



# Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 36 No. 7

Send letters & stories to Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, S. Dennis 02660 or [pjhowes@verizon.net](mailto:pjhowes@verizon.net)

August 2013

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## In Memoriam

In this DHS year our ranks of retired dedicated workers and benefactors have thinned considerably.

Jean Twiss was a gracious docent on the Josiah Dennis Manse Committee for 25 years. Her knowledge of antiques was most helpful when talking about our artifacts and her cookie baking skills are sorely missed.

Margaret Smith was another lady who left her impression on the Manse program. Margaret was a master spinner. She raised purebred Merino sheep whose fleece she sheared, dyed and spun. She was always willing to help young spinners learn the finer points of spinning.

Rose McMurtry had the distinction of being on the Manse Committee for 35 years. When she could no longer perform as a docent she asked to stay on as she wanted it listed in her obituary, so we made her a Member Emeritus. However, it did not get listed among her many accomplishments, so here it is, Rose!

Marion Scofield passed on in January at 102 years. She and her husband, Bill, were untiring workers for DHS and the Manse. They built the herb garden and tended it until they retired. When the ca. 1745 Old West School House was moved to the Manse grounds they oversaw the renovations, found artifacts and set it up as a colonial school house.

Emily Levine and Priscilla Hall, two of our benefactors, slipped away. Priscilla was an 11<sup>th</sup> generation Cape Codder. Her parents, Richard and Eleanor (Baker) Hall were involved in the early days of DHS and Jericho. They designed, set up and managed the Barn exhibit.

And, lastly, is Kathy Roche who passed recently and gifted the lovely Rose Victorian in West Dennis to DHS (see June and July newsletters).

Every one of these dear ladies generously gave of their time, talents or resources to keep the history of Dennis alive and well. Thank you all.

Phyllis Horton

## Dennis An All American Town

“Dennis, named an All American Town in 1978, combines its traditional New England heritage with modern day convenience. The villages of East Dennis, Dennis and South Dennis feature scenic historic districts, hailing back to whaling days. Tranquil, tree lined streets meander through Dennisport and West Dennis. Sixteen inviting beaches lie on the warm waters of Nantucket Sound to the south and on the crisp, refreshing waters of Cape Cod Bay to the north. Numerous recreation trails offer healthful relaxation. Well developed business districts throughout the villages provide ample goods and services.

Residents of Dennis feel a sense of pride in their home by the sea. The quiet little town, incorporated in 1793, was named for Josiah Dennis, a favorite minister. Dennis became active in maritime activities in the 1800's, alive with amazing tales of clipper ship adventures. As the twentieth century approached and the glory days of sea captains faded, Dennis residents turned to commercial fishing and land-based industries. Today, visitors and new residents will be charmed by the sense of history and hospitality which awaits them in Dennis. Dennis seems to come into its own during the summer months. Not a week goes by

that doesn't have a special event, show or concert.”<sup>1</sup>

In the light of current development desires for our Town, I struggle to remain editorially apolitical as this paper demands. Do our current needs really negate the last sentence in the first paragraph?

Peter Howes

Time to reveal an old historical controversy to our newer readers. These two old newspaper clippings illustrate the issues of reporting on history --- and an important missing diary!

### **“Shiverick Monograph Recalls Famous East Dennis Shipyard<sup>2</sup>”**

Hippogriffe Shoal is a coral encrusted rock in the Java Sea. It is about as far away from Cape Cod as a place could be. Yet Admont G. Clark of East Dennis has brought it back and more besides.

The shoal takes its name from a 678 ton clipper built at Shiverick Shipyard. The Hippogriffe struck the shoal in 1858, but survived because a piece of coral lodged in the hole and stemmed the leak.

What makes the yarn unusual is that it took Admont Clark to unravel a contradiction of historical fact. Henry Kittredge had Anthony Howes master. But Howes and Matthews, authorities on the period, recorded David Seabury Sears in command and put the grounding in the China Sea.

Mr. Clark's research definitely supports Dr. Kittredge's record. His evidence includes originals of survey warrants, three made on the ship, and a certificate of seaworthiness issued in London. They were produced for him by Mrs. Minerva Crowell Wexler, one of Mr. Clark's invaluable sources.

All of this is but one item in a booklet that has just come out under the imprint of Parnassus Book Service'. It is Ben Muse's first publishing venture, an historical monograph called "They Built Clipper Ships in Their Back Yard."

Originally published in The American Neptune, Mr. Clark's work is to date the most complete review of the extraordinary Shiverick venture under one cover. Its 30 pages, including pictures and bibliography, is much too brief. "For as I dug deeper," said Mr. Clark, "I unearthed more raw material than I ever dreamed existed: logs, letters, bills, receipts, official documents, etc. There is a book here." Until the Shiverick book is complete, Mr. Clark's monograph with its scholarly research behind it, serves to preserve and authenticate an era in East Dennis which today seems all but impossible. The Shivericks built Belle of the West, Red Jacket, Kit Carson, Wild Hunter, which were among the most beautiful sailing ships ever built anywhere. They made East Dennis men famous throughout the world as shipbuilders and shipmasters.

Mr. Clark's book recaptures the flavor, the familiar names and some of the best anecdotes of historical fact so apparently improbable as to border on legend.”

*DHS has the world's supply of Mr. Clark's book. Mention this Newsletter and take one home from one of the museums for a fiver, normally \$6.00.*

### **“Frank E. Howes Says Old Hippogriffe Yarn Is False<sup>3</sup>”**

Frank Ellsworth Howes of Nobscussett Rd. Dennis takes issue with Admont Clark's conclusion that Hippogriffe Shoal is a coral rock in the Java Sea. Mr. Clark's recently published monograph on Shiverick Shipyard gave Anthony Howes as master of the Hippogriffe which struck a shoal on its trip to London in 1858. Mr. Clark, basing his theory on survey warrants and especially a certificate of seaworthiness issued in London, decided the yarn about the Hippogriffe was true. According to this story, she struck a coral encrusted reef, a piece of coral broke off and lodged in the hole in the ship's bottom substantially stemming the leak

Later a survey ship named reef for the Hippogriffe.

