



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 24 Number 4

May 2001

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, May 9th Board Meeting

All interested members are welcome to attend.

**Jericho
7:00 PM**

Wednesday, May 16th Who Wants to be a Cape Cod Expert?

Jack Sheedy, local author, will narrate a slide show about Cape Cod. Come and test your Cape knowledge. Refreshments.

**West Dennis Graded
School
7:30 PM**

Saturday, May 19th The Life and Times of Capt. Marcus Lafayette Howes

Maritime exhibit at 1736 Josiah Dennis Manse Museum telling the trials and tribulations of a Dennis clipper ship captain.

1-4 PM

Saturday, June 2nd Lady Slipper Walk on the Indian Lands

Narrated walk over the Indian Lands Conservation Area to a premier stand of lady slipper orchids, led by horticulturist Shannon Goheen. Reservations requested. 508-398-0376.

**Dennis Town Hall
Parking Lot
9:30 AM**

A Day with Nature...

A high school composition written in 1915 by Blanche Evelyn Crowell found under the eaves in her old house. Take a walk with her and then come take a walk with Shannon Goheen on the Indian lands. (See events box.)

Early one glorious morning in the month of July, I started out to spend the day in the fields and woods. My purpose was to find as many different species of wild flowers as I could and to gather specimens of them to press. I carried with me my old green bag so familiar among the school girls and within it I placed my camera and a small flower book as well as my lunch box as I intended to spend the entire day. I thought that my camera would be nice to take any view that I might like and the book would be a help in identifying the unfamiliar flowers that I might find.

As I walked along the first flower I noticed was the Partridge Pea that lined the winding road on either side. The Dandelions were all open and bright with their fringy yellow discs. In a little sandy spot I saw the pretty Purple Gerardia and when examined closely I found the dainty little Blue Curlys scattered among them. Daisies and shining Buttercups as well as clovers, Bouncing Bet and Tansy were growing in abundance along the wayside, while here and there the Blue Toad Flax and Pimpernel were flourishing.

On the banking above, the Golden Rod, our national flower, was beginning to open its gorgeous blossoms of which someone has said:

Its bloom knows no stint, its gold no alloy,
And we claim it forever as ours
God's symbol of Freedom and world wide Joy
America's flower of flowers.

Leaving the roadside I passed on into a large field that was beautiful with mid summer blossoms. The first thing I noticed was the abundance of Red Sorrel so familiar to us all. Farmers consider the presence of this plant an indication that the soil is poor. This field was overgrown in places with Queen Anne's Lace, a delicate flower, a joy to the flower lover who admires its dainty blossom, but a pest to the farmer who is ever trying to rid his mowing of it. Indigo or Broom weed which in the winter we see piled up in every available corner was



B. Evelyn Crowell

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A Day with Nature...

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now all in bloom and also Chicory another hindrance to the farmer. In places where these were not too thick the smaller flowers such as Cinquefoil, Yarrow, Self Heal and a few of the sweetly scented Ladies' Tresses appeared forming a carpet. Here and there through the field a Great Mullein with velvety foliage and yellow flowers, and the tall Dock towered above the smaller plants, and the Thistles lifted their prickly heads to light.

Reaching the farther corner of this field, I climbed a stone wall and saw in the adjoining meadow a little brook in which bloomed the blue Pickerel Weed and white Arrowhead with great Willow Trees overhanging all. The cool shade tempted me to rest awhile and eat my lunch. I also took a snapshot of the pretty scene before me before passing on my way. In the next field I found some St. John's Wort, Musk Mallow and the yellow Evening Primrose. Then I was attracted by a bright color farther on near a fence and going to it I found it to be Butterfly Weed. Returning to the brook and following it along I found some of the bright Cardinal Flower and the yellow Jewel Weed with its quickly snapping seedpod. A little distance away I saw a little pond with the shiny green leaves and white flowers of the Pond Lily dotted thickly over its surface. I strolled on beside the brook for quite a distance, drinking in the beauty all about noting many of the flowers I had already seen as well as the abundance of Blue Eyed Grass and at last coming to a large swamp with a wealth of growth of Cat Tails, Honeysuckles, Rose Mallow, Meadow Rue, Fleur-de-Lis, Steeple Bush, Sheep Laurel, Wild Swamp Roses, Button Bush and Joe Pye Weed all so familiar to the flower lover. Walking on into the swamp, stepping carefully over damp places, and looking for the lower plants, I found Meadow Beauty, Grass Pinks, Sabbatia so much admired for its delicate pink blossom, Milkwort with its sweet smelling roots, Monkey Flower, Pitch Fork, known to all because of their persistent habit of sticking to ones clothes, and the different kinds of Sundew whose sticky leaves attract and retain insects.

