



ATWOOD LOG

FALL/WINTER 2020 - 2021



THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY



From the Interim Director

Dear Friends,

2020 is the year that none of us anticipated. To say it was a challenge for our community, our local businesses, and the Atwood Museum would be an understatement. This was the year the museum was going to soar as we celebrated the highly anticipated 400th anniversary of the Mayflower voyage to the New World. This was the year we finally landed the tour bus industry after several years of trying. This was the year we were convinced we would exceed well over 5,000 visitors walking through our doors. This was the year we were ready for . . . then the Coronavirus pandemic changed our lives.

Like most of us, we didn't know what to expect. The world changed so rapidly we could barely keep up with the pace. The "New Norm" has become face masks, social distancing, and Zoom. Through it all, the Atwood Museum remained focused and determined to showcase the place we call home. We forged ahead with our new exhibits: *The Turning Point* and *Wampanoags*, which explored the Pilgrims' arrival and the people who were already here, and *Remembering our Heroes*, which honored the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. We created a virtual experience on our website, bringing back some popular exhibits from past years, generating a virtual homeschool for the young and the not-so-young, as well as prominently displaying the classic exhibits online that have made the Atwood Museum a true treasure.

We were one of the first museums in the state to open our doors to the public, and although our visitor total was 50% less than pre-COVID-19, we did it. We were responsible, created a safe environment, and once again presented a museum that our members and friends can be proud of.

Although the summer season came to a close by mid-October, "plans are brewing" for a busy fall. We are excited for the return of our lecture series (now virtual) and "Halloween at the Batwood" will once again fill our halls and grounds as a socially safe event. The annual "Historic Bake Sale" will be back for a third year, as we create a safe environment for people to purchase and enjoy home-baked goods for the Thanksgiving. Finally, there will be a new train display gracing our main gallery through the month of December.

Despite all the changes and challenges in 2020, we are still here for you. We couldn't do what we do without your support. And for that, we thank you!

Kevin Wright
Interim Executive Director

On the Cover: Operation Market Garden 1944, illustration by Graham Turner

A Crown Jewel

By Barbara Hogan

One of the “Crown Jewels” in the clothing collection of the Chatham Historical Society has recently been restored and conserved by the generous memorial fund established by David Oakley in honor of his late wife, Eleanor. Both David and Eleanor have had a long-standing relationship with the Society. Eleanor spent several years as a volunteer in the Costumes & Textiles Department where she was able to put to good use her knowledge of textiles.

Janet Marjollet, volunteer Director of Costumes & Textiles, along with assistant, Barbara Hogan, selected several gowns deemed worthy of conservation and they were presented to David. After narrowing the field, David and Janet were in agreement to conserve the striking and elegant green ensemble belonging to the Atwood family. The gown selected was given to the Society in 1992 by Lina Atwood Olsson in memory of her uncles. Ms. Olsson is the Great-Great-Grand- Niece of Margery Smith Atwood and has donated many Atwood family memorabilia to the Society. ConText Inc. of Rochester, MA, professional conservators, was enlisted to undertake the restoration.

The 1870’s ensemble consists of four pieces of emerald green silk taffeta with narrow silver and black horizontal stripes and is embellished with beaded black lace. Upon its receipt by the museum, the original record of the gown describes it as “showing the Russian influence that was a popular fashion surrounding the purchase of Alaska from Czar Alexander II, Emperor of Russia, by United States Secretary of State Seward in 1867.”

The actual conservation process involved a careful surface cleaning of three pieces using a low vacuum suction to remove soil particles. The fourth piece was an unfinished vest and received no further attention. Individual stains were “spot cleaned” as necessary. Following the cleaning, the process began with the stabilization of the bodice lining which had deteriorated extensively over the years. The lining was sandwiched between two layers of

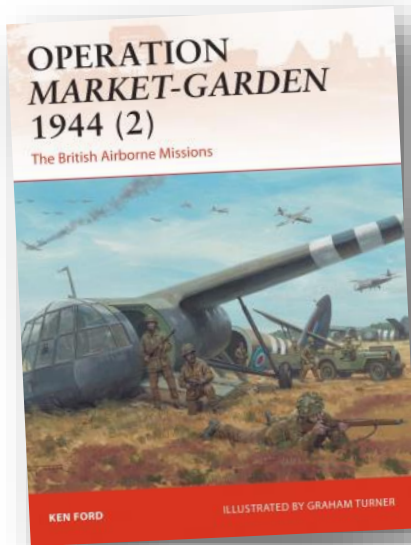


Green ensemble gown belonging to the Atwood family. Chatham Historical Society Collection

Remembering World War II (Part 2)

By Don Broderick

The Normandy Invasion would be immortalized by the very words of General Dwight D. Eisenhower as he was surrounded by his devoted Airborne Troops, and spoke to them, “You are about to embark on the great crusade toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you... I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle.” Thus began the greatest sea, air and land invasion in history, and unlikely to ever be equaled again: OPERATION OVERLORD... D-DAY!



