

AUTUMN 2010

The Atwood Log

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Chatham Historical Society



**The Festival of Trees
and the
Annual Hearth
Warming**



**Holiday
Events**



**To Attend and Enjoy at
The Atwood House Museum**

From the Archives: Jeremiah's Gutter



Photo of the creek called Jeremiah's Gutter from the early 20th century

This article is not the usual topic for a Log article from the Archivist; however, while carrying out a review of our photographic collection, I saw the photograph labeled Jeremiah's Gutter. The caption below the photograph said "Creek known as 'Jeremiah's Gutter' that some people thought should be known as the first Cape Cod Canal." While the archives contain so much information on the building of the present Cape Cod Canal and its effect on transportation of materials from Boston to New York, there seemed to be little information about Jeremiah's Gutter.

The questions that came to mind included: Why wasn't this site chosen instead of the present Cape Cod Canal site? Where did it cut the Cape? Does any evidence of this canal still exist? Who used the Gutter and why was it called a "gutter"? When was it used? Last but not least, who was Jeremiah and why was the Gutter named after him?

One source indicates the gutter may have been in use as early as 1717. Other sources state that it was dug in 1804. Still others document that it was used during the War of 1812 during the British blockade of Provincetown. Thoreau in his book about his travels on Cape Cod (1849 to 1857) refers to Jeremiah's Gutter by stating:

"We crossed a brook, not more than fourteen rods long, between Orleans and Eastham, called Jeremiah's Gutter. The Atlantic is said sometimes to meet the Bay here, and isolate the northern part of the Cape. The streams of the Cape are necessarily formed on a minute scale, since there is no room for them to run, without tumbling immediately into the sea; and beside, we found it difficult to run ourselves in that sand, when there was no want of room. Hence, the least channel where water runs, or may run, is important, and is dignified with a name."¹

One of the people who did use this cut would appear to be Captain Cyprian Southack, hired by the then British Governor, Samuel Shute, to take possession of the wrecked pirate ship, Whydah. Southack had been, for 17 years, captain of the Massachusetts Province Galley and it is believed that over those years he created 20 maps. He either sailed or rowed a whaleboat taken from his galley, right through the gutter with room to spare. This short cut through the Cape was supposed to have gotten him there before the citizens of the Cape could have plundered the wreck. However a description written sometime between 1729 and 1734 describes what he found when he arrived.²

"The following morning, as farmers and other locals arrived at the wreck site, more than a hundred mutilated corpses lay at the wrack line with the ship's timbers. To halt looting, colonial governor Samuel Shute

Continued opposite

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1. Henry David Thoreau. *Cape Cod*. Published 1865

2. *The New England Coasting Pilot of Cyprian Southack*. Clara Egli LeGear; John Nickelis; George Martin *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 11. (1954), pp 137-144

Jeremiah's Gutter Cont.

sent Cyprian Southack, a cartographer and sea captain, to recover what might be salvaged for the crown. When Southack arrived, he reported 'at least 200 men from several places at 20 miles [32 kilometers] distance plundering the Pirate Wreck of what came ashore [when] she turned bottom up'.³

Southack drew a chart of the location of the Whydah, and in that chart we can identify the location of Jeremiah's cut. (See illustration below.) An interesting aside, it would appear that chart was of assistance in the modern day search for the wreck of the Whydah by Barry Clifford.

In 1744, a group known as the 77 Eastham Proprietors was formed. The purpose of this group was to claim everything in sight and if necessary, to go to court to fight it out.

Then the South Parish [Orleans] became a town, and it was discovered that almost all of the worthwhile holdings of "the 77" were now in the town of Orleans. Orleans formed her own "Proprietors," and they too joined forces and went to court. The "Orleans Canal Proprietors" came armed with plans for cutting a Cape Cod Canal through Jeremiah's Gutter, a project which previously had been spiked by the Eastham claims to the land at that place. The canal was never cut, but in a legal battle participated in by every amateur corporation lawyer on the Lower Cape, Orleans sued Eastham and won the verdict — \$64.16.⁴

Later on, Jeremiah's Gutter played a role during the War of 1812, when the British warships were blockading Boston and Cape Cod. Local merchants could transfer their produce through the gutter from the bay side to the outer Cape and off to markets, bypassing the blockaded Cape Cod Bay.

The gutter has since filled in with sand but undeniably it was the first canal through the Cape. It may have been continued to be used had there been equipment available at that time to keep it open.

As to evidence of its location today, the Eastham web site has the following information.

