



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 37 No. 6 Send letters & stories to Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, S. Dennis 02660 or to pjhowes@verizon.net **August 2014**
Internet: www.dennishistoricalsociety.org Copyright 2014 - Dennis Historical Society E-Mail info@dennishistoricalsociety.org
Next Board Meeting: August 12 @ 2:00 P.M., 2nd floor, Dennis Public Library, 5 Hall St., Dennis Port

“Teeny-Tiny Library” @ Rose Victorian

*Story Hour 10:30 a.m. for ages 3-8
Wednesdays in July and August
Register at: 508-394-1696*

Rose Victorian Back-Yard Sale *Friday, August 1, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.*

Annual Teddy Bear Picnic
Saturday, August 2, Noon-3:00 p.m.
For all children with their beloved teddy
A picnic on the lawn & more.
1801 Jericho Historical Center,
90 Old Main Street, West Dennis
Donation \$6.00.
Call - Jinny Devine 508-385-4441

Dennis Festival Days at The School
Friday, August, 15, 1 P.M.-4:00 p.m.
Learn about school life in the 1800's
Paintings, Dennis Maritime heritage.
West Dennis Graded School
67 School St., West Dennis

Colonial Day at the Manse
Saturday, August 16, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Red Sox 2013 Trophy 11 a.m.- 1p.m.
*Tom Kelleher, Sturbridge Village
blacksmith*
Open hearth cooking, candle making,
spinning, pie making, children's games
1736 Josiah Dennis Manse Museum
77 Nobsussett Road, Dennis Village

Herb Day at Jericho
Sunday, August 17, 1:00 p.m.
Celebrate Dennis Festival Days with
herbal demonstrations, crafts, treats.
Tour Captain Theophilus Baker's
“Cape Cod House”.
Historic tools in the Barn at Jericho.
1801 Jericho Historical Center
90 Old Main Street, West Dennis.

Sea Captain's Cemetery Walk
Friday, August 22, 10:00 a.m.
Join *Terri Fox* to tour the
South Dennis Congregational Church
Meet on the Church steps
216 Main St., South Dennis
Rain date Sunday, August 24, 2:00 p.m

We are very fortunate to have many great books and manuscripts that relate vignettes of life in times long past such as these. Then compare these times with what our grandchildren have and know-

MEMORIES OF THE PAST

“I will now take you (my readers) back to the anchorage; the fish had been caught and of course the next move was to dress and salt, to make ready for another day. I will not enter into particulars any further than to say that every man must look to the cleaning and salting of his own. The fish my two brothers caught, together with the two barrels I had taken, were all reckoned in the Skipper's Lot, which when we put together counted up to near twenty five barrels, if not more, and thinking perhaps that it would do me no harm to lend a hand my brothers proposed that I should lay up, that is pick the fish up from the barrels and lay them on the splitting board for Father to split. This I thought at first was not a hard task, but boylike soon began to weaken, as the one steady quick motion had to be kept up to keep my brothers going at the gib tub, turning from side to side occasionally trying to find an easy position that would serve to give me some rest. I turned once too many for as the deck was wet and slippery, and my eyes perhaps were growing heavy from the want of sleep, my foot slipped and I lost my balance, so with a roar and a shout from that whole company (my Father included) that could be heard above the roar of the old harbor bars I landed head down in that slimy, scaly, fishy fish tub. With the light that shone from a dozen lanterns, so arranged as to give light to all those seemingly happy, hardy, jovial fishermen, that they could do better and quicker work, upon me also, as I had that sudden, unexpected and unwelcome plunge into that fish receptacle. Was I hurt in body or in spirits, did I act like one that had been in a scrap and get the worst of it, had all the grit been taken out of me, and I left – as it were – like a wet rag ready to fall in a heap on deck? Not much, for like an eel that very much alive in twisting, turning and wriggling, I left my fishy companions in the tub, and quicker, or sooner, than it takes to write it, was standing like a game cock, defiant and ugly, back again to the deck. All hands by this time had gathered around as though there was to be a second performance, but the show so far as turning somersaults in the Mackerel Tub was concerned was over and the curtain rung down. Mr Dunham (our cook and a good old soul) although seemingly a little flighty in the upper story, was right there to see what had happened to the boy, and to him I was given in charge, and being told by my Father that my services could be dispensed with, that I had better go with the Chef and get cleaned up, and turn in for the night, I reluctantly obeyed. On arriving in the fore-castle my clothes were removed and I was treated to what may be called a genuine

Turkish bath, of which – as I have since thought – I did not stand in need. However, the Doctor's orders, I thought then, must be complied with and so I obeyed, and in fact felt none the worse for it. After donning my second suit, and the dirty one was rinsed in water and hung out behind the cook stove to dry, I made my way aft, sought my father's bunk, and after a thought or two of home and Mother, was soon lost in the arms of Morpheus, the God of dreams."

