

DENNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June Newsletter 1979

Cape Verdean Distinctives

We were treated to a marvelous evening when Williston Holbert of Norton spoke to us at the V.I.C. Hall. Mr. Holbert's comments were in turn educational, entertaining and moving. He is fiercely proud of his Cape Verdean heritage and explained to all why this is so. He spoke of the beautiful language (Creolo) softer and more expressive than the Portuguese it resembles--of the music (now mostly forgotten by Cape Cod Cape Verdeans)--of the marvelous food and the fascinating islands themselves--Fogo, Brava, Isle de Sol. And he demonstrated the wonderful characteristics that have made the Cape Verdeans of our local towns such good neighbors--marvelous good humor and joy in living. Mr. Hobert stated that he wished all native Cape Verdeans would teach their language and culture to their children with pride. He also said that he wished that everyone on Cape Cod could have been there to hear his enthusiastic talk--I wish so too, so that all could come to appreciate this very special ethnic group who have added so much to Cape Cod life.

The Streets of Our Town

Back in the days when Ezra H. Baker was the Dennis Consolidated School, those of us who were lucky enough to be in Miss Helen Wigginton's fourth grade got an excellent course in Cape Cod History, along with our 3R's. Miss Wigginton taught us about rivers, ponds, and Indians, lighthouses, light ships, and clipper ships. The part we liked the best was about the Indians and I remember reciting

"Where we walk to school each day
Indian children used to play."

And so they did for unnumbered generations before the white man came and established his fifteen towns. In Dennis the tribes were called the NobsCUSSETS on the Northside and the Pawkunawkets on the Southside. Mashantampaine was the chieftain with whom our ancestors did their dastardly dealings.

No native Indians live in Dennis today, though several local families have a tradition of a long ago Indian grandmother. But many of the streets of our town recall these inhabitants who lived, loved and lost here so many years ago. NobsCUSSET Road and Mashantum Road recall tribe and chieftain. Quivet and Sesuit are Indians names for the two necks of land around the harbor and Setucket the half way place to the South Sea. And who does not know and love the sweet-sad legend of Princess Scargo and the hill and lake which bear her name?

As children, we were told that Hokum Rock was named for an early chieftain who called his council to meet around this gigantic glacial deposit. Whether or not this is true, for us the ghosts of his braves certainly hover around the caves and crevices of the boulder on Hokum Rock Road.

The spirits of our Indian predecessors can be encountered in other spots in town. If you wish to feel the presence of those peaceful friendly natives, take a leisurely stroll along the trails of the Indian Lands Conservation area, where Ladies Slippers (also called moccasin flowers) bloom in such abundance (Please, do not pick!) or, walk down the shady, silent lane that leads to the Indian burial ground off Old King's Highway in Dennis. There on the banks of Princess Scargo's lake is the final resting place of Mashantampaine and his braves. May they rest in peace, while the Indian names for Streets of our Town continue to remind us of the days when in Dennis, there was:

Not a church and not a steeple
Only woods, --- and Indian people.

Happy Birthday Dear Dennis

June 19th is the anniversary of the signing of the Act of Incorporation by Governor John Hancock which made Dennis an independent town from Yarmouth in 1793. A birthday party is planned for the Lighthouse Inn on Sunday, June 17, with cocktails at noon to 1 and luncheon at 1 PM. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Taylor are chairmen of the event. For details call the Taylors, 398-9158, or for reservations, mail in the attached reservation blank with check and stamped self-addressed envelope. Mr. W. Jeremiah Burke will give a capsule history of Dennis, which will include some fascinating facts about migrations away from the Cape. Nancy Flinkstrom and Gail Hart have a game planned to test your historical knowledge. There will be roses and birthday cake and a good time for all.

Due to an earlier closing of schools this spring, no ceremony is planned for the school children. Children may come to the luncheon and select their lunch from the sandwich bar and enjoy the pool. The staff of the Wixon Watcher, under the direction of Mr. Nillson, is preparing a special birthday edition of the school newspaper at the middle school. It will be distributed to all pupils at the Nathaniel H. Wixon School.

