



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

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www.dennishistsoc.org

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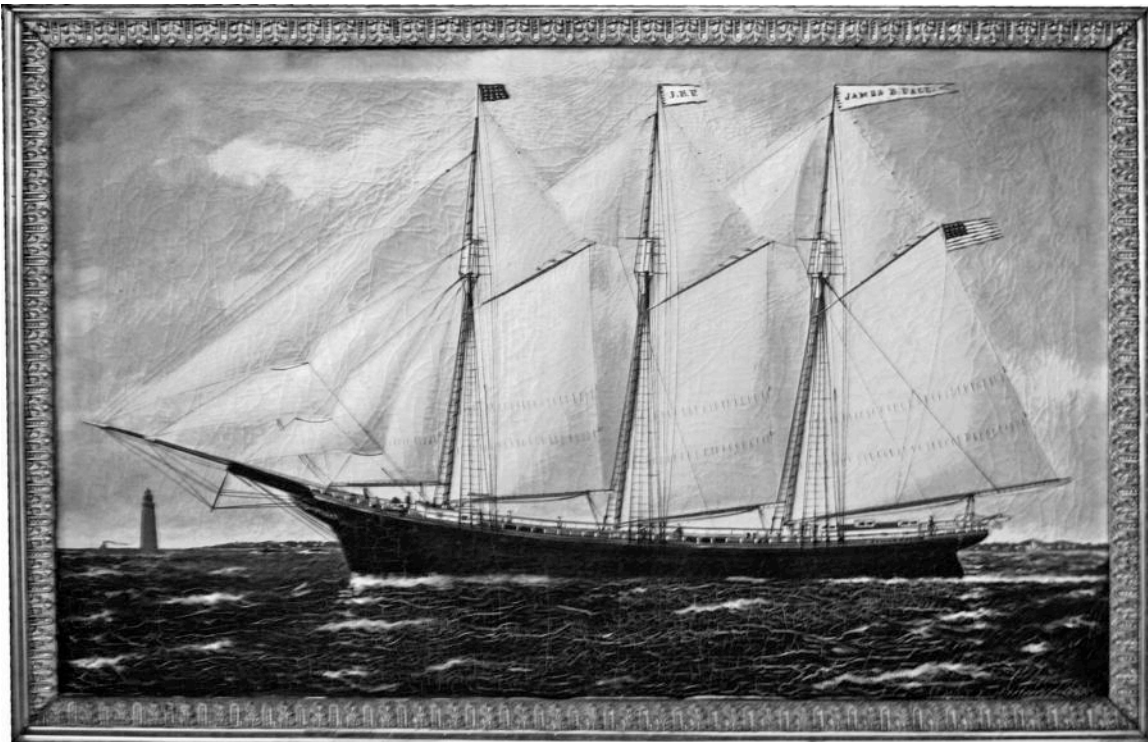
To Our Members

It's that time of the year when the members elect their Board of Directors at our Annual Meeting and Luncheon, which will be held *Saturday, October 22, 11:00 a.m.* at Liberty Hall, 446 Main Street, South Dennis. On behalf of your current Board, we ask that you seriously consider becoming an Officer for a one-year position or as a Director for a two-year position. There are many interesting activities that could use your advice and talents. Phyllis Horton is heading the nominating committee. If you would like to be considered for a Board position (and we'd *love* to have you volunteer), please send Phyllis an e-mail (Pmrhorton@aol.com). Here is the slate that must be elected each year: Officers: President, Vice Presidents (2), Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary; Elected Directors, two positions. Please consider this wonderful opportunity to be a part of the leadership team of the Dennis Historical Society.

