



# Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

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

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## The Rose Victorian

I am very pleased to inform you that DHS has received a major gift on this, our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We were astounded and very pleased that Kathleen Emily Roche of West Dennis generously bequeathed her entire estate to the Dennis Historical Society. The centerpiece of this estate is the Captain Calvin Baker Homestead at 485 Main Street in West Dennis, a beautiful Victorian style home built in 1877, plus an 1884 carriage house and other outbuildings. The carriage house was operated as The Rose Victorian, an eclectic gift shop that specialized in vintage china as well as handcrafted and distinctive gifts.

We feel that it would be a fitting memorial to include information about our generous benefactor.

Kathleen Emily Roche, of West Dennis, MA was the youngest of the four children of T. Charles and Emily (Franchi) Roche on the east side of Worcester. She attended schools in Worcester and graduated from Anna Maria College with a degree in Education in 1967. She was a natural-born teacher and pursued a career in teaching in Westborough and Worcester schools before moving to Cape Cod in 1971, where she taught math at the Barnstable Middle School for 30 years.



After retiring from teaching in 2001, she pursued her passion for antiques, concentrating on restoration and historic preservation. Kathleen decorated her first home in Harwich in the American Colonial style, where she lived for 12 years. In 1984, she purchased an antique salt-box style home in the South Dennis Historic District, where she opened her first shop, appropriately named The Salt Box. In 1989, she purchased The Captain Calvin Baker Homestead, a beautiful Victorian style home built in 1877 on Main street in West Dennis, Ma., where she resided until 2013. She restored it through the years, painting it in an original Victorian rose color. In the carriage house, which was added to this property in 1884, she opened her second shop, named in a similarly apt way, The Rose Victorian, which specialized in vintage china, as well as handcrafted and distinctive gifts.

Kathleen was appointed by the Dennis Board of Selectmen to serve on the South Dennis Historic District Commission for over 10 years. She was a charter member of the Old South Dennis Village Association, a supporter of the Dennis Conservation Trust and a benefactor of the South Dennis Free Public Library as well as the Dennis Historical Society.

Kathleen is survived by her sister Margaret Roche of Dennis, MA her niece Magdalena Koerber, residing in Germany, and four nephews, Thomas, James, John, and Kevin, her grand nephew Jack, and cousins. She was predeceased by her two brothers.

Kathy's unselfish gift to our society is a direct result of her love of history and historical preservation. We believe that she placed her trust in us hoping that we would follow through with the portion of our mission statement: "to collect, preserve and promote the history of the Town of Dennis..."

thereby assuring the care of her beloved, historic "Rose Victorian".

Peter Howes

## Elderberries at Jericho

An elder shrub survives quietly in the backyard at Jericho, built in 1801 for Theophilus Baker, Sr. Standing next to the path leading to Trotting Park Road, it produces clusters of delicate white flowers in late spring, followed by bunches of tiny purple, almost black, berries in the late summer. I had admired the flowers briefly last June, barely noticing them in the bustle of opening the museum for a new season. There was scarcely time to catch a glimpse of the berries at the end of the summer before they were gobbled up by the birds. It was later in the winter, during cold and flu season that I realized this was an Elder. In search of a cough medicine that would be safe for my one-year old grandson, I found a bottle of elderberry syrup that claimed to soothe coughs, act as an expectorant, and boost immunity, without harmful ingredients. Pictured on the label were clusters of elderflowers. I recognized these as the same flowers I had seen near the fence at Jericho!

The medicine seemed to work as advertised, and I began to wonder. Has this shrub been used by generations of the Baker family? Is it commonly found in older gardens? Since my prior knowledge of elderberries consisted of stories of exploding jars in my grandmother's kitchen, and the fate of the gentlemen callers in the movie "Arsenic and Old Lace", I decided to do some research.

Much folklore surrounds the elder shrub. In ancient cultures it was thought to have protective and healing powers. Elder branches were hung in windows to ward off evil spirits. Throughout Europe some legends claimed that spirits lived in the elder, which discouraged people from cutting it down and using the wood. The stories are varied and often contradictory, but it seems that the elder has been recognized as being special for centuries. Such stories may have inspired J.K. Rowling to make the Elder Wand the most powerful of wands in her stories about Harry Potter.

Sometimes called a tree, the Black Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) is native to Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia. The most common species found in the United States is the American Elder (*Sambucus canadensis*). It likes moist, well-drained soil, can be 5 to 12 feet tall, and grows in moist woodlands, along roads, and often in farmhouse gardens. All parts of the shrub have been used medicinally and cosmetically throughout history. Some sources describe it as "a complete medicine chest". The list of traditional uses is long!

When did this elderberry shrub begin growing at Jericho? Did Baker family members brew wine, bake pies, and even make cough syrup? I'm still wondering, but they sure should have!

