

Keeping Our History Alive



Little Shed at the end of Holway Street, with the sea and grass across the horizon - copyright E. Joan Horrocks 2016

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FROM THE EDITOR

This year was a tumultuous one for our country and for the Old Village. Many architectural and topographical changes are apparent, and there are more being played out. We have lots to report on regarding these changes in our neighborhood, including a focus on Chatham's water supply, covered by Debbie Aikman and David MacAdams. We have the latest on Chase Cottages from Joan Horrocks, whose photographs also return to enliven our pages. John Whelan's discovery of a century-plus old directory yields some intriguing differences and similarities in the makeup of our town. Judy and Don of the Chatham Historical Society's Archives Department have provided us with some photographic gems too. Our sincere thanks to you all for broadening our appreciation of the beautiful, fragile and one-of-a-kind Village we care for.

Jennifer Longworth
newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org



View at the Darius Hammond House, c. 1820-1850 ,
copyright E. Joan Horrocks 2016

President's Letter

Greetings Members of the Old Village Association,

Here is an update of the sale of the Eldredge Garage:

The Eldredge family requests that Chatham's voters attend a special town meeting on January 23rd and vote to buy their Main Street property for price of \$2,500,000 for parking or other municipal uses.

This property is in Chatham's Historic District and therefore under the jurisdiction of the HBDC. After two long hearings, The HBDC voted unanimously to allow the Eldredges to demolish the extremely fragile former stable as well as the compressor building. The professional advice from representatives of Cape Cod Commission, structural engineers, and members of the Chatham Historical Commission was that the stable in dangerously poor condition and not a reasonable candidate for preservation. Although the compressor building was probably built mid- century, it was decided to be not architecturally significant. Prior to demolition, salvaging of important materials will take place with oversight from the HBDC.

Phase two of the environmental study is currently taking place as underground tanks are being unearthed and the degree of pollution is being assessed. Results of this study are expected soon. Environmental remediation is a prerequisite for the sale whether the buyer is the town or a private buyer.

It is the hope of the board of directors of the OVA that the voters of Chatham recognize the importance of purchasing this property which could eventually provide much needed parking, possible public bathrooms, and open space in our historic neighborhood.

This is a complicated process and I encourage you to contact me if you have concerns or questions. I wish you and your families a lovely holiday.

Winnie Lear, President
directors@oldvillagechatham.org

Water, Water Not Everywhere

Last summer's drought brought about a huge challenge for Chatham's water supply infrastructure. The main culprit appears to have been a substantial increase in the use of irrigation systems. The filling of pools might also have added to the problem. Perhaps a case could be made that the priority for maintaining expensive infrastructure should be for potable use of water. If something isn't done to minimize certain usages, next summer could bring about an even greater challenge.

Current regulations require registration of irrigation systems which are hooked up to the municipal water supply. Many haven't been registered. Efforts by the Water Department are now underway to get to 100% registration, in order to guarantee an annual safety inspection by the Town. This has resulted in a registration increase from about 300 to over 900 systems.



Water all around, but ... An undated Kelsey-Kennard airview showing intersection of Main Street and Shore Road, Holway Street in foreground, Mill Pond and Oyster Pond in back - courtesy, The Chatham (MA) Historical Society

Selectmen, as Water and Sewer Commissioners, held a public hearing on Tuesday, December 13th for public comment on proposed changes to regulations for irrigation systems on the municipal water supply.

Some highlights:

- Connection to a private well, when feasible
- Backflow prevention device (for safety) mandated
- Separate water meter required to be installed
- Timing and rain sensing devices required-rain sensing set to ¼ inch of rain
- Control systems set for no more than 1 inch per week, enough water to maintain a healthy lawn
- Irrigation heads located so as to avoid watering impervious surfaces
- Penalties for violations

The hearing also included new regulations for swimming pools. Some highlights:

- Filling and/or draining and refilling not allowed- water would be trucked in
- Penalties for violations

Anyone who was unable to attend the hearing is encouraged to send comments to Dr. Robert Duncanson, Natural Resources Department or Thomas Temple, DPW.

