



HISTORIC TIMES

A Newsletter of Museums on the Green

VOLUME XIX, NUMBER 1

SPRING 2014

UPCOMING EVENTS:

May 23 Museums open for the season

June 10 Around the Sound Cruise

July 5 Fair and Festival

Aug. 8 Summer Wind

Aug. 12 Katharine Lee Bates poetry fest

Aug. 23 Antique Sale

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Marching to History's Beat at the Museums

2014 is shaping up to be a year of milestones. Two centuries ago, the *Nimrod* attacked Falmouth. On June 10, join us on the *Island Queen* for a cruise "Around the Sound." We'll follow *Nimrod's* track and pass by its lair at Tarpaulin Cove.

In honor of its 100th anniversary this year, the Chamber of Commerce will co-sponsor our gala, "Summer Winds Centennial," featuring hits by Frank Sinatra.

Congratulations are due to Curator Amanda Wastrom, who gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Marshall Lewis Wastrom, on January 10. Amanda is putting together an exhibit on "Victorian Life in Falmouth," showcasing 19th century items from our collection.

You may notice a few changes around the campus. The gift shop will be located in the Hallett Barn. Improved signage and lighting are on the way, and visitation



The "Spirit of America" fife and drum corps helped celebrate our defiance of *Nimrod*. Story on page 4. Photo by Amy Rader.

hours have been altered slightly to ensure ample coverage by volunteers. See page 8 for new hours and contact information.

Check our website often to stay in step for all the summer's events!

Collections Department Has a Busy and Exciting Year

Collections Manager Jen Krumfolz reports that with the help of the accessions committee, the museum accepted and accessioned over 150 artifacts last year. As some of you may know, the basement of the Cultural Center is now the main storage area for the museum's collection. With a team of wonderful volunteers we were able to move 95% of the museums'

artifacts into the new facility. We would like to thank the Stanley W. Watson Foundation for their generous grant, which helped us acquire new custom shelving to properly house our collection.

In 2014, our main focus will be to go through all of the objects that were moved into the new building, catalog them, and enter them into the PastPerfect database.



**Executive Director
Mark Schmidt**

From the Director

As we emerge from a long winter at last, spring is a time to sum up the successes of our past year. The first full season of our Cultural Center led to a significant increase in visitors, membership, programs, and private rentals. Exhibits, such as *“There’s a War On! Falmouth and the Home Front during World War II,”* drew much interest from visitors, residents, and media alike. School programs and collaborative efforts with other non-profits expanded. The Museums are more involved with the downtown business community than ever before, while our enhanced

website makes it easier to keep up with all that is going on. Our wildly successful celebration *“Hullabaloo and the Nimrod, Too!”* proved that the War of 1812 has not been forgotten in these parts.

The Historical Society was created in 1900 to preserve the legacy of this great town and all who make it so. It’s a responsibility we take seriously, and we’re honored to have your help. As you read these pages, I hope you’ll find many programs and volunteer opportunities that intrigue you. Together, let’s have even more fun in 2014 than ever!

“I LOVE FALMOUTH
AND LOOK
FORWARD TO
SPREADING THE
WORD ABOUT ALL
THE EVENTS AND
EXHIBITS WE OFFER
HERE.”
KELLY BENWAY

Kelly Benway Joins Our Team

Kelly Benway has joined the Museums as Coordinator of Marketing and Development. A UMass graduate, she was an investment banker in Virginia and Boston before moving to her summer house in 2005 to raise her family. Recently she was the Business Development Officer for Bank of Cape Cod. Kelly's husband Eric is in Marine Operations at WHOI; sons CJ and Joe are in 3rd grade and pre-K.

Kelly finds our employees and volunteers to be “a dedicated, great group of people.” She was thrilled to see so many show up on short notice to correct an error in the Heritage Dinner mailing. “Every person was upbeat and had a great attitude. I'd like to thank everyone, not only for helping out, but for being so gracious. Please let me know your thoughts and ideas.”

