

## Keeping Our History Alive



photo © EJH 2025

### IN THIS ISSUE

SHARING STORIES ~ 223 MAIN STREET AND 21 HAMMOND LANE  
THE COSTS OF LIVING IN CHATHAM ~ CLAIR BAISLY'S MILLPOND COPPER SHOP

### FROM THE EDITOR

We are so grateful to Joseph DeRosa and Janet Killmon, who answered the call for personal stories about their homes - we hope this will lead to many more of you sharing your own home history with us!

Many thanks to John Whelan and Debbie Aikman for their contributions and to Elizabeth Stryjewski for her kind assistance in editing and proofreading the news. Joan Horrocks' array of lovely and intimate neighborhood pictures capture our community at its summertime best.

Best wishes for a wonderful summer,

Jennifer Longworth  
[newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org](mailto:newsletter@oldvillagechatham.org)



# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings!

We in the Old Village welcome our many neighbors who have arrived for what I hope is a wonderful summer season.

You will soon receive a card outlining three upcoming member events: Wine, Cheese and Conversation at the Porches July 21, Lawn Party August 4, and our Annual Meeting August 18 at Chatham Beach and Tennis Club.

I encourage you to join us and look forward to seeing you soon. Enjoy this beautiful weather.

Warmly,

Winnie Lear, President  
[directors@oldvillagechatham.org](mailto:directors@oldvillagechatham.org)



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# 223 Main Street

~ Joseph DeRosa

I fell in love with my house over 25 years ago, a Mansard Victorian with Italianate touches - teardrops hanging beneath curlicue corbels under the roof line. The interior had horsehair plaster walls and an ornate dining room tin ceiling. Its history fascinated me. At the Registry of Deeds, I traced deeds back to the first 1850 owners, Captain Everett and Mrs. Mercie Hammond Patterson. The rings of a huge Norwegian pine tree that came down in a hurricane revealed that it was just a seedling that year. Mercie lived there most of her life. In the early 1900s, Harold Brown, the Chatham school bus driver, operated a bicycle shop in the 100 foot long shed out back. A Chatham artist and schoolteacher had raised her family there before I bought it.



the steep, creepy staircase



photos courtesy the author

The house had good bones but was somewhat in disrepair. With the help of a talented architect and a local builder, I spent about 10 years renovating it, preserving its old-world charm, especially a steep, creepy back stairway. A skilled woodworking artist from New Hampshire worked a whole summer to bring the exterior back to its 19th century majesty. As a tribute, I wrote a (soon-to-be-published) ghostly novel called *The House on Main Street*. I added an Afterword tracing the property from the time of the Monomoit Indians and Samuel De Champlain to the present.



Loneragan Woodworking  
contemplating the 1998 restoration



The entrance as it looks now

## 21 Hammond Lane

~ Janet Killmon

I purchased my home at 21 Hammond Lane in 2016 and completely renovated it in 2020.



Renovation in progress at left showing original green likely from the home's time as a Monomoy camp or cabin

photos courtesy the author



Roof reconstruction



Master bedroom fits neatly under the roof

As part of the renovation my architect researched to see if there were any issues that would need to be addressed with the Historical Commission.

His efforts revealed that the home was not considered “historic”. What it did reveal was that a portion of the home was originally a boathouse that was floated over from Monomoy Island in the 1920's to its current location on Hammond Lane.





The renovated and enlivened home maintains the spirit of its past



When the interior walls and ceilings were demolished we discovered an area on the 1st floor where ceiling joists and the 2 x 4 wood wall frames were painted forest green. We surmised that this was the original part of the structure which may have been used as a hunting cabin or beach camp. The unpainted wood joists throughout the rest of the house were most likely rooms that had been added on over the years.



photo © EJH 2025

## The Costs of Living in Chatham

~ John Whelan

We all enjoy the benefits of living here in Chatham, and, particularly, the benefits of living in the Village. I call it the Village because that was the name years ago, not the Old Village. I think of the incredible views available daily at the Chatham Lighthouse. I think of the interesting homes throughout the Village. I think of the wonderful streets in the Village and the very nice people who live there.