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis- 1990 Official Publication of the Dennis Chamber of Commerce  
Prescott Visitor Magazines, So. Yarmouth, MA 02664 With Permission of Gatehouse Media

<sup>2</sup> Barnstable Patriot, June 7, 1963

<sup>3</sup> Barnstable Patriot, June 14, 1963

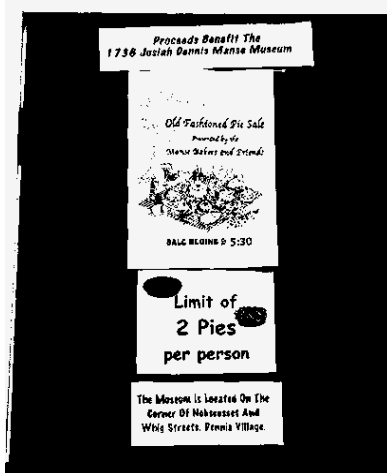
Mr. Howes, now in his nineties, recalls his uncle reading from diary of the voyage, a diary Mr. Howes later read himself. Anthony Howes was master, alright. But he was sick almost the entire voyage. Frank E. Howes' uncle, Daniel Willis Howes, was first officer and in command, according to the diary. "Breakers ahead, breakers ahead" this diary records the alarm given when the Hippogriffe first sighted danger. She struck a sandbar, Frank E. Howes says. She was not stove, and repairs were made in London. Hippogriffe shoal has no coral on it. says Frank Howes.

For the record, then. Historian Clark and Mr. Howes agree on identity of the captain. Hippogriffe shoal, however, is still a controversy."

*Does anyone know of this diary? We would LOVE to copy and return it!!!!*

Pete Howes

### Manse Pie Sale in New Location



The Manse moved its annual July Pie Sale to Carleton Hall due to the threat of rain. Will the Pie Sale return to the Village Green next yet or not???



*Photos by Nancy Maguire*

### Rose Victorian

A remarkable young woman named *Rebecca Gallerizzo* has graciously volunteered her time and talent to help us open the Gift Shop and bring it to its past glory. We hope that others will join in some volunteer hours in this Gift Shop "Barn". Members-only sale, 50% off with postcard, Aug. 2, 3, 5 from 10-5, Sun. Aug. 4 - Noon-5. Regular hours will be established in the near future.

#### Kap'n Kezzie's Komments

What this country needs are more unemployed politicians  
*Edward Langley*

Only Irish coffee provides in a single glass all four essential food groups: alcohol, caffeine, sugar, and fat.  
*Alex Levine*

The government is like a baby's alimentary canal, with a happy appetite at one end and no responsibility at the other.  
*Ronald Reagan*



#### DHS Dues

It's that time again!  
Summer visitors may still be here, but –  
**Dues notices are in the mail!!**

#### Showable & Notable

***Wedding Gowns Thru The Years***  
**At the Jericho Historical Center**  
See how fashions and customs changed.  
Tour the 1801 home of Capt. Theophilus Baker. Open every Wed. 2-4.  
Visit the Barn Museum at Jericho.

***The Captain Levi Crowell Exhibit***  
**1736 Josiah Dennis Manse Museum**  
A West Dennis Captain captured by the Confederates! Actual Civil War items, his original diary and more! Details of his time as a captive in Madison GA, including relics from the prison.  
Tues. 10-1 & Thurs. 1-4

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### Bits 'n Pieces - August 1963 - from The Dennis-Yarmouth Register

8/02 \*Dennis to Crack Down on Dogs: the dog officer investigated 20 cases of dog bites in one day last week.  
\*The golf course paperwork is *still* sitting on the Governor's desk awaiting approval.

8/09 \*A 57 ½ lb. striped bass measuring 53" in length was caught by a Cleveland man fishing out of Sesuit Harbor. He was aboard the Lulu Belle, Capt. Ralph Dunsford.

8/16 \*As expected, Allen Ludden and his wife Betty White, opened at the Cape Playhouse to a SRO audience.

8/23 \*"Glass Exhibit at Jericho August 26-30." Old Sandwich glass and other types of old glass to be shown.  
Volunteers are needed during the open days.

8/30 \*Early purchase of Christmas cards from: Spain, Holland, Austria, Germany, Belgium and England may be purchased at: "Ruth's Shop", 51 Main St., West Dennis.

#### Born in August 1963

8/09 – Whitney Houston, Singer....8/20 – John Stamos, Actor....8/30 – Michael Chiklis, Actor, in Lowell,MA

#### DHS CURRENT EVENTS FOR AUGUST

**August 7: Flotsam & Jetsam Yard Sale**, 10 am – 3 pm; West Dennis Graded School, many "odds 'n Ends" of historical, hysterical and items from the Rose Victorian's kitchen – many are vintage &/or collectible.

**August 17: Colonial Day At The Manse**, 10 am – 4 pm; Blacksmith from Sturbridge, colonial skills, pie making, tours, and refreshments. *All this and it's still FREE.*

**August 24: Teddy Bear Picnic at Jericho:** Noon - 3 pm; Songs, games, treasure hunt, craft AND lunch!  
Bring your children or grandchildren and that "special toy" for a picnic on the lawn. \$6.  
For reservations by August 21st: Call Jinny 508-385-4441.