



Dennis Historical Society

Newsletter

March 2018

Volume 41, No3

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**Board Meeting, March 13, 2 pm, Dennis Memorial Library, 1020 Old Bass River Road, Dennis
Members Welcome!**

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

LONG LOST PARSONAGE FINDS ITS CHURCH

~ A Parsonage with Three Lives ~

Finding a new DHS Newsletter in my mailbox means wonderful reading in the evening ahead! There is always a new story, or discovery, bringing to light pieces of my Cape Cod history. With each issue, one reads of our ancestors' long ago daily lives, their hardships, tales of their ships and voyages, their homes, families, work, churches, businesses, and of those who peopled them. Thus, when my May 2017 Newsletter arrived, I was prepared for a “good read!” Never, however, did I anticipate finding clues leading to the actual church that originally belonged with the parsonage which I had saved, in the nick of time, from being burned down 45 years ago...more on that to follow!

In Phyllis Horton's tale of the “Traveling Church,” there was the important clue. In 1828, the original Baptist Church in North Harwich moved to West Harwich, since the congregants had shifted south to West and South Dennis, Dennis Port and West Harwich. Originally it was located at the intersection of Depot Street and Queen Anne's Road (aka Main Street), near the site of the present, Baptist/North Harwich Cemetery. Thank you, Phyllis for the article, and to Henry Kelley II, for inspiring her to write!

The Parsonage, its beginnings and its Baptist Church

Since the DHS Newsletter clue, I have rather successfully researched the early story of this parsonage, while also expanding my knowledge of U.S. history. I learned the Baptist Church origins were to institutionalize the concept of separation of Church and State in our country. Purported to be one of the first Baptist Churches in Massachusetts, the origins of the North Harwich Baptist Church date to 1757, when the anabaptistical wing of the second Separate Church organized a church there of the Baptist Order. Elder Richard Chase was invited to be its first Pastor. While he served until 1777, the first 20 year records are lost, yet it has long been known that many early members were residents of other villages and towns.

For those unfamiliar with North Harwich, it occupies a somewhat remote corner between three towns, Brewster, Harwich and Dennis. Before 1700, Samuel Hall was its earliest known resident, building a mill, Hall's Mill, at the headwaters of the Herring River. Later a small village emerged, only a “stone's throw” today from the eastern boundary of Dennis, south of present day Route 6. Perhaps you wonder why the DHS is writing here about North Harwich; the answer is in the genealogy of most old Cape Cod families!

North Harwich is now bifurcated by Route 6, the Mid-Cape Highway, with an underpass between the pieces. South of the underpass, is the original village center, with its 150-200 yr. old homes. During the 19th century it was a very busy place. There are fresh-water ponds and lakes that led to early mills and industries, as well as cranberry bogs. Also as important, was the North Harwich Railroad Depot, long providing the only freight and passenger service for West Dennis, West Harwich, Dennis Port and South Dennis. North Harwich became a kind of incubator, with the children born there establishing themselves throughout other Mid-Cape villages. Thus, North Harwich was related to the Dennises and to the other Harwiches by the genealogy of

the families. We do recommend a drive to North Harwich, including its outskirts, where there is a public, well-hidden, old Kelley Cemetery.

Following Rev. Chase was Rev. Samuel Nickerson. He was then succeeded by Rev. Enoch Eldredge, who was followed by Rev. Abner Lewis of Freetown, the last recorded pastor serving from 1794 to 1809. From local and town histories, plus a close examination of the parsonage's design, it appears that it was likely built for Rev. Lewis and his family between 1795 and 1798. After Rev. Lewis' departure in 1809, its use as a parsonage is unrecorded, however, in 1828, the Church was moved to its present location on Main Street in West Harwich. The replacement of that church was built in 1841, as the West Harwich Baptist Church.

Elbridge Gerry Doane, Sr., b. 1813, son of Capt. Nathaniel Doane (1781 -1866) and Mary Knowles Paine (1783–1871) was probably the first owner after the house passed from the hands of the church. Sometime between 1828 and 1840, he moved the parsonage from North Harwich to Harwichport. Barnstable Registry of Deeds records show appropriate real estate transfers, vaguely described, between Elbridge's future father-in-law and Rev. Abner Lewis. A successful merchant, Elbridge, m. 8 Oct. 1835 to Temperance Kelley (1815 –1904) of North Harwich, moving into the parsonage in Harwichport, c.1835, where most of their children were born.

Their 2nd son, Edwin Ruthvin Doane (1838-1931) was born in the parsonage, going to sea as a mariner. Captain Doane married Anna M. Eaton (1844 – 1933) in Deer Isle, Maine, later moving to 104 Lincoln Rd. East Boston, where for years he was Tug Boat Captain for Boston Harbor, spending summers at the parsonage. Our own son, Cartier Tatibouet cherishes Edwin Doane's original Sea Chest.

