



DHS ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Meeting held at Jacob Sears Memorial Library on September 11th found a very congenial group of our members gathered together. The new board nominations was read by Gertrude Lailey and voted by the membership. Our new President is Richard H Howes (the baton passes on, but not very far--his Nancy is our retiring President). Laura Crowell was elected Vice-President, Sarah Kruger is the new Secretary and Isabel Flynn and Henry Kelley II were re-elected to serve three more years on the Board of Directors. Thank you very much, Nancy, for your leadership during the past two years. The By-law change mentioned in August's newsletter was adopted by the membership. We were pleasantly entertained by the Questers who gave their slide presentation "Cape Cod Thru A Quester's Eye". Living here we tend to forget what a wealth of historic treasures we have on the Cape. It was a treat to see so many of them brought together. Thank you, Questers. As usual, some of our DHS superb cooks put their talents to work and the refreshment table was loaded with all kinds of goodies. Nice work, ladies!

DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS AND WITCHES?

Of course not. But we are in the season of Hallowe'en and the little ghosts, witches, and goblins--with probably a few pre-Teenaged Mutant Ninja Turtles mixed in--will soon be ringing doorbells in our neighborhoods, in the annual celebration of things spooky and scary. If you have children or grandchildren, or even looking back on your own childhood, you know that things spooky and scary hold a great fascination for children. Judging by the number of homes on the Cape which have traditions of being "haunted", things scary and spooky continue to intrigue us as adults. Telling ghost stories is an old tradition, whether it be on camping trips, or slumber parties. But no people have a richer supernatural folk lore than seafaring folks. Our ancestors loved to tell tales of olden days, when witches roamed along our deserted beaches, causing ship wrecks, and the ghosts of the mariners drowned on our shores searched in the night for their lost companions and their beloved vessels. And we all know that the squaws who labored with clam shells to dig Scargo Lake for the Princess Scargo, even before the Europeans came to settle here, can still be heard grumbling and groaning along the banks of the lake on dark, moonless nights. I thought perhaps, in preparation for the annual invasion of small spooks and goblins, I would help you all get in the mood by telling you one or two stories, which come from our town's past. Both of these stories were said to be true.

A certain coasting captain, well known to local mariners, had taken a cargo of lumber into Havana. While off-loading, his first mate, upon whom he depended heavily, became sick and was taken to the local hospital. When the vessel was ready to sail, the captain was told that his mate was too ill to leave with him. It being well-nigh impossible to hire a good officer in the island port, the captain had to press his second mate into service. They set out to sea with fair winds and after a day or two, the Captain felt at ease enough to give his mate the night watch. He enjoyed a good nights rest and awoke before dawn to relieve the mate at the helm. He found his officer agitated and upset. "Captain", he said, "I have seen our first mate. He was walking on the deck, examining the rigging. When I hailed him. he turned full face to me, waved his hand and disappeared!" The Captain was enraged. He accused the mate of drinking when he was responsible for the safety of the ship. For the remainder of the trip, he took the night watch himself and seldom went below. Back in port at Baltimore, he fired the man, who still insisted that his story was true. Some months later, the Captain with new officers took his vessel once more to Havana. As soon as his papers were cleared, he went to the hospital to inquire the whereabouts of his old shipmate. He was given the sad news that the mate had passed away--and that he died on the very night when he had been seen by his fellow officer on the deck of the schooner.

This tale is about witches. Although witches were never prosecuted in the Old Colony of Plymouth, certain women whose behaviour or looks caused their neighbors to distrust them, were often believed to be witches. It was thought that these women could assume the shapes of animals and birds and travel through time and space. Unusual happenings on land and sea were believed to be caused by these women, and they were often shunned. This tale was told by Captain Thomas (4) Howes, a man of whom Captain Thomas Prince Howes has written, "His word was as good as Mr. Stone's", Mr. Stone being the honored and honorable minister of this parish during Thomas (4)'s lifetime. Capt. Thomas was on a voyage to the Grand Banks with a crew of local fishermen. One bright day, far away from home and a good many miles out to sea, one of the crew men spotted a black cat swimming toward the vessel. Every one knows that cats are not naturally swimmers, and there seemed little doubt in the minds of the terrified crew that the animal was in reality a witch. One of the crew men had a silver button on his sleeve, so he loaded his gun, using the button as a bullet and shot the swimming cat dead. The rest of the voyage progressed without incident. Returning home with a hold full of fish, they discovered that on the very day and time that the cat had met its end, an old woman of the village who had long been suspected of being a witch had suddenly died. So much for ghost stories, but if you are now interested, Elizabeth Reynaud's books entitled, "The Narrow Land", and "The Mutinous Wind" have more Cape Cod tales and legends. Happy Hallowe'en, everyone. Don't forget that those Ninja Turtles are said to prefer pizza! But I guess most of them will accept something sweet instead.

