



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

P.O. Box 617, South Dennis, MA 02660

Volume 29 Number 9

September 2006

Calendar

Sunday, Sept. 10

1:30 & 3:00 P.M.

Tea at the Manse

See article for details.

Sunday, Sept. 17

3:00 P.M.

***Nobscusset Harbor at
Corporation Beach***

Local author Patricia Walker will discuss this fascinating part of Dennis history, the subject of her recent book.

Refreshments.

Jacob Sears

**Memorial Library
23 Center St. E. Dennis**

Saturday, Sept. 30

10 A.M.-2 P.M.

Autumn at the Manse

See related article.

Saturday, Sept. 30

2:30 P.M.

***Dennis Village
Cemetery Walk***

Meet Terri Fox at the Village Green.

(Rain date Oct. 1)

Sunday, October 1

11 A.M.-2 P.M.

***Autumn at Jericho*
1801 Sea Captain's house.**

Old Main St.

West Dennis

(See article p. 1)

What a Wonderful Life!

Wouldn't it be fun to play with the sheep all day? Patrick, Katherine and Bridget Crane (right) from Arlington seemed to enjoy these two little ones named Oreo Cookie (a 4-month black-faced Scottish) and Abraham Lincoln (a 2-month Shetland) when they visited Jericho for Old Fashioned Skills Days. We were told by their owner, Veronica Worthington, that Oreo and Abraham often go swimming off Lighthouse Beach, so don't imagine you're seeing things if you find yourself swimming with sheep.



Veronica runs the Herb Farm at 89 Fisk Street in West Dennis where you can find all sorts of lovely dried flowers and wreaths, another skill being demonstrated at the Jericho open house. Joan

Monteiro was at work braiding rugs, Susan Kelley and Beth Deck were busily spinning wool into yarn, and Dee Moore (left) was weaving baskets. There were exhibits of home canning equipment, lovely examples of 19th century quilts and samplers, and even jewelry made from human hair. This was a whole different world of skills from that of the 18th century Josiah Dennis Manse. Why there



was even time to create the beautiful tole work on display in the Fairbanks Room. If you missed out on Skills Day, be sure to Celebrate Autumn at Jericho on Sunday, October 1 when the Jericho Historical Center will be open from 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. Refreshments will be served. Look for The Salon at Jericho on November 12!

Tea At The Manse

This premier event will take place on Sunday, September 10, 2006 with seatings at 1:30 and 3:00 P.M. arranged through reservations. (508-760-0433) Bring your own tea cup and enjoy tea and special refreshments along with the lovely harp music of Andrea McCarthy. There will be a raffle to benefit the Dennis Historical Society including the prize of a Byers' Choice Afternoon Tea Figure (a Winterthur exclusive) plus other tea gifts and specialties. If you have not made your reservation by September 1, we cannot guarantee there will be space available. (It still might be worth a try!) The cost of the tea is \$10.00, the Colonial ambiance, priceless!

Autumn At The Manse

On Saturday, September 30, from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. the 1736 Josiah Dennis Manse will be open and refreshments will be served. But that's just the beginning of a very exciting day! Randy Joseph from Plimoth Plantation will be there to teach us about the life of the Wampanoags who lived in this area when the early settlers arrived. He will provide educational materials and artifacts. With him will be another teacher to help children with the early craft of making corn husk dolls. This should be interesting for adults and exciting for children who are especially welcome for this occasion at the Manse.

Thank You

We are very grateful to the members of the **Dennis Village Garden Club** who baked for our July pie sale on the Village Green. Thanks to the **Dennis Memorial Library** for the loan of tables which helped us to sell "two pies a minute" until they were all gone. Also to the **Dennis Village Improvement Society** who allowed us to use a corner of the Green for our sale.

Thanks to member **Deanna Furman** who has returned again as a beautiful young docent at the Manse. Visitors are impressed with her knowledge of Manse history.

Thanks to the **Heaney family** who cooked up a storm at the Manse Colonial Open House. Though the town health regulations did not allow us to let guests sample all the good food they cooked over an open fire, the docents had a chance to taste some real colonial cooking after the event.

Thanks to **Nancy Reid** and the 23 people who made the South Dennis Walk such a successful program. And to **Jim Coogan** and **Terri Fox** and all the others who made young and old alike welcome at the Children's Lawn Party.

And I wonder if we thanked **Jack Sheedy** enough for all we learned about **Cape Cod Ship Building** when he talked with us in June. He called it "Shipbuilding 101" but we all heard something new, whether it was about the early Vikings, the natives as shipbuilders, the reconstruction of the Pilgrims' pinnace, or early ventures into building ships around the Cape.

A final thanks goes to **Thomas S. Kelley** of Bradenton, Florida who was the first one to renew his membership this year—before the dues notices were even sent out! That's loyalty!

A Sorrowful Farewell to Life Member **Lois Steele** who died unexpectedly at 67. Born and raised in Dennis Port, she was a 12th generation Cape Codder. Our deepest sympathies go to her sisters **Phyllis Horton**, **Mary Whittemore**, and **Naomi Costa**, who are also members of the Society. Sadly, it was only this spring that they lost their brother, **Alton Robbins**.

