

ATWOOD LOG

SPRING/SUMMER 2019

Coming This Summer!



Main Street Cape Cod

**THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



From the Executive Director

The “quiet” time of the year in Chatham is usually one of our busiest at the Museum as we plan for new exhibits and special events for the year. This year is no different with the whirlwind of activity mostly focused on the new "Main Street Cape Cod" exhibit. Through friendships and collaborative efforts inspired by the Cape Cod Museum Trail, we have received strong support from our colleagues, other historical societies and museums across the Cape to produce an exhibit in the Main Gallery covering the broader Cape Cod region. Explore the diversity of towns on our peninsula and learn more about what makes our Cape Cod communities so special all in one exhibit. Hopefully, this exhibit will inspire you to visit some of the more than seventy museums found throughout the Cape.

Rich in history, arts, culture and natural beauty, our evolving town centers have changed dramatically in the last 100 years. These centers reflect the strength and resilience of the residents as they transition from rural farming and fishing communities to tourist havens with vacation homes with a vibrant year around population supporting the ebb and flow of crowds. In spite of the changes over time, the hearts of the towns remain both important as community centers and reflect what to many is the desirable character of Cape Cod.

The entire museum reopens in May including two additional exhibits, “Chatham Digs” and the “NC-4 Flight Into Chatham.” In the meantime, be sure to visit our website for a list of speakers and special events currently in progress. We look forward to seeing you, hopefully often, this year At the Atwood.

**Our Annual
“Evening to Remember”
gala will be
Saturday, July 13th
at the stunning
“Sea La Vie”**

Mark Your Calendars!



On the cover: Main Street, Chatham - Postcard: August 20, 1909



Cash Store, corner of Main Street and Walker, Falmouth

Photo courtesy of Museum on the Green, Falmouth

Visit Historic *Main Street Cape Cod* in a New Exhibit

One of the simplest and best things to do on Cape Cod is to visit each of the many villages, from Falmouth to Provincetown to see the character of Cape Cod life embodied in historic structures and landscapes. Coming in May, you will be able to visit the historical versions of many of those Main Streets, all in one place.

The upcoming Main Gallery exhibit at the Atwood House & Museum will be *Main Street Cape Cod*, the result of a collaboration of the Chatham Historical Society with many other museums and historic societies across the Cape. Some historical organizations which are working with the Atwood House & Museum include the Falmouth Museums on the Green, the Wellfleet Historical Society, the Sandwich Glass Museum, the Historic Society of Old Yarmouth and many more! The *Main Street Cape Cod* exhibit will explore how the central street running through each community defined and shaped our heritage.

For Chatham, there will be displays and historical artifacts from the Orpheum Theater and the Eldredge Public Library. From other parts of the Cape, images and articles will be on loan from historical societies and museums highlighting unusual aspects of each town.

Aside from being the principal thoroughfare through an area, Main Street USA usually shaped and located the town center, especially in the

(Continued on page 4)

2019 NEW EXHIBITS

(Continued from previous page)

19th and early 20th centuries. The street was the focal point where commerce took place and people gathered to share news, forming the central core of a community. Cape Cod was no different. And while town centers and main streets may have moved over time, the central roads left landmarks and stories shaping local history.

Main streets on Cape Cod developed in the late 1800s, when the population grew rapidly and communities were thriving. They usually included a post office, town hall, churches, and stores. As technology and transportation changed, town centers evolved. Remnants of these centers remain today and define many unique aspects of each town and village across the Cape.

Come and walk down Main Street, Cape Cod at the Atwood House & Museum. The exhibit opening weekend will be May 24 - 25.



**Main Street headed
towards Congregational
Church, in Wellfleet**

*Courtesy of Wellfleet Historical
Society & Museum*

**County Courthouse,
Barnstable**

Courtesy of Tales of Cape Cod, Inc.



