



# Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

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**BATTY DOCENTS** - a reprise - a knowledgeable and very thoughtful reader contacted Burt and claimed that he was eligible for Bat Combat Pay, that the writer assists "VETS" to receive the Medical Treatments they've earned and "that well written report certifies you to a Town Medal & future town assists!!" Way to go, Burt!!!

## Dennis Historical Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting

Our gathering was held on October 20, 2013 at the Sea View Restaurant. Chef Paul McCormick and staff provided a superb meal. Following dinner and the business meeting, all were entertained by old stories, quips, and witticisms told by the "Old Timers Round Table" consisting of Phyllis Horton, Burt Derick and Paul Prue. Your Board members until the 2014 meeting are:

**PRESIDENT**

Peter Howes

**VICE PRESIDENTS**

David Talbott

Terri Fox

**TREASURER**

Larry Symington

**ASSISTANT TREASURER:**

June Howes

**CLERK/RECORDING****SECRETARY:**

Bonnie Hempel

**CORRESPONDING****SECRETARY:**

Ruth Derick

**ELECTED DIRECTORS**

Patricia Corcoran

Virginia Devine

Kathleen Dorshimer

Betsy Harrison

Nancy Howes

Mary Kuhrtz

**APPOINTED DIRECTORS****DENNIS HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

Don Robitaille

**JERICHO HISTORICAL  
CENTER**

Dawn Dellner

**JOSIAH DENNIS MANSE**

Terri Fox

**ROSE VICTORIAN**

Burt Derick

**CURATOR/ARCHIVIST**

Phyllis Horton

**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Richard Howes

**AUDIO/VISUAL**

Brendan Joyce

**LIBRARIAN**

Burt Derick

**WEST DENNIS GRADED  
SCHOOLHOUSE**

Open

## A Rough Life

[1868?-01-23; This letter is undated but probably written about this year; letter from F.L.A.M. Smith to his grandfather-in-law Capt Seth T. Whelden, South Dennis, Mass.]

Hotel de S.S.H. New Brighton Jan 23<sup>d</sup>

My Much respected Grand Pa; it being a severe snow storm here to day; I thought I would drop you a line, to let you know where I am and what doing; Well, I am here in this big Hotel for life I never aspired to such a palace residence before; but I got out of funds and out of employment; out of Friends and no home and therefore I had to do the next best thing and that was to come to this Hotel; we have between 400 to 500 inmates, a motley set of old and dilapidated, web footed shell backs as ever you saw, however we are all all [sic] well and comfortably Housed, well fed, well clothed Smoked and Chewed, Preached and Prayed to our hearts conten[t]; and nothing to do but Eat and sleep, come and go when we please and all for nothing; but nothing but shear necessity and want of a

Home drove me here You know very well I was not welcome where my Wife and children chose to live; since My purse caved in, therefore I have got a ticket here for life; and no black looks; and no one to quarel with; and no mothers-in-law to dictate to me; Charlotte wrote me that you were in [page] pretty good health and I was right glad to hear it; I was up to Brooklyn a few days ago and Watsons family werer all pretty well as for myself I remain about the same, my legs dont improve much; otherwise I am first rate; I have nothing of interest to communicate just now; Wishing you and all all all all the family a Happy New Year, and that you may live to see many more such

I Reamin

Very Truly Yours  
F. L. A. M. Smith<sup>[1]</sup>

Burt Derick, "Annals of South Dennis".

## A Wonderful Jericho Historical Center Improvement



Kudos to the Dennis Public Works for their great job in replacing the front walkway at Jericho! The old brick walk had become just a tad unsafe. In addition to this, the large area behind Jericho towards Rt. 28 has been newly graded and re-landscaped! Our thanks and appreciation to the DPW!  
(DPW Photos)



## Community Preservation Grants

Three Grant Applications by the Society were approved at the Special Town Meeting held on November 19. These projects are:

**1) *Painting Preservation and Restoration*** – Four DHS paintings will undergo restoration. Here are some very brief descriptions:

***James B. Pace*** – 642 ton 161 ft Tern schooner (three-masted) built in Newburyport, painted by the noted NE Maritime painter William Pierce Stubbs (1842-1909).

This vessel one of the several ships over the years owned by Fisk Brothers of West Dennis (see the March 2013 Newsletter). On her last and tragic voyage, she was sailing under Capt. John Garfield. She left Philadelphia with a cargo of coal on Nov 24, 1898, unfortunately into the teeth of what was to become the Portland Gale. She disappeared, but was found by divers the next year off Montauk Point with skeletons of crew members lashed to the rigging. She had apparently collided with the Schr. Howard H Hanscomb, which lay very close to her.

