



Newsletter of the Old Village Association of Chatham, Massachusetts

Volume III

Issue II

Summer, 2000

Survey of Village Properties Near Completion

Nancy Yeaw, Chairman of the Historical Commission, and Norm Pacun, in charge of the Old Village Association National Register District application, report that 99% of all Old Village properties have now been surveyed and those requiring architectural analysis have been sent on to our architectural consultant, Candace Jenkins. When her work is complete, the forms will make a final journey to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, where they will be placed in a permanent file. Copies of the forms will be added to the survey books, which are kept locally at the Eldredge Public Library, the Historical Commission and the Chatham Historical Society.

In January, the Association sent out copies of the forms completed in 1990 to property owners for any corrections and/or additions they wished to make. Norm reports that 35 people replied, and he is almost finished revising the forms according to the new information. These, too, will be filed at Massachusetts Historical Commission and will replace the old forms in the survey books. Thank you to all who responded, and a special thank you to Anne Rogers, who is helping us with some information we could not find elsewhere.

Around the Old Village

Update: Bridge Street Intersection

Town officials still have plans to design some sort of sidewalk around the Bridge Street intersection and to extend that walk along Bridge Street to the bridge. The enactment of these ideas are awaiting (1) the completion of a survey of Bridge Street, (2) a formal design and (3) a "taking" of Bridge Street (and possibly some private property) which will probably require Town Meeting vote. Nancy Bak would appreciate hearing from Bridge Street homeowners who have some concern about these plans. The Association will continue to work actively with the homeowners at the Bridge Street intersection.

Wastewater Management Report

At Town Meeting on May 8, Dr. Robert Duncanson announced that Chatham, with the help of volunteers from the FCW Water Watchers, will test all embayments over the next six months in order to provide an accurate analysis of the condition of Chatham's waterways. The decision to expand the testing was prompted by the 1999 results from the Stage Harbor Complex (including Mill and Little Mill Ponds) which showed that the actual condition of the water was much worse than was projected in the model-based consultant's report.

In that these 1999 results indicating that Little Mill Pond is eutrophic (loaded with nitrogen) and Mill Pond itself at great risk, all property owners in the Old Village need to remain alert to new developments. Bob Walsh, who has sat in on the Wastewater Management Citizens Advisory Committee meetings in the absence of David MacAdams, wrote in our last Newsletter of the importance of this issue to the Old Village – in fact, to all of Chatham. Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. If you wish to attend or have questions, you can call Bob for information.

“Village Center” Workshop Zeroes in on Main Street

The Long Range Planning Committee will hold a “Village Centers” workshop on June 20, at 7:00 p.m. at the Annex on George Ryder Road. This session will concentrate on downtown, from the rotary to 400 Main Street. In that the discussion will include the problem of commercial “creep” to the east, the workshop should be of interest to Old Village property owners.

Over the winter, the Old Village Association has taken several hits on the editorial pages of the Chronicle, mainly because of our work to sever the Old Village from the Main Street Reconstruction Project. This criticism even extended to the Selectmen's Advisory Committee. Committee Chairman, David Veach, and I tried in letters to the editor to point out the diverse makeup of the Committee, its efforts to assure the widest possible public participation, and its unanimous vote to recommend the withdrawal of the Old Village from the plan. In the many public meetings and workshops held over several months, members of the Committee had no indication whatsoever that there was any real opposition to their decision from most people in town.

[The Board of Selectmen's decision to sever the Old Village section of Main Street from the project was] "short-sighted, once again showing the Board's penchant to react to a small group of vocal people to the detriment of the town as a whole."

—Cape Cod Chronicle, 10/04/99

The facts of Main Street aside, what is of more concern is the Chronicle's general criticism of town committees and small advocacy groups, such as the Old Village Association. Statements such as those highlighted here encourage divisiveness and create an atmosphere of mistrust – and even prejudice – which has the potential of causing serious harm to the community.

