



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

October 2022

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The next Board Meeting will be our Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 29th, 11:30 am

The SeaView, 76 Chase Avenue, Dennis Port

Members and their guests are welcome, reservations are required

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

The Dennis Historical Society's Digital Archive

In November of 2020, Dennis Historical Society Technology Director Jan Ward and Curator Dawn Dellner, embarked upon an incredibly ambitious project - to move the DHS Website's Digital Archive from its current platform to a new platform using *PastPerfect*, a software program used by more than 11,000 museums and societies to manage their collections and contacts.

DHS was already using *PastPerfect* for museum inventory, contact and membership tracking. Adding the Digital Archive will consolidate all the society's data in one place. And for the first time in years, provide the ability to update the digital archive collections. This was not possible with the old platform.

Jan, Dawn and Board member Dee Collins worked tirelessly through the corona virus lockdown and long after to learn the new program, extract the original data, map the data to the new platform and then weed through 18,000 + records to conform to the new format. They then worked with the *PastPerfect* vendor to upload the data, images and files to the new platform. The number of hours is staggering! The result is a new version of the Digital Archive which will soon be connected to the DHS website. Containing all of the data from the prior archive, it can be updated in real-time and reflected on the website instantaneously. Also included is a new Search Engine which is more flexible using keyword search criteria.

Many hours of the work this past summer was done by our intern Jamie Mastrogiacomo, a graduate of Smith College presently pursuing her post graduate degree at UMass. As you may remember, in the spring of 2021, the Board approved the creation of the *Kathleen E. Roche Memorial Internship* in memory of Kathy's bequest to the Dennis Historical Society in 2013. In gifting her home, the Rose Victorian in West Dennis, her business, a gift and antiques shop in the carriage barn on the property and her personal assets, Kathleen indicated, "It is my wish that the Society make it a productive part of the fulfillment of its goals and purposes...for many years to come." Sale of the property provided a substantial portion of the funds the Board has designated as "endowment," enabling it to fulfill her wish. The internship program was designed by a committee created by the Board in consultation with the New England Museum Association. It is funded by a portion of the endowment. The goal is to annually award an internship to a graduate student pursuing an advanced degree in museum studies and/or history. Already, the internship is fulfilling its mission, even exceeding expectations!

Editor's Note – Wanting to make sure that the technical aspects and the chronology of this article were correct, I sent a draft to Jan for editing, which she did....**thank you Jan!**

And now, for a sneak preview of what's coming to the Dennis Historical Society Website, type <https://dennishistoricalsociety.catalogaccess.com/> in your browser and have a look!

Back to School

On the second floor of the West Dennis Graded School, in addition to the Dennis Historical Society's Maritime Museum, the Nobscussett Indian Room, office and storage space is a classroom. This classroom, which to a large degree replicates the late 19th and early 20th century ones in the Dennis Graded Schools (see the January 2021 Newsletter on our website) has been unusable for many years. Because of the need to preserve the finish and character of the original hardwood flooring, the student chairs and desks in the classroom were not secured to the floor. This resulted in a potentially dangerous situation.

A committee consisting of Pat Corcoran, Patty Sakellis and June Howes discussed ways to accomplish the much needed *fix* and procured an estimate for the cost to secure the desks and chairs, but leave the floors intact. With the need of an additional estimate for cost comparison, President Betsy Harrison suggested master woodworker David Mason. Dave's approach to the project and his prompt and reasonable estimate resulted in the DHS Board unanimously voting to proceed with the work. With Board member Bob Poskitt overseeing the project from estimate to completion in collaboration with the initial committee