—Debbie Aikman

Avis Chase Women's Association Update

The ownership of the Chase Cottages on Water Street in the Old Village, which was bequeathed in 1953 to the Young Women's Christian Association of Philadelphia in the will of Avis Chase for the "benefit, rest and recreation" of members, has been under litigation since 2012. It should be noted that although the organization continues to exist under its original corporate name, it now does business as the Avis Chase Women's Association of Philadelphia in order not to infringe on trademark rights of YWCA USA, the national association with which it is no longer affiliated. For fifty-five years, starting in the summer of 1959 and running continuously through the summer of 2014, women members from Philadelphia and vicinity have taken the opportunity for one or two-week vacations at the Chase Cottages in Chatham exactly as Avis Chase specified (racial and religious restrictions in the will were removed in court).

The Boston YWCA sued to obtain ownership, averring that the Avis Chase Women's Association (ACWA) has not and cannot properly continue to run the charitable program. Named as a backup in the will in case Philadelphia refused to accept the gift of the properties or could not continue the program, the Boston YWCA maintains that they should be granted ownership. A trial was held in November 2014 in the Family and Probate Court in Barnstable, judge Robert Scandurra presiding. Although the judge ruled in favor of Philadelphia on many of the major points, in the end he surprisingly decided to grant ownership to Boston. According to lawyers for ACWA the trial judge made several errors of law. His decision was appealed. A three-judge court of appeals heard oral arguments in the case at the John Adams Court House in Boston on November 14, 2016. A final decision is expected in three to six months.

—Joan Horrocks, Member ACWA Board of Directors

Chatham in 1901

One of the great pleasures of owning an old Cape Cod home is to poke through some of the things that have been in the house for years. My mother and father bought 65 Holway Street in the 50's, and I've had a great time poking around the house that had been the Holway Family home since it was built. A contractor recently found the date 1815 carved into a crosstie in the foundation. Thomas Holway and his family lived there for over 125 years.

Today I am writing about an artifact I found in the house - a 1901 Directory for Harwich, Dennis and Chatham published by A. E. Foss & Co. of Hopkinton, Ma. There's a lot of great information for a student of Chatham history in this book. In 1901, the Cape was quite different from today, though the town of Barnstable was the Cape's largest, just as today. Barnstable's population was 4,364, barely enough to beat out Provincetown as the Cape's most populous town. Provincetown totaled 4,247 in 1901 compared with only 2,942 in 2010. In 1901, Provincetown was the wealthiest town on Cape Cod and one of the wealthiest in the country. Even Chathamport had a post office. I think it survived into the 1960's and maybe into the 1970's. Of course, there were five Post Masters-three Nickersons and one Eldredge among them.

Lots of Chatham's roads had different names, with the main exceptions being roads in The Old Village. Main Street, School Street, Water Street, Silverleaf Avenue, Holway Street and Bridge Street were exactly as you find them today. Some notable differences were that Shore Road was called The Boulevard, as well it should be. Stage Harbor Road, where lots of Atwoods lived, was Atwood Street. Chatham Bars Avenue was called Ocean Street, and there are lots more.



End of Holway Street where Donald Eldredge and his father would drive their 1932 Ford Station Wagon and ride the open beach - courtesy, The Chatham (MA) Historical Society

Chatham had only four churches listed: the Congregational, the Methodist, the Universalist and the South Chatham Church. The Universalist Church was then where the Episcopal Church stands today. Prominent among the Clubs and Societies was The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which met every Wednesday night at the Methodist Church. Chatham was a very sober place. Not much fun allowed in those days. It is no wonder that young Chatham boys could not wait to go to sea.

The names in the directory are exactly what you would expect. 80 Nickersons and 87 Eldredges with lots of Bassetts, Bearses, Cahoons. Crowells, Doanes, Goulds, Hammonds, Hardings, Hardys, Kendricks, Rogers, Ryders, Smalls and Taylors. No Irish names, no Italian names, no German names, no Scandinavian names, in fact, no other foreign names at all. A complete lack of diversity and most everyone was related in some way to everyone else.

