



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 38 No. 4

Send letters & stories to Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, S. Dennis 02660 or to pjhowes@verizon.net

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The next Board Meeting: is Wednesday, May 13 @ 2:00 P.M., The Rose Victorian, 485 Rt, 28, West Dennis

In Memoriam

Brendan E. Joyce



Brendan's "Walking Tour of Quivet Neck"

Brendan E. Joyce, of East Dennis, passed away Tuesday, April 21, 2015. As his name denotes, Brendan had the classic wit, wisdom and verve of an Irish sage. Father, tomato farmer, historian, husband and friend he cut through the nonsense of the world with brilliant insight, humor and canny common sense. Brendan loved his country, his town, his neighborhood and his family

His country will remember him for 30 years of service in the US Army Medical Service Corp earning a Bronze Star and Vietnam Service Medals. His neighborhood and town will remember him for his passion for history and untiring commitment to the Dennis Historical Society, Jacob Sears Library and the Quivet Neck Homeowners Association as well as his hospitality and support of local civic causes.

His family will remember him for his intelligence, his love of opera, wine and cooking, his gardens and his wit. Brendan, a biochemist, received a BS from Manhattan College, a MS from Virginia Poly Tech, and a PhD from the University of California, San Francisco. He was the grand host of many feasts and lively debates and we are thankful for being the recipients of his generosity, his handiness and knowledge.

He is survived by his wife, Maureen A. (Duffly) Joyce and his daughter Kathleen Joyce. The Last Chance Stand has closed but we will always remember that nothing beats a peach on the beach, except maybe two. Burial with full military honors was held Wednesday, April 29, at the Massachusetts National Cemetery, Bourne, MA at 11:15 a.m. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Jacob Sears Library, in memory of Brendan Joyce, PO Box 782, East Dennis, MA 02641.

Courtesy Gatehouse Media

First Flight

At the risk of seeming to take a leaf out of Russia's book of preposterous assertions that all important scientific discoveries originated in the U.S.S.R., I am going to claim for West Dennis distinction of being the scene of one of the earliest airship trials. Back in the 1860's we had in the village a very talented young inventor, the record of whose exploits has been lost in the rush of scientific developments. It might be well for us to give him some belated recognition. He was Luther Childs Crowell, the son of Francis Crowell, who lived in the house where the Plantation Motel is now. In his late teens Luther was so addicted to experimenting with all sorts of inventions that his father, in order to preserve their home as a dwelling place, turned over to him a two-story building standing on high ground overlooking the little Cove. Luther was delighted beyond words to have a workshop and gladly transferred to it all his gear from various parts of the house. The family breathed a sigh of relief and Luther, one of pure rapture at having space to work uninterrupted.

In the course of time on the upper floor of the shop, Luther succeeded in contriving a flying machine of the glider type. Discarded sheets to cover the wooden framework of the wings were begged from his mother, and his sister Susan's help was enlisted. She was the one of the family who was always ready to listen to Luther's schemes and dreams and to help him whenever she could. In this case she sat long hours in the attic of the house and patiently stitched and fitted the sheets.

The day finally came when the much-talked-about flying machine was completed and ready for

its first trial. Great was the excitement of all the small boys — and some not so small! In the fields near the shop the crowd of onlookers gathered, my father a very small boy in the throng. Every eye was fixed expectantly on the wide double doors that opened out of the second story of the shop. Suddenly out through the door appeared two great, white wings with Luther Childs Crowell dangling beneath them, suspended by an elaborate series of straps. Mouths gaped open, eyes were wide with amazement, and not a breath was drawn as the clumsy bird-like contraption drifted along toward the Cove, born on the brisk southwest wind. Gradually the flying machine dropped lower and lower until it finally settled gently to earth and deposited Luther in the marsh grass — uninjured but somewhat dashed in his hopes. Evidently his keen mind was quick to grasp the implications of his failure for he never made another attempt along that line.

