

ATWOOD LOG

FALL/WINTER 2021-2022



THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY



From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Talk about a fast summer!

As we embark on the Fall season at the Atwood, I am reminded how much personality each season brings. Spring brings flowers and a fresh outlook on the new season. Summer is filled with excitement and crowds of visitors enjoying the hard work that went into preparing new exhibits. Fall and Winter are the typical times to take a breath and relax in the off-season . . . NOT! I find that our off-season is one of our busiest times. Getting ready for the new season with new exhibits is incredibly time-consuming. We've set the bar high at our museum and we continue to raise that bar. Fall is my favorite time of the year. There is a crisp bite in the air, mixed in with the occasional warmth reminiscent of summer. Leaves start to change, and, if we are lucky, we get to enjoy spectacular colors. We are still busy at the museum, though things are considerably calmer. At this point in the year, the out-of-town visitors head home and are replaced by the locals who come out of the woodwork to enjoy their community. Fall is our time to showcase some familiar family events at the Atwood, including Halloween at the Batwood, the Best Bake Sale in History, Hearthwarming in the Old House and holiday surprises throughout the month of December. Getting the museum ready for next season begins in earnest during the final few months of the year.

A lot of work goes into preparing an exhibit. You need to put together a dedicated group of volunteers willing to give a lot of their time to work with our staff to produce an experience for our loyal members and fascinated visitors. You need to brainstorm ideas on what kinds of exhibits are both interesting and fitting for Chatham, then put those ideas into action and start making something magical. When January rolls around, we put the pedal to the metal and focus on putting the multiple parts together.

If we do our job well (and we will!), the casual visitor won't know how much work went into preparing the museum. As long as they walk in with a smile and enjoy the many wonders of the Atwood Museum, I am okay with that.

If you are one of those who avoided the summer crowds and haven't visited us yet this year, not to worry. The museum is still open Tuesday - Saturday 10-4 until October 9th, Fridays and Saturdays, 1-4 through the end of the month. Fridays and Saturdays, 1-4 during the month of December.

Yes, we do take a slight break during November, but keep checking our website for any updates.

Kevin Wright
Executive Director



Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, MA

In Remembrance

By Don Broderick, CDR USN (Ret.) and author Paula Proctor

January 2022 brings a sudden and sorrowful end to our WORLD WAR-II Exhibit at the Atwood Museum. Thousands of visitors have seen exhibition and experienced, in part, the largest conflict in the history of humankind. Hundreds of thousands of American men and women, as well as many of our faithful allies, lost their lives liberating Europe from brutal Nazi totalitarianism and fanatical Japanese Imperialism. Within mere months of each other in 1945, and with resounding joy, the USA and its European Allies stood victorious announcing VE-DAY and VJ-DAY.

Looking northward from the Atwood Museum, up Stage Harbor Rd., on the left and just before the rotary sits our WW-II War Memorial Park. Chatham—in proud tradition—has honored our fallen soldiers from the WW-1, as well as the Civil, Korean and Vietnam Wars. Curiously enough, WW-II had not made honor roll cut until 2015 when a magnificent stone memorial was dedicated by the town of Chatham, its veterans and its people in honor of those lost in these colossal battles of the European and Pacific Theaters.

(Continued on next page)

On the Cover: Our Skeleton Crew playing the organ during Batwood

(Continued from previous page)

War memorials are a necessary part of the healing process. They link us to those who, through great sacrifice, have lived and died before in the hopes that both they themselves and the horror and violence of war will never be forgotten. In Massachusetts, World War-II memorials span the length and breadth of our commonwealth and mark the loss of over 10,000 lives.

On the lawn of the Brewster Town Hall stand several tributes to those who bravely served. One plaque reads: "Proudly We Pay Tribute to the Men and Women of Brewster who answered their Country's call in World War II." A second marker nearby remembers those who fought in the Battle of the Bulge. In many places, town squares are named after fallen servicemen. In Provincetown, the heroism of 1st Lieutenant Mathew Gregory, recipient of the Purple with Oak Leaf Cluster and Bronze Star, who fell at Normandy, is remembered at the corner of Bradford St. and High Pole Rd.

