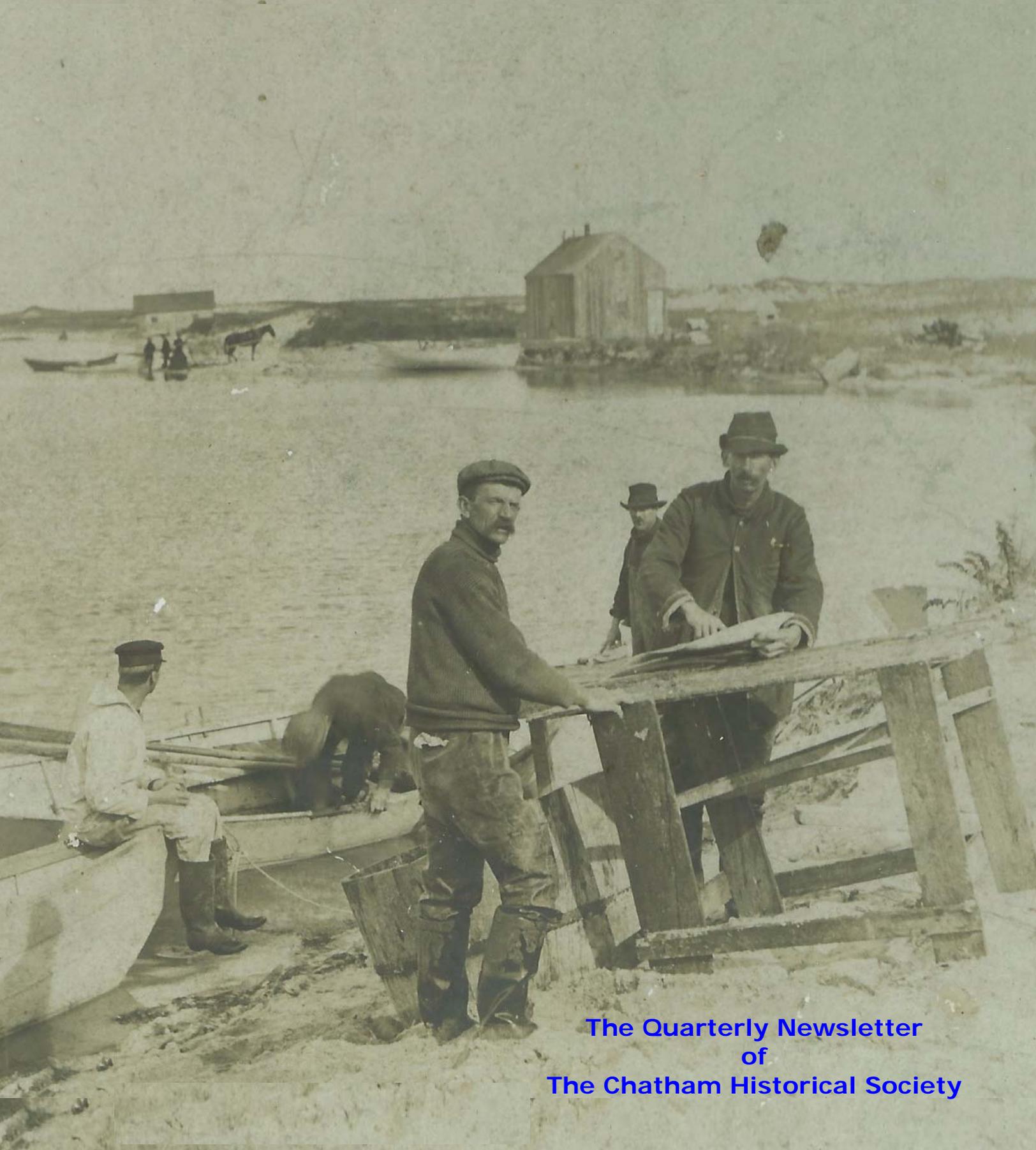


Autumn 2013

The Atwood Log



The Quarterly Newsletter
of
The Chatham Historical Society



From the Director

A month or so ago we hosted an event at the Atwood House for a major corporate citizen in the region. In the course of talking with several of their executives I was asked, “What kind of season have you had?” Colleagues at Chatham’s other historical organizations have asked me the same question over the last month or so. Because we are still looking at the numbers, I have answered this question based on my sense of how busy we have been and on anecdotal reports from our great docents. July seemed slow but August felt strong. The fall shoulder season also felt good with solid numbers of visitors, even on some of the warm “beach days” we had.