CALENDAR

- Oct. 7 7:30 P.M. Nan Waldron's slide presentation "A View From Outermost House" at Carleton Hall. This was rescheduled after being cancelled by Bob. Refreshments will be served.
- Oct. 9 7:00 P.M. DHS Board meeting at the Manse.

A PUNKHORN CENTER STORY

They are doing a nice job on that old house down to Punkhorn Center. You know the one I mean. It sits on the little triangle where Setucket Road crosses the Airline. If memory serves me correctly, that was Sam Walker's place years ago. O' course, Punkhorn Center really belongs to Brewster, and my memory doesn't always serve me--correctly or otherwise--these days. But I'd like to tell you a story about Sam Walker, anyway. Sam was a well-known character in East Dennis. He was an honest enough man, willing to work with his ox and cart whenever there was work to be had. Didn't have a steady job, but lots of folks didn't in those days. Had one or two bad habits, but even so do such paragons of virtue as you and I. Most folks liked Sam and he liked most folks. His biggest problem was cash flow. For you see, he was, as may Dad would say, no better than he ought to be, and when the cash did flow, he was sometimes tempted to indulge himself in what the late Dean Sears would call "riotous living". As a consequence, Sam was one of the many residents who carried a sizeable balance down at the store of Kelley and Sears on Quivet Neck. Capt. Stillman Kelley was an exemplary neighbor and charitable enough, but you can bet that, as an official of the church and a business man of honor, he would get just a bit riled when he'd hear that Sam had come into some cash and none of it had come to be applied to his balance at the store. So one fine morning, Captain Stillman let Sam know in no uncertain terms, that no more credit would be extended to him until he paid off his present bill. You all know how that Kelley clan is. They don't believe much in riotous living, especially when it's at their expense! Can't say that I much blame them for that, either. Well, Captain Stillman and his partner, Brother Nathan Sears, didn't see much of Sam for quite a spell. Then one day Sam pulls up his ox cart at the door of the store. "Captain Stillman", says he, "I would like very much to pay my bill today. And here is a short list of a few necessities we need down to Punkhorn, for you to add to the tally." You can't blame Captain Stillman if he felt a little self-righteous as he weighed out a bit of this and a tad of that to fill Sam's list. Possibly he could take a little credit for helping Sam to set himself on the straight and narrow path. The order was all bagged up and Sam toted it out to the ox cart, while the Captain added up the tab. "That will be \$10.27, including today's purchases," says he. "Well", says Sam, "I'm a might short of cash today, but I'll pay it up as soon as I can." "Wait a minute, heah," retorts the Captain. "I understood you to say you were going to pay your bill today!" "Oh no, Captain Stillman, I guess you heard me wrong. What I said was I should LIKE to pay my bill today, and certain sure, I would. Howsomever, bein' mightly short of cash, I'm disappointed to say that I can't" You can bet that Sam made a hasty retreat back to Punkhorn, and it's a sure thing he didn't show himself down to Quivet Neck for some time either. He knew well enough that he couldn't get away with a trick like that with Captain stillman Kelley more than once. All that was left for Sam to do was to give up, or at least curtail, that riotous living, and save out a bit of cash as it came his way to pay his bill at the store. And I'm sure that's just what he did, for Sam was, after all, an honest man, willing to work if there was work to do. And Captain Stillman Kelley was a first-rate business man whose motto was "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me!"

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Membership chairman Isabel Flynn has announced two new Life Members. They are Jim Carr and Shirley Howes Wright. Welcome aboard for the long haul! Our life membership list is growing nicely.

INDEXER FOUND

Our appeal in last month's newsletter for a new indexer for the DHS newsletter has been answered by Barbara Hart. Harold Merriam will help her get started. Thanks, Barbara, and a special thanks to Mr. Merriam for all his work in getting us started with the index. It has been very helpful to a number of people.

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