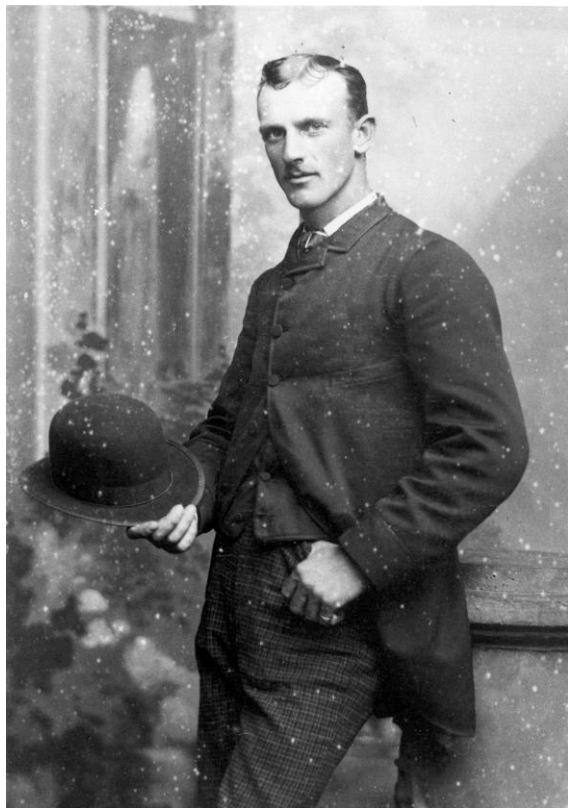
Pete Howes

Schooner *James B. Pace*

The *James B. Pace* was a three-masted schooner of 642 tons, 161' long and built in Newburyport, MA in 1883. She was owned by the Fisk Brothers, William Garfield and several others, all of West Dennis. Her home port was West Dennis and her captain was John D. Garfield, son of William. The *Pace's* mission was transporting cargos along the eastern seaboard including coal from the Pennsylvania coal fields, by way of Philadelphia, to New England ports.



In late November 1898 the *Pace* was loading coal for an early morning departure on the 24th. Captain Garfield was one of many captains loading for a run to Boston in anticipation of arriving early and getting a good price.



Captain Mark Holmes of New Haven, CT was also loading coal for Providence, RI. He and John Garfield had met many times in different ports and had become good friends. They spent the evening of the 22nd having dinner together and enjoying good comradeship. Captain Holmes was set to depart the next morning with the *Schr. Howard H. Hanscom*.

There was a full moon that night with a ring around it. The old timers predicted foul weather ahead even though the barometer remained high.

On the morning of the 24th John Garfield cleared Philadelphia bound for Boston right into the infamous blizzard that became known as the Portland Gale.

The anxious days following after the storm were spent waiting for word of many vessels along the entire northeast coast. Many were located far from their original courses, some with damaged ships and lost crewmen. The *Pace* and *Hanscom* were both counted as missing, along with a number

of other vessels. The wait stretched into weeks and months knowing they were lost and wondering where it happened.

In December of the following year government divers who were working off Montauk Point, Long Island discovered both vessels with the skeletons of crew members lashed to the rigging. Evidently the vessels had collided and sunk so rapidly the men did not have time to untie themselves. This discovery solved an ocean mystery that had puzzled mariners for a year.

What a twist of fate that the two captains who were such close friends should go to a watery grave together.

In West Dennis there was great sadness, but relief to finally know they had been found. Captain Garfield left a wife and two children, his father, five sisters and two brothers. He was 36 and well respected by all who knew him.

Also lost was Daniel J. Nickerson of Dennis Port, engineer of the *Pace*. He left a wife and eight month old son, his parents, three brothers and a sister. Danny was much loved and respected in Dennis Port and sadly missed by many.

Mate Charles Norton of Maine was the only one of the sailors whose name was known.

The Dennis Historical Society has a new addition to the Maritime Collection, a large painting of the *Pace* under full sail. This was a gift of Dean and Nancy Garfield of Dennis Port and St. Petersburg, FL. The painting was passed down through the Garfield family until now.

DHS is pleased to have the *Schr. James B. Pace* back in her home port, West Dennis, at the 1867 West Dennis Graded School. Watch for her at a future exhibit.

