



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter June 2020

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**The next Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, June 9th, 2:00 pm at the 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

There once was this Genius in Dennis....

On March 23, 2020, an email came into DHS from member Paula Bacon of South Dennis. It was in reference to an email she sent to DHS last August. The new email contained this sentence: "Time to print the story about our connection to the Manhattan Project." The August email's "Subject: *Re: old science czar Vannevar Bush buried in South Dennis cemetery.*" Attached to the email was a document containing an article written by Paula which originally appeared in the *Cape Cod Times*. Her updated version of that article makes it even more timely. I am sure that you will find it as interesting and informative as I did. Thank you Paula!

VANNEVAR BUSH 1890-1974



Images courtesy of Google

75 years ago, Vannevar Bush imagined an information super highway, the world wide web. "Consider a future device...in which an individual stores all his books, records and communications, and which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. It is an enlarged supplement to his memory."

VB



April 3 1944

Father of the Computer Age, son of Provincetown, and one time resident of South Dennis.

The Bush property along Bass River in South Dennis has not only wonderful memories for those who know South Dennis, but allows us to remember that one of the great thinkers of the last century once spent significant time amongst us.

Vannevar Bush proposed a new device that would make voluminous stores of information more accessible—his analog computer. He headed the Manhattan Project under the Office of Scientific Research and Development. President Roosevelt felt Vannevar in 1940 was the one to lead a comprehensive effort. Bush led the Carnegie Institute and was Dean of Engineering at MIT in Cambridge before that. Bush met the need for technological leadership in Washington in the Manhattan Project and showed how that effort could be a prototype for today's problem with Covid 19. Senator Markey and MGH president Peter Slavin suggested this in a recent Boston Globe article with the headline "We need a Manhattan Project to fight corona virus pandemic."

Paul Prue remembered the tank like machines by the Bush home at the end of Bass River Road that stuck in the mind of a small boy during World War II days. Vannevar Bush, even on vacation, was working on better military equipment. South Dennis had a ringer here and the Bush land by the river will give us a reminder of Vannevar and his connection to the land.

The late Dr. Norton Nickerson told stories about being hired as a young boy to thread worms onto hooks at the boat house in the present town purchase. Vannevar had visitors like his friend Harvard president James Bryant Conant.

They talked about radar's influence on military strategy as they fished in Bass River and Norton listened. Norton went on to be a Tuft's professor who started the college's first environmental program.

I remember watching Vannevar Bush go for the mail daily while I waited for the school bus by Liberty Hall. I can see Vannevar now puffing on a pipe and just going for the mail like we all did, no delivery then. He drove an average looking green station wagon. Vannevar was one of us when he was here. Our Dennis history tells of his desire to cheer on the local baseball teams and would frequently go with his neighbor Freeman Thacher.

Imagine—Vannevar Bush, according to an old Boston Business Journal, "is quite possibly the greatest, technological visionary ever to come out of Massachusetts." Bush was the father of hypertext. In 1945, Bush wrote a groundbreaking article titled "As We May Think" describing a device called memex, the forerunner of the internet. And yet back in South Dennis, Polly Thacher remembers him trying to find a way to scientifically rid her of the poison ivy itch.

Silicon Valley even attributes the beginnings of the Stanford Engineering School to Bush. MIT student Fred Terman took the Bush model of cooperation between MIT and Raytheon back to Palo Alto. This allowed the best minds to work unfettered as the key to incubating an idea. Terman was charged with starting an engineering school with plenty of land but no money. David Packard from HP was a student. In the Packard garage, some good experimentation was going on. Fred Terman got his students involved. In 1970, H-P had 50,000 employees, many Stanford engineers. The idea of developing public-private partnerships with a goal of developing products to be marketed grew fast. And from those simple beginnings has become, with the Stanford focal point, a world success. My son is a D-Y graduate who is now calibrating robots in the Valley. I often have wandered around Stanford and see with my own eyes how small seeds can become huge giants. The world recognizes Silicon Valley judging from the many languages I heard as I listened to the people passing on the college paths.

Although the Bush influence reaches far and wide, Vannevar Bush still rests on Cape Cod. His grave is by the South Dennis Congregational Church in his wife's family plot that would be easy to miss. Occasionally, I imagine rumblings from that spot when people try to limit public access to the internet domain. Vannevar was the son of a Provincetown clergy and wanted the world to work despite his Manhattan Project connection. Net Neutrality is important.

His daughter-in-law up in Harpswell, Maine, has made it possible for the 13.1 acre Bush property to be shared by people for generations to come. Gratitude is sent to her and the Bush family memory.

Paula Bacon

Scargo Tower

In February, DHS received an email wondering if we had pictures of either of the two towers which preceded the present stone structure on Scargo Hill. A search of our digital archives yielded none. Hoping that the *Dennis Historical Commission* could help, I emailed Chair, Diane Rochelle, and she sent back a picture of the second tower. Diane is also a past President of the DHS and a current member of the Board. Editor's note: Unless one of our readers can help here, there are, apparently, no pictures of the first tower.

Guessing there are many readers who may not be familiar with the history of Scargo Tower, I went to one of my favorite quick and easy reference books, *Gazetteer of Dennis* produced by the *Dennis Historical Commission* and edited by Burton N. Derick. This book is available in the Bookstore on the our website.



