



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter June 2019

Volume 42, No6

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**The Next Board Meeting, Tuesday, June 11th, 2:00 pm, Dennis Public Library, 5 Hall Street, Dennis Port
Members Welcome!**

Please send information & stories for the newsletter to Dave Talbott at the DHS Website email address: info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

Fire at the Olde Stagecoach Motel

In the May 2018 Newsletter, the first of the "This Unknown House" series appeared. The house was quickly and accurately identified by readers as the home of James S. Howes (1814-1890), located on Rt. 6A in East Dennis. When the correct identification appeared in the June Newsletter, it was noted that "the house was destroyed by fire, probably in the 1950s, possibly the early 1960s." Now with information provided by members Carole Bell, Betsy Wilcox and one of the scrapbooks loaned to me by Mary Kuhrtz, the date and the details of the fire are known.

It was cold in the early morning hours of Saturday, January 23, 1965, the temperature in the mid-twenties. Snow lay on the ground from a previous storm. The cry "**fire**" was frantically reported to a telephone operator by Paul Bauman, co-owner of the "Olde Stagecoach Motels." The operator notified the Dennis Fire Department at 3:15 am. Units 1 and 2 quickly responded with the Yarmouth Fire Department assuming standby status.

When crews arrived on scene, the center section of the building which connected the main house to what had been the barn before it was converted to apartments was fully involved. This center section was the living quarters of Mr. Bauman, his co-owner wife, Evelyn, and their 17 year old daughter Holly. According to the account in the *Standard Times* of New Bedford, "heavy smoke and intense heat prevented firefighters from immediately entering the building. Several attempts were made by firefighters wearing gas masks and carrying oxygen tanks before they were able to find Mrs. Bauman's body behind a door in an upstairs bedroom." She was dead, a victim of smoke inhalation.



This picture by photographer John Kerr appeared in the January 25, 1965 edition of the *Standard Times*. It shows Dennis firefighters on the snow covered front lawn of the *Olde Stagecoach Motels* on Rt. 6A East Dennis after the fire was extinguished. According to the account in the *Times*, Mr. Bauman and daughter Holly, a senior at Dennis Yarmouth Regional High School escaped and were uninjured by the fire. In addition, two cats and husky dog who was in an outside dog house also survived.

According to a follow up article in the *Dennis-Yarmouth Register* by Helen B. Richardson, also in Mary's scrapbook, on Friday, January 29th, services were held for Mrs. Bauman at the Hallett Funeral Home on Tuesday the 26th. Her burial followed in the Quivet Neck Cemetery.

Although the cause of this tragic fire was still under investigation at the time the articles appeared, it was believed, according to the *Times*, that it "began on the first floor of the family's living quarters before roaring through the building."

I interviewed retired Deputy Call Fire Chief Paul F. Prue about both his recollections of the fire, and also what it was like in the days when Station 2 was staffed by "on call" volunteers. Prue remembered the fire well.

In 1965, the Town of Dennis was protected by "call" firefighters. The south side was served by Station 1 and the north side by Station 2. In a fire emergency, the call was made by dialing "0" to get the operator. Dennis had gone to dial phones in 1957. The operator reported the emergency to the police department, located on Rt. 28 in West Dennis which sounded the alarm in the appropriate fire station. The alarm in Station 2 was triggered electrically from the police station.

According to Deputy Prue, there were three sirens on the north side which harkened back to the "duck and cover" days of the cold war. The sirens were installed by the Office of Civil Defense, and later given to the Town of Dennis when that office was disbanded in 1964. One was located at Station 2, one on Mashantum Road, and the third, eerily in the case of this fire, was directly across 6A from the "Olde Stagecoach Motels."

When the sirens wailed, if you were working, you stopped what you were doing; digging in your garden, you dropped your shovel; sleeping, you bounced out of bed. It was the responsibility of every call fireman to get to Station 2 as rapidly as possible!

Everything happened, and happened fast when the men arrived. All their gear was on the vehicles. Three men had a head's up on the fire's location. Then Deputy Chief Josh Crowell, Paul Prue and Dick Howes all had radios which were tuned to the fire department frequency and on 24/7. Dick, who owned and operated *Dennis Radio and TV* at the time had built his own. Josh's and Paul's had been constructed as an "electronics project" at the *Wentworth Institute of Technology*, which Paul had attended. According to Prue, all the other firefighters depended on the sirens, and no matter the time of year when it was windy, slept with a window partially open so that the siren could be heard.

