



Dennis Historical Society Newsletter February 2022

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**The Next Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 8th, 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

Carole Bell, lifelong resident and longtime DHS member has a passion for preserving the history of the Town of Dennis. Readers will instantly recognize Carole's name from contributions she has made to the newsletter, most recently in October 2021, *Witch One is Yours*. Over the last three years, I have been the recipient of newspaper clippings, photographs and first hand recollections which Carole has emailed to me. The following is a compilation of information she sent about a former Dennis institution. We start with an article by Cape Cod writer and historian, the late Noel Beyle. It appeared in the *Register* on March 23, 2003 in Mr. Beyle's feature *Rear Window*.

Joe Hefler's Blacksmith Shop



DHS Digital Archive

Joe Hefler's blacksmith shop. Hefler also pushed "filtered gasoline" from a pump by the side of the road, Offered travelers motor oil (it was "Mobiloil") plus automobile tires (they were "Good Year"). This photo was taken by a Chatham postcard photographer around the time of the First World War - give or take a couple of years – at a time when the horse and buggy age was passing the torch to no end of a phalanx of cars plying the roads here from the Canal to the Cape tip. And, Joe Hefler was in the middle of this change: shoeing horses and pumping gas.

Today, Hefler's roadside pit stop has long been replaced by the Dennis Garage and the CCB&T branch office to the east. Plus, the white house pictured just beyond his shop was Joe and Grace Hefler's home (moved there from Yarmouth at some point - Hannah Crowell's house originally). The Hefler home was torn down several years ago to make way for a group of commercial buildings called "Dennis Common," with only Hefler's gazebo and part of the porch retained on the northernmost structure.

Oh, yes, (if I could) this writer would vote in favor, of the proposed park. Funded through a mix of private and public monies, it's an A+ idea!

Editor's note - Interestingly, Mr. Beyle makes no mention of the Stageway Restaurant, *Thelma & Joe Hefler* DHS Digital Archive nor the fire which destroyed it in 1975. Also interestingly, the picture from the Digital Archive is labeled as it appears. All available information confirms that, as in the article, Joe Hefler's wife was Grace. Was "Thelma" in the picture

This spring, Dennis voters are going to be asked to turn a village institution-turned-eyesore into a public park. The former Dennis Garage or Getty Station on the busy corner of Route 6A and Nobscussett Road, run for many years by Dan Walker and his son-in-law Bill Bell, has been closed since 1993. And, since 1984, the town has engaged in an up-and-down battle with Cumberland Farms over plans to convert the place into a combination gas station/convenience store. Concerns over traffic at the multiple-road intersection led the Dennis Planning Board to reject the proposed project three times. Last year, Cumberland Farms sold the property, and currently Dennis is seeking voter approval for plans to buy it, remove the garage building, and landscape the property into a small park.

Yet, long before the recent battle with Cumberland Farms - even before Walker and Bell operated their gas station this vintage photo shows what once used to be on the site:



Thelma Elizabeth Chase, later Mrs. Henry Seth Leonard Doane? Was she a family friend? Is the picture mislabeled in the Archive? Can anyone help here?

