

*Spring 2007*

# ***Mainsheet***

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*The Newsletter of the Woods Hole Historical Museum  
P.O. Box 185, Woods Hole, MA 02543*



## ***SUMMER EXHIBIT IN GALLERY ONE FEATURES***

### ***WATER COLORS OF PEGGY CLARK KELLEY***

### ***DONE FOR A CHILDREN'S BOOK***

A toddler who loved to play sailboat in his back yard dreamed that his wooden-box boat sailed out of the back yard and into Vineyard Sound. Noted theatrical artist Peggy Clark was fascinated to hear about the dream and created a series of vibrant water colors telling the story in charming pictures. Together with text by Clark's mother, Woods Hole scientist Eleanor Linton Clark, the pictures became an unpublished book, intended for young audiences, and also of interest to anyone interested in Woods Hole, Vineyard Sound or sailboats.

A selection of the original water colors and related photographs will be on exhibit at the Woods Hole Historical Museum this summer in Gallery One. A few of the rag dolls accompanying the toddler on his journey will also be on display.

## ***"THEN AND NOW" PHOTOS IN GALLERY TWO***

The Archives is rich in photos from the 1870s to the 20th century showing the charms of long-gone buildings and features. Susan Fletcher Witzell has selected photos from the past and attempted to recreate the same viewpoint in modern photography. The old and the new will be displayed together. One featured section will be "around the block" using photos by the talented Sarah Bryant Fay, who continuously recorded the scene on upper Water Street and around the block to Railroad Avenue as it changed rapidly around 1900.

### What's new in the gift shop?

🎧 Whether walking about town listening to the MP3 tour of Woods Hole

🚤 Out in the Sound enjoying the water

🏖️ Or at the beach

What better way to protect your pate than a hat with the Woods Hole Spritsail? New this spring. Available in three colors.

Bucket hats \$18.00, baseball style hats \$16.00.

### News from the Archives —

#### Clay pipes found on Penzance.

White clay pipes used for smoking tobacco in the 18th and 19th centuries were found in the fill of the former Pacific Guano Company wharf during stone wall reconstruction. Two of the pipes were given to the Museum.

*More News from the Archives on page 5.*

### DAN CLARK

Charlie McGowan has started compiling information and stories about the late Dan Clark with the intention of creating a file for our Archives. Anyone who could add a story or some facts to this collection is encouraged to send it to the Archives or bring it in to us.

Big quiet Dan Clark was an important part of our community, building docks and doing good works, taking a sequence of young men under his wing. We want to make sure his life is documented.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

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**Woods Hole Historical Collection  
& Museum**

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*Assistant Curator and Archivist*

Susan Fletcher Witzell

Archives Open

Tuesday and Thursday

10—2

And by Appointment

Year Round

Exhibits Open

Mid-June—Mid-October

Tuesday—Saturday

10—4

### *Mainsheet*

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P.O. Box 185  
Woods Hole, MA 02543

## WOODS HOLE'S FIRST YACHTSMAN

*By John Valois*

The enchanted Golden Age of yachting during the years of approximately 1880 to 1895 was also a time of enormous proliferation of summer mansions, often called "cottages", along the New England coastal shore. The available waterfront property with views of oceans, bays and sounds filled rapidly. The building of large yachts continued but small boats such as cat boats became popular, finding excellent anchorages in harbors, coves and inlets. Buzzards Bay was considered at that time the finest sailing area on the coast, having warm deep water, excellent winds and many harbors to cruise but most of all being a place to race. Newport became the racing Mecca during the Golden Age but Buzzards Bay was its equal in small boat racing in one-design classes.

In 1892 Alfred Craven Harrison retired from his presidency of the Harrison, Frazier Company, a large sugar refinery in Cuba. He sold his partnership to the American Sugar Company and he returned to his family home in Philadelphia. He continued his activities in philanthropy and in various clubs, especially the Corinthian Yacht Club of Philadelphia.

Alfred married Kate de Forest Sheldon in April 1872. Her father was President of the New York Bank and Trust. Mrs. Harrison became interested in Woods Hole as a possible summer residence. She had heard of Mr. Mahlon Ogden-Jones who had built a summer "cottage" designed by Edmund Wheelwright. The estate was on three acres overlooking Little Harbor, Woods Hole. Queen Anne motifs dominated the interior of the house, tall chimneys, varied roof-lines, and leaded glass windows. In 1892 the Mr. and Mrs. Harrison bought this estate from Mr. Ogden-Jones.

Mrs. Harrison was born into a world of both Edwardian and Victorian conventions.



MERRY MOUNT "A. C. HARRISON EST." WEST FRONT, WOODS HOLE, MASS.

She understood the lavishness created by this period. Hers was not the role she sought, but one she accepted with grace and responsibility.

Kate and Alfred were parents to five children. Their first child was Alfred C. Harrison, Jr. who later married Pauline DuPont. Mary de Forest, Kate Sheldon and William Frazier all were active children in sports; sailing, swimming, tennis, croquet and golf. Their last child, Mildred, was born

in Woods Hole. Later in life she married Count Karl von Holmstein of Austria who visited Woods Hole many summers.

There were invitations into Little Harbor's society by the Luscombes, Fays, Carltons, Cranes and others. Mrs. Harrison organized picnics, chowder parties, and trophy dinners to celebrate sailing activities.

Both parents were avid sailors but they needed more experience in racing. Neighbor Walter Luscombe introduced young Sam Cahoon, a skilled racer of spritsails, to the Harrisons as a boatman. They gladly hired Sam Cahoon as a "boat boy" to maintain their boats and to crew for the family. They admired his sailing ability and also used him as a tennis and swimming teacher for their children. After Sam's graduation from high school in 1896, he became the Harrison's sailing master and captain, eventually moving onto the estate.



