



November 2011

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Welcome to our first e-newsletter

I'm writing this because of a bridge. A couple of bridges, actually: one physical and one metaphorical. The physical bridge is the footbridge at Little Mill Pond, the installation of which was spearheaded by George Olmsted. I sent a piece in to the newsletter a couple of years ago, which talked about my family's experiences over a summer, linked by the footbridge. Because of the article, I met Carol Pacun, Nancy Koerner, and a host of others, including Chatham neighbors, and OVA officers and board members, all of whom are passionate about the Old Village. Many have contributed not only their enthusiasm and insight to this inaugural e-newsletter, but also their own writings.

So now we come to the metaphorical, but also very real bridge. In this first e-newsletter, you'll find stories about the past (John Hutchinson's remarkable tale of the Monomoy Branting Club and Nancy Phelps' piece about her courageous ancestor, Barzilla Harding), the present (the 2011 Chatham Preservation Awards) and exciting future events (Mary Ann Gray, Don Edge and Chatham300.org all have much to share with us!). I am grateful as well to John Whelan and Don Freudenheim who have generously doled out memories from their treasure chests (see our Village column). Thanks also to Bob Staake, whose handsome OVA logo continues to grace our newsletter. Most of all, Carol was kind enough to write a truly eloquent "call to arms"; a reminder that the beautiful and rich backdrop we enjoy relies on the history of past Village dwellers, and even more so on us now. I encourage you to contribute your own events and stories to this

Chatham Historical
Society

Chatham 300 Years

National Trust for
Historic Preservation



publication. I hope this newsletter will be our very own Old Village bridge, from past to future, from neighbor to neighbor, from our own unique community to the wider world around us. Welcome!

Jennifer Longworth

Editor

President's Letter

What an exciting moment this is for our Association - a first edition e-mail newsletter! We are so fortunate to have Jennifer Longworth serve as our newly appointed Editor. She has volunteered to bring her wonderful communication skills and marvelous technology ideas to this task. Carol Pacun, who served as our Editor since our first hard-copy newsletter was written in 1997, is working with Jennifer to provide a smooth transition. I am thrilled that Jennifer will share her skills, ideas and exciting energy as we move forward in this high-tech society. We want to preserve the old houses in the Village but we don't want to be outdated in our communications with you members!

~ Nancy Koerner, President

Ave Atque Vale!

After 13 years of editing the Old Village newsletter, I have the pleasure of turning over its publication to Jennifer Longworth, whose enthusiasm, computer savvy, love of our neighborhood - and willingness to work is exactly what the newsletter needs.

Looking back on those many years, I want to thank those Old Villagers who contributed articles-some dealing with serious issues such as zoning, preservation and wastewater, others sharing memories of Old Village life as well as portraits of town characters. (I realized how long I've been wandering around when Don Freudenheim's annual meeting retrospective included a picture of me!) Last but not least, a special thank-you to Sunny Pennypacker of Desktop Images (Red River Print Shop) in Harwichport who designed and produced all our newsletters from day one, as well as an overwhelmingly long list of papers, announcements and booklets. Sunny was a joy to work with, never missed a deadline, and kept me reasonably sane.

Then there were the editorials, my favorite part of the letters because I got to talk about the Village's preservation and to criticize and praise (not so often) the changing scene in Chatham. Right now-perhaps in a last hurrah-I would like to take a moment to remind new and old members alike why we all founded the Association. The primary goal was, of course, to preserve the history and character of the Old Village, a goal which should remain at the top of our list today and tomorrow. Preservation work requires constant vigilance and concern. The formation of the National Register District was not the solution, just a first positive step.

The second goal of the Association was to empower each and everyone in the Old Village to act as advocates for their neighborhood. We have proven that if we as a group stand together to protect our houses, streetscapes and way of life, we can make a difference. Think of what has been accomplished: the formation of an Old Village National Register District, the defeat of an inappropriate (some would say bizarre) Mass Highway effort to widen and speed up traffic on Old Main Street, the town's purchase of the Andrew Hardings Lane beach, and limited parking on our streets (admittedly, a work in progress). We also encouraged local boards and commissions to make their hearings more transparent and user friendly, helped neighbors get plans for building projects in the Old Village, attended zoning hearings, forged a relationship with other

neighborhood associations and organizations through the Chatham Alliance, and have been a vocal force for the protection of the Old Village's and the town's historical assets.

In short, those in power listened when we spoke. But we have to speak up if we want to be heard. Once again, I urge each and every one of you-old hands and newcomers alike-to play an active role in the future of our neighborhood and pay attention to town matters, remembering that our quality of life is also dependent on what happens in our community. Through all these years, I have never doubted that the Old Village is worth our time and effort. So many of you stood up with us over the years! I hope you will continue to do so.