Excerpt from the book by *Joshua Eldredge Howes*, edited by Burt Derick

PAYING TOLL

Reliance and Thomas walked slowly along the road toward her home, talking of his voyage and of the village happenings in his absence. When they reached her gate he said, "There's a Cape frolic over to South Yarmouth tonight, I hear tell. I presume likely I can get Cap'n Ed's horse and buggy if you hanker to go."

Reliance's shining eyes betrayed her eagerness but she hesitated dutifully until she had secured the necessary parental permission.

That evening, when Thomas drove up to the door, Reliance ran out, looking her sweetest in a sprigged challis gown, protected by a long dolman cape, and with a blue fascinator framing her face.

It proved to be an evening to store away in memory. Thomas and Reliance made a handsome couple as they danced the reels and sang the rounds that interspersed them. When they had enjoyed the

bountiful collation of cake and lemonade Reliance was dismayed to discover that it was past ten o'clock.

Thomas made his way quickly to the horse-shed to get Prince and the buggy while Reliance hurriedly donned cape and hood. Prince, happy to be homeward bound, stepped along briskly until they neared the toll bridge at Bass River and found the barrier down and the toll-house in darkness. The toll-keeper, old Uncle Peter, had



Bass River Bridge

gone to bed, sure there would be no further traffic for the night.

"It's a shame to waken the old fellow," said Thomas, "We'll just slip by and then I'll come over and pay him in the morning," and Reliance laughed breathlessly at the spice of adventure this lent to the evening. Holding Prince to a slow walk they drew up to the barrier. Thomas handed the reins to Reliance and, climbing down, lifted the white wooden bar and held it up until she had urged Prince past it. Lowering the bar quietly into its place, Thomas climbed back into the buggy and they drove on, beginning to feel that they had successfully run the gauntlet. And then Prince's hoofs struck the draw section of the bridge. It rang with a hollow sound; the heavy chains clanked, and the iron bolts groaned and grated with the joggling passage of the buggy. In the stillness of the night the din sounded terrific and Thomas exclaimed, "Drat it! That's done it, certain sure."

He hurried Prince off the draw and onto the solid portion of the bridge but just as they were rolling along sedately once more and daring to take a long breath, they heard in the distance the slam of a door and a high-pitched voice shouting, "Hey! Hey, there! You come back here, you scalawag!"

Thomas was all for whipping up Prince and driving off into the night but Reliance was shocked at the mischievous suggestion and urged him to stop and wait for Uncle Peter, adding with a little gasp, "Oh, what do you suppose he'll do?"

"Collect his toll!! It's about all he can do, I presume," grinned Thomas, "Time he gets here, like as not he'll be so tuckered out he won't be able to give his temper a proper airing."

They waited in silence until the little old, man, night-shirt flapping about thin legs and night-cap awry, came panting up, his stockinged feet thudding on the planks of the bridge.

"Thought you'd skip toll, did ye — ye cheatin' — "

Thomas interrupted him by leaning from the buggy to thrust the coins into the old man's hand, saying, "Kinda hated to disturb your rest, Uncle Peter, We was aiming to pay up come morning, We'll be getting along now. Good-night to you."

Thomas jerked the reins and they drove off, stifling their mirth, leaving Uncle Peter standing in the middle of the bridge looking after them. He sputtered feebly for a moment and then turned to hurry back to his warm house, grumbling as he padded along, "Never did see the like of it! And past 10 o'clock. Such goin's on! Don't rightly know what young folks are acomin' to nowadays."

Marion Ryder Crowell¹

Lieutenant Jonathan Howes

Lieutenant Jonathan Howes was a man of property and standing.

He had three sons, David, Jonathan and Thomas. David settled upon Suet Neck, Jonathan was killed by a whale, and Thomas retained the house and home place of his father, and transmitted it to his son Thomas, who in turn left it to his son Thomas, whose only son, died in Liverpool, Eng., with small pox. He was a young man of great promise, second mate of the ship James Perkins, with the late Capt. Seth Crowell.