Numbers through the door are, of course, only the most easily quantifiable measures of our success in attracting people to the museum on any day or over the course of a week, month, or year. Given the high impact short term external conditions, i.e. the weather, have on how potential visitors decide to spend their time on a particular day, it is probably more instructive to look at the monthly or annual numbers than day-to-day or even week-to-week figures. And while these numbers are helpful, they are only part of the story. They measure how many came to the museum but nothing about the quality of their experience when they were here. We are trying to gather that very important information about their visits from our guests in several ways.

Attendance figures also don’t say a lot about who came to the museum. We have been puzzling over this and trying to better understand the make-up of our audiences, not just during the 18 weeks or so we are open between mid-June and Columbus Day weekend, but year round. It is very important for us to have this information as we plan the exhibitions, lectures, events, and other projects that together make up our program. We know that the number of people in Chatham varies dramatically from month to month. I’ve been told that the year round population is about 5,000 to 6,000 but that in the seven weeks between July 4th and the third week in August there are 28,000 to 30,000 people here. Beyond the swing in numbers we believe that there are significant shifts in the demographics of the summer and winter populations, and even within the summer population from month to month.

Our schedule of open hours reflects the shifts in the numbers. The period from late fall through late spring not only offers a smaller potential audience for tours of the Atwood House and visits to our exhibitions but also is a time when we have fewer volunteers available to operate the museum. Experience has shown us that we have a loyal audience during the fall, winter, and spring and we try to offer substantive and engaging lectures throughout the period and special events around the holidays. We are not an organization that uses one or two programming models to reach a single, narrowly defined audience. Our world is more complex than that and while we may be a relatively small organization, we serve multiple audiences by offering them a range of ways to connect with the stories we tell. And we would like to make it even more complex and find out about those potential visitors who are not coming to the museum. I would welcome your thoughts and insights regarding these questions. Feel free to send them to me by email, dennis.mcfadden@chathamhistorical.org, or in person if our paths cross.

Dennis McFadden

Chatham Historical Society

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Dan Buckley

President, Chatham Historical Society 1990 – 1998

Having lived in Chatham from the time he was six years old and having completed a career in the U. S. Navy with years of executive experience, Dan Buckley was ideally suited to lead the Historical Society at a time when it needed reorganization and development.

As a virtual native of the town, his interest in its history was ingrained and inspired him to improve the experience for all who visited the Atwood House Museum. Before he became president, visitors to the museum were greeted by hostesses and told to view the old house and the galleries on their own. Realizing that such an arrangement did not provide an optimum experience, Dan instituted the present system of trained volunteers, who guide visitors through the Atwood House and the attached galleries.

To improve the finances of the Society, Dan took the



Daniel Buckley, Lt. Cdr., US Navy (Ret.)

lead in establishing an annual auction of donated items that necessitated careful, detailed organization in order to acquire the donations, transport them to the museum, set them up for the auction, and return those that did not sell. Because it was so time-consuming, the auction ultimately was replaced by the annual antiques fair.

As would be expected from one with his military experience, Dan controlled the organization with a firm hand; but because he was a warm and considerate person with an infectious sense of humor, members of the Executive Board and other volunteers worked happily under his guidance. Dan was one of the longest serving presidents of the Society and certainly one of the most memorable.

Spencer Grey

Annual Hearth Warming December 14 and 15

The annual Hearth Warming event, one of the highly anticipated events at the Atwood House Museum each year, will take place on Saturday, December 14 and Sunday, December 15 from noon to 4:00 pm both days. As in previous years, the rooms will be decorated for the season and delicious refreshments will be provided; fires will be lit in the Old House fireplaces. On Sunday the Old House will be part of the Chatham Chamber of Commerce's Annual Historic Inn and Museum Tour, held each year during the Chatham Christmas Stroll Weekend. Additional special programming for the day is being planned and will be announced on the Society's website. You may also obtain more information by calling the Historical Society at 508-945-2493 in early December.

There will be a "Meet the Author" event at 2:00 pm on Saturday when Joan Bines, Director of the Golden Ball Tavern in Weston, MA will be present to discuss her book, *Words They Lived By: Colonial New England Speech, Then and Now*. Her book offers an entertaining and informative look into colonial New England life as well as a bit of perspective on ours today. It sheds light on familiar colonial New England words and expressions and on the life and history that informed them. Did you know that the colonists used the words *slang*,

football, *coffeehouse*, *negligee*, *scuttlebutt*, but with far different meanings from those we know today? Did you wonder where the expressions *red tape*, *bitter end*, or *to be at loggerheads* came from? Be sure to come to this informative program on Saturday, December 14th.



Fireplace in the South Parlor of the Atwood House Museum

Monomoy, Chatham's Wilderness

In 1964 then President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act, legislation creating a national system of wilderness areas. The stated purpose of the law was to preserve certain unique places that could be defined in terms of the impact of human activities on them.

