

MEMORIES OF DAYS GONE BY

I have a copy of a school newspaper, published in 1857 by the pupils of the South Dennis Academy. In an essay describing her town, one young lady writes: "There are four villages in the town, North, East, South and West Dennis. As I have never visited North or East Dennis, I can not describe them." Well, many Southsiders took the risk and travelled over the Airline to East Dennis for "Memory Day" on November 20, and found it to be a very pleasant village. They were welcomed by a number of long-time East Dennis residents, (who knew that already), and who told some fine stories of bygone days. Another pleasant day of looking back was enjoyed by all. Thanks to the trustees of Jacob Sears Memorial Library for permission to use the hall. Also to Edie Sunderland and Grace Nyberg who served refreshments, Henry Kelley III who moderated, Ben Thacher, who taped the conversations and Cynthia Hotalling, who so graciously assisted us with all arrangements. We will continue our Memory Day series in early March, visiting South Dennis. Hope you can be there.

CHRISTMAS CONVIVIALITY

That's the phrase coined by Ann Chalmers to describe what we hope will be the end result of our efforts when D.H.S. and the Jericho Committee co-sponsor Christmas Open House, on December 4th. Ann and Hazel Newcomb will decorate the Jericho House. D.H.S. cooks will provide the goodies, which will be served with "Negus" or hot chocolate, and a good measure of cordiality by members of the Jericho House Committee. One of the old sleighs from the Barn Museum will be outdoors, decorated as a backdrop for our carollers, Girl Scouts from troop 722 and troop 1515, indoors background music will be provided by Enrico Caruso and Madame Schuman-Heink, antique music boxes and such, courtesy of Ben Thacher of Old Sound Museum. Park at Ezra Baker School, lower parking lot, which will be plowed in case of snow. (Say that Softly.) Hours for the open house are 4-7 P.M. so that the symphony patrons can stop by on their way home from the concert. All plans are set, and all we need is you, to make Christmas Conviviality happen.

ANYONE FOR GOLF?

So it's going to be Dennis Highlands. Well, I guess that's appropriate enough. If anyone had asked, I would have preferred Run Pond, if only because of the mystery of why this little pond is so-called. I have asked old-timers and conservationists, but no one knows of the existence of herring run into this particular pond. Of course there might have been generations ago. Another possible origin of the name occurred to me a while ago, South Yarmouth Road was once called "The Run Road". It led, and still leads, to a stream in Yarmouth which has an active alewife run each Spring. Run Pond may have been referred to as the pond near Run Road, but more likely that would have been Flax Pond. No matter, Dennis Highlands, not Run Pond will be the name of the new golf course. I heard a great story about the beginnings of golf in our town, from Lester Edwards. Grace Johnson was the manager of the Belmont Hotel in the early 1900's. She thought some of her sophisticated visitors would be interested in golf, then unknown to our hard-working townspeople. So she hired Joe "Party" Baker's cow pasture off Summer St. in Dennisport. The fairways were scythed and a nine hole course created. Lester and some of his friends were hired as caddies. When Lester arrived home with a dime he had been paid, he tried to explain to his mother how he had earned it. Behind his newspaper, Father was listening, incredulous "Do you mean to say these are grown men playin' that there game, tryin' to hit a little ball into a hole with a stick?" "Yes, Sir," Lester replied. Mr Edwards thought on that for a bit, then he said, "Well, now, boy, I guess it's all right for you to take the dime for carrying them sticks, if they're fools enough to pay it. But mind you don't get to nigh those fellars, you hear? I think they've been out in the sun too long!" Dennis residents are kinder to golfers today. In fact, I hear some natives actually play the game. But I still wonder a bit. You know they have some strange rules. I've heard tell that there's a rule at Dennis Highlands that, when it opens this spring, no one can play the course unless they have two socks on each foot. Now, ain't that the durnedest rule you ever heard? Only possible reason I can think of for such a rule is in case you get a hole in one. Out in the sun too long, I do declare.