Eastham

Aschettino Property Walk

(1.5 hours, easy) Walk through two of Eastham's treasured town properties, the South Eastham Conservation Area and the Aschettino Property. You'll pass through diverse landscapes of forest, with some very old "specimen trees," marsh, and the historic **Jeremiah's Gutter**. Take South Eastham Street (on the west side of Route 6) to Arrowwood Drive, turn left at Peach Orchard Lane.

Why was it called a gutter? The dictionary defines a gutter as:

1. A channel at the edge of a street or road for carrying off surface water.
2. A trough fixed under or along the eaves for draining rainwater from a roof. Also called regionally *eaves spout*, *eaves trough*, *rainspout*, *spouting*.

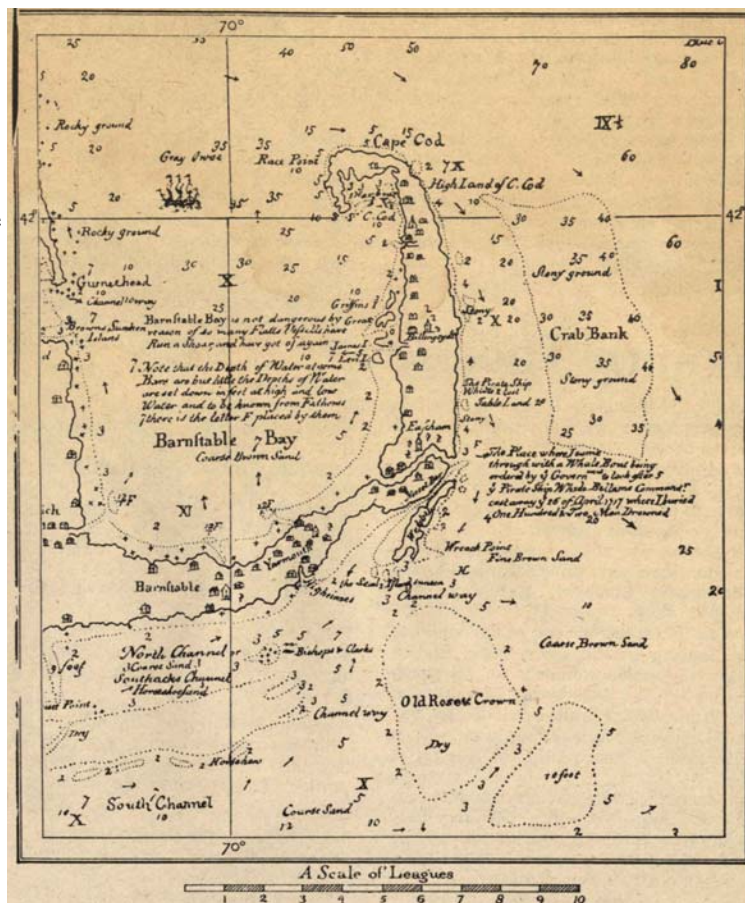
3. A furrow or groove formed by running water.
4. A trough or channel for carrying something off, such as that on either side of a bowling alley

Research does not specifically tell us the reason other than we may surmise that it was due to its size and the fact that water did run off it into the ocean.

Lastly, who was Jeremiah? In the web site write up for the Heman Smith Guest House in Orleans, it mentions that two hundred feet south of their building was the home of Jeremiah Smith that overlooked Orleans's Town Cove. The name of Jeremiah Smith appears in genealogies several times. The first is a Jeremiah Smith, born in 1654(5) in Plymouth and dying in Eastham in 1706. He had four children one of whom, named Jeremiah, was born in August of 1685. Another family line has an Abigail Smith marrying for the second time to a Jeremiah Smith born in Eastham on August 18, 1685. It would appear that the first Jeremiah died too soon to be given credit for the Gutter, but perhaps his son was the owner of the property for whom the Gutter was named.

The unraveling of the story of Jeremiah's Gutter has been an interesting search. It has involved pirate ships, British Governors, a cartographer, a war and a blockade, as well as a little genealogy. There are many more stories to tell in the Archives and individuals are welcome to find one of their own. We are open all winter on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to 4 PM. Why not stop in and visit.

Mary Ann Gray
Archivist



18th century chart drawn by Captain Cyprian Southack showing the Cape from Eastham to Provincetown as an island, separated from the mainland

3. <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/whydah/story.html>
4. CAPE COD PILOT Federal Writers' Project Works Progress Administration for the State of Massachusetts by JEREMIAH DIGGES 1937.

