



dennishs@cape.com

# Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

www.dennishistsoc.org

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Send letters & stories to Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, S. Dennis 02660 or pmrhorton@aol.com

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## More Grapes...Or Is It Gripes?

Good heavens, by now you may be thinking the only grapes you want to contemplate are the kind that comes in a bottle. The November newsletter had a piece about picking grapes and making jelly. Then the March edition repeated the same story. That newsletter came to us from the sunny shores of Florida where our editor either “had a senior moment” or spent too much time in the sun. (Sorry, Peter.) Then, to add insult to injury, when I sent the original article to Pete in October I dropped half the story. My computer skills range from none to just enough to get myself in trouble.

I had thought to send the missing part in December but it didn't happen. Now I'll do it because this is the best part of the story to history-minded folks. So...

We tend to think of Victorian ladies as being delicate, prone to the vapors and fainting couches. That's not quite so.

Dennis women put great effort into their jelly and preserve making. Each berry or piece of fruit was carefully examined for any blemish. Only the best would do for “her jelly”. It was cooked according to her special formula and taken from the heat of her wood-fired cast iron stove at an exact moment. When it finished bubbling she turned it into the jelly bag, pulled the top string tight and raised the steaming hot dripping bag up until it cleared the top of the drip pan, then fastened it to a hook in the ceiling and left it to drip. This is a very difficult chore as it sometimes weighted upwards of 20 pounds and the trick was to do it without getting scalded by the dripping bag...and I've seen women in their 70s do it. Mind you, this is in the summer and the kitchen is well over 100 degrees.

That jelly bag was immediately off limits to everyone. No pressing on it to make more juice. That would make the jelly cloudy.

When the juice was ready she made her jelly and sealed it with paraffin wax, tossed the drained fruit out to the chickens, washed her jelly bag to be ready for next time, made a cup of tea, changed her apron and sat down to enjoy looking at her gleaming gems in the afternoon sun.

Over the years many Dennis women took their jellies to Barnstable County Fair for judging against offerings from other Cape towns. Dennis usually fared well and over the years many blue ribbons came home.

The other venue for women to enjoy accolades was at the church or social hall suppers. Here, the competition was just as intense as the fair, but more personal, these women were friends and family. Bread or biscuits and jelly were a staple on every long table in the hall and were replenished when needed. The woman's husband always announced to all around to “try some of Emma's jelly. It's go-o-o-od.” He wanted his fellow diners to know that he ate like this on a regular basis. Not that he had much to do with it being there but, hey, a guy's got to have some bragging rights!

Times have changed from my grandma's time for just about everything for which we should all be grateful. I didn't have to stoke my gas stove with wood, I washed and kept the jelly jars hot in my dishwasher, and, yes, I did have the luxury of putting my juice into the freezer and making jelly later when I had more time.

Phyllis Horton

## The Compost Pile: May's Grapevine info from Environment Committee

A compost pile can be located in any shady spot in the garden. One can start with a pile of leaves and dirt and worms. Rake out a hole in the middle and start adding peels, skins, seeds, old disease free plant material, eggs shells. Do not use household animal wastes or any meat scraps. Some lime may be added to hasten the decomposition. Cover it all with dirt and leaves and leave it for 2 or 3 weeks.

Phyllis Horton

## TREASURES FROM THE MANSE

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### 4<sup>th</sup> Chronicles Chap. 1

- 1 – Now it came to pass when Howes whose surname is Chapman which was the son of Isaac was Post Master<sup>[1]</sup>, that there lived in Crow Town a bachelor whose name was Eurial
- 2 – And behold Eurial was possessed of a charger whose name was Black Hawk
- 3 – And it came to pass on a certain night after Black Hawk had partaken of the provinder provided by Eurial his master, that his hunger was not appeased and he stretched forth his neck and put forth [over page] his legs in search of that which satisfyeth the inner horse.
- 4 – Now the legs of B Hawk being exceeding long the became entangled and he could not draw them forth but he struggled mightily until he had fallen
- 5 – Behold when the morning had come soon after cock crowing when Eurial had risen he went & [???]tdway to look after Balck Hawk
- 6 – And when he had come into the place where the horse was he was astonished for the beast had fallen –
7. Then Eurial reasoned with himself saying, had not B Hawk struggled hard and become weary and therefore he said unto [next page] Elnathan his father, father let him lay till the morrow peradventure he may rest himself – and will arise again
- 8 – Now when the morrow had come behold when Eurial went in unto the horse which was fallen he put str[???] mightily to arise but could not –
- 9 And he had beaten his head in so much that on eye had become darkened, and the covering of hair which the Lord had given him was much torn –
- 10 – Whereupon Eurial was much moved, and he went in unto his father saying father behold Black Hawk has waxen weak, one eye has become darkened and the covering of hair which the Lord has given him is much torn and therefore we must Slay him for he is henceforth no account unto us
- 11 Now when Eurial had thus declared unto to his father, he was moved and the great and loving heart of his mother Rebecca was grieved and she wept –
- 11 – And Rebeca Said unto Murry which was the Son of John which was the Son of Job which was the Son of Nathan the Priest, come thou up to the help of Eurial my son, and Elnathan his father that the horse die not [next page]
- 12 And Murray the Son of John answered and said I will come, and straight-way Murray called unto Aaron the father of Cynthia his wife and he also came up to he help of Eurial
- 13 Now when they came to the place where the horse lay they found Eurial, and Josiah his brother and Elnathan his father
- 14 And behold the heart of Eurial had died within him and he cried saying behold the horse B. Hawk has fallen and will rise again no more
- 14 But Aaron which was the father of Murrays [over page] wife Seake and said now to Eurial, be of good cheer thine horse shall rise again
- 15 – And straight way the heart of Eurial was comforted, and his faith increased much, and he hearkened unto the voice of Aaron.
- 16 And again Aaron said unto Eurial the bachelor bring unto me strong cords even cords of Manilla
- 17 And when they were brought Aron fastened them about the body of the horse which had fallen and above to the beams fastened he them –

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<sup>1</sup> Howes Chapman became postmaster in 1861, thus the dating of this article.

