



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 29, number 3

March 2006

Calendar

**Sunday, March 12
3:00 P.M.**

A Celtic Musical Journey!

**Thom Dutton, the
Cape's Troubadour
Harper**, will perform a
wonderful selection of
Celtic music & stories.
Refreshments will be
served. There is a sug-
gested donation of
\$5.00 at the door.

**Dennis Memorial
Library
1020 Old Bass River
Road in Dennis
Village**

**Thursday, March 16
Noon-4 P.M.**

Antique Appraisal Day at Eldred's

For a donation to DHS
of \$5 an item, or \$10
for three (maximum),
Eldred's will provide
verbal evaluations of
your treasures. It may
be possible to consign
them to Eldred's for a
future auction if you
wish.

**Eldred's Auction Gal-
lery, 1483 Rt. 6A
East Dennis**

Where Will We Find Tomorrow's Archives? Lura Crowell

The Massachusetts Historical Society was formed in 1791 at a time when those who fought in the Revolutionary War were aging and going to their reward. There was a group of citizens who realized that it would be important to preserve their records and experiences for the future. The Reverend Jeremy Belknap, a Boston minister, brought together nine acquaintances who pledged their own family papers, books, manuscripts and artifacts, then sought out others and began the new organization. The Massachusetts Historical Society, the first in the country, became the repository for many rare documents important to the study of American history. In the 1830's and 1840's the northwestern states began to sponsor state historical societies. However, in the northeast, individual towns felt the responsibility for preserving local history. This brought about the formation of many separate and private Historical Societies. While the towns kept official records, most of the local societies came to house archival collections which remain largely unpublished and unique. In addition to historical artifacts there may be financial information of local businesses, church records, correspondence, memos, diaries, scrapbooks, pictures, films, and today, electronic records. The Dennis Historical Society is always happy to receive any materials which have to do with the history of the Town of Dennis or its people.

It won't surprise you to learn that our librarian, Burt Derick, has been working diligently to transcribe for research several boxes of old books and papers from the estate of Henry Homer Sears of East Dennis. These included Nathan Sears' Bible, several diaries kept by Sarah Clark (Howes) Sears (1823-1883) wife of Nathan, diaries by Nathan Sears (1821-1904) and Henry Sears (1845-1930), school data for 1858, accounts for Kelley & Sears Co. and still more to process. By reading the accounts of these lives and business dealings you get a real sense of what it was like to live here in the mid-1800's. But who is recording today's local history? Are you keeping a journal or diary? Where is all the correspondence your descendants will read? Is it only in your e-mail and deleted when you send a reply? Are your household records kept on your computer, too? Family pictures on video or a disc? "Well, what of it?" you ask.

Have you looked at your old colored photos from the '50's and 60's? *Mine all seem to be fading away.* Some older film can actually be dangerously flammable. *(If you find any that smells like old vinegar, better get rid of it—fast!)* Have you retrieved information from your old floppy discs lately? *Gone?* Can you still play your old reel-to-reel tape recorders and hear those precious voices? *What reel-to-reel player?* It seems our modern photographic and elec-

tronic records quickly deteriorate and the machinery we need to retrieve them soon becomes obsolete. To save these records we need to keep track of the dates they were made and remember to "migrate" them to the newer technologies every few years. On the chance that we won't remember to do that, it's a good idea to print out all correspondence and reports that are important, and even to scan fading pictures you want to save and reprint those, too. Digitizing is handy when you want to access your photographs and records, but if you don't remember to update those discs, your information could be lost to future generations. So we're back to the beginning. Where will we find the archives of tomorrow? The answer--preserve them today!

From a letter addressed to *Messrs Kelley Sears & Co, East Dennis, Mass from J. M. Freeman*
Halls Store Deleware Ma(rch) 3/ 57

Messrs Kelley Sears & Co.

The Schr J. B. Barnes is ashore about 1.Mile below Indian-river inlet. She bilged within one hour after She came on. We Kept in the riggin till the tide went down Some. Her boat hap-pened to be on her weather Side. We cut her lashings and jumped in too her and as good luck would have it we got a shore and not got upsat. We saved nothing but what we Stood in. We hove to yesterday morning about seven Oclock off Cape May under three reft foresail. It was blowing heavy and snowing as thick as it could fly and the first thing that we Knew we was in breakers we put the helmen up but it was of no use. We never saw the land not till we had been a shore one hour and a half. And the vessel was not more than once or twice her length from the beach. I think the chance is rather Small for her to ever Start again for She is buried in the sand Some. We Shall Strip her to day and Save al that we can. You must write as Soon as you receive this. I will write again the next mail. Which will be next Saturday. Direct your letter to Halls Store Deleware.

Halls Store. Deleware. March, 7/ 57

Messrs Kelley Sears & Co.

Sirs.