An Ode to the Mass. Highway Department

How sad that highway planners pay no mind
To saving roads that meander and wind,
Among old trees on scenic curves,
Past vistas easy on the nerves,
But rather like to chop and slash,
Straight as missile making hash
Of centuries' growth of elm and ash.
How can their thinking be so rash?

From a poem by Frank Gibson, written to protest Mass. Highway Department's proposals for Old Kings Highway. The complete poem can be accessed in Cape Cod Journal, an e-zine associated with the CapeInternet.

A View from The Old Village

The Old Village Association is an example of democracy in action. We work hard to keep our members informed, enabling them, as educated citizens, to participate in town government. The Association has always encouraged others, particularly neighborhoods, to do the same. We were charter members of the Alliance, a broad-based group of nonprofit organizations, and strong supporters of the Forest Beach neighborhood group's efforts to save the MCI property in South Chatham.

The driving belief behind the Association – that the Old Village is an asset to the town and worth preserving – seems to have wide support. Most people understand that our efforts to protect front lawns and green space are aimed at preserving the historic character of our area – not keeping others out. We are in favor of narrow roads, not to stop cars from driving through, but to keep speeds down. We worked hard to limit – but not ban – parking, so that our residents could access their driveways safely. We reminded officials that Andrew Hardings Lane Beach is not large enough to support the kind of services available at, say, Hardings Beach, but we campaigned for the beach to be open to the public – even though the town owns only a tiny strip of what's left. And, although we continue to be advocates for scenic views and aesthetically pleasing streetscapes, we are also working hard on safety issues, particularly around the Bridge Street corner.

"Projects can be held hostage – or foisted on the rest of the population by a small but vociferous faction . . . Old Village residents will get to keep their quaint, narrow winding streets, but people in West Chatham will still have to hug the side of the road when walking to Hardings Beach."

—Cape Cod Chronicle, 4/20/2000

A neighborhood association is hardly a new, frightening concept. American history is full of examples of individuals and "small groups" with ideas about and dreams for the future of their town, city and country. The Chronicle is right to be worried about the people who never attend meetings, never vote and take no interest in public affairs. However, the newspaper is not serving the interests of the town by goading a segment of the population into action by referring to their status as "second class citizens" or informing them that the Selectmen have no interest in anyone who doesn't live in "exclusive downtown neighborhoods."

What all of us in Chatham should support is the involvement of all citizens in the real issues which will frame the future of our town. Chatham is lucky to have volunteers who are willing to serve on committees and organizations which help explore alternative solutions to problems, gather public opinion, keep an eye on the government, and provide an added level of expertise to the decision-making process. Debating issues and challenging authority has been and is America's most cherished tradition. In our democracy, nobody should be criticized for having ideas – or a vision for the future! In the Old Village "advocacy" is not a dirty word. Nor should it be at the Chronicle.

Carol Pacun

Eliphelet's Lane

by J. S. Stinson

The Slaughterhouse

From 1874 thru 1884 Lothrop L. Barse "pig butcher" was very actively involved in his trade. His two boys Willis S. and Fred W. "took to" their father's business with "great gusto," wanting no one to say that the past season of slaughtering had not been an acceptably fine one. This would mean by the Barse's tally one hundred or more hogs "finely dressed."

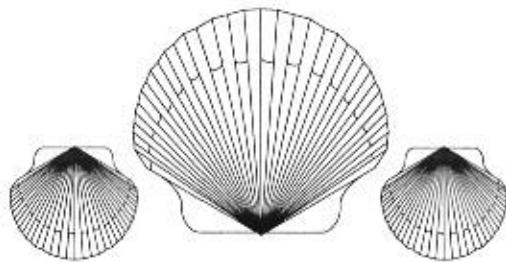
The Barse family had their home at 306 Bridge Street where Lothrop L. carried on a business of tavern keeper and ran a livery stable. But at the end of Eliphelet's Lane, it was an entirely different set-up. Here a story and half building with loft above, open at both ends, with barn-like doors that closed at night, held within itself gigantic hooks embedded into the timbers and running length-wise of the building both sides. We can well imagine the activity during these times of retrieving one's "special hog."