So listen up, history buffs, you are about to hear about something very few of us are aware of: The Mission of the 53rd TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON of the 9th TROOP CARRIER COMMAND. In civilian language, these front line units consisted of some of the most uniquely trained pilots of their time. Simply put, they were WW-2 glider pilots who, out of sheer audacity and unequalled bravery proudly put to the skies without ever needing a drop of internal fuel!

The United States Army Air Force soon realized it needed more efficient and timely methods of getting combat soldiers from British soil, across the English Channel, to the

European combat zones; thus the Waco CG-4 “Hadrian” military glider was born out of necessity to transport troops (13 per glider) and supplies to identified assault/landing areas (plowed fields). With a top speed of 149 mph, the glider was towed by C-47 transport aircraft (nicknamed Gooney Bird) to its tow-cable release and Insertion Point (IP). From this moment on, the Waco and passengers were powered and controlled simply by gravity and the skill of the pilot.

These gliders were principally built of wood frame, with the fuselage and wings covered with fabric. The aircraft had no defensive measures except for weapons carried by the soldiers and pilot. So, from take-off to landing, while being towed at low altitude and low airspeed, they were sitting ducks to enemy fire including anti-aircraft flak, 20mm cannon and small arms fire.

After little urging, I received approval from Virginia Nickerson of

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Chatham, MA, to use the following hair raising excerpts which were published in the Sept. 2011 issue of *WARBIRDS DIGEST*. This is a sampling of her father's Flight Diary, written by LT. John Hughes Nickerson, on September 18th, 1944 at the onset of OPERATION MARKET GARDEN.

“After final briefing and two postponements and two changes in route, we finally took off. I flew No. 3 position in second echelon of four. Carried Jeep and three men. I was surprisingly calm and cool, didn't seem at all as if it were me sitting there. My ‘co-pilot’ — one of the airborne— was ok, but had never been in a glider before. D. E. King and Timmins towed me. Inter-com checked good after T.O.

High overcast—good flying weather. King called back frequently to see how I was doing. Headed out over the Channel and hit a sprinkling of rain, which didn't last long. As Schoenberg Light came into view, I had my c/p help me into my flak suit, then he put his own on. 20 mm and machine gun fire at coast, then quiet until we crossed onto the mainland when we got heavy flak. Saw about 5 fighter planes before, but they had disappeared, and I was wondering where in Hell all the air cover they had promised us was. Big black bursts of flak were all around us and every once in awhile a piece would whiz through the glider. I would just grip my wheel a little harder and sweated - wondering just when and where it would hit next. I thought of a line of a poem. ‘Thinking of death as just another place to go—another road to walk—another land to know!’

“Presently it stopped and in about 5 minutes some 20mm opened up on us. I could feel and hear as they whistled by the ship. At the I.P. Jerry threw a lot of stuff at us but we plowed along un-hit. Old King would call back and ask if everything is ok. My little c/p still followed through on the controls to get the feel in case I should get hit. Four minutes out the first echelon cut [the tow] and dove. I watched for Coffee and Twil to cut and followed a second later. Flak—22mm— machine guns and small arms stuff was zooming all around, but I was pretty busy dodging other gliders and looking for a good spot to land. Sat her down perfect tail first (14:38 hrs) in a plowed field. The two boys aft

(Continued on page 11)



LT. John Hughes Nickerson

Photo courtesy of Virginia Nickerson

Isolation – Then and Now

By Barbara B. Semple

Isolation. This is a word we have become all too familiar with this year. We talk about it and we feel it. Some synonyms for it are quarantined, secluded, shielded, segregated, loneliness, friendlessness, lack of contact, aloneness, remoteness, and inaccessibility. Can you relate to some of those words during this time of COVID-19? We have all been kept from our families, our friends, our familiar activities, and even some of our favorite foods.

During the late 1800s, would you have felt similarly upon a ship, at sea, for an undetermined time, in unforeseeable weather conditions, and with little variety in food? Though you surely did not have COVID-19, you spent a fair amount of time being seasick!

