



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 27 Number 12

December 2004

Calendar of Events

**Saturday, December 11
1-4 PM**

DHS Christmas Open House at Jericho

Celebrate the season at the
beautifully decorated
Jericho Historical Center
Corner of Old Main Street
and Trotting Park Road in
West Dennis.

*Join us at 1:00 PM to
honor Ann Chalmers,
chairman of the Jericho
Committee, who is retiring
after 25 years of devotion
to the Jericho Museum.*

Refreshments

**Sunday, December 12
Noon to 4:00 PM**

Visions Open House at the Manse

Step back into a Colonial
Christmas as costumed
docents serve you tradi-
tional refreshments.

Stroll through the house
and enjoy the lovely holi-
day decorations.

**1736 Josiah Dennis
Manse Museum**

**77 Nobscussett Road
Dennis Village**



The Story Continues...



Prince S. Crowell's House

Barbara Eastman Durst
Box 802, 29 Center Street
East Dennis, MA 02641

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

I just received your November 2004 Newsletter. I was especially interested in the article on the first page—the letter from David Crowell III. Polly Dillingham Foster Crowell is my great, great Grandmother (Prince/Polly, Edwin/Louisa, Gertrude/Ralph Taylor, Barbara/Frank Eastman, me!) I would be very interested in having a copy of the photo of the portrait of Polly. The child who died as an infant was “David”

I hope someone is letting David Crowell III know that Prince’s “mansion” is still alive and well! . . . I live directly across the street on part of the original Crowell property. The greenhouse is long gone, however. . . . I do not know of a relative named Edgar but every summer my great Uncle Edwin D. Crowell, Jr. came from Brooklyn and helped with taking care of the house. He was born in 1886 and would have been 78 in 1968. Either he or his sister, Minerva Crowell Wexler, were always up on a ladder & climbing on a roof to repair leaks or gutters. They were quite a pair to behold—especially at their ages! (Aunt Min was 9 years older!) Perhaps it was these two (grandchildren of Prince & Polly) that Mr. Crowell happened upon.

Just some information you might enjoy! Please let me know if it is possible to obtain a copy of my great, great grandmother! I would also be interested in reading any other data you have on the family.

Thank you,
Barbara E. Durst 11/4/04

Thanks to our friends at the Woods Hole Historical Collection & Museum!

We are very fortunate to have received a gift of transcriptions of letters for our library collection as well as the following note.

November 4, 2004

To the Dennis Historical Society—

The enclosed letter transcriptions were given to us recently. We thought they would fit more appropriately in your archives, so here they are. We know nothing about them except what is written on the opening page. A Fulcher descendent sent them to Mrs. George Acheson, recently deceased, who had been one of our members here in Woods Hole.

The Curator, Jennifer Gaines, and I would like to tell you what fans we are of your monthly newsletter. There is always something wonderful to read, a diary or journal excerpt, letters or an article of local interest. ... The last one received was of particular interest because of the portrait of Polly Dillingham Foster Crowell who married Prince Sears Crowell. Many of their descendents (including Prince Sears Crowell III) still live in Woods Hole—having moved here from Dennis to invest in and be involved in the Pacific Guano Company.

Best wishes.

Sincerely yours,
Susan F. Witzell
Curatorial Assistant

A Mystery! Can you help?

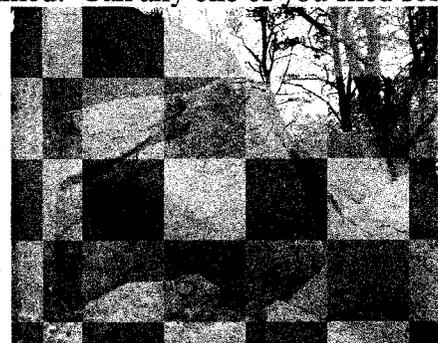
The Dennis Historical Commission is in the process of having a marker made to be attached to a stone and placed near Hokum Rock. The information on the marker was gathered with the help of Sandy Wiper and Luke Dignan a student at Ezra Baker School in 1996, who, with the help of his dad, surveyed the rock pile and did a study of its dimensions. We also have a variety of tales and legends about how the rock was named, and stories of outings to the site for picnics and patriotic rallies. But there is a mystery about Hokum Rock that is unresolved. High up, on the southeast face, is a small, well-crafted carving of a whale. No one on the Commission has been able to determine exactly when, or by whom, the carving was done.

Ah, but the mystery deepens! After you visit Hokum Rock, take a ride to the south side of town. Stroll along the east jetty of Bass River, at the end of West Dennis Beach. About 2/3 of the way to the end of the breakwater there is another carving of a whale on one of the large rocks. The carvings are not identical, but both are unexplained. Can any one of you shed some light on these examples of creative art?