New Members since September 2013



Sarah Adams
& Jack Carney
Mary Alessi
Donald R. Aukamp
Frank & Diane Bushfield
Susan Callahan
Jean Callan
Richard Chute & family
Linda & John Collins

Richard & Cynthia Douglas
Tom & Marianne Flynn
Margaret & Richard Foster
Barbara & Tom Gardner
Kevin & Marie Griffin
Sol & Nancy Gully
Marie & Jack Lydon
Kathleen Madaus
Janet & Joseph Mulvey

Ted Murphy
Patricia Richard
Joan & Edwin Rogers
Deb & Steve Siegert
Laura & Fritz Sonnichsen
Mary E. Tor
Dr. J. Boyd & Rita Vereen
Linda & Bill Walczak

Exhibits Planned for 2014

If These Houses Could Talk

May 15 - September 15, 2014

In our annual collaboration with the Falmouth High School Ceramics Program, this exhibition celebrates the hidden stories found in Falmouth's historic architecture. Ceramics students researched Falmouth buildings and created birdhouses inspired by the architectural,

historical, and/or cultural significance of the houses they studied.

The birdhouses will be on display outside their respective buildings, where passersby can see them and read about the houses' stories. A walking tour brochure, with map and descriptions, will be available at both the Museums on the Green and the Chamber of Commerce.



Birdhouse crafted by a ceramics student.

Victorian Life in Falmouth

July 1 - October 11, 2014

With the arrival of rail travel in the 1870s, Falmouth experienced a jump in tourism. Wealthy Bostonians and New Yorkers flooded to Cape Cod for the scenery and fresh air. The Victorian era marks the beginning of Falmouth's



(tourists and locals alike) lived in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

ongoing role as a summer holiday destination. Featuring everything from hair crimpers to bloomers, this exhibition highlights items from our vast Victorian collection of exquisite clothing, furniture, and decorative items. Come see how Cape Codders

(tourists and locals alike) lived in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

THE GOULD
FAMILY PLAYED
CROQUET ON
WHAT IS NOW
THE MUSEUMS'
CAMPUS.

Art + History Series: This Summer in the Cultural Center

Three visual artists, given free rein over our vaults, interpret the Museums' collections, and/or local history, from their unique perspectives.

Shirah Neumann

May 10 - June 21, 2014

Inspired by Falmouth's location and connection to nature and the sea, Portland's Shirah Neumann created a new series of paintings.

Salley Mavor Expressions in Stitches— Then and Now

July 4 - August 16, 2014

Mavor is known for whimsical creations

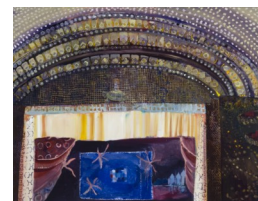
such as "Pocket Full of Posies," which pairs her fiber illustrations with nursery rhymes. Here, she will juxtapose her own work with pieces from our textile collection.

Jenny Fragosa

August 29 - October 11, 2014

Jenny Fragosa is a printmaker and painter who uses any media she can get her hands on. Visual imagery derived from her life and emotions appears and disappears in her mark making. We can't wait to see how our collection will inspire her!

Watch for dates of receptions and artists' talks to be announced.



"La Bayadere"
Oil on panel, 2013
by Shirah Neumann

Much Ado about Hullabaloo



“Ichabod Hatch” awaits incoming fire from HMS *Nimrod*.



A bold enemy infiltrates the party at the Coonamessett.



The Rum Soaked Crooks sang about Mad Jack Percival, a cantankerous cuss from Cape Cod.



***Nimrod* never took our cannon. Note the 1814 flag, with its 15 stars and 15 stripes.**

All photos above by Amy Rader.

Last January 28, loud “huzzahs” rang out in the Coonamessett Inn. Over 150 brave souls warmed themselves with ale, hard cider, Guinness beef stew, and lusty music, as they celebrated Falmouth’s defiance of HMS *Nimrod* two centuries ago. A fife and drum corps inspired the crowd with patriotic tunes, and the Rum Soaked Crooks explained, in song, why no Cape Codders are in heaven.

As if to prove that point, long-dead characters from the *Nimrod* story mingled with the guests. Ichabod Hatch (Grant Willis), Silas Jones (Mark Davis), the town crier (Rocco Maffei), and an old salt (Jim Lukas) had spent the day dodging cannonballs and were thankful not to have been injured. Their salt works, featherbeds, and sideboards had not been as lucky.