Leaving the swamp with its attractiveness, I hastened on as the day was waning to visit the woods for further specimens. Here on the edge I found the purple and white Asters and the quickly fading Frostweed. As I entered the woods, the first flower that I noticed was the slim white Star Flower. Farther on in the recesses of a dark and shady spot near decaying tree stumps I found the cold, waxy, parasitic plant known as Indian Pipes. I hurried on toward the road leading from the woods and found Blue Lupines, Goat's Rue and Wild Geranium blooming along the path. Still another new plant I noticed as I went my way homeward was Herb Robert not at all a common plant but interesting for its dainty color.

"Old Sol" was sinking below the western horizon as I reached my home after having spent a very pleasant day in my favorite pastime, and bringing with me many specimens for my collection, besides a number of snapshots to remind me of it all.

Evelyn Crowell
East Dennis, Mass.



What do you have in your attic? Won't you send us your stories? If you find a picture to illustrate, we'd be happy to scan it in and return it to you. Contributions should be sent to the Newsletter Committee, Dennis Historical Society, P.O. Box 607, South Dennis, MA 02660.

Society News

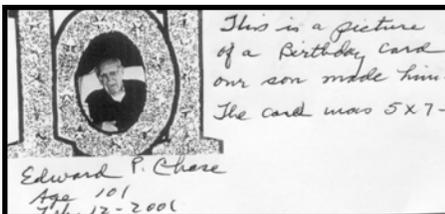
It's spring, isn't it? We're thinking about flowers and gardens and have planned our annual Lady Slipper Walk on the Indian Lands. Meanwhile, the Manse gardeners are hard at work planning the new raised bed gardens. The locust trees have been cut and put through the sawmill thanks to Richard Howes. Dave Talbot, Gene Tully, Seth Crowell, and Fred Schenklerberger. The garden committee is working on design and ordering seeds. Now if the weather would cooperate, we can watch those gardens grow!



The Manse School Program will be held on May 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16 and 17 – and the Jericho School Program will be June 7 and 8. Third grade students in the Dennis school system have a chance to attend, and this year the program will be offered to home schooled children and students from the Trinity School.

The Jericho Committee has provided us with a list of members for 2001: Ann Chalmers, President, Mimi Williams, Joan Martin, Joan Monteiro, and new member, Lydia Sebastyn. Marge Mantell is their representative to the DHS.

May 17th at 9:30 AM there will be a planning meeting at Jericho, which includes the Friends of Jericho. Hope you'll be able to attend!



Congratulations to Edward P. Chase, who turned 101 on February 12, 2001. We believe Mr. Chase to be our oldest Society member. If you know of someone who has had more birthdays than Mr. Chase, please let us know!

Who Wants to be a Cape Cod Expert?

You can find Jack Sheedy's books on sale at local bookstores as well as at the Manse and Jericho. His *Dennis Journal* gives us a pocket-sized view of our town and its history with a flavor all its own. With Jim Coogan, he has written *Cape Cod Companion* to help us learn more about Cape life and its stories. Now here's your chance to see his slide show about Cape Cod and find out from the man himself if you can qualify as a Cape Cod Expert!

**Wednesday, May 16th
7:30 PM
West Dennis Graded School**

Dennis Historical Society

P.O. Box 607

South Dennis, MA 02660-0607

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THE WAY WE WERE...

As the days of sail gave way to steam power, a few intrepid sea captains still put to sea in sailing vessels. It was in 1887 that Captain Marcus Lafayette Howes from Dennis voyaged to Japan in the bark *Freeman*. It took several months to find a cargo to carry to Europe and our captain had to take on a Japanese crew for the return voyage. Only the Japanese mate spoke English, so the orders were relayed to the crew through the mate. There was trouble ahead.

Come to hear of his sea adventure and other stories in the life of Marcus Lafayette Howes and his family. Visit the Josiah Dennis Manse on May 19th from 1 – 4 PM.



The Bark *Freeman*

Built in late 1860-1870 by Richard R. Freeman of Wellfleet and commanded by Captain Marcus Lafayette Howes of Dennis. Wrecked off Puerto Rico in 1909.