



CONGRATULATIONS, HONORARY LIFE MEMBER JOHNNY KELLEY ON FINISHING YOUR 55TH BOSTON MARATHON!!

"SHIPWRECKS ON CAPE COD"

A well-illustrated, well-narrated talk kept an over-flow audience entranced as Jim Coogan spoke on that subject last month at the Jacob Sears Memorial Library. Jim is a great story teller. Aren't the students at D-Y High School lucky to have such an enthusiastic teacher? Our thanks to Jim and to the trustees of the library for a memorable afternoon.

WE REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY

D.H.S. is seeking to attract new members to swell the ranks. We plan to hold two open house teas to the town's Historic Centers, with special exhibits of our collection of historic interest, as well as displays showing some of our activities. These are the basis for a successful afternoon, in addition to the usual yummy refreshments! But, as in all recipes, a dash of the "active ingredient" is needed. If our recipe was for bread, yeast would be the pre-requisite. But for a successful new-member recruitment tea the active ingredient is YOU, our present valued members. Please attend one or both of our Open House teas. There is always something new to see at our Historic Centers, and also something old--old friends, and old reminders of our town's past.

OUR GRAVESTONE INVENTORY BEGINS

For all you good people who have volunteered to help the Dennis Historical Commission inventory the ancient gravestones in various burying grounds in town, as part of our tribute to our founders in this 350th Anniversary year, please note. We will meet with the Commission on Monday, May 8th at the Cape Cinema at 10 A.M. and then walk out to the Hall Burying Ground for a "how-to" workshop on using the inventory form. Please bring a pencil, measuring tape, and a clip board if you have one. The rain date is Wednesday, May 10th at 1:00 P.M.

LADY SLIPPER WALK SCHEDULED

The forsythia is fading fast, and ere long the petals of the flowering shrubs in front of Town Hall will be dropping like pink snow flakes along Main Street. Summer's almost here, but there remains one late spring treat to anticipate--the hundreds of Lady's slippers which grow in crowds on the south peninsular of the Indian Lands Conservation. D.H.S. will once again sponsor walks conducted by Dr. Norton H. Nickerson, on Saturday, June 3, at 9 A.M. and at 10:30 A.M. If you plan to attend, please sign up by calling Fern Daniels at the Conservation office, 394-8300, indicating what time you will be there. Comfortable shoes, please, cameras welcome. Mark this date down now, as your June newsletter will probably be too late for a reminder.

JUNE LUNCHEON AT THE LIGHTHOUSE INN

Circle Sunday, June 25th and plan to attend the annual Town's Birthday luncheon. Menu and reservation form next time.

AN EXEMPLARY EXHIBIT OF "EXAMPLERS"

If, after attending our "Open House" afternoon at Dennis' two Historic Centers you still have a yen for things historical, you must take the time to visit the Sandwich Glass Museum. In addition to their unique glass collection, this summer's special exhibit, entitled "Cape Cod Samplers" is truly special. Curator Lynne Horton has collected and studied over 100 samplers made by Cape and Island girls in the late 18th and early 19th century and many of them will be on display all summer. To fully appreciate this event you must first consider why samplers were made. In the early days much, if not all, of the family's clothing and household linen was manufactured at home. Before her marriage a girl was expected to have made for herself 3 sets of table linen, 3 sets of bed linen, and 3 sets of body linen. In some areas, including rural New England, that meant spinning flax into thread and weaving the cloth first--which, incidentally, explains why unmarried girls were called "spinsters". Each piece of precious linen was embroidered with the makers initials and a number, and might be decorated or edged with open work. The sampler, sometimes called an "exampler", was a practice piece, used to teach the little girls how to make the cross stitch letter and numbers as well as decorative embroidery. It would then serve as an example or pattern for stitches on their dowry linen. Four samplers in the Sandwich exhibit are the work of Dennis girls--actually two pairs. One pair was done by two little girls who grew up together near Scargo Lake--Eunice Cobb Paddock, born in 1814, and Lucy Hedge Howes, born in 1817. Both were done when their stitcher was 11 years old, and they are very similar in style, colors, and decorative stitch. Ms. Horton has concluded that they were taught by the same seamstress, possibly a teacher in the district school that stood beside Scargo Lake in that era. When Lucy and Eunice married, the girlhood friends were separated, Lucy to live in Sandwich with her husband Joseph Nye, Eunice to travel with her husband, Capt. Carleton Howes, as he sailed around the world. This summer the work of their young had's reunites them in a way they probably never imagined. I'll tell you about the other pair of samplers next time.

