



IT WAS A LOVELY TEA PARTY

Those who came out on a drizzly evening to hear the story of tea were amply rewarded by the interesting presentation of Mr. William Congalton. Mr. Congalton, I am also happy that I was not born before tea, and glad that I ventured forth on a cold and rainy evening to hear your delightful talk. Also, we should thank Phyllis, the Board, and Mrs. Congalton for the very pleasant 'teatime' following your program. Let's have tea together again some time soon!

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST GRADE TEACHER?

Psychologists say that, aside from parents, the most significant adult remembered by most Americans is their first teacher. Many of us who had our primary education in Dennis, and who are lucky enough to be alive and well today, remember the same teacher. She is Susan P. McHenry, who shepherded so many Dennis children through that crucial first grade experience with such style and vigor. Our May meeting centers around schools in Dennis. Our 'Dennis Remembered' programs have been among our best meetings. Whether you attended school here or elsewhere, you are sure to enjoy remembering those good old days when the 3 r's were taught to the tune of the hickory stick. V.I.C. Hall, the site where our May meeting will take place, stands where the former Dennis Port Graded School stood. In each village of our town, from the 1860's until 1930's, a graded school fulfilled the educational needs of our town's young folks. D.H.S. has a collection of pictures of the many classes who attended these graded schools. Our aim is to identify these classes. If you or your parents or grandparents attended any of these schools, perhaps you can help. Or perhaps you have a class picture that is identified which will help us. Anyway, with or without pictures and/or memories of being educated in Dennis, come and hear or share stories of school days - "good old golden rule days."

ALSO SELECTED SHORT SUBJECTS

Remember when the feature at the movie show was preceded by short subjects? D.H.S. will reintroduce Short Subjects, as an addition to our regular monthly meetings. This month Henry Kelley III will talk for a few minutes on the Worden family. If you have wondered how Worden Hall got its name, you'll enjoy this. And if any of you north-siders have any trouble finding Dennis Port, just call me. Henry, can you find V.I.C. Hall?

THANKS FOR ALL THE SQUASH SEEDS

We deeply appreciate all the squash-loving friends of D.H.S. who are saving squash and watermelon seeds for our June field trips. Remember that there are 150 children who will be making necklaces from these seeds, so please save yours for us, also.

We have other needs at 'D.H.S. Headquarters'. A very urgent one comes to mind. As a result of the South Side Historic District Study Committee's work, many houses in town have been dated, but no date boards are available. Can you help? We need to have volunteers who will prepare, paint and stencil date boards to identify houses in our town which have been documented to be over one hundred years old. We hope to include on these date boards the names of the original owners. Can anyone out there give us even a few hours of labor? Call Phyllis - 394-0017 - or any Board member, if you can help. And keep those squash and watermelon seeds coming.

GROWING UP IN DENNIS - DECORATION DAY

Every May we have a nice three-day weekend, but many don't even know why. But old-timers like me remember when the 30th of May - whenever it fell - was Decoration Day. As children, it was a time to gather armfuls of lilacs, narcissus, and "flags" (iris), and take part on a family outing to the cemetery, to decorate the graves of our ancestors. We had to take along an assortment of disposable containers, a little water to prime the cemetery pump, and a hand shovel. At the family lot - or lots in our case - Dad would get busy making small depressions with the trowel, while the boys went off to make sport at the pump. Mother and we girls arranged the flowers into bunches. There were always small bouquets of pansies and lily of the valley for the little lost children, and a huge bunch of lilacs for the great granite family stones. My sisters and I would wander from lot to lot marveling at the age of great-great grandmother, Thankful, who, Dad told us, smoked a pipe and had nary a tooth when she died at age 95. There was young great-uncle George, who died in Havana of Yellow Fever, and Little Lena, who died onboard her father's vessel in New Orleans - aged 19 - of a broken heart, Aunt Ede always said.

