

CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Dennis Historical Society will be held at V.I.C. Hall, Depot St., Dennisport at 7:30 P.M. on Monday, September 8, 1980. Reports of the year's activities and election of officers will constitute the business. Dues are due on or before this meeting. Let me quote to you from our new by-laws: "If the annual dues of any individual or family member are not paid by the annual meeting, the member shall be notified by the treasurer or his delegate, and unless such dues shall be paid by the following September first, the membership shall be terminated on that date." Simply put, this means that you can not be more than one year in arrears and retain membership privileges. Many of you have already sent dues together with a stamped self-addressed envelope and we greatly appreciate your doing so.

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

Following the business at the annual meeting, we will reminisce about the good old days of baseball, before the advent of Fenway Franks, when the refreshments at the game were sold by the Good Humor man and admissions were collected by passing the hat through the stands. Those were the days when Dennis had a million dollar outfield which didn't cost a cent, and a player-manager who had a fine head of hair, and batted 438. I speak, dear fans, of the 40's and 50's when the Cape League sponsored real baseball, and the Dennis Town Team, later called the Dennis Clippers, batted and fielded their way to immortality at what is now the Ezra H. Baker field. Come hear some of the stories and see movies and pictures of this fabulous team whose only qualification for membership was residence in the town for which you played. You will enjoy an evening of fun. All former Dennis Clippers are most cordially invited.

"PACKET IN THE BAY!"

We have spoken of the romantic Clipper Ships and the practical schooner, both of which have played a role in our maritime history. Let's speak today of the sloop, another vessel of practical importance to our town. As we have seen in speaking of the use of the word "ship" to mean, by and large, any large sailing craft, even though it is a specific class of vessel, the terms used to describe our marine vessels were often used differently in different parts of the world and in different eras. The term "Sloop" is one such term. In the early wars with England, sloops were war ships which carried less than 18 guns, all on one deck. They were most often rigged as ships, and in fact were often referred to as "ship-sloops". However, in strict terms of rigging, a sloop bears no resemblance to a ship. It is a craft with only one mast, from which is furled a large mainsail, and sometimes a topsail. The height of the mast equals the length of the hull on deck. The main boom is equal in length and the main gaff about 2/3 the length of the boom. The sail or sails on the mainmast are supplemented by one or more jibs, all of which provided a lot of canvas to catch the favorable winds, yet could be manned by a small crew. One of the earliest Packets to Boston from Dennis was the Sloop Sally. Capt. Oren Howes probably was one of the masters of this vessel, for he has a record of being in the Packet service for fifty years before his death in 1877. The Sloop Sally carried cargo from Nobscussett Point Pier to Boston until 1835, when the development of the salt industry required a larger vessel. Sloops were also employed in fishing and are still popular as racing yachts.

WANT TO LEARN TO SPIN?

Carolyn Zellars, who has spun often at the Manse will teach Spinning at Adult education classes at D-Y High this fall. Register Monday, Sept. 8 at 7:00 PM. First come first serve. You can still make the Annual Meeting.

DENNIS FESTIVAL DAYS

Our efforts to include something of the history of our town in the program for Dennis Festival Days was rewarding. Many of the lovely young ladies of the seventh grade class at Nathaniel Wixon School modelled some of the costumes in the collections of our two historic houses, and did a fine job of it. A few were included in the professional fashion show at Lighthouse Inn, and Rita Bedard took the opportunity to include some interesting facts about the town's past, as she commented on the outfits. On display, but not modelled because of their fragility were two wedding gowns which are part of the Manse collection. The oldest was worn by Thankful Howes for her marriage to Harvey Howes in 1823, fashioned from a grey-blue fabric brought to her by her father, Captain Oren Howes on one of his trips aboard the Sloop Sally. The other was worn by Mercy Caroline Howes for her wedding to Henry Francis Howes in 1864, when he returned from service in the Civil War. This dress was made from silk brought from Calcutta aboard the Clipper Ship Hippogriffe, one of the Shiverick ships, and was transported by Mercy Caroline's brother, Daniel Willis Howes.

Our thanks to Jean McMurtry, Paula Bacon, Esther Howes, Anna MacDowell, Hazel Newcomb, Eleanor Hall, Cris Harriman, and all of the models and their mothers who made this activity so much fun for all.