2019 NEW EXHIBITS

CHATHAM DIGS

CAPTAIN JOSEPH ATWOOD HOUSE . . . HISTORY IN THE DIGGING

Archaeological digs have become popular in recent years throughout Cape Cod to enhance the understanding of our early history. Archaeologist



Craig Chartier from Plymouth has located many fascinating artifacts. Around Chatham, he has led excavations at the location known as the original Caleb Nickerson Homestead and at the Old Atwood House, below the original structure.

In 2018, the foundation of the Old Atwood House was restored thanks to the support of a Chatham Community Preservation grant. Since the 1750's,

when the property was first built, much of the home sat directly on the ground with its beams supported by stones only a few inches above Chatham's sandy soil. Many of the floor joists had failed and parts of the underpinnings of the main house sat directly on the wet sand. Moisture in the foundation was taking its toll. The restoration project included removing the floorboards and 8-12 inches of soil underneath the footprint of the Old House.

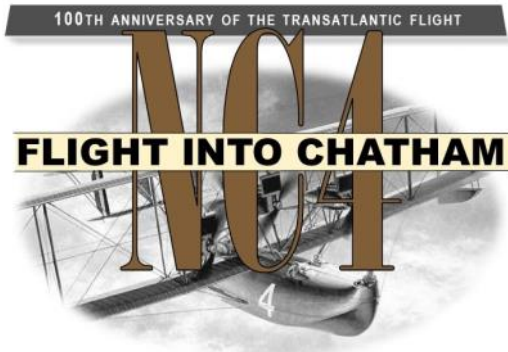
Board member and longtime docent Steve Burlingame contracted Chartier to inspect the soil for artifacts. Chartier and his team of volunteers spent several days sifting through the material and located buckets of historically important material. From this, Chartier prepared a report outlining the location, contents, estimated dates, uses and other details about these objects.

According to Craig Chartier's final report, 4,325 artifacts were uncovered from underneath the Old Atwood House. Found treasures include two prehistoric items: a quartz flake used as a tool, and one chert projectile point, a hard, fine-grained sedimentary rock composed of quartz crystals. Early colonial items included a boar's skull, presumably from a feast, sewing items, earthenware, hand-blown glass, lead shot, gun flint, and more.



The results of this fascinating work, along with a number of key artifacts, will be on display this summer at the Atwood House & Museum.

2019 NEW EXHIBITS



As the nation celebrates the 100th anniversary of the first transatlantic flight in May, we commemorate Chatham's role in this historic adventure in a new exhibit.

What follows are excerpts from author Janet Daly and others in a Chatham Historical Society catalog produced in 2007 about the famous NC-4 aircraft.

Chatham – and the rest of the country – saw enormous change in the years from 1917 to 1922. Traditional ways and modern technology clashed as World War I brought both to the forefront. Chatham's position on the East Coast was an ideal location for one of six Naval Air Stations the government built almost overnight to protect our shores during the war. Where fishermen once worked in Pleasant Bay, heavy equipment and machines carved out a base for dirigibles and seaplanes. Fifty buildings were constructed to house dozens of planes and blimps and more than 300 servicemen. Radio station WCC, the Marconi Radio Station, was nationalized as part of the war effort.

The ultimate success of the air war illustrated the potential value of commercial aviation. When bases and air stations were closed overseas and in the United States after the war, surplus equipment, including planes, were offered at bargain prices. Local airlines were formed throughout the U.S. and Europe by former army and naval aviators.

In 1919, The London Daily Mail announced a \$50,000 prize for the first airplane to cross the Atlantic. At war's end, the U.S. was left with four cutting-edge flying boats ready to be commissioned. The Navy readied them to attempt the trans-Atlantic feat. In May 1919, three NC-type flying boats took off from Rockaway, NY to fly to Portugal, with a stopover at the Azores. As the NC-4 took off on its first leg of the flight, it encountered engine trouble off Cape Cod. After a water landing, the NC-4, taxied to the Chatham Naval Air Station. There it was repaired and took off for Europe. This NC4 was the only one of the four planes to complete the journey, becoming the first to cross the Atlantic.