2nd Scargo Tower, image from DHC

Scargo Tower - *Scargo Tower began as a wooden tourist observatory built by investors in 1874, for which they charged five cents for people to enjoy the view of Cape Cod Bay from Provincetown to Plymouth. The Honorable Francis Bassett donated a telescope for it in October of 1874. Made of wood, it was destroyed in a gale two years later. Rebuilt of wood, it was secured by wire cables to prevent winds from toppling it again. In 1890, the hill and tower were purchased by Francis Tobey, who had purchased the NobsCUSsett Hotel from his brother Charles. In 1900, a fire started on South Main Street near Southworth Nye's butcher shop, and the wind being so brisk, it spread rapidly. A backfire was started to contain it, and it worked, but not before the wooden tower on Scargo Hill lay in ashes. Francis Tobey had the tower re-built, this time in stone. The rocks came from Sandy Neck, Barnstable, and were brought by raft to Corporation Harbor. The 30-foot tower was built by stonemason John Murphy of Boston, who always wore white overalls and a derby hat.*

A rare Photo from the Warren Wiggington Collection actually showing the 2nd Scargo Tower



SPANISH INFLUENZA RAGES IN U.S.

Thousands of Cases Reported
With Many Deaths.

THOSE WHO ARE MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO IT

**Fruit-A-Tives - The Wonderful
Fruit Medicine - Greatly Helps
To Resist This Disease**

The epidemic of Spanish Influenza which played such havoc in Europe has reached this continent. Thousands of cases of the strange malady have appeared and many deaths are already reported. Surgeon-General Blue of the United States Public Health Service having stated that "Spanish Influenza will probably spread all over the country in six weeks."

Practically every ship which touches our shores from abroad brings those infected with the disease.

Surgeon-General Blue urges that "the individual take all precautions he can against contracting the disease by care and personal hygiene." Plenty of exercise should be taken; the diet should be regulated too.

Spanish Influenza affects most severely elderly persons and others whose powers of resistance are weakened by illness, work or worry, especially those who are "run-down" or "not feeling up to the mark."

The really great danger from the disease is not so much the disease itself, as that it often develops into pneumonia.

What everyone needs now is a general tonic like "Fruit-A-Tives". This wonderful fruit medicine is not a germ-killer. It is a body-builder; a strength-maker; a blood purifier; a power in protecting against the ravages of the disease.

"Fruit-A-Tives regulates the kidneys and the bowels, causing those organs to eliminate waste regularly and naturally as nature intended. "Fruit-A-Tives" keeps the skin active and purifies and enriches the blood. "Fruit-A-Tives" tones up and strengthens the organs of digestion, assuring food being properly digested and assimilated.

Everyone can take ordinary precautions, avoid crowded places, and use "Fruit-A-Tives" regularly to keep the bowels and kidneys regular and the whole system in the best possible condition. Then we are safe from disease.

"Fruit-A-Tives" is sold by dealers everywhere at \$.50 a box, 6 for \$2.50. Trial size \$.25 or send receipt postpaid on receipt of price by FRUIT-A-TIVES Limited, OGDENSBURG, N.Y.

I opened the window and influenza!

With all of us still leading very altered lives, I considered an article for the June issue about the impact of the 1918-1919 Spanish Flu Epidemic on Dennis. Soon after I started my research, I decided, "if I have had enough *pandemic*, probably everyone else has too!" I did, however, find the article which I have included here from the Yarmouth Register, dated Saturday, November 09, 1918. Incredibly, it is an early infomercial! Please read it from top to bottom. I think you will be amazed as to how much has remained the same with regard who's at risk and precautions to take. It is even more amazing the way the advertisers were permitted to incorporate quotations from the actual U.S. Surgeon-General in their ad copy! I apologize for the tiny print, but it needed to fit on the page, and also appear as it originally did in the paper.

A Mysterious Apparition



In December, DHS member, Dee Collins, emailed a color photograph she had taken to the members of the Board. It is of the head stone of John Howes (1746-1832), and it was taken at the Howes family cemetery in Dennis. The image is reproduced here, unfortunately, in black and white. Other photos of the stone taken without the same lighting and a lesser amount of lichen do not show the apparition. Was this a one of event, when Mr. Howes returned for a visit?



*"Erected To the Memory of
M.' John Howes
He died
Sept. 11. AD. 1832
aged 86 years"*



The image on the right from findagrave.com, provided by *wintercape*, shows no trace of the apparition which appears on Dee Collins' photo.

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
South Dennis, MA 02660-0607

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**West
Dennis
Village
Cemetery
Walk**

Friday,
June 12th,
at 10am

Rain date:
Sunday, June 14, at 2pm

FREE ADMISSION
WEST DENNIS CEMETERY
AT THE INTERSECTION OF POND AND FISK STREETS

(Note: No parking in the cemetery itself)



Join the Dennis Historical Society June 20
from 1 - 4 pm at Josiah Dennis Manse for



THE UNVEILING

Mistress Dennis' costumed mannequin
is revealed... as her work cupboard opens

1736 JOSIAH DENNIS MANSE MUSEUM
61 Whig Street in Dennis Village

FREE ADMISSION
(Donations gladly accepted)

Unfortunately, these events may have to be postponed or cancelled. We will do our best to let you know! The June 13th event "Dennis Women Who Went To Sea" has already been cancelled, and the Dennis Maritime Museum will closed for the 2020 Summer Season.