CALENDAR

- May 8 10 A.M. Cape Cinema parking lot. Gravestone inventory group
 May 16 7:30 P.M. Board meets with Sarah
 May 22 3-5 P.M. Open House at Josiah Dennis Manse. Quilt exhibit
 June 3 9 A.M. and 10:30 A.M. Lady Slipper Walk. See article for information
 June 4 3-5 P.M. Open House at Jericho
 June 25 12 noon Annual Dennis Town Birthday Luncheon at Lighthouse Inn

"WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORWAY BLOOMED....."

The birthday of an American President will be celebrated in this month of May-- Cape Cod's own president, John Fitzgerald Kennedy. It's not a big national holiday-- probably the evening news will show a member of the family placing a wreath near the Eternal Flame at Arlington Cemetery. Perhaps there will be a similar, simple ceremony at the Memorial in Hyannis. However, news media and public alike will take little notice of this birthday, in contrast to the extensive coverage the anniversary of Kennedy's death received last November. The Kennedy family has stressed that they prefer that John's life be remembered on the day of his birth, not his death. If you have visited the Kennedy Library you will have noted that no part of the exhibit deals with that terrible day in Dallas. The movie which is viewed upon entering the display area ends with these words, spoken as the screen becomes dark: "On the 22nd day of November, 1963, in Dallas, Texas, John Fitzgerald Kennedy died....." The audience typically sits in silence for several moments, many wiping away an embarrassing tear. Each is remembering exactly where he was and what he was doing when the tragic news was heard. Probably, if you were alive in 1963, you are having a flashback to that moment right now. If so you, you can relate to a moment in history which occurred 124 years ago. Dennis residents in 1865 did not hear by radio or television of the death of their president. No one called on the phone to ask if they had heard the news. The only source of quick communication was via the telegraph, and the words which came clacking through that wire were impossible to believe. President Lincoln had been shot while attending the theater on Friday, April 14. At 7:22:10 A.M. on Saturday, April 15th, his heart had ceased to beat. The telegraph operator in the Dennis Post office must have read the report incorrectly! But subsequent reports confirmed the news. As the word spread around the town, neighbor comforted neighbor. Teachers who received the news at school tearfully dismissed the children. Wagons pulled off the road, and their drivers openly cried. Two days earlier the town had joyfully celebrated the surrender of Lee to Grant at Appomattox. An outdoor rally had been held in West Dennis, with speeches made from the steps of the church. "Jeff" Davis had been hung in effigy, there were cheers for the President and General Grant, and patriotic music was heard. "It was the general belief that so fine a celebration had never before been held in this place," states a letter to the editor in the Yarmouth Register, of April 21, 1865. But the letter appears in columns edged in black, side by side with accounts of more somber activities. As in 1963, so in 1865, the citizens bonded together in their shock and grief. In Dennis village the residents of the north side met on Sunday evening, which was Easter Day--"Oppressed with grief and wishing to sympathize with each other." On the south side, citizens met the following evening to make resolutions expressing their sentiments of grief and loyalty. On the 19th of April, a memorial service was held at the South Meeting House at the same hour as the funeral in Washington. The church was draped in black, and a large and solemn audience attended. Flags were at half-mast, bells tolled mournfully for hours. Of these sad days, Carl Sandburg has written: "Thousands on thousands would remember as long as they lived the exact place where they were standing or seated or lying down when the news came to them." If you were born before 1960, these words could apply to you on November 22, 1963. Memorial services, tolling bells, lowered flags and shared grief are all a part of that flash back. This year, as for many years, Abraham was remembered on the day of his birth. The anniversary of his assassination passed with only a line in the daily almanac. One day this will be true of J. F. Kennedy. But as long as any of us live who heard live reports from Dallas, we will remember the exact place where we were when the news reached our bewildered ears.

"When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed,
 And the Great star early dropped in the western sky at night,
 I mourned and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring."

Walt Whitman

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