Chatham had lots of seamen, lots of fishermen, lots of small merchants and some farmers. A very small number of boarding houses: tourism really got going after motorcars became popular around 1910. Plenty of fish, so everyone had food. Boys seldom finished high school. Lots of men lived alone in shacks at the shore.

Overall, Chatham was a very different town from what we know today. It was and continues to be a town you had to want to get to, to find. The highway went right on by and a traveler might miss Chatham altogether. I've decided that being off the highway was good then and continues to be good today for the town we call home.

—John Whelan

Alliance Report 2016

The Chatham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation is a meta-committee of local non-profits concerned with conservation and preservation. The OVA is a founding member.

The year 2016 was an active and productive one for the Alliance. Much of the focus and energy of the Alliance during 2016 went into the planning and promotion of a Town-wide forum late in April on Chatham's drinking water. The Alliance forum planners were fortunate in obtaining as speaker Dr. Scott Horsely, principal of the Horsely and Witten Group, and an internationally known authority on the subject of fresh water aquifers and public policy relating to their use. The questions regarding Chatham's drinking water included:

Where does the water come from?

How can we protect it?

Will there be enough?

This forum marked the beginning an on-going discussion of Chatham's drinking water. Chatham now exceeds its State permitted water withdrawal rate. While we were assured there is, and will continue to be, plenty of drinking water in our sole source aquifer, steadily increasing demand with development in Chatham will bring increasing challenges in the extraction and distribution of water of drinking quality in sufficient quantities to meet demand. The well documented sea level rise, of serious concern for other reasons, impacts only the margins of the aquifer and not where our drinking water is pumped from. Our fresh water aquifer sits atop salt water, so it's possible that sufficient sea level rise could result in a rise in fresh water pond levels and run off, decreasing slightly the depth of the top layer fresh water in our aquifer. The forum was well attended by about 100 local residents.



End of Morris Island - copyright E. Joan Horrocks 2016

During the winter and early spring Alliance programs were designed to lead up to the drinking water forum. Topics included the proposed Conservancy and Flood Plain Districts zoning bylaw amendments to be voted on at the May 2016 Town Meeting, the Friends of Chatham Waterway's Pond Study and Lawn Fertilizer Study, a talk on salt marsh ecology, including a bit on coastal processes and sea level rise, and their effects on salt marsh ecology. The Cape Cod Commission's fascinating, and slightly frightening interactive sea level rise website was briefly described.

Meetings that followed the drinking water forum included the Alliance's ever-popular selectmen candidate's forum early in May, focusing the candidates' attention on issues of preservation and conservation. Candidates Amanda Love and James "Buck" Upson were present, but selectman Jeff Dykens, up for re-election, was unable to attend. Fall meetings have been free ranging, centering more on historic preservation than on conservation. Specific topics of discussion have included passing family homes down through the generations, the increasing prevalence of over-size seasonal houses, and the lack of teeth in Chatham's master plan. Another town-wide forum is in the earliest planning stages for the spring of 2017. Although the Alliance's by-laws call for advocacy on behalf of preservation and conservation, the reality of the matter is that in an environment in which the cancerous growth of Brand

Chatham rules supreme, serious talk of advocacy for anything that might inhibit the lining of private pockets is quickly squashed by the powers that be. Thus the Alliance is most effective in achieving its goals through non-adversarial programs focused upon educating the citizenry on matters of preservation and conservation, and in facilitating communication both among citizens, and between citizens and the selectmen.

—David MacAdam
OVA Representative to the Alliance

Old Village Association Officers 2016-2017

directors@oldvillagechatham.org

Officers: One-year terms

President:	Winnie Lear
Vice President:	Debbie Aikman
Treasurer:	Nancy Koerner
Clerk:	Bill Horrocks

Directors: 7-11, each with a three-year term

Term ending 2017	Mary Ann Gray
	Nancy Phelps
	Jennifer Longworth
	Lisa Edge
Term ending 2018	Winnie Lear
	Carol Pacun
	Bill Horrocks

Term ending 2019

Debbie Aikman
Nancy Koerner
David MacAdam
Lisa Green

Appointed

Corresponding Secretary: Lisa Edge

~ Village News ~

Events in the Village and Close By

Time to renew your membership! The annual renewal forms have been mailed out. We appreciate your being a "paid-up" member as it helps with the cost of stationery and supplies, accountant's fee, postage, printing, Constant Contact (our newsletter internet provider) and expenses of projects such as the annual meeting, Kids for Food and OVA at the Atwood House. Hopefully you realize our Newsletter Editor and Board of Directors serve for no fee! A kind word to any of them is always appreciated.