Anyway, I have always thought that Dennis was a
Whale of a Town! (Sorry!)

Nancy Thacher Reid

If you look very carefully you might find the whale. LC



Membership Update

For some of you this will be the last issue of the Newsletter. Dues notices were sent out before the annual meeting and most of you replied at once. Check the expiration date on your mailing label to see if you might have forgotten that we need your dues to cover the costs of printing and mailing the Newsletter. As an added reminder: **Individual Dues are \$15; Family Memberships are \$25; Supporting , \$50; Contributing, \$100; and Patron, \$250.** We are always grateful for donations from Life Members and send a special thanks this month to **Betsy (Hall) Wentworth** for her welcome donation "in appreciation for the Newsletter."

It's been some time since we listed new members of the Society. **Welcome!**

Michelle Arsenault, Dennis Port

Carlyn M. Carey, Washington, DC

Priscilla Hall, South Dennis

Priscilla Lapiere, West Dennis

Verna Maloney Sethares, S. Yarmouth

Barbara Waas, South Dennis

Carol Bell, Dennis

Barbara DiGioia, Rockville, MD

Ed & Deb Klein, Holliston, MA

Russell & Susan Pettibone, S. Yarmouth

Mel & Dorothy Tuttle, Yarmouth Port, MA-

James & Nicole Whitehill, South Dennis

It seems to me that we overlooked our welcome to *Kenneth Gelnett of Bourne, MA* and *Martin & Joyce Halpert of East Dennis*. If somehow you've been left out, call Lu at (508) 385-3268.

We are also saddened by the loss of some of our faithful members:

Former President Ray Urquhart, Dennis

Charter Member Robert W. Stone, WD

Helen P. White, S. Dennis

Mildred Stewart, Montclair, NJ

Life Member Mahlon Chase, Jr. Bellevue, NE

Honorary Life Member, Johnny Kelley, ED

Former Board Member, Gertrude Lailey

Gilbert S. Kelley, Bradenton, FL

Life Member David I. Cook, Carthage,

Eileen Kraus, W. Dennis.

Christmas Beginnings

Some time ago we received an article about Louis Dean's Radio Store from Betty Dean Holmes. It seemed an appropriate time to begin this story.

When Louis and Esther Dean moved in 1923 into the little house on Center Street in Dennis Port, the newlyweds were very content. After their first child, Sally, arrived in 1926 they realized they needed more income and a bigger house. Howard Doane of Harwich, a high school classmate, had asked Louis to join him in the funeral home business, which would be known as "Doane and Dean". Louis and Esther discussed what to do.

Esther appreciated Howard's offer, but she was not enthusiastic about the business of a funeral parlor. Esther told Louis, "I would far rather someone called to say their radio was dead than that their aunt was dead." That settled that. Louis declined Howard's fine offer and Doane found Mr. Beale to join him in his funeral business.

Louis had been successfully selling radios and putting up radio antennas in the evenings after finishing his day-time carpentry job. Esther's father suggested perhaps Louis could make a living selling these new-fangled radios and repairing them. The first radios Louis sold went to Orion and Burt Derick's father, who bought two radios to give his sons for Christmas. The twenty dollar profit on those two radios meant a very special Christmas Day at the Dean's!

Louis parents were invited to celebrate at a festive Christmas dinner.

We hope all of you have reason to celebrate new beginnings with those you hold dear during the Holidays and in the New Year! Merry Christmas to all!

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-profit
Organization
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 2
South Dennis, MA
02660

The Captain's Treat

by Peter Howes

It was a dark and stormy night. (My English teacher told us never to start a tale with that hackneyed phrase—but it *was* one.) At least it was very, very cold. Captain Ezra Howes 2nd of Dennis Port was at the helm of the 130-foot tern schooner *L. A. Plummer* as she plowed through the icy seas somewhere off the New England coast. He had been Master of this vessel since it was launched from the Packard & Haggett shipyard in Bath, Maine in 1882.

The crew was small as the few men needed to sail a three-masted schooner was a major factor in their excellent economics. This was a competitive necessity in the days of coastal trade. But this crew was tired of their Captain's complaints that the coffee brought him to ward off the penetrating Atlantic winter cold was never hot enough. Unbeknownst to their hardy Captain, his favorite mug was placed in the galley oven until heated beyond all reason, then taken out with gloved hands and filled with boiling coffee. Brought to the helm, the unsuspecting Captain grabbed the mug with his gloved hands and lifted it to his lips—from which the skin was immediately removed.

Unfazed, he plunked down the mug and loudly exclaimed,

"Just right b'Gawd!"

Capt. Ezra Howes 2nd

