

#### MID-WINTER FESTIVITY - FEBRUARY 15/16

The committee has chosen the Dennis Inn for our annual luncheon get-together. We will have a social hour at noon and luncheon at 1 P.M. You may have a choice of Broiled Scrod, or Baked Stuffed Chicken Breast, served with a Baked Potato, Fresh Vegetable, Rolls and Butter, Dessert and Beverage. The cost is \$8.25 per person. Please send your check and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Joshua Crowell, P.O. Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638, and indicate your choice of entree. We will be entertained at dinner by members of the Mid-Cape Chorus, and our own "Sound Man", Ben Thacher, and his lovely wife Sara will be our guests. I have a couple of good "trivia questions" for all you Dennis history buffs. Come and join us for a February brightener. And please make your reservations right now.

#### AMONG OUR NEW MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. Chester Twiss, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Putnam, Mrs. Audrey Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. George Snow, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Malinowski, Mrs. Jean M. Kay. Please greet these people, and make them welcome.

#### THE WRECK OF THE BRIG POLLY

The disastrous voyage of the Brig Polly in 1812 was one of the most talked of sea tragedies of that period. The story was told and retold wherever sea stories were recounted, but for two Dennis families the oft repeated saga had a special significance. When the Polly sailed from Boston loaded with lumber for St. Croix, Capt. William Cazneau was in command. His mate was John Paddock, son of Capt. Judah Paddock of Dennis, and before the mast was another Dennis mariner, Henry Howes, son of Elkanah. Henry was one of the American seamen impressed for service in the British Navy before the War of 1812. After he was released, he returned to the sea, for a seaman was all he had ever been. The Paddock and Howes family left behind in Dennis stoically went about their business while awaiting news that their sailing men had arrived safely in port. But it proved to be a very long wait before news of any kind was received. For the Polly had run into a violent wind as it approached the southern edge of the Gulf Stream. The vessel had been thrown upon its beam ends, and to right her the crew had cut away the rigging. She righted, but was filled with water and helpless without sails or rudder. Then began the struggle for survival, with little water, and scant edible food. One by one the crew succumbed to exhaustion, exposure, and dehydration. After many days, the captain succeeded in kindling a fire, and by boiling salt water and distilling it, obtained fresh water to drink. But for most of the crew, it was too late. By this tedious method of obtaining water, and by scraping the barnacles from the side of the brig and catching an occasional shark, the Captain and the Indian cook were able to survive. All others perished. The incredible part of the story is that the two men drifted in their helpless vessel in one of the most frequently travelled parts of the Atlantic Ocean for 190 days before they were found by another ship and rescued. Upon their return to Boston, after an absence of more than seven months, it was the Captain's sad duty to inform the families of the crew, including the Paddocks and the Howes, of the fate of their loved ones. There is an incredible footnote to this amazing tale. Captain Cazneau died in California in 1866 at the age of 97. His health was apparently little damaged by his six-month ordeal!

#### STATE HOUSE EXHIBIT - NOTE THEY HAVE CHANGED OUR DATES!

In spite of the confusion that there seems to be at the State House as to when we are to be there, Sarah Kruger and other members of the Board have pressed on with preparations and it now seems definite that our exhibit on the history of Dennis will begin on March 1st and continue through March 29. Paula has gamely rescheduled the opening day bus tour, and if you are interested in going up to attend our opening, please call Paula Bacon, 394-5739. We are sure that you will be proud of the exhibit we are pulling together, and we are delighted to tell prospective visitors to the town about our interesting past. Through the initiative and hard work of Freeman Bullard and Hughson Hawley, we have a salt works model to display. Some of the art work of Ann Guiliani which was created to accompany our slide show will be used, as well as one of the sailing charts belonging to Capt. Moses Howes, which we received as a gift from Margaret Murphy. And of course the proud model of the Belle of the West will help to tell the story of the Shiverick shipyard. We hope many of you will take the opportunity to visit the exhibit in Doric Hall of the State House from March 1 to March 29.

