



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 37 No. 7 Send letters & stories to Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, S. Dennis 02660 or to pjhowes@verizon.net **September 2014**

Internet: www.dennishistoricalsociety.org

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E-Mail info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

The next Board Meeting: is **Wednesday September 10 @ 2:00 P.M., Jacob Sears Memorial Library, 23 Center St, Dennis, MA**

Thursday, September 25, 7:00 P.M.
Wampanoag Language Reclamation Project

Unspoken and unwritten since the mid 19th century, the exciting progress towards reclaiming the language, featured in the film "We Are Still Here" will be presented by *Judy Urquhart*

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

HERB DAY AT JERICHO

The number of people interested in herbs surprised the Jericho Committee. They came from many places, local and away. Allison Dellner, a certified herbalist from Vermont demonstrated how to make some of the many syrups, condiments, medicines, etc. that are becoming more popular. She passed out recipes for some of her demonstrations. Docents demonstrated how to make attractive lavender sachets which the visitors made and took home.

The refreshment table was covered with tasty and interesting goodies made by the volunteers, including: Lavender Shortbread Cookies, Rosemary Chocolate Chip Cookies, Lemon/Sage Pound Cake (wonderful!), Herb Butters, Dill and Parsley Biscuits, Lemonade and Teas infused with herbs, Watermelon/Basil Cooler, etc.

The Committee was so pleased with the guest's responses they will create an herb recipe book which will be for sale next summer.

Oh, by the way—it started to rain at 3:30 but the Jericho folks were proactive—they put up some tents before the event started!

Phyllis Horton

TEDDY BEARS IN THE RAIN

Does this sound familiar? Check your July newsletter "Ice Cream in the Rain"!

The early morning of August 2nd was dry with rain forecast so Dawn Dellner, Jericho Director, opted to proceed with the Teddy Bear Picnic, putting up tents loaned by the Dennis Fire Department, Ginny Devine and Phyllis Horton. That was a smart move as it rained (i.e. poured) most of the day, but visitors came in good numbers—some with raincoats and umbrellas, others just sloshing around in the puddles having a soaking wet, wonderful time—and all clutching their favorite teddy bear, frog, Barbie or mermaid (Ariel).

4-H Club Leader, Strell Landry came with her group of girls to do community service by face painting—which was a huge hit. A few of the creations ran in the rain but the 4-H'ers cheerfully did them again. Lemonade, PB&J sandwiches and teddy graham crackers were consumed. They played games, had stories read, and went home clutching prizes, soggy "best friends" and wearing big smiles!

Phyllis Horton

JOSIAH DENNIS MANSE MUSEUM

In late May the boys and girls from the 4 third grades of Ezra H. Baker School enjoyed our hands-on school program at the Manse and 1745 one-room schoolhouse as they learned how children lived in the 1700's.

It's been a busy summer! From our opening reception on June 21st to August 21 we have had 697 visitors from 27 states and 5 foreign countries.

Colonial Day on August 16 brought many people to see the Red Sox 2013 World Series trophy, Tom Kelleher from Sturbridge Village working as a cooper, Terri Fox hand dipping candles, pies being made, spinning and weaving, children's games and classes were held in the schoolhouse.

The Manse will be open on Saturdays from 1-4 p.m. on August 30, September 13 and 27 and for Christmas at The Manse from 12 to 3:30 p.m. on December 14.

We are grateful for volunteers who host for us and tend our interpretive colonial gardens.

Nancy Howes, Committee Chair

THE ROSE VICTORIAN

Briefly, the house is 137 years old, the gift shop is 130 years old and the “Teeny Tiny Library” is the youngster of the RV Family, at only 10 years old. All are the property of DHS.

The “RV Team” pondered what to do with this young’un we’ve inherited. Since it was built as a small library play house, complete with a book-drop, it became evident it should some how be available to the youngsters of Dennis. Thus the birth of our “Teeny Tiny Library” occurred.

With the co-operation of our five town libraries and our volunteer RV Team, story time was offered each Wednesday of July and August. The feed back has been positive: the Register promoted it weekly and the Cape Cod Times found it worthy by sending a reporter and photographer for a story that was published in their Sunday, August 24th edition. Each parent and child that attended enjoyed it and looks forward to 2015.

It seems the “baby” of the Rose Victorian group is growing up and taking on a life and reputation of it’s own. Thank you Kathy Roche, and thank you South Dennis Library for having the playhouse built in 2004.

June Howes

INTERESTING NEW ARTIFACTS

In addition to the West Dennis drum DHS has received an eclectic collection of items. Long time friend of the Society, Bob Eldred, Jr. gifted us with a well-worn bootjack made by Elisha Bassett Chapman of East Dennis on 27 January 1835 at age 20. He carved the date and his initials in it. Elisha died two years later at age 22. The bootjack was used for years by family members as a fine example of Yankee thrift: Use it up, Wear it out Make it do, Or do without.

Bob also gave to our Maritime Collection a print on canvas of the Shiverick Clipper Ship Wild Hunter. The print was taken from the original in possession of a descendant of Capt. Prince S. Crowell, one of the principal financiers of the Shiverick Shipyard.

Ruth Derick has donated a collection of Ca. 1890 hat pins from her family and Burt’s family that will be added to the ones at Jericho.

Two lovely beaded purses inherited from a Nickerson grandmother and a small china doll were gifts of Judith E. Reiss.

