



ABOUT ALMANACS--OLD AND NEW

Among my favorite stocking stuffers is the Old Farmer's Almanac which I note is this year proudly presenting its 200th edition. I thought you might be interested to know that D.H.S. has a 200 year old almanac--not the first one of Robert B. Thomas, now known as "Old Farmer's", but another one of the 19 "Alamancks" which were offered to the public in the year 1792. In an era when everyone was a farmer, the astronomical information presented by the almanacs was considered essential in order to take advantage of the best time for planting and harvesting. Long range weather forecasts were also carefully studied by all who would have successful crops, and the time of the conjunction of planets and phases of the moon had a great influence on agricultural schedules. Our ancient almanack as it is labelled is one prepared by Nathaniel Low, and, he says, it is the thirtieth year that he has issued such a volume. It contains but 24 pages, in contrast to the 288 (plus ads) in the 1992 OFA. Though much has changed, much has also stayed the same. Both contain information about eclipses, moon phases, position of the planets, time of sunrise and sunset, tides, poetry, wise sayings and long range weather forecasts. Missing from the old editon are ads, puzzles and recipes. Not found in the new edition, dates of the courts of common pleas, time and place of the Friends Yearly meeting, and a list of the roads which lead out of Boston, and the distances and names of "Those who Keep Houses of Entertainment." The 1792 almanack is one of a series which came to us in the Stone collection of Papers donated by Allison Stone Kennedy and Sheila Stone Hawes. The almanacks range from 1766 to 1805, and are of great interest because they belonged to Nathan Stone, second minister of the East part of Yarmouth, now Dennis. In most of them, Mr. Stone has inserted a blank piece of paper for each month, on which he has written his daily activities, including observations about the actual weather, as compared with the predictions. Mr. Low appears to have been quite accurate, at least for January of 1792.

Column 1 is his predition, column 2 is Mr. Stone's record

January 1	Expect snow or rain	January 2	Rain
January 5	Cold windy weather	January 4-7	Cold
January 11-13	Wind and snow, perhaps	January 12	Cold
		January 13	Snow and rain
		January 14	Cold and slippery
January 20-22	More moderate but falling weather	January 18	Pleasant
		January 19	High wind with snow
		January 21-24	Cold
January 24-29	Good weather for this season	January 25	The weather moderates

Mr. Low's introductory remarks to this almanac include this comment: "...a Perhaps may with justice be added to what I have said of the weather: yet I have followed such rules herein as experience has taught me from the aspects and configurations of the Planets."

And from the Old Farmer's Almanac of 1992: "Our weather forecasts are determined both by the use of a secret formula devised by the founder of this Almanac in 1792 and by the most scientific calculations based on solar activity..... It is obvious, however, that neither we nor anyone else has as yet gained sufficient insight into the mysteries of the universe to predict weather with anything resembling total accuracy."

Let's see how well the 1992 almanac predictions hold true. More about our ancient almanacs another time.

AN UP-DATE ON OUR HISTORY

Many of you have been kind enough to ask how the history of the town is coming along. Well, it depends on when you ask me. Some days it flows, some days it just vegetates. On the whole its coming well, and I have every confidence that the completed book will be in hand in time for the Bicentennial town meeting, May 1993. Cost is still undetermined, as we have not come to a decision on the number of pages, number of photos, etc. But we will keep you informed. Now, here's something some of you might be able to help us with. All of us on the Board feel that photos will greatly enhance the finished product. We seek pictures of general interest that have not previously been published, especially of people and places now no longer here. Have you any such pictures in your family collection? Glass negatives are especially welcome, as they generally reproduce well. Although we are limited in the number of photos we can afford to include, we would like to have as wide a selection as possible from which to choose. If you have old pictures or glass negatives, may we see them? They will be returned to you, and credit as to source will be included in our published history. Please call President Richard Howes, 385-3528 if you are able to contribute to our exciting project in this way.

