



Weymouth Historical Society Newsletter

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MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

It is hard to realize now that Christmas was outlawed in New England until the second half of the last century. We know about the Pilgrims and Governor Bradford noted that "no man rested all day" on Dec. 25, 1620 but the date was a common work-day in Boston until 1856 and those who refused to go to work on Christmas day were often discharged. As late as 1870 classes were held in the public schools of Boston on the 25th and any pupil who stayed home to observe the day was punished, sometimes by public dismissal.

The other great religious observance of December has been followed in this country from the 17th century on as those of the Hebrew faith celebrate the anniversary of the Re-dedication of the Temple as a "feast of Lights", Hanukkah.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS: Mr. and Mrs. John Murphy
Mr. and Mrs. Earl Pithie
Edward J. White
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Campbell
Miss Ruth Hicks
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Butterfield
Mr. and Mrs. M. Allan Nickerson
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Gonia
Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Howard, Jr.

NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE: Thank you all for supporting our efforts to bring you great programs this year. Who would think "Sandwich Glass" would be tremendously funny in addition to being informative? All of you who attended know that it was. Everyone (69) had a marvelous time at the Adams Mansion in September and Mr. Abbe's tour of Boston in November was a delightfully nostalgic trip.

For January 8th we have a fine treat. Doris Oberg has prepared a special Bicentennial program and we hope to have an overflow crowd.

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On Feb. 12th we want to honor a **president** whose birthday has been ignored in recent years. This will be a town-wide celebration of the greatness of Abraham Lincoln.

Reserve Mar. 19th on your calendar for then we will learn more about one of our neighboring towns, Scituate. Mrs. Laidlaw is well known on the South Shore and we are fortunate that she will be our speaker.

CHRISTMAS PAST: The word "carol" comes from the Greek word choraulein, (choras: the dance, aulein: to play the flute), and referred to a dance accompanied by the playing of flutes. Such dancing- usually done in ring form- was very popular in ancient times among the Greek and Roman people and the Romans took the custom and its name to Britain. In medieval England "carol" meant a ring dance accompanied by singing but gradually the meaning of the word changed and was applied to the song itself. In an English-Latin vocabulary of 1440 a synonym for carol would be "song, psalmodium".

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK: We recently loaned an hourglass once used in the Second Church (now Old South Union) to the Cohasset Historical Society. It served during a service at the Second Congregational Church of Cohasset to illustrate its use in earlier days.

LAST CALL FOR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS: We have a limited number of boxes of the special Town Hall notepaper on hand and you can obtain them at \$1.50 each by calling the editors at the numbers listed below. **REMEMBER-** the purpose of the sale is to benefit you- a reduction on your annual dinner cost. When the paper is gone, that's it-- no more will be available.

A GASTRONOMIC CELEBRATION: A not-too-elaborate Christmas dinner on a Maryland tidewater plantation before 1700 is recorded: raw oysters, turtle soup, ham, venison, turkey, ducks, potatoes, sweet potatoes and other vegetables, jellies, conserves, pickles, pumpkin, mincemeat and apple pies, custards, syllabubs, coffee, sweetmeats, cider and "divers wines and spirits".

SEE YOU ALL IN JANUARY

Chris Stanton 7-8360
Betty Kevitt 5-4804
Editors