WE GO AWALING

Our January Meeting will be on the evening of Tuesday January 10th at Carlton Hall. We will have a talk and slides depicting "Life Aboard a Whaler" brought to us from the New Bedford Whaling Museum by Sheila Callaghan. Be sure to mark the date.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS OF HISTORY

We have available the following which make fine stocking stuffers or gifts for your friends and family who are interested in our town's history: Master Mariners of Dennis, O'Neil, \$1. They Built Clipper Ships in Their Back Yard, Clark, \$2: The White Spire, Perry, \$2: Scuttle Watch, Crowell, \$5: Salt Works Tile, \$5. Also available, at East Dennis Library, tiles of the 8 Shiverick Ships, \$3.25 each. Call 398-8842

CALENDAR

- Dec. 4 4-7 P.M. Christmas Open House, co-sponsored by D.H.S. and Jericho Committee at Jericho House, West Dennis
- Jan. 10 7:30 P.M. Carlton Hall, Sheila Callaghan, Topic: "Life Aboard a Whaler"
Who Knows when? Winter Carnival, Ice Boat races, skating etc., Scargo Lake
"Save the Date!"
- Mid-February The Annual Mid-Winter Festivity Luncheon

WINTER CARNIVAL

Gail Hart, Richard and Nancy Howes, Sarah Kreuger and Henry Kelley are taking up plans for a winter sports day at Scargo in February, weather permitting. If you are interested, call one of them. Look around your hay mow for remnants of an ice boat, sharpen your skates, and be ready to go.

WOMEN WHO WENT TO SEA

Cynthia Jane was the daughter of Capt. Alexander Baker of West Dennis and his wife, who was born Sarah Doane Crowell. Cynthia and her mother were accustomed to being alone together, as Capt. Alexander was often away on coasting voyages. In the early winter of 1853, when Cynthia was only seven years old, they were busy planning a celebration, expecting Capt. Baker to return from his latest voyage on the Sch. J.K. Randall, bringing coal from Philadelphia to Boston. Each had made him a homecoming gift. But Christmas came and went and there was no sign of the Captain. It was with great joy and relief that the Baker women heard that a number of vessels were anchoring at the Deep Hole off Bass River, awaiting a favorable wind to carry them on the dangerous passage around the Cape to Boston. Among the vessels was the J.K. Randall. As they hurried to the shore, Capt. Baker had a boat lowered and rowed in to greet them warmly. He told them that as soon as the wind came up from the South west the fleet would leave, and carry their cargoes to Boston. He would take the next packet to NobsCUSsetT and the stage home to West Dennis. "Don't worry," he shouted cheerily, as he rowed back to his vessel, "I'll be back before you miss me." Later that evening, Dec. 28th, the wind did come up fair for Boston and the fleet began the hazardous trip around the Cape. But about 2 A.M., as they cruised along the backside, the wind shifted to the northeast and snow began to fall. Each vessel tacked furiously, trying to round the Cape and pass over the shoal. In the blinding snow, the vessels soon lost sight of each other. The storm set in in full fury, and snow and wind buffeted the boats and the shore until midnite of the 29th. Those on shore could only watch the devastation. Piers and wharfs were splintered, storehouses broken up, and their goods floated about on the ice which moved back and forth, battering the shore. Those vessels moored at NobsCUSsetT and Sesuit were destroyed or lifted clear of their mooring, landing on marsh and debris of ruined wharfs. Ashore at what we now call Chapin Beach was the Schooner Willow, of Boston, from Philadelphia, high and dry, all hands safe, but a little further down, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of Corporation Wharf was the Sch. Commodore Kearney, Charles Baker of Hyannis, master, the vessel totally destroyed, but all of the crew safe. Capt. Levi Crowell's schooner Tirza came ashore at Turo, crew safe, but vessel and cargo of flour badly damaged. Several vess were ashore on Sandy Neck. Mrs. Baker and Cynthia anxiously waited for news of the J.K. Randall, but none came. She and her crew werenever heard from again. Despite this tragic experience, Cynthia fulfilled her destiny and married Capt. Henry Harrison Fisk. She went to sea with him on many occasions, and in her old age she delighted to relate her tales of voyages to her grandchildren. But always included among the stories was the story of the last time she saw her father, and his last words to her: "I'll be back before you miss me."

CHRISTMAS ON THE ISLANDS

Jericho is not the only old home to be decorated and open for Christmas. Paula Bacoh has arranged a tour to Edgartown where several old Whaling Captain's homes will be open to the public. The trip, which includes lunch at the Kelley House will be on Dec. 17. Call Paula, 394-5729, for details.

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