Childrens' Programs at the Atwood House Museum



*Working the rigging
in the exhibit*

This past summer's eight week program for children was thoroughly enjoyed by the children as well as the instructors and assistants. Topics explored included cod fish and oysters. Four of the programs gave the children insight into the 'China to Chatham' Special Exhibit and helped them explore Chinese culture. During each of these programs the children helped to cook Chinese food such as fried rice, egg rolls, and Chinese dumplings. Each session also included a craft project. Two of the crafts taught the children to make a pinwheel and to create a fireworks picture using glitter on black construction paper.



Making Chinese Dumplings

This fall the Challenge Program for Chatham students will also concentrate on the special exhibit. Programs designed for the three school age groups - Elementary School, Middle School, and High School - will explore aspects of the exhibit using a variety of media. Possible projects could involve building a model of a Chinese Junk, creating a mask that might be used during Chinese New Year, making a Chinese puppet, a lantern, or a kite. Other project could

involve making a ship's journal or writing a letter home during a long voyage. Other possible projects involve role playing an interview of a Chatham sea captain, map making, a study of Chinese religions, or writing an article for an antiques magazine about the export trade.

Students have from now until mid-January to complete their projects. A reception to honor all participants will be held in February.



*Shopping for candy at
Levi Atwood's General Store*

Annual Hearth Warming Saturday, December 11



*Holiday centerpiece in the
South Parlor of the Old House*

The Annual Hearth Warming Open House, one of the museum's most popular events, will be held on Saturday, December 11 from 1 to 4 pm. Fires will be lit in the fireplaces of the Old House, providing a delightful ambience; and delicious seasonal refreshments will be available in the Mural Barn.

In addition to the refreshments and fires, there will be visits with Mrs. Santa Claus and a story reading of *The Night Before Christmas*. Additional new events are still in the planning stages.

The Museum Shop will be open for your holiday shopping pleasure. There are always so many lovely items to select from for the special people on your gift lists so plan on attending the 2010 Annual Hearth Warming.



*Decorations above the fireplace in the
South Parlor*

Thirteenth Annual Festival of Trees

Trees Preview & Holiday Browsing

Nov. 26, 27, Dec. 4, 1-4 p.m. Silent Auction & Gala Party Dec. 4, 5-8 p.m.

For the sixth year, The Atwood House Museum will be the location for the Chatham Garden Club's Annual Festival of Trees, which will be celebrating its thirteenth successful year. The festivities will begin the day after Thanksgiving when visitors will have the opportunity to place silent auction bids on exquisitely decorated trees created by Chatham Garden Club members. All of the trees promise to be unique in design and attendees will also have the opportunity to purchase festive wreaths, smaller trees and gift baskets, or simply enjoy the beautifully adorned historic Atwood House Museum and Gift Shop.



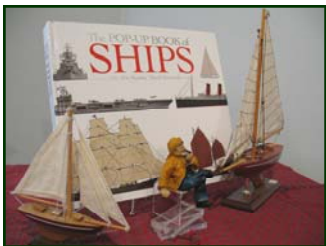
The 3-day Festival will begin with three afternoon dates – Nov. 26, 27 and Dec. 4 – when the Atwood House will be open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Visitors will have the chance to preview the array of designer tabletop trees, buy handcrafted holiday boutique items or simply browse the Museum and its Gift Shop. Complimentary cider and cookies will be served.

The conclusion of the Festival of Trees will take place on Saturday evening, December 4, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at a Gala Party and Silent Auction Finale where complimentary wine and delicious hors d'oeuvres will be served.

A single-afternoon ticket costs \$5 (children under 12, with an adult –free). A Festival Party ticket costs \$15 which also includes entrance on all viewing days as well as admission to the silent auction. Tickets may be purchased at the door or by contacting Margaret Martin, Chatham Historical Society, 508-945-2493. For more information, call Bette Hahner, chairwoman, 508-945-9962. All proceeds will benefit local scholarships, town beautification projects, and historical preservation and education outreach programs offered by the Chatham Historical Society.



Shop Your Museum Shop during the Holidays!



*Books and Toys
Jewelry
Shells
Nautical Gifts
Oriental Items*

*The Museum Shop
will be open during the Festival of
Trees and the
Annual Hearth Warming*

Two Recent Events for Society Members and the Public

Two events held by the Society during the summer and early fall were "An Evening to Remember" in July, and the Twelfth Annual Antiques and Art Show and Sale for Cape Cod, Saturday and Sunday of the last weekend in September. Both events raised needed funds for Society operating expenses.

