelope and send to : Lura Crowell, Asst. Treasurer

P.O. Box 216

East Dennis, MA 02641

RSVP by March 30



The Littlest Library by Karen North Wells

Third in a series of articles about our Town libraries...

The Free Public Library of South Dennis

One small square room and an alcove was once all the space used for the South Dennis Public Library. This little building, its shelves crowded with books to suit every bibliophile, may well be one of the tiniest libraries in New England.

The building, which resembles an early campground cottage, was first owned by John Rose, the first Portuguese settler in the Town. Legend has it that the library really was a campground cottage brought from Wellfleet, but others say that Rose built the tiny house himself. It was referred to as "the house that John built." When he died in 1868, the property was bought by Benjamin M. Nickerson, Jr., who used the place as a cobbler's shop.

Next to make a home of the small structure were two sisters, Misses Elizabeth (Lizzie) and Emily Smalle. When Miss Lizzie passed on in 1918, the property was sold to Captain Jonathan Matthews. He, in turn, presented the building to the Village, rent free, for use as a public library. He died in 1926, and in his will he made

the building an outright gift to the Village.

The South Dennis Library Association was incorporated in 1928. The first librarian at the new library was Mrs. Bessie Matthews, the wife of David Matthews, who was the brother of Jonathan.

Today the library continues to serve the Village as it has done for the past 82 years. People who enjoy browsing will find the atmosphere most informal and inviting. Thanks to Pauline Marr, Librarian

Dennis Historical Society

P.O. Box 607

South Dennis, MA 02660-0607

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THE WAY WE WERE

Burt Derick's call for old pictures and documents did not fall on deaf ears. He has been able to catalog and scan several old class pictures.

This picture shows the class of 1899. Do any of the faces seem familiar to you?

In our upcoming newsletters we hope to share some of the history of our Dennis schools.



The Class of 1899

