

AT THE ATWOOD HOUSE

Tourists Discover Chatham, Part Two

by Spencer Grey

The largest and grandest of all places of accommodation was the Hotel Chatham, which opened in 1890 on what is now the fourth green of Eastward Ho! According to the brochure of the hotel: . . . it possesses every modern convenience, has large airy rooms, elegantly furnished with open fireplaces, spacious halls, broad piazzas, bathrooms, etc. There are good stable accommodations, a long line of bathhouses, billiard rooms, bowling alleys, and tennis courts.

Because the only way to reach the Hotel Chatham was by open wagon over rough dirt roads from the West Chatham Railroad Station, and once there, it was difficult to go elsewhere, the Hotel closed in 1894 after only four seasons of operations.

The same year that the Hotel Chatham closed, another hotel opened adjacent to Watch Hill, the summer home of Marcellus Eldredge. With its ocean front location, the Mattquasson soon became a favorite of many loyal visitors, who returned year after year, usually staying several weeks. A young lady who was staying with her mother at the hotel in 1928 described their arrival this way: The desk clerk greeted us as though we had returned home, and informed us of those who had already arrived. Following the bell hop up the broad curved staircase, we were taken to our usual room with its twin, white enamel beds, and commode with a large iron stone basin on top. . . . Between the windows fronting the flagpole, hung a hefty hemp rope with instructions for its use in case of fire. Later in her account she describes their daily routine: Mornings, certain of us played several sets of tennis. My mother and most seniors soon settle themselves in the long row of rocking chairs on the veranda in their crisp cotton dresses, cotton stockings and white shoes. . . Husbands joined them weekends, coming from New York by train. . . In 1943 the hotel was leased to the WAVES and was used by them until 1945, when it resumed operation as a hotel until it closed in 1956 to give way to house lots.

The series of hotel openings climaxed in 1914 with the opening of Chatham Bars Inn, which today, as one of the most prominent resorts on the east coast, continues to attract visitors from all over the world to its luxurious rooms and commodious cottages.



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