



MISS DELIA C.

Adelia Capron Kelley Linnell was born March 19, 1859 to Captain Fernandes Geoffrey and Susan Howes Kelley in the family homestead on Center Street, Dennis Port, the third of four daughters. Known variously as "Delia C.", Miss Delia", or "Aunt Dele" by everyone in the village she was a woman much ahead of her time. The only formal education she had was acquired in the Dennis school system but she continued with self education for the remainder of her life. A woman of firm convictions and a sharp mind, she loved to debate the pros and cons of any subject with anyone but she especially enjoyed matching wits with men. Remember, this was in the era when women were supposed to know and keep "their place" in society--which included keeping her mouth shut out in public except for meaningless pleasantries. Adelia was a strong advocate for women's rights. The 19th Amendment was ratified on August 26, 1920 giving women the right to vote and she surely was in attendance at the next annual town meeting on March 21, 1921 held at the Old Town Hall. Over the years she spoke out many times for and against issues involving our town. She didn't hesitate to tell the town fathers when she thought they were steering a wrong course, but also didn't hesitate to commend them if she agreed with their policy. I remember attending a town meeting at the West Dennis Community Building in 1945 and being impressed that Miss Delia rose to speak on an article, spoke long and fluently, and when Moderator I. Grafton Howes banged his gavel and asked her to take her seat she replied in a loud, clear voice, "Mr. Moderator, I have the floor and I have a legal right to speak my piece." Whereupon Mr. Howes threw his hands up in the air and let her continue--to the applause and laughter of all in the hall. Of course, by this time Miss Delia was a fixture at town meetings and many people looked forward to her oration as it livened up the otherwise dull proceedings.

Adelia married Captain Prentiss Linnell of Hyannis on April 18, 1898 as his second wife. He went to sea in his early years but left that to become a railroad engineer. He and Delia lived in her home on Center Street and when he died in 1924 he left her quite a bit of property. Much of her inherited land had somewhat unclear titles (as is the case with a lot of Cape Cod titles even today!) and she spent the balance of her life trying to clear them. Delia would walk, carrying her black Boston bag, from Dennis Port to Hyannis, then on to the Barnstable County Registry of Deeds and Probate Court where she spent hours poring over the old records, and then she would walk back home. One afternoon Harriet Murray Foss met Miss Delia on Route 28 in West Yarmouth and offered her a ride home. She said, "Thank you, no, I'm stopping in to visit Mrs. Hurst in Bass River and I'd just get in the car, then I'd have to get out." (Probably a distance of 3-4 miles!) In her years of research at Barnstable Adelia became well versed in Massachusetts law and didn't hesitate to note which Chapter or Article she was quoting from when she expounded on town meeting floor. Right or wrong--no one ever questioned her.

Miss Delia's home is next to her father's. In 1868 Captain Kelley purchased the Old Ocean Seminary built by Samuel D. Chase in 1855, and moved it to his property for use as a grocery store, from the corner of Hall and Division Streets where the Harwich Junior Theater now stands. Over the years her home had been a seminary, Masonic Lodge, grocery store, auction house, and the Baptist Church Society held meetings there while their church in West Harwich was being built. In 1871 Capt. Kelley converted the building into a two family house. It was occupied by different families until shortly after 1900 when Adelia and Prentiss moved there. For a number of years after she was widowed she ran a dry goods store from her home.

There are quite a few people who still remember Miss Delia. Many of us did odd jobs for her--shopping, getting her mail, cutting wood, etc.--and she paid us what she thought the job merited. There was never a fixed fee, it fluctuated. At this point her situation was rather precarious. She had spent her life savings on lawyers trying to clear the titles to her property. Never the less, she was a very interesting woman and one who added a bright piece to the colorful mosaic of our town's history.

BETTER BY THE HALF DOZEN

Membership Chairman Isabelle Flynn recently announced the addition of six Life Members! Until now we've had one or two at a time, so this is a banner crop. They are: James F. and Joan M. Martin, Thomas E. Howes, Catherine M. Wilson, Sharon Ann L. Paradis, and Shirley Loud Putnam. In addition we have fourteen brand new members: Mrs. Philip Baroni, Mrs. Kenneth Coulsey, Mr. and Mrs. John H. Griffin, Mr. and Mrs. John P. Marsh, Mr. and Mrs. John T. Sheedy, Jane Wardwell Stevens, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Perry, Mr. and Mrs. Jason H. Samuels, and Jeanette Sears Wood. Sincere welcomes to you all. Hope to see you at the annual meeting!

1995 ANNUAL MEETING

It's time once again to elect new leaders for DHS. This event seems to roll around sooner and sooner as we get older and older. At any rate, our annual meeting is always an interesting time. We are famed (notorious?) for having brief business meetings--and then on to the good part. The good part this year is a talk by John Schofield of the Robert C. Eldred Co. in East Dennis--"Your Antiques and the Story They tell". John said for you to bring something small for him to talk about. I'm sure you all have an item with an interesting history. Bring one along--and bring a friend too. John's talks are always very informative. You may discover the whatsit you inherited from Aunt Myrtle is valuable! We'll meet at Jacob Sears Library on Sept. 24 at 2:00 P.M. The DHS Board will present their wonderful assortment of refreshments for all to enjoy.