***The American Brig Lubra Outside Hong Kong Harbour*** by Thaddeus Bannister (Actually painter Reginald Nickerson – West Yarmouth, who painted under several names.)

She was built in Danvers, MA in 1835 and was owned and captained by Benjamin B, Howes Dennis. In 1865, one day out from Hong Kong, she was captured by pirates and all were killed except Lucy (Lord) Howes, her baby and

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<sup>1</sup> Francis L. A. M. Smith was born in Newbern, NC, the son of John Smith of Newbern. He married in Dennis, 14 Mar 1855, Charlotte Matthews Whelden, daughter of Seth T. Whelden Jr. & Emeline Thacher. They had at least 3 children born in South Dennis, so it would appear that they were living, at least until 1862 (when the last child was born in Dennis), with her parents. Francis died on Staten Island in 1885, aged 63y.

little girl and the mate. Lucy Howes and the mate (said to be Henry W. Hall of Dennis) succeeded in getting the vessel back to Hong Kong. The book *Privateers, Pirates and Beyond* written by her granddaughter from old diaries is available through DHS. (Just came across a great 1867 newspaper article about the piracy. I may include a bit of it in next month's issue.)

**Schooner Searsville** - Designed by David Shiverick, Sr. and built 1855 in East Dennis - 220.8 Tons, 108 Ft. long, saw service as a Civil War Personnel Transport in 1862. Capt. Benjamin P. Sears was her first Master.

**Painting of Rev. Nathan Stone (1737 – 1804)**

Rev. Stone succeeded Rev. Dennis and years after his death recommended that this precinct of Yarmouth be named in his honor. He and wife moved into Manse (where the painting now hangs) with Rev. Dennis widow – and their first child is believed to have been born there.

2) **UV Protection of Framed Artifacts** –Some fifty pictures, samplers and other memorabilia will be reframed with modern glare-free museum quality UV resistant glass. Frames and backings will be repaired & restored as required.

3) **Continued Development of the Accessible Digital Archive** – This funds continuation of building the Archive that contains over 14,000 individual items” that includes pictures, maps etc. at the time of writing. These data increase constantly. There have been over 225,000 searches of the archive to date.

### The Dennis Port Graded School

Recently the Harwich Historical Society sent us a photo someone had given them but, as it was not in Harwich, they passed it along to us. Cape historical organizations do that. Someone had written West Dennis Graded School on it but they were wrong. It was the Dennis Port Graded School. It was formerly a Friend's Meeting House in Nantucket and was purchased in 1865, flaked, floated across Nantucket Sound and erected on Depot Street. It looked similar to the North, South and West Dennis Schools except this one had a clock in the cupola. Dennis Port was the only village without a large church where the other town clocks were located. People attended the West Harwich Baptist Church or the smaller Reformed Church of Latter Day Saints in Dennis Port. The Dennis Port School burned to the ground on April 17, 1930. The VIC Hall now stands on that site.

Phyllis Horton



### Kap'n Kezzie's Komments:

In general, the art of government consists of taking as much money as possible from one party of the citizens to give to the other. -- **Voltaire** (1764)

The only time the world beats a path to your door (or the phone rings) is when you're in the bathroom.

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### **“Bits ‘n Pieces!”**

The year is 1963 ... from *The Dennis-Yarmouth Register* ... December... Price: \$4.00 yearly or 10¢ per copy.

This is the final month of our 50th Anniversary year and the last edition of Bits ‘n Pieces. Searching the December archives of The Register on the microfilm machine, I not only experienced eye-strain but discovered a lack of news items. It seems our residents of 50 years ago were more interested in the December social scene. Many festive events were described including dances, dinners, family comings and goings, craft fairs and plans for New Year’s Eve. It seems like even ‘back then’ they knew how to have a good time.

*However*, in the December 6, 1963 issue of the D-Y Register one interesting article did present itself. I couldn’t help but wonder if some of our readers, even 50 years later, might agree with it. And now I quote:

#### **“Petitioners want to abolish Dennis Planning Board”**

“The oft-embattled Planning Board of Dennis faces a new challenge.

A petition was submitted this week calling for abolishment of the board, with its duties being turned over to the Selectmen.

The petition contains sufficient signatures to be included in the annual town meeting warrant, according to the Selectmen.

Apparently such a move would be legal, if the townspeople voted it.

The Planning Board is responsible for supervising the subdivision control law under which Dennis zoning bylaws operate. It signs subdivision plans, holds hearings and makes proposals for town planning.”

(Note, the printing of the above neither agrees nor disagrees with its 1963 writer.)

*May each and every one of you have a Merry Christmas,  
a Joyful Holiday Season, and a Healthy, Happy 2014!  
Best wishes, June Howes*