

## Keeping Our History Alive



Nature's fireworks © EJH 2021

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KIDS FOR FOOD 10 YEARS AND GOING STRONG

## FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of our newsletter is very much a snapshot of our association's mission and current activities. It's replete with stories of homes and businesses, and images of cherished architecture and landscapes that are both iconic and in flux.

A big shout out to our gifted contributors: Tracy Foley, Lisa Green, Joan Horrocks, David MacAdam, Carol Pacun and John Whelan; they've helped create a vibrant newsletter representative of our community. A special thanks also to Judy Cuniff, archivist at the Chatham Historical Society for helping us source the marvelous images of Hawes House.

Kids For Food Drive details will be headed your way soon - we are delighted that donations can now be made online on our donations/membership page!

Wishing you a joyful summer,  
Jennifer Longworth  
[newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org](mailto:newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org)

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Fellow Villagers,

After a most difficult and challenging year, Chatham is bustling with more visitors on Main Street than I can remember. We welcome the return of our shops, restaurants and museums, as well as our beloved Eldredge Library and Orpheum Theater. We miss access to delicious fare at Cape Abilities but appreciate their weekly deliveries and are hopeful for the shop's eventual return to Chatham. The Avis Chase properties are closed for the second year but we will be welcoming our Philadelphia friends as soon as safely possible.

I hope you are able to join us August 23rd for the Annual Meeting and wish you a safe and fun-filled summer.

Warmly,

Winnie Lear, President

[directors@oldvillagechatham.org](mailto:directors@oldvillagechatham.org)



Photograph of the front of Hawes House 1939 - courtesy Chatham Historical Society

## **The Hawes House - One Of The Early Inns Of Chatham**

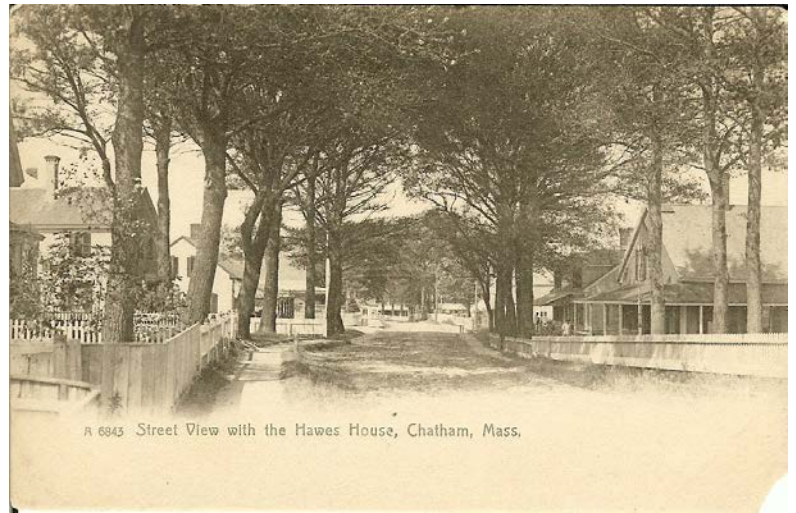
When we think of longstanding Chatham Inns, the one that comes to mind first is most likely the Chatham Bars Inn, but twenty-two years before its founding, another inn on the water began welcoming guests in our own community.

In 1815 the Old Village was a thriving commercial fishing village, with the Andrew Harding store and a commercial wharf at the end of Water Street. Although it began as a farming community by this time the war of 1812 was over and we were taking advantage of the shoreline with boatyards, salt works and flake yards.

It was also around this time that the first owners of the Hawes House purchased the home at the southeast corner of Water and Main Streets. Collins Howes, Sr. bought the home for his wife Rhoda (Bangs). The charming, shingled home with its Cape style architecture and front porch was located just down the street from the commercial wharf that Rhoda's father and brothers operated, and within sight of the twin lights. Collins and Rhoda went on to raise ten children and stayed in the house at 114 Main Street until their respective deaths in 1871 and 1892.