Having given up that dream he turned his attention to the problem of the printing press. In this field he was destined to have more complete and lasting success for, in time, he invented a new type of press. As has so often been the case with our young inventors, Luther had no money to develop his important discovery so he sold his press to a company for a very small amount of money and a promise of a job in the company. He turned out to be a great asset to the firm for his own ability as well as for his really remarkable press. When one of the new presses was set up in a newspaper office, it refused to work and consternation reigned. In desperation Luther himself was called in. After carefully looking over the motionless machine, he exclaimed, "There's your trouble." And he pointed to a spot where a tiny screw was missing. As soon as the screw was in place the press started and functioned perfectly.

It is quite possible that in the ranks of the initiated in the lore of newspaper offices and printing establishments Luther Childs Crowell has long since been accorded his rightful recognition, but here on the Cape I think we would do well to remember the young spirit that once launched itself, with sheet-covered wings, on a southwest wind blowing toward the Cove.

Ryder, Marion Crowell, Cape Cod Remembrances, pp 58-59

Get a Horse

Trouble with horses, aside from not being too bright, and having a jumpy disposition, they still hold it against humans because they have been

domesticated. They kick, sometimes bite very often have individual unpleasant ways which do not endear them to their masters. Like Junior. Junior had a frustrating habit of, when left alone for a few minutes, stepping over a fence, in a quest for the marvelous green grass on the other side. He managed to do this while still harnessed to the wagon. He couldn't get back over the fence, and straining, as he was against the harness buckles, was impossible to remove from the wagon. Only alternative was, with a deal of effort, to take down the rails of the fence, back Junior up, tie him tightly to a post or whatever, reassemble the fence, and be on your way.

Then there was the balky animal. There cannot be anything more frustrating than a 1500 pound beast that refuses to move. A truly dedicated balky horse will resist pulling, pushing, bribery, deception or even beating, and no puny 200 pound human is going to get him off the dime until he's damn good and ready. One such belonged to Grandfather. Dad said his name was Bob, and he was a hard working animal, except when a perverse mood made him decide to stand still. You could plead with him, pretend to walk off and forget him, offer a pail of food, take off his harness, to make him think the work day was over, but to no avail. One evening when Grandfather was ready to head home after a cold day of cutting and loading firewood, Bob refused to move for an extended period.

After exhausting all ideas to make him move, and anxious to get home for what would now be a very late supper, Grandfather tied Bob's head close to a tree, and left him there for what turned out to be a cold snowy night. When he was untied in the morning, Bob was willing, in fact anxious, to transport his loaded wagon toward home. On another occasion, Bob totally defied all efforts, so Grandfather tried a method he had heard of which was sure to get the balky animal moving. He carefully built a small pile of twigs, leaves and small branches beneath Bob's belly and, as the balky animal watched warily out of the corner of his eye, lit the pile on fire. Sure enough, the horse moved! He moved forward 6 feet, stopped, and stood there, as the growing flames set fire to the wagon!

The 'Used Car' dealer during the day of the horse was the horse trader (or trader) of tale and legend. Be it not said that any of them were dishonest, but some were prone to be a might sharper on a deal than most of their customers. One such on the north side sold my Grandfather an

animal who he said was sound of limb and wind and would do a good day's work. "Only trouble with this horse is he don't look too good." Grandfather who was interested in performance, not beauty contests, bought the horse, harnessed him to his shay, and leading his other horse behind, started across the Cape toward home. The new horse trotted along well and answered promptly to the reins.

Walking him out, a while later, Grandfather let go of the reins, in order to blow his nose. The new horse walked off the road and bumped directly into a tree! Subsequent examination showed the horse to be stone blind! Grandfather came home fuming over getting 'taken' in a trade. Grandmother met the trader in a store a short time later and berated him for selling her husband a blind horse without telling him. "Oh, but I did tell him," replied the trader, "I told him that horse didn't look too good!"

