



FESTIVE FESTIVAL DAYS

Dennis Festival Days was shortened this year from nine to five busy days and from all reports everyone had a wonderful time.

The Colonial Open House at Josiah Dennis Manse was bigger and better than ever. About 400 people came to take a trip, with our costumed guides, back in time to the 1700's. Many colonial crafts and games were demonstrated. Out on the south lawn Sarah Kruger proved her athletic abilities as she taught colonial games to many of our visitors and Carol Horton-O'Sullivan had an ever-changing group that learned how to make corn husk dolls. Thanks to Nancy Howes for drying the corn husks. If you'd like to help build up our supply for next year give her a call at 385-3528. Nancy Reid and Maureen Joyce were out in the 1770 school house teaching the fine art of writing with a quill pen--not an easy task when you've been raised on ball point pens.

We had anticipated a rainy day and Emily Levine graciously loaned us her large tent. However, we were lucky and had a beautiful sunny day--so the tent kept the sun off Al Reylek while he instructed everyone in the science of making ice cream with a hand-cranked machine, and Sherry Sparrow and her daughter Terry Fox as they dispensed Colonial-type goodies and gallons of lemonade. Everyone was happy for the shade and refreshments, and the kids learned that making ice cream that way means a lot of hard work before you get to the good stuff!

Beth Deck demonstrated spinning and weaving and invited our guests to try their hand with the shuttle--always a popular feature in our open houses. Kitty McNamara was busy quilting in the west parlor, Eleanor Roy did her lovely needlework in the east parlor while the rest of the Manse was in the capable hands of Lu Crowell, Rachel Baroni, Nancy Howes, Lynne Horton, Dot Bell, Isabelle Flynn, John Burton, Josh Crowell, and Phyllis Horton. Seth Crowell and Fred Eble did a great job finding parking spaces for all the cars and Dick Howes documented all the events with his 'non-colonial' camera.

Across the stone wall, on the triangle, the Falmouth Militia performed their muster and drills and a number of young people in costume made it all seem really authentic. Ben Thacher and Michael Morea strolled the grounds entertaining everyone with their fiddles, Jessica Foster, Amy Deck, Nikita Chalke, and Alison Reid helped out wherever they were needed, and Sarah Deck had the care of our new attraction, Rachel, one of Joanne Crowell's sheep--and believe me, Rachel was the star of the day!

On Tuesday the Village Garden Club presented their Annual Flower Show at the Manse. The theme this year was 'A Stroll Through Dennis Village' and the ladies came up with some lovely interpretations.

The open house at Jericho on Sunday afternoon had great attendance. The antique car parade went right by the house and raised everyone's excitement level. Their guides are now in costume which lends a charming quality to our lovely 1801 house. A number of 1800's skills were demonstrated. Pat Swain and Rosemary Mailhot did some quilting, Joan Martin did rug hooking and Joan Monteiro did rug braiding. Our ancestors were frugal folk and wasted not even a snippet of cloth--that's how those two crafts began. My grandmother Nora Snow Murray had a favorite saying, "Use it up, Wear it out; Make it do, Or do without." True then--and true today! Alice Hildebrant demonstrated quill work, Marian Low kept her knitting needles busy, and Kitty McNamara showed the art of stenciling. Out in the Barn Museum Don Swain was caning a chair--and making it look easy even though it really isn't. All in all our DHS participation in Festival Days was a huge success--and we're already planning for next year!

The one factor that makes these events--and everything else we do in both houses--so successful is our **volunteers**. Without them we couldn't open our doors. Very sincere thanks to everyone who helped throughout the year in any way.

CALL TO 1996 ANNUAL MEETING

Come one, come all to our annual meeting on September 15, 2:00 P.M. at Jacob Sears Memorial Building. We are on record for having the briefest of business meetings so we can get on to the program and I expect President Brendan Joyce will dispense with matters in his usual easy style. Please remember, to be a voting member your dues must be up to date. They were due September first, so if that dues envelope is 'somewhere' on your desk see if you can find it and send it along. Thanks! Noted lecturer Eleanor Mason will entertain us with "Pilgrims--A New Approach" on the life and times in colonial times. I'm sure our refreshment table will live up to its great reputation, so come and bring a friend--or more--and their appetites, to our special event.

