



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

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Reviving A Grand Old Tradition

When Hurricane Earl was knocking on the door I suddenly remembered that my grape vines were loaded with the best crop we've had in years. It also dawned on me that it's much easier picking grapes off the vine than picking them up from the ground after the storm has passed. (I've done both.)

I called old friends Ruth and Burt Derick to see if they wanted to come help. They arrived in early afternoon having visited his late Mom's arbor with a large container full of juicy Concord grapes. We stripped my vines and we had enough grapes to keep us busy for several days.

Making jams, jellies and juices is an old Dennis tradition I learned from my Mom, aunts and grandmother. Their jelly making was part of a summer-long exercise of "putting food by" for winter. The Cape Cod of my youth was one where we never went hungry during the Great Depression. We lived with little cash money but plenty of food from the land and sea. Peas, green beans, corn, tomatoes, etc were canned, root vegetables were put down in the root cellar, gallons of chicken soup, jars of tuna fish and quarts of blueberries, peaches and pears were processed on the cast-iron Glenwood range against the long, cold winter ahead.

All of the above were utilitarian fare taken for granted to keep body and soul in good health until spring arrived.

Where Cape Cod women rose to perfection in their culinary arts was in their row after row of jars of jams and jellies, each one gleaming like a gem when held up against sunlight. Cape Codders had a sweet tooth. They always had to have something sweet to "top off" every meal. Apple pie for breakfast was a given. Saltratus biscuits with jelly was expected at every meal. Whoever would think of putting hot biscuits on the table without the jelly jar?

Ruth, Burt and a friend processed their grapes and made jam and jelly. I cooked my grapes and let the juice drip through several layers of cheesecloth until it stopped dripping. In earlier times everyone used a jelly bag with a drawstring in the top, clean but stained from previous years of making jellies. The bag was hung from a nail or hook in the kitchen that stayed in place year long but was only used at jelly making time. No one ever touched the bag and only the juice that flowed by gravity was used as that made the clearest jelly.

I have not made my jelly yet. I learned a trick some years back from my Canning and Cooking book put out by the Farm Home Journal magazine. I freeze the juice in four cup batches and take it out later in the fall and winter when I have more time. There is a certain pleasure derived from filling those jars when snow is on the ground.

I suspect my mother and grandmother would have loved to have that luxury.

Phyllis Horton

Emma Baker's recipe for Apple Sauce Cake

Emma Baker, the last of the Baker family to live in Capt. Theophilus' 1801 home, now called "Jericho" was an active member of the Ladies Union Circle of the south Dennis Congregational Church. That, in spite of the fact that Emma has acquired a reputation since her death as having been a recluse and somewhat "odd."

Well, a little "odd" she may have been, especially to those of us in our teens and growing up in South Dennis in the middle of the 20th Century. But, the 1937 cookbook "Our Favorite Recipes" published by the Ladies Union Circle features a number of recipes submitted by Emma Baker. She was obviously an active member of that popular social village group.

Some of the recipes in this 1937 edition remind me of my mother's personal recipe notebook: lists of ingredients (usually with measures, though not always) and little or no precise directions. I think at the time, it was assumed that every woman had been trained by her mother and knew the proper order in mixing a cake, making a sauce or preparing a dinner dish.

Here for example is Emma Baker's "Apple Sauce Cake"

1 cup sugar	1/2 teaspoon clove
A little salt	1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 cup shortening	1 cup raisins, currants, citron mixed
1 teaspoon cinnamon	1 teaspoon soda in warm water

Stir in 1 cup sour apple sauce. Beat all together well. Add 1 1/4 cups flour. Bake 45 minutes.

My favorite recipe in the 1937 edition is that of Abbie Baker, very likely Emma's relative. It is for "Quahaug Chowder." To wit: "Quahaug chowder is made exactly like clam chowder."

Fortunately, Abbie's recipe for "Clam Chowder" is just above on the same page, and there are several clam chowder recipes to choose from throughout the book.

Peggy Eastman.

1736 Josiah Dennis Manse Museum Update

The past few months have seen a beehive of activity at the Manse as the completion of the building repairs will be completed in early November, ahead of the original schedule. Final landscaping will be completed over the winter and into next spring. You will be amazed at the complexity of equipment in the new basement for the new heating/air conditioning, wiring and fire suppression systems. The interior of the main museum will look much as it always has – minus the bouncy floors, failing plaster walls and ceilings etc. but with a new coat of paint, windows with period glass and other historic touches. There are several minor changes that were necessitated by problems or building code requirements.

The Grand Opening is being scheduled for next spring – we'll announce it in a later Newsletter.

Pete Howes

TREASURES FROM THE MANSE

Another gem found in the papers of Rev. Nathan Stone, no doubt written in the late 1700s, was the following little poem:

"How A Minister Introduced himself to a Young Lady
My calling is Divine
My Living Large & fair
Come let us now Combine
And make a Happy pair
The womans Answer
S^t your Calling is divine
your Living But for Life
And when the Ministers Dead
what will become of his Wife
To hospitality inclin^d
This worlds vain wealth he ne'er could prize
But laid up treasure to the Skies."

