

ORCHIDS OF THE NORTH

On Saturday, June 4th, we will be privileged to conduct a walk on the Indian Lands Conservation Area behind the Town Hall. Dr. Norton H. Nickerson, Jr. will accompany the group as interpreting naturalist and Pauline Derick will point out some of the remains of a pre-historic Indian village. The date has been selected in the hope that the Lady's Slippers (*Cypripedium acaule*) will be in blossom. If you have not been out on this lovely peninsula, you have missed one of the loveliest walks in town, especially in Lady Slipper season. There are literally hundreds of these delicately pink members of the orchid family, sometimes called Mocassin Flowers, blooming along the pathways. They are by no means the only attraction as other interesting plant and animal life interacts in an unspoiled setting. To join our walk to the Indian Lands, meet us at the Town Hall parking lot, near the old cemetery, at 10 A.M. We'll take you from there along paths where once walked only the mocassins of pre-historic natives. All are welcome.

ANNUAL EZRA H. BAKER FIELD TRIPS PLANNED

June 6 through 10 are the dates during which the 3rd and 4th grades will visit our two Historic Centers. The third graders will be welcomed to the 18th century at the Manse by the Rev. Josiah Dennis himself, portrayed by Mr. Joseph Solarz. And the 4th grade will contrast today's busy life with the equally busy lives of Cape Codders in the 19th century, when they step into the Time Machine at Jericho. Children and adults alike enjoy these five days, with such activities as writing with a quill pen, making butter and ice cream and hearing sea chanties and Indian legends. Volunteers to help are always welcome. Call Paula Bacon 394-5939 or Nancy Reid 398-8842.

GARDENS OF TIME

Jeannie Gillis of the Heritage Plantation spoke to an interested group at West Dennis Community Building about some of the uses of plants and herbs around the homes of our ancestors. She also gave us some suggestions for appropriate plantings around the historic homes which many of those present own. If you have a chance to visit the Plantation during the Rhododendren season, Jeannie will be happy to answer any questions you might have about authentic herbs and plants of the years gone by.

THE LOST DENNIS LODGE

The Mount Horeb Lodge of Masons of Dennis joins the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts this year in celebration of the Grand Lodge's 250th anniversary. Our local lodge will celebrate with a parade, a craft show and by the presentation of a gift to the town at the Jericho House on June 19th. Mount Horeb's celebration not only marks the Masons' 250th anniversary, but also the 190th birthday of this town. More about these events next time, as well as a little of the history of the Lodge, which was chartered in 1855. Mount Horeb is not the only lodge that there has ever been in Dennis, nor was it the first. I had long been intrigued with references to a lodge which existed here in the early 1800's. Recently, with the help of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Thompson of Dennis and Mr. Robert W. Williams III of Taunton, a Masonic historian, I have learned a great deal about it. The Sumner Lodge of Masons was chartered in 1801 and soon thereafter constructed a building for its meetings near the present fire station on Old Bass River Road. The lower floor of the building was at one time a private school and later a residence. Reports of the Lodge's "doings" gives us names of members and officers and indicate that then, as now, a major activity of the Masons was social service. Neighborhood committees investigated need, especially among widows and orphans of former Masons and whenever possible these needs were met. The Lodge was active and vital until the early 1820's, when an anti-Masonic wave swept across the country. A man named William Morgan, disenchanted with the order, announced that he would disclose all of the Fraternal secrets to the press. Masons universally declared that the only secrets Masons kept were the traditional greeting and such like, and that the purposes were well-known and honorable. But when Mr. Morgan mysteriously disappeared, the Masons were accused of kidnapping or worse. The charges were never proven, but the Orthodox clergy, already threatened by free-thinking liberals, seized the opportunity to denounce the Masonic movement. In some parts of the country the order nearly disappeared, as a result of the attack. Stalwart Masons, who believed firmly in the purposes of Masonry and the good it accomplished, rode out the storm, and in the later part of the century the movement was once again popular. Sumner Lodge seems to have been one of those which did not survive the turmoil. The last few pages of the Lodge's minutes record a vote to return their charter if it was requested and to sell the building. The Sumner Lodge's Hall still stands in Dennis, now on the corner of Corporation Road and Old King's Highway. The Charter, however, was never returned to the Grand Lodge. I wonder if someday it might turn up in a north-side attic?

