



# Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 37 No. 1 Send letters & stories to Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, S. Dennis 02660 or pjhowes@verizon.net January - February 2014  
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## Happy New Year!

As you read this newsletter, all of the DHS Museums have been bedded down for winter, the

Rose Victorian is slumbering, and the plans for next year have been finalized and are detailed in the enclosed Annual Calendar. You will see that your Society has set forth on a busy schedule, with some great events that I hope you will be able to attend.

As we start the New Year, I must note and thank the number of good folks that have volunteered to help DHS prosper and move forward this past year. Through the efforts of our Board, our members and even some 'almost members', the Society has accomplished much and has a busy and exciting year ahead. I hope that you will be able to participate in our efforts by attending some of our scheduled events, attending Board meetings or even volunteering a bit of your time. We would love to have you join us!

As this year is a part of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War, from time to time there will be items on the activities of Dennis

folks during that conflict and our event on May 17 will feature Civil War Reenactors. Last month the schooner Searsville under Capt. Benjamin Sears, was noted as a vessel that saw service as a Civil War Personnel Transport in 1862. She was one of many from Dennis and other Cape towns.

## Before the Brig Lubra

The travails of Capt. Benjamin Howes and his wife Lucy Lord Howes in the years before acquiring the Brig Lubra involve a very traumatic time during the Civil War. The DHS book *Privateers, Pirates and Beyond* contains a wonderfully complete account of this and much more than their history on the Southern Cross and Lubra (and yes – please buy one!!!).

The medium clipper ship *Southern Cross* was built in 1851 in East Boston by E. & H.O. Briggs. In 1852 she came under the command of Capt. Thomas Prince Howes of Dennis who was her master until 1863 when she became the command of Capt. Benjamin Perkins Howes, and they sailed for San Francisco on Feb. 27. Lets jump ahead.

On 21 March 1863, the *Southern Cross* departed Bella Vista, CA, heading for New York with 791 tons of Brazil Wood. They reached the equator on 9 April, and on the 10th Lucy Lord Howes delivered a 7 1/2 pound baby boy. Unfortunately, he became ill and passed away on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May.

Misfortune continued, for on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June at 3p.m. they encountered the Confederate steam privateer *Florida* which ordered them to heave to. They were boarded by a crew of 16 men all armed with cutlasses and revolvers lead by Lt. Stone who walked up to Capt. Howes, placed his hand on the Captain's shoulder and said "Captain you are all our Prisoners". Finding that the *Southern Cross* was bound for Boston, Lt. Stone declared that since they were bound for New York, he did not care who owned the cargo, for he was going to burn the ship. They had little time to gather their things, allowed one bag apiece, and in twenty-five minutes they were hurried aboard the *Florida* in teeming rain. The crew of the privateer ransacked and looted what they wanted, then set the ship afire fore and aft. Captain Howes and his

## DHS February Events

**Saturday, February 15,  
2:00 P.M**

### "Tea and Talk at Jericho"

Enjoy afternoon tea in this fine example of the full "Cape Cod House".

Marsha Finley will present the story of the two women who restored and named Jericho and of their national and international scope of influence.

\$8.00 Donation to benefit our Barn Restoration efforts.

Call Dawn,  
508-237-6954,  
by Feb. 8 for reservations.

1801 Jericho  
Historical Center  
90 Old Main Street,  
West Dennis

## Our Mission

The Dennis Historical Society, Inc. is an educational organization established to stimulate interest in local history, promote scholarly effort, foster the continued collection and preservation of historical data and material, and cooperate with individuals and other organizations having similar interests.

wife and officers were conducted to the Captains Cabin of the *Florida* where they were well treated by Captain Maffitt. However, Capt. Howes noted that the officers and crew were placed in irons and kept on deck in the rain all night, sleeping as best they could. They were released during the day, but put in irons each night. They were all fed the same as the crew of the privateer, and were otherwise treated kindly. Captain Maffitt “very kindly gave up his room to Mrs. Howes, occupying a lounge in the cabin himself..”