- 18 Again Aaron the father of Murray's wife, Eurlial the bachelor, Josiah his [next page] brother and Elnathan his father lay hold on the cords, and when they had wrought mightily behold the horse again stood up and began to eat of the provender which Eurlial had provided –
- 19 And the horse of Eurlial Stands to this day on four legs where upon Eurlial is exceedingly rejoiced –
- 20 – Moreover the chronicles of the horse which had fallen are ended

And, I suppose, we should say – AMEN!!!

Burt Derick

## **Captain Theophilus Outwits the Pirates**

(Captain Theophilus Chase, West Dennis)

In the year 1850 Captains of ships had been warned not to accept cargo destined for the Island of Martinique. However, mariners of Cape Cod had sand in their shoes and pooh-pooed the warning. Many a Cape Cod sea captain had and his crew had been captured, murdered and the contents of their ship confiscated by Pirates operating along the coastline of the Island of Martinique. Apparently these river pilots had infiltrated the ranks of the legitimate captains and pilots operating in this area. (Sounds like something that would happen in businesses to this day.)

Great-grandfather decided that there was a tidy sum of money to be made if a ship's cargo could safely be delivered to the Island of Martinique. Because of the danger of piracy, consignees offered enormous rewards for safely delivered cargoes, therefore, as Capt. Theophilus loved taking chances he declared, "I have no idea or intention to deliver my cargo to Davy Jones locker or to release my "hold" on life!" "The hell with the pirates, bring them on!" The Bradley's course was set for the Island of Martinique! Because of the rocks along the shoreline and the narrow channel, pilots were very necessary if one was to reach his final destination within the harbor.

After days of sailing the man on watch reported a fleet of tiny boats directly ahead. As one of the small boats approached the Bradley, the sailor navigating it signaled he wished to board the Captain's ship. Great-grandfather gave the order to his crew to lower Jacobs's ladder and the man came aboard. He had the necessary credentials, well sort of, and stated he was a pilot who could guide the Bradley safely into the harbor. The story goes...Capt. Theophilus looked him over from head to foot and said, "Listen, damn you, one false move towards the rocks or the beach and I'll put you down with the sharks. Now, up on the bridge!" The anchor was hoisted and slowly the ship began to move. At first all went well, however Great-grandfather remained with this unsavory character. Soon he noticed the color of the water, also bits seaweed clinging to the sides of the Bradley, sure enough, it reflected the depth the Lead Line found of water only a few fathoms - and then a grating sound was heard as the ship began to scrape the bottom. Sure enough, his erstwhile pirate alias pilot friend was taking him to the rocky shore and beach.

Very quietly Great-grandfather stepped behind his guide putting his revolver against the back of his head. "Now, you son of a b..., get this ship back into the channel before you become shark steak!" Before they reached the safety of the quayside, Great-grandfather had the first mate (who was Uncle Lafe) take charge of the ship, the prisoner put into irons. The cargo was safely discharged to the correct destination and the pirate turned over to the legitimate authorities and the Bradley hoisted sails and headed for the open seas.

Lora (Chase) Nowotne

### **Facebook**

First we had e-mail, then we had a web page, and now in 2011 the Dennis Historical Society has a Facebook page. Terri Fox has volunteered to be its administrator. Please check it out and "friend" it. Thanks, Terri!

### **DENNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD MEETING**

*Note:* All members are invited to attend monthly DHS Board Meetings. The next meeting is at 3 pm on April 20 at the 1801 Jericho Historical Center, 90 Old Main Street, West Dennis.

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## THE DENNIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY

*"IN REVIEW"*

FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 10:30-NOON



*COME & SIT-A-SPELL  
while*

*Historian Burt Derick Introduces Our Resources*

*Diaries      Photographs      Ship's Logs*

*Upper Level, West Dennis Library*

*260 Main St., Rt. 28  
West Dennis*

[www.dennishistSoc.org](http://www.dennishistSoc.org)

Info: 508-398-3183

Refreshments

### *Did You Hear??*

Burt Derick has been honored by the Town of Dennis. The 2010 Town Report has been dedicated to Burt. Be sure and pick up your copy!

Besides being a devoted husband, father, grandfather and faithful friend to many, Burt loves his hometown. Over the years he has served on numerous committees and for many years been a DHS member. He is an author, historian, researcher of Town lore and people, collector, teacher, President of the Swan Lake Cemetery Association and other things too numerous to include here.

Not long ago, Nicole Muller published an article in which she labeled Burt as a modern day "Renaissance Man". Burt is many things to many folks, willing, even eager to voice his opinion on a variety of topics!. But to DHS, Burt is truly our "diamond in the rough".

*JAH*

***Congratulations, Burt Derick!!***