Flight crew of the NC-4

The flight of the NC-4 made history. Its emergency landing off

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

Chatham's shores and the installation of a new engine and repairs conducted at the Chatham Naval Air Station made Chatham well known throughout the world.

In the May 8, 1969 issue of The Cape Cod Chronicle, Ed Snow wrote of the past and present residents of Chatham who, as members of the military had assisted in the first transatlantic flight 50 years earlier. Here are some excerpts from that article:

Lt. Commander Albert C. Read

"About the middle of the afternoon the flight engineer crawled forward through the doors in the [NC-4's] compartments and handed Commander Read a note . . . saying that one engine had developed trouble and was about to quit. It did quit, and the air speed of the NC-4 dropped, but she still continued to fly on three engines....another engine began to skip and lose power.

"A quick check on his position showed that he was 100 miles off Chatham, Cape Cod. There was a naval air station at Chathamport and maybe they could get his "Lame Duck" back on her wings again . . . Commander Read could remember when as a boy of about 9 years of age he had lived in Chatham when his father, Reverend Read, had been pastor of the Baptist Church there (now Masonic Hall). He had attended grammar school, and later, intermediate school, and he could think of no better place to be at this time, especially as it was the nearest point of land to his present position."

Chief Petty Officer Charles Devine

"...the NC-4 started the long, slow trip over the ocean to Chatham. At the air station, preparations were made to receive the big visitor. It took all that night for the NC-4 to taxi in as far as Chatham."

Chief Machinist Mate Grover C. Farris

"Almost as soon as it arrived a group of motor mechanics, under Aviation Chief Machinist Mate Grover C. Farris, removed one engine and installed a new one in its place. A propeller was found to be defective, and a new one was flown to Chatham and installed. The other three engines were overhauled and tuned up.

"... in the fall of 1919, Farris married the former Miss Bathsheba S. Howes, of Chatham. At the closing of the air station he was transferred to Lakehurst NJ and was assigned to the lighter-than-air branch of the Navy. After concluding his hitch in the Navy, he returned with his family to his native state of Tennessee, and after a short stay there returned to Chatham, where he worked as an automotive mechanic. He passed away in 1960. Two sons, Robert and William, and their families, are residents of Chatham."

Soar into the past this summer at the Atwood House & Museum as we feature the famous NC-4 flight into Chatham using early aviation footage, photographs taken in 1919, a model of the aircraft and more.



Double Take

Activities

Sunday Lecture Series



Evening To Remember

Enjoy what the Atwood has to offer

ies at the Atwood

Classic Car Tour



Exhibit Planning



Holiday Magic



ffer!

Resources for researching your Chatham home's "Family Tree"

By Judy Cuniff



The Atwood House from 1936

At the Chatham Historical Society, we archivists get many requests for research. One of the most common questions is, *"Do you have any information about the old house located at ...?"*

The first resources we check are our own archives. The Chatham Historical Society has a searchable database which can provide access to photos, documents such as deeds and family papers, in-house publications, historic assessor's books (1870-1969), and Barnstable county maps from 1858, 1880, and 1906 showing home owners' names and building outlines.

Some time ago, the Chatham Historical Society published six pamphlets with historical information about a selection of old houses around town, including detailed genealogical histories of families handing down their properties from one generation to the next. Architectural features in these booklets also help describe the use of these properties, the cultural development of our community, and other historic events which impacted daily life.

Another helpful publication is called "A Sense of Place by the Sea" by Nancy Barr, who wrote this book in 2007. The book describes the stories behind key properties forming the four villages of Chatham. Houses which are featured include the John Hawes homestead, The Port, The Coffin Maker's House, the Levi Eldridge family home and many more.