I am happy living in Chatham and especially happy living here in the Village. I have had several conversations recently about the costs of homes in Chatham and some of the expenses related to ownership of those homes.

The Massachusetts Department of Revenue collects data from all of its cities and towns about all kinds of things. The data I found most interesting related to the average cost of homes and the average real estate taxes in that town. Chatham, as we all know, has become an expensive place to buy a home. The average cost of a single family home in Chatham at the end of 2024 was a phenomenal \$1,580,091.

Since that number is an average, remember that it is actually dragged higher by the multi-million dollar residences in town. Despite that distortion, I think we can all agree that it costs a lot to buy a home in Chatham. Fortunately, most of us purchased our home years ago. It may have felt like a high price at the time, but, in retrospect, the price was a bargain.



The average real estate tax bill for 2024 was \$5641 and ranked 212th among Massachusetts cities and towns. The residential Tax Rate per thousand was \$3.57. Only Edgartown and Nantucket enjoyed lower tax rates per thousand of evaluation. So our homes are worth a lot and our real estate tax bite is reasonable. The average tax bill in Brookline is \$23,447, some \$17,806 higher. A more local comparison is Orleans with an average tax bill of \$8049.

One other factor to consider is the rate of appreciation of homes in Chatham. I had heard all sorts of figures on the average rate of appreciation, so I resorted to asking AI. I'm afraid I will be doing that a lot more frequently as AI continues to develop. ChatGPT reported that based on sales, not listings, that the annual rate of appreciation in Chatham is about 12%. A very healthy return and it means that your home doubled in value in about 6 years. Some stock market participants may have achieved 12% over the past 10 years, but they have been few and far between.

My conclusion is that living in Chatham and the Village has its daily delights and every day, all the time, our homes are appreciating and making our ownership all the more attractive.

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## **Clair Baisly and Millpond Copper Crafts Shop**

This brief feature has been assembled with the kind assistance of Debbie Aikman, who shared artifacts and history. Millpond Copper Crafts pieces can be found online, where they seem to attract a devoted following. The shop must have been a lively place with artistry, commerce and the vibrant Baisly presiding! - *Ed*

Built in 1935, the home at 78 Water Street took the place of Sur Mer, which had been moved to Shore Road in 1913. The land was sold in 1934 to Ernest Dutton, then Commadore of the Monomoy Yacht Club, who also owned 136 Main Street. He had the Water Street house built in 1935 for his wife Anna Steele Dutton. The property was eventually sold to Clair Baisly, who operated Mill Pond Copper Crafts from her home in the 1950's. Our 2008 Winter Newsletter provides a profile written by Carol Pacum of Baisly, excerpted below:

Until her death in December 1988, Clair was a one-person Old Village Association – educating people about Cape Cod homes, leading Old Village walking tours, writing articles for the Chronicle on Chatham history, conducting oral histories of Old

Village residents, distributing a newsletter and, at every opportunity, emphasizing the very special qualities of the Old Village.

She loved Chatham, and tried to make sure that everyone would eventually look carefully at the town's historic assets and want to protect them. When she felt she needed a level of expertise to better accomplish this goal, she went back to school, earning a master's degree in art history from Tufts University. Clair served on the Chatham Historical Commission for 15 years, from its inception, and was involved in the formation of the Chatham Historic Business District Commission.



