



OUR PRECIOUS INDIAN LANDS

".....In shade  
Beyond the ferns, sequestered in the glade  
The orchid of the north swayed silently.  
The Lady Slipper....."

If you have walked the Indian Lands Conservation Area this spring, you don't need to be told what a precious possession we all share in owning and protecting this priceless piece of land. For those of you who may have forgotten, perhaps it would be well to remind you how it came to be, that these two peninsulas, embracing a beautiful marsh, are ours forever. In 1973 Mallam Realty Trust, owners, proposed to develop the 23.4 acres on the south peninsula, by dividing it into more than twenty lots. Such a proposal raised red flags, not only in the eyes of the Conservation Commission, but for others, who could readily see the possible damage such a development would have on the marsh and river. A citizens' campaign bolstered the Conservation Commission's position, and the town proposed to buy the land, the owners were willing to cooperate and a special Town Meeting in August 1974 voted to approve the purchase at a price of \$195,000, 376 voting yes, 3 voting no.

In 1984 a similar situation occurred with the possibility of development of the northern peninsula, also of approximately 23 acres. Again, access and possible harm to marsh and river were problems. This time around, there was the added feeling that developing the land would be costly in the demands it would place on community services. A committee of citizens, which was called The Dennis Committee, organized a campaign to curry voter favor, not only for the peninsula itself, but for the purchase of nine other parcels of land for various municipal purposes. On the night of January 24, 1985, Dennis voters decided overwhelmingly to purchase all ten parcels. The cost of the north peninsula, now part of the Indian Lands, was \$550,000, and the vote was unanimous. Nearly 1,000 voters were present. The Native American winter home would be preserved.

Today, the bonds have been repaid and the land is ours, free and clear. And we have plenty of tenants--in addition to that fabulous display of Lady Slipper's. "Big Blue" the Heron will be back from his breeding grounds soon. Egrets, green heron, and families of ducks and geese paddle about on the marsh. A great horned owl disturbs the peace of mind of the flock of crows and you can often hear the mimicking songs of a brown thrasher. We did a good thing when we saved the Indian Lands from development.

A few years ago, Mr. Walter Morley composed a poem about our Indian Lands, designed to teach our school children its importance as the NobsCUSset tribe's winter home site.

"The time is decade marked since Nature's child  
Dwelt in this place and drew life from the wild.  
Now others come to dream, perchance to steal  
A vision from the awe that here they feel;  
Enchanted by the spirit of this ground;  
Ennobled by the peace they here have found."

You may be too late for the Lady Slipper's. But there is much to enchant and ennoble us as we walk the Indian Lands. Perhaps a vision of the Native Americans who occupied this land for thousands of years before our European ancestors arrived--or perhaps of the native birds and animals whose descendants are tenants on our common ground today. Walk the Indian Lands in silence--a silence accompanied by the eternal sounds of songbirds and gulls. Look at the opposite side of Bass River, where homes sit cheek by jowl, most certainly threatening the purity of Bass River. And, as you meditate upon the beauty of the Conservation Area, send up a silent "thank you" to those voters of the Town meetings of 1974 and 1985 who preserved for us and our descendants forever a very special part of our town.

[Note: Mr. Morley's poem has been produced as an audio-visual production by DHS, narrated by Mrs. Almira Morley. The poem is dedicated to our dear friend and teacher, the late Esther Wigginton Howes.]

OUR MARITIME HERITAGE

Our language here in New England is full of expressions which have their origin in our maritime roots. If someone is running risks, we might say she is "sailing too close to the wind," and she should "trim her sails," or "take in a reef or two." The common expression "by and large," meaning "comparatively," or "in general," is also a nautical expression. To sail "by" is to sail close to the wind. To sail "large" is to run with the wind on the quarter. A sailing vessel was judge as "smart" or "crank" depending on how she handled "by and large."

#### CALENDAR

July 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY. Celebrate!  
July 9 7:30 P.M. Board meets at Josiah Dennis Manse  
July and August Jericho House and Barn Museum open  
Wednesday and Friday 2-4 P.M.  
July, August and September  
Josiah Dennis Manse open  
Tuesday 10-12 A.M.--Thursday 2-4 P.M.  
Coming in August 21st through 27th DENNIS FESTIVAL DAYS  
Check next month's newsletter for events of interest to DHS members

#### DUES ARE DUE

It's that time again! If you are a dues paying member of DHS (honorary and life members and complimentary subscribers excepted,) you will find attached to this newsletter your "dues are due" envelope. We hope that you will respond promptly. DHS depends on your dues to provide members services, such as printing and mailing this monthly newsletter, sponsoring our programs and school field trips and funding acquisitions. Some of you may wish to consider eliminating the need to make out an annual check by becoming a Life Member--a real bargain at only \$100 per individual. Otherwise, it will be deeply appreciated if you will submit ASAP your yearly dues of \$2 for students, \$10 for individual or \$15 for family membership (2 votes per family). Ours is a vital and active group, furthering interest and education in our town's past. Please help by paying your dues.

#### OUR ANNUAL BIRTHDAY PARTY

Dennis is now officially 204 years old and the birthday was observed, as has been the custom since 1976, with a "gala " luncheon held this year at the Lighthouse Inn, as it is has been for most of twenty-two years it has been celebrated. As always, a delicious dinner was served to all. Music was provided by the Dennis-Yarmouth Summer Strings. The honorees of the day were the many volunteers who give countless hours of time to DHS programs--the school field trips, manning Jericho House and the Manse in the summer, and assisting with all of the many duties which DHS undertakes as we try to interest others in this town's history. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Bill and Isabel Flynn for the many years they have taken care of the mailing of our monthly newsletter; to Lilla Smith and Marion Lowe for their work at Jericho; and to Florence Bennett and Hope Hallett for the service they have given at the Manse. In addition, all who were present who have devoted volunteer time to DHS activities were presented with a carnation. To all volunteers, DHS Board extends a hearty vote of thanks. What we would do without you? A brief business meeting was held, at which members present voted to accept a minor by-law change which limits the number of consecutive terms which an individual can serve as president to two terms. Other officers consecutive terms are unlimited.

#### HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY

No fireworks in Yarmouth or Dennis this Glorious Fourth. Dennis is saving our pyrotechnic display for Festival Days. Fourth of July fireworks were largely family affairs when I was young. The men in the neighborhood would take a trip to Hamblin's garage in South Yarmouth to purchase Pinwheels, rockets and sparklers. There would be lady crackers for the girls and salutes for the bigger boys, and a supply of punk to set them off with. Then as darkness fell on the night before the fourth, Dad and the other men in the neighborhood would fire off our own private fireworks in our front yard. Those were the good old days!

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