



# Dennis Historical Society Newsletter August 2022

Volume 45, No.08

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The next Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto:info@dennishistoricalsociety.org)

## Dennis Village 1956

At a meeting in June, Henry Kelley II handed me a map. As has been noted on numerous occasions in past newsletters, Henry is both an authority on and collector of Dennis history and memorabilia. The map is a reproduction which I scanned and digitized...more about that later in the article. It was drawn by one Frank D. Waller, and it lists all the residents of the Village, still known at the time as North Dennis. On April 26, 1956, this is how it was written up in the *Yarmouth Register*.

### New Map Identifies North Dennis Residents

by Mrs. Julius Howes

Mr. Frank Waller, Whig St., Dennis, has completed a map of North Dennis on which are located all roads, streets, lanes and byways, with lakes, ponds and location of all important buildings together with a list of names, numbered according to street address.

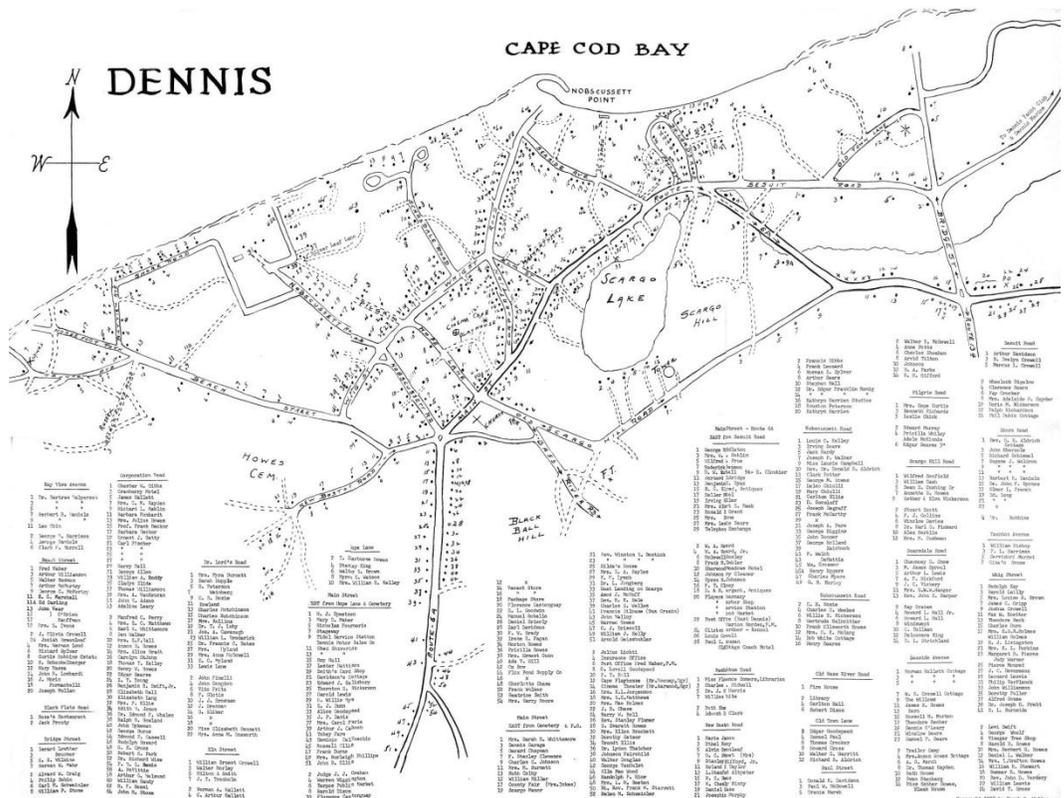
Mr. Waller, a specialist in research, started the project six months ago. First he mapped the area in the immediate vicinity of his own home. His idea was to stimulate community interest by acquainting residents with one another. In addition, he knew his map would be a service to delivery trucks.

All the mapping was done on foot. Mr. Waller identified the residents of homes by personal contact. Rudolph Kay, Whig St., drove him to his starting points on daily walks.

The map, which can be obtained from Mr. Waller, was reproduced by McDowell Hosley, also of Dennis and a lithographer.

Mr. Waller found Dr. Lord's road most difficult to survey because so many homes were owned by summer residents. He found several new roads not yet recorded on a comprehensive map.

Sturgis Library Digital Archive



Map by Frank D. Waller

I remember 1956 so well, especially the fall! We played touch football in the street; looked forward to mischief on Halloween, and freshly raked leaves were burned at the side of the road in front of our house. I still think of that as the smell of the autumn. Living in Stamford, Connecticut, loath now to admit it, I was a Yankee fan. Not only did they best the Brooklyn Dodgers in the World Series that year, but Mickey Mantle won the Triple Crown. Being 13, my obsession with automobiles knew no bounds. When it was October, I couldn't wait for the new models to come out. But alas, I didn't live in Dennis, and I didn't for 15 more years. Proudly, I have long since become a Red Sox fan!

