



WE LIVE AND WE LEARN

In the ten years that I have been privileged to compile and edit the D.H.S. Newsletter, I have learned a great deal - and much of my knowledge has come from reader response. One thing I have not learned, however, is the value to any writer of the frequent use of the phrases "alleged" and "attributed to." After the last edition, several of our members were kind enough to correct me on attributing the quote which begins "You can fool all of the people some of the time..." to P. T. Barnum. The opinions were unanimous in suggesting that it should be attributed to Abraham Lincoln. Well, that sent me scurrying to our reference books here at 480 Main, and here is what I found. Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, 15th ed., 1980 says Abraham Lincoln, as quoted by Alexander K. McLever in his book Lincoln Yarns and Stories, published in 1904. He quotes it as part of a conversation with a caller at the White House. The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations also says that it is attributed to Mr. Lincoln, words in a speech at Clinton, 8 Sept. 1858, as quoted by N. W. Stephenson in his book Autobiography of A. Lincoln, published in 1927. (That's what it says - Autobiography!) But Oxford adds, "Attributed also to Phineas Barnum, 1810-1891." Our last book of quotes is the Home Book of Quotations. There credit is also given to Honest Abe, on the authority of Will P. Kellogg, who cites a speech in Bloomington, Illinois, 29 May 1856. The Home Book adds, it is also attributed to P. T. Barnum by Spofford, presumably the gentleman who was a long-time librarian at the Library of Congress. So, you see, no one seems to be sure who was quoting whom. I am more than happy to give the credit to Mr. Lincoln, my personal favorite American hero. Ah, but there is another phrase about fooling people that P. T. Barnum is alleged to have coined, and nowhere have I found it attributed to anyone else. Perhaps it came to him along with the inspiration for one of his side show attractions, for which he charged separate admission. As an example, he offered the public a chance - for a small admission price - to see a horse with its head where its tail ought to be. Having paid your money, you were treated to the sight of a horse who had been backed into its stall! Without rushing to your Bartlett's, who can come up with the well-known quote about gullibility attributed to Phineas Taylor Barnum? Your prize will be a chance to see a cherry colored cat - no charge. (P.S. Thanks to all who brought this interesting search to my attention. Keep those cards and letters coming!)

A LITTLE REBELLION AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Actually the meeting went well enough, it was the program which followed that dealt with rebellion - Shay's Rebellion, to be specific. It certainly gave us all a different viewpoint on the problems our forefathers needed to resolve in establishing their new nation. Many thanks go to Jim Coogan, our projectionist, and Ann Meehan of the Capt. Joshua Gray Chapter of the D.A.R. who helped us obtain the film. Now, here is a trivia question for all of you - and don't reach for your Bartlett's for this one, either. Which of our founding fathers is alleged to have written the words from which the title of the film came, "A little rebellion now and then is a good thing"? It is neither P. T. Barnum nor Abraham Lincoln.

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

At the annual meeting, Sarah Kruger was elected president; Richard Howes, vice-president; Lilla Smith, secretary; and Joshua Crowell, treasurer. Phyllis Horton, our immediate past president, will serve the unexpired term on the Board left vacant by the resignation of Roxie Avakian, who is moving to Florida. Elected for three-year terms on the Board were Henry Kelley II, Gail Hart, and Nancy Howes.

FLOWERS FOR PHYLLIS

We all owe a hearty round of applause for our retiring president Phyllis Robbins Horton, for her two years of hard work and achievement as the leader of D.H.S. Under her guidance, many valuable artifacts have been rescued and preserved. We have progressed a long way in arranging exhibits and in the care and cataloging of our collections. Our school programs have expanded, and oral history has been collected. We have hosted the Bay State Historic League and the Howes Family Reunion, which was attended by over 350 people. Space does not allow us to continue the list of accomplishments that Phyllis has led us in. We are very fortunate that she is willing to continue to serve on the Board, and we can be assured that her presence will continue to help D.H.S. grow.

CALENDAR

October 13 7:30 P.M. Board meets with Sarah.
October 14 7:30 P.M. 'Old Postcards of Dennis'. Carleton Hall. Refreshments.

Coming attractions:

November 'The Pilgrim Monument of Provincetown'. Talk by Clive Driver.
December Christmas Open House, Jericho.

PICTURE POSTCARDS TO BE OUR PROGRAM

That's another accomplishment of Phyllis' term in office. She has started D.H.S. collecting postcards of old scenes around town. Some show scenes long since totally changed by 'progress', others are recognizable, though the view is altered. They are a wonderful record of the Good Old Days in Dennis. Our October program will be about these postcards. Long-time residents of each village will show you our collection and identify the site pictured. For added interest, we will have a group of mystery cards, and a prize for the person who correctly identifies the most scenes. If you have a postcard collection, will you bring it and share it too? Or, if you have a postcard you cannot identify, come and see if our experts can. We will also have on display some of the recently acquired articles from the Stone family, including the portrait which is allegedly the likeness of Rev. Nathan Stone himself. Cider and donuts will put us in a fall mood. Come and bring a friend. That's Thursday, October 14, at 7:30, Carleton Hall.

SOUTH SIDE STORY

The Dennis Southside Historic District Study Committee has completed a giant step in its work to prepare to ask Town Meeting to extend the South Dennis Historic District to include West Dennis and Dennis Port. They have completed work on 90 of the nearly 500 buildings in these two villages which a thorough survey has shown are antiques. This preliminary report makes fascinating reading. The committee has researched the architects, carpenters, the families who occupied the dwellings, how the streets and neighborhoods developed, and the occupations of the wage earners in each generation. A number of little-known chapters of these two villages' past have been documented. Over the next year I will draw from this study for some fascinating tales to relate to you.

THE BLASHFIELD HOUSE COMES ALIVE

Speaking of postcards, I have one which is extremely important to me. It is a picture of the house on the corner of Upper County Road and Route 134. We grew up calling it The Blashfield House. Actually, it was originally a Baker family home-stead. Certainly, however, the Blashfields were its most famous residents. Edwin Howland Blashfield was one of America's greatest muralists. He decorated a large number of public buildings in major cities all over the country. Late in his life he married Grace Hall, one of three daughters of David Culver Hall of New Hampshire. David was a musician, playing concert and dance music here and abroad. The girls' mother was a singer, who travelled in Europe giving concerts. The girls were educated in Europe. Grace was an artist herself, and one sister was a singer and one a writer. I didn't know all this when I was a little girl, but I did know that these ladies were different from any people I had ever known. Early in the spring the entourage would arrive at the Blashfield House - not just the family, but maids and cooks and sometimes models which Mr. Blashfield would paint. The ladies, Grace and her sister Gertrude the writer, wore long dresses, high button shoes and carried parasols when they walked to see the sunset at High Bank Bridge. They had tea in afternoon, and every summer we were invited to a gala party in the yard, with favors, ice cream and cake. Once in a while Mrs. Blashfield would let one of us tiptoe in to watch her husband at work. The house and yard were beautiful then, and I have watched with a glad heart the efforts to return it to a spot of beauty once again. Be sure to take a look at the Blashfield House on your way to Dennis Port. It will gladden your heart too, as I'm sure it would those delightful old-fashioned ladies who once lived there.

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