



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter April 2020

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**The next Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, April 14, 2:00 pm at the DHS Library in the
West Dennis Free Public Library, 260 Main Street (Rt. 28), West Dennis
Members Welcome**

Please send information & stories for the newsletter to Dave Talbott at the DHS Website email address: info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

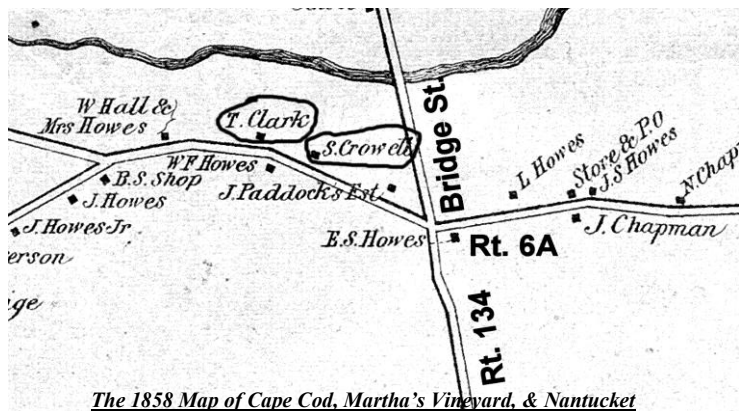
We continue to learn from our readers!

The January 2020 Newsletter included two new images from the glass plate negatives gifted to the DHS by Henry Kelley, "*Home of Mrs. Louiza Clark*" & "*Home of Mrs. Seth Crowell*." The fate of these two houses speaks of the fragility of the properties of our past and validates the importance of the organizations, committees and commissions described in the March Newsletter. These are either charged with or are intent on preserving them.

In the February Newsletter, some information about the two properties was provided to us by Diane Rochelle and Seth Crowell. We learned that, unfortunately, both houses were consumed by fire in the early 1900s. The first burned where it stood, and the second after it was moved. Here, from Scott Walker, is additional information about both properties.

I believe these two homes were located next door to one another on the North side of Rt. 6A in East Dennis, west of present Rt. 134. If I am correct, neither building exists today....confirmed.

The one, I'm certain of is that of Louisa Clark, then widowed, who was the wife of Nathan Clark. Nathan was a son of Thatcher Clark, and Thatcher and family appear as the occupants of the home in the mid 1800s, including this son Nathan and several daughters. (Thatcher's daughter Dinah married Almond Howes and lived on New Boston Road, and daughter Lydia married Ezra Howes, owner of The Bleakhouse on Seaside Avenue.) The 1858 map of Dennis shows the location of Thatcher's home as "T. Clark." Thatcher's 3rd and final wife, Betsy Sears, died in January 1870.



The 1858 Map of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, & Nantucket

His married son Nathan (still living in the home with his parents along with his own wife Louisa and and their children) then died in April, 1871 at age 47-ish. Thatcher himself then passed that fall in September 1871 at age 84, leaving Louisa as the widowed occupant of the dwelling. Nathan is buried at the Worden Cemetery, one of the more "recent" burials there. Thatcher is resting in Brewster. I can't quickly seem to find much else about Louisa, or the sons & daughters that she and Nathan had. Thatcher is described in the census as a "Merchant," and Nathan as a "Farm Laborer".

My 1880 map shows the next door neighbor as "Mrs. S. Crowell," and there was in fact a Seth Crowell that lived in that location in the mid 1800s....a contemporary (generation-wise) of Thatcher Clark. The 1858 map actually shows "S. Crowell". Not sure exactly when Seth died (between 1870 and 1880), but he left a much younger widow behind named Hannah. In 1870 Seth is 78, and Hannah is 41....a vintage Trophy Wife! In 1880, also from the census, both she and her next door neighbor Louisa Clark appear as 51 year-old widows. Across the street (at what is now the Eldred Auction property) is 48 year old widowed Margaret Howes, former wife of Master Mariner William F. Howes.

Seth was a bank president. Very wealthy. "Domestic Servants" are found in residence in his home in 1860 and 1870. Between you and me, did young Hannah marry him for his looks? Were wails of sorrow heard coming from the building when he passed because they were deeply and madly in love? Hmmmm. As widows go, she seems rather well attired in the photograph, which must have been taken a great many years after his death. Not sure what became of Hannah, whether she remarried or where she ended up.

If this is indeed the Seth Crowell house, I'm thinking it could be, (as opposed to his son Seth Jr's house, which was located elsewhere in town). A DHS photo of this home site indicates that the house burned over 100 years ago.

