

Happy New Year--Old Style/New Style

At midnight on January 1, many of us will raise a cup of cheer one to the other for Auld Lang Syne, and wish each other "Happy New Year."

But when the first settlers came to Dennis, the New Year began on March 25--for England was still using the Julian calendar. Most of the rest of the Western world had adopted the new Gregorian calendar in 1582 which measured the year more closely. It also corrected the inaccuracy accumulated over 1200 years by dropping ten days from the calendar and establishing 28 days for February with a leap year at stated intervals. England was not at peace with the Roman Catholic Church in 1582, so they refused to adopt the calendar and confusion of dates resulted, especially in January, February, and March. For the rest of the world January 1, 1621 was the beginning of the first new year. But for the Pilgrims, January 1 was still 1620--and the new year began on March 25, 1621. Confusing? Just try looking up the birth days and marriage dates of the earliest Cape settlers. If they occur in January, February, or March prior to 1752, they are often recorded with double dates as February 25, 1698/99, or they may be initialled with the explanation O.S. (old style) or N.S. (new style).

To further complicate the picture, England officially adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1752, and that year the dates of September 3 through 13 never occurred. In England, there were riots protesting the change--many thought that the Parliament was robbing them of ten days of their lives!

Thus the Pilgrim Fathers signed the Mayflower Compact on November 11, 1620 O.S. (old style) or November 21, 1620 N.S. (new style). George Washington was born on February 11, 1731 O.S. or February 22, 1732 N.S. Got it?

But now, who can account for Antipas Lewis, whose gravestone in West Yarmouth says he died on February 31, 1776? What kind of calendar was that?

Anyway--Happy New Year (N.S.)!!

Christmas at the Manse

A light touch of snow added to the beauty of the Josiah Dennis Manse grounds, and the swag of fresh greens hung upon the front door. Inside, Susan Kelley and her committee had arranged greens and red berries in each appropriate cranny, and garlands bedecked the stairway and mantels. Refreshments were served in the Keeping Room and the Work Room, and at mid-afternoon we were treated to a concert of seasonal music by the Cape Cod Community College Chamber Singers, under the direction of Robert Kidd. They were really great, singing motets, madrigals, and carols in rich harmony, unaccompanied. About 200 people attended the tea and all enjoyed it greatly. Our thanks to all who helped and to the Manse Committee for allowing us to hold the open house there.

Cast a Weather-Eye

Before the days of meteorological radar stations and satellites--even before the days of television or radio--yea, even before the advent of the U.S. Weather Bureau in 1890, folks who lived by the sea had need to keep an eye on the weather. In addition to old proverbs ("Red in the night, Sailors delight", etc.), they depended on their weather glass (a barometer) and the direction of the wind--which could be told at a glance by casting a weather eye at the weather vane perched atop the barn. The vane took the form of fish, fowl, ships--you name it. Marilyn Strauss of West Barnstable has made a study of the many shapes of weather vanes. She will show her collection of replicas and talk about weather vanes at the next meeting of the Dennis Historical Society on January 10, 7:30 PM at Carleton Hall, Dennis. All are welcome.

Carleton Hall

In Dennis we are fortunate to have many meeting halls, some town owned, and the Historical Society meetings are scheduled at different places from time to time. This month the meeting featuring Antique Weather Vanes will be held at Carleton Hall on Old Bass River Road in Dennis. The hall was built in 1820, to be used as a Methodist Church. This church merged with the present Dennis Union Church in the 1840's and the Methodist Pulpit Bible is presently at the Josiah Dennis Manse.

The building was used for a short time as an academy, for there was no public High School in Dennis at that time. In the mid-1800's, it began to be used as a public meeting place, housing the Lyceum. Villagers held stock in the site and pledged needed money for improvements. Carleton Howes, a retired sea captain whose portrait can also be seen at the Manse, was instrumental in raising a substantial amount for necessary repairs and the grateful villagers named the Hall in his honor.

The Dennis Ladies Aid began its meetings here in 1889. The addition to the south was built in the early 1900's. It continued to be privately owned by the villagers until the 1950's when the trustees deeded the land and building to the town. Think of the many happy occasions held in this hall over its lifetime of one hundred and fifty-nine years. (Our thanks to Mrs. Anson Howes for assistance with the above article.)

Mid-Winter Festivity  
The Red Pheasant  
February 17, 1979

PLEASE RESERVE \_\_\_\_\_ Luncheon Tickets @ \$6.00 each.

Please choose: Scallops \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose a self-addressed envelope and mail to: Mr. Joshua Crowell,  
Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638

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Mid-Winter Festivity

Last year at the Hereford House in Dennisport, we inaugurated a custom which may be destined to become an annual event. We labelled it our "Mid-Winter Festivity", and it was greatly enjoyed by all who attended.

This year we will hold a Mid-Winter Festivity again and follow along the pattern of 1978--the date has been set for Saturday, February 17, 1979, and the place, the Red Pheasant Inn on Route 6A in the village of Dennis. There will be a social hour beginning at 12, and luncheon will be served at 1 PM, followed by some informal talks about the village of Dennis. The menu--a good one for a cold February day--Cream of Mushroom Soup, a choice of Scallops or Chicken, Vegetable dish of Baked Tomato, Mushroom Caps and Spinach Mornay, Salad with the house dressing and Dessert--Brownie with ice cream and fudge sauce, plus coffee or tea.

Reservations must be made and are limited. Tickets are \$6.00, gratuity and tax included. Send your reservation and your check made out to Dennis Historical Society to: Mr. Joshua Crowell, Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638. For more information call Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Taylor, 398-9158.

CALENDAR

January 1	Happy New Year, New Style
January 10	"Weather Vanes" Marilyn Strauss, Carleton Hall, Dennis, 7:30
January 16	Regular Board Meeting, Home of Mr. Peirce, 7:30
January 18	Education Program, Mr. Dudley Hallett, Falmouth Historical Society, 3 PM, Ezra H. Baker School
February 17	Mid Winter Festivity, Red Pheasant Inn, 12 noon, Tickets \$6.00
February 20	Regular Board Meeting, Home of Mr. Peirce, 7:30
March 15	"Geology of Cape Cod" Mr. Donald Eldredge, V.I.C. Hall, Dennisport, 7:30 PM
March 28	"Trap Fishing" (slides), Mr. Cyril Patrick, West Dennis Community Building, 1:30 PM

Dennis History in the Schools

The children of the Ezra Baker School are given a field trip to our two historic centers during their elementary school education. Letters from the children indicate they find these trips both enjoyable and educational. At the suggestion of Principal Walter Morley, and with the cooperation of the committees of the two houses, the Education Committee of the Dennis Historical Society is studying ways to make these field trips even more enjoyable and educational. We are studying programs sponsored by other Historic Societies and trying to see how our group can make local history take on special meaning for the children growing up in Dennis.

On January 18 at 3 PM at the Ezra H. Baker School, Mr. Dudley Hallett will show slides of the program presented for school children by the Falmouth Historical Society. Everyone interested is welcome to attend.

Dennis Historical Society  
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