



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter April 2018

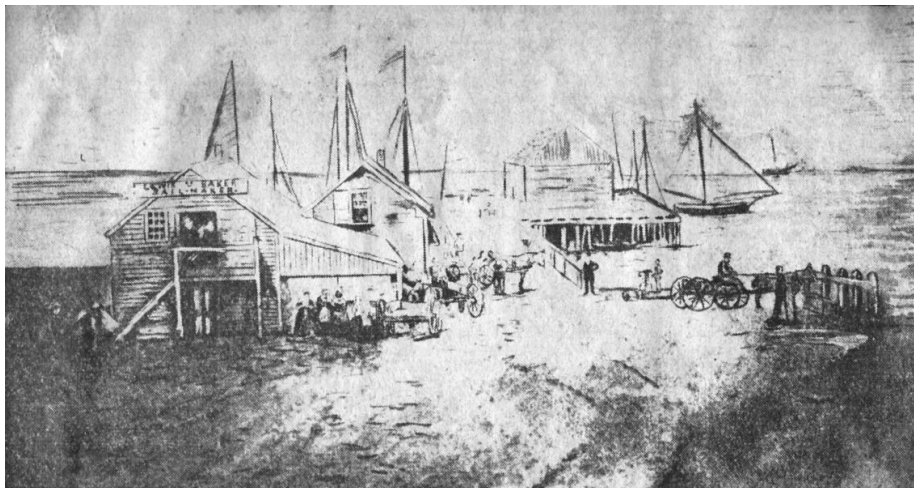
Volume 41, No4

Dennis Historical Society – copyright 2018 Internet: www.dennishistoricalsociety.org E-mail: info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

**Next Board Meetings, Tuesday, April 10th, 2 pm and Tuesday and May 8th, 2 pm
Dennis Memorial Library, 1020 Old Bass River Road Dennis Village**

Members Welcome!

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



Dennis Port 150 years ago. This scene depicts the activity at the end of Sea Street. The original, unsigned, and hung in the home of Mrs. Z. H. Small of Dennis Port 75 years ago.

The Dennis Port Wharf

The 32 year old question of finding a picture of the wharves at Dennis Port has finally been answered, merely by a fluke.

When Nancy Thatcher Reid was going full-bore on writing the history of Dennis, she started a search for a picture of one of the wharves for her book, *Dennis, Cape Cod*.

For a number of years there was an intense push to find the picture which long-time Dennis Port residents could remember hanging in the kitchen of almost every old Dennis Port home. We all remembered them, but no one had any idea when they disappeared! Printing time came with no picture! There was only a wood-cut print by Ray Perry, which is in the book....UNTIL 2017!

My niece, Janet Snow Lincoln, is married to Michael Lincoln. I mentioned to Mike that we never found a picture of the wharves. Mike told his father, Fred, and dear old Fred remembered that his mother had made a scrapbook years ago with a picture of a wharf and the rest—as they say—is history. Now, after all those years we have physical proof of one of the three 600' wharves that stretched out into Nantucket Sound and gave Dennis Port its name. This one shows the shop of Lewis M. Baker, sailmaker, and six ladies dressed in their best dresses and hats who worked in the canning factory on the wharf. In the first years they opened and canned clams from Dogfish Bar. When those were all fished out, they turned to canning mackerel. The picture goes on into the distance showing schooners tied up and other buildings with a horse and wagon in the foreground.

The irony of it all is that the picture was in West Dennis all those years about three miles from Nancy's house—and we never knew!

Phyllis Robbins Horton

Sunshine in Our Lives

In the early 1950s, it was a long, eight hour drive from Burlington, Vermont to Cape Cod on narrow, winding roads. My mother made this trip with my three older sisters and me in a car loaded down for the summer. At that time, the families who came to the Cape for summer vacations stayed until Labor Day. We stopped, overnight, in Onset to see my grandfather, Lang, who was so thankful to have us. This was a journey to the land of my father's people.

The two bedroom cottage my father built in Dennis seemed plenty big for the five of us; there were families who lived in more crowded quarters. And, when it rained we could hear the patter of the drops on the roof. We had a huge yard with plenty of space for games of badminton and croquet and the family picnics. We were glad to be there, close to the water and the beach with my father's people nearby: the aunts and cousins owned cottages next door and across the street – we were a clan.

Our cottage, like most of our friends, had no telephone. If we needed to make a phone call, we asked the family down the street to use theirs, not the lady across the road – she didn't have one either. We didn't have a TV, so we read. The library uptown had a wonderful collection of the classics set in the bookshelf to the left of the entrance. We kept busy.

There was no washing machine in the cottage, but we went out of the house spotless; my mother was a very hard worker. And, our refrigerator was just big enough to keep a few essentials chilled; the freezer section, about the size of a shoe box, was sufficient for making Popsicles. We made do and were content. It was summer living and we were happy. It was a less hurried time, and we learnt to entertain ourselves by perhaps walking on a deserted beach on a cloudy day, because we couldn't think of anything else to do, or following the fire trucks on our bikes to find out what was burning.

There was a freedom to this summer living with no school, studying, or church that we didn't have in Vermont. And, there was a mysterious wildness to the Cape with the pounding surf, the endless miles of scrub pines, and the stillness of pitch black, moonless nights.