During our present isolation, many of us have missed seeing our families, sharing holidays, birthdays, graduations, and other major events in our lives. Some of our families live far away and now wonder when they will fly again and feel safe. Others refrain from visits because of fear of spreading the virus unknowingly. Who has it and who doesn't? We really don't know. Testing negative one day may not shield you from the next weeks' encounters with people. We do have the luxury of almost instant communication with family. We Facetime, Zoom, text and send emails, even talk by old-fashioned telephone.

In the late 1800s, women at sea did not have such communication to help them with the isolation of being away from home and aboard a ship for months at a time. My great aunt traveled with her sea captain husband during the China Trade years. There was often only short notice that you were going to sea again. When a cargo was ready to be loaded, off you went. There were times my great aunt had to leave her ailing father, never knowing if she would see him alive again or what his welfare was for many months. She was the only woman on board the ship. She was not allowed to interact with the crew with the exception of the steward. Most of the time she was confined to her cabin to sew, read or occasionally cook a small treat. Only upon reaching a foreign port would she receive mail from home, perhaps written months before.

As we find now, friends become more important to us than we ever realized. We must "social distance" in our greetings and/or wear masks for the time being. This is a small price to pay for breaking out of the confines of our homes and being able to interact with friends at a beach or in a backyard.

Friends for my great aunt were far away, on land or on other ships somewhere in the world. As they arrived in ports of call such as the Philippines or Hong Kong, they too, found the importance of friends who had landed in the same port for a time. They would socialize, albeit without masks or distancing, but equally joyful to finally be with friends. To be able to share experiences, to talk, to dine together were all equally important to their wellbeing, as we have found it is to ours.

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We are fortunate, particularly here on Cape Cod, with our beautiful surroundings to enjoy each day. The weather changes; snow and rain drift down upon us, even tornadoes pass by and oh, the glorious sun on sand and sea!

Once my great aunt was out at sea, for months at a time, there was only the rolling and roiling of the endless sea, without land to give perspective, day in and day out.

We have the warmth and beauty of our homes to encase us and give us security and a sense of peace.

At sea, there was only your small cabin. When at sea, all the fine furniture and knick-knacks were packed away to ensure their safety. The cabin was quite bare, with only the essentials. Sofas were bolted down, as were beds and tables. Often the sea came overboard and soaked the cabin and its contents. It might take days to dry – no washer and dryer. Your time on deck was limited to nice and calm days.

Many of us have found solace in food and eating during this time of isolation. Though there have been times when grocery stores have been short of flour, cornstarch, yeast, produce and meats, we have still had enough to eat and been able to have a nice amount of variety in our diets. We have even found some creativity in our cooking!

At sea, often water went bad in casks. Limes ran out and scurvy became a great concern. Fresh produce and meats that you left with might go bad with more time at sea than predicted. Some of the same meals were served day after day and were rather unappetizing. When a ship came into port, they picked up what was available in that country. The variety might not have been great and some of it was very different food than most were used to eating.

As much as this time has been difficult for the world, it is not the first nor probably the last time we will have to endure hardship to some degree.

Just as our forbearers at sea did, we need to tighten up our bustles, pull up our boots, shift our sails in the right direction and weather the storm as best we know how. Though not on the confines of a ship, but rather in our safe and comfortable homes, we must all continue, unrelentingly, to think of our fellow passengers on this ship of life and be kind, thoughtful, helpful, and work together to have a safe passage back to port.

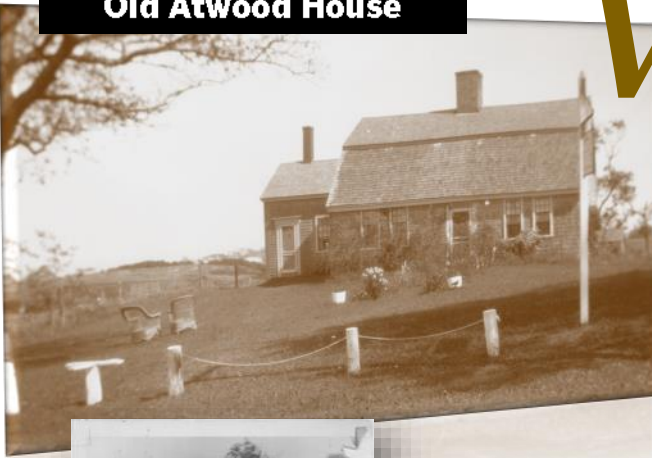


Bark Adolph Obrig, the ship on which my great-aunt spent long stretches of time.

