



#### ANNUAL MEETING

September 11, at 7:30 P.M., we will meet at Carleton Hall to hold our annual meeting and election of officers. You are urged to attend, and support the Board and officers, and to thank them for all that they have accomplished over the past year. Business will be brief, and following that we will hear a delightful and amusing dialogue between two early postmasters of Cape Cod, sure to entertain you. Walter Babbit and Louise Kelley will be our guests. Please come and make them feel welcome.

#### SHIVERICK STORY IN SLIDES

The East Dennis Library Association saw a sneak preview of our Shiverick show at their annual meeting in August. We will have our first official showing of this lively and informative presentation at our October 22 meeting at West Dennis Community Building. It would be a nice meeting for all members to attend - and bring a guest.

#### RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The Board has purchased one print of each of the eight paintings of Shiverick vessels done by the late Nancy Harrison DeVita. We have also received the book entitled A History of The Boston Marine Society by William A. Baker. 110 Dennis men have been members of this society, which has kindly presented us with the book.

We are also the recipients of a framed collage of pictures of old Dennis, presented to President Phyllis Horton by the residents of Eagle Pond Nursing Home. The gift was in gratitude for her help in providing old pictures to be used as part of the decor of that new facility. Each of the residential wings has been given a name with local significance - Liberty Hall, Scargo, and Josiah Dennis. The dining room will soon be known as The Nobscusset, and the public will be invited to dine there. You are welcome to tour this fine new facility; just call and tell them you are coming.

#### A CALENDAR OF OLD DENNIS

Old South Dennis Village Association, better known as OSDVA, is a neighborhood organization which has done a great deal in its short existence. One visible "sign" of their activity is "classy" wooden directional signs which have appeared on Old Main Street in South Dennis. To help support their improvement efforts, OSDVA has printed a calendar which DHS members will appreciate. Antique pictures, some belonging to DHS and some from private collections, adorn each month, and all of them are excellent. To have a glimpse of Dennis as she used to be, you may purchase a calendar for \$6 at any library in town or at Town Hall, as well as other commercial places.

#### THE TRIALS OF CAPT. MARCUS LAFAYETTE HOWES -- CONTINUED

Referring to his atypical name, Capt. Howes is remembered as having said, "My father was a great admirer of the Marquis de Lafayette, but he was a poor speller!" Capt. Marcus' life was very different from his namesake, but not very different from his fellow master mariners. His biggest challenge came while on a voyage from Japan, following the usual trade route to Java, Europe via the Cape of Good Hope, and home to Boston. He was in command of the bark Freeman in 1887, with a Japanese crew, one of whom presented a severe discipline problem. Hidaka Kikimatsu was especially antagonistic toward the first mate, and one day, while the vessel was off the coast of Java, he threatened to throw the mate overboard. The Captain was summoned, whereupon Kikimatsu ran into the fo'castle. Capt. Howes demanded that he surrender, but instead, the sailor dashed from the fo'castle with a knife in his hand. Capt. Howes shot and wounded him, and he subsequently died. The rest of the voyage proceeded uneventfully, and upon return to the United States, Capt Howes filed a full report of the incident. You can imagine his surprise when he was summoned to the U.S. District Court to answer charges of murdering one of his crew. His fellow ship masters were also outraged, for it appeared that Capt. Howes had acted in self-defense, and in the best interest of his crew and the vessel. During his trial the testimony of the crew was given in Japanese and translated for the jurors. The American steward testified that Capt. Howes was threatened by Kikimatsu. Nevertheless, the jury found Capt. Howes guilty and sentenced him to three years at Barnstable House of Correction. He appealed and it appears that he never served the jail sentence. But the entire affair had a marked effect on local ship masters, who were to reassess their responsibility in controlling a mutinous crew member. Capt. Marcus' neighbors and friends never waived in their support, and he retired to Dennis to spend the rest of his life as a respected citizen.

## CALENDAR

Sept. 9 7:30 P.M. Board will meet at Phyllis'.  
Sept. 11 7:30 P.M. Carleton Hall. ANNUAL MEETING.  
Sept. 13 All day quarterly meeting of the Bay State Historical League.  
9:30 A.M. Coffee and registration at West Dennis Community  
Church Parish Hall, Morning Program.  
Noon Luncheon at Christine's.  
1-3 Tours of the Historic Centers, where our school  
program will be demonstrated.  
Showing of our slide show.  
3 P.M. Wine and cheese at Jericho.  
Oct. 22 7:30 P.M. Program meeting at West Dennis Community Building. "The  
Shiverick Story" slide show.

### THE DREADED CRY OF FIRE

The Fire Study Committee and the Fire Department of Dennis have been spending long hours in attempting to determine the most adequate protection for fires and emergency medical attention for all residents of this town. Historically, each section of the town has suffered from serious fires - from massive forest fires to the burning of one dwelling house. It seems to me that Dennis Port has been altered more severely from the disastrous tongue of flames than any other village. One of the earliest severe fires we find recorded was that which destroyed the wharf of J. K. Baker and Co., in 1870. A fire at a wharf may not strike you as a major disaster, but first you must picture what the waterfront property included. J. K. Baker and Co. owned and operated a fleet of 25 vessels. Most were engaged in the fisheries. Along the wide wharf which extended 600 feet into Nantucket Sound stood many buildings which were important to maritime activities. R. Baker, Jr. and Co. had a ship's chandlery, to outfit these vessels for their voyages, and also a retail grocery business for the villagers. There was a warehouse and a fish packing house where the fish which had been dried on the flakes along the beach was packed for shipping. In addition, Kelley's sail loft was at the wharf. The destruction of this valuable commercial property was a serious matter to the economy of Dennis Port. Fortunately, the Baker Co. was financially secure, and most of the businesses were soon rebuilt. A second fire occurred in 1879. Dr. David Ginn had come to town and established an apothecary shop on Main Street. Adjacent to Dr. Ginn was J. Poole's saloon and barber shop, and Heman Snow's blacksmith shop. In April of 1879 the drug store and saloon were destroyed and the blacksmith shop heavily damaged by fire. Dr. Ginn was well enough established in town to try again. He bought Baker's Hall in South Dennis, originally the Universalist Meeting House, and moved it to Main Street, Dennis Port, to be used as his drug store. Upstairs was a social hall called St. Elmo's (perhaps as a reminder of the fire). His business seems to have revived, for in 1889 he constructed the famous Ginn Block of five stores, and gave to Main Street the look we see captured in the OSDVA calendar for March. This block was also destroyed by fire in the late 1920's. Another serious Dennis Port fire occurred in 1929. The grade school, which stood where the V.I.C. Hall now stands, burned in a spectacular fire in March of that year. The destruction of that school led to the decision to build the brick consolidated school which is now called by the name of Ezra H. Baker. Now - two trivia questions for you: (1) In what year was the Dennis Fire Department organized? (2) Who was our first fire chief? Stay tuned for the answers to these and other intriguing questions about the history of this town.

### MEMORIAL FUND

Gifts have been made by the Board to our Memorial Fund in memory of Parmalee Fitch and William Ernest Crowell. Other gifts have also been received in the names of these fine gentlemen. This is a fine way to honor the memory of two men to whom the history of this town meant a great deal.

Dennis Historical Society  
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Non-Profit  
Organization  
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