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS FEBRUARY 15, 1992 CHRISTINE'S--WEST DENNIS

Please make reservations for _____ people. I enclose a check for \$_____ (\$11.00 per person)
 Choice of entree: _____ Baked Stuffed Cranberry Chicken _____ Baked Scrod with Lemon Butter
 Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and sent to: Mr. Joshua Crowell
 Box 963
 Dennis, MA 02638

CALENDAR

Jan. 8 7:30 P.M. Board meets with Phyllis Horton
Feb. 15 12 noon Mid-Winter Festivity, Christine's, program by Mid-Cape Chorus

CHRISTMAS AT JERICHO

We had a delightful Christmas Open House at Jericho on December 8. The Questers added a special touch to the beautifully decorated house by appearing in lovely antique dresses. Sarah Manning's harp lent a special air to the festive afternoon. Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped make it a successful party.

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME--CHAPTER 2

It's official. The designated flower for our town's Bicentennial celebration will be the Cape Cod Rambler--no specific variety being endorsed. The committee made this decision after a lengthy discussion, based on reports from gardeners that the Dorothy Perkins, for all its virtue, is the the best Rambler for our climate, because it is subject to mildew. Dorothy Perkins is a beautiful variety, developed by the Perkins of the nursery of Jackson and Perkins, in 1901 and named for his daughter. But Perkins lived outside of New England and gardeners here found it did not enjoy our climate. Another rose grower, however, did work in New England, in fact right here on Cape Cod, and his rambles were developed with our rugged and sometimes humid conditions in mind. Michael Walsh was born in Wales in 1848, with that proverbial and much envied "green thumb". He had learned much about gardening before leaving his native land to come to America and seek his fortune. After working in the extensive gardens of the Payson family in Belmont, and briefly for a Mr. Strong, who allowed him to develop his own greenhouse for profit, Michael came to work for the Fay family on their estate in Woods Hole. He became like one of the family to the Fays, working as their gardener, and they allowed him to develop his skills as a horticulturist while caring for their three acres of shrubs, trees, and most especially roses. He began his experimental research and development of hybrid roses, particularly rambles or climbers, with the aid of the Fay's daughter Sarah who, in 1897, allowed him space and time to test and grow his new varieties in her greenhouses, near Little Harbor in Woods Hole. In the three years from 1897 to 1900 Walsh and the Fays had a prize winning and much acclaimed rose garden, visited by rose lovers from all over the world, and for which he received many medals and awards. Among the rambles developed at the Fay gardens were the red Excelsa, and the Crimson Rambler, the pink Lady Gay and Sweetheart, white Mrs. M.H. Walsh, now called Jubilee, and other yellow, flesh-colored and salmon pink varieties. Soon Walsh was offering his roses to the public, although very little money was expended to advertise. A "Handbook" of Walsh's roses, published in 1915 has but a dozen or so pages. Thus his varieties, although well known and admired by rose specialists, have become confused in the minds of the ordinary gardener with the varieties offered by the nurseries with a wider audience. The Dorothy Perkins variety of Jackson and Perkins fame and the Lady Gay resemble each other in color and flowering habits. So, many of us who have a pink Rambler which has long blossomed in our ancient yards may refer to the bush as a Dorothy Perkins, when it is in fact a Lady Gay, the product of a man who devoted his life to developing our famous Cape Cod Rambler roses but who never sought fame for his work. Even Miss Fay, his benefactor and sponsor, would write to Dorothy Perkins (then Mrs. Estabrook), "...it is sad that the Lady Gay should be so laid aside as for name and his credit." Walsh died in 1922, having worked for the family of Joseph Fay for 47 years. Their rose garden was cared for by Walsh's 2 sons for many years thereafter, and the site is now marked by a small stone with the following inscription: "Near this place lived Michael H. Walsh, who made the Rambler Rose world famous. Maintained by the Falmouth Garden Club." Around the site a wooden fence was erected, and Rambler roses planted, to remind us of the simple talented man who made the Rambler rose world famous. So you now know the reason why the Bicentennial Committee has come to the conclusion that the Cape Cod Rambler is the most appropriate flower to decorate our town for its coming gala birthday celebration.

MID-WINTER FESTIVITY--1992

Once again we'll chase away the mid-winter doldrums with a luncheon at Christine's Restaurant in West Dennis on February 15 with Social Hour at noon and Luncheon at 1:00. Please see the reservation form on the other side. We will be entertained by the Mid-Cape Chorus under the direction of Mr. Phil Lukens, and we'll have our usual fine assortment of door prizes. Do come!

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660

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