Private and community cemeteries throughout Cape Cod contain the graves of many who have contributed to the war effort. Chester W. Nimitz Jr., son and namesake of the Commander of the US Pacific Fleet, is buried in Oak Dale Cemetery in Wellfleet. A member of the U.S. Submarine Service, Nimitz is a recipient of the Navy Cross, three Silver Stars and a Bronze Star.

Pulitzer Prize winner Art Buchwald served as a U.S. Marine munitions handler in the Pacific during the war. Buchwald later achieved fame as an author, journalist and newspaper columnist, and was noted for his unique and ever-present sense of humor. West Chop Cemetery in Tisbury is the final resting place of this great American humorist. Vannevar Bush, a scientist whose work at MIT Rad Lab significantly advanced the technology used in WW-II, rests in South Dennis Cemetery. Head of MIT, Bush worked closely with FDR as chairman of the office of Scientific Research and Development, and was integral in the creation of the atomic bomb.

Military awards are a visible record of an individual's service history, marking their participation in campaigns and highlighting their accomplishments. In the United States, the very highest military recognition which can be bestowed is the Congressional Medal of Honor, revered as "an honor bestowed upon only the most honorable." The Massachusetts National Cemetery is the final resting place of two such honored heroes, Sergeant First Class Jared C. Monti

(Continued on page 13)

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY!

How Women's Fashions Changed and Why you Should Care

By Laurie Carter Noble

We are blessed with many treasures at The Atwood House and Museum, with one of the most remarkable being the collection of women's clothing. This includes fine examples of women's outerwear, gowns, dresses and accessories that add elegance and grace throughout the museum's displays (most especially in The Old House). They also provide valuable insights into the role of women in America. Through these garments, we get a clear understanding of how the images of women were shaped and reflected in the clothing they wore.

Typically, the more affluent the woman, the more she was relegated to the role of decorative adornment. Her goal was to please the eye of the eligible man who might sweep her off her feet and marry her. Many times clothes for these women were created to flatter their bodies in ways that would be appealing to the man, but that way of designing often came at a considerable cost to the women.

Recall the scene from *Gone with the Wind* in which Scarlett O'Hara is holding onto a bedpost while her corset is tightened and tightened, following the fashion of the day. This type of corseting could have serious health consequences for the women who endured it for the sake of fashion.

In the Atwood Collection, we are fortunate to have an example of this fashion trend as represented by a magnificent ivory silk crepe de chine wedding gown, consisting of a ruffled skirt and a form-fitting jacket.

Here, we can clearly see the highlights of this type of fashion in its accentuation of a very small waist and fitted bodice. As beautiful as this gown is, remember that in order to fit into this type of silhouette, the

wearer had to be bound, padded and trussed very severely. Small wonder

Photograph from the Chatham Historical Society collection



Wedding Dress from 1870's

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

that women of the upper class in the mid-19th century often had “vapors” and fainted so often that there were actually couches designed to address this.

With the rise of the suffrage movement in the 1870’s, the idea of the woman as object of physical allure slowly met its demise as 19th century women began demanding educational and professional opportunities. As a result, fashion became less confining and less damaging to women. Dress reform came slowly, but finally a more natural silhouette for women prevailed.

By the turn of the 19th century, the long slim skirt without bustle or hoop or multiple layers of petticoats was making serious inroads even in high fashion. This can be seen in the graceful ecru evening dress in the collection of the Atwood House dating from somewhere between 1900-1925. (right)

In this shapely but loose fitting gown of embroidered batiste, crocheted lace and net, the feminine form is acknowledged but not exaggerated. Through the pattern of the embroidery, both the bodice and the waist are highlighted but not emphasized, a marked shift from the previous gown.

This newer, simpler and more elegant silhouette appeared in many examples of clothing for career women (think of the Gibson girl blouses), and is memorable in the photos of the suffragist marches of the early 1900’s, with their long white dresses accented by the purple sashes that were identified with Votes for Women marches.

By the 1930’s this trend was gaining prevalence in garments, with some appearing so modern that they could be worn today, almost a century later. This classical silhouette is represented by a stunning black gown in the Atwood Collection. (left)

This glamorous evening dress is made of black lace with gold, lavender and magenta taffeta bands setting off the bodice. Created sometime between 1930-1940, this gown shows how far women’s fashion has come since the era of trussing and corseting.