Come to the Jericho Historical Center for a take-home listing of the many uses of this useful shrub plus a recipe for "Elderflower Champagne".

Dawn Dellner

## The Super Summer Yard Sale

The Dennis Historical Society is having a Flotsam and Jetsam Yard Sale Historical or Hysterical Stuff!! on August 7th. We have some items that no longer fit our collections policy and we are running out of storage space. The money we raise will help to purchase items that **do** tell our story of Dennis. In the past several years we have been able to purchase a number of lovely portraits and ship's paintings from around the country that tell of our grand maritime heritage. Through the wonders of the internet we now have access to our treasures that "went west". It's a thrill when they come back in Dennis.

It's a given that most people have too much Stuff collected over who knows how many years. I am the fifth generation in my home. When anyone passed on their heirs took the good things and left the rest. It's time to clean out!

Your Society is looking for donated items to sell at the best price we can get—or you can rent a table for \$25.00 and sell your own Stuff. If you plan to donate items to DHS please call soon so we can make arrangements to receive your gift. If you are renting a table please make your reservation. When your fee is received we will give you a table number and instructions for the day of the sale. No used clothing, please. There are lots of charitable thrift stores selling donated clothing that would benefit from them. Crafters are welcome.

Call **508-385-3012** to make reservations or for information.

Phyllis Horton

## 1754 Letter to Gov. Shirley from Rev. Dennis and Others

To his Excellency William Shirly Elq: Governour of the Province of the Maffachufets Bay In New England to the honourable his majesties Counfel for Said province and to the honourable houfe of Representatives at ther Seffions In october one thousand Seven hundred and fifty four

This memorial or Petitions of Sundry Inhabitants of the town of yarmouth on Cape Cod humbly Sheweth - - - that wheras this Honoured Court Did In the year one thousand Seven hundred and forty Nine In perfuance of a petition of Several Inhabitants of this town pafs an act to Refrain Creatures from Doing Damage on our meadowes ufually Known By the Name of Nobscufflet meadowes the Good effect of which has Been felt not only By the petitioners themselves But By many others as they are Ready to acknowledge: But as that act is very Near to Expiring: we would humbly move that it might Be Revived and Continued for a Greater Number of years of If it might Be agreeable to this honoured Court untill they Shall order otherwife as the Reason for it is Like to Remain or Be perpetual: and wheras Some objection have Been made againft the former act which forbids any Creature Going on the meadows Beach or Shores Southwest of the place Called the Black earth Betwixt which and our meadowes there is about one mile and a half of Beach adjoining to which Several men have patures Who Say that If their Creatures accidently Break out of their Enclofures only on the Beach without hurting of Coming Near our meadowes they are Expofed to the penalties of the Prefent Law: Now to prevent any Complaint on this head we would humbly move that In the Next act Instead of Southwest of the Black earth as the prefent Law Exprefles it it may Be Said No Creature Shall Be Suffered to Go on any meadow Beach or Shore Lying Below a Lyne Drawn westward from a Sand Bank or hill ufually Called fox hill Down to the Sea: or on any meadow or Beach Lying Southward of Such a Lyne or on any other point if the Compafts that is att prefent In Danger of Being hurt By Creatures Going at Large upon it: this will anfwer the Greateft objection made againft the act Now In force: the particular months or Limmited time for the Reftraint and the Refpective penalties on Such as offered Continuing the Same as the were Before - - - and your petitioners as In Duty Bound Shall ever pray ect -

Joseph Howes Junr

Jofiah Dennis

Samll Howes Jr

John Eldred

Samuel Eldredg

Joseph Hall J

John Hall

Daniel Hall

Selectmen

Barnubas Howes

Isaac Chapman

of yarmouth

Jofiah Hall

Jeremiah Crowell.

Aaron Crowell

Thomas Tobey jun town Clerk

Daniel Hall Jun

Jacob Burg

Joseph Crosby

Seth Tobey

*Transcription of the original document in the State of MA Archives*

### **AN INVITATION TO OUR VALUED OFF-CAPE MEMBERS:**

As you make your Summer or Fall plans to travel, we invite you to consider Dennis. As you know, *your* historical society is celebrating its **50<sup>th</sup> year!** Many exciting events have been planned.

The three town museums are filled with our historical artifacts mostly donated by our members and other friends of Dennis history and worth a visit.

Consider arriving in September or October, the *grand* and *quieter* months on Cape Cod. The weather is outstanding and the water is still warm. You are invited to join us on Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup> when we will gather at The SeaView Restaurant in Dennisport for our Annual Meeting plus a gala dinner and celebration of our 'birth.'

We value each and every DHS member near and far. Hope to see you this year.

June Howes

