



AUGUST ACTIVITIES SUCCESSFUL

A full house at West Dennis Community Building for our Shiverick slide show welcomed it with enthusiasm and asked some interesting questions. As usual, we learned some new information from some of those attending. Also, we signed up a few more Howes'. And Phyllis, you sure were convincing, as several took the time to see Old Sound Museum and compliment Ben Thacher on the fine sound track for our Shiverick show. Then, after being rained out of our nature walk, we rescheduled for Sunday - a beautiful day - and 79 walkers joined Dr. Norton Nickerson for a very worthwhile tour of Simpkins Neck. Thanks to all who helped to make our contributions to Dennis Festival Week so successful.

THE CONSTITUTION IS 200 YEARS OLD.....

....and still working. The framers of this remarkable document concluded their initial work on September 17, 1787. This year begins a four-year-long celebration, which our nation's leaders hope will end with all of our citizens knowing more about the Constitution and our rights and duties under it. Sept. 12-20 is Constitution Week. As Dennis is a Designated Bicentennial Community, we will be taking an active part in the nationwide celebration. TV will cover many national events, so check that schedule. Locally, there will be a brief ceremony at Town Hall on Sept. 17 at 3:30 P.M. coinciding with exercises all across the USA. All buildings with chimes, bells or carillon have been asked to ring them for 200 seconds beginning at 4 P.M. Balloons will be released at that time. Try to be there. Most of our observance of this anniversary will be educational, but this event sounds like it will be fun. Whether you can join us or not, please spend at least 200 seconds on September 17 to reflect on the blessings left to us by those who created the Constitution of the United States.

ANNUAL MEETING

We have a reputation for having the least boring annual meetings on record. The business is short and to the point. We have a fine slate of officers to propose, and then - 'on to the show' - this year, a movie, 'A Little Rebellion Now and Then' which should be of special interest to all who wish to understand the climate of public feeling which surrounded the men who sought to form a 'more perfect union' in 1787. It deals with Shay's Rebellion, which took place in western Massachusetts. But I am sure that the doings around Springfield were discussed with great interest here in quiet Dennis, or rather East Yarmouth, in 1787. About 1770, there had been an emigration to western Massachusetts by Cape families seeking fertile soil for farming. These Howes, Sears, Taylor and Hall families kept in close touch with their families left here on the Cape. No doubt letters between brothers, or to parents, told of the sons who had enlisted in the battle with England, and all shared in the prospect of prosperity when the battle was won. But in the aftermath of the war, financial problems intensified. The western farmers were faced with loss of property, due to their inability to pay their taxes in cash. They protested in a way they had learned from the recent conflict. They marched in rebellion on the courts which were sitting to decide their fate. Of course, they were dispersed and disenfranchised until they agreed to take an oath that they would not bear arms against the state again. On the list of those who were called to appear before the General Court were many Halls, Howes' and Sears'. And so you can be sure that Shay's Rebellion was discussed with more than a little interest, as the Howes', Halls and Sears' gathered at meetings here on Cape Cod. This is an award-winning production funded by the Massachusetts Art Council. We know you will enjoy it. Please be there. (And VOTE FOR SARAH!)

THE BOARD HAS BEEN ROYALLY ENTERTAINED

Gertrude and Harold Lailey were hosts to the Board recently at a most enjoyable supper party in honor of retiring president Phyllis Horton. It was a special treat to attend this nice occasion which was held at the Isaiah B. Hall Bed and Breakfast Inn on Whig Street in Dennis, through the kindness of the Brophys, who are the proprietors of the Inn. We not only enjoyed their very pleasant establishment, but learned a bit first-hand about a fine inn I'm sure we would all be glad to recommend to visitors. The Board thanks both the Laileys and the Brophys for a truly enjoyable afternoon.

AMONG OUR RECENT ACQUISITIONS

From Mike and Judy Dubin, 3 enlargements of colored postcards of the Cape Playhouse, circa 1940.