It was the firm belief passed down by many old-time natives – who when among themselves were pretty near to telling the truth as they saw it – that within this present building today resides remnants of the old slaughterhouse structure.



MILL POND, CHATHAM MASS

109122



Those who do not know where Eliphelet's Lane is have not been reading their newsletter! -ed.

The Last Shanty

By December of 1930 only one of the 15 shanties clustered around the Mill Pond remained. The others with leases terminated either were moved or sold back to the owner of this shore front property. A few hearty souls who wanted to keep this one "shucking shanty" for use had it transferred to Mr. Harold S. Gould in January of 1938 and it continued to be used by "the Mill Pond People" until 1970 when Mr. Gould passed away.

One reached the shanty upon returning from a productive day on the water, with not too much walking after pulling up

the dory. Then the wrestling of those copious bags from the bottom of the dory, walking a scant 15 feet in rubber boots to the weathered door with its square windows on either side. The inside of the shanty greeted the returning tenant by appearing slightly dim after

coming in from the water's glare. Clam hoes, quahog rakes, drails, eel spears, net bags, buckets, bailers and assorted knives were scattered about giving the appearance of work about to commence. The floor had sustained the color of black ebony with the hardness that even a sharp knife would not penetrate due to the many doublings of salt water. Culling boards rested on blunt-end 2x4's pushed against the walls. The mingled smells of kerosene, oilskins, shredded seaweed still clinging to the implements and shells denuded of their inhabitants were wafted together with the clean smell of the sea coming in at the open door.

When the scallop season was a good one, women – when their household chores were done – were pretty well matched with their counterparts at these "shucking tables." But, when shellfishing became scarce the men would be willing to "pool their bags of take" to get a better price.

Stories, jokes, past companions remembered and the pride in challenging the sea to release these succulent delicacies was all that was asked in this time of "simple living."

Tall Tales from the Old Village "The Gam" 1970's Style

On Sunday, May 14, the Chatham Historical Society held one of its famous (infamous) Old Village "Gam Sessions." Dan Buckley, Dorothy Tuttle Chambers, Charlotte Forgeron, June James McDonald and Jane Tuttle Powers shared memories from their childhood – with their ancestors observing the whole scene from their place on the mural barn walls. Your Old Village reporters were laughing so hard we took nary a note, but fortunately Ed Maroney from the Chronicle retold some of the stories in the May 18th issue.

However, by the shearest luck, in that same week John Whelan brought over a transcript from a gam session held in the 1970's, tidbits of which we thought you might enjoy.

On the Subject of Ice Cream

Howard James (1909-1998: *Howard's family lived on Holway Street. He was active in Native American affairs.*) We used to go to Calvin Hammond's for ice cream and also on the corner there where the Calico Cat is now. It was run by a family by the name of Hallett and the Little Tavern was opened by Harold Tuttle. And the reason I know so much about that was I used to pack ice cream there twice a day – stuck the chocolate in the box and put chopped ice around the cans and salt in with it . . .

Clint Hammond (1900-1991: *Clint, an oysterman, lived on Lower Main Street. Residents will remember his lively contributions at town meetings.*) Mel Allen sold ice cream at the Hallett House one summer – the orchestra leader. He had a nervous breakdown and he was down in Chatham recovering his health. I remember the ice cream cones used to be 15 cents; you got a double scoop for a quarter. I usually only had a nickel.

