



# Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 36 No. 9 Send letters & stories to Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, S. Dennis 02660 or [pjhowes@verizon.net](mailto:pjhowes@verizon.net) October 2013  
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## Call to the Annual Meeting

Members are hereby notified that the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year** Dinner and Annual Meeting of the Dennis Historical Society will be held at 5:00 PM on Sunday, October 20 at SeaView Restaurant, 76 Chase Avenue, Dennisport. The dinner price is \$35.00 per person (gratuity & tax included). The agenda will include annual reports, the report of the nominating committee and the election of officers, as well as any other business that may legally come before this meeting. You are urged to attend. Music will be provided by: "*REACHING MINIMUM WAGE*", a talented D-Y Jazz Band. **Please reserve by October 11<sup>th</sup>**. Please make your check out to The Dennis Historical Society, and mail c/o Mrs. Peter D. Howes, 58 Scarsdale Rd., Dennis, MA 02638

## DHS Celebrates 50 Years

What do glass eyes, missing husbands and a nightshirt have to do with a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary?

Read on.

The Dennis Historical Society was formed in 1963 for the purpose of helping to care for the Jericho House Museum which had been given to the town and to promote and preserve Dennis history.

The house was built in 1801 for Capt. Theophilus Baker and was lived in by his descendants until Miss Emma Baker died in 1955. Emma's sister, Mary Kelley, inherited it and put it up for sale. It was purchased by Miss Elizabeth Reynaud who restored it.

Miss Reynaud's health was waning so she instructed her cousin, Virginia Gildersleeve, to give it to the town at her death. However, Miss Gildersleeve was reluctant to do so as there was no historical organization in town to oversee its upkeep and management. She considered giving it to the Historical Society of Old Yarmouth.

A number of Dennis people became alarmed at that prospect. The town appointed a group of people for that purpose and at a Special Town Meeting on August 27, 1962 Jericho was accepted for the town. Because of the new-found awareness of our history the Dennis Historical Society was organized on July 2, 1963.

Now, 50 years later, we celebrate our wonderful heritage, the great artifacts we have collected and all the many volunteers who have given freely of their time and talents to make us what we are today. Hope to see you at our grand celebration on Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. We'll have a live band, great food, door prizes and the answer to the question. The social hour and the band start at 5:00 P.M. Wear your dancing shoes if you're so inclined—it's a party!

Phyllis Horton

*The Historical Society has published many fine books over the years. One of my favorites is Marion Ryder Crowell's "Cape Cod Remembrances". This book, published in 1972, contains many great vignettes of life gone past. I suggest that you purchase one of the few remaining hard copies of this book, which is also available in soft cover. Here is an example:*

## **"Take in Sail, Captain"**

Marion Crowell Ryder

"With her long arm reaching out and beckoning the sea into her quiet blue bays and harbors, is it any wonder that Cape Cod has, in turn, sent her ships out across the moving miles to every corner of the globe. She could safely trust her reputation to these clear-eyed sons whose skill and daring won them fame the world over.

It is hard for us, today, to realize how completely the sea and sea-faring men dominated her life in earlier days. A little village that now seems to us quiet and scattered had, in the "sailing" years, no less than two hundred vessels captained by its citizens, — one captain having several vessels in turn, over the period of years. It was not unusual for some sixty or seventy captains at one time to claim one small village as home-port. Every family who has its roots on the Cape has its annals full of yarns and anecdotes of the adventures of fathers and grandfathers on far seas and in distant harbors.

In 1875 my grandfather<sup>1</sup> sailed his three-masted schooner in ballast from Genoa, Italy, to Messina, Sicily, to load a cargo of oranges and lemons for New York. The ballast consisted of rock sulphur since Grand-father had learned by experience that the crates of fruit, piled on top of the sulphur, would keep fresh and sound and reach New York without danger of spoilage.

As was required, he took aboard a pilot off the harbor of Messina, and sailed for the entrance with fair wind and all lower sails set. When the pilot arrived on the quarter deck he explained to Grandfather that there was only one fruit-loading quay and that, owing to the briskness of business, the vessels had to anchor stern to the quay.

Upon hearing this Grandfather called the mate to the quarter deck and ordered him to have the halyards overhauled and coiled for quick action.

As they passed through the harbor entrance and the busy port opened out before them, the pilot fidgeted uneasily over the vessel's speed and said urgently, "Take in sail now, Captain."

"You leave that to me," was Grandfather's reply, his steady eyes on the stretch of water ahead and his quiet voice giving orders to the man at the wheel.

On surged the vessel through the crowded shipping with a now thoroughly agitated pilot on her quarter deck. "TAKE IN SAIL, Captain!" he shouted, waving his arms in excitement.

"I'll take in sail when it's necessary," was the calm answer.

The vessel skimmed along. The quay loomed ahead. The pilot jumped up and down on the deck, shouting and gesticulating wildly.

Grandfather raised his hand in signal to the alert first officer, "Let go the fore-sail, Mr. Mason." Down came the sail on the run. The seamen dropped the fore halyards and rushed for the main-mast where they took their stations.

"Let go the main-sail, Mr. Mason." With a rush the huge "main" sank to a mass of billowing canvas and the vessel perceptibly slackened her pace. Again feet thudded on the deck and the men stood ready at the mizzen-mast.