Zenas Hawes House Main Street, Chatham early 1900's  
courtesy Chatham Historical Society



Postcard - Street view with the Hawes House  
courtesy Chatham Historical Society

It was at this time, in 1892, that Rhoda's granddaughter, Selena (Howes) Hawes and her husband Zenas Hawes took ownership of the home and decided to run it as a summer boarding house. Zenas had a long career on the sea. As a sailor he was used to being at sea for long periods. He was also recognized for his bravery and awarded a congressional medal of honor when he and nine other men participated in the rescue of the schooner *Grecian*, which had been stranded on the outer bar. With his days at sea behind him Zenas settled into running the boarding house which would become the Hawes House Inn. Guests began to travel to the Inn from as far away as Boston and New York. With the introduction of the railroad in Chatham in 1887 guests no longer had to rely on travel by boat or stagecoach, and the Hawes House began to welcome more guests.

By 1925, their daughter Eva and her husband Isaac Freeman Howes took over the responsibilities of running the inn, later leaving the business to their son Freeman and his wife Lucille, keeping the Hawes House in the same family for over 150 years. As time went, on many changes to the interior and exterior of the Inn took place to accommodate the growing list of guests. In the 1950's they expanded the house to allow for boarding more guests and to create more room for dining and meal preparation. Two additional buildings were also built on Water Street with a middle building that contained additional rooms to rent. The third building, called the Cottage, had small rooms but boasted ocean views which made them more valuable.





Postcard  
courtesy Chatham Historical Society



Postcard of Hawes House Annex  
courtesy Chatham Historical Society

Freeman and Lucille's daughter Linda Salvi has very fond memories of her childhood time spent living at the Hawes House. Many guests and families came every year for a month or two. Linda recalls how she "always loved making new friends and was so happy when they arrived. They would be like one big family and always booked their room ahead for the next year including their seat at the table." Food was cooked in the kitchen located in the cellar and was transported upstairs by a dumbwaiter. Linda remembers one occasion when Freeman sent a cup of clam chowder up on the dumbwaiter for a lunch guest, but when it arrived they yelled down to him "you forgot the clams!" Dinner was served closer to lunchtime and if you ordered meat, you received one serving. If you ordered fish, you could have as many servings as you wanted because it was so plentiful. Linda is still approached by people today sharing stories of what a special place it was.



Photograph "From Water's Edge August 26, 1939"  
courtesy Chatham Historical Society



Blizzard of January 2005  
courtesy Chatham Historical Society

If you were a guest at the Hawes House, you too are no doubt filled with memories of delicious meals of fresh fish and endless desserts like their Indian pudding or Floating Island. Maybe you were there the summer the Hawes House got one of the first telephones in the village, or you might remember sitting on one of the rocking chairs on the front porch enjoying a conversation with other guests. The Hawes House was purchased in the 1970's and became a private home, but as much as things change they also stay the same. The expansive, beautiful home now

accommodates family, not paying guests; the front porch is still used for entertaining and conversation, and the although the wharf is gone, the water and superb views remain.

~ Tracy Foley



© EJH 2020

## Just Where Does The Old Village Start And End?

I served on the Chatham Historical Commission way back in the 1970's. Our fearless leader at that time was Clair Baisly. Clair was certainly qualified to lead us. Maybe she was overqualified, in that she had a graduate degree in architecture from Boston University and had been a student of Cape Cod homes and architecture most of her life. The concept of an Historical Commission was new to Chatham. The start of it really coincided with the arrival of folks who were not happy with our traditional Chatham houses. They did like the traditional homes enough to buy them, but then as owners suddenly wanted to tear them down and build new larger homes. The Town of Chatham reacted by forming an Historical Commission to deal with the demolition requests. Our job was to encourage the homeowners to learn to live with their homes rather than tear them down. We had some success and some failures, and the town recognized it needed a demolition delay which was instituted quite a few years later. Clair wrote a book on Cape Cod Architecture and published it in 1989. It is available at the Eldredge Public Library.





