



### MORE SUMMER FOLKS

Last month I told you about "Linc" Baker and "Cale" Chase--two native sons from the south side who went away, made a fortune, and came back to show their children and friends what a great place Cape Cod is. Now we'll go across to the other side of Dennis--where the same thing happened with a different cast of characters.

Zachariah Howes built his home in North Dennis in 1805 on a rise with Scargo Lake on the south and Cape Cod Bay on the north. One of his grandsons, Ezra T. Howes, went from Dennis to find fame and fortune. He was successful in the oil fields of Titusville, PA and returned to Dennis with his business associate Edward Cole, formerly of Orleans, to renovate the homestead into a summer residence in 1888. They changed the old family home into a very imposing residence and named it Bleak House because of its location overlooking the high moors between the house and the bay. The partners arrived every year with their families and relaxed to enjoy the balmy breezes and beautiful sunsets over the bay. Unlike many other summer families they hired their housekeeper, chauffeur, and maids here and took them back to Brookline in the winter. In one of the later years they moved to Tiverton, RI for tax purposes but continued to spend the summers here. "Aunt Esther" was the last family member to come and she stayed at Little Bleak House. Originally built as an observatory on Newcomb's Hill near the corner of Rte. 6A and Seaside Avenue on Bleak House property it had been converted to a year round house. At the onset of World War II Bleak House was leased to the U.S Coast Guard as a school for training guard dogs for patrol work. By the end of the war the family no longer was interested in retaining Bleak House and it was sold out of the family only to be subsequently purchased by Ted Howes, a nephew of the last Howes owner. He tore the house down and subdivided the property. This development is notable in that it was one of the first on Cape Cod with underground utilities, but out front along Seaside Avenue still stands the rock wall built by Mr. Joseph Murphy of Scargo Tower fame--for the majestic Bleak House.

Charles Tobey of Dennis and Chicago wrote another whole chapter in early Dennis tourism. He didn't spruce up the old homestead to impress his wealthy mid-western friends and associates--he bought a hotel!!! Charles had "gone west" like so many other young men and founded the Chicago Furniture Company--in the 1880's it was the largest of its kind in the country. For years Charles, his brother Frank and their families came back to Tobey Farm in the summer but they made few changes in the old homestead.

The Cape Cod Bay House, formerly the Minot House, had been brought here in 1871 and placed amid 125 acres overlooking the bay. It was a hotel of moderate size and patronage. Always the astute businessman Charles Tobey decided to purchase the hotel as a good investment on his annual summer visit in 1885. He renamed it the Nobscusset House, enlarged it by adding a four and a half story section on the front, built two twelve room cottages, a billiard room, bowling alley with a hall above, ice house, stable, and a pier with a large pavillion at the end extending 800 feet into the bay. Charles died in 1888 and his brother Frank continued with extensive additions that accomodated 200 guests. Henry Hall's house was moved across the moors onto the property to use as a cottage. Remember, this was in the days when a family came for "the season" and took up a suite of rooms. The hotel was famous for its delicious fresh vegetables and dairy products delivered daily from the Tobey Farm and fish and shellfish delivered daily from local waters. In the era of grand hotels this was one of the grandest with a 20 mile panoramic view from the cupola. For entertainment there was bathing, boating, and fishing, croquet, rambling, a small golf course, and swings, plus trips to the observatory on Scargo Hill for an even greater view of the Cape. In the evenings an orchestra played in the gazebo while the patrons waltzed the night away on the Pavillion. What a life!

In addition to personal invitations the Tobeys advertised in mid-western publications about the invigorating, healthful, sea breezes to be found at the Nobscusset House in Dennis, the wealthy patrons mailed thousands of letters and post cards to their friends, and the rest is history. For almost 50 years that grand hotel was host to thousands. Many of them picked up by Richard Hefler in his hotel hack at the Yarmouth Depot and delivered, with a flourish to the front steps of the Nobscusset House.

The hotel was also used by locals for special occasions. A number of Dennis High School reunions were held there and when Yarmouth celebrated their 250th anniversary of the founding of Old Yarmouth they held a grand reception and ball there on September 3, 1889. The hotel was tastefully decorated with flags and pennants, and brilliantly lighted for the occasion. The banquet menu would make today's heartiest eaters pause and say "Enough!" before the meal was half done. The entree was Lobster Salad which had been preceeded by boiled salmon, chicken, ham, tongue, sirloin beef, and turkey--all served with accompanying vegetables and condiments. They finished it off with a long list of desserts, fruits and French Coffee. The night ended with the ball, music provided by the Boston Cadet Orchestra, and a stunning display of fireworks.