~ Carol



CHATHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Chatham, Massachusetts 02015



Town of Chatham
Historic Business District Commission



The
Chatham
Historical
Society, Inc.

2011 Chatham Preservation Awards



165 Main Street - Isaiah Harding House
Owner: James Doggart

Isaiah Harding owned this Greek Revival style house, built about 1858, until his death in 1895. He was ship's captain of packets and coastal steamers that ran mainly between Chatham and ports up the Sounds. For many years he was underwriter's agent for wrecks on the Chatham coast.



Architect Streibert
Associates, Chatham, MA
Contractor: Rick Roy
Construction, Harwich Ma

The purpose of this restoration project was to remove and replace a kitchen and bedroom. A new kitchen and dining area were added and the existing roof was extended to provide more headroom for a third bedroom.

bedroom.

A new basement was also constructed. Two dormers were added on the north side to introduce more light and air into the two existing bedrooms. A back hall, back stair, and two-story garage were added to the west end. Every effort was taken to make the addition compatible with the existing building, and original material was preserved wherever possible.

~ Nancy Yeaw/Chatham Historical Society

photos courtesy Leonard Sussman, Crow's Pond Architects

Old Village Historic Houses Signs

For Chatham's 2012 Tercentennial, to celebrate history and feature the origins of Old Village houses built before the 1900's, The Chatham Historical Commission has made arrangements to produce individualized signs that give the unique history of each of these properties. The Historical Houses Signs, in three lines, summarize the early history of these pre-1900 buildings:

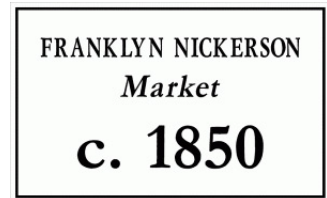
The **name** of the first owner (e.g., Silas Tuttle)

The **function** of the building (e.g., house, store, blacksmith)

The **date** (1780, 1820, etc)

Here is an example:

Capt. ISAIAH HARDING
House
c. 1858



The signs are 7" x 11,"; black lettering on white ½" PVC, with black trim. These signs are made for specific Chatham addresses; they should not be confused with the Historical Commission's attractive 10" circular aluminum blue and gold "Chatham 300th Anniversary Historical Marker" that bears the inscription:

"300TH ANNIVERSARY CHATHAM HONORS THIS EARLY HOME"

The Historic House Sign depicted above is only one type of sign available; building owners are free to put up whatever sign they want, subject to complying with Town ordinances. You are encouraged to mount an historic sign on the exterior of the building, preferably at eye level, on either side of the front door or door facing the street. **No permit is required for Chatham's Tercentennial Commemorative Markers or the Historic Houses Signs.**

Should you choose to do your own research, start with the Eldredge Library's Reference Room. On the bottom shelf of the freestanding bookshelves to your left you will find **Architectural & Historical Survey Forms** - four massive three-ring binders. Each is divided into Chatham geographic areas with streets in alphabetical order and houses numbered sequentially. (Remember that many streets cross into other geographical areas). In Book IV you will find your Old Village house's history. Make a photocopy of this history record. Other sources include the Town Assessors' Online Data Base, the Historical Society's Chatham Old Houses pamphlets, and the Barnstable County Online Registry of Deeds.

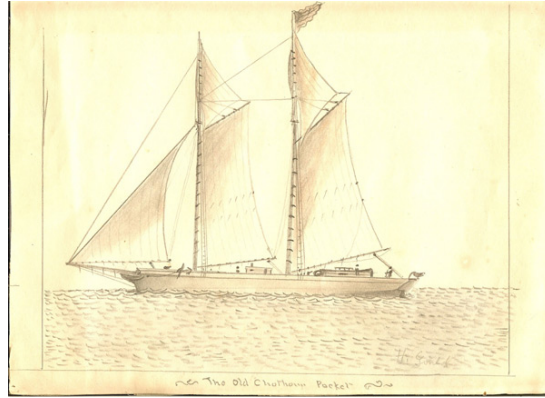
Cautionary note: houses are sometimes named after a well-known inhabitant who may be a few generations removed from the original owner. You will have to choose between history (the original owner) and tradition (the "trademark" name). Reference Librarian Amy Andreasson will assist you if you run into difficulty, and she will photocopy and mail house information to those people not in town. To order an historic house sign, [click here](#). Please address questions to chathamhistoricsigns@gmail.com.

~ Don Edge

A New Water Street Plaque - Recalling a Busy Industry

This summer the OVA voted at its Annual Meeting to support the purchase of a plaque to be placed at the foot of Water Street (on the ocean side) as one of our contributions to the celebration of Chatham's Tercentennial. The plaque will be designed to tell the story of the activities that occurred at that site during the early years of Chatham's development. As most people know, the earliest settlement of Chatham was centered in the Ryder's Cove area where William Nickerson built his home and his extended family joined him. Later on in the 1700's the center of town was near where the old cemeteries are on Queen Anne Road. Late in the 1700's as Chatham turned to the sea to earn its living, the center again found a new home around the Chatham port area and then began to work its way down towards where the James Head Light was located and to what is now referred to as the Old Village.

