

OUR RECENT PAST

Two very successful events took place in February. The first was a tea in honor of Mrs. Marion Crowell Ryder, held in cooperation with the Jericho Committee, at Jericho--a delightful afternoon when many of Mrs. Ryder's friends and admirers came to visit with her and have their copies of Scuttle Watch autographed. The second, which has become an annual event, the Mid-Winter Festivity, was held this year at The Columns. Thanks are due to the Jericho Committee for the beautiful tea, and to the staff of the Columns for their fine hospitality. More people attended this luncheon than any previous winter luncheon, and we thank Jean and Bill Taylor, Pauline Derick, Jerry Burke, Mr. Jack Clarke, and all the others who helped in its success. A special thank you to Mr. Everett Durgin, who again contributed flags as door prizes, and a word of thanks also to Josh and Eleanor Crowell who always accept the thankless job of taking the money and reservations.

OUR IMMEDIATE FUTURE

Time is of the essence, and Kirk Brown will tell us about old time pieces when he speaks to the Society on Tuesday, March 18 at V.I.C. Hall, Depot Street, Dennisport at 7:30 P.M. All are welcome.

In April, think spring, and come to see the beautiful film prepared by the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, entitled "The Run". It was filmed in Brewster in the area of the best-known herring run on the Cape, and possibly the most scenic. It is professionally done, artistically beautiful, and extremely interesting. We will have, in addition to the film, some facts and figures about the historic economics about the herring runs in Dennis, as well. The program will be presented at West Dennis Community Building at 7:30 P.M. on Wednesday, April 23. As usual, it is free and open to the public.

May is National Historic Preservation Month, and D.H.S. will celebrate it appropriately with a program which will focus on the efforts of the Dennis Historic Commission to place the village of South Dennis on the National Register of Historic Places, and other similar efforts to preserve and use our treasures of historic interest. More on this next issue.

STREETS OF OUR TOWN

There was a day on Cape Cod when all (at least 99%) of the native residents were Republican. It was a district where the Republican candidate did not even need to campaign to win, and the Democrat didn't need to bother. Not true today, however, when the candidates in both of the upcoming primaries are being discussed with equal fervor. The interest in the present political struggle leads me to tell you about the political origins of two of the streets in Dennis. Back in the 1770's the two political points of view were not Democrat and Republican, but Whig and Tory; the Whigs being in favor of separation from England, the Tories loyal to the crown. The terms were from the mother country. Although two-party politics would not be a reality in England for a long time to come, still the two groups represented different points of view. The word, "Whig", is the older term and was derived from the Scottish word, "whiggamore"--whig--to urge, mere--a horse. At first it was used derisively to describe the people of western Scotland who, in 1648, marched to Edinborough to protest a compromise which had been made with Charles I to keep him on the throne. Through the years it became generally applied to those who disapproved of the growing power of royalty, and so it was transposed to the colonies to designate those who worked to be free of the bondage to the England King.

The word, "Tory", has just as interesting a history. It derives from Gaelic, "toridhe", meaning a "pursued man". It came into use in England in 1650, meaning an Irish outlaw. In 1679 it made its way into British politics to describe those who wished the Catholic Duke of York to succeed his father, James II, in place of the Protestant William and Mary. The Tories were the group which strongly supported the monarchy, and thus the term was applicable to the colonial loyalists. Dennis had its share of Loyalists, and the fervent Whigs were not gentle with them. Many chose to leave the Cape for Nova Scotia, where many Cape family names survive in such towns as Truro and Yarmouth.

When you go to the polls on primary day, don't ask for a Whig or Tory ballot. As political parties, these two survive only as the names of Whig Street and Tory Lane, both in North Dennis, two of the Streets of Our Town.

