



Dennis Historical Society

Newsletter

July 2025

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Dennis Historical Society – copyright 2025 Internet: www.dennishistoricalsociety.org - E-mail: info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

**The next Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 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

Now That's Fast!

I have to admit, I wasn't surprised when my phone rang the afternoon the May Newsletter arrived in mailboxes across the Cape! It was our beloved local pastor and renowned raconteur of Dennis history, Josh Crowell! There were two reasons I wasn't surprised by the call – Josh rarely emails, doesn't text, loves to share a conversation, and he knew the identity of the *Unknown House* in the May issue! Yes, the house still exists!

A short time later that afternoon, an email arrived in the DHS Inbox from another legendary Dennis historian, Scott Walker. In it Scott wrote - *Newsletter page 3 icehouse photo depicts the old Paddock homestead, still in existence, but hard to see anymore due to foliage cover.*

Ed. note – in the interest of protecting the privacy of the present owners, I will refer to the house/homestead by the name *Paddock*. I learned from Scott that the last family member by that name sold it to the ancestors of the present owners in the 1920s. For those readers not familiar with Scott Walker, he and his wife Robin are longtime DHS members and co-authors of the Postcard History Series, *Dennis*, available in the DHS online bookstore. Scott is a font of local history. His email also contained the following - *The Bleakhouse observatory was constructed by John Hinckley & Sons early in 1888 and was torn down in 1913. To me it's the "other" Scargo tower, with a staircase running along the outside of the building, rather than inside as can be seen in the "Capt Tyler" photo.*

*A subsequent question: Who is this Capt Tyler character? I have found no other references to him in newspaper or census record for Dennis. Maybe he was "from away"? Maybe a reader will know? If anyone has information to share about Captain Tyler, please email me at: info@dennishistoricalsociety.org. As a refresher, the picture with the captain and the one of the *Unknown House* from the May issue are duplicated below.*



DHS Digital Archive

In a followup email, after I had asked Scott for permission to share the information in the first and told him he had been narrowly beaten by Josh with the correct identification of the *Unknown House*, he responded - *Always glad to share what I have learned...permission never required my friend.*

The Bleakhouse observatory is of interest to me as I used to live in that area, and so I researched and learned a bit about it. I can assure you that after extensive searching over the years, the photo you posted with "Capt Tyler" is the best one that the DHS archive has of this obscure landmark. I've not found any better depictions in the collection than that one. Also....'Father' Crowell rules!

In addition to his emails, Scott sent me the picture at the right. Judging by the sharpness of the image, it is most likely a print from a glass plate negative, probably from early in the 20th century. Although taken from about 30 degree to the right of the picture on the previous page, one can see from the gable end, wing to the back and the outbuildings that the pictures were likely taken in the same era.

As in most pictures taken anywhere on the Cape at that time, the lack of trees is striking! Between staying warm in winter, building construction, ship building, fences and bridges, the landscape was very barren.



Image provided by Scott Walker

My intention was to use the usual sources for information for this article – NTR’s *Dennis, Cape Cod* and the DHC’s *Gazetteer of Dennis*. I am pleased to share much of what I have found, but suggest you search *Paddock* online, which will provide much more information.

From the *Gazetteer of Dennis*, we find under the title “Paddock’s Path” – *A north-south road east of Scargo Hill. It is named for the Paddock family who lived on the west side of the road. The Paddock family were prominent mariners from the earliest days, beginning their maritime adventures as shore-whalers. One of the family, Captain Ichabod Paddock (1661-1748) was so skilled at his trade that the people of Nantucket hired him to come there to teach them “the art of taking whales,” which produced the great whaling traditions for which Nantucket and New Bedford were later know.*

Dennis, Cape Cod confirms this account. The map in the May Newsletter confirms the location.

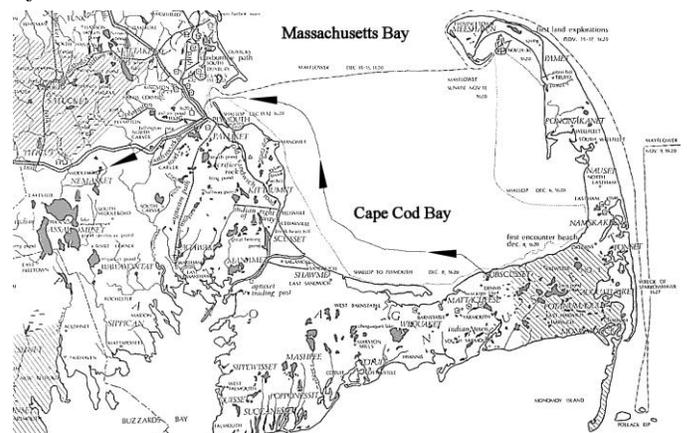
Although searching the name “Paddock” in the table of contents of *Dennis, Cape Cod* produces many results, they are a bit fragmented as far as providing a contiguous narrative of the family’s history. I have, however, elected to reproduce one segment, not only because it poignantly reflects the hardships of the times, but also illustrates the depth of NTR’s research and her wonderful story telling ability.

Although the Paddock family was noted primarily for its involvement in whaling, some Paddocks were stay-at-home farmers, like the majority of those who lived in the East Precinct. Such was Ichabod (1687-1750), a nephew of the instructor of the Nantucket whalers, who was keeping the farm at the end of the lake now called Scargo in Dennis. He married Joanna Faunce, a member of a prominent Plymouth family and became interested in the richer farmland to be found in the area around Middleboro.