Another DHS photo, this one of Louisa's house, indicates that it was later moved to another location, and then it burned....confirmed.

From Rt. 134, travel west on 6A. The house immediately on the NW corner is the Judah Paddock B&B property, and then the next house on the right is where the Seth Crowell house was located. The next house on the right after that (with skylights and so forth) is where Louisa Clark's house was. (The Eldred Auction building is approximately equidistant between them on the south side of 6A)

Interesting to note is that their neighbor to the East on the same side of the road, (in a home then belonging to Mary Paddock, the Judah Paddock B&B property previously mentioned) had a boarder living there in 1880... Anna Shaw, the noted theologian who appears in Dennis history annals. Interesting neighborhood! I'm sure these women all had tea together on numerous occasions 140 years ago.

What your mother might not have told you about dating!

While searching for information about the glass plate image of the "John Sears Cottage," which appeared in the December 2019 newsletter, Ray Sears, sent DHS an email containing some of what he had learned about determining the age of old photographs. Here is some of what Ray found.



John Sears cottage as it appeared in the Dec 2019 Newsletter

beginning of outdoor photos to show home and family, 1880s..And his beard is before 1890s usually. Tiny waisted women are probably age 30-35.

I don't know if you had ever tried photo dating. I went to Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/337276269784836/>

Genealogy Dating Old Photographs for a corporate analysis of Henry Kelley's glass plate of John Sears Cottage- did you see the lady looking through the spyglass?- probably East Dennis looking off the beach into Cape Cod Bay. Makes me think- John Sears was born on 19 Sep 1818, d. 1908 in Dennis, Barnstable, Massachusetts, USA as the third child of Moody Sears and Jane Davis. He had eight siblings (four of them boys) and two daughters. If the dresses are 1880s, maybe he fits better, sitting on porch top right? The analysis said - One man has only the top button of his jacket buttoned=1880s. Long bodice with button fronts and asymmetrical drape on skirt=1880s. No long ties and no pleats in

Taking into account what the analysis results revealed, I went looking in the DHS Digital Archives for images which might confirm Ray's research and found the image which appears below.



"Cottage, East Dennis" from the DHS Digital Archives

Confirming a Date

This image is by John W. Derrick, Photographer and printed by T. P. Stiff, Home Bank Building, Brockton. It came from ALBUM 08\Jacob Sears Library and was scanned into the DHS collections on June 3, 2004 by Burton N. Derick (Burt). The picture was taken on August 12, 1885. The date is in complete accordance with the dating analysis provided by Ray Sears. When one closely compares the features and architectural details of two images, there is little doubt that they are the same cottage!

Thank you Ray for providing the input to initiate the search and confirm the date of the glass plate image.

In this we are unanimous!

The Dennis Historical Society is extremely fortunate that Board Member, Kevin Keegan volunteered to take charge of its publicity! We all are aware of the incredible posters which Kevin creates for upcoming events, as they appear in our newsletters. Unfortunately, they are in black and white in the newsletters instead of in their vivid colors. Also, unless they are subscribers of one of our local papers, members don't get to read the interesting and informative press releases which Kevin writes. I thought you might enjoy the one, soon to be released, for our April program.



Trailblazing Dennis minister Anna Howard Shaw remembered in April 25 talk Reverend Connie Bickford will speak Saturday, April 25, at 2pm at Dennis Memorial Library on the life and incredible legacy of Anna Howard Shaw in her trailblazing roles as Dennis minister, leading suffragette, and friend to Susan B. Anthony.

Although often forgotten today, Shaw was the first women ever ordained in the Methodist Protestant Church and served for five years beginning in 1879 as pastor of Dennis Union Church. After leaving the Cape in 1884, Shaw studied medicine at Boston University, became a physician in 1886, and went on to national prominence as a social reformer and advocate for women's voting rights. Her remarkable career—which also saw her aligned with Susan B. Anthony as friend and progressive provocateur—is one of the great under-told stories in Dennis history.

Reverend Bickford is a retired minister, member of Dennis Union Church, and longtime admirer of Shaw. Her presentation is sponsored by the Dennis Historical Society and Dennis Memorial Library as the first of a number of open-to-the-public events this year recognizing local women's history as the nation marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. A \$5 donation is recommended. Dennis Memorial Library is located at 1020 Old Bass River Road in Dennis Village.

At 2:00 pm on Saturday, September 19, in a joint presentation sponsored by the Dennis Historical Society and the Dennis Memorial Library, guest speaker, noted author and educator, Dr. Michael V. Pregot will present a talk entitled "*Sea Captains of Cape Cod.*" The opportunity to hear Dr. Pregot earlier is described in the poster appearing on the last page of this newsletter. Don't miss it!

