

#### WOMEN AND THE SEA

We enjoyed Jim Coogan's talk on Women and the Sea. He told us something of the hazards faced by these women who accompanied their men on long voyages. Jim is amassing a nice collection of pictures of sea-going women and the vessels they travelled on, and excerpts from their journals, making a most interesting commentary on the great age of sail. Thanks, Jim, for a nice presentation, and we are looking forward to your book!

#### ANOTHER DENNIS WOMAN WHO WENT TO SEA

My own great grandmother, Pauline (Baxter) Thacher, her twin daughters, Amelia and Cecelia, and her youngest daughter, Lena, were among the town's many women who went on ocean voyages, accompanying my great grandfather, George Engs Thacher. Capt. George was a Master Mariner who was well-known for his navigational skills and his many fast voyages. The whole family went to sea with him on occasion, travelling to France, Smyrna, Russia and also up and down the East Coast of the United States. Going to sea came naturally to Pauline, for her father and brothers were captains of sea-going vessels. All of Capt. George's sons (except Willy Fredson, who died young) became Master Mariners, and his twin daughters married Master Mariners, but a different destiny awaited little Lena. A lovely little girl, she grew up to be a frail and lovely young woman and she fell in love with a neighbor boy. He also went to sea, but as a common sailor. His ambition was not to become master of a ship, but to retire from the sea and farm his family's homestead. You can imagine that Capt. George thought that he was not a likely candidate for his daughter's hand. So he took Lena and her mother on a Coasting voyage, hoping that she would forget her beloved sailor boy. Poor Lena was very unhappy, and her health began to decline. In the language of the day, she "languished", and her worried mother consulted with doctors when they docked at Mobile. But, alas, nothing could be done for little Lena, for, in addition to her disappointment at her father's disapproval of her chosen lover, she had "Consumption" - Tuberculosis - a disease that ended many a young life in that era. In Mobile, she died, at the age of nineteen, and her saddened parents brought her little body back to be buried among her ancestors in her native town. Her sailor lover, although grieved, later married, but he never forgot his first love. In later years he would tell my Aunt Edith how much she resembled Lena. It was Aunt Edith who told us the story of Lena's last voyage to sea, and it was not until many years later, when I consulted the town's vital records, that I learned the true cause of Lena's death. Aunt Ede had always told us that she had died of a broken heart!

#### ONE MORE NOTE ABOUT OUR CUP PLATE

Due to the kindness and effort put forth by Gertrude Lailey, our D.H.S. cup plate depicting the seal of the Town of Dennis will be depicted in the forthcoming book of cup plates produced by Pairpoint Glass in Sandwich, compiled by Leonard Paget. The book will soon be published and available to all interested persons. Thanks to Gertrude for once again making an extra effort on our behalf.

#### THE BEST OF MEMORY DAYS

Our November program has been changed to Nov. 20th, but place and topic will be the same. Ben Thacher will present a tape of the best stories compiled from all five of the Memory Days held last year, Gail Hart, Sarah Kruger and Phyllis Robbins are busy indexing and helping to select the best stories heard at each village meeting, and Ben will arrange them according to subject and intersperse them with his own commentary. Whether you were able to be present or not, you are sure to enjoy these spontaneous stories about life as it was in our town some years ago.

In addition to the program, members of D.H.S. will be asked to convene for a short business meeting at which the acquisition policy recently drawn up by the Board will be considered for approval. That policy is attached to your newsletter so that you can be familiar with its content before you come to the meeting, and should be prepared to vote accordingly. Also, at this meeting, the prints made from the 1858 map of Dennis and East Dennis will be available for purchase, framed or unframed. As this is being typed, it is contemplated that the price for an unframed print will be \$5 and framed, something in the range of \$30. As soon as the final price has been established, unframed prints will be available by mail. Stay tuned, as they say.

#### CHRISTMAS AT THE MANSE

For several years now it has been the custom for D.H.S. to cooperate with the house committee of one of the Historic Centers to hold a Christmas open house. This year's festivities will be at the Josiah Dennis Manse on December 9 from 3-5 P.M. More about this next time, but circle your calendar right now.

