DENNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER
Vol. 10 No. 6  June, 1987
Compiled and Edited by Nancy Thacher Reid

**DENNIS REMEMBERED - SCHOOL DAYS**

Lively discussion, lots of laughs, and the good old days at school lovingly remembered. A message from the school superintendent read from the annual town report of 1929 gave us all a lot of insight into just how times have changed from then until now. Many of our old pictures remain a mystery, however. We may schedule another such meeting on a Sunday afternoon in the fall so that some of our older friends may attend.

**TOWN BIRTHDAY TO BE CELEBRATED**

Due to the popularity of the Lighthouse Inn for weddings, there will be a slightly different schedule for our annual birthday get-together. We will meet on June 28 at the Lighthouse Inn in West Dennis at 5 P.M. for sociability, with dinner to be served at 6 P.M. The menu is: Appetizer, Choice of Haddock Supreme or English Cut Prime Rib of Beef, Vegetable, Salad, Rolls, Potato, Beverage and Dessert. The total cost is $11.50 per person, and you must make a reservation. Send the coupon below and your check to: JOSHUA CROWELL, P.O. Box 963, Dennis 02638, and please indicate your choice of entree. Tickets are limited, so make your reservation soon. For entertainment we will hear the Cape's German American Band and our tables will be set in the West end of the dining area, facing the sunset. Hope to see you there.

**AMONG OUR NEW MEMBERS....**

Kathleen Byron, Gemma Bardl, Anna R. Murphy, Robert C. Eldred, Jr., Rev. and Mrs. Edward A. Walker, Pauline Warren, F. James Carr, Jr., John A. Boyd, Emma F. Rudine, and Dr. and Mrs. Leroy Houck. Welcome them when you see them.

**ARE YOU A DUES PAYING MEMBER?**

Most of you are, but some of you are not. It is time for us to revise our membership list, and we must assume that those who have not paid dues no longer wish to be members of the Dennis Historical Society. If you are in arrears but wish to continue your support of D.H.S. in its efforts to preserve and teach the history of this town, please send your check to: ISABELLE FLYNN, P.O. Box 607, So. Dennis, 02660. Not sure if you have paid or not? Call Isabelle, or better yet, send a check anyway. If you are current, it will be credited to next fall's dues. Remember that dues run from September to September, and are $7 for an individual, $7 for a family, and $100 for life.

**A RECENT ACQUISITION**

Have you ever gone shopping for something and come home with an entirely different purchase? That's what happened to Josh Crowell recently. He went to Eldred's auction house to look at a clock, which reportedly came from one of our old schoolhouses. However, there was no way to be sure it had, and it needed a lot of work. But a very plainly framed, dark watercolor caught his eye, and instead, he made a bid on that, and got it for D.H.S. The picture is a "mourning" piece, in memory of Capt. Noah H. Crowell. He was lost, with all of his crew, on the schooner Bride, in the Great October Gale of 1841. The mourning picture will serve not only as a memento of this important storm, in which 20 men and thousands of dollars in damage was done to local fishing vessels. It also serves to remind us of the dangers facing the mariners who in years past were the background of the Cape's economy. Good shopping, Josh!

**THE SEAL OF THE TOWN OF DENNIS**

Those of you who attended the annual town meeting in May may have noted that the podium from which Mr. McDowell conducted the business looked somewhat different than usual. The Nobscusset blue banner, with the seal of the town, was wrapped around it. Usually the podium is not draped in this manner, but displays a handsome wood carving of the seal. That carving was done in 1963 by Mr. Robert Cummings of Dennis Port, and has been on the moderator's podium at town meetings for these many years. At the special meeting in the fall it was noted that the seal had developed a crack and needed refurbishing. The Dennis Historical Commission took it to Mr. Odd Lillyhell, a master woodworker, who proclaimed it a fine carving and well worth restoring. So that work is now under way, and the seal will be back on the platform soon. This gives us an opportunity to thank Mr. Cummings for this lasting gift to the town and the Wixon School. It is an impressive guardian over the doings of Dennis citizens in town meeting assembled, and shall continue to be so for many years to come. A trivia question: The town will be celebrating the 194th anniversary of its incorporation in June. Do you know when the seal was adopted and who designed it? Answer next time.

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Birthday Dinner Reservation
Lighthouse Inn, June 28, 6 P.M.

**NAME**

**MAIL ADDRESS**

Please reserve:  Haddock  Beef  Enclosed @ $11.50 per person

Please enclose check and stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Mail to:  Joshua Crowell, P.O. Box 963, Dennis, MA 02638.
South Dennis, MA 02660
PAID

Dennis Historical Society
Non-Profit

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of the two villagers," so the reporter states. Then at half past ten, the citizens of the two

villages met at their respective churches and formed processions. Led by the children

and youth, they proceeded down each end of Cove Road, toward Bass River, where a bridge

joined the two sections of the road and linked South and West Dennis together. The

South Dennis line of march crossed the bridge, and passed the West Dennis line, to

bring up the rear as the entire parade made for the South Dennis side. The marchers

were led by the band, the Chief Marshall, Harrison G. Alexander, and his aides, the three

oldest citizens (whose age totalled 250 years, says the reporter), and the dignitaries

who were to speak. On Long Neck, benches had been constructed and a platform set up, and

the ladies had prepared a collation. Things went very well - apparently too well -

much to the astonishment of the Committee on Arrangements. You see, the day was planned

as a neighborhood get-together of South and West Dennis families. You can imagine the

committee's amazement when 3000 persons showed up for the celebration. Wow, that refresh-

ment committee must have been stunned! The reporter, who unfortunately was too modest

to sign his correspondence to the editor of the Yarmouth Register, says, in what is cer-

tainly a typical Cape Cod understatement, "The great number gathered on the occasion,

while it was not larger than our hearts, was larger than our accommodations." Many of

the group had to stand or sit on the ground, and the speakers, without benefit of

amplification, were certainly tested. The Declaration of Independence was read and an

oration by the Rev. Mr. Hebard of Harwich Port enthusiastically received, after which,

"The collation was disposed of in a short time." Following lunch, order was restored

and a series of eight formal toasts were offered and responded to by the leading citizens

of the two villages. A long series of volunteer toasts then was offered, one to the

band, one to the Cape Cod sailors - "Can't be beat!" - and another to the ladies of Cape

Cod - "More bewitching than the Salemites ever were." As the day ended, it was

voted to adjourn until the 4th of July, 1860. Let's hope the refreshment committee was

better prepared for that one.

Yes, Virginia, there really were good old-fashioned Fourth of July celebra-

tions in this town. But if you model yours after the 4th of July, 1859, it might be

tough, even for you, to carry it off. Good luck with the completion of Dennis Port

Village Green.

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

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