"Let go the mizzen-sail, Mr. Mason." The last great spread of canvas ran down on the instant.

"Let go the small anchor, Mr. Mason." A seaman, poised in readiness, struck the anchor ring from the cathead and the chain roared out through the horse-hole as the anchor plunged downward.

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<sup>1</sup> Capt. Levi Crowell, in the years following the Civil War

"Let go the sheet anchor, Mr. Mason." The second anchor splashed into the blue waters of the harbor. The vessel lost way, paused a moment and then slowly swung around to head into the wind. Her stern was a few feet from the quay!

Grandfather stood smiling quietly at the pilot who, white and shaken, mopped his brow with a huge red bandana and gazed about him in incredulous amazement.

The crowd on the quay had been watching the vessel's flying approach with their hearts in their mouths. As she fetched up in her appointed berth, they burst into a spontaneous cheer."

### **A Visit with Elizabeth Reynaud**

**Marsha Finley** of the Jericho Museum Committee has created a wonderful program about Elizabeth Reynaud the woman who restored, named and gave Jericho to the Town of Dennis. Miss Reynaud was a remarkable woman. Although she came along later than the Suffragettes she was an amazing force in promoting women's education and equality. Marsha gave her talk to DHS Board members and we were entertained and impressed. She will present her talk at 1:30 & 3:00 for the public at the "Fall for the Arts" event at Jericho, 90 Old Main Street, West Dennis on Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-4:00 P.M. Refreshments will be served.

Phyllis Horton

### **Carleton Hall**

*From our Feb 17, 1979 Newsletter*

"In Dennis we are fortunate to have many meeting halls, some town owned, and the Historical Society meetings are scheduled at different places from time to time. The hall was built in 1820, to be used as a Methodist Church. This church merged with the present Dennis Union Church in the 1840's and the Methodist Pulpit Bible is presently at the Josiah Dennis Manse.

The building was used for a short time as an academy, for there was no public High School in Dennis at that time. In the mid-1800's, it began to be used as a public meeting place, housing the Lyceum. Villagers held stock in the site and pledged needed money for improvements. Carleton Howes a retired sea captain whose portrait can also be seen at the Manse, was instrumental in raising a substantial amount for necessary repairs and the grateful villagers named the Hall in his honor.

The Dennis Ladies Aid began its meetings here in 1889. The addition to the south was built in the early 1900's. It continued to be privately owned by the villagers until the 1950's when the trustees deeded the land and building to the town. Think of the many happy occasions held in this hall over its Lifetime of one hundred and fifty-nine years. (Our thanks to Mrs. Anson Howes for assistance with the above article.)"

### **Newsletter News**

The Board of directors has voted to reduce the number of Newsletters to ten per year. We have been issuing a combined Jan/Feb issue, and it will be joined by a combined Mar/Apr issue.

We are ALWAYS in desperate need of articles, news and such for publication. WWII still must be remembered by some of our readers, and I would love to include your remembrances of that period both home and abroad. And, by the way, the 50's and 60's are certainly suitable for inclusion!

And, finally, your Newsletter Editor is seeking to step down soon from this august post and pass the baton to anyone who can bring a new slant, ideas and energy to your Newsletter. It really is time for me to stop hogging the limelight here and let someone else take over. Interested in exploring this exciting opportunity? Please call me at 385-9308 or e-mail me at [pjhowes@verizon.net](mailto:pjhowes@verizon.net).

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

**10/18:** "Mooseburgers Scheduled for Cape Tables: Several Cape Codders went moose hunting in Newfoundland last week, and they were telling tall tales.

Two big moose hung in the meat cooler at Daggett's market. One belongs to Selectman John G. Sears and the other to Palmer Davenport of West Dennis.

John E. Vektorino of Barnstable went with a different group. His saga included the tale of tracking a cast iron kerosene stove to a camp in the wilderness.

Mr. Sears and Mr. Davenport joined Robert Milligan, a former South Yarmouth resident now living in Maine, and a group from Unity, Me. They traveled by mechanical weasel to a base camp, then on foot over the tundra.

'We had bacon they cooked on four sides,' said Mr. Sears, fingering a front tooth he had just had recapped. 'The coffee was...we would rather drink tea.'

The moose brought to the Cape dressed out at upwards of 600 pounds. Many mooseburgers will be served on Cape tables.

Newfoundland advertised for moose hunters because the herd had become too big and disease threatened. Mr. Vektorino said he came over a ridge and saw 11 moose at one time."

### **WORLD HISTORY EVENT IN OCTOBER 1963**

**10/04 Issue:** "Hurricane Flora hit Hispaniola and Cuba killing nearly 7,000 people, being one of the worst Atlantic storms in history." Editorial note: aren't we glad September was mild on Cape Cod in 2013?

### **DHS COMING EVENTS FOR OCTOBER 2013**

**Sunday 10/05 1-4 p.m.: OPEN HOUSE** at Jericho Historical Center AND the West Dennis Graded School Museum. Talk by Marsha Finley and exhibit "Blue Water Wives & Mothers" by Phyllis Horton

**Sunday 5 p.m.:** Don't forget - Annual Meeting & Dinner. Hope to see many of you!

June Howes