#### TALK ON EARLY INDIAN CULTURE IN DENNIS

You are cordially invited to the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in Brewster to hear a talk by George Stillson on his archaeological survey and digs which he has done on the Nickerson Property on Bass River this year. Mr. Stillson has uncovered many early evidences of the Indian culture indicating a very early civilization which he will tell about and explain. The talk will begin at 8 P.M. and we hope many of you will attend.

## CALENDAR

- November 3 8 P.M. Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster.  
Talk by Archaeologist George Stillson on his work on  
the Nickerson property in South Dennis. See article.
- November 8 7:30 P.M. Board Meeting at Gail's house.
- November 20 7:30 P.M. West Dennis Community Building. "Best of Memory Days",  
a compilation of the tapes we made at Memory Days last  
winter. All welcome. NOTE CHANGE IN DATE.
- December 9 3-5 P.M. Christmas Open House at the Manse.

### GROWING UP IN DENNIS

" Hat's off! Along the street there comes  
The blare of bugles, the ruffle of drums,  
And loyal hearts are beating high.  
Hat's off! The flag is passing by. "

Will any of the retired teachers who taught at Dennis Consolidated School who are now members of D.H.S. take credit for having taught me that verse, remembered for 10, these many years? It came to my mind last month, as I waited with my husband to review a parade of Colonial Militia Units. I observed with pride that a great many of the people of my generation along the sidelines felt moved to salute in some way as the flag passed by. This is the month when we observe the anniversary of the Armistice signed to end the War to End All War. On that day, in my youth, a parade was held in Dennis Port. We children stood on tiptoes down at the War Memorial at Sea and Main St., listening for that ruffle of drums and flash of the Stars and Stripes. The Parade formed in back of the stores. Really not much of a parade - The American Legion, led by Charlie Finlay, the ladies of the Auxiliary, in their long capes and carrying poppies, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, the volunteer Fire Department, and from somewhere a band, or at least some drums and a trumpet. Ben Kendrick, the town's police department, diverted traffic, as the parade came to a halt at the monument where a wreath was laid. It was an emotional occasion, topped by that moment when the crack of the rifles was followed by the quavery notes of Taps, played by the high school's best trumpeter. It was also a fearful occasion for children who grew up with the certainty that the promise of the Armistice was false. Our generation would also be called upon to make the terrible sacrifice. Today on the 11th day of the 11th month, the kids all head for the Mall, but many of us who grew up in Dennis and other small towns may retain a different feeling for the holiday.

### MEDICAL HISTORY ON GREAT ISLAND

A novel public health approach is being tried on Great Island in Yarmouth where lyme disease has been prevalent since the 1960's. The disease, which can be fatal in humans, is spread by a tick which breeds on the blood of the white-tailed deer. Attempts to kill the ticks with pesticide have failed, and the residents have now agreed to try exterminating the herd of deer. The story in the Yarmouth Register intrigued me, for Great Island has another place in medical annals. Small Pox, a constant threat to the early folks hereabouts, broke out in a violent epidemic in the Mid-Cape area in 1796. On Great Island, Dr. James Hedge set up a small pox hospital, where healthy people could come to "have the pox" by being innoculated, and hopefully recover with permanent immunity. It was a modern idea, considered by many to be foolhardy, and against nature. But Dr. Hedge won some town support for his pioneer idea, and there is no doubt that many lives were saved. Of course, records are scanty. I would assume that some of this town's citizens "took the pox" with Dr. Hedge, but so far I have found no records to verify that. There is evidence that the hospital was in operation as late as 1807, and its existence coincides with the years during which Edward Jenner was introducing his method of vaccination.

Dennis Historical Society  
P.O. Box 607  
South Dennis, MA 02660

Non-Profit Organization U. S. POSTAGE PAID Permit No. 2 So. Dennis, MA 02660
--