



Dennis Historical Society

Newsletter

June 2018

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**Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, June 12th, 2:00 pm, Josiah Dennis Manse Museum, 61 Whig Street, Dennis
Members Welcome!**

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

The Rose Victorian has been sold

From our President:

Farewell beloved Rose Victorian. May you be blessed with good fortune as new owners enjoy your historic charm and personality. You were an enchanting home and refuge to Captain Calvin, Dr. Osborne, Kathy, DHS and others. Five years ago we received a most wonderful gift from Kathleen Emily Roche. Pete and Burt designed an operations plan that allowed us to maintain the RV and protect Kathy's legacy. Our volunteers have cleaned and sorted teacups and teapots, lamps and chandeliers and many other wonderful surprises. The Gift Shop thrived under command of June, Pat, Rebecca, Jean and so many others. In April, I signed the last document to send you to a new adventure. Kathy's legacy lives on in a DHS Fund, almost the same in terms of dollars now as when we received it, and we are richer by far because of our stewardship. As June noted, "Pete and Kathy must be smiling". We're proud of you Rose Vic, Diane.

Tales from Our Past 111 a huge success

On the evening of April 28th at 7:00 pm and the afternoon of the 29th at 2:00 pm, attendees at Carleton Hall in Dennis Village were treated to a wonderful series of vignettes performed jointly by the Dennis Historical Society and the Historical Society of Old Yarmouth. Produced and directed by our own Terri Fox, who wrote and performed as the narrator and HSOY's Duncan Oliver who starred in the role of Town Crier. The history based vignettes spanned the years from the 1630s to 2018 and the show was accompanied by the live and lively music of Bill Archie, Bob Hagopian, Bob Aumueller and Vince Kraft.

Bo and Ken Durst told the story of Captain Edmund Sears of East Dennis, who happened to be in Boston Harbor on December 16, 1773. He was off loading his ship's cargo when the famous, or infamous, depending on which side one was on, Boston Tea Party started. Of course he joined in, thoroughly enjoyed himself, and quickly returned home early the next morning...before the discovery of all that tea floating in the water. Bo, as Mrs. Sears, joins him onstage to tell her side of the story, as the Captain arrived home without so much as a "Good day, wife, I've missed you," and promptly threw out all their tea. Her favorite teapot followed it out the garden window. Then, he announced that they would not buy any clothing, fabric or tea from England until this unfair tax tariff was repealed. His wife complained that she and his daughters would now be responsible for clothing their family of eleven, along with their regular chores. He apologizes for making that decree without thinking and promises to work together so all the family will be happy. Ken was costumed in the seaman's outfit worn by Pete Howes at so many Society and Manse events. It was generously donated to the DHS in Pete's memory by his wife, June.

Bo Durst returned as Minerva Handren Sears, wife of Captain Joshua Sears, who has just been given command of the newly christened Shiverick Clipper "Wild Hunter." He was planning a voyage with his wife and recently adopted daughter Lulu, age 3. Minerva and Joshua were unable to have children of their own. She sailed with him on most of his voyages. She shared life at sea from a woman's perspective, and also, that she kept a diary of her thoughts, observations and adventures. Minerva also shared one of her poems "The Meeting of Ships at Sea".

Bob Poskitt was in 2 modern sketches. First was his description of the 2016 /2017 Cranberry exhibit in the Jericho Barn, and next some upcoming events including a repeat of "Children on the Farm" which was so successful last summer. The children learned how to wash clothes outdoors, using a wash tub, scrubber board and rinse bucket. After washing, they had to wring out the excess water, shake out the wrinkles and hang the clothes on a clothesline using wooden clothespins. The kids enjoyed it so much they all got back in line to do it again! Boys and girls were equally intrigued. Ah, the simple pleasures!



(Photo provided by Bob Poskitt)

DHS Cast Members

(Pictured from left to right)

Bob Poskitt, Dick Roy, Bo & Ken Durst and Terri Fox

Richard "Dick" Roy, told about the Saga of the Cross Rip Lightship, which took place in late January and early February of 1918, when Nantucket Sound was frozen with packed ice. He is a docent in the Maritime Room at the Josiah Dennis Manse. Dick told this story from his present day perspective, as if the audience were visitors in the Maritime Room and could see the pictures, the model of the Cross Rip and the quarter-board that washed up on Depot Street beach a year after the lightship was lost. Light ships were floating lighthouses. They had no motors and were towed, then anchored in place to mark dangerous shoals and bars in shipping channels. The crew, usually 6 to 8, lived on-board and had alternating shore leave.

