

# ***Mainsheet***

---

*The Newsletter of the Woods Hole Historical Museum  
P.O. Box 185, Woods Hole, MA 02543  
[www.woodsholemuseum.org](http://www.woodsholemuseum.org)*

## ***Summer 2020***

## ***Director's Message***

Greetings to you all. We hope you are well and finding a silver lining as you stay put during this quarantine, whether it is reading more books, planting a garden, or baking bread! We have loved hearing from many of you in response to our Weekly Dispatches. They have been fun for Colleen and me to research and write, and we are glad you are enjoying them. We will continue to send Dispatches into the summer.

Our opening day has been postponed but on June 26 at 5 p.m., we are planning to connect with you virtually. Bring a glass of wine (or beer or a Margarita!) and join us for an online party. Laura Reckford, the chair of our steering committee, will welcome you and give updates on the museum's real opening, followed by a short virtual walking tour of the village by our tour guide, Rob Blomberg. We will soon provide a registration form for you to join this Zoom meeting,

At present, we are hoping to re-open in early July when Phase 3 institutions are allowed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. If all goes as planned, we will have exhibits outside the boat museum and under the tarp as well as a gift shop display where items may be purchased. Due to tight quarters inside Bradley House, we have decided not to have visitors inside. We have already purchased hand sanitizers and face masks, and will maintain social distancing in our outside museum area.

Our online presence is important in this times. We will host online webinars, post a full walking tour of the village, and of the museum exhibits.

Governor Baker will continue to update us as to the timing of implementing the stages of reopening, so we will keep you posted on social media and on Constant Contact. If you would prefer this information in print, please let us know and we will send you written updates.

Thank you for your support and interest over these past few months!  
Deborah G. Scanlon, Executive Director



Looking up Woods Hole Road with Owen Eldridge house on left, Little Harbor on right

## Message from the Chair

As we enter the reopening phase of businesses and nonprofits in Massachusetts, two months after the abrupt shutdown of our economy, we at the Woods Hole Historical Museum are using this time to rethink the services we provide to our community and how we can do things differently this summer.

We know that the high season in 2020 will be different from any other as people negotiate added protocols designed to keep people safe. At the museum, we are innovating on ways for our visitors to experience our exhibits while keeping required social distancing and adhering to all federal, state and local health protocols. Our number one priority is the safety of our staff, interns, volunteers and visitors.

One way to do this is move programming online. With that in mind, our Director Debbie Scanlon and Assistant Director/Archivist Colleen Hurter are producing a weekly Museum Dispatch E-Newsletter highlighting the museum's rich archives. From the Eel Pond Bridge to past industry in Woods Hole that gave it a certain odor, you won't want to miss this compendium of little known historic trivia about Woods Hole.

If you haven't been receiving this new publication, our E-newsletter, the Weekly Dispatch, you'll want to sign up for it on our website, [WoodsHoleMuseum.org](http://WoodsHoleMuseum.org).

Once we open for the summer, we plan to have as much programming as possible outside on the museum's campus. In particular, we plan to move our popular gift shop outdoors so our visitors can buy the unique Woods Hole offerings we feature every year. We hope you visit us online and in person this summer.

Stay safe and well,  
Laura Reckford

### **Woods Hole Historical Museum** *A Division of* *The Woods Hole Public Library*

#### *Chairman*

Laura M. Reckford

#### *Vice Chairman*

Peter K. Simonds

#### *Secretary*

Kathy Denham

#### *Treasurer*

Don Aukamp

#### *Board of Directors*

Becky Sue Epstein

Robert Leary

Beth Ready Liles

Arlene Lowenstein

Leonard Miele

Maureen Nolan

Chris Polloni

Martha Speirs

Chuck Verbeck

#### *Executive Director*

Deborah Scanlon

#### *Archivist/Assistant Director*

Colleen Hurter

#### *Archives Open*

Tuesday and Thursday

10—2

And by appointment

#### *Exhibits Open*

Early July—Early-October

Wednesday—Saturday

11-3

#### ***Mainsheet***

Published by the

Woods Hole Historical Museum

P.O. Box 185

579 Woods Hole Road

Woods Hole, MA 02543

[www.woodsholemuseum.org](http://www.woodsholemuseum.org)

