LADY SLIPPER WALK

Our June dates and deadlines didn't cooperate this year, so, a belated thank you to Dr. Norton H. Nickerson Jr. for his continuing interest in sharing his knowledge of the natural flora of the Town's beautiful conservation area known as the Indian Lands. The many friends and members of D.H.S. who have joined him for the walks over the years have come to anticipate them with pleasure each spring. Also, each year new walkers are introduced to this natural phenomena seen in few New England woodlands today. Dr. Nickerson has been very generous in helping D.H.S. remind its members that our heritage is not only that contained in written records, but is also written across the land we occupy as trustees for future generations. For those of you who walked with Dr. Nickerson on June 2nd, the sight of the thousands of delicate blossoms will remain in your mind forever. For those of you who didn't...we'll see you next year.

197 YEARS YOUNG

Our annual Town of Dennis Birthday Luncheon June 24th at Lighthouse Inn was a huge success. A sell out crowd enjoyed a fine luncheon with the Stone Family, who once again provided us with a lovely birthday cake. Mary Jane Fragano, with her accompanist, entertained us with musical selections from Broadway shows. The centerpiece of our day was the new painting commissioned by Deputy Chief Paul Prue of the Dennis Fire Department. This work by Cape artist, William R. Davis shows the old South Dennis and Dennis Fire Stations. The work of upkeep of equipment and answering alarms was all done by volunteers, which by 1931 had organized and become known as the Dennis Firefighters Association. In 1930, with an appropriation from the town, these volunteers mounted the pumpers on chassis, and fire sirens were installed. When a fire was reported the first one to get the word was our first Fire Chief. Also attending were present Chief Robert Hersey, Retired Chief Nahlon Chase, and Retired Yarmouth Chief Dana Whittemore, son of Dennis' last Forest Warden, Earl Whittemore. The trivia contest was won by Joshua Crowell, who retired as Deputy Chief of D.F.D. after 38 years.

The door prizes were won by Charles Ebly...a Fairpoint "Cape Cod" plate donated by Gertrude Lailey; Cape Cod Collections, Ltd. new "Cape Cod Map"...Jim Carr; Anita Robbins and Edward Chase...lovely floral arrangements by Positively Depot Street; and Dee Moore and Bill Davis (the artist)...two luncheons at Lighthouse Inn. Congratulations, all!

How Much Did You Know About Fire Protection?

When we were children my father used to tell us that when he was first married the South Dennis Fire Department was housed in his barn—a few buckets of sand and some old brooms! We always thought he was joking, as Dad was wont to do. But, Dad, we were wrong! The "farmers" of Dennis and the fishermen, and other voters as well, it appears, took the very attitude described by our New York visitor who we quoted last time. "It ain't no use having a fire engine...." Not if you don't have many fires, leastways. The town fathers apparently felt that there wasn't any harm in having a little equipment which I have found is in the annual town report for the year 1922, when approximately $100.00 was expended for "fire extinguishers, shovels and brooms". I guess the sand was free. The town reports do list expenses for fire fighting, channeled through the various gentlemen who held the office of Forest Warden. Many of the fires reported were caused by sparks from the engines which pulled the long trains of passenger and freight cars back and forth. The costs of fighting these was reimbursed by the railroad company. As the century advanced into the 1920's the Commonwealth became concerned at the number of acres of woodland being lost to fire. Two remedies were recommended. It was suggested that the towns purchase sufficient equipment for supplying water for fighting fires and that each town begin a vigorous reforestation program. Dennis voted to follow both recommendations. By vote of town meeting in 1928 two 200 gallon portable pumpers were purchased. Some of our early firemen recall they were known as "Pitz-henry Guitill" Pumpers, and as for being portable—it took four rugged men to get them moved. One was kept at the town barn behind the old Town Office in South Dennis, one at the Dennis Garage on the corner of Rt. 6A and Old Bass River Road. Still no formal fire department. The work of upkeep of equipment and answering alarms was all done by volunteers, which by 1931 had organized and become known as the Dennis Firefighters Association. In 1930, with an appropriation from the town, these volunteers mounted the pumpers on chassis, and fire sirens were installed. When a fire was reported the first one to get the word was our first Fire Chief. In 1932 Richard Sears Hall of South Dennis was appointed the first Fire Chief of the Town of Dennis and our Fire Department, still manned by volunteers, was officially founded. The Fire Fighters Assn. continued to be the catalysts for upgrading the town's equipment. They received permission to remodel two of the town's old school houses—in South Dennis and Dennis as fire stations. In the first year our fire department answered 68 alarms, and for many years the number remained about the same. The annual appropriations varied from $750 to $1000, with an occasional special article appropriating money to purchase or upgrade equipment. My, how times have changed. Last year our fire department responded to 2, 536 calls, 769 which were fires, 1,767 for other emergencies. We have 26 career firefighters, and 21 call firemen. Two fire stations house many thousands of dollars worth of equipment, and a new central fire station is now in the planning stage. The annual budget for 1990 includes an appropriation of $1,132,596.21. We've come a long way, Dad, from brooms and sand. (Continued on next page...)
CALENDAR