CALENDAR

Sept. 13 7:30 P.M. DHS Board meets at the Manse.
Sept. 24 2:00 P.M. DHS Annual Meeting at Jacob Sears Memorial Library, East Dennis.

FIRE!!!...

....a word that strikes fear into everyone's heart. That word had a special meaning for all Dennis residents and especially for DHS members on the Friday morning of August 25th. A fire started in the Fairbanks Room at Jericho in an electrical panel under the stairwell. The automatic fire alarm functioned properly and the Dennis Fire Department--who, fortunately, is just around the corner--arrived in seconds. When the firefighters reached Jericho they found heavy smoke billowing from the house. Dennis Fire Captain Robert Tucker reported that when they arrived it was so hot in there it was just about to flash, and the whole building would have been involved. While one crew extinguished the fire another crew covered the antiques with waterproof salvage covers. After the fire was out they started removing the antiques and artifacts to the yard to facilitate the clean up. It is estimated Jericho sustained approximately \$25,000.00 in damage. The loss of our artifacts is minimal. A few items right where the fire started were completely burned, others had some fire or water damage that probably can be restored. Everything in the entire house had smoke damage, but those things are being treated. The town has hired Whalen Restoration Services to do this work. They were on site before noon packing things up for removal to their warehouse in Hyannis. They have a special ozone chamber that removes the smoke odor. Joan Martin of the Jericho Committee did yeoman's work in cataloging the items taken out of the house. She was on duty three full days making sure every item was accounted for. Such is the caliber of our volunteers! Joan especially wants to thank the Fire and Police Departments, Fire Chief Paul Tucker, Town Administrator Steve Lombard, Superintendent of Buildings Steve Estey, DPW Chief Dennis Hanson, Diane Sidall and Bob Reed of the Engineering Department, Phyllis Horton, Carol Horton-O'Sullivan, Nancy Thacher Reid, Sarah Kruger, and Ann Chalmers. Diane Sidall photographed everything! from the condition of the inside to all the items before they were packed up. Well over 800 items were inventoried by Joan and her crew. Adding to the anxiety was a large collection of quilts on loan to Jericho from private donors for Jericho's Dennis Festival Days Quilt Exhibit.

All emergency services have been completed. Whalen has washed the inside of the house with a special fluid that removes smoke odor. The next step is to replace the windows, then to start repairing the rest of the damage. One heartbreaking loss occurred when one of the antique bull's eye windows in the front door broke from the extreme heat. If any of our members might know where a replacement could be located please drop a line to me a Box 607, South Dennis, MA 02660 or call me at 508-394-0017--and the next time you meet a Dennis fireman give him a sincere **THANKS!**

NOT SO FESTIVE FESTIVAL DAYS

This year's Dennis Festival Days gave our emotions a good work out. An automobile accident during the Antique Car Parade sent Festival co-founder Bob Stone to the emergency room--thank heavens he was fine! Then the fire at Jericho certainly dampened everyone's spirits. On the bright side, tho, the other DHS sponsored events went very well. The narrated historic bike tour of East Dennis was a hit, as was the "Fare Exchange" at West Dennis Community Center. Chef John Williams explained the history of how many different foods were introduced into our culture while he prepared a number of dishes, and then we were invited to sample his creations. The comments ranged from "How interesting" to "I must have that recipe!"--and no one left the hall hungry. Thanks, Jack! The flower show at the Manse attracted a large crowd on both days and the colonial open house at the Manse was quite sensational. Well over 200 people came to enjoy our portrayal of early colonial life. The Falmouth Militia added an authentic touch to our antique house and costumed guides. Their musket practice and flag ceremony kept the camera clicking and made little ones cover their ears. Dozens of children played games and made corn husk dolls on the front lawn, our visitors found something interesting to see or do in every room, the ice cream maker never had a chance to "cool off"--it made batch after batch for three hours, and 15 dozen Shrewsbury Cakes (sugar cookies) disappeared in less than two hours. The Quilt Exhibit at Jericho on Tuesday before the fire played host to a large number of enthusiasts. Many thanks to all the volunteers who made our special events so very special.

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PAULINE WIXON DERICK DAY

The annual birthday dinner will be a surprise testimonial dinner for Pauline Derick. Pauline has donated thousands of volunteer hours to the betterment of Dennis, the preservation of Dennis historic properties, and Dennis history. She was the Dennis Historical Society's first Secretary and is a Past President. She has served on every historical board and committee in Dennis and is still active in the Dennis Historical Commission and Josiah Dennis Manse Committee. She was a Charter Member of both organizations. Her list of 'credits' goes on and on. Do join us in honoring this lovely lady for all she has done in preserving Dennis history---and remember--it's a secret!