Their daughter, Nellie Taylor Doane (1868–1961), although b. Deer Isle, Maine, was in Harwich High School's first graduating class. An artistic girl, she went to New York City, where she apparently married a physician, Dr. William Meddaugh Dunning (1868 – 1951). Their only child, Harriet, was born in there in 1897. By 1900, having separated from Dunning, Nellie was living alone in Philadelphia, with 3 yr. old daughter Harriet. Nellie spent most summers of her life at the parsonage, later being its sole owner.

Harriet Doane Dunning (1897–1978) lived well, for regardless of the circumstances of her parent's marriage, her father provided well for her financially. Graduating from Radcliffe (Harvard's former woman's college), followed by a 6-month European trip to 10 countries, she became a life-long, high school English teacher, spending only summers at the parsonage. After her mother's death, as it became a burden both physically and financially, she tried to sell the house for years, then it was to be burned - until our discovery!

The Parsonage, then - saved from Fire; now - 47 years later.



The "Lost Parsonage," it is now located in the village of Harwichport at 435 Lower County Road, where, at the intersection with Ocean Avenue, is a c. 1795 white trimmed, Cape home of indeterminate style, distinguished by two full front doors.

On a beautiful fall day in 1970, my husband and I were visiting my parents, Tina and Burton Barrows in Dennis. When they told us that Harriet Dunning's house, a derelict property long for sale in Harwichport, was to be burned by the Town, I was horrified! With years of back taxes due, Miss Dunning, with no heirs and no funds to maintain the house, had negotiated with the town that the building be used as a real life, house burn exercise, for the Harwich Fire Department. I had to see the house, as Elbridge Gerry Doane, Sr, owner and mover of the house to Harwichport, was my Gr. Gr. Grandmother's brother and still considered family! As appalled as we were with its condition, I was most enthusiastic about saving this former parsonage and unique house from its burn-down date, just 2 days away!

In its favor, it had potential; four bedrooms, two staircases – one a true "captains staircase," a summer kitchen, spaces to install baths, an attached carriage house, and an acre located on the Ocean St. corner, leading to a lovely beach. The downside seemed to be impossible in 1970; no indoor plumbing, an outhouse, Franklin stoves, no central heat, a hand-pump for cold water in the kitchen. The price was \$16,000, and the Harwich bank was pleased to give us a mortgage – young as we were, to save this historic house. Thus, we unexpectedly ended up with a house on Cape Cod – while living in an apartment in Hawaii and fully employed there!

The Parsonage, a Century in Harwichport.

We renovated and named it -"*The Parsonage*," but any accurate history had disappeared. By 1973, with the addition of two Tatibouet babies, it became the wonderful family home that it remains today. It certainly was a lost parsonage, with no church relationship known. To my inquiries, folks were vague, as "built in 1799," or "a parsonage from somewhere in North Harwich." Now its earlier Harwichport years are known, with "*The Parsonage*" settled in Harwichport, still separated, but no longer lost from its church.

We sold "*The Parsonage*" in 1975, and the two owners since then have continued to improve and care for the home – adding a bit to the rear, preserving the narrow open porch across the front and most importantly, retaining the two separate Front Doors, as seen in the 2017 photo.

Very coincidentally, when in the 5th Grade, I asked to attend the West Harwich Baptist Church Sunday School. Little did I know that one day I would own and live in its original parsonage! A few years later my great grandfather's massive Bible was given to me. An inscribed Presentation Bible to Royal Phelps Kelley of Dennis Port, it was given to him from the West Harwich Baptist Church, in his honor and for his service, at the time of his move to Brockton in 1902.

Cape Cod indeed is a gloriously small place, interwoven with the sights, stories, homes, works and pathways of our ancestors ~ the predecessors of this special peninsula that has, over and over, played its role in our country's history. All of which indicates that more than the prospect of a fire led me years later to "*The Parsonage*," to save it and to eventually help write "The Long, Lost Parsonage Finds its Church."

Jane Barrows Tatibouet
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A descendant of Mayflower & Cape Cod Families,
particularly of Dennis, Harwich & Yarmouth

Editor's Note:

Thank you Jane for sharing this well researched and interesting bit of Cape Cod history! In the months to come, members can expect articles by Jane, Phyllis Horton, Bob Poskitt, Bo Durst and yours truly. If you have a story to share, please email it to me, Dave Talbott, at:

info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

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Mark your Calendar

Saturday, April 28th

10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Cape Cod Museum Trail Festival

DHS Exhibition Booth

Hyannis Youth & Community Center

141 Basset Lane, Hyannis

Experience in Archival Studies Needed!

The Dennis Historical Society is seeking a part time volunteer who has experience in archival studies. Your Society is continuing on its digital archive project in collaboration with the Digital Commonwealth of MA and the Boston Public Library and needs and welcomes help with its collections. If interested, or know of someone who might be, please contact Bob Poskitt at BobPoskitt@comcast.net, or 508-394-0310. Thank you!

Give the Gift of History

When your membership renewal arrives in the mail this spring, 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/>**
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After making your payment, email us at **info@dennishistoricalsociety.org** to send the name and address of the recipient.

Thank you!