



Dennis Historical Society

Newsletter

June 2022

Volume 45, No.06

Dennis Historical Society – copyright 2022 Internet: www.dennishistoricalsociety.org - E-mail: info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

The next Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 14th, 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

Bits & Pieces

There have been so many interesting things which have either come my way, or been brought to my attention recently, that this issue is going to be more like the potpourri category on *Jeopardy*. We start with the responses to last month's *Industrial Dennis*, first with an anecdote from longtime DHS member, local historian and many time newsletter contributor - Henry Kelley.

Henry used a term which perfectly describes what he related to me – *Oral Tradition*. His story involves the fire which destroyed the Cold Storage Plant in 1910. I passed the story on to longtime Board Member and local historian connected to East Dennis for generations, Bo Durst. You will be hearing from Bo later in this issue. She was aware of Henry's anecdote growing up, but wasn't able to add to it. The crux of this oral tradition is that the fire was a case of arson, and it was perpetrated by a disgruntled employee because of a dispute about his pay. Also, as the story goes, the arsonist, who lived on Quivet Neck, was never prosecuted for the crime because there was insufficient evidence linking him to the fire even though it was common knowledge on the Neck who was responsible. Hard to believe, but apparently the individual continued to live in town! To date, the individual remains nameless. **Thank you Henry**, I hope I got all the details correct from our phone chat!

From Bo, I received the following - *Enjoyed the article on the Cold Storage Plant. Louis A. Crowell was my great uncle and Prince M. was his cousin--both grandsons of Capt. Prince.*

There were other businesses on our little neck, namely the Sears & Sears Grocery Store on the corner of School St. & Center St. It is still there, looks just the same & is a private residence. Also D.H. Sears (Grocery) Ice Cream Shop as everyone knew it. It also started in the late 1800s but lasted well into the 1900s. I remember DH puttering around the store. He must have been there until he died. We went home one fall and the next summer he wasn't there! His two sons ran it for awhile after his death. People came from all over for their homemade ice cream (and for a long time, hand cranked!). He was also a good cook and Mom talked about his baked beans & chowder, although they almost always made their own (Every Sat, beans & brown bread!!) His helper was Mrs. Black (her son, Sonny, was a lobsterman) and she made DELICIOUS pies & a wicked chicken pie--all chicken! They also had homemade bread & my brother & I were charged with going down every morning to get several loaves. Somehow that nice warm, right out of the oven bread never made it back without lots of little "peck" marks where we'd pinch off pieces. On special occasions, we'd get to race down after supper & get ice cream--usually a couple of quarts as we usually had 15-16 people at the house (Journey's End) and the refrigerator only had a little ice cube compartment. Of course, that meant we had to eat it all!

We also had a lending library long before my time. Julia Long lived on Pleasant St. and her suitor, Nathan Sears, would bring her a book when he came courting. I guess she had a whole bookcase full and started lending them to the neighbors. DHS bought her bookcase and all the books & it sits in the hall at Jacob Sears Memorial Library.

When they built the church here on the neck, there were still the last holdouts from the original meeting house/church in Brewster. Eventually it closed and Captain Dean Sears bought it and had it moved to Pleasant St. In the late 1800s, it became a straw hat factory, employing mostly women. It then became a cranberry sorting & packing plant.

So--lots of things you can check out about our little neck. In the 1900s, there were a number of guest houses & tea rooms in the homes. Ed. Note – for more of Bo's great contributions to our newsletter, go to the DHS Website – www.dennishistoricalsociety.org, click on the Newsletter Tab and see January, 2019 and September, 2021.

Thank you Bo!

In an exchange with another longtime DHS member, local history buff and frequent newsletter contributor Scott Walker, I learned the following –

Dave; A fair amount of rubble (in the form of bricks and mortar) from the destruction of the final storage plant/facility was left on the North shore of the Island Creek (on the inside of the harbor) and still sits there, scattered about. Cheers!

Not being sure about the location of *Island Creek*, I sent a screenshot which I made from a satellite image on *Google Maps* asking him to confirm what I thought was the location of the creek. This information was in Scott's reply –

Yes, you are correct on the Island Creek location, with the "mouth" of it as shown on the attachment I've included here and outlined in red. It continues back into the marsh area as a small stream.