Dealing with Wrecks

Howard James Joe Bloomer – "Copper Joe" – used to go around blowing up wrecks. He was quite a guy with dynamite. If a junk wreck would drift around and come ashore in the wrong place, they would go get hold of Joe and he'd go blow it up. Where the fishermen were living down Powder Hole, there on Monomoy Point, there was a wreck after a storm that...was in everyone's way, and so they got hold of Joe to come down and blow it up for them. He came down with a good southwest wind blowing, blew down in his carboat – everything got soaking wet – he finally landed, came stomping up to the shanty there with his rubber boots on and a stick of dynamite on the stove – all set to blow up the wreck. Russell Bearse was down there; and he had a brand new dory Tommy Gill just made for him in the Mill Pond, thought an awful lot of that dory, and Russell says, "Joe, don't you want me to move my dory out of the way?" "No, no," he says, "goin' to blow everything right out of the way."....When he touched 'er off, one of these beams (of the wrecked boat) went through the air like a boomerang, landed right in the middle of Russell's dory and split it right in half.

On Andrew Harding's Store

Clint Hammond (on being shown a picture on a postcard of the front of Andrew Harding's store) Now this is – let's see – Farrington Robbins, Washington Bearse and Andrew Harding. My grandfather isn't recognizable, but he's behind the post. (The others are) Tinkham Gould [Richard Tinkham?] and Seth Hammond. I heard my father tell this story. It seems that these fellows all set outside there on a plank – on these nail kegs, you know. They would chew tobacco and tell stories and there was a fellow there called Smokin' Johnny. I don't know his name. And so just casually one of the fellows said one day, to make conversation – "Johnny, if you had three wishes and could have anything you wanted, what would you wish for?" Well, he thought



he'd want all the tobacco he could smoke and chew, and second, he thought he'd like to have all the rum he could drink and "Wait a minute now," someone says, "you got only one more wish, you gotta be careful." "Well," he said, "I think I'd like to have a little more tobacco!" I sorta like that story because I'd think of this country as a land of plenty – more than enough – and I guess he thought so too.

On Rum Running

*"Down the Oyster River came the I'm Alone
Manned by the captain, Mr. Howard Doane
Howard had the orders, So speed up your
motors..."*

(note: does anyone know the rest of the rhyme? -ed.)

Gunny Eldredge (*Gunny now lives in Florida. His summer camp for children was well known. He served as caretaker for the Old Mill.*) Well, I know where that liquor was stored. There were some cottages down Hardings Beach that no one had occupied and I used to have a trap line and I'd go by there in the morning, and ...one morning I was going by one old cottage and I noticed that the cellar door was ajar. So I opened it up and went in and all these big things of straw (were) on the floor and burlap bags piled up, so I didn't know what it was and I more or less forgot about it. Well, maybe 10 to 12 years ago I was talking with a fellow named Roger Nickerson. He says, "Well, you didn't know I saved your life one time?...you were a little boy and you were going down in the cellar and there was a fellow along with me and he had a 30/30 rifle on you and I told him don't do it."

And One Prediction

George Lake (1910-1984: *George lived on Hallett Lane. He left his property to the Chatham Conservation Foundation.*) One of the things that fascinates me the most about the village is the taking of the beach...when I was a kid - well, we'll say World War I days, 1918 - the northeast point was opposite Chatham Bars Inn. I've seen that beach come all the way down past Morris Island, and it's a cycle and there's going to be a breakthrough - I'd say in the next five years, and the breakthrough's coming by, well, across from Andrew Hardings Lane. (*Unfortunately, George died before he could see his prediction come true.*)

