



THE MAGIC OF RADIO

For our October program, we heard from Ben Thacher, who in his younger days was well known as "Benny The Great", a magician of some note. But his subject on the 30th was the magic many of us remember hearing from that dome-shaped Philco on quiet evenings at home in days gone by. As usual, Ben had us all feeling very nostalgic as we left, remembering the days of Allen's Alley, The Shadow, and many other radio greats. Good show, Ben! Come again.

THE RAIL TRAIL

Our November meeting is scheduled for the 13th, so quickly make plans to attend. It will be on a subject that many will find nostalgic, and others will find very enlightening from a point of view of a great change that took place in the history of the Cape. Howard Goodwin, of Wareham, will speak on the advance of the railroad down the Cape, from its earliest days at Sandwich, where it served the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company, to its arrival at Provincetown, and finally at Chatham. Mr. Goodwin has slides and pictures of the many railroad stations which were built in various stops, and also can tell us of the clusters of businesses that relocated near the depots and changed forever the supremacy of the little harbor villages as business centers. Our programs each month are excellent, they are free, and we hope that you will come and bring a friend. See you at V.I.C. Hall, Wednesday, November 13, at 7:30 P.M.

THE YANKEE GALE, or MY SUMMER VACATION

The near-miss of Hurricane Gloria had us all in a somewhat agitated state last month, but probably the most agitated were the media people, who had opted to spend the day reporting a hurricane which hardly happened. In the course of the day, we heard many interviews and references to past storms which had affected the area, including the storms of 1938 and 1944, which they referred to as "no-name" storms. The system of naming storms is relatively new, but storms of years past were not totally nameless. There are several hurricanes which earned names for themselves, as their severity was recalled for decades after their winds were only in memory. One of these is the Great October Gale of 1841, a very well-known storm which had a devastating effect on Barnstable County, in the almost total destruction of its fishing fleet. Ten years later, almost to the day, there occurred another storm, not here on Cape Cod, but in the Bay of Chaleur, off Prince Edward Island. This storm was recounted by the light of Cape Cod fireplaces for many generations because of the sad destruction which our fishermen experienced, as they were caught mackerel fishing near that bay at the time of the storm's arrival. There was so much damage to New England fishing vessels in that storm that it was named the Yankee Gale. We are fortunate to have an eyewitness report of that hurricane, although the circumstances under which it has come to us are not very fortunate. The account is written by young Jeremiah Kelley, Jr., who was a crew member of the Schooner R. Baker, Fernandes Geoffrey Kelley, Master. In his account he tells how the fleet of mackerel fishermen had not yet filled their barrels or wet all their salt when a change in weather was noted. Remember, these intrepid sailors of 1851 had little upon which to judge weather changes, except the falling of the barometer and gut reactions. Capt. Kelley resolved to work the vessel toward the harbor, fishing all the time, but it soon became apparent that the wind was rising at an alarming rate. After many difficult attempts were made and had failed, Capt. Kelley himself shimmied out onto the bowsprit and bent on the jib which they needed to carry them into the harbor and safety. Their fight to make landfall resulted in many fearsome experiences, including a man overboard, who was miraculously returned to the deck by a huge wave which almost swamped the vessel. We have this very interesting account because when young Jeremiah returned to Dennis Port where he lived, he also returned to school, as he was only 16 years of age. His teacher at the district school in the "Howes neighborhood", as do teachers even today, asked the students to write an essay on their experiences over the summer. Jeremiah wrote about the Yankee Gale. One year later, Jeremiah was aboard a vessel, The Reaper, coasting to the South when she sprang a leak and sunk. Young Jeremiah lost his life. The schoolteacher had saved Jeremiah's composition, which he framed and presented to Jeremiah's grieving parents. Thus we have this account, written by one who had survived one disaster in which many lives were lost, but who lost his life at sea in another disaster which claimed only his.

FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

Isabelle Flynn wants to thank all of you who have been so prompt about paying your dues and nudge the memory of those who have put it off. Oh, my goodness, I don't think I've paid mine yet.....House dating continues, and the Dennis Port Historic District Study Committee is still busy surveying that village. You will be amazed when they tally up the number of pre-1900 houses they have discovered.....A mini series of educational programs has been held at 4 C's and several members of our Board have attended.....Do you know someone who would like to be a member of D.H.S.? We will gladly send them an invitation if you will tell us where to send it.

CALENDAR

- November 13 7:30 P.M. V.I.C. Hall, Dennis Port. Talk and slides by Howard Goodwin, "Early Railroads of Cape Cod".
November 19 7:30 P.M. Phyllis' house, Board Meeting.
November 24 Celebration of the 150th anniversary of the building of the South Dennis Meetinghouse.

Coming Events

- December - Open House at Jericho. December 15, 3-5 P.M.
January - Old-Fashioned Game Night.
February - Mid-Winter Festivity.

THE MEETINGHOUSE HAS A BIRTHDAY

We think D.H.S. members might like to know that the old meetinghouse which stands atop a hill on Main Street in South Dennis is having a special anniversary, its 150th. The people of the church are marking this occasion with a pageant which illustrates some of the highlights of its history. The building is known as the Captains' Church because of the large number of Master Mariners who have been members. In looking over some of the history of the church, I find it was built in 1835 and the contractor was paid a total of \$3,857.53 and according to the specifications, this included three coats of paint both inside and out. The building was remodeled extensively in 1876, at which time the balcony was removed. Mr. Peterson of Duxbury "buildded well", for the church is as lovely an example of its period as can be found on Cape Cod. I'm sure the good people of the church will be happy if you choose to join them in saluting the happy anniversary of this timeless building.

HAVE YOU MET MADAM PRESIDENT?

Our new president is Phyllis Robbins Horton, from Dennis Port. Phyllis is a great gal, a native Cape Codder, with all the charm and wit that goes along with that distinction. If you haven't met her, that's one more good reason to get out for our meeting on November 13. She brings to the office a real appreciation for local history, and a love of this town which will ascertain that D.H.S. will be graciously and enthusiastically represented by her presence. Introduce yourself to her. She'll make you glad that you did.

FOR SALE---A BIT OF HISTORY

Making out your Christmas list? Why not include a gift or two which will help to introduce your friends or family to some of the town's history. After all, education is one of the primary goals of D.H.S. Below is a partial list of available items. All will be on sale at V.I.C. Hall November 13. Do your Christmas shopping early.

Tile of Salt Works
1858 Map of Dennis Village,
framed or unframed
Dennis Manse License Plate

Books
Master Mariners of Dennis
The Story of Two Old Houses
The White Spire
Scuttle Watch

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

With the usual fine cooperation of the Jericho Committee, we will again co-sponsor the Christmas Open House, which has been held alternately at the two historic centers for the past several years. Bill and Jean Taylor and Gertrude and Harold Lalley will chair the hospitality committee. Ann Chalmers will be chairman of decorations. With pleasant Christmas music from the past in the background, and fine food and drink, we can't think of a better place to be on Sunday, December 15th, from 3-5 P.M., than at Jericho House, corner of Old Main and Trotting Park Road, West Dennis.

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