Both Bob and Dick were in the final "future" scene as Dennis picketers on Chapin Beach demanding the Dennis DPW to put more sand on the beach. On the Gray's Beach and Bass Hole side, Yarmouth picketers are hoping for a strong nor'easter to erode sand from Chapin and move Bass Hole to the east...thereby changing the northern "water boundary line" between Dennis and Yarmouth, to favor Yarmouth. It seemed an easy solution centuries ago to use Bass River and Chase garden River as "natural" boundary lines, but storms can radically change rivers. Chase Garden River is now Chase Garden Creek because of one great gale in October of 1841. Now storm erosion of the beaches might make more changes.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable show! The HSOY players were wonderful as well. Each Society cleared \$660, which was terrific, but the real measure of the success of the performances were the audible chuckles and the many smiles in the audience!

Thank you to Terri Fox, not only for all the hard work and wonderful narration, but also for providing most of the copy for this article!

Schooner given to Honor Phyllis Horton

At the 2018 season opening event, *Hoisting the Sails* at the West Dennis Graded School/Dennis Maritime Museum, Phyllis Horton was honored with a gift to the Dennis Historical Society of a two-masted schooner.

Built in the 1920s, by his uncle, Eugene Smyser in Harwichport, the *Ram's Head*, languished in Dave Talbott's basement for over 35 years, its masts broken and rigging gone. Knowing that Phyllis wanted a schooner for the museum, Dave spent much of the 2017- 2018 winter restoring the ship to give to the DHS. Quoting Phyllis, "It is safe to say that almost every one of our 650 documented Dennis sea captains had command of a schooner sometime in his career. There were six shipyards in Dennis most of which built at least one schooner along with other vessels."

A wonderful event, the exhibit was very well attended, and visitors were in awe of the hours and hours of research and hard work which Phyllis has done. A plaque presented with the schooner cited "her tireless efforts to preserve and promote the Maritime History of the Town of Dennis".



Phyllis and her schooner



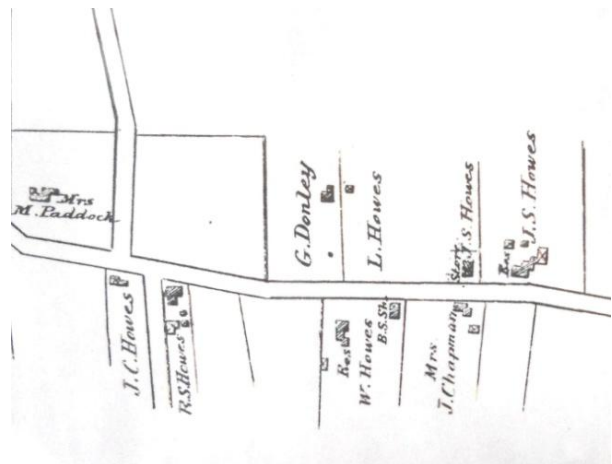
Worker Bees (l-r): Ray Ward, Bob Poskitt
Dave Talbott and Larry Symington



A Final Polish

Editor's Note:

Thanks to our readers, Photo 34 in the May Newsletter is no longer "unknown." The house was the home of James S. Howes (1814-1890), great grandfather of Geta (Gertrude) Crowell. It was located on Rt. 6A, east of the present East Dennis PO. The house was destroyed by fire, probably in the 1950s, possibly the early 1960s. The owner was a musician. She died in the fire. The barn was saved, and is still there. It became part of a complex of motel units and cabins know as the *Stage Coach Motel*. What was left of the house was torn down and replaced with the existing one. It is now condominiums. The house was correctly identified first, by Mary Kuhrtz, then confirmed by Bo Durst and Joel Crowell. Scott and Robin Walker, who also correctly identified the house, provided its location on an 1880 map of East Dennis and an additional photo (below) from the DHS archives. They would like to know when the house was torn down and when the motel was built? If you know/remember the dates for either occurrence, please email them to info@dennishistoricalsociety.org. Thanks to everyone who participated. It is amazing what our members collectively know! A final note: Joel says that the barn was used by *Canada Dry* in the 1930s and his Uncle Nye worked there!



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JUNE
23



JOSIAH DENNIS MANSE OPENING

Celebrating Dennis's 225th
Birthday All Summer Long

Step back in time to the 18th century at the home
of the minister for whom Dennis is named ... and visit our
newest exhibit on the town's 1793 incorporation.

NOBSCUSSETT ROAD AND WHIG STREET
GRAND OPENING SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1-4PM



This house in East Dennis, "Photo 16-03," circa 1920, in the
DHS Digital Archives, has no label, listed as "unknown
house". Source is the "Geta Crowell Collection."

If anyone can identify it, or provide any information on it,
please email me at info@dennishistoricalsociety.org.
Helping to fill in the blanks for archive pictures will be an
ongoing, newsletter feature.