



Dennis Historical Society

Newsletter

October 2024

Volume 47, No.10

Dennis Historical Society – copyright 2024 Internet: www.dennishistoricalsociety.org - Email: info@dennishistoricalsociety.org

The Board Meeting this month will be the Annual Meeting/Luncheon, Saturday, October 26th, 11:30 am,

Encore Bar & Bistro

36 Hope Lane, Dennis Village

Members and their Guests Welcome

Bells Going Off

There is a folder in my computer called *Newsletter Files*. Whenever I come across something which might be of future interest to our readers, it goes into the folder. Little did I suspect that one picture would end up connecting so many Dennis Historical Society dots! Last summer, a request came into the DHS email from Emily Sullivan, Curator of the Cape Cod Maritime Museum, requesting a high resolution photo of Persis Crowell Addy for a new exhibit the CCMM was doing about *prominent women on Cape Cod*. After emailing Emily the image, I stuck it in my folder, and there it sat for a year. Little did I know that picture would connect DHS members Pete Howes, Bo Durst and Jim Coogan! Here's how they come together and who Persis Crowell Addy was – a truly remarkable woman during the *golden age of sail!*

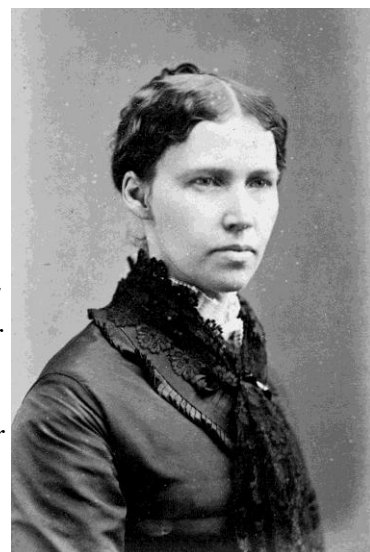
In the June 2012 Newsletter, our five term President, the late Pete Howes, wrote about her in an article – *Women from the Township of Dennis Who Went to Sea* using excerpts from an address by Rev. Alfred Ray Atwood, D. D., pastor during *Old Home Week*, East Dennis in 1942. The December 2020 Newsletter contained an article in which Bo Durst, one of our authorities on East Dennis history, wrote about the relationship between Persis and Anna Howard Shaw. Both of these newsletters are available on the DHS Website – go to www.dennishistoricalsociety.org, click on the Newsletter tab and select the year and the month.

At the DHS Annual Meeting/Luncheon in October 2022, Jim Coogan was the guest speaker. His talk was entitled *Sail Away Ladies*, and it was based on his award winning book by the same name. Confident that I would find information about Persis Crowell Addy, I reached for my copy and wasn't disappointed! Jim's chapter on Persis is printed here in its entirety with the author's permission.

Persis Crowell Addy

A honeymoon voyage to the Far East turned into quite an adventure for twenty-eight year old Persis Crowell Addy of East Dennis. The daughter of prominent East Dennis clippership owner and master mariner, Prince Crowell, Persis married Captain John Henry Addy, a well respected deep water skipper from the same village. Captain Addy had been master of the clipper Hippogriffe and, at the time of the marriage, had just assumed command of the 648-ton clipper Christopher Hall. Both of these sleek vessels had been built in East Dennis in the Shiverick Shipyard.

In 1865, the couple left New York with a load of coal and merchandise, bound for Hong Kong. The letter that Persis sent to her parents on the eve of departure was indeed prophetic. "One would think," she wrote. "That I intended to be gone a dozen years or so by the fuss I make about it." Certainly, there was cause for her to be excited. This would be Persis' first sea voyage and her first extended period away from her Cape Cod home. She had no idea that the trip would last for much longer than she had planned. Her story is not chronicled in a journal, but from a series of letters that she sent home to her family. And they became the main source of what happened to her. She confessed to her mother in one of those communications that journal keeping was not something that she wanted to do. "I suppose it would be well to keep a journal for your especial benefit!" she wrote. "But since I have read Mr. [Henry Ward] Beecher's definition of a journal, I have not felt inclined to write one. He calls a journal 'the Devil's vanity trap.'"



