



# Dennis Historical Society Newsletter

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www.dennishistsoc.org

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Send letters & stories to Dennis Historical Society, Box 607, S. Dennis 02660 or pmrhorton@aol.com

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## TREASURES FROM THE MANSE

Among the treasures uncovered when we cleaned out the Manse, no doubt the greatest ones are found in The Stone Collection, two bags of materials which came down from the family of Rev. Nathan Stone, our town's first minister – the second minister of the East Yarmouth Church. Each day spent opening and transcribing the numerous documents found brought surprising and often mysterious results. This is but one of them.

Found in a two page letter, not dated, but signed, is the evidence of a woman greatly scorned! The letter is dated somewhere around the middle of the 1700's, based on the mannerisms in the prose and the penmanship. It was written in an exquisite hand, most easily readable.

The identity of Eliza Johnson is not known. The presumed date of this would be about the time when Nathan Stone was studying at Harvard, and before his graduation and move to the East Precinct. I am loathe to think this refers to Nathan himself, particularly when Eliza says "you disbelieve the Christian Religion". But who knows?

"Sir:

If my exhausted spirits will support my trembling hand while I write a few lines to ease a broken heart, it is the last office I require of them: then may they leave me, that I may find a safe retreat in the grave from the scorn of man. I do not come arm'd with the awful name of virtue to accuse you of the basest ingratitude, but the scene is entirely chang'd you have robb'd, cruelly robb'd me of the brightest gem in the female character – and I come as a humble suppliant. Can this be possible, am I awake or do I dream? – Ah! poor deluded girl, think not what you were, but what you are: but how can I desist from calling to mind those delightful days of my innocence, when with a serene countenance, and a pure heart. I could look up to Heaven, and beg the God of purity to be my protection, "but how has my gold become dim, and my most fine gold chang'd": How does conscious guilt fill my soul, and blushes my face. Sad reflections on my present state – hurries me to meditate on that which is to come, and the future world opens so many tremendous scenes to my view, that it strikes me back in doubtful remembrance of this. I look for comfort and find none: I look up to Heaven and behold an offended God, and cast my eyes down, and behold a scorning world. I call on my friends they turn a deaf ear I then fly to my parents, who were once my delight, but they, bathed in tears cry out you have brought our grey hairs with sorrow to the grave If to get one moment's ease I wander into the fields each flower, and herb seems to say, touch me not for I am innocent. Thus does all Nature seem arm'd against me. And on whose account do I seem to be forsaken both by Heav'n, and earth? Why his, who strove to gain my affections and became master of them: who triumphs over me, and beholds all my sorrows with indifference and inwardly smiles to think I was such an easy prey who once thought me worth the utmost pains to gain, but now thinks unworthy even to own. Oh! hypocrisy, how couldst thou wear so winning a form? Generosity, where hast thou fled? Honor, hast thou forsaken the human race? Look upon my afflictions, and have mercy upon me Oh! my God, for reproaches have already gone through my heart – Forgive me Oh, my distress'd parents. May the cold grave receive me into it's peaceful recesses, that my shame may be buried in eternal oblivion. Now, sir if your heart be not as hard as the adamantine rock, if your conscience be not sear'd as with a red hot iron it must bring to your view past sins. Although you disbelieve the Christian Religion you have always [over page] profess'd there is a God therefore remember that he has an arm of vengeance and will hear the cries of the wretched. I now summon you to appear and confront me at his awful tribunal, where the unerring must sentence the convicted to the dark regions of distress. Oh! no, for I still find you are too near my heart, and for all your brutality my return is, may you in the hour of distress, and in the hour of death find that peace, and consolation from your God, and Judge which you have denied the wretched."

*Eliza Johnson*

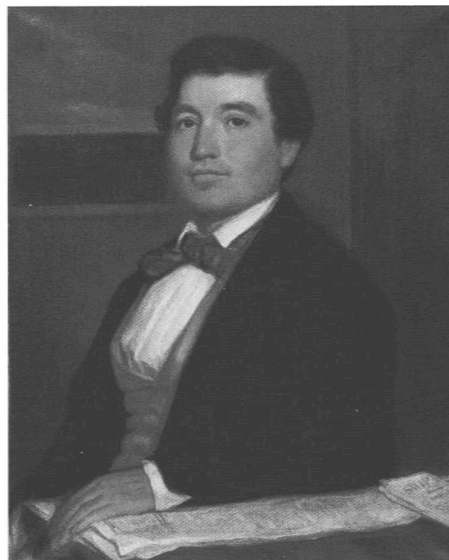
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*Eliza Johnson.*

Burt Derick

### A Wonderful Acquisition!

Dennis Historical Society has just acquired these framed portraits: Levi And Myra Howes Of East Dennis American, painted circa 1850.



