THE BREWSTER STORE

Now a designated building in Brewster's National Historic District, the two-story building was originally built as a church by the Universalist Society in 1852. A declining congregation caused the property to be sold in 1866 for one dollar to William F. Knowles, who ran the Crocker and Kimball Store down the road.

Knowles removed the church steeple and extended the front before opening his new general store. He reserved the spacious second floor for plays, dances and other social events, and during his ownership it

was known as The Hall. Knowles was the town postmaster during many of those years; the post office was an integral part of the Brewster Store, providing a regular meeting place for residents and insuring a steady flow of customers into the store.

In 1926, a local boy named Henry Crocker bought the store from Knowles's son and became the postmaster. In addition to the provisions and services offered, the Crocker Store provided daily delivery service of all its goods, sales and installation of linoleum, as well as insurance sales. Mr. Crocker became so successful that in 1945 he bought an insurance agency in Orleans and sold the store to his long-time employee, Donald Doane. For many of us in older years, the business was referred to as Donald Doane's Store.

By some accounts, Doane had little interest in the store business itself and devoted most of his time to collecting and documenting an amazing array of antiques. Doane closed the store in 1962 and later that year opened it as a museum, which as a business venture was unsuccessful. He reopened the store and occasionally allowed some patrons the privilege of a guided tour upstairs.

Doane died suddenly in 1970. The contents of the store were sold at auction, and Doane's mother sold the store itself to Bob and Faith Dibble, lifelong summer residents of Brewster who also owned a general store in Pennsylvania. The Dibbles changed the name to The Brewster Store. Nurturing a love and

respect for things too often gone from modern daily life, they acquired an assortment of antique tools, containers and display pieces which found new life in their store, and committed themselves to finding

and selling household items no longer available through most modern retailers: lamp parts, enamel ware, cast-iron cookware and old-time kitchen gadgets to name just a few. When the Dibbles decided to retire at the end of 1986, they sold the store to Missy and George Boyd, who, in 1971, had started (and still run) The Strawberry Patch Gift Shop one mile east on Rte. 6A. The Boyds have committed themselves to carrying on the traditions of the Store and preserving this historic building, considered by many as the center of town.

In March of 1989, the entire store was emptied and the structure was reinforced from the basement to the second floor. This was the first major refurbishment since 1866. The second floor was reopened in June of 1989. It now contains the old Brewster Post Office, a miniature reproduction of the Brewster Store, antiques, a collection of World War Il posters, an antique cranberry separator, and a diorama of Kiel Harbor in 1938. "There's so much more on the second floor."

In June of 1993, the shed at the back of the Store was renovated and opened as the Brewster Scoop, the Brewster Store's own ice cream parlor. Serving old-fashioned ice cream, the Brewster Scoop moved in 2009 to the building next door, originally a Brewster Post Office.