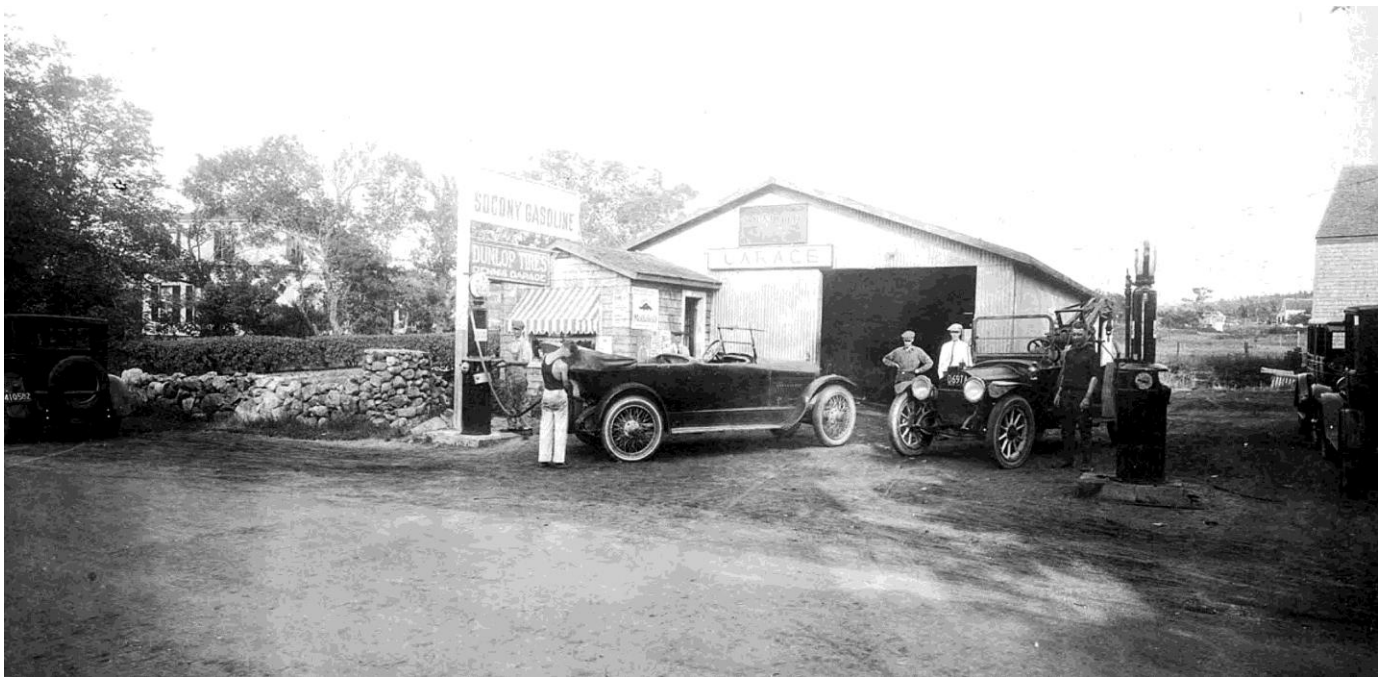
members, the work was completed in August. These pictures show the realization of a project well done. Dave Mason's fine craftsmanship is very much in evidence. At last, the classroom is safely ready for students, teachers and visitors.



These photographs, taken by Bob Poskitt, show how beautifully the student desks and chairs are mounted on individual platforms.

Learning More

The February 2022 newsletter contained errors. I am sure that it isn't the first time this has happened, nor will it be the last! The first error was in the article about Joe Hefler's blacksmith shop written by Noel Beyle. From Carole Bell, I learned that the date the *Dennis Garage* closed was 1983, not 1993, as appeared in Noel's column. When I went back and reread the rest of the newsletter article, I realized the second error. The caption under one of the photos was incorrect - *Pumping gas at Joe Hefler's after it was expanded to the corner of Nobscussett Road*. I didn't know it at the time of the February issue, but the *Dennis Garage* had moved! I should have connected the dots in June with the photo of Dan Walker filling up June Lockhart's MGTD. Hey, that's not at the corner of 6A and Nobscusset Road, but diagonally across from what was *C.L. Goodspeed's*, now *Nancy's Candy, etc*. Below is the full photo which I cropped and incorrectly captioned in February, and the description which appears with it in the Dennis Historical Society's Digital Archive. It's clearly not at the corner of Route 6A and Nobscussett Road.



Detail from the photo of the Dennis Garage on Rte. 6A, Dennis Village. Photo dated circa 1927. Chippy Whittemore, a city slicker, is filling the tank of his Marmon touring car. Others, from left are Dee Dee Whittemore, Johnny Kelley, William Ernest Crowell, and Sherby Howes. The sign says Socony Gasoline and Dunlop Tires. The wrecker is a Packard. Far left is the former residence of Town Clerk, Gerard Chapman; now it is the Scargo Cafe. The white building in the background on the far right is Carleton Hall, Old Bass River Road. The entrance to the Homestead Condos is now where the gas station sign once stood. The garage and the Whittemore Guest House, along with some smaller structures (one housing a restaurant and a real estate office), were torn down. On this site now sets the Mobil Station.

Subsequently, I learned from Carole that - *The garage moved from 777 Main Street where the Homestead Condos are located to the Flying A Tidewater/Getty station in December of 1965. Cumberland Farm bought the site and thus began the battle to allow proposed changes to the site which would have included a convenience store and multiple self-serve gas islands. By 2005, through private fundraising and support at town meeting the building came down and Nobscussett Park was born.*



Dennis Garage, 777 Main Street from the DHS Digital Archive



Dennis Garage, corner of Route 6A and Nobscussett Road from Carole Bell

Phyllis is still providing the answers

Many emails come into our website every day. Some are advertisements, some spam; some are requests to rent properties which appear on our website because they are historic buildings, but we don't own; some are offers of historical artifacts/memorabilia which are forwarded on to Curator Dawn Dellner, and some I can be a bit helpful with. Sometimes, I get help from Curator Emeritus Phyllis Horton. Here is an example which occurred last April.