Architect's Corner

Theodore P. (Sam) Streibert

Old Chatham Village Architecture

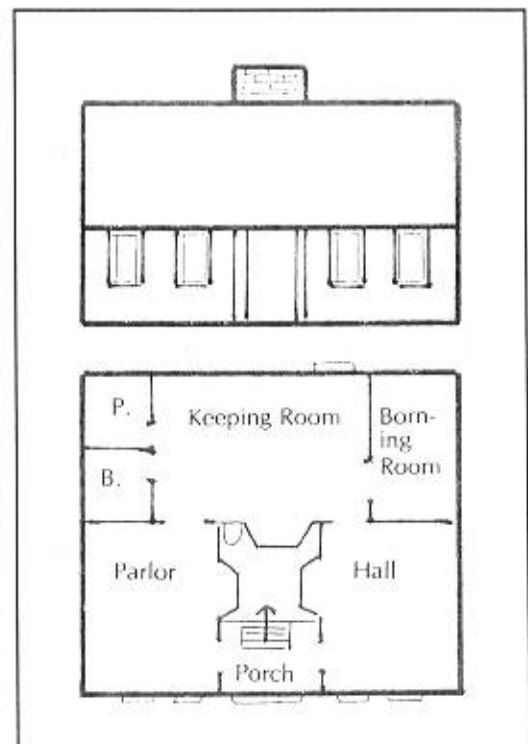
In past articles, I have commented on the practical and aesthetic issues with Village Architecture. The previous article pursued the more practical aspects of old house restoration. It did not cover use. We all live quite differently now than the original owners did. Our habits of living are derived from newer social patterns. All of these pressures can affect the total enjoyment of a restored house.

The formal structure of society required a formal front parlor and dining room, usually located near the house's front entrance. The formal rooms are still useful and should be maintained. Our lifestyles and furnishings have accommodated to include time when a formal occasion is enhanced by being conducted in these rooms. A definite separation existed between these rooms and the kitchen and service areas.

Today the kitchen is the heart of the house. This is the one space where all family and social discourse happens before dinner time, while the meal is in preparation. Everyone likes to be there to discuss the day's events and to share experiences. During the day, the kitchen opens up to the backyard with large windows or doors leading to a deck or terrace.

In an older house, the back of the house was painfully subdivided into a rabbit warren of pantries and separate sitting rooms; even bedrooms and baths. These walls can be removed, and the spaces can be combined to open a compactly designed kitchen to a sitting space, a breakfast area, and the important access to the backyard. This exercise can be very fascinating because every family has its own idea of what this connection should be.

Houses are no longer the collection of boxes they used to be. Now even older homes can be restored so that the spaces flow into each other and the light and the outdoors become part of living within.



Traditional Cape Cod House

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 Elinor Gelsey
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 Chatham, MA 02633

Association Membership on the Rise –

Have You Joined the “In” Crowd?

The Association wants to thank the 122 people who responded to our membership drive and sent in their 2000 dues. Since our dues are so tiny, it seemed silly to spend 33 cents of your donation to send out individual thank you notes, but please know we are grateful for your support.

For those of you who have not yet responded, do consider joining the Association. By sending in your \$5.00 (\$10.00 per couple) you are guaranteed that you will receive all our mailings, and the Association will be guaranteed that we can reach you concerning Old Village matters, including all information on the progress of our National Register District. Your dues can be sent to us at Box 188, Chatham 02633. Thanks so much!

Town Landing Regulations

The Selectmen passed a new set of regulations for non-fishing commercial uses of Chatham’s town landings. When these regulations were in their initial drafts, the Old Village Association wrote the drafters, Harbormaster Stuart Smith and Ted Keon, Director of Coastal Resources, about the town landing at Little Mill Pond. We emphasized that this landing was too small, and the parking too limited, for that landing to have any further commercial activity. We also noted that the dock has always been a favorite fishing spot for children. Fortunately, both men agreed and the regulations ban tour boats from the landing. Now, if we can only guarantee a few more fish for the kids to catch!

★ Save this Date ★
 Old Village Association Annual Meeting
Sunday, August 20, 2000
 More details later

Old Village Association, Inc.

<i>Co-Presidents</i>	Carol Pacun, Robert Walsh	<i>Directors</i>	Sally Daniel	David MacAdam	Theodore Streibert
<i>Vice-President</i>	Elinor Gelsey		Kathleen Earnshaw	Ann O’Connell	Richard Towne
<i>Treasurer</i>	Richard Towne		Elinor Gelsey	Carol Pacun	Robert Walsh
<i>Clerk</i>	Ann O’Connell		Ellen McKinley	Harris Richardson	