The popularity of the grand hotels waned during the 1920's and the Nobscusset Hotel was closed in the early 1930's and demolished in 1934 by I. Grafton Howes. He took it down board by board and used the lumber to build a couple of houses on property he owned on Scarsdale Road. He moved the dining room intact and it, too, became a house. "Mig" Walker Maher remembers when the hotel was closed but before it was demolished. She and Hope Crowell Hallett would go there on their bicycles and ride around the five tiered porches. She says they looked like a layer cake and when Grafton found them up on the top porches he'd chase them off. They also went bowling on the alleys as the balls and pins were still there, and then went dancing in the gazebo pretending they were young debutantes "down for the summer"! Chances are--the present residents in this area have no idea of the rich, historical ground they live on, but if, on a soft summer night, they hear the strains of a waltz--we know why!

### CALENDAR

Aug. 14 6:30 P.M. DHS Board meets with President Brendon and Maureen Joyce.  
Aug. 17-21 Dennis Festival Days. Look for brochure or visit the Dennis Chamber of Commerce.  
Aug. 17 1-4 P.M. Colonial Open House at Josiah Dennis Manse. See related article.  
Aug. 18 2-4 P.M. 1801 Jericho House Open House. See related article.  
Aug. 20 2-4 P.M. Dennis Village Garden Club Flower Show at the Manse.

### A BANNER DAY ON QUIVET NECK

Norman Rockwell would have loved it! The sky was a beautiful sapphire blue and a gentle breeze was blowing in from the bay ruffling the red, white, and blue bunting, the folding chairs set out on the lawn were all taken and many of the guests were standing or sitting on the grass, the band was playing old time favorites and everyone was in a festive mood. Jacob and Olive Sears would have been more than pleased to see the centennial celebration of the hall and library they donated to the inhabitants of the town of Dennis. The program opened with "The Stars and Stripes Forever"--also 100 years old this year, followed by the invocation, and then the welcome by Robert C. Eldred resplendent in a red jacket and straw boater. Max Weber sang a medley of American songs and Joy Wingett read an original poem by Jane Seward Pomeroy, followed by a children's chorus--who received a grand round of applause from dotting parents, grandparents, and neighbors. Bob Eldred to give the address, saying all the right things and keeping it brief--a far cry from 100 years ago when the Hon. Samuel Powers of Newton gave an address of heroic proportions. Connie Rosenberger sang and "our own" Johnny Kelley gave his special rendition of "Young At Heart". The program was directed by Joy Wingett and Margaret Farrell and ended with Lou Pell's Oompah Band playing for a sing-a-long that had folks singing, clapping, and dancing in the street. An art exhibition and historical display was held inside and everyone was sent off with a home baked brownie. Many thanks to the Jacob Sears Memorial Building Centennial Committee for giving us a real slice of Americana and bringing back fond memories of what all of Dennis used to be like.

### HEAR YE!! HEAR YE!! HEAR YE!!

The Yarmouth Minute Men, a Colonial and Revolutionary War era Re-enactment group is looking for Volunteers interested in the Living History for Encampments, Parades, and Educational presentations. Colonial Musicians are also most welcome. If you are a lover of American history and would like to be involved call Aldo Gianotti at 385-6607, Patrick Gilgunn 790-8224 or Larry Chase 790-2866 and perhaps we can look forward to seeing you in next years Dennis Memorial Day Parade.

### FESTIVAL DAYS AT THE MANSE AND JERICHO

Festival Days this year has been shortened to five days but with all the action that used to take place in nine days, so step lively folks, there's a lot to do in a short space of time. DHS will participate with programs at both houses. The Josiah Dennis Manse will have a Colonial Open House on Saturday, August 17 from 1-4 P.M. There will be demonstrations by costumed guides of childrens games, weaving, quilting, butter and ice cream making, Colonial foods, and young fiddlers among the afternoons events. Audience participation will be encouraged in some areas. How long since you've tried to roll a hoop? It looks easier than it is! Also across the stone wall in the triangle the Falmouth Militia will reenact a colonial militia encampment with a flag ceremony and drills. This promises to be even better than last year so bring your cameras and step back into the 1700's.

The following day on Sunday from 2-4 P.M. you can take a quantum leap into the 1800's at the Jericho House and Barn Museum. There you can tour the newly renovated house and watch craft demonstration of 19th century skills, including among others, stenciling, rug braiding, and chair caning. It's gratifying to see our two old houses become centers of historical education as we endeavor to tell the story of life in Dennis from the beginning.

Then on Tuesday the 20th from 2-4 the Dennis Village Garden Club will have their annual flower show at the Manse. This popular event is always very interesting and well attended. Mark these dates on your calendar--you won't want to miss one of them!

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