



MEMORY DAYS....To be continued....

The Memory Days program scheduled for April 28th at Eagle Pond Nursing Home was cancelled at the last minute due to an unexpected problem at Eagle Pond. Everyone who arrived was very understanding and the program will be rescheduled at a future date. Thanks to Eagle Pond personnel for being solicitous of our welfare.

SOCIAL HALLS OF YESTERDAY--Part IV CARLETON HALL

While the second story of Andrew Wheldon's store and that of Dr. Ginn's drug store were created especially to serve the social needs of the village, the present day Carleton Hall was built as a meeting house for the Methodists. I could digress a bit here and tell the interesting story of the religious societies which blossomed and faded in the village of Dennis between 1820, when this house was built, and 1866 when the present Dennis Union Church became a reality. But the purpose of this series is to tell about the halls which have served as social centers for our villages, and the healthy but sometimes acrimonious differences in religions our must wait to be told another time. After it ceased to serve the Methodist congregation, this Hall was used as a school, and was called Academy Hall. Union Academy was what amounted to a private High School, and we are fortunate to have reminiscences which tell about school days there, as seen through the eyes of students. In the library at Josiah Dennis Manse are copies of a literary collection, articles and poems written by the students and distributed sometimes weekly, at other times twice a month, under the title of "The Luminary" and later "Buds of Genius". Subjects range from the weather to the recent battle between the Merrimac and the Monitor and show that creative writing was being encouraged at this time. But a new public school had been built across the street from Union Academy, and its days as a private school were numbered. In 1865, Captain Carleton Howes spearheaded a drive to have the citizens of the village purchase shares in the building, and it became Carleton Hall. After all, with so many Captain Howes' in the village, naming it Howes Hall would not have been much of an honor for Captain Carleton! The Hall has gone through many stages of change and development. In the 1950's a new foundation with basement rooms was built on the south side of the building and the old Hall was moved over its new foundation, and the new wing with kitchen facilities was added, making community meals possible. It has been the site of a Community Christmas Tree for over 100 years, and was used for many of the types of activities noted at other halls. I would guess that the most significant activity connected with Carleton Hall historically was the meeting there of the Dennis Lyceum. Named for the grove in Greece where Aristotle taught, Lyceums were part of an educational movement which was started in the United States in 1826 by Josiah Holbrook in Millbury, MA. The purpose originally was to improve education, train better teachers and foster the establishment of libraries. Most of the halls of the Cape have been home to a Lyceum at one time or another. There was a village Lyceum early in Dennis, probably about 1840, and it met at the old West School House, now standing on the grounds of the Manse. The format appears to have been mainly debate, men only, and included very young men as well as ancient sages. We are indebted to some of the early members who sent reminiscences when the Lyceum was revived and began holding its meetings in the newly named Carleton Hall. Debate topics ranged from temperance to rights of women to vote. "By careful plotting, the rocks of religious controversy were generally shunned," says Thomas Prince Howes, reflecting the differences of the time referred to above. In the waning years of debates, one question centered on whether an electric trolley line should be erected down the Main Street of the village. That one, by the way, was decided in the negative. The Lyceum sponsored a literary collection which it called "The Budget". The writings do not appear to have been published, but were probably read at meetings. From the few copies which we have, we can observe that the children whose works appear in the existing handwritten collections of the Academy had developed life-long habits of interesting creative writing. In its later years women were invited to attend Lyceum meetings, but did not debate. They did, however, contribute to "The Budget". Now let me make an appeal to anyone out there in our vast reading audience. If you have an attic which contains ancient family treasures, and you should ever come across any copies of or contributions written for "The Budget", "The Luminary", or "Buds of Genius",---Please, please, please, let us have a look at them. We would love to have originals for the collection, but if not, we would like to make copies so that the literary efforts of our ancestors are not lost. And while their writing may be more of sentimental value than literary, they are nevertheless valuable as reflecting times long gone, and by many forgotten. Let me close the tales of Carleton Hall by quoting one of the reflections written for "The Budget" in January 1899, by old friend Captain Marcus Hall. It's a long poem but I shall quote only the last two verses.

Grey and grizzled are my school mates,  
Few there are to take my hand,  
Some lie neath the restless ocean,  
Some have graves in foriegn land.

