

DENNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

January 1980, Vol.3, No.1

(Newsletter written and/or compiled by Nancy Thacher (Mrs. Richardson) Reid.)

CHRISTMAS AT JERICHO

The little house was beautifully decorated thanks to the members of the West Dennis Garden Club, Jan Baker and Adele Jenkins. The festive board groaned with goodies prepared by members of the Jericho Committee and the D.H.S. The hostesses and pourers were gracious and lovely in holiday dress. Rhoda Babcock was chairman of the afternoon and seemed to be everywhere, attending to all details, Parm Fitch greeted guests, Marion and Elizabeth Ryder were in costume to tell about the book, Scuttle Watch. Georgia Bagge sang Christmas songs from the parlor, her lovely soprano voice floating throughout the house. She was joined by the choristers from the Nathaniel H. Wixon School, led by Mrs. Patty Anderson. Our thanks to one and all for making our open house at Jericho a lovely holiday party, one of which the Baker family who lived there for so many generations would have been proud.

MID WINTER FESTIVITY

For the third year the D.H.S. is having a mid-winter luncheon, this year featuring West Dennis. The Columns, built in 1862 by Capt. Obed L. Baker, one of the 379 documented sea captains who came from Dennis, will be the place; Saturday, February 16, will be the date; with cocktails at 12:30 and dinner at 1:30. The menu is salad with house dressing, homemade breads and butter, choice of Seafood Crepes or Chicken Supreme, tea or coffee, and chocolate bourbon cake for dessert. The price, an unbelievable \$5.50, includes tax, gratuity and a souvenir menu. Reservations must be made and paid for in advance indicating your choice of Seafood or Chicken. A self-addressed stamped envelope will bring you a confirmation. Please send your orders to Mr. Joshua Crowell, Box 936, Dennis, MA 02638.

WEATHERWISE AND OTHERWISE

When we were children, I can recall my mother would say to us, much too early in the evening for our liking, "Come on, children, time to get dressed for bed." Now we live in a great old Victorian house, where the bed chambers are a Sabbath's day journey from the warmth of the kitchen stove. In these energy saving days, we are learning anew what it means to "dress for bed" with long flannel sleepwear, bed socks and a flannel wrapped soapstone to warm the sheets. One article of nightwear that is making a comeback is the nightcap. Our ancestors, without benefit of scientific fact to back them up, figured out that, with the rest of the body piled high with blankets (aren't we up to about nine, Dr. Abner?), the head deserved some protection as well. So, a nightcap was worn when one "dressed for bed". Today scientists tell us that 30% of our body heat is lost through the scalp, so, as so often is true, the old timers' surmise was a good one.

There is another type of nightcap which early folks made good use of to warm the body from within before plunging into those cold sheets. Often created out of rum or hard cider, this second sort of nightcap was warmed by inserting a hot poker into the tankard. Thus fortified with two sorts of nightcaps, the good folks slumbered well and warm. This all reminds me of a rule for curing the common cold which was told to me by an old Pharmacology professor: Take a nightcap of the first sort and hang it on the bedpost (that shows how old this rule is!). Then take a nightcap of the second sort in quantity sufficient to see two nightcaps on the bedpost. Put the one nearest to you on your head, climb into bed, and stay there until you feel better. (Please note that the above is purely for your edification and does not necessarily imply the recommendation of your newsletter staff!)

DENNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUNCH

So many people asked for the recipe for the hot mulled wine which we served at the Christmas Open House, we promised to print it for you. My old recipe book calls this Negus, and states it was named for "Col. Francis Negus, who died in 1732, and first concocted it." I can find no further reference to the good Colonel. Perhaps this is his only claim to fame.

Make a simple syrup by boiling hard for five minutes, 2 cups of sugar, 1 cup of water, 2 sticks of cinnamon, 12 cloves and ½ teaspoon nutmeg. This can be made ahead. At the time of serving, bring 2/3 cup of this syrup to a boil, add 1 cup of orange juice, bring to a boil again, then add one bottle of burgundy wine and heat to a simmer. Serve with orange slices, hot. Makes an excellent nightcap of the second sort.