Through the design, choice of fabric and accent colors, and scrupulous tailoring, a gown

(Continued on next page)



Ecru gown from early 20th Century

Photograph from the Chatham Historical Society collection



Evening Gown from 1930's

Photograph from the Chatham Historical Society collection

(Continued from previous page)

is created that is form fitting without being restrictive. It does not rely on artificial means to make a woman appealing. More importantly it enables a woman to move freely, to be comfortable in her clothing and to feel that the gown she is wearing enhances her own beauty.

By the time this gown was created, there had been many changes in the accepted roles for women of all statuses. Education was more readily available, though concerns persisted that a woman would leave school or her profession to raise a family, and thus would occupy a position that could go to a man ostensibly more purposeful in his career. By 1930, however, there were women in various careers including the government. The designated “woman’s sphere” had grown beyond the domestic, as was proven by women’s gaining the right to vote in 1920.

With change coming in so many areas, what a woman wore and how she was perceived dramatically shifted to reflect this new world. As Virginia Slims proclaimed in the 1980’s and 1990’s, as American women, we had “Come a Long Way, Baby!”

Once, restrictive fashions had also helped confine women to so-called respectable roles within the “woman’s sphere.” The limiting of a woman’s way of life encompassed fashion, domestic life, and even educational and professional opportunities. Education was confined to “Female Academies”—essentially finishing schools dedicated to giving women just enough knowledge to be interesting conversation partners at the dinner table or on the dance floor. Indeed, the theory widely promoted at the time was that too much learning could atrophy a woman’s reproductive organs, ignoring the existence of people like the great suffragist pioneer Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who, in addition to her formidable intellectual and reform ambitions, was the mother of nine children.

In 1920, the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote, was finally the law of the land. It had taken more than seventy years of perpetual struggle, but at last women had truly come a long way. And the world of women’s fashion reflected that: gone were the tight corsets and cumbersome bustles and the layers of petticoats. Now fashion flattered the woman, but also enabled her to fill whatever role she chose: athlete or not, reformer or not, career woman or not, primary caregiver or not. And little girls might be convinced that they could and should reach for the stars.

We are so fortunate to have at the Atwood House & Museum our extraordinary collection of women’s clothing that show us how these changes came about in so many different eras of American life. And that in America the changes that had come about in fashion signaled broader changes that had a profound effect on women and girls for generations to come.

Vintage Atw



Stallknecht Murals, "Every Man to his Tra
Florence Eldredge standing in Seaside C

Gravestone WIGHT -
Carol Van Buren Wight, 1825-1951,
Alice Stallknecht Wight 1902-1986,
Frederick Stallknecht Wight
and Joan Bingham Wight 1911 -
Located in Union Cemetery



Footstone, John Young 1788.
Old Queen Anne South Cemetery.

ood

ade"
Cemetery.

▶ Gravestone of

Joseph Atwood, d. 1774,
located in Old Queen Anne
South Cemetery



▶ Dog gravestone
in Union Cemetery



◀ Monument in memory of Hiat Young
in People's Cemetery, Chatham.



Classic Gravestones

Images from the Chatham Historical Society collection

The Chatham Orpheum: In Past, Present, and Future Tense

By Edward (Ned) Scharlau

From when it was first built in 1916 until it closed in 1987, the Chatham Orpheum Theater was regarded as a mainstay of the Chatham community. In the era of excellent slapstick humor and brilliant performances like those of the famously mustachioed Charlie Chaplin, the theater became a popular space for contemporary entertain-

ment. As many veteran residents of Chatham remember, the Orpheum Theater (renamed the Chatham Theater in 1938) closed its illustrious doors in 1987, with the former cultural landmark becoming a CVS Pharmacy building. However, in 2011, a collective effort by members of the Chatham community revived the former theater. In order to ascertain greater knowledge of the history of this endeavor and to learn firsthand how the new Orpheum Theater has aimed to preserve the historical nature of the facility while hoping to surpass the excellence of the original theater, I sat down with Kevin McLain, Executive Director of the Chatham Orpheum Theater.