They remained on the *Florida* until June 12, when the privateer boarded a French Bark *Fleur De Para*, whose Captain agreed to take seven prisoners as passengers to Ciara (Ceara, Brazil, - now Fortealeza). The privateer had the English flag flying and represented the seven as people that he had taken off a burning ship. They had freedom on the French ship and eventually reached Ciara. Interesting to note, Capt. Howes made “several warm friends”, and felt a degree of sadness in leaving Ciara which I seldom feel in leaving a foreign port for home”.

Back home in Dennis, Ben decided against going to sea until the Civil War was over. They became the proud parents of Carrie Bertha and Ben ordered a 308 ton brigantine built in Danvers, MA naming her Lubra when launched.

And on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1866 Capt Benjamin Howes, his wife Lucy Lord Howes and two small children began their fateful voyage from San Francisco to Hong Kong....

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### Gentlemen’s Progress<sup>1</sup>

This 1744 book, subtitled “The Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton”, contains his description of journeying from Maryland to Maine and back. He never came to Cape Cod, but the varied descriptions of his travels are quite interesting – and perhaps telling of East Coast life in those times.

#### Susquehanna Ferry

“The lower ferry of Susquehanna, which I crossed, is a mile broad. It is kept by a little old man whom I found at vittles with his wife and family upon a homely dish of fish without any kind of sauce. They desired me to eat, but I told then that I had no stomach. They had no cloth upon the table, and their mess was in a dirty, deep, wooden dish which they evacuated with their hands, cramming down skin, scales and all. They used neither knife, fork, spoon, plate or napkin because, I suppose, they had none to

use. I looked upon this as a picture of that primitive simplicity practiced by our forefathers long before the mechanic arts had supplied them with instruments for the luxury and elegance of life.”<sup>2</sup>

#### Boston

“I left my horses att Barker's stables and drank tea with my landlady, Mrs. Guneau. There was in the company a pritty young lady. The character of a certain Church of England clergiman in Boston was canvassed, he having lost his living for being too sweet upon his landlady's daughter, a great belly being the consequence. I pitied him only for his imprudence and want of policy. As for the crime, considered in a certain light it is but a peccadillo, and he might have escaped unobserved had he had the same cunning as some others of his bretheren who doubtless are as deep in the dirt as he in the mire. I shall not mention the unfortunate man's name (absit foeda calumnia), but I much commiserated his calamity and regretted the loss, for he was an excellent preacher; but the wisest men have been led into silly scrapes by the attractions of that vain sex, .....”<sup>3</sup>

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### And Back In The *Near Past*--

Some of you will instantly recognize these three young ladies posing before quilts on May 20, 1989 in what was the Summer Kitchen of the Josiah Dennis Manse. That room is now the Maritime Room. From left to right, these are:



Nancy Howes, Phyllis Horton and Susan Kelley

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### Kap’n Kezzie’s Komments:

“By all means, marry. If you get a good wife, you'll become happy; if you get a bad one, you'll become a philosopher.” – Socrates

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<sup>1</sup> University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill NC, 1948