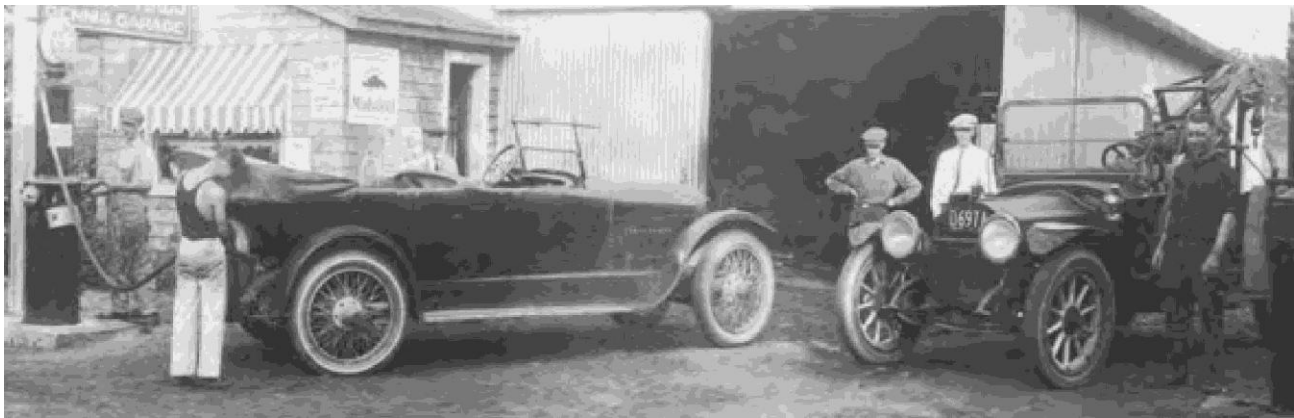


Image from the DHS Digital Archive

Description from the Metadata, DHS Digital Archive

Joe Hefler's Livery Stable - circa 1920s - This was situated at the junction of Nobscussett Road and Sears Square and Route 6 A. Later Sears Square was extended easterly and an entrance to New Boston Rd was created over a portion of the lot where a small collage once stood. During the war, Ann & Ray Hall and children lived in this building. (?) The larger portion of the building was moved onto what is now the (Louis O.) Kelley property and a dormer added. This is the site of the Flying A Tidewater station, then the Dennis Garage (1963?), and later the infamous Cumberland Farms gas Station, (closed 1994), now a public park purchased by the town.

Ed. note – This image and information was also in another article which Carole provided.



Pumping gas at Joe Hefler's after it was expanded to the corner of Nobscussett Road – DHS Digital Archive

This article only scratches the history of what became the Dennis Garage. Dan Walker is Carole's late father and Bill Bell is her husband. For much more information on both, search Dennis Garage and Joe Hefler's Livery Stable at <https://www.dennishistoricalsociety.org/archive> and <https://www.sturgislibrary.org/research/notable-collections/newspaper-indexes/>. You will not be disappointed!

Thank you Carole

Who was Caleb Chase?

The following account which answers the question was written by our own Phyllis Horton.

The Most Famous Chase of them All!

A friend, surnamed Chase, once told me that there was a time when you couldn't throw a rock in West Harwich or Dennis Port without hitting a Chase. Chase Families were that numerous!

Caleb Chase was born in West Harwich in 1831. He was the youngest surviving son of poor farmer Job Chase and his second wife Phebe. Caleb was one of his father's 17 children.

In 1850, Caleb traveled to Boston to seek his fortune, and as luck would have it, he found it! At first, employed in a dry goods store, by 1862 Chase had established a coffee roasting company. James Sanborn, a coffee importer from Lewiston Maine moved to Boston and in 1874, the two men partnered to form Chase & Sanborn Coffee and Tea company. Together they devised a method of shipping their product. Chase and Sanborn was the first coffee company to ever package and ship roasted, ground coffee in sealed tins. Sales soared!

During the Civil War, coffee replaced tea as the hot beverage of choice in the United States. By the late 1870's Chase & Sanborn coffee was easily the most popular brand. In fact, in 1893, Chase & Sanborn coffee was granted an exclusive license as the sole supplier of coffee at the Chicago World's Fair.

Caleb and his wife Salome moved to Brookline, Massachusetts for business reasons, but always returned to their home on the Cape along the Herring River in the summer. The Chase mansion in fact is now Cape Cod's Irish Pub in West Harwich. Chase never forgot his roots and love for both Harwich and Dennis Port. He provided the funds to build the Chase Library in West Harwich which was co-founded by Salome Chase.

Born into poverty himself, he never forgot the poor. In his will dated 1899, Chase left the Town of Dennis \$5,000 annually, a princely sum at the time, to establish a fund for the support of the poor, particularly the destitute elderly. Seven years later, he added a codicil raising the total to \$10,000.

Ed. Note – Over the years, as the population of Dennis grew, so did the need. The return on the original bequest was not able to keep pace, and additional funding became necessary.