The first observation that entered my mind as I sat in one of the neatly ordered booths directly adjacent to the theater's bar space was that the interior of this historic site is exceptionally modern. Later in my discussion with Mr. McLain, I learned that a principal objective of the theater was to synthesize modern and antique elements of cinema, preserving its roots without entirely forgoing modern elements. In describing the history of the theater, Mr. McLain alluded to it as a phoenix rising from the ashes, an apt analogy given the reverence with which this theater was viewed by the community.

Kevin McLain's rise to executive directorship is an equally fascinating story. Mr. McLain, then an I.T. director at the Chatham Bars Inn, was initially tasked with the installation of the wireless infrastructure and other modern systems necessary to sustain a digital theater throughout the old building. He gradually developed an interest in the project over the course of this undertaking, and began to sit in on meetings concerning the future of the theater. He decided that if the theater was to become a backer for cultural projects by assisting non-profits and working with local groups, he wanted to direct it.



Vintage Orpheum Theater, Main Street, Chatham.

Photo courtesy of the Mayflower Shop

(Continued on next page)

“It’s not a job, it’s a mission,” he explained to me.

The reconstruction efforts would prove to be Herculean in nature, but those involved understood the importance of their labor. As Mr. McLain described: for decades, residents of Chatham had lamented the loss of their local theater. The paramount importance of this establishment necessitated the many improvements to the structure. The building was gutted, with the roof being raised to accommodate a modern projector screen. Due to the centrality of the theater on Main Street, it was decided that a café and bar space should be added. Mr. McLain stressed that Chatham is a destination rather than a transition point to a different location. As such, amenities and films of local and cultural importance would be the focus of the theater, differentiating it from modern commercial theaters. Most challenging, he noted, was space, since the historical nature of the building needed to be preserved. Ultimately, a sustainable layout was reached that left the exterior of the building unchanged.

Mr. McLain was confident in the future of the theater. He felt that the community support was astounding and unlike that of any other town in the United States. He recalled how visitors would describe to him how their respective towns had attempted to revive their local theater to no avail, due to either budget constraints or a lack of local enthusiasm. In his eyes, the community of Chatham invested in the future of this theater because so many had missed it during its absence.

Addressing, inevitably, ‘the pathogen in the room,’ we discussed the theater during COVID-19. Though the Orpheum was closed during the height of the pandemic, Director McLain is certain that the theater will weather this proverbial storm with the continued support of the town of Chatham. This establishment will continue to flourish if Chatham residents continue to visit after Labor Day to see its cultural offerings. The theater aims to achieve a balance between, “tourists and locals that often don’t come in until after Labor Day.” Mr. McLain explained that the theater once screened a film on the Uffizi Gallery in Italy, and over 80% of visitors had already seen the gallery in person, a sign of Chatham’s well-traveled and well-educated population that few small towns in America can boast.

I was initially overwhelmed by the volume of new information Mr. McLain offered me. I described to him that as a Minnesotan, I was not aware of many of these nuances and cultural efforts of the Chatham community. However, I learned that before Kevin McLain’s tenure on the Cape, he was himself a fellow Midwesterner as a resident of Michigan! After exiting the building, greeted by the summer heat that permeates throughout Main Street, I left with the newfound belief that the Chatham Orpheum Theater ought to be preserved as a site of both culture and entertainment for future generations of Chatham residents, and for visitors from around the globe.

Edward (Ned) Scharlau has interned during the summer at the Atwood Museum since 2019. He is a high school senior living in Minnesota.

TripAdvisor Reviews

The best advertising for a small museum like ours is through word of mouth. One of the most popular referral systems currently is TripAdvisor. Reviews on this free worldwide travel site attract visitors, future donors, and supporters. We hope that you will consider reviewing us online. This can be accomplished by creating an account on TripAdvisor or using Facebook to log in. Why does TripAdvisor require an account? To make sure that reviews come from legitimate people.

To review us see: www.tripadvisor.com/reviewit

Recent feedback:

One of the best museums (and tours) on the Cape

“We weren't really sure what to expect but the museum far exceeded any expectation we could have had. The museum is very lovely. The Atwood home is well preserved and the women who run the site give amazing tours. They are very knowledgeable about what the items and rooms were used for in the home that really helped us to understand. It truly was walking back in time. There is also some excellent artwork in a barn off the Atwood museum that the tour guide knew some of the local people in the paintings. This museum tells a very unique story of Chatham and really was the best experience we had on our week long trip. We so appreciated the hospitality of the historical society staff and volunteers explaining the history and the native people as well. Would definitely recommend.”

