



WE REALLY IMPRESSED THE BAY STATE HISTORICAL LEAGUE

The weather was beautiful and thanks to careful planning mostly on the part of our president, the schedule went like clockwork. Bill Scofield and Josh Crowell showed our Dennis history show and received many sincere compliments. Ann Treat Reynolds, Phyllis and Lynne Horton, Sarah Kruger, Gertrude Lailey, and Lilla Smith were also on hand to greet the more than fifty guests and to serve coffee and doughnuts. There were two fine speakers in the morning, then a very good lunch at Christine's. After that, the visitors went to both of the historic centers to see a demonstration of our school program. Once again, they were most enthusiastic. Our thanks to the teachers and pupils who took part, to the House Committees, and to the following individuals who guided or demonstrated: Beverly Gordon, Margaret Smith, Gertrude Lailey, Lena Anderson, Chris Harriman, Phyllis Horton, Jean Lieberworth, Marion Lowe, Lilla Smith, Bill and Isabelle Flynn, Rose McMurtry (and if I've missed someone, it was not intentional). You were all great. Congratulations to President Phyllis for showing us off to such fine advantage to our fellow societies of Massachusetts.

LAUNCHING OUR SHIVERICK STORY

PLEASE NOTE! We have once again had to change the time and place of our program, due to the problems at West Dennis Community Building. We will launch our new slide show, 'The Story of the Shiverick Shipyard', on Thursday, OCTOBER 9, at 7:30 P.M. at Carleton Hall. And we will NOT meet on October 22, as previously announced. PASS THE WORD ALONG. We sincerely hope that this is the last change we will have to make. The Christmas program is scheduled for the Manse and we have invitations from both the East Dennis Library and from Ben Thacher at Old Sound Museum to hold meetings there.

The Shiverick slides were assembled to tell the history of this famous yard on Sesuet Creek in East Dennis in the nineteenth century. It also tells the fascinating story of how these wooden ships were built and the importance of the shipyard to our town's economy. I know you will enjoy it.

LAUNCHING A SHIVERICK VESSEL

In the 19th century when this town's economy was so closely tied to the sea, the launching of a new vessel was a day for celebration, dedication - and hope! With our sturdy fiberglass boats, radio and radar communication, loran and other safety accessories, it is hard for us modern-day sailors to visualize the risks involved within the occupation of our town's early mariners. Lady Luck was a very real presence on every voyage and the best of crews in the most carefully built vessels could sometimes run afoul. A column in the local newspaper was headed 'Marine Disasters', and listed not only local mishaps, but any marine accident which was reported to the editor. Communication being what it was in those days, a Dennis family might read the news of the fate of an absent member through this column.

As each new vessel was launched, friends and neighbors could not help but wonder what her fate would be. Occasionally, a ship would appear to have a jinx set upon it from its birth. Such a vessel was the Hope Howes. She was launched as a schooner from the Shiverick yard in 1836. Her captain was to be Christopher Howes and she was named for his young wife. She was launched with the usual hopes and expectations and began her career upon the seven seas. The first tragic event happened in the south. Captain Howes had brought his vessel into Mobile Bay from Liverpool, arriving on the 18th of April in 1838. He left her and took passage on the schooner Henry Clay, bound for the city of Mobile. En route, the schooner capsized with the loss of all on board. His young wife never recovered from the loss. For years she continued to grieve and became so despondent that she was declared insane. Her only child, a boy who had never known his father, became her guardian. She lived in the old saltbox house, called Hope House today, on the lane which was pressed by her feet as she walked to the burying ground to visit the memorial she had had erected to her lost mate. Hope Lane is now her memorial.

In the meantime, the Hope Howes continued in trade for a few more years, under Captain Stephen Sears and Captain Samuel Shiverick (one son of Asa who would "rather be sailing" as the bumper stickers say). I have not totally solved the mystery of her ending. Dean Sears told me she was lost with all hands off New Zealand about 1843. The Cape Cod Commercial Insurance Co. paid a claim for her loss "at St. Michael's", but the memo is not dated. The Hope Howes does not appear in the tax assessment record of 1844. Dennis Vital Records show the death of young Captain Samuel Shiverick on May 6, 1844. I am still searching for the missing pieces to finish the story of the Hope Howes.