Snow House with July 4th regalia - courtesy D. MacAdam

The Historical Commission also tried to compile a historical record of what life had been like in the early part of the 20th century. Clair Baisly organized a gam of older Village residents to talk about their memories. One of my treasures, and I have a lot of old Chatham treasures, is a grainy transcript of one of those gams. One of the first questions posed was about the borders of the Village. Many of the participants had lived in the Village and most had gone to the Village School, and yet, there was little agreement. Some thought the Village started at Homestead Lane, while others had the Village extend a ways down Bridge Street. Nearly all included the Marcellus Eldredge Estate, which had become Dalecourt Road [Now Watch Hill Way]. I have heard people exclude Watch Hill Way from the Old Village in recent descriptions.



Peeking over the peak at the Marcellus Eldredge estate - © EJH 2021

Ned Meany, the former headmaster of Northfield Mt. Hermon who lived on Sunset Lane was one of the clearer speakers. Remember that about half the participants were 85 and up, and they may have spoken coherently, but the transcript missed a lot of their words. Ned concluded that the Village was less defined by specific borders or streets, and more by the closeness of houses and their historic significance. It was more defined by a feeling than specific parameters. I liked his conclusion then and I like it now.

~ John Whelan



The Porches with her summer finery © EJH 2021

## Pandemic and the Old Village

Over a year ago the COVID-19 pandemic began to rage through the world with a destructive, deadly violence, creating terror, horrendous illness, and death. It wasn't long afterward that Old Village homeowners realized that the Village, with its nearly empty streets, stretches of ocean and windblown sand perhaps offered the safest possible haven for their families. Locals had always divided the year very simply... summer always busy with vacationing families, and winters, when they were left alone. The pandemic upended that picture, as some summer families (thanks to Zoom and virtual learning), settled in with those year-rounders who stayed put.



The Old Village, turning a corner - courtesy D. MacAdam



The problem was that no one was absolutely certain who was where, when or with whom. Get togethers, meetings (a favorite of winter residents!), visits to the library, many stores and most restaurants were not allowed. Walking, a favorite Old Village activity, did not help. Masks made identification almost impossible. Who, exactly, was that person you just passed? On summer walks pleasant greetings and detailed comments on the weather have always been the norm, except, perhaps, for people devoted to their phones and /or New Yorkers, whose parents had taught them never to look a stranger in the eye. However, walkers during the pandemic, even on deserted streets, seemed to race by, careful to double Dr. Fauci's six-foot distancing goal. The result? Just lately, to my embarrassment, I have discovered that friends I thought had left in October had been here all winter.



Andrew Hardings Lane Beach in the mid 1960's - courtesy D. MacAdam



Pandemic? What Pandemic? Andrew Hardings Lane Beach July 2020  
courtesy D. MacAdam

I have no idea whether there were fewer or more people in the Old Village over the past 15 months. However, I can almost guarantee there were more dogs (who did not quarantine) and trucks. During this period, two substantial houses were being built in the Old Village, including in one case, a soundproof office and special electrical equipment. Whatever unique plans and landscaping were required, the process resulted in a long, noisy and invasive line of trucks, front loaders, forklifts, tractors, 18 wheelers, plus the usual business vehicles, carrying wood, rocks, stones, granite, dirt and equipment I had never seen before outside the Big Dig. The comings and goings never stopped – every day (from about 7am to 4pm) for months. This migration was especially bothersome because Old Village houses and driveways are close to narrow streets which are difficult to negotiate in normal times. Parking can be a problem. One day, we counted twenty vehicles at the end of the road with almost no opportunity for anyone to turn around.



Big activity in the neighborhood - courtesy D. MacAdam



I have been thinking about these troublesome times, especially since the worst may be over, and - fingers crossed - we can rediscover the joys of living in a very special town. An unanswered question is whether our pandemic experience will result in unexpected (and perhaps unwelcome) changes. Time will tell. Last week, I walked down Andrew Hardings Lane to a deserted beach. It was a typical Chatham day, a glowing sun on the sand with stretches of wafting fog over north beach. I could barely see a fishing boat headed south, but the waves splashing on the shore assured me it had passed. I walked along the sand and through the tiny passageway on to Holway Street. The scene was chaotic. About a half dozen men in bright yellow shirts were brushing layers of dirt off the street. Rather like fog, the dust was almost blinding as it swirled around in the sky above. I decided not to retreat to the beach but to walk ahead to Main Street. Suddenly, one of the men shouted "Stop. Get back." The men dutifully pulled over to the edge of the road, allowing me to pass – rather like Queen Elizabeth checking the troops. We all smiled at each other. Only in the Old Village! But close by a massive truck was sitting on Main Street, almost blocking my path and clogging traffic. I headed for home – and made sure to say hello to a passerby. That's what we do.