These paintings are closely tied to the models of the Starlight and the Belle of the West that are being displayed in the West Dennis Graded School while the Manse is under repair.

In May 1862 the clipper ship Starlight of Boston came into Calcutta under the command of Capt. Levi Howes of East Dennis. In this painting, Levi would have possibly been approximately the age that this event took place. Levi's brother, Capt. Allison Howes was also in Calcutta in command of the

Belle of the West, a Shiverick-built ship. Having not seen each other for several years they must have enjoyed an interesting visit, for Capt. Levi challenged brother Allison to a race back to their home port of Boston. Starlight, 200 tons heavier than Belle, left 12 hours earlier and they sighted each other three times during the voyage around the Cape of Good Hope, The Starlight came into Boston Harbor exactly 12 hours ahead of Belle---a 17,000 mile dead heat!

"Captain Levi Howes, the eldest of the four brothers of Captain William F. Howes, above mentioned, was born February 20, 1812, and died May 11, 1874. He was the oldest of the five sons, all of whom retired safely after a seafaring life. At the age of twelve he went to sea, first serving as cook on a packet between East Dennis and Boston, and within ten years he was himself a master mariner. His career at sea was somewhat eventful. At the age of twenty-eight he commanded the ship Harold, of Boston, on a voyage from Calcutta, when the vessel was burned, barely allowing the escape of the crew to the life boats. After several successful years in foreign merchantmen, he was interested with Christopher Hall and Prince S. Crowell in ships built at East Dennis, where, in 1845, he erected the residence now the summer home of his widow. The financial crisis of 1857 having effectually impeded this business, he again went to sea for a few years, retiring in 1865, having several times circumnavigated the globe."

(Source: History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts, edited by Simeon L. Deyo. 1890. New York: H. W. Blake & Co)

## Successful Events

Colonial Day on the Green, Skills Day at Jericho and the Open House at the West Dennis Graded School were great successes and very well attended. Threatening weather limited some of our planned events at Skills Day but the crowds came despite the conditions. Here are two illustrative photos.

Colonial Day  
Bridget Roane of  
Croton on Hudson, N.Y.



Skills Day at Jericho  
Kitty McNamara with  
Jr. Docent Dylan Krusz and visitors



## DHS Dues

Our thanks to all of you who have been so prompt in sending in your dues and donations. We are simply amazed at the Yankee ingenuity shown in solving the problem of the humidity-damaged envelope seals!

Our Treasurer and Membership chair would really *love* to have all of your dues mailed in by the end of September if possible.

## Digital Archive Support Job Opportunity

The non-profit Dennis Historical Society is seeking a part-time computer-savvy individual to support transfer of our Digital Archives to an internet-searchable resource. This position will require a minimum of twenty hours per week during the initial phase. Routine interface in Dennis will be required. For a full job description see <http://www.dennishistsoc.org/employment/>

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*Note:* All members are invited to attend monthly DHS Board Meetings. The next meeting is at 3 pm on September 8 at a private historic home. If you want to attend, please call Mary Kuhrtz at 508-385-4978.

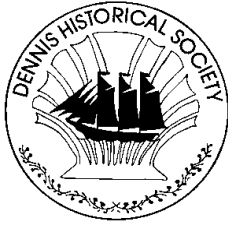
### **PLEASE NOTE – THE NEWSLETTER CANNOT BE FORWARDED**

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When your newsletter is returned we have to remove you from the mailing list until we learn where you are.

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## Mark Your Calendars – Upcoming DHS Events

**WANTED**  
*30 Fearless People!*  
Twilight Cemetery Visions  
Saturday, September 11, 6 p.m.

• "Special" Guided Tour With Leader  
Terri Fox  
And Her Lively Keenactors



Dennis Village Cemetery  
Rt. 6A & Old Bass River Rd.

**\$13 Per Hardy Soul**  
**Reservations: 508-385-9308**

Dennis Historical Society

*Autumn at Jericho*  
*Saturday, September 25*  
1:00 – 3:00



◆ 1801 Home of Captain Theophilus Baker  
◆ Historic Barn Filled With Wonderful Artifacts  
◆ Refreshments

Jericho Historical Center  
90 Old Main St., Corner Trotting Pk. West Dennis

**“Restoring our past....Preserving our history”**

If you haven't driven past the 1736 Josiah Dennis Manse Museum on the corner of Whig St. & Nobsusset Road – DO IT! The work is outstanding and will overwhelm everyone when it is completed.

JAH