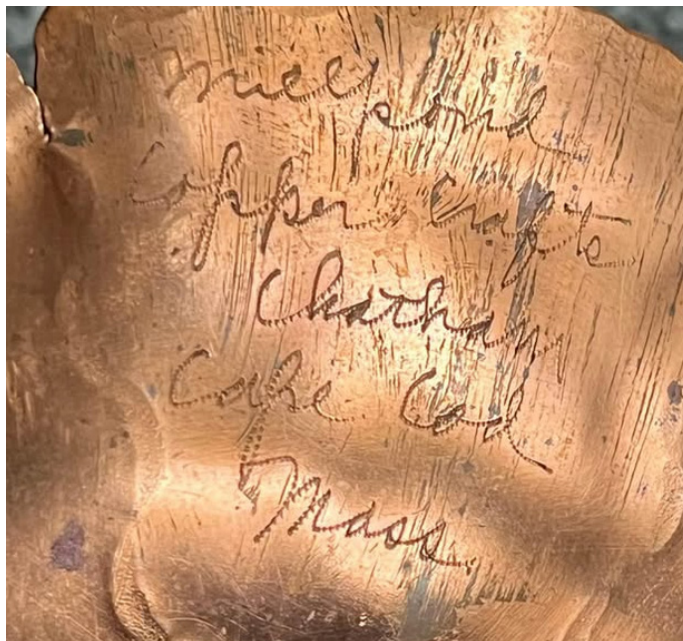
Those around her marveled at her energy, perseverance and creativity - she did the drawings and the photography for her book *Cape Cod Architecture* (Parnassus Imprints, Inc., 1989), and for many years designed copper and tin items for the Copper Shop on Water Street.

Her actions and words set the stage for our National Register District, where the neighborhood, primed by Clair, was ready to take a stand for long-held goals.





The Millpond Copper Crafts interior as it looked in the 1950s. The reverse of the postcard at right reads "Just around the corner from the Chatham Lighthouse, plenty of parking [!]. Following the old traditions, all work in Copper, Brass, Aluminum and Pewter is designed and executed entirely by hand. Visitors are welcomed."



Seaside reading photo © EJH 2025

## In The Old Village

**Monday, July 21, 4-6 pm** - Wine, Cheese and Conversation at the Porches, Water Sreet overlooking the Mill Pond. Natalie Coleman Fuller will speak about the mission and initiatives of the Friends of Chatham Waterways. Bring your own chair if you wish.  
Rain date – Tuesday, July 22.



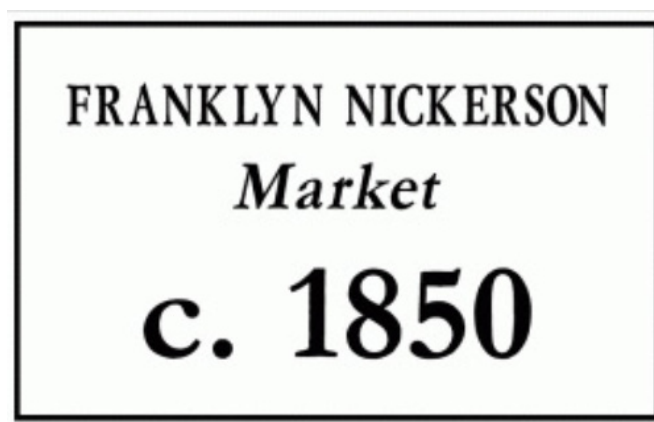
photo © EJH 2025

**Monday, August 4, 2025, 4-6pm** Lawn Party Rain date - Tuesday, August 5

Keep an eye on your email inbox for member invitations!

**Monday, August 18th, Chatham Beach and Tennis Club** - 5:15 PM Refreshments and Conversation, 6:15 PM Program and Business Meeting. John Whelan will regale us with stories from his Fifty Years of Music and Entertainment at Iconic Cape Cod Venues

**Chatham Historic House Signs** - houses 100 years old and over are eligible for signs that highlight the building's early history, as in the example below. [Learn more and apply here.](#)





## Chatham Walkers Welcomes You!

We invite all Old Village residents and visitors to join the Chatham Walkers, motto: "For fun and fitness", for 2-3 mile walks starting at 7am at the Oyster Pond bathing beach parking area on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. All ages and walking rates are welcome!



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## Happy Summer!



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