

SPRING 2014

The Atwood Log



The Quarterly Newsletter of The Chatham Historical Society



From the Director

This year a number of centennial anniversaries are being celebrated in Chatham. The Chatham Bars Inn opened in 1914. That same year Guglielmo Marconi began operating his new facility on Ryder's Cove, now home to the Marconi – RCA Wireless Museum. And 1914 was also the year the United States Power Squadron was founded, an anniversary the Cape Cod Power and Sail Squadron will mark. Farther afield, the Cape Cod and the Panama Canals both opened in 1914. If you consult a timeline for the American economy, you will find that the Clayton Anti-trust Act became law in 1914. In Europe, August 1914 brought the start of the First World War when Germany invaded Belgium.

In our own lives we often pause at chronological milestones - our birthdays; the 5th, 10th, 25th, and 50th anniversaries of our graduations, marriages, and other significant events - to take stock, look back, try to remember what it was like then, and perhaps measure how we have changed. When we do, we can fill in what came before the event we are marking and the spaces between it and the present. Because it is our life, we can fashion a narrative, connecting the dots between then and now to explain how we got from where we were to where we are.

In an article about how several historians developed markedly different interpretations of the causes and effects of the Dust Bowl, the severe draught that struck the Great Plains in the 1930s, William Cronon distinguished between a chronicle and a narrative. He defined a chronicle as, "a simple chronological listing of events as they occurred in sequence." In contrast, Cronon suggested that in writing a narrative, an author not only identifies events that took place but attempts to assign relative significance to them and to describe causal relationships between them in order to tell a story. Cronon, noting that historians have an "affection for narrative," goes on to suggest, "When we encounter the past in the form of a chronicle, it becomes much less recognizable to us. We have trouble sorting out why things happened when and how they did, and it becomes hard to evaluate the relative significance of events." We might add that organizations like ours, rather than just noting that something happened in a certain year, often seize on milestone anniversaries of historic events as the occasions to create narratives that we believe can bring history to life.

In the months ahead we will have the opportunity to see and hear this year's centennial events woven into narratives. Some, like the centennial of the beginning of the First World War, have already begun turning up in the media and in new popular and scholarly books. An exhibition and a range of programs being organized on the Upper Cape to mark the anniversary of the Cape Cod Canal will cover the story of the building of the Canal and describe its significance. As for Chatham anniversaries, on June 21st, as part of Chatham History Weekend, the Power Squadron will present a talk about the organization's founding and subsequent work. The next day the Marconi – RCA Wireless Museum will open the newly renovated Hotel Nautilus to the public, adding to our knowledge of the history made at the Ryder's Cove campus. At our annual meeting on August 17th, Spencer Grey will give a talk on the growth of tourism in Chatham in the years leading up to the development of the Chatham Bars Inn.

(If you would like to read "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," William Cronon's article, it can be accessed through his website, http://www.williamcronon.net/writing/cronon_place_for_stories_1991.pdf)

Dennis McFadden

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Program Series: *Constructing Wilderness*

Our series of programs about the meaning of Wilderness in New England and, more specifically, Cape Cod continues in May and June with three additional programs. All programs are at 2:00 pm at the Atwood House Museum.

On May 5th we hosted a program presented by Katherine Grandjean, Assistant Professor of History at Wellesley College. Her topic was *Into the Wandering Wood: New England Colonists' Early Experiences with Wilderness*. Ms. Grandjean has researched, written, and taught courses about the interactions between the early New England colonists and the Native Americans.

On May 27th David Brownlie, Refuge Manager of Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, and Nancy Roeper, National Wilderness Coordinator US Fish and Wildlife Service will present a program on the challenges of managing a wilderness in the 21st century.

The final program of the series will be presented on June 8th by John T. Crumbler, Professor in the Department of History at University of Louisville. His topic will be *The natural World and its Uses, 1660 - 2010*. He will focus on the natural resources of the Cape, how they were used and how their uses changed from resources for production to resources for esthetics.

Constructing Wilderness has been made possible with the generous support of Cape Cod Five Cent Savings Bank Charitable Foundation, the Chatham Fund of the Cape Cod Foundation, and the Jean and William R. Vanderbilt Program Fund



Scene On Monomoy with lighthouse in the distance

Joanna Springer joins Atwood House Staff

If you have noticed that the Atwood House and the Chatham Historical Society have been a little more present in the press recently and that the website has included some overdue updates, you can thank our new Administrative and Program Assistant, Joanna Springer. Joanna joined us at the beginning of March and has already had a significant impact on museum operations. In addition to her work on public relations and marketing, she has been helping with program planning for the season ahead. When our doors open in June, Joanna will also be a presence in the museum, working to insure the smooth running of our interpretive programming and tours.