As captured in the *Times* article, when the men arrived, the fire was raging and the heat was intense. It was Prue's first task to connect the truck to the nearest hydrant. Fortunately at the time, Dennis had a public water supply and hydrants were available, or all the structures on the property would have been lost. It was Howes' first responsibility to run the hose. Deputy Crowell directed operations and all the volunteers. There were 12 to 15 firefighters who served Station #2. Prue remembers vividly that Paul Bauman and daughter Holly watched in horror from across the road, knowing that wife and mother was still inside.

When I asked Prue about the men in the department, he was effusive in his praise. Yes, the men were paid when called out, but they were still all volunteers who put the well being and safety of the public above their own. "Civic duty" was the term he used to describe the motivation of the firefighters. He was obviously very proud of his service and the men with whom he served!

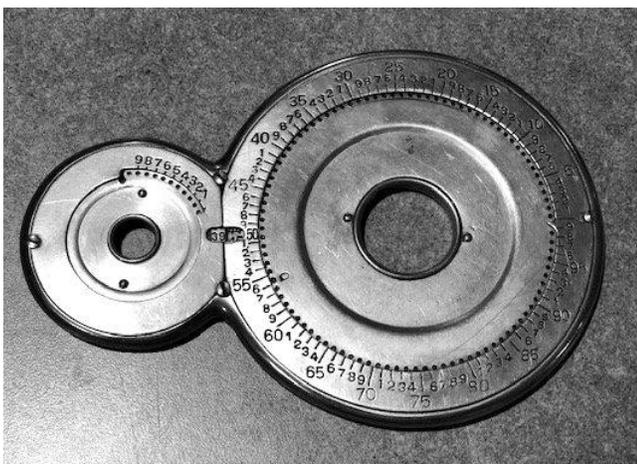
A New Twist to an "Unknown"

Readers have been terrific with their response to "*This Unknown House!*" I am hoping that there is one of you who can provide an answer to a new mystery by identifying the instrument/calculator pictured. First, a little background. The pictures were emailed to the DHS Website by member, Mike Howes of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I asked and received Mr. Howes permission to share his email with the members. WOW, what would we do without our Howes' connections?!

"I am sending as attachments, photos of an item that has been passed down to me from previous generations of Howes. It belonged to Captain Allison Howes when he was master of the "Belle of the West". I assume the item was used to make some calculations for his journeys, but my research to date has not uncovered what it is called, nor how it was used. Would any of your board or other person have any idea of what this is or how it was used? I have a number of other items in my possession from Captain Allison's seafaring days also.

Captain Allison Howes and his wife, Mary Clark (Lincoln) Howes are both buried in Riverview Cemetery, Pierre, South Dakota. I am the 4th generation of Howes in South Dakota, and we have children and grandchildren residing here also. For the benefit of my family, I have spent a lot of time and published the Thomas Howes and Lincoln genealogy going back centuries. It has been totally fascinating."

So that you know your competition, I have contacted the *American Precision Museum* and the *Naval War College Museum*. The Curator of the *NWCM* has sent the pictures on to the *Naval History & Heritage Command* for assistance in identifying the instrument. So far, there has been no answer. Here is chance for someone to scoop the experts!



Front Face



Back Face

The disks are made of brass. The larger is approximately 6" in diameter and the smaller one is half the size. There is nothing to indicate that the graduations are degrees, nor anything else to indicate what the numbers represent. The larger has 100 graduations from 1-99, (0-100) with each unit of 10 further divided by 10 and the even units divided 1-4, (0-5), and the odd units 6-9, (5-10). The graduations on the smaller disk are 1-9, (0-10). It appears if one copied the 1-9, (0-10) graduations 5 times around the smaller disk, it would complete a circle. Would that mean 50 graduations? That would be consistent with half the diameter. Why are the numbers in the smaller disk only slightly smaller? The cross-hatching, or knurling on the back appears to provide a texture used for rotating either the large or small disk. There is probably either a gear, or a friction mesh so that rotating one desk causes the rotation of the other and the numbers to change in the windows. There are 100 *dots* which appear between each graduation on the large disk, and a *dot* which appears directly opposite each graduation on the smaller. Possibly, the *dots* are perforations which allow a sharp or pointed object (stylus) to be used to rotate either disk? The name of and use of this device (engine), I hope someone in our readership knows! Please email your answers to info@dennishistoricalsociety.org.