Phyllis Horton

New Grave Markers

On August 12 Terri Fox led a cemetery tour of old Swan Lake Cemetery for an enthusiastic group of 45 people. Burt Derick, Peter Howes and Phyllis Horton assisted her in telling stories of “family neighborhoods” who lived near each other in life and are buried near each other for the hereafter, or interesting people such as Benjamin F. Baker of Dennis Port who was the only native Cape Codder to receive the Medal of Honor for his actions in the Spanish American War. Burt talked about a Dennis Port soldier buried at Andersonville Prison during the Civil War who now has a bit of Cape Cod soil on his grave in Georgia and Swan Lake has a bit of Georgia clay by the stone dedicated to him here. Phyllis Horton introduced them to a new grave marker for men who served in the U. S. Life Saving Service.

In the latter half of the 19th century maritime traffic along the eastern seaboard and other American coastlines reached historic numbers. As many as 500 vessels passed by Cape Cod in 24 hours. From that vast array of vessels it was inevitable that many would come ashore in the fierce storms of the North Atlantic. Cape Cod was noted as the most dangerous winter coast of the world. After demands by the public for Congress to do something to alleviate the terrible loss of life from shipwrecks they established the U.S. Life Saving Service in 1872 that would put trained personnel in stations where the largest loss of life was taking place.

Surfmen of the Life Saving Service risked their own lives to save shipwrecked victims. Their government-issued rule book that detailed every aspect of life saving duty said “You have to go out”, but made no mention of coming back. You rescued the crew or died trying. Dennis cemeteries have a number of Life Savers.

In 1915 the U.S.L.S.S. and the Revenue Cutter Service were merged to become the U.S. Coast Guard by an act of Congress and the old Life Savers passed into history and became legends.

The Dennis Historical Commission is honoring those who rest in our burying grounds with the new markers. If you know of anyone buried in Dennis who was a Life Saver please call Phyllis Horton at 508-394-0017. We will see they are duly recognized.

It was my great pleasure to place the first Dennis Life Saver marker at the grave of Timothy F. Murray of Dennis Port, my great grandfather. He served at the Orleans Station. His main job was to fire the Lyle gun out to the stricken ship to fasten the line for the breeches buoy because he had a good aim. I feel sure everyone his crew helped save was very grateful. Of course, he worked in all other jobs at the station, just as the other surfmen did. There was no room for prima donnas in that outfit!

Phyllis Horton

Membership

Thanks to all of you who have kindly renewed your membership so rapidly. I really appreciate it!!! If our dues envelope is still sitting on your desk, please-please send it back with your check as soon as possible. August 31 is the last day of our membership year.

Dawn Dellner

Bequests

A great way to make sure that your love of history is remembered by future generations is to remember The Dennis Historical Society, Inc. in your will.

DENNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD MEETING – NEW DATE

Note: All members are invited to attend monthly DHS Board Meetings. The next meeting is at 3 pm on Tuesday, September 13 at the air-conditioned Jericho Historical Center, 90 Old Main St., West Dennis. To better serve our members, we have moved the meeting to the second *Tuesday* of each month.

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~ SEPTEMBER EVENTS ~

Saturday, September 24, 6:00 p.m.
Twilight Cemetery Visions!

A special guided tour of the historic Dennis Village Cemetery with ghostly reenactors. Bring your imaginations.

Maximum 30 hardy souls!

Prepaid reservations required by Sept. 18.
Call (508) 760-0433

Don't be late - Ghosts don't wait!!
One tour only!
\$15 per person

Meet at the Dennis Village Green
Rt. 6A & Old Bass River Rd. Dennis Village

September 25 Cranberry Tour
CANCELLED

Due to the inclement weather (hail storm to be exact) of Aug. 2nd, the tour of "Annie's Crannies" is **cancelled** for this year.

We hope to be able to offer this interesting tour in 2012.

Coming Attractions - For details please see www.dennishistsoc.org
October 1st & 2nd - Fall For The Arts weekend in Dennis.
October 22 - Dennis Historical Society's Annual Meeting & Luncheon