From Grandville and Sue Chalke, scrapbook, map of Dennis, 1858, and a plan of the roads from East Dennis to Yarmouth, 1848, which shows the exact layout of the early roads.

From Mrs. F. T. Hall, a photograph of Freeman G. Hall, with his ox and hay cart, about 1900.

From the estate of Mrs. Gus Friend, Allison Stone Kennedy, executor, an invaluable collection of papers, plus artifacts of the Stone family, which we will describe in detail soon.

Also purchased from that estate, the desk of the Rev. Nathan Stone, his portrait, and other mementoes of the Stone family.

CALENDAR

- Sept. 12-20 Constitution Week
Consult your TV program for national observances.
Dennis residents are asked to make a special effort to fly flags and banners this entire week, especially Sept. 17.
- Sept. 17 3:30 P.M. Official brief ceremonies at Town Hall.
Local churches have been asked to ring their bells at 4 P.M. for 200 seconds. Balloons will be released. All welcome.
- Sept. 17 7:30 P.M. West Dennis Community Building. Annual meeting and election of officers. Following that, a movie entitled "A Little Rebellion Now and Then."
- Sept. 26 All Day Howes Family Reunion. Headquarters at Carleton Hall.

SOME OTHER INTERESTING HOWES COUSINS

As you are aware, the descendants of Thomas and Mary (Burr) Howes will gather in Dennis on September 26 for a day-long family reunion, sharing the history of the many branches of the Howes family. Mary and Thomas settled here in 1639 with their three sons, and Howes descendants live here still. I have told you many of the stories of Howes' of past generations, most of them of the family that remained in this area. These stories and the history of those families who moved away from Cape Cod have been told over the summer months by the exhibit in the summer kitchen of the Manse. They include Osborn Howes, who joined with his brother-in-law to found the noted shipping firm of Howes and Crowell in Boston; the family of Cordelia and William Howes, who emigrated to Australia; the famous Howes brothers, photographers, whose record of New England in pictures in the late 1880's is superb. The branch which fascinates me is that of the descendants of Moody Howes. Born in Dennis, he emigrated to New York state in 1750. He was a farmer and at first was a tenant in an area of New York now Putnam County. His son Daniel was also a farmer, and became the owner of the farm when it was confiscated from its Tory owners. But some of the sons of this Daniel heard a far different beat than that of the plodding of work horses, and the clang of cowbells. His second son, Nathan Alva, born in 1796, was enchanted away from life on the farm by a traveling acrobat. He taught Nathan to walk the "slack rope," and Nathan joined his troupe as an entertainer. Once he had heard the applause of the audience, Nathan returned to the fields no more. He gathered about him a small group of equestrians and rented one of the first elephants ever seen in the U.S. Legend says she was Old Bet, and that Nathan and his troupe traveled at night, so that his huge beast would only be seen by those who paid admission to the rented barn where the show was put on. His show was very successful and he persuaded his young brother Seth B. to join him. They were soon discontent with "barnstorming" and rented the Hippodrome in New York City for that city's first indoor circus. Later they had a sailmaker create a tent, and traveled with it from town to town. They are credited with originating the circus parade, complete with band and decorated wagons. When they toured England (as The Great American Circus), they planned to take American Indians in full regalia - a primitive Wild West Show - but the Indians changed their minds and refused to go, so they enlisted performers who were willing to redden their skin and used them as substitutes. Perhaps this led P. T. Barnum, one of their friendly rivals in the circus business, to coin his well-known quote, "You can fool some of the people all of the time, etc." With true showmanship, when the Howes Bros. entourage returned to the U.S., it was advertised as "The Great European Circus"! Of course, not all of the Howes Brothers' relatives approved of the life styles of their cousins. One Howes descendant whom we met recently told us that his grandmother had never mentioned her circus-business cousins. He found out about his ancestors' circus careers when he and his wife did some family genealogy. As you can see, the Howes' were, and are, a family of many and varied talents. Rounding the Horn in a furious gale is not all that they have been noted for.

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

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