#### *Written and Edited by*

Deborah Scanlon and Colleen Hurter

*Judy Stetson has been an integral part of Sprintsail, our semi-annual journal, since its start in 1987. Recently retired from the editorial board, she shares here some memories of her first 20 years. More to follow!*

## **Judy's Voyages Aboard *Sprintsail* 1987-2006**

The Woods Hole Historical Museum published *Sprintsail*, A Journal of Falmouth History, Volume 1, Number 1, in the summer of 1987. Mary Lou Smith introduced our journal and explained its name: "The spritsail is a small boat rig of respectable ancestry used around the world. Its name comes from the sprit, a spar comparable to a gaff, but attached much lower on the mast. The sprit crossed diagonally to the uppermost corner of the sail, which it extends and elevates.



Judy Stetson

"The Woods Hole Sprintsail Boat was originally used for fishing and later became popular among local and summer residents for racing and sailing. Slimmer, deeper and with more freeboard than a catboat, it was fairly easy to row and was a good boat in the fierce tides of Woods Hole. The spritsail rig was certainly influenced by the stone bridge built across Eel Pond Channel in 1878-1879. The mast of the spritsail was stepped far forward and held at the bow by a pinned bracket. When approaching the fixed bridge, the boatman removed the pin, and mast and sail dropped into the boat, allowing the spritsail to enter Eel Pond.

"As we launch this new *Sprintsail*, A Journal of Falmouth History, we hope it will prove to be as useful and 'handy to have around' as the old spritsail boat. We want it to be jaunty and trim, good for all weather, fun to use, and valuable to year-round and summer residents alike. To this community of Falmouth, with its splendid maritime past, we offer this *Sprintsail* for pleasure, adventure and exploration of the currents of local history."

Twenty years later, Red Wright described our first issue: "Jane McLaughlin got us going in grand style with a biography of Baldwin Coolidge (1845-1928), the Massachusetts photographer who recorded scenes around New England for nearly half a century with considerable emphasis on Cape Cod and the islands. Many of his extraordinarily clear and beautiful photos had been used in both Woods Hole Reflections and The Book of Falmouth. Later, of course, they became the basis for New England Views, (1998), edited by Susan Witzell, Jane and Mary Lou, and published by WHHC with the cooperation of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Jane's article was accompanied by 13 of Coolidge's photos and the cover photo of an art class on Martha's Vineyard that includes Coolidge, two pages of footnotes and a tabulation of Coolidge's glass plate negatives."

It has been an honor and a great pleasure to serve on the editorial board of *Sprintsail* starting with that first issue. I retired after we had completed work on the Winter 2020 *Sprintsail*.

During the first twenty years, in addition to being on the editorial board, I contributed six articles. The first was “The Enlightenment” in the Summer 1989 issue about the coming of electricity to Falmouth. My research required learning how to access and then to reproduce ads from the microfiche collection in the Falmouth Library. I was fascinated to read about the old technique of storing a lump of phosphorus in a bottle of boiled olive oil and uncorking it to carry light into a dark pantry. The companion articles in that issue were even more interesting, especially “Electrifying Changes” by Clarence Anderson who was alive then and who electrified the town!

My next article was “Woods Hole Buys Its Post Office” in the Summer 1994 issue. That was the most interesting one for me to research, as well as being an important piece of our history to document. It involved finding and then going to the Post Office archives to learn its history which began in 1826. In 1827, President John Quincy Adams appointed Ward Parker Woods Hole’s first postmaster, authorizing him to receive the mail from ships and stagecoaches. The story of how the post office was saved is also the story of why it was saved. Mary Lou Montgomery was the star of that drama. I still have one each of the two runs of t-shirts we sold to raise money and public awareness for the project. The second run added window boxes full of flowers making them more beautiful and current than our first run.

“Prince Crowell and his *Imp*” in the Summer 1996 issue was partly based on conversations with Olive Beverly, Prince Crowell’s daughter. One joy of writing local history is access to living memories, oral histories, and personal accounts of past lives. Archivist Susan Witzell was very helpful to us as we hunted for original sources and subjects during all those years.



