



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter November 2021

Volume 44, No.11

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**The Next Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 9th, 2:00 pm at the Dennis Memorial Library
1020 Old Bass River Road, Dennis Village**

Members Welcome

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

The acorn doesn't fall far from the tree

Last month, while working on the October Newsletter, out of the blue, and much to my delight, I received this amazing email. No sooner was the ink dry on the October issue, when I began looking forward to working on November's!

Hi Dave, I'm a historical society member and daughter of Nancy Thacher Reid, former historical society president and author of the Dennis Town history book! I have written a little story that might fit with the newsletter. I'm attaching the story and three photos for you to check out! The photos are of the schooner mentioned in the article, the house and the family of Captain Roland Kelley. You may use any of these that you think fit. Let me know what you think about the article, Katharine Thacher Peace

Thrilled, I wasted no time in responding!

Thank you Katharine! The article is excellent, and I had no trouble with the format. I will definitely use it in a future newsletter; the readers will love it! The pictures will go with it beautifully! Wishing you and your family the very best. Take care, stay safe, Dave

Fate of a Dennis Schooner

My parents, Richardson and Nancy Thacher Reid, live in a beautiful Victorian home in the historic district of South Dennis. It is ten rooms of vintage elegance, complete with gingerbread trim, a gabled window (once my bedroom) and a regal "tower" from which Bass River can be seen through triangular windows. This impressive home at 480 Main Street was completed in 1892 by Captain Roland Baker Kelley, and it remained his pride and joy to the end of his life.



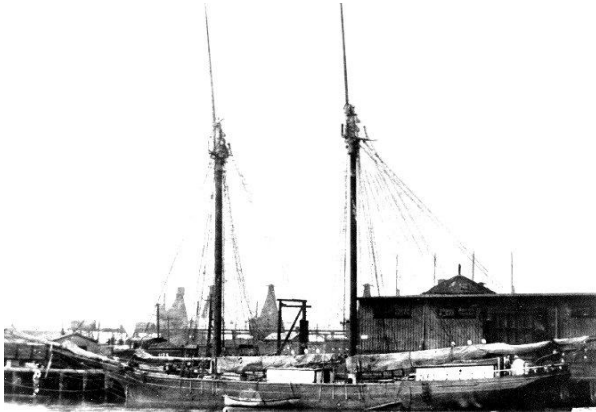
1960s image of 480 Main Street provided by the author

Roland Kelley was a successful seaman, transporting merchandise from ports around the United States and abroad. His three-masted, 252 ton schooner, the M.E. Eldredge, carried products such as coal, cotton and clay as well as foodstuffs from the southern states, around New England, Nova Scotia, Cuba, and the Caribbean. He and his crews braved many a storm at sea, several of which were chronicled in the local papers, such as their miraculous survival of the

Roland Kelley, born 1851, son of Elisha Kelley and Eliza Jane Crowell, was brought up in South Dennis and married my great-grand-aunt, Amelia Thacher, in 1872. The couple would have seven children, the youngest, Gertrude, born in the new house. There was a huge housewarming party when the home was completed, and the newspaper lists a menu of gastronomic delights as well as the entertainment, which was provided by the Kelley children singing and playing various instruments.



The Kelley Family circa 1885, photo provided by the author



Schooner M.E. Eldredge, photo provided by the author

blizzard of November 1898 in which many vessels and their crews were lost. The M.E. Eldredge was run ashore and completely dismantled, but all aboard her survived, and the schooner was not a total loss.

As residents of Capt. Kelley's beloved home, we have always kept a photo of his schooner in a prominent place on our living room wall, as well as a photo of Roland, his wife Amelia, and five of their children in the music room. I had often wondered what happened to Capt. Kelley's schooner, and recently found my answer in the newspaper archives.

An article out of Havana, Cuba details the loss of the M.E.

Eldredge in a hurricane in May 1917. Nine crewmen and the captain (not Kelley, but a captain named Delbat) were able to escape the sinking of the ship in a life vessel, with only a can of peaches for sustenance. The poor fellows were helpless in the open seas for eighteen days. Sadly, the captain and one crew member perished of thirst and exposure, but the rest managed to cling to life. They later reported that they caught a shark with ropes and drank its blood for life-sustaining fluids. At last, they were spotted by a passing ship and rescued, recovering from their ordeal in Havana.

Captain Roland Kelley was one of the last active sea captains in Dennis, as the encroaching railroad system gradually made sea transport obsolete. Certainly, he must have been devastated at the loss of his captain, crewman and his vessel, even as his means of livelihood was fading with the times. Captain Roland Kelley died in April 1923 at his treasured home where his ghost is still occasionally encountered.... but that's another story!

Thank you Katherine from all of us!

The 2021 Annual Meeting

The Dennis Historical Society Annual Meeting was held on October 12, 2021. Because of the cancellation of this year's luncheon due to the coronavirus, it was decided that there would be two separate meetings, but they would be conducted on the same day. This year's Annual Meeting commenced at 2:00 pm with the regular Board Meeting starting after the Annual's adjournment. The minutes are on file with Clerk/Recording Secretary Bonnie Hempel. The most important item on the agenda was the election of Officers and Directors. Here are the results of the election.