In 1722, Ichabod and Joanna collected all their possessions and drove their cattle to the shore, where they were loaded on a boat which would land them at Plymouth. At sometime during their passage, Ichabod's money was stolen. Undaunted, he and his family disembarked and walked to Middleboro, driving their cattle before them. The cattle fed heavily on the fresh green grass, but it didn't fatten them up at all. In fact, as they had previously been fed salt marsh hay, they sickened on the meadow grass and all died. The Paddocks stuck it out, however, and became active in their new community, serving the church there as their ancestors before them had done at NobsCUSset.

Not all families who emigrated had such misfortunes. Several sons of William Chase moved to Bristol County and prospered. Others, especially of the Howes and Hall families, had gone to the fertile valleys of Connecticut and were thriving. Still the majority of sons and daughters of Yarmouth opted to remain at home where the love and support of family made the struggle for survival easier.

The map shows the journey of Ichabod Paddock and his wife Joanna from the East Precinct of Yarmouth (now Dennis) to Nemasket (now Middleboro) in 1722. NobsCUSset Harbor was their likely departure point for Plymouth. They might have driven their cattle down a path in the vicinity of the present Dr. Lord’s Road, and then down the beach to the harbor.



Map Courtesy of Alden Kindred of America – (Paddock journey added)

As mentioned, there is a wealth of information online about the Paddock Family. Probably one of the most famous connections to Dennis is the relationship between Mary C. Paddock and Anna Howard Shaw which is featured in the May 2019 Newsletter in an article written by L. Ray Sears and his sister Pamela Sears Cooper entitled *Paddock Household*. Another newsletter connection to the Paddock Family, Anna Howard and the Town of Dennis was provided by DHS Board Member Bo Durst in an article entitled *When the Stars Align* in December 2020.

Very Local!

Carole Bell is an incredible source of Dennis memorabilia, providing anecdotes, pictures and written accounts of our town's history as seen through the eyes of a lifelong resident. Recently, Carole emailed me some photos complete with descriptions and notations. She followed by dropping off a large envelope with newspaper clippings and more pictures. I am pleased to share some of them. More will be in future newsletters. **Thank you Carole!**

Ezra H. Baker School Bus Route, North Dennis. Circa 1951-52



Photo taken at 106 Whig Street, the Ellis home.

Brant Ellis drove the North Dennis route and stored his bus beside his barn. Children in the photograph lived on Elm Street, Whig Street, Beach Street, Nobscussett Road and Hope Lane.

Frank Embler drove the East Dennis route and housed his bus in Grafton Howes' barn at 133 Whig Street. My sister and I lived next door at 143 Whig, so we used to pry open the big wooden doors and squeeze through. We would climb into the bus and play. We never got caught because the barn doors faced the back yard.

**Front Row: L-R. Nancy Howes, Faith Hallett, Patty Walker, Gail Walker.
Middle Row: David Howes, Ernie Holmes, Marilyn Howes, Joy McDowell, Ellen Howes, Nancy Taylor, Fran Hallett.
Back Row: Jay Crowell, Bus Driver Brant Ellis.**

Flooding on Whig Street

During heavy rain the street routinely flooded, and so our dad, Dan Walker, put my sister and me into his skiff, snapped this photo and mailed it to the town. Shortly thereafter, the Dennis Highway Department installed a drain. A picture is worth a thousand words.



I couldn't resist finishing with this picture of Cowgirl Carole, circa 1953 (3yrs.old). It was taken when her home at 143 Whig Street was under construction. She said of the picture - This was my father's favorite photo of me. He often mentioned how he cracked up when he spied me out by the front step wearing my favorite gun and holster and toy guitar standing proudly in my underpants. Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and The Lone Ranger were standard fare for children's programming.



143 Whig Street looking east, 1957

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*The Museums Are Now Open For The 2025 Season!
Don't Miss These Events And Don't Miss These Opportunities To Help Your Society!*

SPECIAL EXHIBIT
at Josiah Dennis Manse



HISTORIC REDWARE

in The Manse's permanent collection

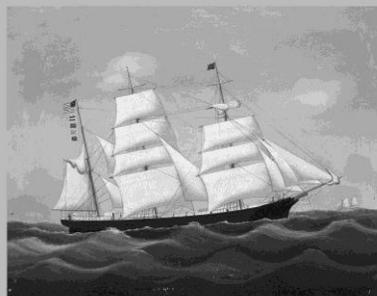
SATURDAY, JULY 19, 1 - 4 PM

Josiah Dennis Manse/ 61 Whig Street, Dennis

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Dennis Maritime Museum

West Dennis Graded School House, 2nd Floor



**MEET PEOPLE, HAVE FUN, AND SHARE
DENNIS'S RICH SEAFARING HISTORY**

Wednesday or Friday, 1 - 4 pm in July and August
One hour training/overview provided by DMM staff
Interested? info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

KIDS RULE!!!

Children's Day: July 26, 1 - 4 pm



Captain Theophilus Baker House/Barn

90 Old Main Street, South Dennis
Free admission/Donations gratefully accepted
Rain Date: Sunday, July 27, 1 - 4 pm

Volunteers Needed at the Jericho Historical Center!

If you love to garden and want to help at the Captain Baker House and Barn, please contact Dee our Volunteer Coordinator at: DHSVolunteerCoordinator@gmail.com. In addition to providing much needed assistance, you'll learn about 19th century kitchen herbs, native plants and plant material.

AND, you'll have fun...we promise!