Many years since here we studied,  
Tender memories of them all.  
Flit like shadows o'er a curtain,  
As I sit in this old Hall.

It's 92 years later, and the old hall is still going strong!

## CALENDAR

May 6 7:00 PM Board meets with President Nancy  
Jun 1 9:00 Lady Slipper Walk on the Indain Lands with Dr. Norton Nickerson.  
10:30 AM If you have never taken this walk--this is the year to do it!  
Please make reservations with the Natural Resources Office at  
Town Hall. Leave your name and phone number in case the date is  
changed due to our EARLY spring!!

### A SEA STORY

All of you know by now that maritime industries of various sorts were an important part of the economics of this town in most of its history. We tend to picture the north side, with its romantic shipyard tales and the many deep water captains who were raised there, as the center of this legacy. In fact, the ports at Bass River and Dennis Port probably had more of an economic influence on this town, beginning with the days when whaling lost its prominence and coastal trading and fishing became the maritime economic base. For a full examination of our maritime industries, you will have to wait for our book to be published! (Advanced orders will be accepted soon.) But for now, a tale of some adventures of Dennis men, in the waning days of sailing ships. On the maps drawn of Barnstable County in 1880, 3 wharves are shown extending from Dennis Port several hundred yards into the sea. They are home for a dimishing fleet of fishing and trading vessels, now in a threatened industry which must meet the challenge of steam trains and ships, and larger vessels which need deeper harbors than Cape Cod can provide. Still a brisk business is being carried on at Dennis Port. With financing from Fall River, the Dennis Port Fishing Company maintains a wharf there. Local sail makers, rope walks, and barrel makers are still earning a comfortable living. Dennis Port is not ready to give up its amphibious identity. But in March of 1888, a severe storm shakes the village. The first shock is assessing the damage done to docks and piers. The Schooner Wanderer, Capt. Chase, has dragged her mooring and crashed into Baker's Wharf, damaging both wharf and vessel. Several other small vessels which were in port have gone ashore and been damaged. In a week's time, the dreaded news. This was not just a local storm. Much damage is reported along the whole Atlantic seacoast. Little by little, the sad toll is reported. Sch. W. H. Oler, Capt. Edwin Edwards of Dennis Port, with a crew of local men, has been damaged, but with no loss of life. Sch. Wm. G. Lewis, Capt. Scotto Kelley of Dennis Port, has not been heard from. In a subsequent report, news is received that the Sch. A. L. Belden has been found, severely damaged by the storm. The men and vessel have suffered greatly. It was necessary for the crew to be lashed to the rigging for twelve hours, before the storm subsided. Steward Moses H. Baker of Dennis Port was lost overboard. Capt. John L. Crowell of West Dennis had several toes frozen, which must be amputated. But the Schooner Wm. G. Lewis has still not been heard from. Dennis Port will recover from the damage to piers and vessels. But the scars left by the loss of life heal much more slowly. The Sch. Wm. G. Lewis, with captain, officers and crew mostly Dennis Port boys, is never heard from again.

Reports continue to appear in local newspapers about repairs to the wharfs, even additions to the businesses at the waterfront. But the countdown to the eventual demise of Dennis Port as an active commercial port is already in the cards. Capt. John L. Crowell announces that he will open a Dry Goods store near the West Dennis bridge. Capt. Scotto Kelley's wife has a stone engraved in his memory erected at the Swan Pond Cemetery. Life goes on.

### HELP!!!

Jericho still needs some volunteers for the school program on May 30 and June 3-7. It's easy and enjoyable!! If you can help for even just one day please call Lilla Smith 398-3367. You won't be disappointed, I promise!

### NEW MEMBERS AND SNOWBIRDS

Isabelle announces new Life Members Mary Ann Gelsthorpe and Nancy Thacher Reid, and our other new members--Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Marshall, Mrs. and Mrs. David B. Allen, Mrs. Dodie Fast, Peter R. Flanagan, Harriet Baker Hayward, Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. McNamara, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Wentworth, and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph O'Clair. Also--you lucky people returning home to our beautiful spring--please be sure Isabelle has your change of address.

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

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 2  
So. Dennis, MA  
02660