HOWES FAMILY REUNION

Descendants of Thomas and Mary Burr Howes will assemble here on October 5th for a day devoted to renewing old family ties, researching their genealogy, looking up some of the old homesteads, and having a good time here in the old East Precinct of Yarmouth where Thomas and Mary settled in 1639. They had three sons--Joseph, Jeremiah, and Thomas who all had families here in Dennis. From then until now this good family proliferated to untold thousands throughout this country, Canada, and the world. If you are a Howes descendant and would like to meet dozens of cousins call Nancy Howes at 385-3528 for information and registration. If you think you might have a Howes line but are not sure call Nancy and come along. Perhaps someone will be able to help you trace it. Even if you find that you aren't a Howes you'll have a good time. We're a real friendly bunch!

CALENDAR

Sep. 11 7:30 P.M. DHS Board meets at the Manse.
Sep. 15 2:00 P.M. DHS Annual Meeting at Jacob Sears Memorial Building. See article.
Oct. 5 Howes Family Reunion in Dennis. See article on other side.

BACK TO SCHOOL

The other morning I walked out to get the newspaper and heard excited young voices. Down on the corner were a group of small children and their moms waiting for the school bus. It was the first day of school.

Talk about instant flashbacks! I could see myself on my first day of school wearing a new dress mother had made for the occasion, a big red bow in my hair and a brand new lunch box. Inside the lunch box was my lunch and a pencil box which contained pencils, a pencil sharpener, ruler, large eraser, and a compass—which I'm still not sure how to use! Being the oldest I had no one to help ease me into the routine, and although I had watched other kids waiting the year before it seemed a lot different when I was doing the waiting.

I stood on the corner by John T. and William McHenry's Furniture Store (now Barbo's) rather scared, waiting for Eddie Higgins to come with his bus and whisk me off to Dennis Consolidated School. Some of the ones I remember waiting were 'upperclassmen' cousins Pauline and Stanley Robbins, Wallace, Stuart and Carleton Doane, Marion Mason, Hilma and Clayton Young. There may have been others but time dims some things. Of course, the "downtown" kids already had their seats picked out so it was a big decision whether to take an empty seat or try for one with some older kid and being told they were 'saving' it for someone else. First grade decisions are tough!

Arriving at school was easy. A lot of first graders were somewhat intimidated by Mrs. McHenry but she was my Aunt Sue so I was on safe ground. Little did I know that her pointer was 'non-denominational'—it was just as apt to reprimand family as it was 'others' for a wrong answer or behavior. Still, that was the best introduction I could have had to elementary education, and hundreds of Dennis students will say the same.

The principal at Dennis Consolidated was William McLin whom I considered a giant with a voice to match. It's surprising now to read his description of himself when he arrived at the North Harwich Depot to begin his duties in the Dennis school system. "A mere broth of a boy who stood 5'8" and weighed 122 lbs." However, he had a voice that would stop anyone in their tracks, and that was his secret weapon. By the time I reached eighth grade we had learned that he loved to read poetry—an was excellent in his delivery—and if we could get him started on one of his favorites he was good for the whole period—and we were off the hook as far as that math class was concerned. His nickname, behind his back, was "Old Flannelfoot" because he could move up on a classroom without anyone knowing he was within a mile of us. That's how he caught a lot of kids cutting up, which led to a session in his office—something that would be frowned upon today.

The other teacher we dearly loved in the first grade was Miss Goodspeed—the phys ed teacher. She taught us the importance of personal hygiene, jumping jacks, and being a team player. She taught at Dennis on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, Brewster on alternate Thursdays, and the rest of the week at Yarmouth. Dennis paid her the large sum of "6 mos. @ \$12., 4 mos. @ \$21.60" for a total of \$158.40. Meanwhile, the boys gym teacher earned \$216.00! Fertile ground for women's lib!

Reading the town report tells me that we had Vocal Music with Miss Beatrice M. Walsh, but I don't remember her at all. The only first grade music I can recall is starting each day with Mrs. McHenry (Aunt Sue)—singing at the top of our collective voices "Good morning to you". Other perusals of the town report says that exclusions from school in those tender years were for skin problems (?), scarlet fever, and pediculosis—look that up in your Webster's Unabridged! Also in the report of the Supervisor of Attendance were listing of "sent to school from streets", "before Court and sent to school on probation", and "detained at home on account of poverty". How times have changed—Thank Heavens!

I wish great, good fortune to all of this years first graders. May you all have as good memories of your early school years as I do.

Dennis Historical Society
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