HOWES FAMILY TO HOLD A MEETING

A get-together for all those who claim descent from Thomas I. Howes is in the works for late September, 1987. If you are among this (LARGE) number, you can keep abreast of plans by sending your name and address to Richard and Nancy Howes, P.O. Box 904, Dennis, MA 02638. Also, please let other Howes descendants know, and if they cannot attend, they can perhaps contribute some information which will help to update the Howes family genealogy. More later.

CALENDAR

- OCTOBER 9 PLEASE NOTE CHANGE!!
 7:30 P.M. Carleton Hall. 'The Story of the Shiverick Shipyard'.
 told in slides and sound.
- October 9 10 A.M. Bangs Hallett House, Yarmouth Port.
 Meeting of the Cape and Islands Historical Association.
- October 21 7:30 P.M. Board meets at Phyllis' house.
- November 19 7:30 P.M. West Dennis Community Building (we hope!)
 Mr. Morris of the New England Fire and History Museum
 will speak.
- December 7 2-4 P.M. Josiah Dennis Manse. Christmas Open House.

IF THIS HOUSE COULD TALK.....

High on my list of houses that I wish could tell the stories that have unfolded within their walls is that of Captain Ellis Norris on Cove Road in South Dennis. Capt. Norris was not a native of this town. He was a Barnstable boy, but he 'married on', as they say, when the sister of the wife of his best friend and fellow sea captain, Obed Whelden, became his bride. His career at sea, much of it as commander of the schooner Daniel L. Sturgis, was filled with the usual trials and triumphs. In 1857, Capt. Norris had built for his family the house which is still standing, first on the right on Cove Road. In spite of his sea-faring occupation, the captain had a great fondness for home. He wrote many letters when away and made every effort to contact other Dennis mariners when in any port. His old house could probably enlighten us as to the captain's many adventures at sea, and the struggle of his family in the many long months that he was away. Most of all I would like to hear from Capt. Norris' front stairway. The story has been handed down that the captain himself built that stairway while away at sea, brought it home with him, and installed it himself. I know of several Dennis citizens who were born at sea while their mother accompanied her husband on a voyage, but this is the only "sea-born" stairway I have ever heard about.

There is one other interesting story about Captain Norris. His hobby when at home was raising frogs, which he sold to the New York market! That's a hobby I have never come across. Wouldn't you like to know how he went about that? We could find out, if only his house could talk.

THE LOVELY LADY GHOST

It being October, perhaps a ghost story is in order. This haunted house is really over the town line in West Harwich, but I have been asked about the legend, so I will tell it to you. The Cape Half House in West Harwich has a resident lady ghost. She is said to be Angeretta Poole, who lived in this house from about 1887 until she died in 1914. Angie and her husband, Joseph, were in business in Dennis Port. Joseph had a saloon on Main Street - not the swinging-door, Irish-pub type of saloon, but a place where the local gentlemen could stop for an occasional game of billiards or darts. Joseph was also a barber, and Angie kept a confectionery counter, perhaps so that the billiard players who stayed too long could take a peace offering home to the "little woman". In 1886, when Joseph died, under unfortunate circumstances, Angie bought this little half house, and continued the business as long as she was able. She loved her little house, and was always careful to see that it was secure before she retired for the night. One evening, while descending the stairs to check the locks, the lamp which Angie carried set fire to her clothing, burning her so severely that she died. From time to time, since that night, her spirit has been seen, the phantom of a little lady in white, carrying a lamp, descending the stairs to be sure that all is well with her beloved home.

DENNIS FIRE DEPARTMENT TRIVIA QUESTION

If you think you know the answer to the trivia questions about the Dennis Fire Department, be sure to be at our November meeting. We will be talking about the history of fire fighting in general, and perhaps will include a few facts about our fire department in particular. See you then.

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