

WOMEN AND THE SEA

Jim Coogan is well known to us all as a serious student and writer about local history. Come and hear him tell us of the stoic and sometimes adventurous fair sex of years gone by in the land where "Women mated and gave their men to the sea, and waited." Some did not wait but went along with their mates to sea. Jim will tell us of the fortunes of these women at our meeting on October 9 at Carleton Hall at 7:30 P.M.

THE LEGACY OF DR. HERSEY

Farmer James Hersey of Hingham had three sons who became doctors. His eldest, Ezekiel, was sent to Harvard College, from which he graduated in 1728. He returned to Hingham to set up practice, and he shared his medical knowledge with his younger brother, James, and trained him to become a doctor as well. Dr. James came down to Barnstable to establish a practice which in a short time encompassed the entire Cape. Soon he sent for his young brother, Abner, who left the farm and came to Cape Cod to learn the profession. But a few short months into Abner's training, Dr. James died, leaving a widow, two young sons, and a large and lucrative practice to the care of his totally unqualified brother. Undaunted by his minimal amount of preparation, Abner applied his native intelligence and sound judgement and soon earned the respect of his new patients. His practice covered the entire peninsula, and he maintained a rigid schedule of visits to each town, certain days being appropriated to certain places. So reliable was his routine that patients could travel to a given cross road, and would have less time to wait for the arrival of Dr. Hersey than the average wait you and I have at our doctor's office today. Besides punctuality, Dr. Hersey had certain other traits which have been long remembered. He was a rigid moralist, abstained from alcohol and tobacco, ate no meat and was extremely self-centered. He had his clothes made to his own specifications, to provide both comfort and convenience. He hated dampness and cold. He travelled in a two-wheeled carriage, entirely enclosed except for a slit through which he peered, and a second slit through which passed the reins. In winter he wore a voluminous cloak, made of 7 calf skins, lined with flannel. In the deepest cold of winter he slept under 12 woolen blankets, peeling them off one at a time as spring approached. He was morbidly afraid of "catching something" from those he treated, especially the smallpox. Nevertheless, he continued to be Cape Cod's most respected physician, from the time of his brother's death in 1742 until he died in 1787, at the age of 66. And he continued to live in the memories of his constituents, for, by his will, upon the death of his widow, his extensive land along the present 6A in Barnstable was left in trust to the 13 Congregational parishes then on Cape Cod, each to have a share of their use in proportion to the amount of business he had done in each parish. The share of the East Parish of Yarmouth, now Dennis, was 1/14th. This profit was to be used "forever" for the purchase of certain religious books. He also specified in what proportion the money should be expended, as 1/3 was to be for the purchase of Dr. Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. He also laid out in great detail how his estate was to be managed, fences maintained, manure applied, crops rotated - and he promised to return in 100 years to see if his trust was fulfilled. As it turned out, it was not, for the deacons of the 13 churches could not manage the land for a profit. In 1816, they received permission from the General Court to sell the land and invest the money, the profit from which was still to be used for religious books. I wonder if any of the 13 Congregational Parishes still have on their libraries a copy of Dr. Doddridge's tome?

GAMES AT THE MANSE

Nancy Symington was in Europe during Dennis Festival Days, so Beth Crowell and Trudy Whalen kindly undertook to conduct the games at the Manse for the nearly 40 children who attended. We appreciate their help, and I'm sure they had as much fun as the kids did. It has been suggested that because of the popularity of this activity, we divide the youngsters into two groups, by ages, next year. Any volunteers to help?

T- FOR TWO

T-shirts, that is. At the annual meeting, Wilson Scofield and Joshua Crowell were awarded official T-shirts with the emblem of the Dennis Chamber of Commerce on the front and "D.H.S. A-V TEAM" on the back. This was in gratitude of their "above the line of duty" service in having shown our slide show "Dennis" to over 3,000 people in the past two years. And with the T-shirts our heartfelt thanks. Setting up and taking down the equipment for each showing takes over an hour of time, to say nothing of driving to such far-off places as Taunton and Eastham. We deeply appreciate what our cracker-jack A-V team has done to spread the history of our town - and goodwill for the Society.