"A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

Six years later a significant portion of the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge here in Chatham was

much of the land it sought to describe and exert physical and intellectual control over as wilderness. During the 19th century, wilderness was both the setting and an inspiration for some of the most significant achievements of American arts and letters including the

writings of James Fenimore Cooper and the paintings of the Hudson River School artists.



Member of the Life Saving Service at Monomoy Station

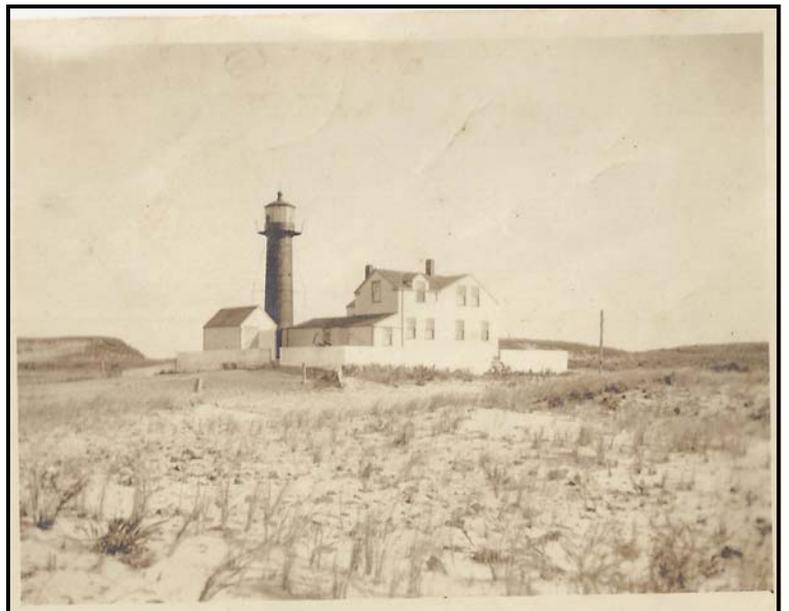
In the three centuries that followed their arrival, many assumed that when the Pilgrims landed here North America was a wilderness untouched by human activity. This assumption either implied that the Native American peoples Europeans encountered here were an element of the wilderness or left unacknowledged the sophisticated and varied relationships those peoples had with the land. When the 1964 act contrasts wilderness, "with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape," it opens the door to a more complex



The Brant Club

designated a wilderness under the 1964 Act. Today it remains the only federally designated wilderness area in Massachusetts.

The poetic description above, authored by the environmental leaders who helped draft the enabling legislation for the Wilderness Act, captured the meaning the term wilderness had acquired in the United States by 1964. It was a definition that had evolved over time. For the early settlers of the Massachusetts Colony the term wilderness engendered images of nature untamed and even dangerous and called to mind biblical settings of trials and tests of faith. In describing the land around Plymouth where the pilgrims landed in 1620, William Bradford characterized it as, "a hideous and desolate wilderness." In the early years of the Republic the new federal government considered



Monomoy Light

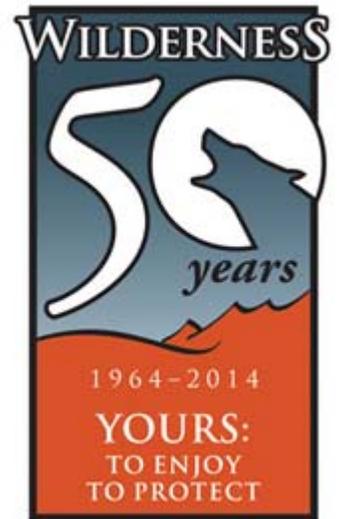
understanding of wilderness. It sees the evidence and nature of human activity upon a place in the present as key to determining whether it is a wilderness. It envisions that a place might become a wilderness after not having been one. At a time when it is recognized that every place on earth has been impacted, either actively or passively, by human activity, the Wilderness Act affirms that places that have been used and even abused in the past but have subsequently become defined by established natural communities in which humankind plays a circumscribed role may be described as wildernesses.

Monomoy with its history as a venue of commercial and sport hunting, the site of a fishing village, the location of a lighthouse that served as a critical navigational marker, and, during the Second World War, a



The Beach at Monomoy

military training facility is an example of this kind of wilderness. Wilderness, both as an idea within American culture and as a defining term for Chatham's Monomoy, is clearly a rich subject. In 2014 the Atwood House will explore it in a project entitled ***Constructing Wilderness***. Through a series of talks, lectures, and conversations beginning in January and an installation in the main space of the museum throughout the year we will explore both the big question of what wilderness means in America and the record of Monomoy's transformation into wilderness. The Atwood House's partners on ***Constructing Wilderness*** include the Eldredge Public Library, the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Sanctuary, and the Chatham Conservation Foundation. Be sure to keep an eye out for additional information about the project on the museum website,



Logo for 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act

<http://www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org/>.