OLD QUILTS TELL GREAT STORIES

This summer, the 1801 Captain Baker House at Jericho in West Dennis will feature quilts—big quilts, little quilts and some that testify to important stories of our past. Several were made with pieces of Civil War uniforms, and you have to wonder about the soldier who wore that uniform. Did he fight at the Battle at Bull Run or Gettysburg? Was he ever wounded? Most men in that war tended not to say much about their experiences...they just wanted to move on. However, their wives or mothers were not about to let that much cloth lay around unused. You can almost feel her joy as she applied her scissors to the material, that she was bringing that terrible event to an end in her family. You will see the fabric stitched in next to some of Great-Grandma's shawl that was found in the attic, or scraps left over from the coat she made for little Hannah. Cape Cod women were a thrifty lot. The old mantra was "Use it up; Wear it out; Make it do; Or do without." Many old Dennis homes had a sampler hanging in the kitchen with that advice.

Other quilts tell a lovelier story. It was fashionable to make a signature quilt for a young bride who would be moving out West where her husband-to-be had gone to find his fortune, Different squares were signed by friends and family in hope she would be comforted to think of the people who were thinking about her. We know it was prized by the owner, because she passed it down in her family, who, in turn, passed them on to DHS.

Dawn Dellner, Director at Jericho has created a lovely exhibit, "Treasures in Cloth" featuring DHS quilts. Each one has its own story. Some of the most touching ones were made during the 1900s Depression by non-sewers who created quilts to keep their family warm when they couldn't afford coal or wood for the fire.

There will be a Members Only Sneak Preview at Jericho on Friday June 21 from 5-7 PM. You will go home being grateful you only need to turn up the thermostat to get a little heat.

Phyllis R. Horton, Curator



(Dennis Historical Society Digital Archives)

"This Unknown House"

This picture is from the **Betty Mullan\Images\Album 11\2008-05-13** in the DHS Digital Archives. Nothing is know about this picture except that the house is/was in West Dennis. If anyone can identify the house, the two little girls in the yard, or any other information about this picture, please email me at:

info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

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HOWES FAMILY CEMETERY WALK

Friday, June 14, at 10am



Join Dennis Historical Society Directors Diane Rochelle and Bob Poskitt for an informative stroll through the recently restored Howes Family Cemetery

Access at the end of Bramble Road off Beach Street in Dennis Village

RAIN DATE: SUNDAY, JUNE 15, AT 10AM



Dennis Life Savers, Lightship Men & Lighthouse Keepers

OPENING SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1-4PM

Free admission to the Dennis Maritime Museum at the West Dennis Graded School House 67 School Street, 2nd floor
Starting June 19: open 1 - 4pm Wednesdays & Fridays
Wheelchair accessible



LOOK OF REVELATION Josiah Dennis' costumed mannequin to be unveiled Saturday, June 22, 1-4pm

Exhibit on display thereafter on Tuesdays 10am - 1pm, Thursdays 1pm-4pm, & special-event Saturdays through August 29

JOSIAH DENNIS MANSE, 61 Whitig Street in Dennis Village
Free Admission (donations gratefully accepted)



TREASURES IN CLOTH

Masterpieces from the Quilt Collection of the Dennis Historical Society

EXHIBITION OPENING: SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1-4PM
Captain Theophilus Baker House at Jericho Center
90 Old Main Street, West Dennis

FREE ADMISSION (donations gratefully accepted)

June 14th

June 15th

June 22nd

June 23rd

With all three museums opening for the summer season in June, there is plenty of exciting activity in store for everyone. In addition, don't miss the "Sneak Preview, Members Only" of "Treasurers in Cloth" on Friday, June 21st from 5-7 pm. Mark your calendars and be sure to attend all of these events!