BIRTHDAY PARTY RESERVATIONS -- June 17, 1979 -- Lighthouse Inn, West Dennis

Please make reservations for _____ people for the Birthday Dinner. I enclose \$ _____ (@ \$6.00 per person).

Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope and send to:
Mr. Joshua Crowell, P.O. Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638

C A L E N D A R

- June 10 - 2-4 PM Open House for Town Hall employees at Josiah Dennis Manse.
June 17 - Lighthouse Inn, West Dennis, 12 noon to 1 PM--cocktails, 1 PM--
Birthday Party luncheon. Reservations must be made. See attached
order blank.
June 19 - Happy Birthday Dennis--186 years old
- 7:30 Executive Board Meeting, Home of Mr. Peirce.
June 29 - 2-5 PM, Opening Silver Tea at Jericho House. All welcome.
July and August:
- Josiah Dennis Manse open 2-4 PM each Tuesday and Thursday
- Jericho House and Barn Museum open 2-5 PM Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.
July -

Bicyclists Pedal Under Gray Skies

Rain again threatened the bicyclists on the Corporation Beach to Scargo Pottery tour, but again the trip went on. Esther Howes told about the Nobscusset Pier Corporation and showed the only existing company records that ran from 1814 to 1841. She also told about the packet trade and fishing industry. The next stop was at the theater where Margaret Adams talked about how Raymond Moore created our famous straw hat theater back in 1927 and she relived some colorful anecdotes. Paula Bacon retold the legends of Princess Scargo and the giant Maushop. Gail Hart spoke at the Indian Burial Ground about the Nauset Indians that roamed through Nobscusset, the Indian name for Dennis. She had both wampum and an arrowhead to show. The tour ended at Scargo Pottery where Harry Holl fascinated the group as he threw some pots and talked about how the Cape is ideally suited for craftsmen and should promote the arts.

Don't forget, maps of all our Bicycle Tours are available at the Dennis Chamber of Commerce or by calling Paula Bacon, 394-5739.

Ezra H. Baker School Field Trips

Even as you read this newsletter, school children from Grades 3 and 4 of our local school will be making their annual visit to the two Historic Centers here in Dennis. This year the visit is being expanded to include lessons in Dennis history. Beautiful costumes have been created for the children to wear. Crafts will be demonstrated, sea chanties will be taught, Indian signs copied with quill pens, the story of salt-making, and other industries explained. We can't begin to describe the total program, but a full report will be given at the annual meeting. For the present, we thank all the people (and there are many) who have helped prepare the programs and those who will be at the historic center on the six days of the field trips. We hope that every Historical Society member will take pride in knowing that 337 Dennis school children will have a great experience in learning local history as a result of the efforts of so many willing people.

Pedalling Down Paddocks Path

Those who took advantage of the guided bicycle tour in the Scargo area in May may have felt the presence of an unseen bicyclist of years past whose home stood on Paddock land at the east end of Scargo Lake. Hannah Paddock was a free spirited women who was born in 1849 and grew up in Dennis, perhaps wishing she had been born a boy. The Paddocks were an old Dennis family, whalers and mariners for generations. Huldah Crowell was Hannah's mother and she made the mistake of giving birth to Hannah in haying season. When her husband was summoned to attend his daughters birth, he is said to have remarked, "Terrible poor figurin', Huldah, don't ever do this in hayin' season again!"

Perhaps his chauvinistic attitude accounts in part for Hannah's feminism. For Hannah was not only a bicyclist, she was also a "bloomer girl", and a suffragette. She frequently entertained ladies from both northside villages at tea at her home, exhorting them to labor for the right to vote. Wouldn't she be pleased to know the active part women take in Dennis affairs today? And I think she also would enjoy our historical bicycle tours if only she could don her bloomers onemore and pedal along Rt. 6A. She died unmarried at age 82 and is buried in the Paddock family burying ground. Rest in peace, Hannah. Your sisters carry on the fight.

Dennis Historical Society
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