The cover of the Winter 2006 issue is a beautiful photograph that ran in the Boston Sunday Globe, with the caption, “Margaret Medeiros, August 2, 1952, Falmouth Strawberry Queen, Boston Sunday Globe Pictorial, August 3, 1952, Globe staff color photo by Hugh O’Donnell.”

“Running Water” in the Summer 1998 issue was the next article I wrote for *Sprintsail*. I learned how people got water for themselves, their gardens and their animals in the centuries before water was piped to houses and public watering troughs. I also learned who had the money and knowledge to preserve Long Pond for a public water supply by buying up much of its watershed, and who else first financed pipe laying and water tower construction for their own benefit. . My footnotes for that article reference both *The Book of Falmouth* and *Woods Hole Reflections*. I based a companion article, “Falmouth’s Historic Pumping Station” on the description and statement of its significance that Matthew A. Kierstead had written as part of its nomination to the national register of Historic Places. It is indeed a handsome building.

“Mail Order Houses” in the Summer 2004 issue connected Falmouth into the wider history of the times. “Mail order houses captured the imaginations of thousands of Americans in the early 20th century. People were excited about the new Machine Age that applied powerful tools to the forests and precise tools to the mills. They were impressed by the new Scientific Principles that brought rational design to house plans and efficient production methods to house construction. They were enthusiastic about the Industrial Age that brought reliable, low cost housing



to the market, And they eagerly read the mail order catalogs filled with enticing advertisements. Affordable housing was on sale at market rates and everyone profited.” The “Airplane House” on Juniper Point started as a proposal for a portable house until the owner’s Chicago architects tactfully managed to change her mind. William Gray Purcell’s very well told tale, “From Portable to Notable - The Story of the Airplane House on Juniper Point and How it Grew” is in the Summer 1990 issue of *Spritsail*.

When Mary Lou retired from the editorial board, we devoted the Summer 2006 issue of *Spritsail* in a tribute to her and included a comprehensive retrospective of the journal. In my tribute to Mary Lou I wrote “Your foreword to *The Book of Falmouth* expresses its purpose beautifully. My hope, and the hope of all those who have worked on this Tricentennial *Book of Falmouth*, is that we can keep the diversity of our town alive, continue to respect one another’s differences, and preserve the beauty of Falmouth before it is lost to uncontrolled growth and the pollutions of its clear air, sparkling ponds, and shining sea.”

Lenny Miele and Olivann Hobbie have succeeded me as editors of Spritisals and are charting her future voyages through the past of our history, “Lest the future not forget.”

---

## Conversations



Dan Clark

This winter we had three very popular conversations. You can access recordings of these on our website.

In January, Chip Shultz, Tom Renshaw and Peter Bumpus shared memories of "Dan Clark: Marine Contractor and Woods Hole Legend."

In February, Miguel Moniz explored the history of the arrival in Falmouth in the early 1900s of 2,000 migrants, mostly from the Azores and Cabo Verde.

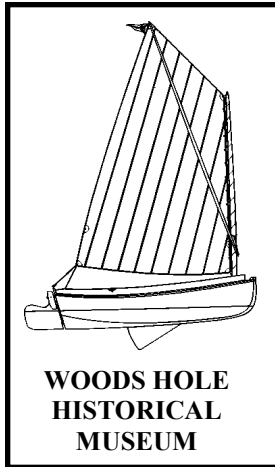
And in early March, Terry Soares of Soares Flower Garden Nursery talked about “New Gardening Practices and Trends.”



Talk on Portuguese migrants by Miguel Moniz



Terry Soares



P.O. BOX 185  
WOODS HOLE, MA 02543  
[www.woodsholemuseum.org](http://www.woodsholemuseum.org)  
508 548-7270

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 40  
WOODS HOLE, MA

***Join us for a virtual opening party  
on Friday, June 26, at 5 PM!***

***Bring your glass of wine, connect to our Zoom meeting  
on your computer or iPhone and enjoy a walking  
tour of historic Woods Hole by our tour guide,  
Rob Blomberg, and updates on our real opening.***

***Please go to our website and register for this meeting  
on Zoom.***