Rev. Stone lived up to this poem in most respects. He was generous to a fault, both with his time and his "fortune". The epitaph on his gravestone in the Dennis Village Cemetery says it best:

"Of Temper humble, mild, & kind,
To hospitality inclin^d
This worlds vain wealth he ne'er could
prize
But laid up treasure to the Skies"

Burt Derick

DHS Board Meetings

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE

The next Board meeting is at 7 pm on November 10 at the West Dennis Graded School, First Floor and open to all DHS members. We hope that this change to an evening meeting will make it easier for our members to attend.

Annual Meeting

The DHS Annual Meeting was held Oct. 16 at the historic O'Shea's Olde Inn in West Dennis. We had fifty-eight reservations, a great turnout. Betsey Harrison and Robert Hunter were elected to the Board. The complete Board of Directors list will be in the next Newsletter.

PLEASE NOTE – THE NEWSLETTER CANNOT BE FORWARDED

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President Cleveland's Thanksgiving Proclamation.

The customary Thanksgiving proclamation has been issued by the President as follows:

A proclamation—By the President of the United States. The constant goodness and forbearance of Almighty God which have been vouchsafed to the American people during the year which has just passed, call for their sincere acknowledgment and devout gratitude.

To the end therefore, that we may with thankful hearts unite in extolling the loving care of our Heavenly Father, I, Grover Cleveland, President of the United States, do hereby appoint and set apart Thursday, the twenty-eighth day of the present month of November, as a day of Thanksgiving and prayer, to be kept and observed by all our people.

On that day let us forego our usual occupations, and in our accustomed places of worship, join in rendering thanks to the giver of every good and perfect gift for the bounteous returns that have rewarded our labors in the fields and in the busy marts of trade. for the peace and order that have prevailed throughout the land, for our protection from pestilence and direct calamity and for the other blessings that have been showered upon us from an open hand.

And with our thanksgivings, let us humbly beseech the Lord to so incline the hearts of our people unto Him that He will not leave us or forsake us as a nation, but will continue to us His mercy and protecting care, guiding us in the path of National prosperity and happiness, endowing us with rectitude and virtue and keeping alive within us a patriotic love for the free institutions which have been given to us as our national heritage.

And let us also on the day of our thanksgiving especially remember the poor and needy, and by acts of charity let us show the sincerity of our gratitude. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

(Signed) GROVER CLEVELAND.

Barnstable Patriot Nov 11, 1895
(Sturgis Library Collection)

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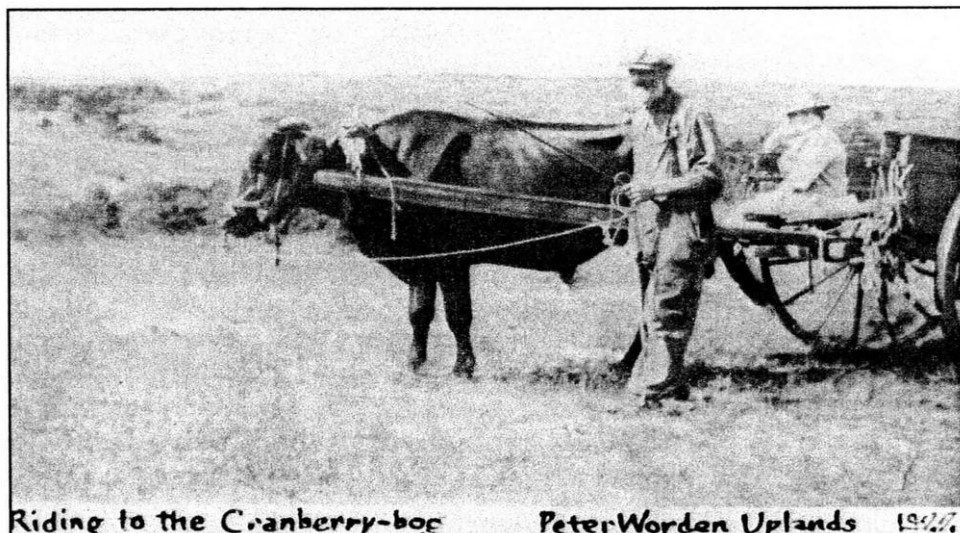
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

THE WAY WE WERE

This is from the November 2004 Newsletter and was written by our former Editor In Chief Lu Crowell. We thank her for all of her contributions and wish her a Happy Thanksgiving.

“A while back we received a nice note from Nancy Adams of Sarasota, FL and Dennis, who made us smile at the family stories she enclosed. Her mother, Barbara McPhee, told of her grandfather who at one time had no money and nothing to eat. He went to the Bay, caught the "dirty lobster", went home, pulled down the shades and ate the lobster before anyone could see how poor he was to have to eat lobster! Nancy writes that she also saw her great Grandpa eat a "Cape



Riding to the Cranberry-bog Peter Worden Uplands 1947.

Cod Turkey Dinner", i.e. codfish, mashed potatoes and beets. Wherever you are, we hope you enjoy your Thanksgiving feast, whatever it may be—cranberries included, of course.”