

DENNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MAY, 1979 NEWSLETTER

Pewter Crafters of Cape Cod

It is always a pleasure to hear a true craftsman talk about his work. We were treated to this experience last month when Mr. Barry Cliff spoke on "American Pewter--Its Past and Its Present". Mr. Cliff and his family have learned to hand-craft beautiful pewter tableware, following the old techniques of itinerant pewter makers who once peddled their wares here on the Cape. Their shop is located on Rt. 6A just across the Yarmouth line, and if you missed the talk, you are welcome to stop by and see this old craft being practiced much as it has been for hundreds of years. Thanks, Mr. Cliff, for renewing our faith in fine craftsmanship.

Cape Verdean Distinctives

Newcomers to Cape Cod may not be aware of the importance, culturally and economically, of the Cape Verdean residents of the Cape. On May 3 at 7:30, at V.I.C. Hall on Depot Street in Dennisport, you can learn of their rich and diverse cultural background and perhaps come to understand how, when and why they became important Cape Cod residents. Please come to hear Dr. Williston Holbert speak and show slides of his many trips to his ancestral islands. The Harwich Historical Society and the Cape Verdean families of Dennis are also invited to attend.

Town Meeting--Old Style/New Style

"The purest form of democracy" is a phrase often used to describe the traditional New England town meeting. Dennis voters will have their day of democracy when town meeting 1979 convenes at the Nathaniel H. Wixon School on May 8. Town meetings were authorized by the General Court in Plymouth Colony at the meeting of the deputies on September 3, 1639. The law from the old Plymouth Colony Records reads, "All townships shall have liberty to meet together and to make such town orders as shall be needful and requisite for the hearing (sic) of cattle and doing such other things as shall be needful for the maintenance of good neighborhood."

Early town meetings were not in fact democratic at all. Among the qualifications for voting were that you should be male, a freeman, member of the church, having 20 pounds notable estate, and "of good conversation, having taken the oath of fidelity." Though no longer a requisite, we certainly do have men of good conversation, who always make town meetings interesting.

The earliest existing record of a town meeting of Yarmouth (of which Dennis) was a part) is for May 19, 1677. Among the acts passed was one which required that each freeholder should kill 6 blackbirds by July, or pay a fine. Perhaps this should be considered for seagull control at the town dump! (just joking, folks) Another item of business which evoked a great deal of discussion was the matter of granting liquor licenses. Perhaps things have not changed so much in 302 years, after all.

Incidentally, the townsmen also voted to fine those freemen who did not attend the town meeting, certainly not necessary today as Dennis meetings are better attended than any other Cape town. We hope you plan to be present May 8 when Dennis celebrates 340 years of democracy in action.

Indians, Packets & Pottery--Subjects on May Bicycle Tour

The next bicycle tour will start at Corporation Beach at 2:00 Sunday, May 20th. Included in this tour will be the history of the fish corporation that gave its name to the beach and the road, and the story of the packets that brought the merchandise for the general store followed by a stop at the store. There will be a tour of the theater where Margaret Adams will tell of its glamorous history. As Scargo Lake and the Indian Burial Ground are passed, some history of the Lake and the Nauset and Mattachiest Indians will be learned, and the story of Princess Scargo will be retold. The main tour will end at Harry Holl's Pottery Shop from where the more zealous bikers may go up the hill to Scargo Tower where they can look down on the route.

Trail blaze with us as we go the first round of this trip. This will be the 6th printed bicycle tour of Dennis. Regular repeats of these tours are planned. The printed tours are distributed through the Chamber of Commerce and through members of the Historical Society. Call Paula Bacon (394-5739) for more information.

Field Trips are Nearly Ready

Many hands, hearts, and minds are combining to make the annual field trips to the two historic centers by our school children a really exciting experience in learning the history of Dennis. We need volunteers who will help explain our excellent exhibits, and who also might be interested in serving as hostesses at the historic centers, both for the children's field trips and during the summer.

Specifics now needed are old-fashioned clothing that the children may try on--costume jewelry brooches, someone who spins or has a hand-loom and can weave. We also are looking for a model windmill, pictures of mills and water wheels and ladies who can embroider. Can you meet any of these needs? If so, call Paula Bacon 394-5739, Nancy Reid 398-8842, or Georgia Bagge 398-8869.

BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON
LIGHTHOUSE INN
June 17, 1979

PLEASE RESERVE _____ Luncheon Tickets @ \$6.00 each.

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please enclose a self-addressed envelope and mail to:

Mr. Joshua Crowell, Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638

Dennis Celebrates a Birthday

It is becoming an annual event to celebrate the town's birthday by holding a luncheon at the Lighthouse Inn in West Dennis. This year's party will be on Sunday, June 17, with cocktails and hors d'oevres 12-1, and luncheon at 1 P.M. Clam chowder, seafood newburg in patty shell, garden peas, molded strawberry salad and cranberry sherbert will be on our Bill of Fare. Mr. W. Jeremiah Burke will read his paper giving a short history of the town. And Gail Hart and Nancy Flinkstrom will provide us with a fun-type activity. Tickets are \$6.00, tax and gratuity included. Reservations must be made. Please send your check and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Mr. Joshua Crowell, Box 963, Dennis 02638.

As last year, a sandwich lunch will be available at the pool for children. Do join us for a pleasant birthday celebration. Mr. & Mrs. William Taylor are chairmen of the event.

Have You a House to be Dated?

The House Dating Committee will hold a class in how to date a house at 2 PM on Saturday May 5 at the Jericho House. Mr. Edmund Nickerson, Chairman, will explain the goals of the committee and the form to be used in submitting a house for dating. Mrs. Pauline Derick will lead the class, and material will be available for those interested in working on their own house or someone else's. We are now placing date markers on all houses 100 years or more of age. A great many houses remain undated and we need all the help we can get! This is a very interesting procedure and a lot of history can be learned in the process. So please join us for some expert help that may start you on an educational project.

Liberty Hall

Did you know that in its 135 year history the building known as Liberty Hall in South Dennis has been used as a Dry Goods & Provisions store, a stove showroom, a furniture store, an ice cream parlor, a church, a school, post office, and supper room/function hall, among many other things? Today it is best known, of course, as the location for the Union Circle Thrift Shop.

As part of a project to raise the community's awareness of Liberty Hall, and its availability to individuals and groups, a history of the building is currently being completed, and will be used as a fund-raiser for the Liberty Hall Restoration Fund.

The book is being written by Edmond Rhodes Nickerson, and contains the complete history of Liberty Hall, with notes and notices of every event held at the hall during the last 135 years, along with scores of vintage photographs of the entire village of South Dennis, ancient deeds and maps, and other memorabilia sure to be of interest to every present and past resident of South Dennis.

Details of the publication date and subscription will be forth-coming in the near future. --This is the last call for any old pictures of the village of South Dennis, houses, etc. for inclusion in the book.

Anyone with pictures, contact Ed Nickerson, Box 52, South Dennis, MA 02660.
MAY 1979 CALENDAR

May 3 7:30 PM "Cape Verdean Distinctives" Dr. Williston Holbert, VIC Hall, Dennisport
May 5 2 PM House Dating Class, Mrs. Pauline Derick, Jericho House
May 20 2 PM Bicycle Tour, meet at Corporation Beach, Dennis
June 17 1 PM Birthday Luncheon, Lighthouse Inn, W.Dennis, Cocktails 12-1

Dennis Historical Society
Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660

MAY 1979

Bulk Rate
U.S. POSTAGE
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