The bicycle tour which followed the Recreation Commission Bicycle Path pointed out many little known facts about the early history of our town. If you missed the guided tour, you can obtain a map which indicates historic sites, from the bicycle committee, Paula Bacon and Ginny Gifford.

**** CALENDAR ****

- Sept. 8 Annual Meeting, Films of Dennis Clippers, V.I.C. Hall, 7:30 PM
Sept. 24 Executive Board Meeting
Sept. 27 Walking-Bicycle Tour of Nantucket (see article)
Oct. 21 "Cape Cod's Thornton Burgess", Nancy Titcomb, West Dennis Community Building, 7:30 PM

Jericho House will remain open on Saturday only 2-5 PM throughout September.

Also of interest to our members:

- Oct. 13 Bus tour to Plymouth for Harvest Days at Plimouth Plantation. Morning visit the Wax Museum or the Mayflower and Cranberry World. Call 394-5739 for reservations and information.

HISTORIC TOUR PLANNED

The Board of D.H.S. has decided to sponsor two tours of historic places in the course of the year, one in the fall and one in the spring. The Fall tour looks like it is for the hardy, a bicycle-walking tour of Nantucket, on Saturday, Sept.27, which is Seafest Day on the Island. Basic Cost, \$16. includes boat fare, admissions and guide service. Schedule: Leave Hyannis, Ocean Street Wharf at 9 AM. 11 AM to 1 PM a walking tour of the village, conducted by the Nantucket Historical Society, with entrance to historic houses and museums, 1-3 PM enjoy lunch at Seafest booths and browse along Main Street, 3-6 PM bicycle tour of windmill, first house, old jail, South Beach, etc, 6:30 enjoy dinner and entertainment at the Brotherhood (extra). 8:25 PM return on last boat back to Hyannis arriving about 10:30 PM. Late afternoon departure possible for those on walking tour only. Bike \$5. extra. Call 394-5739.

STREETS OF OUR TOWN

Division Street in Dennisport is the boundary between Dennis and Harwich. It is shown as a street as early as the Map of 1831, and probably was a path for some years prior to that date. Would it surprise you to know that another "Division Street" was proposed in 1848, this one running east-west along the Old Chatham Road dividing Dennis into two separate towns? The town meeting of March, 1848, appointed a committee to petition the legislature to authorize this division. The exact reason for the rupture is hard to pinpoint from this distance in time. The petition mentions large tracts of uninhabited land separating the bayside villages with piers and wharves pointing toward Boston, from the soundside villages whose commerce was directed to Providence, Newport, and points south. Furthermore, the south side villages were becoming part of the commerce of the adjacent villages of South Yarmouth and West Harwich, while the north side villages remained pure and uncontaminated by the commerce of other towns. The south side had a need for expensive bridges to link it to the other towns, the costs of which were borne by all the taxpayers of the town. No doubt there were other difficulties and diverse interests which brought about the decision to divide forever. Whatever caused the proposal to be made, subsequently a reflective group of voters signed a remonstrance to the legislature begging that the petition not be allowed. It was signed by 101 voters from both North and South Sides, and reads in part, "No good and sufficient reason exists for such division...We know of no dissimilarity of interests in either section. We are emphatically a commercial town; our interests and consequently our wants and desires are identical." The calm voices of the "remonstrators" apparently prevailed, for in a short time a special town meeting voted to withdraw the petition. Those of you who have lived in Dennis for any length of time know that the North Side--South Side controversy never totally disappeared. It is still essential to the functioning of the town that there be equal representation from each side of town in order to have business progress to the satisfaction of all. Nevertheless, our interests are still identical and North Siders work with South Siders to keep Dennis the All America Town it was designated in 1979. We can be grateful to those citizens who had second thoughts about the decision to part, leaving only one Division Street among the Streets of Our Town.

INDIAN PROGRAM PLANNED

We plan a program this fall centering around our local Indians and would appreciate hearing from anyone with Indian artifacts or lore to share. Call Gail Hart, 398-9359, if you are willing to help us to put together such a program.

Dennis Historical Society
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