MEETS DEATH WHEN HIS SHIP FOUNDERS

Capt. George F. Chase of the Cape Was Well Known Here.

Capt. George F. Chase of Dennisport, well known here where there are relatives, met his death recently when the barge Pilgrim, of which he was captain, foundered along with the barge Liberty. Capt. Chase was 69 years of age, and from a boy of nine had followed the sea, crossing to Europe twice and was a familiar figure in all American seaports. He had been a captain for 45 years, lately of the barge Pilgrim.

He is survived by his wife, Mary R. Chase, and a daughter, Mrs. Ernest Megathlin of Campello, formerly of Dennisport. The deceased also leaves a brother, Benjamin Chase of Brockton, and a sister, Mrs. Elisha Rogers of Somerville. Capt. Chase was a frank, upright character, a good husband and father, and sympathetic and radiating good cheer. He was a member of the Marine Society.

The body was taken to Dennisport Wednesday, the 15th, accompanied by his family, relatives and friends and the funeral was held in the Latter Day Saints' chapel. Elder Hal Smith officiated and selections were sung by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dobbins of Brockton.

Among those attending were Mr. and Mrs. P. M. Patterson, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Joy and son, Mr. and Mrs. David J. Nickerson, Mrs. Frank Spinnett and son, Mrs. Thomas Hunter and son, Mrs. Elthina Joy, Mrs. Charles Young, of Providence, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dobbins, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Megathlin, Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Chase, Mrs. Harry Smith, George Snow of Brockton; Mr. and Mrs. Elisha Rogers, Mrs. Alpha Baker, Mrs. Lizzie Hart, Boston.

Profuse and beautiful pieces were testimonial of the esteem of many relatives and friends.

Good afternoon, I was hoping you could elucidate for me whether the Captain Chase Road in Dennis Port is named after the famous Owen Chase of Moby Dick fame, or if there is another Captain Chase whose history I might learn about? Kitty

Hi Kitty,

Chase is an old family name in Dennis, particularly Dennis Port. I received an email a few years back with the attached clipping, the 1918 obituary of Captain George Chase. The sender was hoping it identified the person for whom Captain Chase Road was named. I sent the clipping to then Curator Phyllis Horton, and this was her response:

That would be a nice story, but I wouldn't dare say so without documentation. The road was laid out in the 1950s by one of several developers who bought up acres of land and laid out all the roads in that area. Chances are fairly good that none of them ever heard of Captain George Chase. They were all from away and here to take advantage of the building boom after WWII. Sorry--no one likes a good story better than I do.

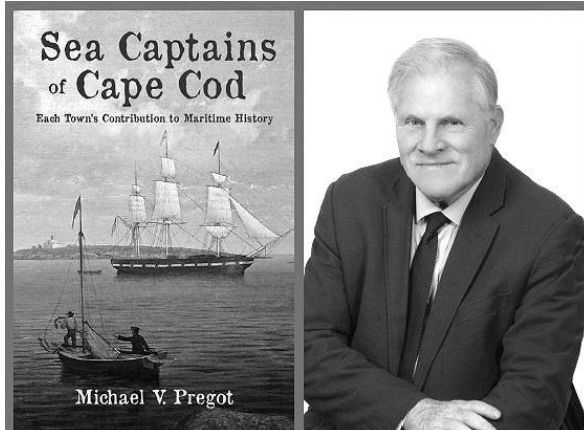
Since the developers were "from away", they may have been more familiar with the name Chase from *Moby Dick* than from anything related to local history. So, you might be right! With your interest in Dennis history, I would highly recommend *Dennis, Cape Cod* by Nancy Thacher Reid. There are many Chase references in it and probably everything you ever wanted to know about Dennis! You can order it from our online Bookstore and get a one year membership in the DHS as a gift.

Regards, Dave

***Keep checking your mail box for the invitation and details.
Coming up at the end of the month,
the DHS Annual Meeting and Luncheon!***

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The Dennis Historical Society and
Dennis Memorial Library present...

Dr. Michael Pregot
SEA CAPTAINS OF CAPE COD

Saturday, October 1, at 2pm
Dennis Memorial Library, 2nd Floor
A \$5 donation will be appreciated

Renew Your Membership

Come on folks, do it today!
If you have lost your paperwork, print out the
form found on our website and mail it with
your check to:

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660

You can do it all online using **PayPal** at
www.dennishistoricalsociety.org/

Get Involved/Membership
If it's a gift or a new membership, after
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to send the name and mailing address.

Thank you!