I emailed the map in pdf format to another Dennis historian Carole Bell, a name you have also seen frequently in past newsletters. Carole is a lifelong resident. Being quite young in 1956, she forwarded it to a cousin who no longer lives in Dennis, but was here when Mr. Waller made his map. Shortly after, I received a phone call from Kevin Maher. Three years younger than I, we spoke about his recollections of being a 10 year old growing up in the village. Fortunately, because my skill level at taking dictation is zero, Kevin followed up our conversation with an email.

*Nice to speak to you the other night. I still work part time at an Auto Body shop in Halifax about 10 miles from us here in Middleboro. Growing up in Dennis in the 50s was something special!*

*As you know, life was so much simpler. Kids behaved, or their parents would give you a bit of a spanking. There was respect for elders, police, firemen and teachers, anyone in authority. If you did something wrong, you knew damn well the word would get back to your parents and then watch out! Everyone in town would know you were in trouble.*



*Hokum Rock, DHS Digital Archives*

*The boys had Cub scouts with Mrs. Sproul on Scarsdale Road, while girls had the Brownies. Later, we had Boy Scouts with Paul Prue and camped up at Hokum Rock. The road was just dirt then with no houses. It was like being up in New Hampshire to us kids. The leaders, being older had cars. Sometimes, late at night, we would put their cars in neutral and push them down the road, so in the morning, the cars were MIA....pissed them off a bit! Ralph Richardson from East Dennis was our leader once, and had us be the only troop on the Cape using our bikes to go to campouts. We were a bike troop, kind a neat!*

*When not camping out, our meetings were on Friday nights in the Dennis Union Church's*

*basement. We also had dances there, but not too many girls to choose to invite. This was all in the winter when things were really slow! I will try and to send info in segments as my old brain recalls life's events back then.*

**So this is the start!** Inspired by our Curator Emeritus Phyllis Horton, the Dennis Historical Society has slowly and carefully begun a collection of Dennis items from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Wouldn't it be great to add the recollections of those who lived here? The pdf of Frank Waller's map can be enlarged on anyone's computer so that the names of all the residents in Dennis Village in 1956 can be easily read. If you email me at [info@dennishistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@dennishistoricalsociety.org), I will email the pdf map to you. Readers who were either living here at the time, or who recognize the names of people who were, are asked to share their memories and contact those who might be willing to do the same. 1956 was a very special year - Ike was a reelected President, the only war was cold, not hot and the Salk Vaccine had already cut the cases of polio in half from the year prior! Because of the map, this article has focused on Dennis Village, but we must be sure to make the memories about all the Dennises. Please think back and encourage others to do so. Was it a parade, a picnic or a prom, a teacher, classmate, holiday, sporting event, a personal achievement, a vacation or the weather that, when you let your mind drift back, stirs a memory? We have a rare and wonderful opportunity here to document daily life in a very special place on Cape Cod. Excerpts from responses will be sure to appear in future newsletters – thank you in advance for participating!

***Our Memories are Our History, so please send me yours!***

## ***Help!***

The Dennis Historical Commission is looking for information. The 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Revolution will be observed in 2025. DHC is documenting a list of soldiers and sailors of the East Precinct of Yarmouth, now Dennis, who served in the Revolutionary War 1775 – 1783. So far, we have listed 60+ who are buried in Dennis cemeteries and others that were removed to other towns. Their service is documented by Massachusetts Soldiers & Sailors of the Revolutionary War, 17 volumes. The families are Baker, Bangs, Chapman, Chase, Crosby, Crowell, Hall, Hedge, Howes, Nickerson, Rogers, Sears, Tobey and Vincent. If anyone has personal history of Revolutionary War veterans of the East Precinct, please send it to Diane Rochelle, DHC Chair, [whiskeyboo@comcast.net](mailto:whiskeyboo@comcast.net) (508-394-7311). Family history, oral or written, strengthens the commitment and sacrifice of their service and emphasizes our memorial observance.

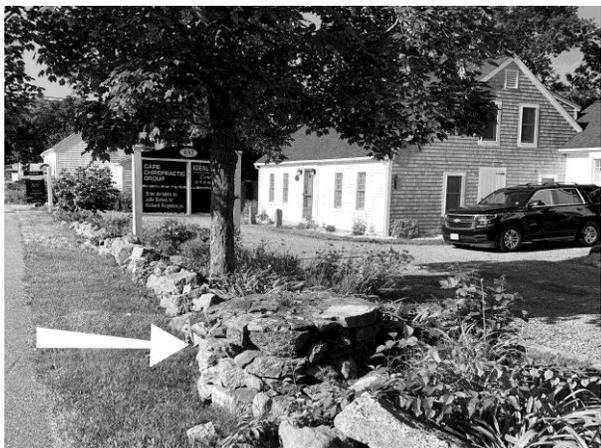
***Thank you!***

## ***Cobblestone Structures***

The image was recently sent to me by board member and *another* Dennis history aficionado Ann Croston. Ann is the creator of the *Dennis Village Walking Tours*, and she had a question about the object pictured. Fortunately, because a

similar question had been asked about such structures that used to be at the entrances of the *Josiah Dennis Manse*, I already had the answer from another board member and Dennis Historical Commission Chair, Diane Rochelle.