Most importantly, your dues indicate your **commitment to the Association's purpose**: "To preserve and protect the historic nature and architectural beauty and integrity of the old Village area of Chatham". This is becoming more and more of a challenge. Your support and assistance is needed and welcomed. If you did not receive a membership form please contact us at directors@oldvillagechatham.org.

Thank you,
Nancy Koerner and Nancy Phelps
Membership Co-Chairs

Oyster season this time is October through April. Chatham Shellfish Department purchases seed, then upwells for a couple of years below HarborMaster's office, grows them out in Stage Harbor to legal size then distributes them for harvesting in waters in or near The Old Village.

The most popular area is at the causeway on Morris Island Road as it approaches Stage and Morris Islands. In The Old Village there are distributions at head of Little Mill Pond near Pease Boat Works.

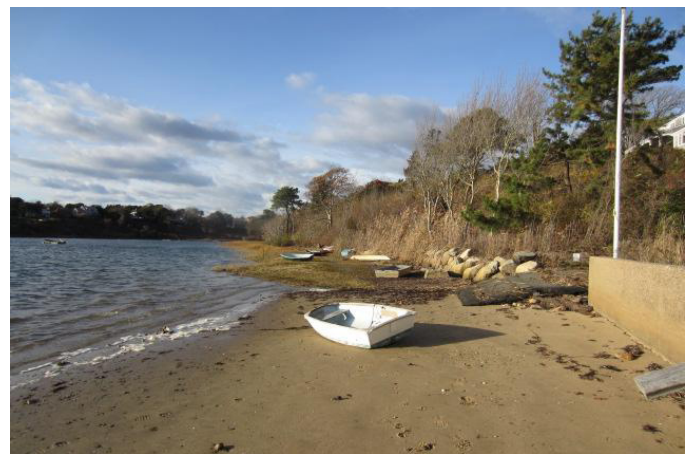
—George Olmsted



Clams, by George!
photo courtesy George Olmsted



Please be aware: skiffs remaining on the beach are now subject to removal by the Harbormaster Department



Doorway to Captain Jones' House on Main Street, copyright E. Joan Horrocks 2016

Atwood House Events - for more information, visit Chatham Historical Society:

Enjoy First Night Chatham at the Atwood House Museum as they ring in the new year - the Museum is a Button-Free venue for First Night! Don't miss the final viewing for 2016 of the model train fest designed by Ryder Martin. Visit the other galleries and plan on shopping in the Museum Gift Shop.

Chatham Alliance For Preservation and Conservation meetings are held and open to everyone, and usually from 3:30-5:00 pm, the **first Thursday of the month, September - June** (except January) at the Community Center. There is usually a speaker/lecture on a topic relevant to conservation and preservation in Chatham at each meeting. Once or twice a year the Alliance also hosts forum/panel discussions on conservation and preservation topics of broad current interest. For more information email David MacAdam.

Historical Signs for Pre-1914 Houses - Eligibility for Chatham Historic House Signs has been revised by the Historical Commission, and now houses **100 years or older** are eligible for the white rectangular signs that, in three lines, summarize the early history of pre-1915 buildings, e.g.

The name of the first owner	FRANKLYN NICKERSON
The function of the building	Market
The date	c. 1850

Over 670 Chatham houses are eligible for these signs, 107 are in the Old Village. The information and application form are available on the Town web site under Historical Commission. For street designations in the Old Village visit our National Register District webpage. Questions? Email housesignquery@gmail.com.

Help us conserve resources and funds! To subscribe to our e-newsletters please email newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org. Your email address will be used only for OVA communications. We welcome new contributors as well!



Looking Up - copyright E. Joan Horrocks, 2016

Happy Holidays!
Old Village Association
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