Two More Positive I.D.s

On January 31, 2020, we received a letter from Henry Kelly providing identification of the two glass plate images which appeared in the February 2020 newsletter. Additional information on the house labeled "*Mrs. Elijah J. Howes House*" in the newsletter was provided by board member and current owner, Phil Catchings. It appears below.

From Henry: The first house is Phil Catchings', corner of Sea and Pleasant Streets, Quivet Neck. It was built in 1845, the home of Capt. Levi Howes. Photo caption should read Mrs. Eliza J. (Davis) Howes, widow of Capt. Howes. DHS owns a ship model of one of his commands, the clipper *Starlight* which is on display at the *Josiah Dennis Manse Museum*. For more information see Simeon Deyo's *History of Barnstable County*, pps. 565-6.

From Phil: The house labeled "Mrs. Elijah J. Howes House" is my house, built by Captain Levi Howes (1812 - 1874) in 1845 at the corner of Sea St. and Pleasant Street on Quivet Neck. The low board fence around the corner is quite distinctive. I believe that the photo is slightly mislabeled and would more accurately be labeled "Mrs. Eliza J. Howes House." Levi's first wife Myra died in 1850, and Levi re-married in 1852 to Eliza J. Davis of Chatham. *History of Barnstable County* notes "... (Levi) was interested with Christopher Hall and Prince S. Crowell in ships built at East Dennis, where in 1845 he erected the residence now the summer home of his widow."

From Henry: The second house is the 1719 salt box, "*House of Joshua Sears*". Birth place of Capt. Isaac Sears, notable Revolutionary figure, who lived in Connecticut and was a significant waterfront "rabble rouser" in New York City. He had a mob which destroyed a statue of King George III, and he became known as "King Sears."

The house still stands in West Brewster near the Dennis town line at Bound Brook (Quivet Creek), abutting the Sears Cemetery, off Airline Road, near Rte. 6A. The property was originally owned by the fabled Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Colony, whose widow, Alice, sold it to the first of the Sears clan, Richard, in the 1660s. In the photo, the approach to the house is by an unpaved portion of "Old County Way," still a picturesque pathway, from Airline Road to the Sears Cemetery. Highly recommended for its historic atmosphere, park at the conservation area.

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Anna Howard Shaw

The true story of one of Dennis' most famous 19th century residents: trailblazing minister, suffragette, and friend to Susan B. Anthony

A delightful and memorable presentation by the Reverend Connie Bickford

April 25 at 2pm at Dennis Memorial Library
A \$5 donation is suggested

Sponsored by the Dennis Historical Society and Dennis Memorial Library

The Whaling Story of New England

Whaling has been a profitable commercial venture for centuries for many Cape Cod families. In New England alone, we have records dating from 1690 of brave men facing challenges connected to chasing the "Leviathan" of the sea. The very last whaler left the port of Provincetown less than a century ago, in 1927.

The peak years of whaling were between 1846-1855. "Shore whaling" and Native American "drift-whaling" has its roots in Nantucket. In the pre-revolutionary era, Wellfleet and Provincetown became a center for the construction of larger ocean-bound commercial whaling boats. In the mid-1800's, New Bedford became the symbolic and true epicenter of the great whaling adventure.

There were many products made from the whale, making it one of the most valuable products of its era. The whale hunt process, itself, evolved over time from being a fairly crude operation emerging into a complex dynamic industry. Many fortunes were made and lost by local whaling captains.

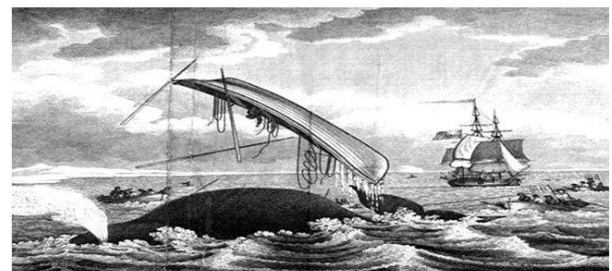
Melville based his celebrated book, *Moby Dick*, in large part, on the tragic outcome of the Essex. Their whaling story eerily resembles the misfortunes that befell the sailors of the Pequot. Come to listen about a noble and dangerous period of American life.

Date: April 21

Time: 6 PM

Place: Provincetown Public Library

Presenter: Dr. Michael Pregot



Unfortunately, these events may have to be postponed. We will do our best to let you know!