Ablly chaired by Executive Board member RoseMarie McLoughlin, the July 17th Summer Celebration attracted about 150 attendees for a beautiful party under a tent at The Atwood House Museum. Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and music were enjoyed by those present. A highlight of the event was the presentation of the First Annual "Bringing History to Life" award, presented to artist Joseph McGurl for his contributions to present and future generations as a leader in the American Landscape School. Other committee members were Susan Collins, Phyllis Freeman, Pamela King, and Pat Sachtleben.

The two day Antiques Show provided a venue for 37 antiques dealers and Cape Cod artists. This event was chaired by Development Chairman Reed Hertford and was supported by over 40 volunteers in many capacities. Special Sunday events included book signings by two Cape Cod authors, antiques appraisals by Robert Eldred and his associates, and an Antique Car Show in the parking lot. Both days were well attended.

Chatham Historical Society's Trip to China, October, 2011



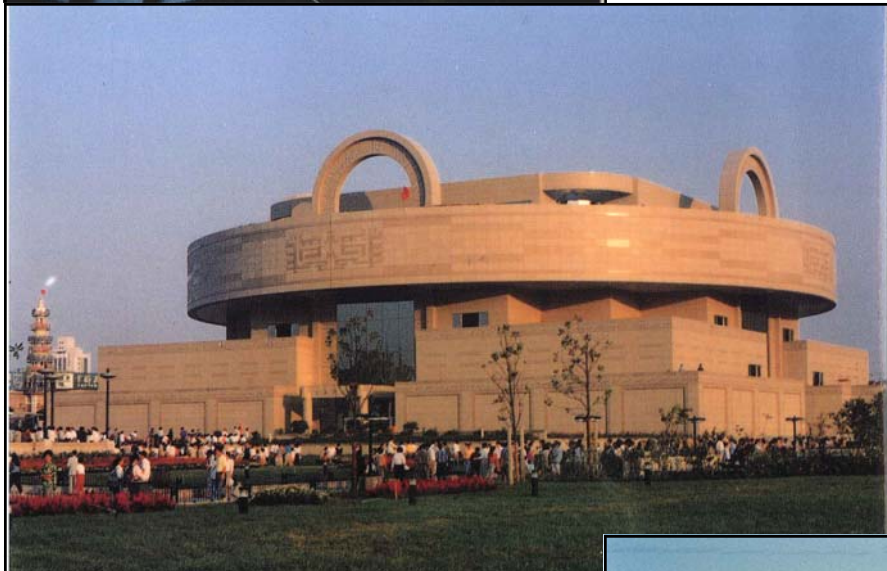
The Chatham Historical Society is offering an excellent program in coordination with Viking River Cruises to tour China from Shanghai to Beijing in October 2011. This tour, "The Imperial Jewels of China", includes the Great Wall and the Terra Cotta Army, both UNESCO Sites, Shanghai/Bund tour, Shanghai Museum, Shiboazhai Temple, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, Peking Opera, Shanghai Acrobatic Troupe revue, scenic cruising in the Three Gorges, visit to a special school for children, and more. National Geographic Society rates this tour as the fourth best river cruise in the world.

Our ship for the six days on the Yangtze River will be the Viking Emerald, a brand new ship to be launched next spring, featuring balconies with all staterooms, European cuisine, lectures and programs on Chinese culture and history, and up-to-date technology - all to enhance the edification and enjoyment of the cruise. The ship's staff all speak identifiable English. Accommodations have been reserved for up to forty-four people and will be assigned on a first come-first served basis.

Prior to the river cruise, two nights in Shanghai allow the exploring of China's most modern and one of the world's largest cities.

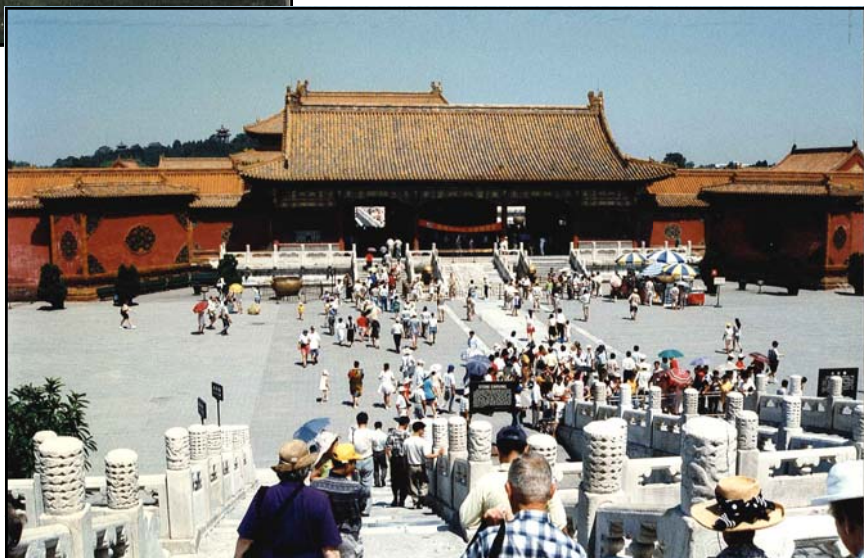
Later, three nights in Beijing allow time to absorb the historic setting of this capital city. One night is spent in Xian with its Terra Cotta Warriors. It is possible to extend your journey for four nights in Hong Kong and Guilin. Viking personnel can assist with travel arrangements to China.