SEAPORT SERIES CONTINUES

The bus tours to seaports have been hugely successful and will continue in March with a trip to Salem on March 5. The Port to be visited in April is Fall River, on April 1st, leaving the Wixon Middle School at 8:50 A.M., the cost is \$12. On May 1st, Mystic Seaport will be the destination, leaving from the Ezra H. Baker School, costing \$24. And there will be two trips to Newport, one on May 4 and one on June 4, costing \$15. We urge you to contact Paula Bacon, 394-5739, if you are interested in any of these trips, for the details sound like each and everyone will be as pleasant as those to New Bedford have been. Call early, as the buses fill quickly.

- March 12, 19, 26, and April 2 Mini series of programs on the History of the Town of Dennis 2:30 to 4 P.M. Wixon School Library. You may attend any or all programs, no charge. Please see attached flyer for details.
- March 17, 1776 Evacuation Day. Men from Yarmouth and East Yarmouth (now Dennis) had marched 88 miles to Dorchester Heights to help Gen. Washington force the British from Boston.
- March 18 7:30 P.M. V.I.C. Hall., Depot St., Dennisport. "The Hands of Time" Talk by Kirkwood Brown on old clocks.
- April 1 Lv. 8:50 A.M. Fall River Bus Tour \$12. Call Paula Bacon, 394-5739
- April 23 7:30 P.M. West Dennis Community Building "The Run", movie of the annual alewife migration, filmed at Brewster
- May National Historic Preservation Month
- (March 26 7:30 P.M. D.H.S. Executive Board Mtg., home of Pres. Hart)

A CAPE COD IRISHMAN

By and large the founders of our town were what would be called today "Wasps". They hailed from the southwest corner of England, and when they came to the New World, they brought with them their English customs, dialect, even the names of towns and county. But one of our founding fathers is said to have come from Ireland. His name was David O'Kelia, a name which in characteristic disregard for spelling was soon recorded as O'Calley, O'Killey, Killey and at last Kelley, David appears in Old Yarmouth in 1645 when he married Jane Powell and established a dwelling on Upper Bass River, a place now called Kelley's Bay. There he raised a sizeable family, in the Quaker tradition, perhaps because of his wife's affiliation with the sometimes unpopular sect. The Kelley offspring did not all remain around the bay that bears their name. Early in the settlement of West Dennis they were busy in marine and commercial enterprises. The family also held large tracts of land in Dennisport. Though many, like Capt. Elihu Kelley were mariners, some were farmers, some traders, some millers. The Kelley family plied the ferry between West Dennis and South Yarmouth. Cyrenius Kelley was a blacksmith. Dr. Horatio S. Kelley compounded a powder to cure headaches. Anthony Kelley built one of the huge wharves at Dennisport. In more recent years members of David O'Kelia's clan have been marathon runners, insurance men, television repair men, yea and even selectmen! It is said that in Massachusetts there are two classes of people on St. Patrick's Day--those who are Irish, and those who wish they were. Cape Cod families who can claim descent from David O'Kelia can put themselves into the first category.

WORDEN HALL

From the Yarmouth Register, February 1877:

"EAST DENNIS -- The usual quietness of winter prevails in this village. The church bell and the school bell continue to ring out their peals regularly. Social gatherings are frequent for amusement, conversation and work."

The church bell still tolls through the crisp March air in the quietness that prevails even today in East Dennis in late winter. The school bell has been silent since that building was taken down in 1932. The village school stood next to Worden Hall, where much of the social life took place in the 1880's. The old hall still stands, not as a social hall, but privately owned, as an exceptional art gallery. Lovingly restored by Donn and Nancy DeVita, this is a wonderful example of how older buildings can be recycled and continue useful lives. Mr. DeVita has collected a great deal of information about the hall which he plans to publish. Its walls reverberate with echoes of the many lectures, band concerts, and church fairs held here in its one hundred plus years. Its name derives from the Worden family original owners of the land. Peter settled here before the town was incorporated as part of Yarmouth. He has the dubious distinction of being the first white man to die in the town, in 1640. He is buried in a small family burying ground in back of the Hall, which town meeting recently voted to call The Worden Family Cemetery.

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