Several ship models were on display, including Arnold Lunn’s *Nimrod*. Greg Gilbert and Maria Ward also loaned educational models and posters.

Just why did the mighty Royal Navy strike at little Falmouth, and (aside from the excuse it gives us to feast) why should we care now?

The Run-Up to the Attack

The United States had declared war in 1812, when President Madison and his party saw an opportunity to strike Britain while it was distracted by Napoleon. They expected easy victory, revenge for England’s interference with

American trade, and a consolidation of U.S. power.

Things didn’t go as planned. Canada easily beat back an American invasion, and Britain, even while subduing France, had some spare ships available to harass the New England coast. One of these, HMS *Nimrod*, was assigned to the Vineyard Sound and Buzzards Bay beat. Sheltering at Tarpaulin Cove, *Nimrod* would unpredictably swoop forth to lob cannonballs, threaten shore raids, and demand tribute.

Locally, Falmouth was suffering widespread unemployment after years of blockades and embargoes. Soaring poverty rates had forced selectmen to change the way they cared for the poor. In 1812, they established a poorhouse, where those seeking relief were expected to live and work, contributing to their own support.

The war called forth other examples of Yankee ingenuity. Shipwright Elijah Swift, not wanting his new blockade runner to be pulverized by the *Nimrod* while still in dry dock, built the vessel on his front lawn (now the library lawn), then hired a team of oxen to haul it down Shore Street. After masts and sails were attached, the *Status Ante Bellum* was safely launched.

Despite these hardships, spirits remained high in Falmouth. A religious revival packed the churches, and the local militia defied British demands — unlike some other Cape towns which felt

. . . and the *Nimrod*, too! 1814 - 2014

pressured to collaborate.

In January 1814, *Nimrod* tried to capture the packet ship that delivered mail from Nantucket to Falmouth. Redhaired Capt. Weston Jenkins let loose with the town's entire battery (two small four-pound cannon) and forced *Nimrod*'s boats to turn back. For this and other aggravations, *Nimrod*'s captain, Nathaniel Mitchell, decided Falmouth needed his attention. On January 28, he sailed to the foot of Shore Street and demanded the cannon's surrender. "Come and get them," Jenkins is said to have replied.

Mitchell, a sporting type, gave the town one hour's reprieve. Evacuees streamed towards Long Pond, clutching provisions and their family silver. Then *Nimrod* opened fire. Three hundred cannonballs smashed the salt works at the water's edge, pierced houses, and ricocheted over the frozen ground. Much property was damaged, but no one was hurt. At sunset, seeing the militia dug in along Surf Drive, Mitchell broke off the attack and sailed away, emptyhanded.

Nimrod as History and Legend

An unpleasant experience is not necessarily appreciated as "history" right away. Shell-shocked residents hurried to repair the damage. They must have quickly recycled most of the cannonballs, especially the 32-pounders, none of which remain today. Only one man, John Crocker,

wrote an account of the attack on the day it occurred. Decades passed before it occurred to anyone to preserve the cannon that Jenkins had refused to give up. Too late. The state had taken them and melted them down in 1831.

As years rolled by, younger generations were fascinated by the story. Around 1900, the new historical society began to collect old-timers' anecdotes, as handed

down in their families. Embellishments had begun to creep into the tale. Did Ichabod Hatch really sit in his front doorway, daring the *Nimrod* to hit him? Perhaps; certainly it made for a better story. Little cannonballs, long used to

weigh down gates and icebox covers, suddenly became important artifacts. Later in the twentieth century, researchers retrieved copies of *Nimrod*'s log from British archives, and archaeologists raised cannon believed to be *Nimrod*'s from beneath Buzzards Bay.

Still we are not satisfied with what we know. A second log has been found, raising questions about *Nimrod*'s classification and gun complement. Some have argued that the cannon recovered from Buzzards Bay are not *Nimrod*'s, but may be from a Revolutionary War privateer — and thus valuable in their own right. We're still seeking answers about that January day in Falmouth in 1814. Our uncertainties are like the war itself, a murky conflict with no clear winners.



HMS Nimrod off Falmouth in 1812, painted by E.F. Lincoln in 1919. Now hanging in the Wicks House.