The trader in question had a reputation for making a sharp deal, and having a quick wit unhampered by the fact that he was afflicted with a stuttering problem. A man, to whom he sold a horse, supposedly seven years old, took the nag to a vet for a second opinion. "Horse is 21 years old, if he's a day!" sez the vet.

The new owner in high dudgeon accosted the Trader. "You sold me this horse, and said it was 7 years old. Turns out he's 21!"

"No No, No No," sez the trader, "I t-t- told you he was s-s-s-seven, s-s-s-seven, s- s-s- seven... Now, that's 21, hain't it?"

'Nuff said.

Thacher, Ben, Whose Boy Be You? pp94,95

Consider Becoming a DHS Volunteer

Winston Churchill spoke the following words: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Your historical society needs your gift of time. We maintain three museums owned by the town and an inherited property owned by DHS. Each property is unique and worthy of your interest: The 1736 Josiah Dennis Manse, the 1801 Sea Captain Theophilus Baker's home "Jericho", the 1867 West Dennis Graded School and the 1877 Rose Victorian built by Sea Captain Calvin Baker would all welcome you.

Phone: 508-385-2232 (leave a message)

E-mail: info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

NEW BOOK NOW AVAILABLE!!

Memories of the Past

Joshua Eldredge Howes

BORN IN DENNISPORT, Massachusetts in 1839, Joshua Eldredge Howes wrote this memoir in the last years of his life. His lucid recollections begin with a queasy introduction to the sea as a young boy, describe primary education in the town's one-room schoolhouse, continue through a period of teenage carousing, and culminate in an ocean voyage to Peru, Holland, England and Canada.

As he recounts stealing sheep from a miserly priest in Nova Scotia, attending a bullfight in Peru, and setting fire to a brothel in Liverpool, Joshua spins a gripping yarn that remains compelling and appealing.

Published by Brian J. Cook and supported by DHS, this book is available through our website and will be sold in our museums and the Rose Victorian. Burt Derick originally transcribed and annotated this book in 2010 and had been corresponding with Brian. Joshua Howes was Brian's great-great-great grandfather – and my great-grandfather Ezra's older brother.

Pete Howes

The Probate Court

So faithfully did the commissioners appointed by the Barnstable County Probate Court execute their duties on behalf of Mrs. Cornelius Shaw, the widow of a sea captain who perished at sea, that in probating an inventory of a Truro property which accurately divided a house, barn, and hen house into the customary "widow's third," they actually ran an imaginary line completely through the house. Its course was described in detail.

The document is dated March 10, 1852. The nicest part of its calculation comes at the end which states: "We also set off one third part of the Barn being the western part designated by a cut on the beam, both on the North and South side in a straight line; also one third part of the Hen House & Back House, it being valued as per appraisal at \$150.77."

Cape Cod Legends, Boston, The Berkely Press, 1935



Gift Shop
will open
May 15, 11 a.m.
485 Main St., Rt. 28
West Dennis

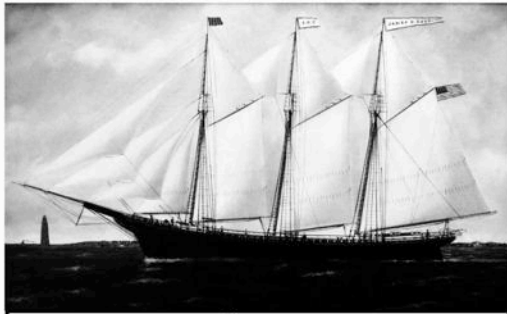
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Maritime Days Open House

Phyllis Horton's
Home Port: West Dennis
Life and Times of Some
West Dennis Captains



Saturday, May 16
1p.m. - 4p.m.

Dennis Maritime Museum
West Dennis Graded School
67 School St., West Dennis



www.dennishistsoc.org



Saltworks on Cape Cod

Guest Speaker

John G. Sears III

Sunday, May 17, 2:00



West Dennis Library
Second Floor
260 Main Street (Rt. 28), West Dennis



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