



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF SANTUIT & COTUIT

SPRING 2011

# NEWSLETTER

## Opened for the Season

With the chirping of the robins, a new season opens for the Historical Society of Santuit and Cotuit. Starting its 57<sup>th</sup> year there are many new surprises including a new main exhibit, a gifted ice house close to opening and new items in the gift shop. Museum hours are 1-4 pm and the gift shop is open 1-5 pm.

Among the fun discoveries I've made since becoming Curator of the Cotuit Historical Society are the charming personal items tucked away in drawers, closets and archival boxes. These things have brought the private lives of those who lived in Cotuit before me into sharper focus, made them more human and personalized them. I picture the loving mother carefully sewing her child's christening clothes, gently adding lace trim to a bib or relaxing as she crochets an evening purse to carry with her on a night out.

I found a gentleman's carved walking stick in the back of a closet, a beaver top hat wrapped in tissue paper and a hat stretcher in a dresser drawer.

In the attic I found a child's dress, still charming in its details but showing clear signs of its age. I fell in love with it anyway because of its delightful bright red buttons down the front. The care and skill that went into making this young girl's dress, in light of how much work women faced every day just to survive in the 1800's, amazed me.

Separation was another daunting aspect of life in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Keeping in touch was so much more difficult that keepsakes were treasured possessions helping to ease the pain of yearning and loss. Hair was a common keepsake. In fact, hair samples were so valued they were often incorporated into jewelry and worn close to the heart. After the Civil War, it was not uncommon for grieving women to gather and work the hair of a deceased loved one into a memorial wreath or a framed floral design. These memorials were yet another discovery I made as I explored the archives of the Cotuit Historical Society. I've put some of my favorite finds on display in the museum and I look forward to sharing them with you.



Sharon Johanson  
VP/ Curator



# A MESSAGE from our President

It's hard to believe that the snow is gone and spring has sprung. It was a long cold winter and I am sure everyone is delighted to see the good weather and the greening of the lawns and trees. There is so much to do to get ready for our season, the Museum and Homestead to be cleaned, the grounds to be readied we encourage anyone interested in helping with these chores to call the Museum.

The Board, all winter has been planning many exciting events for the year including our annual Strawberry Festival and our fund raising event "Taste of Cotuit. The Cotuit Chronicle lecture begins in June at the Cotuit Library the third Wednesday of the month at 7pm. We have an interesting and educational line up this year and hope you will join us. The subjects range from the Cotuit Whaling Families to Senator Charles Gifford. These lectures are always so interesting and give us a perspective on life in Cotuit in olden times. The Museum will be open this year from Memorial Day weekend until Columbus Day weekend. Our Gift Shop will be open Saturday and Sunday from 1pm until 5pm with many new and interesting items.

Our historic plaque project is into Phase II. We have given out 15 house plaques to date and will issue 20 more this year. This has been such a rewarding project and so wonderful to see the plaques on the various old houses that face the street, look for them, they are quite lovely! We have come up with a new project this year; we are publishing our historical papers in book form, issues 1 through 50! The books will be available in the gift shop and for those of you who want to know as much as possible about Cotuit this is it!! This year we have again awarded a scholarship to a deserving high school senior, more in our next newsletter.

Our membership drive begins on June 1<sup>st</sup> and we hope you will renew you membership and if not a member consider joining. The dues help us to maintain the Museum and Homestead and support our programs and events. During these hard economic times all Museums are struggling so your support is vital to the continuation of our Society. The Board and volunteers look forward to seeing you at the Museum and one of our events this summer.

Joyce Ginouves, President

## Membership

The 2011 membership drive has now begun. Membership runs from June 1st 2011 to May 31, 2012. Benefits include a 10% discount at the Gift Shop and free admission to Chronicles. A membership form is included with this newsletter and we hope you will renew your membership or consider becoming a new member.

## 2011 Officers & Board of Directors

President	Joyce Ginouves
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Treasurer	Peggie Bretz
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## New Plaques for Historic Houses in Cotuit

In the spring of 2009, the Cotuit Historical Society presented plaques to the current owners or managers of five historic Cotuit buildings announcing the name of the original owner and the date it was built. These five plaques can be seen on Route 28 near the entrance to Main Street, at Sow's Ear, ETC, The Cahoon Museum, Regatta Restaurant, and at 5 Main Street.

This spring, we are presenting plaques to eleven more buildings in central Cotuit. Most will soon be seen on private homes along Main and School Streets, plus one on Putnam Avenue. The public buildings being "plaqued" this spring will include the Cotuit Library (Schoolhouse 11, 1830) the Historic Society of Santuit and Cotuit (Samuel Dottridge, 1808) and Mariners Lodge (Union Meeting House, 1846). Homes and buildings built with money from the whaling industry will be honored with a whale on the plaque.

If you own a building in Cotuit that predates 1900, maintains a significant amount of its original design, and you would like to participate in our plaque project, please contact me at 508-428-7440.

The Cotuit Historical Society is proud of our beautiful, historical heritage, and our intent with these plaques is to provide residents and visitors with handsome reminders that Cotuit has a history we can all be proud of, a history personified by the edifices of these beautiful historic homes.