In addition, many old Chatham houses were surveyed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the results are contained in our files as well as online. If you want to see any of these items, please email us at archives.atwood@gmail.com for an appointment. Provide us with as much detail as possible about the property you wish to research. We are generally in the office on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

The Chatham Historical Society also recommends the following websites:

1. *Town of Chatham Assessors Database*: <https://www.chatham-ma.gov/> , Click on "online services/web assessor portal." Search by property address, view and print. This site provides structural information, assessor's date of construction (not always accurate for older homes), and recent deed information with book/page references for recent transfers.

2. *Barnstable County Registry of Deeds*: <https://www.chatham-ma.gov/>

(Continued on page 11)

provides an online search by owners name(s), deed references, etc. The information can be viewed for free and printed for a fee. Deeds are available back to 1790.

3. *Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC)*: <http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm> provides a search by address by town of all houses before 1900 that have complete inventories done by the *Chatham Historical Commission* consultants. These inventories provide historical names, description of structure, picture of house, map of area, etc.

4. *Eldredge Public Library (EPL)*: <https://www.eldredgelibrary.org/> The library has printed inventories of houses from the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey. Reference & Genealogy Department librarians can provide access to census records, local and regional history books as well as family genealogies, to give context to the period of your house. Online historical Chatham newspapers can be accessed from the library website. These are searchable by names.

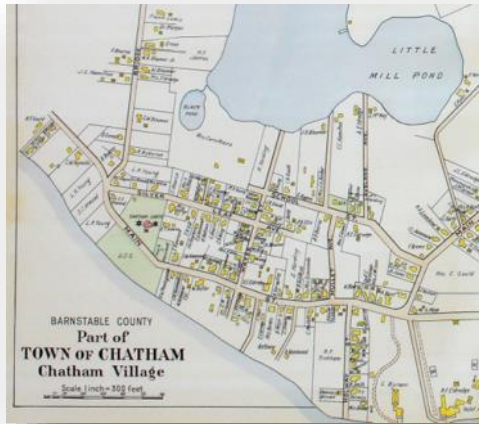
5. *Chatham Historical Commission (CHC)*: <https://www.chatham-ma.gov/historical-commission> provides files organized by address with original notes and research for Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory forms, both completed and yet to be completed.

It is important to note that many of the early building records were destroyed in fires when the Barnstable County Courthouse burned in 1827 and the Chatham Town Hall burned in 1917.

In addition to these many resources, there are also chatrooms, blogs, and discussions online that might be helpful. Popular sites include the *CHAT-M-Room*, <http://www.chatmroomcc.info/> and on Facebook: *If you grew up in Chatham, you remember when* and *Atwood House & Museum / Chatham Historical Society*.

The history of a house informs us about a family's past and also tells us about the events which shape a town. So much can be learned by the history of a house -- who built it, why they built it, and why it was constructed in a certain style. This information then tells us about the population of the town, the main industries, the centers of commerce, the culture of the town and the era. It is important that these house histories are kept alive.

Everyone here at the Chatham Historical Society hopes that this list helps you discover more about your beloved homes and places of interest. Happy searching!



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 a simple 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

What some of our visitors are saying:

From - Chatham, MA - Fascinating History of Chatham

“The Atwood House is a small museum but very much worth a visit. They pack a lot of fascinating information about the history of Chatham into the museum. Some of the exhibits change regularly so it never gets old. The camp from North Beach is a reminder of a time gone by and very interesting to see. I highly recommend a visit to the museum.”

From George M. Clifton Park, New York - Much to See!

“When we have been on the Cape we’ve passed by this place for many years. During a stormy Saturday in late October we finally went in.

We had a tour of the house by a docent which was very informative about the founding of Chatham and the subsequent history. Then there were exhibits in other wings that told of the prohibition era on Cape Cod, rescues of ship wrecked crews, writers who live in or near Chatham. All very interesting.

Another wing has murals created by Alice Stallknecht lining the wall. Really enjoyable. The docent gave us background on the people who were painted. The subject and use of neighbors as models is very reminiscent of Norman Rockwell.