AND THREE FOR TEA

In thanks for the very hard work put in by the Cup Plate Committee, Pres. Nancy presented a token gift of tea to each of the three members, Gertrude Lailey, Jean Dunham and Elinor Crowell. Symbolically, as each of them enjoy their next 25 cups of tea, they will be reminded of how much we appreciate their good work!

CALENDAR

- Oct. 9 7:30 Carleton Hall "Women and the Sea" Talk by James Coogan, Jr.
Oct. 11, 12 and 13 Cape Cod Embroiderers Guild Exhibit as Josiah Dennis Manse
Oct. 16 7:30 Board meets at Nancy's House
Nov. 2-3 New England Archivist Fall Meeting, Excellent program for all interested in maintaining historic documents. For information call Charlotte Price 362-2131.
Nov. 13 7:30 "The Best of Memory Days" West Dennis Community Building Excerpts from our Memory Day tapes compiled by Ben Thacher.

DENNIS AND THE ARTS - THE LEGACY OF RAYMOND MOORE

I follow with interest the diligent efforts of a group of dedicated people who are hoping to establish an art gallery for the display of works of local artists here in Dennis. The desired site is on the grounds of the Cape Playhouse, which would certainly be a beautiful and appropriate setting, already well-known as a center for performing arts. The present Playhouse complex, operated by the Raymond Moore Foundation, was conceived in the 1920's by Raymond Moore, a young theatrical producer with vision and an uncanny ability to make his visions come true. Beginning with 3½ acres of attractive and undeveloped land and an empty building which had originally been a church, Moore's cultural legacy today covers 30 acres with numerous buildings. The Playhouse itself was moved to its present spot and converted into a theater designed by Cleon Throckmorton and opened in 1927. The cinema was built in 1930, designed by architect Alfred Easton Poor, and was inspired by another church, in Centerville. It contains a spectacular ceiling mural, covering 6,400 square feet, which has recently been restored. The mural was designed and executed by world-famous artist Rockwell Kent and his assistant, Jo Mielziner, and is probably the Cape's best known work of art. Moore dreamed of adding an art gallery for Cape artists' work - and now it seems possible that that vision also will come true. Dr. Hersey would be displeased with the use of his legacy, but I'm sure that Raymond Moore would be pleased with present and future uses of his.

LOCAL ARTISTS' WORKS IN PRINTS

Recently the work of two of our local artists has become available in prints, and both are of interest to our members. The Dennis Committee has made available, through the kindness of the owner of the original painting, copies of the work of Rick Howard depicting the village of Dennis in 1960. This painting, in Rick's inimitable style, will certainly become a collector's item. Also, Nancy DeVita has available prints of her paintings of the Shiverick ships built in East Dennis from 1849-1863. She has done extensive research to assure that her paintings are as accurate as possible. Any of these prints would make valuable additions to your collection.

DUES TO BE BILLED

Members who have not paid their 1984-85 dues as yet will receive a bill for same this month. Please remember that if you wish to receive a membership card, you should enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope when paying your dues. Or you may pay your dues in person at the next D.H.S. meeting at Carleton Hall on October 9. Also please note, some dues have not been paid for previous years. If it is true in your case, it will be noted on your new bill. After a decent interval, those whose dues are more than one year in arrears will be removed from the mailing list. We feel that it is unfair to those who pay dues to continue the expense of printing and mailing newsletters to those who have not paid dues. So come on folks, get those late dues to Isabel Flynn, P.O. Box 607, So. Dennis, MA 02660. \$4 per individual, \$6 per family, \$2 for student and \$100 for Life Membership.

ANTIQUe MAPS TO BE REPRINTED

Through the kindness of Sylvia Hoseley, D.H.S. has received permission to reprint a section of the map of 1858 showing Dennis and East Dennis. On the map names of homeowners at that date are written along the unnamed streets. It is an attractive and interesting document and may be purchased both framed and unframed. Details will be available at the next meeting, Oct. 9 at Carleton Hall.

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

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