July 11  7:00 P.M.  Board meets with Nancy
July & August  Josiah Dennis Manse open Tuesday and Thursday 2-4 P.M.
          Jericho House and Barn Museum Wednesday and Friday 2-4:30 P.M.
          Bring your summer visitors to see our historic centers.
          Dennis Festival Days.

August 18-26  Bike tour of West Dennis sponsored by D.H.S. Meet at West Dennis
          Community Center for a guided tour to points of interest.
          Rain date Aug. 22.

August 21  10 AM to noon  Bus tour of the 5 villages narrated by Nancy Thacher Reid. Limited
          to 43 reserved seats. Call the Dennis Chamber of Commerce. Meet
          at the Ezra Baker School lower parking lot. Reservations must
          be made at the Chamber.

August 24  9:30 to noon  Board meets with Nancy Josiah Dennis Manse open Tuesday and Thursday 2-4 P.M.
          Jericho House and Barn Museum Wednesday and Friday 2-4:30 P.M.
          Bring your summer visitors to see our historic centers.
          Dennis Festival Days.

FIRE PROTECTION continued...

We of Dennis should be grateful to the 6 fire chiefs, and the hundreds of men and
women who have served as both volunteers and career fire fighters in our town in the 58
years since Dennis has had a Fire Department. It's a demanding and dangerous job and Dennis
citizens can sleep peacefully knowing that the Fire Department is ready and able to protect
our lives and property.

A MAN CALLED JOB

The story of Job Chase really belongs to Harwich. But, as he was a descendant of
William Chase, a first-comer to Old Yarmouth, and because of his close relationship to the
development of the Port of Dennis at Crockers Neck, now called Dennis Port, not to mention
the marriages of many of his children with prominent Dennis families, I think his life
should be recorded among the annals of this town. Besides, it's a good story, and I think
D.H.S. members will appreciate it. If ever a man received an appropriate name at his birth,
it was Job Chase. Even if you're not a Biblical student, you will probably be aware of the
Old Testament character of this name. He was a pious man who had achieved a good deal of
success and honor, but in his later years, all that he loved was taken from him and his
patience and piety were sorely tried. So it was with Job Chase. Born in 1776, Job was the
son of Job and Hope (Howes) Chase. They lived on ancestral land, passed down for generations
on the west side of Herring River. The family belonged to the Baptist Society, a religious
society which was gathered in West Harwich in 1756 and incorporated by the Massachusetts
General Court in 1789, with Job's father as an incorporator. Job Sr. was typical of the men
of his generation in this town. He combined farming and fishing in a successful blend to
provide amply for his family and learned as he practiced each to trade his skills and his
commodities in a manner which improved his worldly estate. Job early learned the skills
which both farming and fishing required, and assimilated his father's expertise in trading
goods and services with neighbors whose needs and skills meshed with his. That was a way
of life on Cape Cod in the early 19th century. A man's value was not only reckoned by his
visible estate, but by his skills and abilities. Job Jr. had little formal education. As
was customary he attended school at the district school on a regular basis until he was ten,
but then it was time for him to learn a man's work. No one has recorded his first trip but
undoubtedly it was to cook aboard a fishing schooner off to seek the valuable cod fish in
early spring of his tenth year. But Job seemed more inclined to use the mental skills he
learned from his father than the fishing skills which his father also possessed. One of his
first decisions when he reached the age of discretion was to marry Polly Eldridge and
provide himself with a home of his own, also on family land in West Harwich. Then he had
built for himself a schooner which he named Job Chase, no doubt in honor of his father, not
to perpetuate his own fame. Outfitting the schooner, but not manning her himself, Job
managed to benefit from a profitable fishing voyage, while remaining at home to establish
the business of supplies which all the fishing vessels must have when setting out for a trip.
Job apparently earned the trust and respect—and more importantly--the business of many of
his neighbors.

More about Job Chase next time...