CALENDAR

May is National Historic Preservation Month

June 4 10 A.M. Walk on the Indian Lands Conservation Area

June 6-10 Annual Ezra H. Baker School trips to the Historic Centers

June 10 7:30 P.M. Concert at So. Dennis Congregational Church, Donald Enos, organist, David Gable, violin.

June 19 190th Birthday celebration for the Town of Dennis, 250th anniversary Massachusetts Grand Lodge of Masons. Parade, craft show, etc. etc. See articles.

Boat ride on Cape Cod Bay, 1 P.M. Reservations. See article.

June 27 D.H.S. will visit the Marion Historical Society, Ansell

Gurney's Herb Farm and the Stone Greenhouse. More next time.

Also of interest* June 16 Bus trip to Topsfield, Quilting Exhibit. Call Paula Bacon 394-5939.

A FLOATING BIRTHDAY PARTY

The Masons are putting on a very nice celebration on the Town's 190th birthday. To add to those festivities, D.H.S. will sponsor a boat ride on Cape Cod Bay. The M.V. Albatross will set sail from the west side of Sesuet Harbor at 1 P.M. on Sunday, June 19, to cruise for an hour and a half on the Bay. Bag lunches are welcome, beverages will be on sale and a unique birthday cake will be served to all. I'm told that Lil Phillips has written a poem for the occasion, and that an old Cape Codder will tell some tall tales. At any event, a cruise out of Sesuet and a chance to look at our shoreline from the water will provide us with a pleasant afternoon. As the number of passengers is limited, reservations must be made at least one week in advance. Please send a check, \$5 each adult, \$2.50 children under 12, to Gail Hart, Box 433, So. Dennis or Phyllis Horton, Box 275, Dennisport.

THOUGHTS WHILE CONTEMPLATING AN APPLE TREE

Years ago we planted a summer apple tree in our yard. It's now a sizeable tree, neatly pruned, and just about to blossom. But we've had nary an apple from its lovely boughs. You see, all of the creepy crawlies that thrive on apples in So. Dennis know about our tree, and they get to it before we do. I don't like insecticides, but I'm afraid I'm going to resort to spraying this year, just to see what those Golden Delicious apples taste like. I wonder what the early settlers did about insects in the fruit trees? For we know that the early Cape Cod farmers brought such trees with them from England. Many of the early wills, which provide so meticulously for the needs of each heir, divide the "orchards" as they are often called, proportionately among widow and children. My own first generation Cape Cod Thatcher ancestor, tradition says, is buried not in the ancient burying ground but in a spot where once his beloved fruit trees flourished. I wish that family tradition had also passed down his method of insect control! I have read that fruit trees were "sooted", by placing two shovelfuls of soot and one of lime in a bucket downwind of the tree and wetting it, with the resulting gas being beneficial to the tree. Perhaps I will try this. The only other method which our ancestors may have used gave rise to an expression which many of you have certainly heard and probably have never thought about. It was early discovered that there were fewer insects if all dead branches and twigs were kept trimmed out. This trimming was done either with a metal hook fastened onto a long handle, or with a wooden shepherd's crook. Now in England, where many of our ancestors originated, landlords often forbade their tenants to cut down living trees for the firewood they so much needed. But tenants were allowed to take all dead branches which they could collect "by hook or by crook" and burn these. Thus, if you intend to do something in spite of all obstacles, you will do it "by hook or by crook." So whether it be by sooting or by spraying, I may have some apples this fall, "by hook or by crook!"

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