Joanna comes to the Atwood House with over nine years of experience with non-profits involved in a mixture of music, arts, and humanitarian efforts. She has worked in numerous roles throughout her career ranging from administration to marketing and publicity, event coordination, concert production, grant writing, and volunteer coordination. Prior to moving to the Cape, Joanna lived in Colorado Springs where she served as President of the Black Rose Acoustic Society, a volunteer run acoustic music oriented non-profit. She did this while handling production, publicity and managing the box office for a locally owned theater and event center, Stargazers Theatre.



Joanna Springer

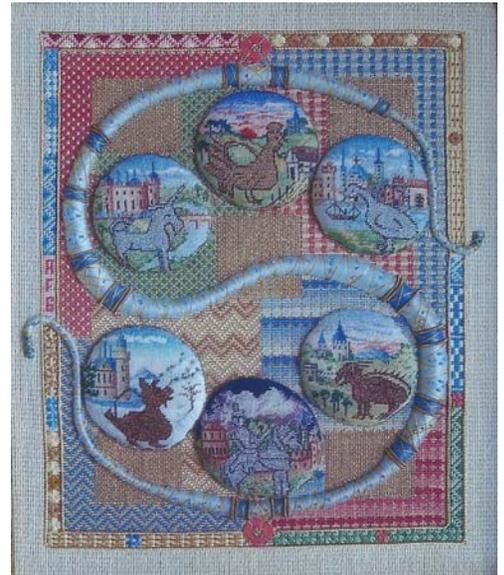
Works most artful & ingenious: Embroidery by Ann Grey Atwood House Summer Exhibition

While Ann Grey and I were talking recently about the Atwood House summer exhibition, *Works most artful & ingenious: Embroidery by Ann Grey*, our conversation turned to her current research. “I’m learning so much!” she exclaimed, “Did you know that in seventeenth-century England the most highly acclaimed embroiderers were the men who made ‘slips’?” Slips are finely worked motifs on small pieces of canvas that were incorporated into larger compositions, and I didn’t know this or much else about embroidery when we began planning the exhibition several months ago. What I have learned since is that there is an enormous amount to know about the subject and that Ann’s work positively inspires one to want to know it all. Finding out that needlepoint, the word I had been using to describe her work, is an imprecise American term for what is more accurately described as canvas embroidery was just the beginning.



Ann’s own introduction to the medium came when she offered to paint some embroidery canvases emulating a preexisting design for a project her mother was working on. In time Ann took up embroidery herself, learning basic stitches and completing her first samplers. With a keen eye, a sharp intellect, and an insatiable curiosity she quickly moved beyond designs suggested by others to develop her own, drawing on a broad knowledge of the visual arts acquired through frequent museum visits and self-directed study. Intrigued by medieval illuminated manuscripts with their jewel-like scenes, finely wrought initials, and intricate decorative patterning, Ann began to adapt images, motifs, and layouts she found in these luxurious objects to designs for embroideries. These were succeeded by projects in which Ann, while continuing to look at manuscripts, drew on a broad range of additional sources as inspiration for more freely conceived compositions. Her most recent work, while building on what she has done before, continually moves in new directions in subject, imagery, and composition. At the same time and in some instances in response to ideas for a design, Ann has added new techniques to her repertoire and experimented with materials beyond those usually associated with embroidery.

In looking at her work and talking with her about it, I have come to understand that for Ann, as her delight in uncovering a bit of embroidery history hints, needlework is not an end in itself but rather a medium for a process of discovery. It is a process of discovery that looks to both the past and the future. It looks back to satisfy a curiosity not only about how to do something, but to answer questions about when it was first done, who did it, and why. And it looks to the future to satisfy a creative restlessness that Ann acknowledges when suggesting that the reason she moved on from her early adaptations of medieval manuscripts was, “I got bored.”





Examples of Ann Grey's embroidery work above and on the adjacent page to be seen in the upcoming exhibit, opening June 21st

The works from the walls of Ann's home that will take up temporary residence at the Atwood House this summer, then, while satisfying as completed projects are at least as important as mileposts along an ongoing and open-ended journey of exploration. *Works most artful & ingenious* will trace the course of this journey. The first comprehensive survey of Ann's career to be organized, it will include several of her early samplers, examples of her adaptations of medieval manuscript illustrations, works inspired by the natural environment and a host of other sources, and recent explorations that test the limits of embroidery as traditionally defined.

The exhibition will also look in detail at goldwork, needleweaving, and stumpwork, three historic embroidery techniques that Ann has worked to understand and incorporate into her compositions in extraordinarily creative ways. In addition to visually stunning and technically intriguing finished works, *Works most artful & ingenious* will offer revealing insights into Ann's creative process. Ann herself suggested that it might be interesting to show pieces she is working on at the moment. The exhibition will, therefore, include works in progress along with examples of drawings the artist has used in transferring an envisioned design to a blank canvas and several of her handmade "notebooks" in which she records experiments that sometimes subsequently find their way into a work.