Duty done, it was off to the parade to see the ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary lay the wreath on the Veterans monument at Dennis Port. For Decoration Day was started in 1868 at the suggestion of Gen. John Logan, Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, who in that year called upon his fellow veterans to decorate soldiers' graves with flowers on the 30th of May. Our Cemetery Commissioner and Caretaker of Veterans Graves for Dennis, Alton L. Robbins, continues this 119 year old tradition, and places a new American flag at the graves of Dennis Veterans on Decoration Day.

CALENDAR

May 13 7:30 P.M. V.I.C. Hall, Dennis Port. School Days remembrances.
Also: Short Subject - The Worden Family in Dennis.
May 19 7:30 P.M. Board meets at Phyllis'.
May 30 10 A.M. Town Hall parking lot. Meet to join our Lady Slipper Walk
on the Indian Land Conservation Center.
June 28 Annual Dennis Town Birthday luncheon. Lighthouse Inn.

CAPTAIN LAND AND THE TEA TRADE

The year of 1844 must have been an extremely exciting one for Capt. John Land of West Dennis. In New York, the ship Rainbow was being built for the China trade, and he had been chosen to command her. All of the east coast of the United States was abuzz with the excitement caused by the sailing industry's mania for speed. Each vessel launched carried with her predictions from "Armchair Captains", as to the time it would take her to complete her maiden voyage. The Rainbow, although small, at 750 tons burthen, was of a revolutionary design along clipper lines, and perfectly proportioned. In retrospect, naval architects rank her among the most perfectly designed vessels ever built in America. The sea coast ship watchers were anxious to see what she could do. In the ship Splendid, Capt. Land had earned the reputation as a "bucko" master, that is a driver who dared to carry sail to the limit. He was also a master of the art of sailing - not daring carelessly, but understanding his vessel well enough to know her limits - and sailing up to them. He had sailed the Splendid across the Atlantic to Harve, and also around the Horn to China, and had learned much about taking advantage of prevailing winds and currents. Now he was ready for Rainbow. There is little question that Capt. Land and the designer of the ship, John W. Griffiths, conferred often about the hull design and rigging. As the launching grew closer, the excitement increased and the betting public began to speculate on her speed. She was launched in January, 1845, and departed almost immediately for China. John Land evidently applied all that he had learned, as the vessel sailed steadily along the coast of South America, rounding the Horn and bravely setting out across the broad Pacific. All went well, and as Rainbow passed near Java, she met a ship returning to New York and asked them to report their safe arrival to the owners. The Rainbow was loaded with its cargo of tea and set sail for her return. This second lap of the voyage was as fortunate as the first, and Capt. Land and his tired crew sailed jubilantly into New York harbor exactly seven months and seventeen days after leaving, a spectacular voyage. In fact, Capt. Land had the honor to announce both his safe arrival in China, and his return to New York to his delighted owners, for the vessel that had left China before they had even arrived was several days behind them in returning. But the remarkable record of Rainbow is not over. Leaving once again for China, Capt. Land and his crew returned with another cargo of tea in the awesome time of six months and sixteen days, a record never yet surpassed.

All was not joy for John Land, however. During his remarkable voyages, his young wife had died, and his father became ill. He remained as master of the Rainbow until 1848, when he turned to command over to Capt. Hayes. The beautiful ship Rainbow left New York on March 17, 1848, and was never heard from again. Coaxed back into service, Capt. Land took command of the ship Challenge. On a voyage to China in 1852, John Land died. He is buried on French Island in Canton. So admired was he by his fellow mariners of West Dennis, that two of them reported to the community that they had visited his grave in China to pay tribute to their departed comrade.

LADY SLIPPER WALK

Our annual walk on the Indian Lands Conservation Area is scheduled to begin from the Town Hall parking area at 10 A.M. on Saturday, May 30. Hopefully the lady slippers are aware of our schedule. Dr. Norton H. Nickerson will once again lead us, as we view the beauty of the myriad of lady slippers which blossom and thrive on this island. Do come. A fine walk for the whole family. (If you want a somewhat shorter walk, join us at the railroad track at the end of Riverside South, Old Dennis.)

BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON PLANNED

The 194th anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Dennis will be celebrated with a luncheon on June 28, at Lighthouse Inn. Details and reservation form next month. In the meantime - Circle That Date!

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