One walk. The Old Village is here, different but the same. I wonder now if, just possibly, the masses of construction vehicles we have seen all winter mean that more young people will build, add on or enhance their summer homes so they can live here all year around. Doubtful... but still. Whatever changes occur and at what price, there is one vehicle from the past that everyone in the Old Village would like to see in the years to come: a school bus.

~ Carol Pacun



## Kids For Food - The Backstory On The Old Village's Most Popular Family Event

The **Chatham Food Pantry** has been the beneficiary of the Old Village Association's neighborhood **Kids For Food** drive for what will be ten years this August. It is certainly a worthy nonprofit, but many of our new members and neighbors may be wondering, how did this begin?

Well, I am proud to tell you the story behind Kids For Food. Nancy and Bill Koerner built their cottage at 99 School Street shortly after they married in the late fifties. They used it for their annual two-week summer vacations with extended family for many summers while living and working north of Boston. Nancy describes a local mobile blood drive she spearheaded before she retired as one of her many community activities, and the precursor to **Kids For Food**. When she retired and eventually moved to Chatham full time, her involvement in the community kept her busier than ever, which continues to this day.

When Chatham announced plans for their 300-year celebration, Nancy had the idea to launch the OVA's first Kids For Food Drive as a small gift to the community from the OVA. For the first few years the Food Drive was organized around the Fourth of July, when Nancy's extended family would be at the cottage and there would be plenty of children to help, and to educate and inspire about how to give back.



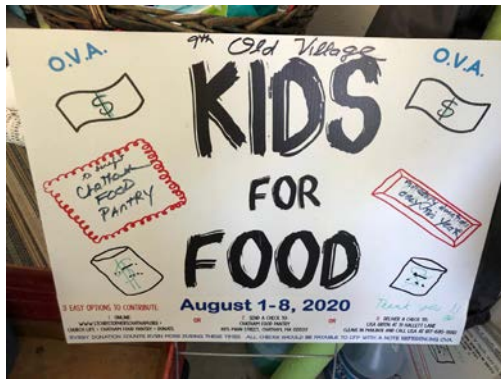
Nancy and Bill Koerner - courtesy Koerner family



Bill Koerner hard at work - courtesy L. Green



A few years after I moved to the Village, Nancy asked me to be one of her helpers for the **Food Drive**. During my first year of involvement, Nancy invited my son Murray and me over to make signs. He was a budding teen at the time and not actually a “kid” but the lawn signs we made that summer are still the blueprint for the ones we continue to use. Bill and Nancy had a huge tent that was set up at the Koerner headquarters and teams of adults and children canvassed the entire Village with wagons and carts to collect cans, food and monetary donations. All were brought back to the tent and Bill made sure that each food item had not expired. In later years, he’s used a magnifier. Our core group of volunteers and team leaders were always so energetic and eager to help. Nancy provided water and snacks especially for our youngest volunteers along with some bright yellow t-shirts with a soup can motif. She later added a raffle, all the while explaining to eager faces how helpful their volunteerism meant to many families in need in Chatham. At the end of the day, we would load up Nancy’s red minivan and Nancy and Bill would personally deliver the boxes and donations to Ted and Martha Miller at Chatham Food Pantry. They were always gracious and appreciative.



I’ve continued to work with Nancy and we’ve refined the process year after year. Nancy has been such an inspiration to me. I look forward to our conversations and the many ideas that are precipitated. Last year, we were forced to drastically change our format, but to the credit of our Village it was our biggest year for monetary donations.