Off Pirates Point

Our Author Series in cooperation with the town libraries will conclude with a talk by **Patricia Walker** about *Nobscusset Harbor at Corporation Beach* on Sunday, September 17 at 3:00 P.M. Join us for this bit of local history at the Jacob Sears Memorial Library in E. Dennis.

Which reminds me of a letter we received concerning the area, or close to it. This letter came from **Mary Beth Noonan** via e-mail last April: *Hi: Do you have any information about a piece of land in East Dennis referred to as "Pirates Point"? It is located on the bay off of Old Town Lane. I was just wondering if there was any background information regarding pirates or such.* The reply was sent as follows: *Dear Mary Beth, I have never heard of Pirates Point or any reference to pirates in that area or anywhere else in the Town of Dennis. That point of land is known locally as Crowell Point. It is a point of rocks on the north (Cape Cod Bay) side of the original land grant of Christopher Crowell whose homestead is still standing on Old Town Lane. ...Sorry not to have the answer you were looking for. Phyllis Horton*

I expect **Patricia Walker** might tell us that "Crowell Point" is called "First Point" by those whose orientation is from Nobscusset looking east. But I think we've also discovered the origin of the name "Pirates Point" in a privately published (1945) paper-bound book titled *In Sunshine and Shade—Stories of Various Entertaining Incidents* by **B. Nason Hamlin**. Inside the front cover is an inscription to **Blanche (Howes) Crowell** by the author: "To Our dear Mrs. Crowell: My former neighbor" and on page 59 begins the tale "Off Pirates Point":

"ABOUT AN HOUR before sunset on that lovely, breathless afternoon, we three—two daughters and I—were paddling a few yards off-shore in the old Indian canoe. We had no especial object in our drifting along on just the short distance out from the curving, silvery sand beach. There, some hundred feet to the south, sat our newly built cottage which had been placed on an open hill, and this rolling country was covered only with bayberry bushes and plots of steadily blooming, single wild-rose plants. It was a lovely and entrancing knoll on which to pass the summer days.

"There were, say, twelve to fifteen acres which lay in the entire estate...If one wants to know about it, thence go down from the village, at the west, to look the place over,...you'd simply have to refer to the section so well known to every townier as **Joshua Crowell's** cow pastures...Josh had inherited it all, a century or so ago. He kept his herd of cattle there; these were never restricted from calmly roving over the turf-covered, flower-bearing hills; and stopping now and then to wade into and to drink from the acre pond of fresh water, supplied by its constantly boiling spring; and all this about two hundred feet from and above the white dunes stretching along the run of the beach.

"....But pop back now! And if not too "fed up" with the chat, join our little voyage....The tide was nearly at its full; there was not even a whisper of air to be seen on all that vast stretch of glassy bay....Straight north of us, as we were floating along in the idling canoe, there could be detected a not too distant group of some flotsam, just slowly drifting, nearly motionless, in the glistening water....—something to follow out and add to our daily trip onto the waters of the bay.... To the east lay the water away to the bay-coast of Eastham, Wellfleet and TruroTwenty feet ahead, we ran straight into this sought-for string of flotsam...just at the extreme western end of all the, shall we say, wreckage. The nearer we got, the longer seemed to extend that line of neat, almost uniformly-boxed goods. It stretched on in winding, though fairly straight groups each of eight cases....in clumps at every fifty feet or so apart, as the line grew in length. In a good black stamped line on the top and bottom of each case was—XXX."

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The Way We Were *("Off Pirates Point, cont.)*

"An hasty glance which I managed to direct toward the further wharf, (that one, away up to the end of the curve of our beach) brought to me the hasty picture of Lisha Brinn opening up some sort of a wooden case, still dripping with its bath of salt-water. There he was in his lobster-dory, just in apparently from a dash out into the nearby sea. He was splitting off the outside of a wooden case which I thought was the same size and the same build as were these floating boxes which I was attacking with vigor at that very moment and planning to rescue.... There flashed a bright reflection of the sun on what must have been a polished and well-protected tin holder of a number of gallons of liquid ... You shall hear right now that each tin held five imperial (so known)...gallons (of liquor)!!

"We were thrilled at so liberal a present, for...this busy afternoon—this hour approaching sunset—happened to be right in the middle of that worldly famous and closely operated 'Act of Prohibition' time....

"I seized upon the very first case to which we paddled. The kids leaned far over the port side as I struggled with the fairly bulky box. The canoe had to be kept evenly on keel...despite the heavy weight suddenly forced on it by the lifting over and bringing in as big a crate as those...proved to be. Now the canoe holds and carries comfortably three, or possibly four persons, and I'll confess that there really isn't great room for much luggage in addition. However, I managed to capture and to drag in over the boat's side three neatly-wooded and clearly-marked cases. ...There was really no further room for rescuing...another so heavy a case...But there was the possibility...of grabbing another case or two, and after hitching on some rope...then towing along behind us the mighty cargo and pulling to the far-away shore just below our cottage."

(Wait for what happens next!)



View of NobsCUSSET from "Pirates Point"