When we’re back in Chatham again we will go back. Exhibits change from time to time so there will be some new part of history to explore.”

Birds that flock together . . .



**Help Grow Our
Family and Give the
Gift of Membership**

For more information visit our website:
www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org/our-community/membership

Chatham Historical Society

Board of Trustees

Officers

Virginia T. Nickerson
Chair

Stuart D. Green
Vice Chair

Linda A. Cebula
Treasurer

Tim Weller
Secretary

Trustees

Dawn Boynton

Stephen J. Burlingame

Richard H. Evans

Nick Harris

Steve Nickerson

Elizabeth Schiller

Angie B. Simonds

Don St. Pierre

Craig S. Vokey

Operations Staff

Danielle R. Jeanloz
Executive Director

Kevin D. Wright
Assistant Director

Caroline Imparato
Administrator

Janet Marjollet
Costumes & Textiles

Gaylene Heppe
Gift Shop Manager

Florence Seldin
Book Shop

Barbara Semple
Children's Book Shop

Robert Ralls
Technology & Information

Don Broderick
Lecture Committee Chair

Don St. Pierre
Building & Grounds

Honorary Trustees

Rob Bergh

Richard W. Costello

Stephen S. Daniel

Donna Drown

Mary Ann Eldred

Spencer Y. Grey

William G. Litchfield

Janet Marjollet

Barbara Matteson

Stephania McClennen

Walter J. Meier

Joshua A. Nickerson, Jr.

David R. Oakley

Winifred Portenoy

Christopher L. Rhinesmith

John L. Whelan



CALENDAR

Sunday Lecture Series 2019

March 17th

Loving Cape Cod: A Conservation View

Speaker: Kristen Andres

April 14th

1919

Speaker: Martin Sandler

May 19th

100th Anniversary of the NC-4 Flight to Chatham

Speaker: Dave Crocker

June 23rd

Chatham's Archaeological Digs

Speaker: Craig Chartier

July 14th

The Apollo Mission

Speaker: Don Broderick

ALL LECTURES BEGIN @ 2:00 pm

Limited seating—Arrive early!

SAVE THE DATE!

Chatham Historical Society's Annual Meeting

August 25, 2019 - 3:00 pm

Check our website for details



EVENTS

April 6, 2019 • 10AM-4PM • FREE ADMISSION!

**Hyannis Youth & Community Center
141 Basset Lane, Hyannis**

The Festival of Museums is just that – a **FREE** one-day celebration of Cape Cod's museums and galleries with events throughout the day. Museums and galleries from all around Cape Cod are offering a fun packed day of surprising and exciting events and activities aimed at igniting your imagination. So, whether you're a mom or dad looking for something to do with the kids, a group of friends looking for a new experience or an art or history enthusiast, come along and join in the fun!

Check out our Booth!

Are you a Cape Cod resident?

Do you enjoy History and Technology?

On **May 11th** from **10am - 4pm**, the *Chatham Marconi Maritime Center* and the *Atwood House & Museum* will once again team up together to celebrate a **FREE** day of Fun, Education and Local History. Show us a Cape Cod driver's license, and your group will be admitted for **FREE** to two of Cape Cod's most exciting places to visit...all located in beautiful Chatham!



Pirates' Day



AUGUST 3, 2019 - 11 AM - 3 PM

Ahoy Matey!!

Make plans to join in the family fun as Pirates' Day returns to the Atwood House & Museum for some swashbuckling adventures.

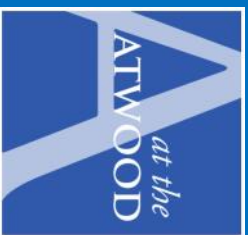
**Check our website for more details
www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org**

CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

347 Stage Harbor Road
PO Box 709
Chatham, MA 02633

OR CURRENT RESIDENT

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



Visit us on the web at www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org