DHS Digital Archive

After traveling much of the summer of 1866 between Akyab, Burma, and the Chinese port of Shanghai and British Hong Kong, where Persis enjoyed the company of other Cape Codders who were engaged in the Far Eastern trade, the



THE CHRISTOPHER HALL - BUILT AT SHIVERICK SHIPYARD 1858
EAST DENNIS - MASSACHUSETTS

ten-year old Christopher Hall set a course east for Howland's Island to load guano for eventual delivery to the Pacific Guano factory in Woods Hole, Falmouth. Sailing through the Navigator Islands near Apia in Western Samoa, the ship struck an uncharted reef in January of 1867 and began to sink. Persis could save only a small bag of clothing and her watches and chains. In a steady rain and with a high sea running, the crew fastened a rope around her waist and lowered her into the lifeboat. As water sloshed in the small boat, she helped bail by using an old hat until someone handed her a bucket, making her task a bit easier. Fortunately, they were fairly close to a small island and were able to make a landfall without much difficulty.

As they approached the small atoll, there was concern that it might be inhabited by unfriendly natives. There were several cases in the area where shipwrecked mariners had been attacked by bloodthirsty tribes and the crew held their weapons at the ready for any possible threat.

Only know image of the Christopher Hall. Photo of a ship tile.

"When we neared the shore we espied little huts," Persis wrote in a letter sent to her parents shortly after landfall. "And four women whose only dress was leaves fastened around their hips, and long enough to reach their knees. We by no means felt sure of a kind reception, but decided to land. The natives appeared very kindly disposed, shook hands with us and led us to their chief's hut. The chief spread clean mats for us to sit on, which I can assure you, I was very glad to do."

For days, the survivors adapted as best they could to the conditions of the small island, eating tropical fruits, fish, and occasional meat. Persis made herself as comfortable as possible but made it clear that style had its limits. "... I did not want to put on a gentleman's entire suit, or even to adopt the native women's costume.

"Word of the survivors' predicament was eventually sent to the port of Apia, the main harbor in Samoa, and they were picked up by some Europeans and given quarters there with an American man who had taken an island woman for a wife.

"I am well now, and with kind people, Henry has dropsy, is under a physician's care, and improving . . . We do not know how we shall get home but think we shall go in the Brig Susanna to Hamburg, which will leave here in three or four weeks." She was apologetic that she would not be able to bring her nephew "Brinnie" any souvenirs of the voyage, but she wanted him to know that she would tell him some good stories about the little boys and girls on Apia when she returned home.

Finally, after more than a month and a half, Persis and her husband were able to make the journey back to Cape Cod via Europe. For Captain Addy, the voyage proved to be his last. Never fully recovering from the ordeal, and in weakened health, "Henry" developed consumption and died in East Dennis in the fall of 1867. He was forty years old. Persis did not remarry and lived in the family home on Center Street. Some time later, while temporarily living with her close friend Reverend Anna Howard Shaw in Hingham, she developed a brain tumor. She died at age forty-one in March of 1878. She and her husband are both buried in the Sea Street cemetery in East Dennis.

Thank you Jim Coogan!

Another Dimension of the Driftwood Zoo

Part of the article written by Jericho Committee and DHS member Bob Poskitt in last month's issue about the reopening of the Jericho Historical Center was about the Driftwood Zoo exhibit in the Captain Baker Barn - visitors enjoyed the new exhibits in both buildings, especially the Driftwood Zoo in the Barn, revived under the artistic direction of Dee Collins with help from members of the Friends of Jericho. Almost serendipitously, I received an article from Assistant Librarian Maureen Sullivan who faithfully serves all of us at the Pauline Wixon Derick Library. Unfortunately, proper credit cannot be given to the following, as the author and source aren't known.

LOSS OF A CAPE SHIP.—Advices from Tahiti, to May 5, report the total loss of ship Christopher Hall, of Dennis, upon Navigator's Island. She sailed from Howland's Island, Nov. 24, for Boston, with a cargo of guano. The C. H. was a ship of 648 tons register, built at Dennis in 1857, was owned by P. S. Crowell and others of Dennis and vicinity, and commanded by Capt. John H. Addy.

Yarmouth Register - May 31, 1867

A Dolphin and the Driftwood Zoo



Photo taken in the Jericho Barn by Dee Collins

Many years ago a man by the name of David L. Barnicoat used to travel with his father to Maine. There they would search the rocky shore for pieces of driftwood to sell in their Cape Cod gift shop, the "Three Coins in the Fountain".

On one such trip, Mr. Barnicoat found a two hundred pound piece of driftwood that resembled a dolphin, complete with an eye. The dolphin was brought to the gift shop where it was put on display. Several years later the Barnicoats, moved to New York, leaving the dolphin with the new store owners. It was sold a few times, to new gift shop owners, before finding its way to the Driftwood Zoo.