I wrote to you last before I could ascertain how bad the Vessel was. (on account of the Mail going So Soon ass it does not go but twice a week)

I called a Survey on her and they condemed her as being Sea worthy. or any money in her for the owners to get, by trying to get her off &.... So we Stripped her what we could the mainsail & foresail we could not get. for She had got on them and destroyed them. her Chains rooled off of her deck and got under her bottom. I advertised her to be Sold a public Auction but yesterday a man by the name of John. W. Waker of Lewis-town offered me more than I thought the things would fetch at Public Auction. So I Sold the whole concern for One Hundred and Seventy five dollars, on the Conditions that if the Owners was not Satisfied they could have the concern back by refunding the Money &. Mr. Waker is the man that got the Schr N.H.Hill of Wellfleet, off this winter I Shall wait till next wendesday before I Start to come home So to give you a chance to get here before I get away if you have Started. &

Yours With respect

J. M. Freeman

These letters were saved from 1857. We are finding letters from 1957. But what about 2007?

Do You Remember?

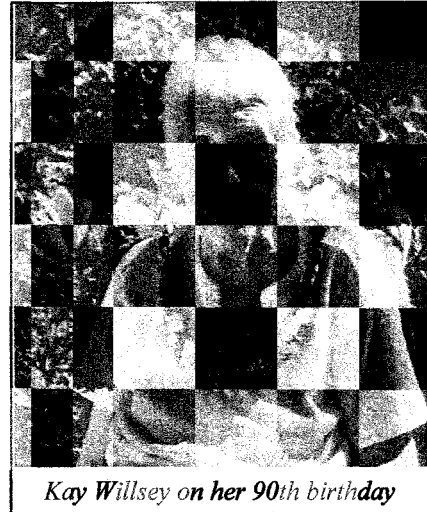
Warm summer days and lovely fresh blueberries picked from the patch at the end of New Boston Road and Fieldstone on land given to the town by the Harry Cross family? If you do, then you probably remember the "Blueberry Lady" of Dennis. Thanks to a note from member **Dorothy Kierstead** we can renew our acquaintance with this special lady:

Dennis Historical Society

I am enclosing copies of recent pictures of Kay Willsey, former Blueberry Lady, sculptor, bird carver—a lady of many talents. Also former president of Dennis Village Garden Club.

She just sent me copies of her recent activities and thought you might like them. She recently celebrated her 91st birthday. Perhaps some of you that remember her could drop her a card to say hello or a birthday card. A year ago last summer, I met her for lunch at an ocean side restaurant in Kona. Even though she was unable to do much for herself, she had a smile and sparkling blue eyes for me. It was a delight to visit with her.

Her caregiver is Patti Van Asperan and she has done a marvelous job of caring for this lovely lady. Her address is 76-956 Hualala Road, Kailua, Kona, Hawaii 96740.



Kay Willsey on her 90th birthday

The Hands that Wield the Gavel!



Photo by Richard Howes

Thanks to **Richard Howes**, **Nancy Howes**, our new **Chairman of the Manse Committee**, will be able to keep order at the regular monthly meetings. **DHS President Jinny Devine** also benefits from Dick's latest project. The picture to the left shows the two new gavels Richard made out of maple with the addition of a dowel from a handle that had been cut off of a damaged rake. (*A Cape Codder's Motto? Never throw anything away!*) There's even a slice of maple to save the table top.

Member News

Special thanks this month to Life Member **William E. Crowell** for his generous donation to our Operating Fund.

We were happily surprised to receive a new membership, our first from Canada. Welcome **Les Bowser** of Omemee, Ontario.

Thank you to **Henry and Susan Kelley** for a donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of **Nancy Sears**.

More thanks to the **Reverend and Mrs. Edward A Walker** for a beautiful gift in recognition of **Phyllis Horton's** many years of faithful service to the Society.

Last but not least: *Dear Friends, First of all I want to inform you of the death of Oren Shiverick Foley on May 16, 2005. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Nancy (Thompson) Foley and his twin sister, Ethel Foley MacQuarrie of Warren, RI. Second, please find a donation to your Operating Fund. The Dennis Historical Society had a lot of meaning to the Shiverick-Foley family. Oren was always proud to be a true Cape Codder. Sincerely, Nancy Foley* Thank you, Nancy. But what sad news! We offer our deepest sympathy to both you and Ethel.

3/06

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The Way We Were

Here's our answer to March Madness and the Final Four! On February 21, 1957 it was the Dennis Firemen vs. the Dennis Policemen at Ezra Baker School. The final score was Firemen 20, Police, 13. Front row (left to right) shows Cliff Ellis, Dan Walker, Bud Foster, Leo Babineau, and Joe Walker. Standing (left to right) are Dave Hodsdon, Paul McDowell, Stuart Wixon, Earl Eaton, Bill Hodsdon, Ernie Babineau, and Roy Nyberg. (Thanks to Carole Bell of Beach Street, Dennis for the photograph!)



Don't forget to join us for music and refreshments at the Dennis Memorial Library on Sunday, March 12 at 3:00 P.M. — a Celtic Musical Journey with Thom Dutton. You'll be sorry if you miss this wonderful program. Come and you'll leave singing!