The area encircled in blue is where the debris/rubble is located. Apparently, they just bulldozed it to the shoreline upon demolition. Can you imagine...nobody cared? I am fairly certain that it was either Burt Derick or Phyllis Horton that alerted me to the fact that debris from the factory was located here. This is also the location of where the H. H. Sears Lumber Yard was located in late 1800s, of which there are several old photos of in the Archive. The pilings from those ventures are still visible (depending on the tide) along this north shore of the creek "mouth".

I was always more inclined to think it (factory) was located where I have circled in pink, based on the location of the debris. Plus, if you walk down to where the photo was taken on the front cover of the newsletter (west side of harbor) and line up your sight line, I think the pink circle location might make sense. Not positive, but.... based on the "Sheriff's Sale" notice from Barnstable Patriot (2/4/1924 on pg. 3 of newsletter) it clearly indicates the location "on the Northerly side of Island Creek".

Thank you Scott!



H.H. Sears Lumber Yard, DHS Digital Archive

Because, at least for the time being, our newsletter is published in black and white, I took the information on the image which Scott sent back to me and transferred it to another screen shot which appears below.

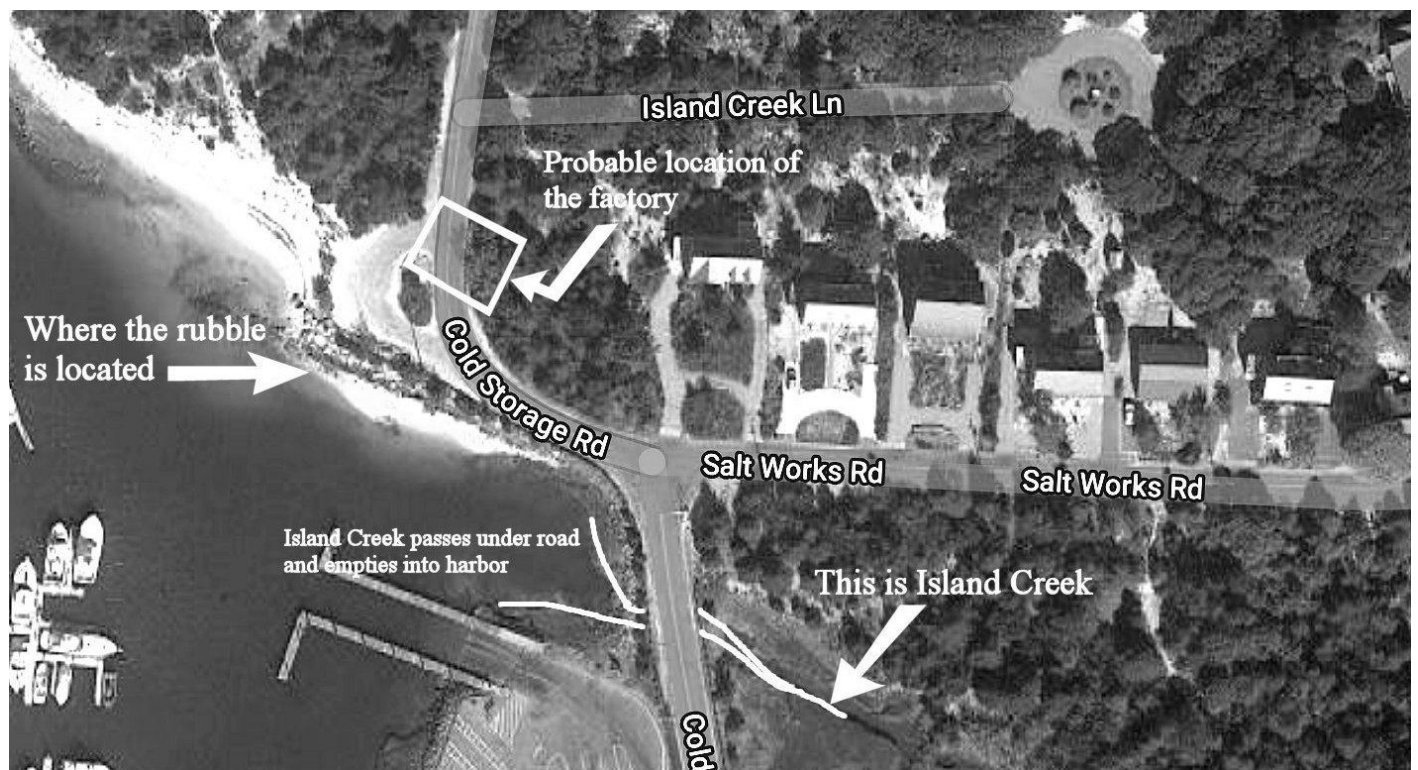


Image Courtesy of Google Maps

Button, Button

A donation was submitted for review by the Acquisition Committee by the *Village Improvement Society of Dennis*. The button was found in the *Soldier's Field*, also known as *Training Field*, on Route 6A in the Village. Found in 2019, and given to the *VISD*, President Carole Bell gifted it to DHS. Although the terms *obverse* and *reverse* are most often used to describe coins or medals, I am using them here as there is engraved lettering on the back. A quick bit of online research indicates the button is probably from the mid-nineteenth century. Having been found in the *Soldier's Field*, one would like to hope that maybe it came from a military uniform at the time of our Civil War. It may, however, have come from someone's Sunday best on the way to or from a service at the *Dennis Union Church Meeting House* built in 1838. It became the *Dennis Union Church* in 1866.