Image courtesy of Barbara Semple

Barbara B. Semple, of South Chatham, MA, is the creator and presenter of the popular lecture, “Women at Sea, the China Trade.” Barbara is also a long-time, dedicated volunteer at the Atwood Museum.

Old Atwood House



Vinta At



Nicke

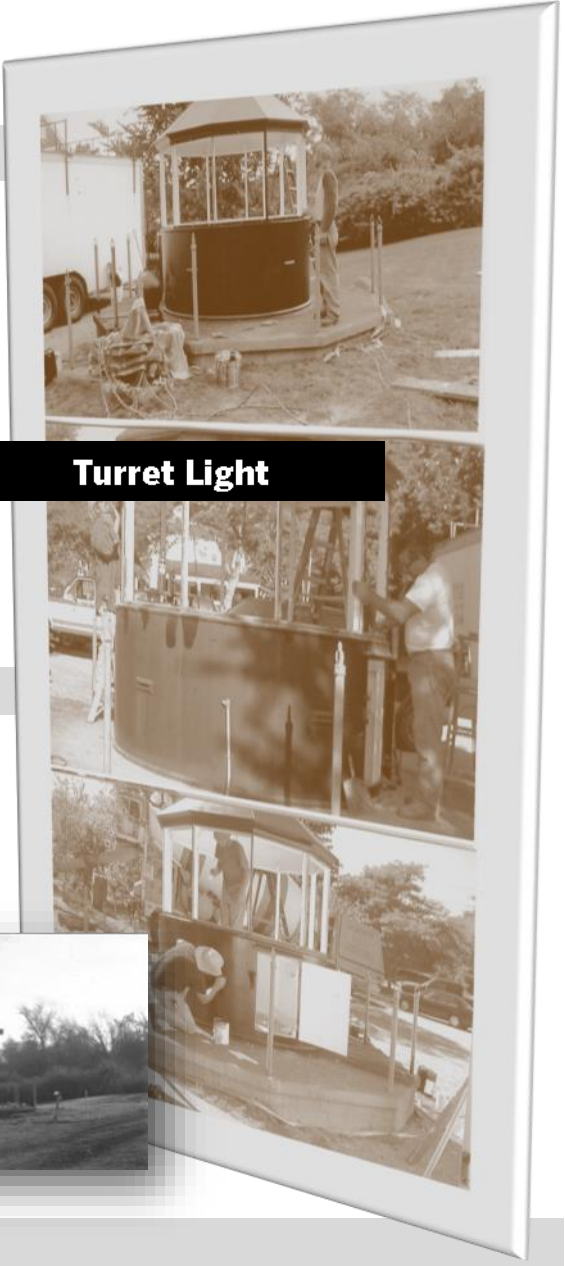
Stallknecht Murals
Notice anything different?



Age Atwood



Person Camp on North Beach



Turret Light



Classic Memories

Visit the completed Wetu on the grounds of the Atwood!



David Weeden of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, constructed the Wetu with his son Adaquin, during the summer.



CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Check out our new collection on our website

Oral
HISTORIES

World War II (Continued from page 5)

jumped out to size things up. I thought I was in the middle of an ammo dump exploding there was so much firing. The Jerry's were counter attacking as we landed and we broke it up. Saw friendly troops in a line of trees about 200 ft. in front. Jerry was in a hedgerow all along to our right about 200 yds away. We unloaded and just then mortar shells began bursting around the glider so we took off towards the C.P.

One paratroop LT. said to me 'I always hated the sight of those damn gliders, but I was never in my life so glad to see you boys landing today.'

We were first ones in on D-Day + 1."

Following the successful and eventual break-out from Normandy, Allied forces made rapid advances across France and into Belgium. The problem was, they were outrunning their own supply lines and decided to increase the Airborne activity to support the threatened ground surge. Thus, the two-part OPERATION MARKET (air) GARDEN (land) was conceived and executed 17-25 Sept.

1944, and the 53rd Troop Carrier Squadron was tapped for glider airlift duty once again. Three Airborne Divisions would drop into Holland to secure territory and bridges. It would be the largest airborne operation ever. Speed was essential! Unfortunately, historians still argue that the Allies didn't quite have it.