Excellent museum

“This was a great museum because not only did we enjoy the "trip" through a day in the life of Captain Attwood and his family there were other eras represented. Very friendly and helpful staff.”

Step back in time in a beautiful home . . .

“We enjoyed stepping back in time in this magnificent home. Our group of three had a personal tour guide, Sally, who loves the house and history, and had interesting commentary about the structure and many period artifacts. In addition to the living areas, there are rooms with local artifacts and photography of main streets of Cape towns from then and now that we really enjoyed. Another docent, Mr. Kelley, is a Chatham resident for 85 plus years—having graduated from Chatham High in a class of 24. Our visit lasted about an hour. Great way to enjoy a rainy day in Chatham.”

Make your plans to visit us this fall!

(Continued from page 4)

(Afghanistan) and Hospital Corpsman Richard David DeWert (Korea). The cemetery, located in Bourne on land formerly owned by Otis Air Force Base, is one of the largest national cemeteries in the U.S. Flying ace Lt. Commander Fred Christiansen can also be found here. For his service in WWII, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Silver Star and the Air Medal. Here too lies Major General Charles Sweeney, a man who “took no pride or pleasure in the brutality of war.” Famous for his command of Bockscar—the plane which dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki. Sweeney’s marker reads: “Great Patriot.”

Approximately 16 million Americans served in WW-II, over 200,000 never came home. British poet John Maxwell Edmunds so eloquently described their sacrifice. “When you go Home, tell them of us and say, For your Tomorrow, we gave our Today.” It is for us—those who are left behind, the beneficiaries of their sacrifices—to remember and to be grateful. It is our responsibility. It is our duty.

Chatham Historical Society

Board of Trustees

Officers

Michael Woehler
Chair

Steve Nickerson
Vice Chair

Linda A. Cebula
Treasurer

Amanda Davis
Secretary

Trustees

Dawn Boynton

Stephen J. Burlingame

Stuart D. Green

Nick Harris

Mariah Kelly

Winifred Lear

Carolynn Levy

Virginia T. Nickerson

Bonnie Rosenthal

Jamie Selldorff

Angie B. Simonds

Craig S. Vokey

Operations Staff

Kevin D. Wright
Executive Director

John Tibbetts
Assistant Director

Kristina Koskores
Administrator

Janet Marjollet
Costumes & Textiles

Gaylene Heppe
Gift Shop Manager

Florence Seldin
Book Shop

Don Broderick
Lecture Committee Chair

Don St. Pierre
Building & Grounds

Bill Horrocks
Charts Curator

Margaret Martin
Recording Secretary

Honorary Trustees

Rob Bergh

Stephen S. Daniel

Donna Drown

Mary Ann Eldred

William G. Litchfield

Janet Marjollet

Barbara Matteson

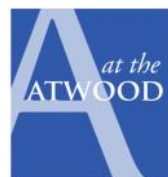
Stephania McClennen

Joshua A. Nickerson, Jr.

Christopher L. Rhinesmith

John L. Whelan

Sarah G. Wilsterman



CALENDAR



Virtual Lecture Series 2021

October 12, 2021

Sailing to Cathay

Speaker: Andrew Singer



November 16, 2021

Life in Glass

Speaker:

Camille Broderick Rodier



Missed some of our lectures?

Recordings now available on our website

Keep checking website for upcoming talks



EVENTS

DON'T MISS OUR HOLIDAY EVENTS!

Check our website for details



Halloween at the Batwood

Spooktacular Family Fun

Saturday, October 30th (1-4)

Best Bake Sale in History

Help Support the Atwood

Tuesday, November 23rd



Stroll back in time

Hearthwarming at the Atwood

Saturday, December 11th

CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

347 Stage Harbor Road
PO Box 709
Chatham, MA 02633

**NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE PAID
ORLEANS MA 02653
PERMIT NO.11**

OR CURRENT RESIDENT



Visit us on the web at www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org