



MEMORIAL DAY--1896

We seem to be focusing mostly on new acquisitions as the subject for newsletter articles--and isn't it fortunate that we are so actively collecting memorabilia which reflects our town's past? This month, among other things donated by Dr. Norton Nickerson, we have received a copy of the program for the Memorial Day exercises held in West Dennis in May of 1896, sponsored by the Frank D. Hammond Post No. 141, G.A.R., and the Women's Relief Corps. The booklet was published by the G.A.R. Post and contains a description of the ceremonies and the complete text of all the speeches.

According to the newspaper account, the day began with a dinner served on the lower floor of Nictheroy Hall, at which four hundred people were fed. Promptly at 12:45, a line of march was formed, and the veterans, accompanied by the West Dennis Brass Band, under the direction of J.H. Jenks, marched "around the square," a distance of about one mile. They then reassembled on the third floor of the hall for the ceremonies. According to the report, 2500 people were in attendance.

Selectman George A. Baker gave the welcome on behalf of the town, expressing the gratitude of the town to those who had served in the Union troops during the Civil War. Luther Hall, chairman of the Dennis School Committee welcomed the veterans on behalf of the school children. Pupils from Miss Garfield's primary class, Miss Lovell's intermediate class and Mr. Corlis's Grammar class in the West Dennis Graded School, forty-six children, all carrying flags, sang in a chorus led by Miss R. Ina Crowell. The words included: "Welcome Veterans, to West Dennis! We the children welcome you; You who saved the country's honor, worthy wearers of the Blue!" "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was also sung, accompanied on the piano by Miss Lizzie Kelley.

The Honorable Henry Fisk, one of four brothers who had all served in transporting men and supplies during the Civil War, gave a welcome on behalf of the Sea Captains. Then came the main address, delivered by the Rev. Mr. J.G. Gammons, minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church of West Dennis, now the West Dennis Community Church. Mr. Gammon, like Luther Hall, had served in the Civil War. His speech was patriotic, though a little long. But what struck me most, in reading the text from which he spoke, was how familiar the topics which he addressed were! He spoke of the problem created by illegal immigrants, who took jobs away from citizens, and refused to learn to speak English. He talked about a protective tariff, of the danger of financial monopolies, the problems in Cuba and ethnic war in Turkey. Except for the names of the latest business men to sleep in the Lincoln Bedroom, it reads much like today's Cape Cod Times. Yet there are some glaring differences. The U.S. Treasury was in excellent shape, with no national debt. And the pronouns "she" and "her" are not used once. Rather, despite the fact that the ceremonies were co-sponsored by the G.A.R. and the Women's Relief Corps, only one small paragraph is addressed to the women, in a talk which covers fourteen pages! He also makes no reference to the freed slaves and their descendants, and blames the war on the south's dissatisfaction with the election of Abraham Lincoln, which indeed did precipitate the secession.

We can identify all of the participants of the day, we know that 2nd Lt. Franklin D. Hammond was from Chatham and was killed at Cold Harbor in June of 1864, and we have newspaper accounts which supplement our program. What we don't know is where was Nictheroy Hall? Can anyone help us out? More next time.

204th BIRTHDAY DINNER RESERVATIONS JUNE 8, 1997 LIGHTHOUSE INN
Please make reservations for _____ people. I enclose a check for \$_____
(Cost is \$13.50 per person tax and gratuity included.)
Choice of: _____ Broiled Scrod Nantucket
_____ Chicken Franchise

Please enclose stamped self-addressed envelope and send to: Phyllis Horton
Box 963
Dennis MA02638

Reservations by June 3, please.

CALENDAR

May 6 7 P.M. Annual Town Meeting at Nathaniel H. Wixon School
May 7 2-4 P.M. Jericho House
Workshop: How to Date and Document an Antique House, led by Sarah Korjeff of CCC (see below)
May 10-18 Cape Cod Maritime Week '97
May 12-22 School trips at Josiah Dennis Manse
May 14 7:30 P.M. Board meets in Brendan Joyce's barn
May 26 9:30 A.M. Memorial Day Parade--Dennis Village
COMING IN JUNE-- MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW
June 7 9:30 Annual Lady Slipper Walk
June 8 12 noon Birthday Luncheon at Lighthouse Inn (see article)
June 14-22 Heritage Week '97- Several important events will be held in Dennis

BYLAW CHANGE RECOMMENDATION

At the April meeting of the Board of Directors it was voted to recommend that in the section of our Bylaws dealing with officers the following be substituted for the present Section B. Paragraph 2:

"All officers will be elected for the term of one year. The president may serve for only two consecutive terms."

OUR ANNUAL BIRTHDAY PARTY IS SCHEDULED

...and it will be at the Lighthouse Inn on Sunday, June 8, with social hour at 12 noon and luncheon at 1. The focus for this meeting is our many, splendid volunteers and we hope you will be there to thank all who work to keep our excellent programs going. Please use the coupon (over) to make your reservations. Menu: Cranberry Shrub, Choice of entree, Chef's choice of Vegetable and starch, Rolls, coffee or tea and our traditional birthday cake.

DATING A HOUSE

If you live in an old house, you are probably already an enthusiast. Knowing about the people who lived in the house before you becomes an obsession. And you probably already know what fun it is to solve the mystery about the house's past, by tracing records at the Register of Deeds, Probate and County Offices. If you do live in an antique house but have never searched its history, or if you don't live in an antique house but are interested in solving historical puzzles, consider attending the workshop to be held at Jericho House on Wednesday, May 7, from 2-4 P.M. Sarah Korjeff of the Cape Cod Commission will take us through the procedure of researching and documenting our old houses and will also remind us of the importance of recording what we know of our past in order to preserve it for the future.

MARITIME WEEK

DHS and the Dennis Historical Commission have gladly taken part in Cape Maritime Week, for what town on Cape Cod has a better right to be proud of its maritime heritage? The kick-off for Maritime Week was the symposium held at 4 C's on the Cape's Maritime history. The first event of the day was the presentation by Admont Clark of Dennis on the history of the Shiverick Shipyard, illustrated by DHS slide show which was shown by Brendan Joyce. The Symposium was dedicated to the memory of Joshua Crowell.

Dennis Historical Society
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