<sup>2</sup> *Gentlemen’s Progress*, pp. 8

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 129

## Introducing A New Board Member

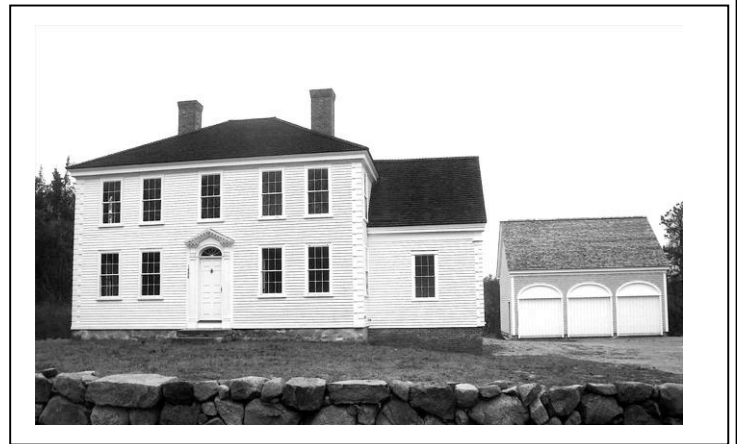
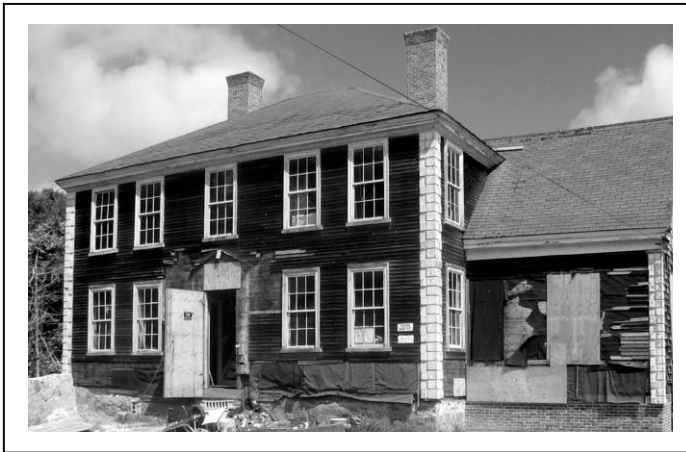
You may have noticed in the last Newsletter that we have a Board Member at Large, Kevin Keegan. Back in 2009 we ran an article and later a picture that discussed the purchase of the Stephen Homer House on Rt. 6A. Kevin and Linda Keegan of Silver Springs MD purchased this house in 2007 for their future home. They have been summer residents since the late 1960's, and, as you will see below, have done a masterful job of restoring it. The picture on the left is of the home as it began restoration.

The five-bay federal home was built circa 1800 by sea captain and later justice of the peace Stephen Homer who was the son of Yarmouth sea captain Stephens Homer and Elizabeth Chapman.

Stephen Homer married Thankful Chapman in a ceremony officiated by Reverend Nathan Stone in 1792. The couple had eight children, all of whom lived to adulthood, and two of whom--first son Joshua (after 1857) and second son Stephen Jr. (who bought half the house from his parents in 1832)--later lived as adults in the home.

Below on the right is our recent photo of the house with its new barn and carriage house that replaced the one that blew down during hurricane Bob in 1991.

We welcome Kevin to the Board, and look forward to he and Linda becoming full-time Dennis residents.



### Found Among The Obed Baker Papers

July 18<sup>th</sup> 1867

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| <p>I Went fishing</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">I Fished two hours</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">II Caught nothing.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">III. Lost some hooks</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IV. Broke my Pole.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">V. Came Home.</p> <p>II. Took a walk.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">I Passed a new schoolhouse.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">II Stopped at a place where they were repairing the road.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">III Turned around and came back.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IV Saw some prairie dogs in a cage.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">V Arrived at my starting place</p> <p>III Worked a little while</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">I Tried to make a box.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">II Sharpened my knife</p> | <p style="padding-left: 20px;">III Broke it</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IV Finished the box</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">V Mended my Fish pole.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">VI Went to dinner</p> <p>IV Sat down to read.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">I Finished my book</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">II Commenced another.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">III Found it very interesting.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">IV Read till nearly Dark.</p> <p>V Went to see some friends in the evening</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">I Had a pleasant Time.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">II Staid until 10. oclock</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">III came Home</p> <p>VI Talked over the events of the Day</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">I Retired.</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;">Willington Lockwood. -----</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;"><i>Transcribed by Burt Derick</i></p> |
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## 2014 EVENT CALENDAR ENCLOSED

(As a tribute to Lou Crowell, our former and longstanding newsletter editor, selections from her “The Way We Were” will occupy this space all year.)

January-February 2000

## THE WAY WE WERE

(Below) Ice farming on Scargo Lake, from the Anson and Esther Howes collection.



(Above) This picture, from a collection of photographs taken by B. Evelyn Crowell, shows ice-boating on Scargo Lake in 1939.

### Were winters really colder then?

*If you have a memory or a photo to share, please contact the Newsletter Committee, Dennis Historical Society, P.O. Box 607, South Dennis, MA 02660. Pictures will be returned!*