He owned slaves and left one slave girl, Deborah, to his widow, to wait upon her. He also employed numbers of Indians to attend upon the taking of whales off the shore, then a common and profitable business. It is said he made money enough in one season, with his Indians, by whaling, to pay for his house. A daughter of the last Thomas Howes married Capt. Jacob S Howes, well known to the readers of the REGISTER as possessing the sharpest pen anywhere extant in Barnstable county, and his son, Charles E. Howes, was the last of the line born in the old mansion, which in later years has been occupied by families of other blood and race. Thus it will appear that six generations have lived in this ancient dwelling. It has sheltered the dusky Indian and his squaw, the negro slave, and their masters and mistresses. It has had its share of births and deaths, of weddings and funerals. All the domestic virtues have been cultivated beneath its roof. It has been the abode of hospitality, family affection, veneration, love and filial duty. Who that remembers that old house will not sigh to think its room has fallen? It is associated with the memory of our first minister, the Rev. Josiah Dennis, for whom our town is named. Mr. Dennis was engaged to be married to the daughter of Mr. Jonathan Howes, whose name was Thankful. It was though proper, as she was to be a minister's wife, to send the young lady to Boston, to get an education suitable to fill her station. In Boston she unfortunately died, to the great grief of her lover, who never afterwards went to Boston without visiting her grave. Her brother David afterwards had a daughter born, which Mr. Dennis wished to have named for his lost love.

This request was granted, and he presented the little girl a string of gold beads, saying at the same time that the necklace must be handed down in the line and accompany the name of Thankful. The baby whose name was clasped by the beads lived to marry Mr. Enoch Taylor of Barnstable and herself bore a daughter Thankful, who married Mr. Isaiah Hall of Dennis, and thus the beads got back again and are still worn by one of the descendants of old Jonathan Howes. So much romance did our first minister have in his nature, which was a right, true and honorable one, and genial withal, if tradition reports him correctly. It may appear sentimental, in this bustling and busy age, but I confess to a feeling of regret when any venerable landmark is removed and sympathize with those who would preserve the few remaining vestiges of historic interest. Love and hope, and veneration, are all contained in sentiment, it is an old fashioned thing, and we should be careful how we step among those things.

Thomas Prince Howes²

¹ *Cape Cod Remembrances*, pp 48 et seq.

² 1818-1894 This came from Ruth Allis. Original source unknown.

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

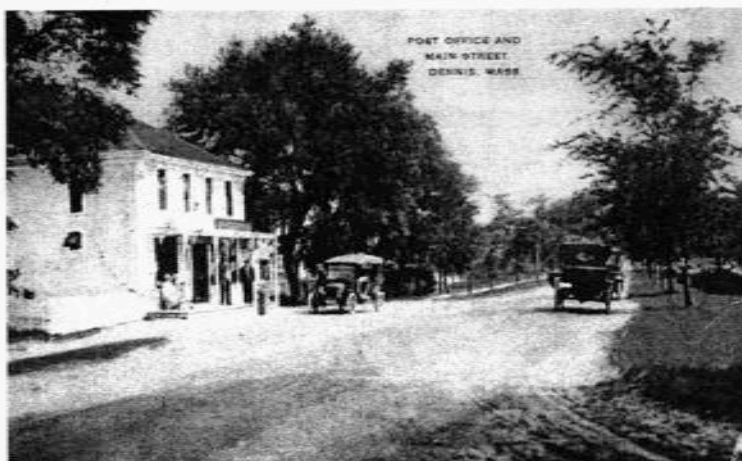


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Notice: The membership renewals are on their way. If you are a Life Member and do not owe dues, please consider either a donation to the Caleb Chase Trust Fund to help the elderly needy in Dennis and/or to the Dennis Historical Society. Your prompt response will help our membership Chairlady.

The Way We Were

Henry Kelley can always find time to recall stories about the goings-on around town. Recently he was heard to tell about “**Walter Fessenden**” of Dennis Village. It seems that Walter was a man of modest means who had no wood lots of his own. As a result he asked for and received permission from various others to clean up the tops and branches of their trees after the major wood had been carried away. One day he pulled his horse and wagon in front of the Dennis Post Office where some local wags derided his practice of picking up these “leftovers.” One said, “Walter, where are you going with your wagon full of such crooked wood?” To which Walter replied, “Boys, crooked wood will still make straight ashes! Git along, Horse.” Now for those of you who don’t remember the practice of calling townspeople by their first and middle names, you might not know that Walter Fessenden had the last name of **Howes**. Walter Fessenden Howes was born February 23, 1852 and died July 4, 1922.



Dennis Post Office, circa 1918
From the DHS Postcard Collection