*These are cobblestone entrance columns. They should have had wooden gates attached originally. Scargo Tower is a*



632 Main Street, Route 6A. Photo by Ann Croston

*cobblestone structure built c1901 by John Murphy, Boston mason, contracted by Frank Tobey when he replaced a wooden observatory for Nobscussett House. There were 2 pair of columns at the Manse because Whig Street divided the house from the barn when they were built c1906. William and Grace Dwight bought the property in 1904, adding a front porch, dormer, 2 story rear wing and summer kitchen as well as the entrance gates. None of the cobblestone columns have any provenance to Rev Josiah Dennis or the Howes family who owned the property before he did.*

*The style was popular. Mr. Murphy may have built ones for Bleak House and Luther Hall's house. Some were probably built by local masons copying this cobblestone style.*

## ***Our Long Reach Continues***

Emails come into the DHS Website from all over the country and the world. Sometimes they are requesting permission to use images and information that have been found in our Digital Archive. The last time such a request appeared in the newsletter was the January 2022 issue. I thought the information which was included in the following email was more than worthy of passing along too. It is from the Professor of Costume Design, Carey B. Hanson, Department of Theatre and Film, University of Mississippi.

*Hello!*

*I hope this email finds you well. I am a descendant of David O'Killia who settled in Old Mayfair next to Kelly's Bay in the 1650's. I am in the process of writing a book about all early American children and their lived experiences between the years of 1600-1800. I have included David's story in the book. I would love to include a photo from the Dennis Historical Society in the publication if possible. I found a photo on your website which captures East Dennis Harbor along with the Kelley and Sears buildings. The content and style of the photo would work well in the publication. I wanted to inquire concerning the process of gaining permission to use the photo. My book is an academic publication. The publisher is Routledge Press. The book is scheduled to be released internationally in English as well as electronically in May 2023. The University of Mississippi has graciously funded the research for this project. Please let me know what additional information you may need for the permission process. Below is a link to the requested photo. I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Thank you for emailing and asking permission. You have provided all the information needed. Yes, you may use the photo. The only request is that you credit the source to be the Dennis Historical Society Digital Archive.*

*Thank you so much for your quick response. I am thrilled to include the photo. One question I had, is the photo available in a JPEG or TIFF format? Currently it is in a PDF format online. If not, I will find someone who can help me convert the photo from PDF into a JPEG format for publishing.*



H.H. Sears Lumber Yard, DHS Digital Archive

*Amazingly, I just happened to have used the same image in our June Newsletter. As I always do, when I converted it to a jpeg, I cleaned it up a bit. If you want one as it appears in the Digital Archive, let me know, and I'll send you another jpeg with the original blemishes.*

*Thank you so much! This is perfect. I really appreciate it. If the publisher would like the original photo, I will let you know. For me this is wonderful. All the best, Carey*

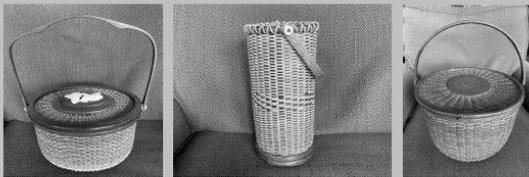
***Coming Soon – responses about the location of John Hall's remains – Please stay tuned!***

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

**Non-profit Org.**  
**US POSTAGE PAID**  
**Permit No. 24**  
**South Yarmouth, MA**  
**02664**

## **Nantucket Lightship Baskets**

**Past and Present**



See local weavers and antique baskets  
on Saturday, August 6, from 1 - 4 pm

**DENNIS MARITIME MUSEUM**  
AT THE WEST DENNIS GRADED SCHOOL HOUSE  
67 School Street, 2nd Floor (wheelchair accessible)



**COLONIAL DAY IS BACK!**  
Saturday, August 20: 10am - 3pm at Josiah Dennis Manse



**FREE ADMISSION AND FUN  
FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY  
AT THIS SPECTACULAR  
SUMMER EVENT**

Join costumed interpreters from the 1700s as they  
make local history at the restored 18th century  
home of the town's namesake minister.

61 WHIG STREET IN DENNIS VILLAGE