THE HANDS OF TIME

The New Year is the occasion for many of us to be more conscious of the passage of years than at ordinary times, but our busy lives today keep us ever conscious of the passage of the minutes and hours. Our March program will focus on the keeping of time, when Kirkwood Brown will speak on antique clocks at a meeting to be held at W.D.C.B. on March 19 at 7:30 P.M. Plan to attend and bring a guest. Our programs are always interesting. This one sounds especially so.

THROUGH THE SCUTTLE WATCH

We have been assured that the books will be here early in January. Please, you local folks, if you have not heard from us by about January 20th, will you give us a call, as we will try to have all of the books that have been ordered in your hands by that time. Call Virginia Gifford at 398-2160. And thanks for your orders.

\*\*\*\*\* CALENDAR \*\*\*\*\*

January 17 7:30 Carleton Hall. Talk by Bill Norman, "The Cape Cod Canal".  
 January 23 7:30 Home of President Hart. Executive Board Meeting.  
 February 6 9 AM Bus tour of New Bedford. Leaves from Ezra Baker School.  
 February 16 The Columns, West Dennis. Mid-Winter Festivity. Reservations  
 needed. See article.  
 March 19 7:30 W.D. Community Building. Kirkwood Brown, "The Hands of Time".  
 March 5 8:30 AM Bus trip to Salem. \$15. More next month.

CAPE COD CANAL

Mr. Bill Norman of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will speak to the D.H.S. at our January meeting on the growth, development and maintenance of the Cape Cod Canal. We hope to have a good group to hear him, so please make a special effort to be at Carleton Hall on January 23, for this most interesting presentation.

STREETS OF OUR TOWN

Between Trotting Park and Lower County Roads is a street called South Village Road. From it run three short streets called South Village Lane, South Village Circle, and South Village Drive, and on the extension of the road south of Lower County is South Village Beach. Back in the early 1800's Dennis was not divided into the five villages we now know. All of the town from Setucket Road north was referred to as the North side, all of it from Setucket Road south was the South side. Both sides had neighborhoods with descriptive names. On the North side the old Indian place names survive; Sesuit, Quivett and Nobscussett, also names whose origin is obscure or forgotten, as Fox Hill and the Indian Field. The South side had neighborhoods named for the earliest settlers; Crowe's Neck (now the west side of West Dennis), Baker Town near Jericho House and Crocker's Neck (Dennisport) probably a corruption of Crook's Neck, for Jacob Crook, the Indian who deeded the land to the white men. Close to the South Sea was a fishing village called South Village. Extending out into the water where South Village Beach is today was a busy wharf, home of a fishing fleet, with a fish store and chandlery. Fish flakes and salt works extended along the beach toward the lighthouse and Swan Pond River. A second wharf extended out at the lighthouse. Surrounding the waterfront commerce were modest classic Cape cottages--not elegant homes like Obed Baker's Columns, or the Main Street home of Capt. Luther Crowell, for the inhabitants of South Village were hardworking fishermen and their families. Their busy community contributed a great deal to the economy of the town. Today the area is still crowded with modest homes, as in yesteryear. But these were built mostly to "accommodate tourists" as the Lighthouse, now a gracious inn, also does. A few houses have survived from the nineteenth century--a single Cape, a house and a half, one or two square houses vintage 1850 or so--nothing besides remains to identify this once busy fishing village, save only South Village Road--one of the Streets of Our Town.

MOBY DICK REVISITED

Whales, here we come again. New Bedford is a town preserving its history, and the nation's largest local history museum--the Whaling Museum--is a place full of fascination. As there wasn't a bus seat to spare on the trip on November 30, some of you might like to join this next guided tour on February 6 of the town that Herman Melville claimed was "Harpooned and dregged up from the bottom of the sea." The tour starts at the Museum with a film, then small groups tour the museum with a guide. At noon people are free to poke around the newly restored waterfront district and have lunch in one of the charming restaurants. Then a tour is planned of the glass museum to see special exhibits of the beautiful Pairpoint and Mount Washington glass once manufactured in New Bedford. A brief stop is made at the Revere Factory store. Then Fairhaven, with its fantastic array of architecture is visited on the way to Fort Phoenix which overlooks the site of the first naval battle of the Revolution. For information or reservations contact Paula Bacon, 28 High Bank Road, South Dennis, MA 02660 (394-5739). The total cost of the trip is \$10, payable in advance.

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