Henry Kelley II gave us three commemorative china pieces showing scenes of Dennis Port at the turn of the century. They were made in Germany and sold as souvenirs to summer visitors, although many locals bought them, too. Store keepers in each village sold this china promoting their village. They are now quite collectable.

Ken Durst gave us an 1883 cook book inherited from his mother. Some of the recipes are quite interesting. Be thankful that modern cooking and baking have been greatly improved!

Thanks to all of our donors. Your interest in the Society keeps us going!

Phyllis Horton

THE WEST DENNIS DRUM

This past spring Mrs. Beverley Estes-Smarziassi of Orleans, a descendant of Capt. Levi Crowell of west Dennis, gave DHS a drum with a significant historical provenance. It is called an Eagle Drum as it has an American flag and eagle on its side. We do not know the date it was made but do know it was used in West Dennis to recruit soldiers for the Civil War. Eldred’s Auction appraisers said it is a valuable artifact from that time.

In the days before telephones, cell phones and iPads the way to summon people to gather for important news was to send a young man throughout the village beating on his drum. Village people followed the drummer until the end of his route, which was most often the village center. During the Civil War it signaled that recruiting officers were here to enroll men into the Army or to inform people of good or disastrous news regarding the Union Army or Navy. No one knows for sure where the drum was kept after the war but quite probably it was at Capt. Levi Crowell’s home.

In 1884 the young men of West Dennis decided to organize a brass band. J. Harvey Jenks, later the West Dennis Post Master and purveyor of gravestones, is credited with being the organizer of the group and a Professor Carter was the first leader. Each young person purchased whatever instrument he had a desire to play. Without benefit of lessons they all struggled with learning how it worked causing some neighbors to wonder at the strange sounds heard every night in the neighborhood.



Eventually they all mastered their chosen instrument and started performing in public. In time they were invited to perform in neighboring towns. DHS has a photograph of the band in uniform. Our drum is not shown, just a big bass drum, but I think our drum would probably be used at times. Our ancestors were not known to miss many opportunities.

It is on display at the West Dennis Graded School in the “Dennis Men in the Civil War” exhibit. In July some of his descendants visited the museum to see the drum. Ruth Derick photographed Levi’s gr, gr, gr, granddaughters with the drum.

Phyllis Horton

THE CHINA WOMAN

In those far days even though distances were so great and the silences between the setting sail and the home coming were so long, many strange and far-away places were closely woven into Cape Cod lives. Captain Baker, the father of Alpheus Baker of South Dennis, took his wife with him on a voyage to China. While the vessel was in port there their son was born and Capt. and Mrs. Baker engaged a Chinese Amah for their baby. The little dark-eyed Chinese woman became so devoted to the baby and he thrived so happily under her care that, when the time came for their departure for home, the Bakers asked the nurse to return with them to the Cape. At first she was frightened at the thought of journeying so far away but finally her devotion to the baby coupled with the prospect of seeing the strange land she had heard so much about impelled her to accept the offer.

Once back in their South Dennis home the Bakers did everything in their power to make the little stranger comfortable and happy but the traditional New England food, the unaccustomed climate and her utter loneliness made her droop and pine away. Seeing her condition, Capt. Baker offered to send her back to her home-land on the next China-bound ship but, though this prospect brightened her days briefly, she just couldn't wait for that long homeward journey and so died gently as she had lived. She was buried in the South Dennis Cemetery with the inscription on her grave simply — "The China Woman."

“Cape Cod Remembrances”, Marion Ryder Crowell

WEATHER NOW AND IN THE PAST

It has been a delightful summer, but a bit cool! Nasty weather in other parts of the US have the prognosticators of doom claiming that this but proves we humans are most certainly all to blame for our violet climate. I will avoid repeating the latest global catastrophe buzz words, but merely as an introduction to an article next month (and not as a cynic) I would like to point out some real facts.

Think we have it bad? The 1800’s saw Massachusetts hurricanes in 1804, 1806, 1815, 1821, 1825, 1830, 1839, 1841, 1846, 1849 1850, 1854, 1858, 1861, 1867, 1869, 1873, 1879, 1880, 1885, 1888, 1893 and 1898. Plus, there were many terrible storms – like the Yankee Gale in 1851 that destroyed Boston’s Minot light, the Gale of 1862 that was the single most destructive storm ever to strike New England fishery (some new material on this next month), and the loss of the steamer Portland in a terrible 1896 storm. And I could easily add a long list;

I’m glad to have lived when I have, thank you!

Pete Howes

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Notice: Please return your DHS dues as soon as possible. It helps to keep our Membership Chairlady smiling!

The Way We Were

(September 2003)

Dennis native Dan Walker is shown installing the new DHS date board on Carleton Hall. Dan and his wife, Frances, have been involved in Carleton Hall events for many years. Although counted among the faithful at the Immaculate Conception Church in Brewster, Dan worked in the kitchen for the Dennis Union Church Chicken Pie Suppers and Fran's chocolate cake was always saved for the auction (or sometimes on the "special" shelf in the kitchen!)

Dan's mother, called "Mother Mary" by nearly everyone in Dennis Village, gave Fran a word of advice when she came here as a bride. "Anything they ask you to do, you do. You'll never be sorry." The feeling was mutual. When Mary's church had a cake sale at the church in Brewster, Dennis Village Protestant ladies made cakes for them. That's part of what made Dennis a great place to live!



Photo is thanks to Carol Bell who wrote:
"I snapped this of my dad back in April, installing the sign at Carleton Hall. He loved doing it. We measured 'twenty times and drilled once.'"