RECOMMENDED READING

1812: THE NAVY'S WAR *and* THE SHINING SEA

George Daughan

A RUINOUS AND UNHAPPY WAR *and* MAD JACK PERCIVAL

James Ellis

JAMES MADISON

Richard Brookhiser

ON DVD

HORATIO HORNBLOWER A&E, 1998. Set on a British warship.

LOCAL ANGLE

SPRITSAIL SUMMER 2012 "Falmouth and the Second War of Independence" & "The Cannon (and Cannonball) Controversies" by E. Graham Ward.



Elijah Swift named his ship *Status Ante Bellum*, or "Status Before the War."

Charlotte Price, F.H.S. Archivist, 1912-2013



Charlotte Price helped to change history, then went about preserving it.

Charlotte Schuster Price, former archivist at the Falmouth Historical Society, died peacefully at the age of 101 on December 22, 2013, in Maryland. Wife of Dr. Kline A. Price, Sr. (a pioneering African-American urologist in Washington, D.C.), Charlotte studied at Howard University under renowned historian John Hope Franklin and Nobel laureate Ralph Bunche. Mrs. Price fought for voting rights for D.C. residents, and offered financial and moral support for the litigation leading to *Brown v. Board of Education*.

In her mid-50s, she transformed herself from activist to archivist with an MLS degree from Catholic University. After her husband's death in 1973, she moved

to Plymouth, Massachusetts, to be archivist and acting director of Pilgrim Hall. In 1978, she moved to East Falmouth. She served as the first professional archivist at the Falmouth Historical Society, where she also chaired the long-range planning committee and was a member of the board of directors.

Mrs. Price took great pride in being known as "The Walker." She routinely walked along the Shining Sea Bikeway until her late 90s. Charlotte Price is survived by two sons, seven grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. Her organizational system is still the backbone of the archives, and her Guide to Manuscripts is frequently consulted.

DID YOU KNOW?

PINK GRANITE
FROM WEST
FALMOUTH WAS
USED AT JFK'S
GRAVESITE.

Detail from
Trumbull's "Death
of General Warren
at . . . Bunker Hill."



Lectures

- May 1 **Stephen Puleo**, "The Caning: The Assault that Drove America to Civil War."
 May 6 **Ben Bradlee, Jr.**, "The Kid: The Immortal Life of Ted Williams."
 May 13 **Nathaniel Philbrick**, "Bunker Hill: A City, a Siege, a Revolution."
 May 15 **Craig Steven Wilder**, "Ebony and Ivy: Race and the Troubled History of America's Universities."
 May 21 **Janet Uhlar**, "Freedom's Cost: The Story of General Nathanael Greene."
 May 27 **Lt. Col. William Hanson**, "Prisoner of Peace."
 May 28 **Michael McNaught**, "Clash of Titans: Grant vs. Lee, Virginia, 1864."
 June 5 **Thomas Healy**, "The Great Dis-sent: How Oliver Wendell Holmes Changed His Mind—and Changed the History of Free Speech in America."
 June 25 **Christopher Cameron**, "To Plead Our Own Cause: African Americans in Massachusetts and the Making of the Antislavery Movement."
 July 9 **Larry Tye**, "Superman: The High-Flying History of America's Most Enduring Superhero."
 July 16 **Michael Connelly**, "The President's Team."
 July 23 **Robin Tagliaferri**, "The China Trade."
 August 6 **Alex Kershaw** on WWII
 Sept. 12 **Matthew Stewart**, "Nature's God: The Heretical Origins of the American Republic."
 Nov. 8 **Military History Symposium**
 Nov. 19 **Ken Turino**, "The Spirit of Christmas Past: Four Centuries of Christmas in New England."
For a full description of events and starting times, go to www.museumsonthegreen.org

Mystery Photos: Why Is This Woman Lonely?

The mystery of these photos may yet be solved. Both are pasted in a Swift family album now in our archives. Other pictures in the album show the young men as members of the Williams College track team around 1900. One of these athletes is likely a close relative of the album's donor, and since we still maintain contact with the family, an email or letter might clear up this particular mystery.



Was Miss Lonely ever introduced to these gentlemen?

For most of the unlabeled pictures in the archives, however, we don't have such a handy source available. By publishing these from time to time, we hope our readers will provide us some identification. Meanwhile, be sure to document your own photos and digital files. List names, nicknames, and relationships. Take future viewers into your confidence, and let them in on the family jokes!