The button is a plain-faced, brass button with the following engraved on the *reverse* – RICH - GILT – COLOR - WARRANTED. The button has a greenish, yellow patina and is in remarkable good condition. If anyone would like to add to the history of buttons of the era, please email me at: info@dennishistoricalsociety.org



Obverse

Reverse

Glimpses Back

As another summer season at *The Cape Playhouse* approaches, these two photos provide a very nostalgic look back! The first was given to DHS by local legend Carole Bell who has tirelessly worked to insure that Dennis' past is carried into the future. The second is from our Digital Archive, but it got there by way of Carole too! **Thank you Carole!**

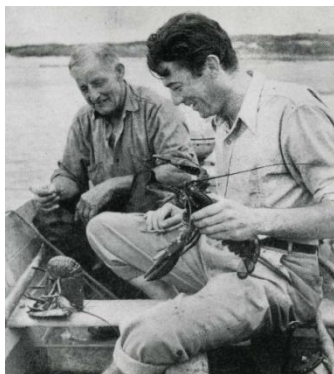


Photo provided by Carole Bell

With the photo, Carole wrote – *Gregory Peck was doing summer stock at The Cape Playhouse, "Playboy of the Western World."* Ed. Note - 1946 - *He stayed at Mrs. Hayden's house at 60 Corporation Road where he had proposed to his wife several years early. E.N. - 1942. But back when he was a fledgling actor, he roomed at my grandparent's home at 19 Corporation Road. (room on the right; top of the stairs.) The photo is Ben Walker (my grandfather) and Peck at Corporation Beach. They had gone out to pull pots. Peck is wearing Ben's shirt, and Ben is showing him how to stand a lobster on its head. Years later, when my cousin Anne Marie Walker, met Gregory Peck at the Kennedy Center, he remembered living with "Father Ben and Mother Mary (Walker.)"*

From the Metadata in the Digital Archive, we learn that this is – *Actress June Lockhard's publicity photo, shot in 1953 at the Dennis Garage, Rte. 6A. Dan Walker (Carole's father) obliges at the pump. Note, Mobil gas price at \$0.32 per gallon. Perhaps the photographer was Bob Dixon of Oyster Harbors. From Album 09 Carole Bell. Ed. Note – if one zooms in on Dan's left pant leg, "Bob Dixon Oyster Harbors" is written there. June is driving an MGTD.*



DHS Digital Archive

A final *bit* for you to supply the *pieces* - if you haven't yet renewed your DHS Membership, please do so!
We don't want to lose you - **Membership Matters!**

Dennis Historical Society
P.O. Box 607
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02664

West Dennis Village Cemetery Walk

Friday,
June 17th,
at 10am

Rain date:
Sunday, June 19, 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 25
from 1 - 4 pm at Josiah Dennis Manse for



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)

*Please note – the correct date on the 2022 DHS Calendar for Dr. Pregot's talk –
“Sea Captains of Cape Cod” is Saturday, October 1st at 2:00 pm.*