The first week of July and August my sisters and I took swimming lessons at the public beach in the freezing cold water. Each of us took, in our turn, private tennis lessons, and as a group, we took sailing lessons at the yacht club. We met people we never would have known in Vermont: artists from Greenwich Village, the Israeli Ambassador to America, Nobel Prize recipients, and famous writers. The Cape broadened our horizons.

By the mid-sixties, most of my friends and I had summer jobs. The wages would hardly pay our college expenses, yet we worked. It was a way to keep us busy and teach us the value of money and responsibility.

It is all the crazy, stupid things we did as adolescents that bring a smile to my face now: going to the local corn field, at night, picking corn, bringing it home, and cooking it. (When my mother found out, I thought she was going to explode.) Jumping off the Old Bass River trestle, which all our parents had forbidden us to do. (I wasn't in on that one.) Borrowing the wooden lady, a clipper ship's figurehead, from the yard of a prominent Boston lawyer and talking about using her for firewood for the bon fire at the beach. The decision was negative and our futures were crime free.

The taste of salt water and the warm sun on my shoulders is as close to heaven as I can get here on this earth. Like most places, the Cape has changed, but fortunately, it still has areas with charm, including Dennis Village. I will always be a summer person and think of the Cape as a place for swimming, tennis, and sailing and come Labor Day, I know I must leave and settle into winter living.

By Martha R. Lang, Ph.D.

The Old School House

By Evelyn (Eva) Crowell, 1934

Eva was the youngest daughter of Captain Prince Sears & Polly Dillingham Foster Crowell. She was born March 9, 1854. She married Samuel L. Powers, Esq., from Newton, MA. Samuel later became a State Representative. This story was written in 1934 when she was 80 years old. It is from her memory of the time she was 5, about 1859.

"My recollections of the little old school house date back to my fifth year. It was located just below the house of Captain Milton Hedge on the opposite side of the road. (Hedge lived on Center St. at the corner of School. The school was on School St. at the NW corner of School & J. H. Sears Rd.) The building consisted of one small room with a raised platform in front for the teacher's desk, and at the opposite end of the room double desks for the pupils with two persons at each desk and a seating capacity of about 24. A stove occupied the center of the room leaving a small space in front near the platform for classes in recitation.

It would seem that in so small a room a stove would give out sufficient heat but such was not the case as pupils in the back seats were forever asking permission to sit or stand near the stove to get warm.

The teacher was Miss Lydia Sears who taught previous to my entrance and from then on for five or six years until the new school building was erected, near Worden Hall (1862). We were all very fond of her but never called her by any name save teacher. It was teacher can I do this or teacher can I do that.

I recollect one of the girl pupils coming to school with whooping cough. We were all most envious and could think of nothing more desirable than to whoop the way she did. So we all gathered around as close to her as possible. The result was what might be expected. One after another, they came down with the disease.

In those days a cough was no excuse for staying away from school, so we sat and whooped to our hearts delight. There were rewards of merit given out for excellence in class work and one good conduct award consisting mostly of colored pictures on card board. The New England primer was also given out for the same purpose and some of the terse sentences come to my mind such as "In Adams fall we sinned all", "The eagles flight is made by might", "My book and heart shall never part". Bad behavior was punished by slaps on the hand with a wooden ruler, kept in the teachers desk, and what close attention was given to school lessons when the desk was opened and the dreaded stick appeared. Another task for unruly pupils was the untying of knots in a string twisted up for that purpose into a bunch of hard knots. Not being an expert myself in the task of lessening knots, I remember well sitting on the edge of the platform and knowing the idle boys and girls had their eyes on me in a furtive watch out. I would occasionally give a loud whoop (being then a whooping cough victim) which in some mysterious way saved me the embarrassment of being looked at. During the civil war the school made bags of pink and white calico filled with thread, buttons needles and bandages for the soldiers. There was also a good deal of work on samplers putting in the letters of the alphabet.

It is a long road traveling back from 80 years to 5 but I have endeavored to tell only what is remembered without drawing on my imagination so that while the story is very simple it is I believe correct in outline."

Eva Crowell Powers

Article provided by Bo Durst

Eva is Bo Durst's great, grand aunt, b. 1854, d. 1942, sister to Bo's great, grandfather, Edwin D. Crowell. She is buried in Newton, MA where she and her husband Samuel lived.

Editor's Note:

Thank you Phyllis, Martha and Bo for sharing these wonderful bits of Cape Cod history!

If you have a story to share, please email it to me, Dave Talbott, at:

info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

Thank you!

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660-0607

Non-profit Org.
US POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 24
South Yarmouth, MA
02664

Mark your Calendar Again

April's Big Event!

**Tales from Our Past III
with the Historical Society of
Old Yarmouth**

Saturday, April 28th, 7:00 pm

Sunday, April 29th, 2:00 pm

Captivating vignettes from our past.

**Carleton Hall
1006 Old Bass River Road
Dennis Village**

*\$15.00 donation, or \$12.00 donation for
(DHS Members)*

It's Membership Renewal Time!

When your membership renewal arrives in the mail, don't just renew your own membership, start a new membership for a family member, or friend with a connection to the Town of Dennis.

Not only will your gift be appreciated, it will help grow your Society!

Please include a note with the name and mailing address of the gift recipient along with your payment.

You can do so online using **PayPal** at <http://www.dennishistoricalsociety.org>
Get Involved/Membership

After making your payment, email us at info@dennishistoricalsociety.org to send the name and address of the recipient.

Thank you!