Water Street, aptly named, is probably the only street in the village to run from one body of water to another, i.e. from the Atlantic shoreline to Mill Pond. Many of the homes along the portion of the street from Main St. to the Mill Pond were built by sea captains or former sea captains whose families have woven their names into the Town's History. These names are as well known as their homes, as many of them remain in much the same condition as they were when first built; however, the history of the portion of the street running from Main Street to the shoreline is less known.



sketch by H. Gould, courtesy Chatham Historical Society

The 1858 map of Chatham Village shows two extensions into the Harbor area indicating the site of two docks at the end of the street. Documents in the Chatham Historical Society Archives also indicate that packet ships used the docks to allow cargos to be brought ashore along with passengers. One of these items is a pencil sketch by Harrison Gould, done for Dr. Minnie Buck of a packet ship that ran from Hardy's wharf to Boston. Another packet ship, the Canton, captained by Barzilla Harding was built in 1826 in Chatham and owned by Reuben, Collins and Enoch Howes, all residents of the Old Village. Another paper indicates that Captain Josiah Hardy owned a store and a stage at the end of Water Street "from which schooners were outfitted to sail to every port in the world." Andrew Harding and his brother also had a store in the same area. That store was later moved to Main Street where it is now a residence. The cause for the removal from its original site and the tearing down of Josiah's store in 1872 was the result of the ocean gradually wearing away the pilings under wharf and store.

In order to make the plaque interesting to the visitors and residents alike, it would be wonderful if those who read this article who know of other stories of the old docks on Water Street would send them to Chatham Historical Society in care of Mary Ann Gray.

~ M. Gray

As a companion to the above, Nancy Phelps offers the following about her above-mentioned ancestor, Barzilla Harding, whose great granddaughter's husband George H. Wilder, originally wrote this. It is interesting to note that from the time of Harding's early eighteenth-century initial runs, Water Street had a vital town landing until 1987.

Barzilla Harding was born in 1788 to Isaac and Tabitha (Eldredge) Harding, whose home was on the knoll overlooking Stage Harbor, with an entrance on Champlain Road. At about the age of twenty, Barzilla started the first line of packet schooners between Chatham and Boston. These provided the only practical direct lines of transportation and communication between the two points [see J. Hutchinson's article for more about the travails of land travel - ed.]. At first, sailings were once a week, and later increased to twice a week. Head winds and adverse tides were often encountered. He carried sea products and farm produce, returning with manufactured goods, foodstuffs and passengers. The trip took an average of three days as he sailed around Provincetown, then across Cape Cod Bay to Boston.

~ N. Phelps

Chatham 2012 Tercentennial - Find Your Way Here

The Celebration Begins - March 9 - 11
 Founder's Weekend - June 8 - 11
 Independence Day - July 4
 Chatham Arts Weekend - September 1 - 3
 Homecoming Weekend - October 19 - 21
 First Night Chatham - December 31

For more information on these and other exciting events, visit
www.chatham300.org



The Monomoy Branting Club

Old Village writer, painter and historian **John Hutchinson** shares some of what he has gathered below in researching his forthcoming book, *Warren Hapwood and the Monomoy Branting Club*. As Hutchinson notes, the story "relates to such diverse topics as the beginning of the tourist industry in Chatham, the beginnings and burgeoning of the wildlife conservation movement in this country, and the remarkable story of the brant goose." We are honored to have this pre-publication piece of history -



Branting Clubhouse

1890 courtesy Chatham Historical Society.

Located on the Atlantic Flyway, Chatham has been from time immemorial a hunter's paradise. Its extensive beaches, with their fresh water ponds and salt marshes, and its numerous sheltered inlets and bays, were an annual stopping-off haven for millions of migrating shore birds and waterfowl. This wondrous cornucopia of game provided sustenance for the area's early settlers and, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, sport for a growing number of men who could afford to avail themselves of the area's bounty. Among the region's earliest sportsmen, the illustrious attorney and avid hunter and angler, Daniel Webster, is known to have enjoyed sport in Chatham during the 1820s. But for all save a few wealthy gentlemen, leisure time was then at a premium, and travel to Cape Cod an uncomfortable proposition at best, and at times an abysmal undertaking.

The story of the Monomoy Branting Club begins in 1861. Its founder was Warren Hapgood, a prosperous young Boston haberdasher. Five years earlier...