By now, the new Dennis-Yarmouth High School had been built, and Dolphin was the name chosen as the school symbol and various teams' name. Col. Wallace Liberty, then school committee chairman, happened upon the dolphin at the Driftwood Zoo, and purchased it for display in front of the new school, where it stayed for ten years.

After that time, Mr. Barnicoat was sickened to learn that a group of vandals had poured gasoline on the piece and set it ablaze. Fortunately it burned itself out, but not without inflicting damage. The Assistant Principal Edward Webster, after giving it some thought, decided that a gentle sand blasting might work to restore the dolphin. Who better suited to the job, than Barnicoat & Sons Monument Works? Returned once more to David Barnicoat, the man who 15 years before, had rescued it from the waves of Ellsworth, Maine. Ed. note – DY High School opened in 1957. The dolphin was returned to Barnicoat & Sons in 1967. Does anyone know if it was successfully restored and where it is today? Please email me at info@dennishistoricalsociety.org if you know...thank you!

Friends of Jericho

The following email was sent by Bob Poskitt on September 16th.



"Friends" gather on the lawn at Jericho. Photo by Sue Poskitt

Yesterday afternoon, Dawn and the Jericho House Committee hosted the first Jericho Friends Social. Close to 20 attended including area Main St. neighbors and DHS members.

Dawn sent out an invitation and each attendee brought something to eat or drink as well as to bring home later. The weather could not have been better as we all ended up 'under the shade of the apple (maybe cherry?) tree near the barn. Several tours were provided and there was lots and lots of chat about area historic houses. A member of the South Dennis Historical Commission also attended along with a former member, adding much incite to the afternoon's discussions. Dawn and her Committee will continue to reach out to these area "Friends" into the fall to be sure they are included in all events scheduled at Jericho.

This just in...

An email was received by DHS on the morning of September 17th. It was sent by Katharine Peace, daughter of beloved historian and author Nancy Thatcher Reid. It read as follows –

Hi, this is Katharine Peace, daughter of Nancy Thacher Reid. Wanted to let the Historical Society know that Nancy passed away yesterday, age 94, at Rosewood nursing home in Harwich Center. It was a peaceful and painless passing, and all of my brothers and I were there with her. We are proud of her for all her accomplishments, including, of course, her book on the town of Dennis. Please pass the word for us. There will be a memorial gathering at some point, but no funeral.

Kate Peace


Our deepest condolences to Katharine and her family.

There will be much more about Nancy in an upcoming newsletter.

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

2024 Annual Meeting/Luncheon



CONTEST RULES

- Pie must contain apples
- Pie must be presented in minimum 9" disposable tin
- Pies must be dropped off at 1 pm for judging
- Optional * Please provide recipe when submitting pie


REGISTER YOUR PIE BY OCTOBER 8

☎ 508 - 257 - 6954

🌐 www.tinyurl.com/24applepie

✉ down.dellin@gmail.com

APPLE PIE BAKING CONTEST
 Jericho
 Historical Center
 Saturday,
 October 12, 2024
 1-4 pm




CAPTAIN BAKER HOUSE AND BARN

The historic full cape house built in 1821 and occupied by the Baker family until 1855, contains 19th century furnishings, fixtures, paintings and interiors. Exhibits in the Barn Museum focus on farming.

92 Old Main Street
 West Dennis, MA 02672
www.dennis-historical-society.org/museum/
enr.chs-historical-center.org/

FIVE PRIZE CATEGORIES

- Just Like Mom's (Classic)
- Anything Goes (Use your imagination)
- Most Photogenic
- People's Choice (fans vote for favorite)
- Youth Baker (17 and under)



ALL ARE WELCOME

Captain Baker House and Barn will be open for tours.

Admission is free. Donations are gratefully accepted.


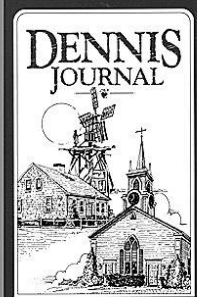
JUDGING CRITERIA

Judges will consider taste, appearance, and texture of both crust and filling.

Pies will also be served to the public and fans can vote for their favorite.

Contest entry form is on the website.

Dennis Historical Society Annual Luncheon

Featuring Jack Sheedy
Keynote speaker will share his favorite "Mysterious Cape Stories"

Saturday, October 26, at 11:30 am
Encore Restaurant in Dennis Village

Invitations to current DHS members will be mailed shortly

DHS Members & Guests Only
Watch for the mailing and RSVP promptly!