



THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR IS HERE!

Goodness, it seems as if we have been talking about and planning for this celebration for a long time. Calendars of events are developing and will soon be in your hands, starting with the church suppers and reading of the Proclamation which makes this a year of 365 days of celebration of the 200th anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Dennis. And although it is our 200th birthday, all of us who have researched the town's past can find no record of any previous celebration of the anniversary. At the time of the centennial the town of Yarmouth had only recently held a humungous "Quarter-Millennial" celebration, commemorating the 250th year since its settlement. Dennis had played a very important part in that celebration. Several of the more important addresses given at major events were by men of Dennis, and the Reception and Grand Ball which closed the celebration was held at the Nobscussett House in our town. A fireworks display had capped that evening of dancing and festivity which ended with a set piece which displayed the words "Yarmouth 1639-1889" and a second one which said "Good Night". (For that kind of spectacular we're all going to have to put a whole lot of change into those collection cans!) Although Dennis did not make a municipal contribution towards this gala, individual citizens had contributed large amounts, and perhaps this is why there is no mention of a public recognition of the town's own centennial.

When the 150th anniversary time came around in 1943, the selectmen decided to forgo any celebration due to the war. And so it appears that this year will mark the first time that there has been an official celebration of the beginning of this unique and extremely interesting, beautiful, friendly, progressive, exciting, innovative, historical, and whatever else you can add, town. So, it falls heavily upon our shoulders to do it right! Each and every citizen must do his or her part to make this the most exciting, productive and fun year that ever was. Take part in every event, pitch in for every good cause, make plans for future projects that will be of benefit to the town and its people, pay your taxes, recycle, plant roses--and have fun. And don't forget to contribute to the fireworks.

Read your Dennis Historical Society newsletter for updated calendars of events. The calendar will also appear regularly in the Dennis Bulletin. Your board is hoping that increased interest in the town's history will also bring new members to our ranks. If you know of a potential member, will you help us by sharing your newsletter with them, or inviting them to join the Society?

The church suppers will be held in nine Dennis churches on January 30th. Mary Asestine of the Bicentennial Committee has been coordinating this activity with the churches. A Dennis selectman will read the Proclamation at each of the dinners. There will be several different menus offered in different churches in the \$5-\$6.50 range with special rates for children, so go to the church of your choice, of pick the menu of your choice, but do go. Everyone will receive a distinctive blue button with the Bicentennial logo.

The second affair is an "All You Can Eat" Bicentennial Family Pizza Party featuring pizza, salad, and soda on February 10 at the Wixon Middle School. There will be two seatings at 5:30 and 6:15 P.M. Tickets are \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children under 12. They will be available through Wixon and Ezra Baker Schools and must be purchased in advance. Pizza will be provided by the Patriot Square Pizza Hut. There is a snow date of February 24th. Profits will be shared by Ezra Baker and Wixon Schools and the Bicentennial Fund. This sounds like a great time too!

Next on the calendar....DHS will have its annual Mid-Winter Luncheon on February 13 at Christine's Restaurant in West Dennis. Social hour starts at 12 noon, and the luncheon at 1:00 P.M. Our local Questers chapter will entertain us with a Period Fashion Show and I understand from Lilla Smith some of the ensembles will be slightly more "fashionable" than others. We expect an active response to this event, so get your reservation in early. (See below.)

The last event for February will be a Presidential Buscapade on February 22 sponsored by Bacon Tours and endorsed by the Bicentennial Committee and DHS. Included will be a guided tour of the Old State House in Boston (where our Act of Incorporation was signed by Gov. John Hancock) to view the six million dollar renovation, a short walk on the Freedom Trail, a drive past Presidential birthplaces and luncheon overlooking Boston Harbor. Local experts will share facts and folklore about the City of Presidents and the homes of the Adams and Hancock families. The cost is \$37.00 which includes a full lunch and a \$5.00 donation to the Dennis Bicentennial Fund. To sign up or seek more information call 394-5739.

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS

FEBRUARY 13

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 w/ Lemon Butter
Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope and send to:

Mr. Joshua Crowell
Box 963
Dennis, MA 02638

CALENDAR

Jan. 13 7:30 P.M. DHS Board meeting at Josiah Dennis Manse.
Jan. 30 Dennis church suppers. Watch the Dennis Bulletin for more info.
Feb. 13 12 Noon Mid-Winter Luncheon at Christine's. Period Fashion Show by the Questers.