This year CFP is still unable to collect food donations so we will again collect monetary donations. We are making it easier to donate directly through our website. We are thankful to be here to continue this effort and look forward to being able to expand the drive for years to come. We encourage any new families to contact us with suggestions or questions. And if you see Nancy and Bill bombing around in their new red SUV make sure to toot!

~ Lisa Green



Don and Old Village friends, August 2014  
courtesy Alan Pollock, Cape Cod Chronicle

## **In Memoriam**

### **Donald James Edge (1932-2021)**

Don Edge was a zealous and indefatigable advocate for special attributes of our Old Village. He was often seen around the neighborhood and at OV events, such as the annual wine and cheese gathering (so graciously orchestrated by his wife Lisa), with a story to excitedly share about the past and a project for the future. In addition to promoting the Chatham Historic House Signs, one of his most well-known missions was a corrected attribution of Eliphamet's Lane to the Eliphalets of the Hamilton family, patriots of the 18th and early 19th centuries. As Don noted in a letter to the Chronicle:

“Chatham should have a sense of its own history and a due respect for the past and heed the words on the Pioneers of Chatham Monument: ‘He who has no feeling of Veneration for his predecessors should expect none from those who follow him.’”

For Don, it was essential to properly acknowledge these Chatham figures, and he finally triumphed in gaining this recognition in 2019 with the addition of the “Named for Eliphalet Hamilton” placard under the Eliphamet's Lane sign at the corner of School Street.

Don's dedication and eloquence were matched by his deeds – we have much to thank him for. His spirit and love for our historic corner of Chatham will always be part of the Old Village legacy.

The Board of Directors



# Old Village Association Officers 2020-2021

President: Winnie Lear  
Vice President: Debbie Aikman  
Treasurer: Nancy Koerner  
Clerk: Carol Pacun

## Term ending 2021

Winnie Lear  
Carol Pacun  
Bill Horrocks

## Term ending 2022

Debbie Aikman  
Nancy Koerner  
David MacAdam  
Lisa Green

## Term ending 2023

Nancy Phelps  
Jennifer Longworth  
Lisa Edge  
Linda Howes Salvi

## Village News



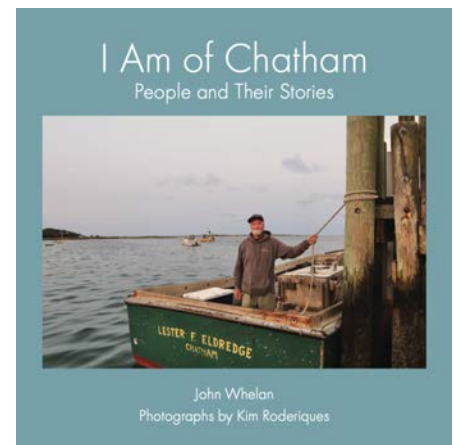
The Old Village Annual Meeting will be held **Monday, August 23rd, 5:30 pm** at the Beach and Tennis Club. Dorothy Bassett, Executive Director of the Chatham Conservation Foundation, will be our speaker.

## CALLING ALL AUTHORS AND FILMMAKERS

Have you or has someone you know published a book or produced a film about the Old Village, Chatham or Cape Cod?

Please send us title(s), author/director name, publisher and date, and where to find the book/film locally and online, plus an image.

We'll include this on our website's new library page!



*I Am of Chatham*

John Whelan and Kim Rodriques, June 2021, Sockpirate Publishing



Nancy Phelps, OVA Board member and descendant of Marcellus Eldredge, proudly performed the ribbon-cutting at the 125th anniversary of the Eldredge Public Library on Sunday July 11!

While meetings and activities of the Chatham Alliance For Preservation and Conservation are suspended, you can email David MacAdam, OVA representative, for updates/information.

**FRANKLYN NICKERSON**  
*Market*  
**c. 1850**

### Chatham Historic House Signs

Houses 100 years or older are eligible for white rectangular signs that summarize the early history of the building, e.g.

Name of first owner -  
FRANKLYN NICKERSON  
Function of 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 are available on the Town web site. For street designations in the Old Village visit our webpage.

### STAY CONNECTED!

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**WISHING YOU A SAFE AND HAPPY SUMMER!**

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