The idea of a trip to this burgeoning economic power house with its historical sites and ancient antiquities was generated as a result of the popular and informative "Chatham to China" special exhibit now in the Oscar Nickerson Gallery for this and next year. The China trade era was very much a part of the historical marine tradition in Chatham as reflected in the collection of the



Spectacular Museum of Chinese history in Shanghai: above - exterior; top photo shows the museum's main stairway

Photos are of sights you might see if you travel with Society members on this exciting trip to China



To the right, Entering the Forbidden City in Beijing



Traveling the Yangtse River

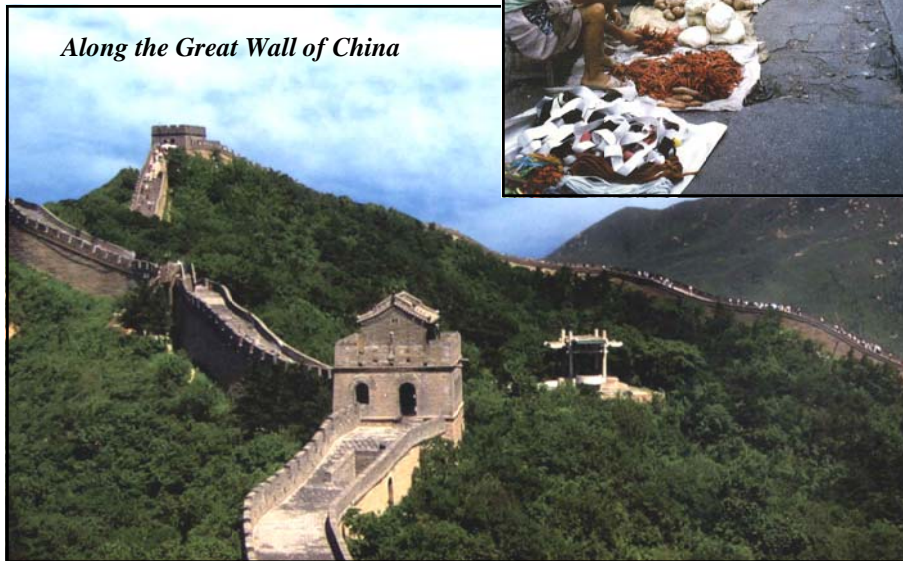
Atwood House Museum. A portion of the cruise fare will benefit the Chatham Historical Society.

Early reservations may take advantage of any special offers available at the time of reservation. For further information, please call the Society at 508-945-2493. You will be referred to the expert travel agent ably assisting the Society with arrangements.

Below, a Chinese market scene



Along the Great Wall of China



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
___ Discoverer	250
___ Explorer	100
___ Family	50
___ Individual	25
___ Student Historian (to age 18)	10

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 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.

347 Stage Harbor Road
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Chatham, MA 02633

On the Web: www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org

Mark Your Calendars

Coming up at The Chatham Historical
Society & Atwood House Museum

Afternoons at the Atwood Lecture Series

Lectures for Autumn 2010 and Winter 2011

2 pm at Chatham Community Center, Main Street, Chatham, MA 02633

Sunday, November 14, 2010

Speaker: Michael Tougias

"The Wreck of the Pendleton"

Sunday, January 9, 2011

Speaker: Nancy Barr

"Summering by the Sea: the Early Days of Tourism in Chatham"

Sunday, February 13, 2011

Speaker: Peter Arenstam

"Mayflower II"

Other Events

Friday and Saturday, November 26 and 27, Saturday, December 4

Festival of Trees: Trees Preview & Holiday Browsing,

In partnership with the Chatham Garden Club, 1 to 4 pm

Saturday, December 4

Festival of Trees: Reception and Silent Auction, 5 to 8 pm

Saturday, December 11

Annual Hearth Warming: 1:00 to 4:00 pm, *Admission free*

Special Events Planned