The following statistics show the enormity of the operation which ultimately resulted in historically marginal and unsatisfactory results:

20,000 dropped by parachute, 15,000 airlifted by glider, 1,485 KIA, 6,485 captured or escaped, 3,910 safely evacuated, 1,300 US aircraft used, 480 RAF aircraft used.

The culmination of this clash with the Nazis was the bloody Battle of Arnhem, and in the surrounding Dutch towns, which resulted in a German victory. Complete Allied liberation of the Netherlands would not occur until February of 1945 following the largest airborne assault in history... OPERATION MARKET GARDEN.

Maybe in this day and age of Internet Texting, the urban acronym OMG may have a different connotation for some of us, after reading this issue of the Atwood Log.

Just maybe.



Period cartoon made by glider pilot trainees during the war.

Cartoon courtesy of Don Broderick

Don Broderick is a long-time, dedicated volunteer in the Archives Department of the Atwood Museum.

Beware of the Powderpost Beetle

One of the joys of taking care of historic buildings is guarding the structures from unwanted and damage causing pests.

According to Terminix, a national “Powderpost beetles are wood-boring Bostrichidae, subfamily Lyctidae) that unfinished, unpainted and/or unsealed moisture content. When it comes damage, they are second to termites...”



pest control company, beetles (Family primarily impact wood that has low to causing structural

Although we are not experts, as a museum that has two historic and wooden structures, we have had our fair share of battles with these tiny fiends. We thought we would share with you a few ways to spot, treat, and possibly prevent a powderpost problem.

Spotting powderpost almost impossible to see items, floorboards, pinholes in them to powderpost beetles.



damage: The actual beetles are with your eyes. Many old wooden ceiling beams, etc. will have indicate there has been activity by

These holes vary in size and are a result of the beetles boring their way through the wood and pushing, what looks like sawdust, outwards. You can tell if the powderpost beetles are currently active if there is a small pile of sawdust around the pinholes. Therefore, if you start to see these small mounds of wood residue, it may be an indication that there are active powderpost beetles in that wooden object or structure.

Treating for powderpost beetles: Call your pest control company. Most companies, especially in New England because there are so many old and wooden structures, have dealt with these insects. One of the treatments they might use is a chemical wash called Timbor, which is made out of mine salt and acts as a fungicide. It can be painted onto wooden items to kill off beetles. There needs to be activity after the wash for the chemical to be effective. The beetles will begin to eat the treated wood and the chemicals will destroy them.

Preventing powderpost beetles: Powderpost beetle larvae can lay dormant for years and when there is a change in temperature, they can come back to life and begin burrowing again. Beetles particularly like damp, humid, warm places. To prevent the change in these warm and humid temperatures, use a dehumidifier. This should keep the air dry, cool, and much less inviting for beetles to thrive.

As previously mentioned, we are not pest experts, we just wanted to clue you into some of the potential problems that come with old wooden houses and objects. Keep your eye out, talk to specialists, and try to prevent the issue before it becomes a problem!



Our best,
The Atwood Team

We would like to thank the different specialists from Pest Pros and Fowler and Sons for teaching us so much about powderpost beetles over the years.

Crown Jewel (Continued from page 3)

dyed bobbinet and secured with tiny conservation stitching. The splits, the losses and weakness in the silk fabric, and the large voids in the hem were reinforced by the use of dyed fabric underlays. All closures were re-stitched and previous alterations were reversed where possible. In short, a very painstaking and time consuming process!

Given its age and fragility, the gown will be treated with respect and caution whenever the opportunity to put it on display presents itself. This lovely example from a by-gone era has been restored to the best condition possible and will now be permanently stored in the department under proper archival conditions.

The Chatham Historical Society and the Costumes & Textiles Department thank David and the many benefactors who made this project possible in Eleanor's memory. We are sure Eleanor would be pleased!

Barbara Hogan is a long-time, dedicated volunteer in the Costumes & Textiles Department of the Atwood Museum.

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CALENDAR



Lecture Series Returns



Celebrate the Holidays
New Train Display
at the Atwood

Throughout the
month of December

ENJOY VOLUNTEERING?

If so, the Atwood Museum wants you!

For information and opportunities

Contact Kevin Wright: kwright.atwood@gmail.com



EVENTS

Halloween at the Batwood

**Socially Safe Fun
Friday, October 30th**

Check our website for details



Pilgrims' Progress

Music of the Plimoth Colony Settlers

Virtual Lecture November 10th

Check our website for details

Historic Bake Sale

Join us for our 3rd annual event

**Pre-Ordered Baked Goods
Available November 24th**

Check our website for details



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