When Ann begins a new project, it is with a blank piece of canvas or fabric and ideas about how she would like to fill it. There may be sketches, portions may be started and then ripped out, ideas evolve, and with time the work emerges. When we began planning *Works most artful & ingenious: Embroidery by Ann Grey*, we started with the galleries where the exhibition is being installed and a number of ideas about how we would fill them. We talked about including a section on the history of embroidery. We considered presenting the work chronologically, installing it in the sequence in which it was created. At one point, however, we determined that the best way to show Ann's work was to simply let it speak for itself. This is our goal for the exhibition.

Works most artful & ingenious: Embroidery by Ann Grey, will open at the Atwood House on Saturday, June 21st and remain on view through Columbus Day weekend. The Museum is also organizing a day-long program on embroidery later in October. Keep an eye on the Museum website for additional information about this.

Dennis McFadden

Chatham History Weekend 2014

The Atwood House Museum will be one of nine sites participating in this year's Chatham History Weekend, June 20th to 22nd. The weekend is a project of Historic Chatham, a new consortium of organizations formed to coordinate activities and celebrate the history of our town. In addition to the Atwood house, sites open over History Weekend include the Chatham Lighthouse, the Chatham Railroad Museum, the Chatham Windmill, the Eldredge Public Library, the Marconi-RCA Wireless Museum, the Mayo House, Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, and the Nickerson Family Association. All will be open at no charge for the weekend. In addition, several other programs and events are being planned, including a family oriented History Hunt, developed by the Women's Club of Chatham, and a screening of *The Great Gatsby* at the Orpheum Theater. Check the Historic Chatham website www.Historic-Chatham.org/weekend for hours and additional events and programming.

A Note of Thanks

As we prepare to open the Atwood House Museum for the summer we want to acknowledge the generous donors who have supported our programming and operations this year. These include:

The Arts Foundation of Cape Cod

The Cape Cod Five Cent Savings Bank Charitable Foundation

**The Chatham Cultural Council,
Chatham's community partner of the
Massachusetts Cultural Council**

The Chatham Fund of the Cape Cod Foundation

The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation

The Women's Club of Chatham



SAVE THE DATE

*The Chatham Historical Society's
Annual Summer Celebration*

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

Saturday, July 19, 2014

5:30 to 7:30

Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres

**Please join us as we present our fifth annual
"Bringing History to Life" award**

INVITATION TO FOLLOW

Atwood House Museum Social Media

We are embarking on additional use of social media. As the vast majority of social media is free to use and easily accessible, The Atwood House is striving to use more of this to publicize our events, our exhibits, and to keep in touch with our members and visitors.

The Atwood House Museum and Chatham Historical Society continue to serve as a resource for the local community. In continuing to being a good resource for Chatham and Cape Cod, we are trying to make our resources more accessible to everyone. To that end, we have launched a Chatham Historical Society Pinterest account: <http://www.pinterest.com/chathamhistoric/>

The Pinterest account has allowed us a simpler way to present the existing galleries at the Atwood House Museum on the internet, while also including changing content and galleries with specific interests in mind. The Pinterest galleries can be viewed by anyone but only those with a Pinterest account can “follow” our boards or comment on them.

Currently on Pinterest: Chatham Historical Society & Atwood House features past and present photos and postcards of the museum over the years. We are also featuring the galleries that are currently found around the museum including: The Mural Barn: The Murals of Alice Stallknecht, The North Beach Camp, The Turret Light, The Durand Room, The Joseph C. Lincoln Room, Nickerson Portrait Gallery, The Tool Room and The Fishing Gallery. We are currently at work on the Old House: Historic Atwood House as well as other galleries to complement our upcoming new exhibits.

At the time of this writing, we have 19 galleries (or Pinterest “boards” as they are called). Several of these are themed boards that showcase specific items from the Chatham Historical Society Archives that are not on display for the public. These include the nature Watercolors of Marcia Gaylord Norman, the Antique Quilts and Antique needlework found in the Historical Society’s collection as well as Main Street Chatham and Historic Monomoy featuring old photo postcards and photographs of these areas from the archives. Those of you who have “liked” us on Facebook may have noticed that we always announce our Pinterest updates on Facebook. New boards and updates to existing boards will happen on a regular basis.

In addition to Pinterest we continue to use our Facebook account: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Atwood-House-Museum-Chatham-Historical-Society/101814749894361>

We also have a Twitter Account for announcing our events and new exhibits. You can follow us on twitter at: @theatwoodhouse.

We continue to maintain our email list where we announce upcoming exhibits, events and lectures. If you aren’t signed up to find out about the latest going on at Atwood House Museum, you can sign up easily on our web site: <http://www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org/connect/mailling-list.htm>

Joanna Springer

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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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.

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Mark Your Calendars

Coming up at
THE ATWOOD HOUSE MUSEUM

At the Atwood - Series on *Constructing Wilderness*

Programs are 2:00 pm at the Atwood House Museum

May 25, 2014

Speakers: Dave Brownlie and Nancy Roeper -
Managing the 21st Century Wilderness

June 8, 2014

Speaker: John T. Cumbler -
The Natural World and its Uses, 1660 - 2010



Museum Opening Day: June 21, 2014 1:00 - 4:00 pm