

DENNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

November, 1978

Learn to Trace Your Family Tree

A panel consisting of three people with a wealth of experience in tracing Cape Cod genealogies will conduct a program designed to help you trace your Cape Cod roots. It will be held on November 8, 1978, 7:30 PM at the Jericho House. The panel will consist of Pauline Derick, Gertrude James and Louise Kelley and will answer your questions as to where and how to trace your ancestors. So get out your family bibles, shoe boxes or whatever you use to hold your family history and bring your questions to the panel on Wednesday, November 8.

About the Newsletter

Thanks to those who returned the questionnaires or responded orally to some of our queries. We even got some volunteers!

The comments about the newsletter were encouraging and helpful. The biggest complaint was timing. We are concerned about how long the mail is taking. Since we cannot control the delays at the various Post Offices, we are trying to correct this problem in two ways--first by trying to get the news collected and written earlier in the month and second by trying to include dates as far in advance as we can. So please, be patient and make a note when you receive this letter not only of this month's activities, but also of those in the future. And we will try to get the letter to all as close to the first of the month as we can.

Only How Many Shopping Days?

We're thinking about the old fashioned kind of a Christmas, where trees were decorated with cranberries and popcorn, and home-made ornaments adorned the house. So we're inviting you to a Christmas Open House at the Josiah Dennis Manse, on Sunday afternoon, December 3rd from 3-6. Refreshments will be served and seasonal music will be sung--But best of all, you will have an opportunity to see our lovely old home, decorated by a committee headed by Susan Kelley who loves the house as all Dennis citizens should. Bring your friends and start off the Advent season with some old fashioned Christmas in your heart.

Remember what we said in the previous article and circle this December date right now.

Dennis, Do You Remember?

Ferd Baxter has kindly consented to repeat his program presented at the Annual Meeting on Wednesday, November 29th at the West Dennis Community Building, for the benefit of those who do not go out to evening meetings. Please spread the word. If enough members are interested in daytime programs, they will be scheduled from time to time.

This May Be Your Last Newsletter!

The mailing list for newsletters has been compiled not only from the current membership list, but also has included former members. We have done this realizing that the Society had a long period of relative inactivity during which dues were not collected. However, we are now updating our list. Therefore, if your dues have lapsed, and if you are interested in continuing to receive the newsletter, please pay your current dues. Note we are not trying to collect dues in arrears. Only current dues are necessary to keep your newsletter coming. Please send \$3.00 per member which includes \$2.00 dues to September, 1979, and \$1.00 newsletter assessment to:

Elinor Slade, Membership Chairman
Box 607, South Dennis, MA 02660

And we thank you.

The Streets of Our Town

Ferry Street, West Dennis used to be the main street through the village. And of course, it was so named because, until the year 1832, a ferry ran across Bass River from the end of Ferry Street to the Yarmouth side. The ferry-men were members of the Kelley family and they could be summoned from the 'tother side of the river by using the conch shells hanging from posts at either landing. The fare was first 1¢ then 2¢ per passenger, but 25¢ for a horse and carriage. The flat-bottomed boat often had a tough time navigating against wind and current. After much sober reflection, the towns folks decided to form a stock company and build a bridge, which of course, ended the career of the ferry-men.

An interesting chapter on the bridges across Bass River is found in Marion Crowell Ryder's book, Cape Cod Remembrances. The book is available at all of our libraries and is also on sale at the Historic Centers. Her paragraph regarding the ferry is an interesting remembrance of olden days on Ferry Street, one of the Streets of Our Town.

Wet Bikers Get Traditional Treat

Cider, donuts, apples, and strawberry wine were waiting for the group that went on the second fall bike tour. Mary Fishler remembered her old cousin, Obed Shiverick, reminiscing about one of the favorite local Halloween happenings which was dressing up in one's "awfuls" for a hay ride followed by strawberry wine and other treats at the farm. Mrs. Fishler came all the way from New Jersey the night before the bike ride to set the scene for history to relive itself. The weather took care of getting the bikers into the "awfuls". Just as the group was ready to leave Chapin Beach for the last stop, the farm, the rain which had been holding off all morning, came to costume the crowd. The bikers arrived at the farm drippy wet and the finest clothing had the look of what Obed Shiverick would call "awfuls". The treats served up with warm hospitality and mixed with history and local yearns gave the bikers a dry and memorable finale to the tour.

Tobey Farm was given by "King's Grant" back in 1678 to an ancestor of the present occupants, Jim and Mary Fisk, for Thomas Tobey's service in King Phillip's War. The family has farmed the land ever since. Big crops were needed when the family owned the Nobscusset Hotel and had to provide food for all their guests. The Fisks continue to work the soil and their rustic farm kitchen was full of squash and pumpkins, their last crops.

The tour had started at Carleton Hall where Joshua Crowell told of life and changes by the Village Green. Then the bicyclists pedaled over to the Josiah Dennis Manse where Esther Howes gave a guided tour through the Manse and told more about Josiah Dennis, the Whig Street area, and the old Nobscusset Hotel. Then the group headed out to Chapin Beach stopping along the way to visit Mrs. Bottero to learn about how she and Dr. Bottero came to the area and saw many other Italians join them until the section became know as "Little Italy". The group got an Italian farewell. At the beach, Gail Hart told about Cultured Clam Corp. and showed some Indian arrow heads that had been found along Chapin Beach. Nancy Flinkstrom talked about the canal that might have been built through Chase Garden Creek and Bass River. And George MacDonald from the Conservation Commission spoke on erosion which effects can clearly be seen there on the beach.

More trips are planned, but dates have yet to be set. If the air stays so nippy, the next well-publicized rides may wait until spring. For latest developments, call Paul Bacon at 394-5739.

C A L E N D A R

November 8	7:30 PM	Jericho House - Panel "Tracing Your Cape Cod Roots", Pauline Derick, Gertrude James, Louise Kelley
November 21	7:30 PM	Regular Board Meeting, Home of Mr. Peirce
November 29	1:00 PM	Ferd Baxter will give a repeat showing of his slide show, "Dennis--Do You Remember?", West Dennis Community Building
December 3	Sunday, 3-6 PM	Christmas Season Open House, Josiah Dennis Manse
December 19	7:30 PM	Regular Board Meeting, Home of Mr. Peirce
<u>COMING SOON:</u>		
January 10		Program Meeting--Weather Vanes, 7:30 Carleton Hall. Program by Marilyn Strauss
February		Mid-Winter Luncheon

Dennis Historical Society
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