THE ORDEAL OF MISS JUDITH STONE:

The people of Provincetown were used to finding the wreckage of ill fated vessels along the beach on the backside of the Cape. But they were shocked and saddened when the shattered hull of the Sloop Catherine was discovered on Sunday afternoon December 5th, 1809. She was a Provincetown packet, making regular trips between the Cape tip, the ports along the north shore of the Cape, and Boston. She had left her home port for a routine round trip, with Captain Joseph Sawtelle, Mate Samuel Parker, and their sons Joseph Sawtelle, aged 13, and Edward Parker, aged 11 as crew. The vessel's last stop had been Barnstable which they had left with a cargo of lumber and four passengers at 10 A.M. on Thursday, Dec. 2nd, headed for home. Among the passengers were Mrs. Ansel Davis, wife of Dr. Davis, and her two children, aged 6 months and 6 years. The fourth passenger was Miss Judith Stone of Dennis. She was the daughter of the late Rev. Nathan Stone, the sister of Nathan Stone of Dennis who was a prominent citizen of our town. She was also the sister of Rev. Nathaniel Stone who was serving as the minister of the orthodox church at Provincetown. Judith was travelling from Dennis to pay a visit to her brother and his family at the tip of the Cape, and he was among the first to hear of the wreckage ashore. It was painfully clear that no crew or passengers could have survived the punishment which the Catherine had sustained as she pounded on the beach off the Highland. Natty rode on horseback to Dennis to find out if Judith had in fact taken passage on the Catherine as had been planned. With his fears confirmed, he had to inform the family of the loss of the sloop and ride mournfully back to Provincetown to console the grieving families there. Plans were made to hold a memorial service for all aboard the lost vessel. But before the service was held, joyful news came to the ears of all. The eight persons who had been on the Catherine were not lost, but were alive and well. This is their miraculous story.

A few hours after leaving Barnstable, the wind which had been blowing from the west switched around to the north. Progress was slow against the adverse wind, and about 9 P.M. they were engulfed in a snow storm. The Catherine was off course, and soon struck on the shoal off Wellfleet, but worked her way free. With difficulty, the crew was able to sail her to Billingsgate Island, where they anchored around the point for shelter. By Friday at sunset weather conditions seemed to be improving with the wind shifting back into the west. The crew raised sail and tacked to the south, then came about and headed home once more. At 8 o'clock fresh snow squalls developed. Through the whirling snow they spotted a light to the leeward, which they thought must be the one on the Truro high lands, and another on the weather side, which they took for Race Point. They set their course accordingly. But at 9 o'clock it was discovered that the vessel was sinking, probably due to damage in the grounding. Hastily they abandoned ship, and all climbed into the whale boat taking only their personal belongings and one piece of beef. The men and boys took turns rowing towards what they thought was the harbor, but the tide and the wind combined carried the small craft to the north west. A serious setback occurred when one of the oars was lost. The men could now do nothing to improve their situation. When dawn came on Saturday they were unable to see any land. A huge wave engulfed the whale boat, nearly filling it with frigid water. As darkness fell again they could see Highland Light at a distance, and tried to make for it with their single oar. Yet another snow squall soon obliterated the light and they drifted out to sea again. At dawn on Sunday they were once more out of sight of land and hope began to fade. However their spirits were lifted at the sight of a sail in the distance. Frantically all of the adults joined in signalling with everything they could wave and miraculously the crew of the schooner spotted them and took them aboard. She was the Schooner Amanda Malvina, from Maine to Delaware. Captain Delano made a trip into Nantucket to leave his hungry and nearly frozen passengers. There, they were able to board the Brig Governor Hopkins, on its way to Newport, from which city the eight grateful survivors were fetched to their homes. The plans for a sad service of memoriam were changed. Instead, on December 19th, Rev. Stone conducted a service of Thanksgiving, reflecting the community's joy at the return of their relative and friends. This time the sea was not the victor. Miss Judith Stone had a once in a lifetime adventure which she no doubt was asked to relate again and again.

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