#### CRANBERRY HISTORY TOLD

The Audio-Visual Committee has recently completed work on a slide and sound presentation on the cranberry industry. It was undertaken at the suggestion of Walter Morley, with the thought that it would be a helpful tool to prepare the school children for their field trip to Link Thacher's bog in the fall. The show combines history with present day growing practices, and was done with the cooperation of Mr. Thacher, who narrates it. Pictures were taken by Mr. Morley, Link Thacher, and Mrs. Laura Thacher, and are supplemented with slides from D.H.S. files, and other sources, with technical work by Wilson Scofield and sound by Ben Thacher. The show has already had two successful showings, and we hope it will be widely seen. The beautiful Indian Land slides are also about complete. Sound needs to be added, and then that set of slides will also be available for use in the schools and for groups.

CALENDAR

- Feb. 3 South Dennis Memory Day Senior Center 3 P.M.  
Feb. 4 Board meets at Gail's 7:30 P.M.  
Feb. 16 Mid-Winter Festivity Dennis Inn, Social Hour 12, Luncheon at 1.  
Reservations necessary. See article.  
March 1-29 Doric Hall, Mass. State House Exhibit, 'History of Dennis'  
March 3 Dennis Village Memory Day at Carleton Hall 3 P.M.

BE SURE TO NOTE MARCH DATES, AS THE NEWSLETTER OFTEN GETS TO YOU TOO LATE FOR EARLY IN THE MONTH ACTIVITIES.

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Also of interest to our members -

- Feb. 14 4 P.M. Jericho House Tea, scones and English movies, 'Gardens of Great Britain' and 'Cotswald Journey'. All welcome.

DR. WILLIAM B. GOOCH, M.D.

Unlike Dr. Hersey and Dr. Hulburt, Dr. William Gooch did not live for very long in this community, and his medical contributions are obscure. But he did leave his signature on our town's history in a very interesting way. Dr. Gooch was born in Yarmouth, Maine in 1794 and graduated with the Medical Class of Bowdoin College in 1825. He served as physician in his home town until 1839. Then, in an early example of 'mid-life career change,' Dr. Gooch, under the auspices of his friend and then Secretary of State Daniel Webster, became the U.S. counsel in San Domingo. While there with his young family, Dr. Gooch corresponded with and complained to Secretary Webster about the conditions under which he had to function and his low recompense. At the end of Mr. Webster's term as Secretary, Dr. Gooch found his way to West Dennis, perhaps due to his acquaintance with the many Dennis mariners who sailed to that Caribbean island. He settled here in 1843 with his wife, son and two daughters.

In the decades preceding the Civil War, a strong feeling existed in this town between the group which called for the immediate abolition of slavery in all states, and the more conservative voices which favored a compromise which would protect the Union. The Abolitionists, with Capt. Prince S. Crowell as one of their most outspoken leaders, were said to have been an important link in the underground railroad, landing runaway slaves at Bass River, transporting them across Cape, and smuggling them, via fishing boats, to Canadian ports. They had brought to the Cape such well-known Abolitionist speakers as Parker Pillsbury, to try to win support of their position. The Unionists felt equally strongly about saving the Union of states, and preventing secession and war. But they had no fiery speaker of the persuasion of Mr. Pillsbury to whom to turn to plead their case. Then Dr. Gooch let it be known that he was a friend of Daniel Webster, the great orator, who, despite his speech of March 7, 1850 in which he favored a strong fugitive slave law, still had many devoted listeners who agreed with his eloquent support of the sanctity of the Union. Dr. Gooch must have had a strong influence on the men of West and South Dennis, most of whom were Whigs, and knew that Webster was very much out of favor with his party. On July Fourth, 1851, 54 prominent citizens signed a letter to the God-Like Daniel, inviting him to visit Dennis. Dr. Gooch wrote a personal letter, telling him that he could assure him a warm reception, something which Dan could no longer anticipate in Boston, and offering him the hospitality of his home. Mr. Webster responded with a long and eloquent letter, saying that he would be delighted to spend time in Dennis if circumstances allow, that he had often visited Dennis on his many trips to the Cape and recognizes many names on the invitation sent to him.

The committee then made a specific invitation to "Partake of a public dinner" here in Dennis on the 27th of August. The Gooch family tradition states that Mr. Webster did accept this invitation, but was detained in Washington, and that Dr. Gooch read his address. I have yet to discover any evidence of this, however. I cannot say "Daniel Webster slept here." But that's not because he was never invited. Dr. Gooch left shortly after this, and the Papers of Daniel Webster at Dartmouth College hold no further letters from Dennis.

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