Dennis Historical Society's Officers and Directors for 2022

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(Candidates for Election or Re-election Italicized)*

PRESIDENT.....Betsy Harrison
TRANSITIONING PRESIDENT.....Dave Talbott
VICE PRESIDENTS.....Terri Fox, *Phil Catchings*
CLERK/RECORDING SECRETARY...*Bonnie Hempel*
TREASURER.....Larry Symington
ASSISTANT TREASURER.....*June Howes*
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.....*Ruth Derick*

ELECTED DIRECTORS

**Bill Collins, Dee Collins, *Pat Corcoran*, Ann Croston, Bo Durst, *Terri Fox*
 Kevin Keegan, *Mary Kuhrtz*, Bob Poskitt, Diane Rochelle, *John Schofield**, Jan Ward**

CURATOR/ARCHIVIST EMERITUS....Phyllis Horton
DENNIS MARITIME MUSEUM DIRECTOR EMERITUS....Phyllis Horton

APPOINTED DIRECTORS

HISTORICAL COMMISSION.....*Bob Poskitt*
JERICO HISTORICAL CENTER...*Dawn Dellner*
MEMBERSHIP.....*Jan Ward*
JOSIAH DENNIS MANSE.....*Terri Fox*
MARITIME MUSEUM at WDGS.....*Pat Corcoran*
CURATOR/ARCHIVIST.....*Dawn Dellner*
LIBRARIAN.....*Ruth Derick*
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN.....*Paul Lapense*
PROGRAMS.....*Betsy Harrison*
PUBLICITY.....*Kevin Keegan*
TECHNOLOGY.....*Jan Ward*
DIRECTOR AT LARGE.....*Patty Sakellis*

2021 Historic Preservation Award

DENNIS HISTORY ... REIMAGINED: This year's Burton Derick Historic Preservation Awards were presented by Diane Rochelle, chairperson of the Dennis Historical Commission, for four recent renovation/restoration projects in Dennis. The presentation occurred at the Josiah Dennis Manse Museum on a beautiful Saturday afternoon, August 21st as part of the Manse Committee's annual Colonial Day festivities.



Photos by Bob Poskitt

In addition to chair Diane Rochelle, the Dennis Historical Commission includes Bob Poskitt (vice chair), Bill Collins, Josh Crowell, Chris Flanagan, Sarah Kruger, Tim Scannell, Ken Van Tassel, and Julian Weiss.

Press release by DHS Publicity Director – Kevin Keegan

The properties recognized this year were (clockwise from top left) 858 Route 6A (Main Street), Dennis, built circa 1780 by John Hall (Cape Cod style of architecture); 20 Corporation Road, Dennis, built circa 1798 by Nathan Hall (Federal style of architecture); 46 Pleasant Street, East Dennis, built circa 1853 by captain Joshua Sears (Victorian Eclectic style of architecture); and 30 Upper County Road, South Dennis, built circa 1870 by William Allister (Greek Revival style of architecture).

Burton "Burt" Derick, a 12th-generation Cape Codder who grew up in Dennis Port and South Dennis, was a longtime local historian, meticulous researcher, and indefatigable champion for the preservation of early Dennis homes. These annual awards for historic stewardship have been given in his memory since 2014.

Dennis Historical Society House Signs

Captain Ruben Hopkins
1830



Own an historic house in Dennis? If your home was built prior to 1900, DHS House Signs are available.

These signs are professionally lettered in black on white azek and measure 16" x 5 1/2". The price, which includes verification of date by the Dennis Historical Commission, is \$125.00 for non-members and \$100.00 for members.

If the name of the original owner cannot be verified, only the date will be used. If the exact date cannot be determined, "circa" will be used before it.

Please mail your check made out to the Dennis Historical Society for the appropriate amount, and mail it along with the information on your house to P.O. Box 607 South Dennis, MA 02660. You can also place your order by emailing the information to info@dennishistoricalsociety.org, and then making a PayPal donation to the DHS by clicking on:

Get Involved ▾, **Donate**, **DONATE** and entering the appropriate amount. Delivery time will vary, longer if research is necessary.

 **Happy Thanksgiving** 

Wishing everyone a truly wonderful day!

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

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02664



Anna Howard Shaw

The true story of one of Dennis' most famous
19th century residents: trailblazing minister,
suffragette, and friend to Susan B. Anthony

A delightful and memorable presentation
by the Reverend Connie Bickford

November 13, 2pm, Dennis Union Church
A \$5 donation is suggested

Sponsored by the Dennis Historical Society
and Dennis Union Church

*Looking for the
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Holiday Season?
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Website.*

Type
www.dennishistoricalsociety.org
in your browser and click on

Bookstore

*You will find a great selection
of books which will make a very
special gift for a very special
person!*

2021 DHS Annual Appeal

Next month, members will receive
their Society's 2021 Annual Appeal
letter asking for support for *wish list*
items for each of our three museums.

Please give generously! Your
contribution will greatly assist our
museum volunteers in fulfilling our
Mission Statement.

**To Preserve, Protect & Promote the
the History of Dennis, Massachusetts**

*(For some, it may still be tax
deductable)*