Sharon Johanson  
VP/ Curator



***The Historical Society of Santuit and Cotuit***

***Annual Membership Form***

***New or Renewal***

***June 1, 2011- May 31, 2012***

***We sincerely appreciate your support. Thanks to your generosity we have been able to continue our activities and programs for both children and adults only through your support. Please send your completed form together with your yearly dues to HSSC, Att: Gigi Morse, P.O.Box 1484, Cotuit, MA 02635. Thanks to all our members.***

***Name(s)*** \_\_\_\_\_

***(As you would like it to appear in the directory)***

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***[ ] Lifetime \$500 [ ] Benefactor \$150 [ ] Supporter \$100***

***[ ] Family \$35 [ ] Individual \$25 [ ] Student \$10***

***[ ] I would like to volunteer my time please contact me***

## SPONSORS:

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## Ice House Update



To facilitate opening our ice house in the early summer, we have made significant strides in achieving our goals. 1<sup>st</sup> we cleared trees to open the parking lot and provide a location for the foundation. Next we dug and poured the foundation and then bricked the above ground portion to replicate how the foundation would have looked in the late 1800's. Once completed, sills were added and the rot on

the ice house was repaired. The remaining step was to place the ice house on the foundation.

Now the ice house is secured we will clean the interior and move the Ice Harvesting exhibit, currently in the self guided museum, to the ice house and will look to add to the exhibit over time with additional ice harvesting tools and a model of ice block storage techniques when monies become available through either donations or gift shop receipts.

To help us fix the exterior, including re-shingling the roof and sidewalls and adding a beam for a block and tackle which was used to load the ice house with ice, we applied for a grant from the Town of Barnstable Community Preservation Committee. In April, the Committee granted our request for \$8,000 and forwarded their recommendation to Town Council for their approval. At the June 2nd Town Council meeting our request for funding was approved by the Council.



## Exciting New Collection of Historical Articles Detailing Cotuit's History

In the 55 years that the Historical Society of Santuit & Cotuit has been established, we have had many speakers come and talk to the Society about the history of Cotuit and Cape Cod. They have shared poignant tales & stories about our village, its residents and the lives they led. The Historical Society has compiled these chronicles in a treasured memento book called "The Life and Times of Cotuit". It includes 50 stories of Cotuit and it's charming past. It is now available at the gift shop for \$19.99. It will make great reading at the beach and you can learn the meaning of the saying, "Once you've sailed a Cotuit Skiff you can sail anything."

## Scholarship Awarded to BHS Senior

In keeping with our mission, we are pleased to announce we have funded a \$1,000 scholarship for a graduating BHS senior in May. The scholarship was based on a candidate with a declared and demonstrated interest in History and/or Education as a major field of study who has shown perseverance and dedication to his or her academic responsibilities while facing significant challenges along the way. This years recipient is Athena Levesque of Hyannis. Athena is one of identical triplets all heading to Framingham State in the Fall and plans to major in history and education. Upon graduation from college she plans to work for the Peace Corps and then ultimately teach history at the college level. Congratulations to Athena!

**2011 COTUIT CHRONICLES**  
**COTUIT LIBRARY - 871 MAIN STREET**  
**COTUIT • 7PM**  
**Free for members • Non-Members \$3**

**June 15 Cotuit Whaling Families**  
**Ken Molloy**

The Coleman and Nickerson families were prominent in building the communities of Cotuit Port and Cotuit Highground. They owned stores and hotels and built beautiful homes. Local schools and churches benefited from their generosity. The whaling voyages of the Colemans and Nickersons are legendary – whaling wives and children, Yemen pi rates, disasters in the Arctic. This Chronicle talk explores the Colemans and Nickersons and follows their whaling exploits around the globe.

**July 20 Mariners Lodge**  
**140 years in Cotuit**  
**Tom Hadley, Al Knight, Mike McLaughlin**

Cotuit's oldest organization, Mariners' Lodge, has extended fellowship and charity through depression, war and changing times within the Village of Cotuit and beyond over almost a century and a half. A program how the Masonic spirit and musical composers, has also played out in the lives of Masons in one small New England village.

**August 17 Cranberries and Painters:**  
**The Ryder and Harlow Families,**  
**Jim Gould, Rick Kornblum**

This is the story of two families that dominated the cranberry business in Cotuit and Mashpee, and also became our major butchers and how the Ryders started painting figureheads for Cotuit-built schooners and became the main house painting family of Cotuit. Illustrated by photos that have not been seen by the public

**September 21 Senator Charles**  
**Gifford Jacqueline Zenopoulos**

Treasured memoirs of Charles L. Gifford from the lens of a close family member. A relative for whom "Charlie Gifford" was a role model for life. Historical and numerous memorabilia about a man who loved politics, people and his property on the water in Cotuit.



**HSSC Antique Garden**

This spring the Cotuit Bird and Garden Club has been cleaning, weeding, re-designing, and planting the gardens at the Cotuit Historical Society. Words cannot express how grateful we all are for this contribution of their time, energy and expertise.

**Save The Date!**  
**A Taste Of Cotuit**

*An evening of fine wines and exceptional food to benefit the programs of the Historical Society of Santuit and Cotuit*

**SATURDAY JULY 16, 2011**  
**6:00-8:00 PM**

Samuel B. Dottridge Homestead  
 1148 Main Street

**TICKETS \$50.00 (508) 428-0724**  
**LBAILEYGATES@COMCAST.NET**