"Miss Lonely," otherwise unidentified, from a Swift album, ca. 1900.

Volunteer News

We are fortunate to have an incredibly dedicated group of volunteers—but there is always room for more! If interested, contact Carolyn Tarr at 508-548-4857 ext. 20, or at eventsfhs@cape.com. Docents, greeters, and grounds maintenance helpers are particularly needed, but all are welcome. Longtime and new volunteers are invited to the following events.

Thursday, May 1, 10 - 12 "Upstairs, Downstairs, Inside and Out." A behind

the scenes look at the Museums. Volunteers will meet staff, see where they work and find out what they do! Lunch will be served in the Cultural Center at noon.

Monday, May 5, 5 p.m. Informational meeting to welcome you back and let you know what will be happening on campus this season. PLEASE BRING A FRIEND who may be interested in volunteering. . . . Wine and cheese will be served!

WANTED:
OUTGOING PEOPLE
WITH A PASSION
FOR FALMOUTH.
LEARN OUR
HISTORY AND
SHARE IT WITH
OTHERS!

Renting the Cultural Center

Planning a party this summer and don't want the hassle of hosting it in your home? Come by and see our beautiful new building! Its Village Green location, nestled close to a colonial garden and picturesque gazebo, is unrivalled.

The space is completely accessible, air conditioned, and has a fully equipped kitchen for your catering needs. Parking is available adjacent to the center, in our

lot on Katharine Lee Bates Road.

Members are entitled to a discount on rental fees for this one-of-a-kind space. To make an appointment to view the Cultural Center, contact Carolyn Tarr, Events Manager, at 508-548-4857 ext. 20, or at eventsfhs@cape.com.

The Cultural Center offers a refined and intimate setting for a variety of occasions.



MUSEUMS ON THE GREEN
55 & 65 PALMER AVE.
P.O. BOX 174
FALMOUTH, MA 02541

PHONE 508-548-4857
EMAIL fhs@cape.com
WEBSITE
museumsongthegreen.org

OFFICE HOURS (Conant)
Tuesday - Friday, 10 - 4

RESEARCH (Conant)
Tuesday & Thursday, 10 - 2

MUSEUM VISITATION
(Check in at Hallett Barn)
May 23 through October 11
Tuesday - Friday, 11 - 3
Saturday, 11 - 2

STAFF

Exec. Director Mark Schmidt
Collections Jennifer Krumfolz
Curator Amanda Wastrom
Events Carolyn Tarr
Marketing Kelly Benway
Membership Cathy McDonnell
Research Meg Costello

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Young artists made these birdhouses inspired by Falmouth history. See page 3.



Museums on the Green
P.O. Box 174
Falmouth, MA 02541

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Upcoming Events

June 10 **Around the Sound Cruise** Board the Island Queen and follow the track of the *Nimrod*. Cash bar/refreshments.

July 5 **Independents Day Fair and Festival** Independent musicians, art dealers, authors, and artisans in a street fair setting.

Aug. 8 **Summer Wind** Enjoy cocktails, *bors d'oeuvres*, and dancing to Sinatra hits. Co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

Aug. 12 **Katharine Lee Bates Poetry Fest** Falmouth poets read their works. Prof. Bates usually makes a few comments.

Aug. 23 **Antique Sale** An opportunity to find new treasures!

Oct. 26 **A Visit with the Night Watchman**

Nov. 29 - Dec. 7 **A Colonial Christmas**

For Children and Families

May 10 **Just for Kids: Colonial Gardening** Learn how herbs and flowers were used in old New England. Make a mini colonial

Our events for children promise to be even better than last year's.



garden to take home for Mother's Day!

July 4 **Open House with Colonial Games** Celebrate America's independence with games and activities dating back to 1776.

July 11 **Teddy Bear Picnic** A "make and take" affair: Build your bear, dress it, and take it home. Reservations required.

July 18 **Big Ryan's Tall Tales** Original stories, puppet play, interactive games and music add up to lots of fun! Lasts 45 - 60 minutes. For preschool to 5th grade.

July 25 **Animal World Experiences** An interactive program featuring a variety of exotic mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates.