

Historical Society opens fall season

CHELMSFORD — The Chelmsford Historical Society opened its fall season with a dinner meeting at the North Chelmsford Congregational Church on October 21. Following the meal, Chelmsford historian and lecturer George Adams Parkhurst spoke on the life and work of Mark Reed, a local man who achieved international fame as a playwright.

Reed received his early education in the local schools and graduated as valedictorian of Chelmsford High School, Class of 1908. He then attended Dartmouth College, graduating magna cum laude, and went on to earn a degree in architecture from M.I.T. Soon after, he found himself in the front lines of France during World War I. Following the Armistice, he moved to New York and

did freelance writing while waiting for his big break.

His career as a dramatist culminated in two Broadway hits, "Petticoat Fever" (1935) and "Yes, My Darling Daughter," (1937) both of which became major box office attractions in the movies as well as on the stage. Theater critics rated Reed among the top playwrights of the period. Such popular actors and actresses as, Robert Montgomery, Leo G. Carroll, Humphrey Bogart, Myrna Loy, and Jessica Tandy appeared in his productions.

"Unfortunately, the fame of this local boy who reached the heights of the theatrical world is known to only a few present day Chelmsford residents," concluded Parkhurst.