Cover photo: Fishermen on Monomoy



Think Museum Shop

Are you starting on your Christmas or other holiday shopping, or is there someone for whom you need a birthday present? What about a hostess gift? Stop into the Atwood House Museum Shop and see the beautiful array of gifts and books available for your shopping pleasure!

The Museum Shop will be open for your shopping pleasure and holiday gift giving Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving from 12 to 4 pm.

Halloween Happenings October 26



The Atwood House Museum, in collaboration with the Eldredge Public Library, presented Halloween Happenings on the Saturday before Halloween. EPL Youth Services Librarian Tammy DePasquale read stories to the children in the Mural Barn while cookies, provided by museum volunteer Pat Cass, and brown bag mask making were available in the Main Gallery. Additional refreshments of Cider and apples were generously donated by the Chatham Village Market. The crafts were supervised by museum volunteers Sue Halligan and Janet Marjollet. Additional assistance was provided by volunteers Edie Crowell, Carol Kolb, and Barbara Newberry. The Olive Garden Restaurant kindly donated the bags for the masks.

Those Were the Days

The program series - *At the Atwood* - continued on Sunday, November 10th with a round table discussion about growing up in Chatham in the last century. Fran Jones, Sonny Mallowes, and Dan Ragan told stories about themselves, each other, and various interesting Chatham personalities from the early to mid twentieth century. Comments and questions from the capacity audience showed that this was, indeed, a topic of great interest to many who live in Chatham or surrounding towns.



Left to Right: Fran Jones, Sonny Mallowes, and Dan Ragan

Consider the Gift of a Membership

Think about giving someone special a membership to the Chatham Historical Society/Atwood House Museum for Christmas, anniversary, birthday, or any other event that is special to you and that person or persons. You may do so by telephone, by using the web site (under **Get Involved**), or by filling out and mailing the adjacent membership form. This could be the perfect gift for those who do not want "more stuff".

You might also consider a commemorative brick to be placed in our walkway for yourself, or friends, or family. Again, you can do so using any of the above mentioned methods of ordering and purchasing.

Girls Night Out



Committee members left to right - Janet Holden, RoseMarie McLoughlin, Paula Lofgren, Judi Clifford, Laurie LaConte, Janine Scott, and Regina Shakin (front right)

A new program of events debuted July 2nd at the Atwood House Museum to a sellout crowd. Girls Night Out, a series of seven evenings, ranged from fashion to floral arranging to wine and cheese. The committee, pictured above, has been very pleased with the response to their hard work and planning. The organizing committee, after exploring the format and the interest, is moving ahead with future events. To learn more about these plans visit their Facebook page- <https://www.facebook.com/ChathamGNO>.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Chatham Historical Society is to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret art, decorative arts, artifacts, archives, and places of historical interest relating to the history of Chatham and vicinity; and in so doing provide a record of the cultures and the people of our past and thereby inform and educate succeeding generations.

Join Us !

Chatham Historical Society members receive free admission to The Atwood House Museum, 10% off Museum Shop purchases, and a complimentary subscription to our newsletter. Our members play a vital role in helping to preserve the rich history and culture of Chatham and the surrounding region. Many members cherish volunteer opportunities at the Museum

Membership Categories

___ Captain Atwood Circle	\$1000 +
___ Heritage Society	\$ 500 - 999
___ Discoverer	\$ 250 - 499
___ Explorer	\$ 100 - 249
___ Family	\$ 50 - 99
___ Individual	\$ 25 - 49
___ Student Historian (to age 18)	\$ 10

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 The Chatham Historical Society
 and mail with this form to:
 The Chatham Historical Society
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If you have allowed your membership to lapse, please consider renewal now. If you are an active member perhaps you can think of someone to pass this along to who might be interested in becoming a member.

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

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Mark Your Calendars

Coming up at
THE ATWOOD HOUSE MUSEUM

Future Events - Check our web site or call the museum

Thanksgiving Weekend Shopping

Friday and Saturday, November 29 and 30, 2013, Noon to 4 pm

Annual Hearth Warming

**Saturday and Sunday, December 14 and 15, 2013,
Noon to 4 pm**

At the Atwood - Lecture Series

Lectures are 2:00 pm at the Atwood House Museum

January and February Programs to be Announced

Please check the Web Site or

Call the Atwood House Museum