[Read On...](#)

~ Village ~

The **Annual Meeting** met August 30th, despite Irene's attempts to crash the party. The membership elected several new officers and directors, as proposed by the Nominating Committee. These now include:

OFFICERS: One-year terms

President: Nancy H. Koerner
 Vice President: Winnie Lear
 Treasurer: Debbie Aikman

Clerk: Wendy Johnson
 Asst. to Treasurer: Mary Olmsted

DIRECTORS: 7 - 11 Directors each with a 3-year term

Term ending 2012: Winnie Lear
 Mary Olmsted
 John Whelan

Term ending 2013: Deborah Aikman
 Nancy Koerner
 David MacAdam
 Nancy Phelps

Term ending 2014: Mary Ann Gray
 Wendy Johnson
 Jennifer Longworth
 Ken Miller



The meeting included a review of the results from the recent OVA survey indicating members' overwhelming interest in having the OVA "keep us current and communicate significant developments that affect the Village, and secondarily to inform, educate and enlighten us about the history of the Old Village". This e-newsletter hopes to provide a big step in this direction!

OVA President **Nancy Koerner** spoke about one of the OVA's tercentennial gifts to the town, in the form of an extended effort to remove invasive species from the end of the ocean side of Water Street, with the participation of Chatham Coastal resources Director, Ted Keon and town entities. This will restore public access to the beach that had existed through the last two centuries until 1987.

After the business meeting, **John Whelan** hosted a fascinating line up of raconteurs and his own tales. Highlights included:



Hawes House in the 1950's
 courtesy Wm. Koerner

Colie Yeaw on the venerable *Chatham Beach and Tennis Club*, including its escape from becoming the site of a Howard Johnson's restaurant thanks to his aunt **Marion Yeaw** (three cheers for preservation!).

Bill Koerner on Hawes House - a bring-your-own electrical equipment establishment loaded with lively stories, and even romance - Bill met his future bride **Nancy (née Husted) Koerner** at the boarding house in the 1940's.



Art Gould chats with a friend
 at the beach
 photo D. Freudenheim

Don Freudenheim's photo reminiscence of the Old Village, along with some of its personalities, including **Art Gould**, whose unofficial "water-taxi service" plied the waters to North Beach. His stunning pictures of Andrew Hardings Lane beach showed houses succumbing to the ocean after the 1987 break.



Houses lose the battle, but perhaps not the war, 1987
 photo D. Freudenheim

John Whelan shared stories about **Ann Kimball Smith** and her sailing lessons for the Netherland's future Queen



Don Harding's
"Better Half"?

Beatrice, and the house owned by **Willie Gould** and **Dan Harding**. As John recalled, "neither would sell their half to the other, they got out a tape measure and cut it in half. Dan Harding was a smart old Cape Codder. Old Cape Codders had lived through a lot of adversity and never wasted anything, so he lashed two dories together and put his half of the shack on top and floated it to the Mill Pond where it stands today, at the foot of Hammond Hill Lane".

Whelan's radio program of American Pie-oldies rock and roll is on WOMR-FM, 92.1 Community Radio for Cape Cod, 6:00am-10:00am, every other Saturday. WOMR has a repeater station at 91.3, which can be heard up-Cape. It also streams worldwide at WOMR.org.

We hope to have more wonderful storytellers at future get-togethers, and invite you to share your own stories of the Old Village - please contact us at newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org.

In Memoriam

We note with great sadness that Old Village neighbors Skip Fleischmann, Brian O'Connell, Charles McClure and Ginny Fitz passed away during the year. We extend our deepest sympathies to their families.

The OVA Board recently appointed board member **Jennifer Longworth** to the post of editor of the Association's new e-newsletter. Her parents, **Joyce and Ruskin Longworth** own the Old Village Schoolhouse at 82 School Street. While Longworth resides in Glen Ridge, NJ, she says, "Chatham remains our family's favorite spot to gather in any season, and I consider it my spiritual home. One of the most appealing aspects of the Old Village is its readiness to welcome while striving to retain its profoundly unique historical and natural character. Much of what I remember from my childhood remains and is enjoyed by our children year-round!" Her career has involved media relations, marketing and preservation. While Longworth is often in Chatham, she depends on both year-round and seasonal residents to contribute events, zoning, preservation and other news to keep us all informed, and welcomes you to contact her at newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org.

The OVA newsletter will have a close relationship with the **OVA website**, and with this in mind, the OVA is looking for someone to help update and spruce up our website. If you're interested to help take the website to a whole new level, please contact Nancy Koerner at director@oldvillagechatham.org.

Membership and Annual Meeting notices will continue to be sent by regular mail.

If you're **new to the neighborhood**, or know of someone who is, please call OVA Vice President Winnie Lear or contact her at 508-945- 7699 or winnie.lear@yahoo.com for an informative **Welcome Packet**.

Please let us know if your [email address has changed](#). Our next newsletter will be published Spring 2012.

Happy Holidays!

Old Village Association
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