Dennis taxpayers can contribute to the fund by checking a box on their tax forms. The Trust continues to this day, now known as the Caleb Chase, Jonathan Matthews & Nathaniel Myrick Trust Fund. Here's how it works. Each year, the Dennis Assessor's office provides the Fund with the names of senior citizens who qualify for tax abatements but who still cannot afford to pay their taxes. Many are shocked and pleasantly surprised to receive checks in the mail! Caleb Chase's compassion and generosity still touches lives today.

After Caleb Chase's death in 1908, the coffee company was bought by an entire string of other companies: Standard Brands, Kraft Foods, Hill's Brothers Coffee and Chock Full of Nuts. In 2006, the current owners, the Massimo Zanetti Beverage Group of Bologna, Italy, bought Chase & Sanborn, which is still available to purchase online, but has ceased to be an item commonly found in most American grocery stores.

Thank you Phyllis!

So here are two last minute New Year's Resolutions as we enter the second month of 2022. First, when your DHS membership form arrives in March, be sure to renew your support. Second, please take special note of the last line of the renewal form – *I'd like to donate to the **Caleb Chase Trust Fund** that benefits the elderly needy in Dennis.* \$ _____, and add the amount to your check. The elderly needy in Dennis will be very grateful.

Identity Confirmed

In the December 2021 Newsletter, I wrote in the introduction to the final look back to 1979, *A Nineteenth Century Christmas* that I suspected that the identity of the editor at the time and the author of the article was Nancy Thacher Reid. I asked if a member would email info@dennishistoricalsociety.org, and confirm or correct this. It wasn't long before I received the following confirmation from longtime member Gail Hart – *In response to your request for confirmation that the newsletters from the 1970s and 1980s (and maybe much longer) were written by Nancy Thacher Reid, I can confirm that fact. I was the typist and proofreader. In those decades, we did not have the ease of computer preparation that we now take for granted. Nancy would arrive at my house (no email either) with sections of paper spliced together with tape and hand written inserts. Then each issue was retyped, and taken to the printer. Nancy and I would see which one of us could procrastinate the longest so that we would be right down to the wire every time! We had a lot of laughs. Much of the info she was gathering became part of her history of Dennis. When you are looking through the archives, especially the Christmas issues, you may find a recipe for Captain Negus' punch. That would be worth reprinting. We served it at the Old South Dennis Historical Village Association (OSDVA) holiday get-togethers for many years. It was always well-received! We had to post a monitor beside the punch bowl to make sure the children weren't ladling any into their glasses.*

Thank you Gail, your response is very much appreciated!

I searched the back issues on our website and although I found a reference to *Captain Negus' punch*, I didn't find the recipe. Here is one from the website CompleteCocktails.com. Authentic? Similar? Wrong? Maybe a reader will email me at info@dennishistoricalsociety.org and let me know!

The Negus Punch recipe is a warm winter party punch drink made from ruby port, lemon, cinnamon, sugar, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, lemon juice and hot water, and served from a large warmed pitcher. Recipe serves 10-12.

Ingredients

1 bottle Port Wine – ruby port	7 Cloves
1 Lemon – peel only	½ tsp Allspice
8 Sugar cubes	Water – boiling
2 Cinnamon sticks	½ oz Lemon Juice
1 Nutmeg – crushed	Glass: Pitcher/Bowl

Directions

Add lemon peel, sugar and about 1 inch water to a warm pitcher and stir to dissolve the sugar. Add wine, lemon juice and spices, stir well. Top with a few cups of boiling water and stir well before serving.

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2021 DHS Annual Appeal

If you haven't yet responded to the Society's 2021 Annual Appeal letter asking for support for *wish list* items for each of our three museums, *please* do so today and 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**

*To all of you who have already given
Thank you!*

Unknown Location



DHS Digital Archive

Somewhere in South Dennis in 1937.
Pictured - Ted and Leslie Bragdon, Fred
Sears and Lloyd Liske – dog is unnamed.
Does anyone know where this picture
was taken? Email your answer to me at:
info@dennishistoricalsociety.org