Sam Cahoon and Mrs. Harrison, above.  
(Cahoon Collection)

Catboats in Little Harbor, c. 1910,  
right. The Harrison's house may be  
seen in the left background (chimneys).  
(Sarah Bryant Fay photo)



In 1897 William Frazier Harrison, Alfred's son, became a member of the Beverly Yacht Club at Wings Neck, Pocasset. The Club had a reputation for fast boats and experienced captains and crews. A new 1902 racing design from Nat Herreshoff's lines was commissioned for the Club. Thirteen boats were bought including one for Alfred Harrison. The class was called "Buzzards Bay Thirties". The boat was 46 feet with a sail area of over a thousand square feet. The new owners were thrilled to have such a fast boat. Alfred Harrison christened her *QUAKERESS II* and for the next eight years she was maintained and sailed under the command of Captain Cahoon.

*QUAKERESS II* was sailed to Cuba for the winter months following the summer race series in Buzzards Bay. Mr. Harrison's sons, Alfred Jr. and William, spent the winter in Cuba enjoying the high society and exciting racing. By 1909 *QUAKERESS II* had been sailed hard under all conditions. Mr. Harrison recognized she was no longer a secure boat and had Captain Cahoon and his mate sail her to Philadelphia for spring racing in calm waters. A grand celebration was given to Captain Cahoon for his loyalty to the family and an ovation to *QUAKERESS II*.

World War I had begun in Europe causing the family to return to Philadelphia. Mr. Harrison's health had failed and his sons found less time for racing. "Harrison House" was sold to Mr. Newcomb Carlton in 1914. He rented the house to the Harrison children until he moved into it in 1925.

Alfred Harrison died in 1927 at 81 years old and Kate died in 1935 in the family home in Loverock, Pennsylvania.

## 2007 MODEL BOAT SHOW

*The sixth biennial Model Boat Show went off seemingly without a hitch Saturday April 14 as more than 55 modelers set up their exhibits in six buildings stretching the length of Water Street and around the corner to the Library and Museum. People, about 500 of them, poured in to see the exquisitely constructed boats. At the Museum volunteers had set up a pool on the lawn where kids sailed the little spritsail boats they had just assembled and painted in the Boat Shop. Inside there were special displays of models of Catboats, Cape Cod Knockabouts, and several local yachts. In the Library a professional model builder was working on his 3 foot long schooner, surrounded by the work of others displayed on the window ledges. At 3 Water Street there was a special exhibit of ferry models backed by greatly enlarged historic photographs from our archives. There was also a small theater set up to illustrate the use of tow tank test models, which helped explain the purpose of the 20 foot long hull model of the new Island Home resting on the lawn of the Museum. Down in the Community Hall was a bustle of models and modelers filling the room. They ranged from the frontispiece of the huge (four feet at least!) and exquisitely detailed *When and If*, to the racing yachts of the American Model Yacht Association which would periodically leave the room to race in Eel Pond, to a fleet of Chesapeake sandbaggers, to military vessels, to elaborate ships from the 1600's, to simple sweet smooth half models. Downstairs were commercial exhibitors offering their wares. Next door in the Fire Station, the tables each displayed yet another model. From here groups were led to the sub display in the WHOI tow tank. In the MBL Club, more delights awaited the visitors: not just one, but two modelers demonstrated the art of building ships in bottles. One table was covered with miniature military vessels, others burgeoned with beautiful vessels in a wide range of sizes, many with sails set. Many of the modelers were on deck enjoying talking with visitors and each other. During the noon hour there were talks in the Candle House. One by an amateur modeler and case builder, the other by an oceanographer who uses small submarines professionally.*

*All through the day our volunteers greeted visitors at the doors and monitored the exhibits. Some even continued their volunteer services into the night, patrolling the streets and exhibit buildings. Sunday dawned with a light rain and dire warnings of impending gale force winds and flooding. After consultation it was decided to stop the show at 1 PM to allow our exhibitors to load their boats and return home safely, a decision they all appreciated.*

*Many thanks to all who helped make this show, at least Saturday, such a big success! We couldn't have done it without you!*

### **MORE NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES....**

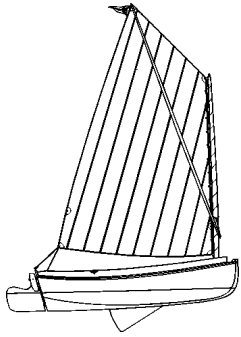
#### **Surveys and Blueprints from the Fay Family.**

The heirs of Miss Elizabeth Fay gave the Museum a large number of survey plans (and blueprint copies) of lands and properties owned by Joseph Story Fay and his children Henry H. Fay and Sarah B. Fay. They are a fascinating look at the changes in Woods Hole from the 1870s to the 1920s. The surveys, stored for many years in Miss Fay's basement, came to us coated with mildew. It has taken a number of summers to accomplish the unpleasant task of cleaning them—all done by our summer interns and other volunteers. Remarkably they are in excellent condition.

Some of the most interesting show the changing shape of the land and the ownership of various lots on Millfield Street. Other fascinating engineering drawings are of the extension of the steamship dock and railroad tracks when the new station was built in 1902. Three Baldwin Coolidge photos taken in March 1902 of the construction at the dock and tracks were probably commissioned by the Fays.

#### **Papers of James W. Mavor, Jr.**

James W. Mavor, Jr. was well-known for his painstaking research into early artifacts of New England's history, astronomy and early explorers of Cape Cod and the Islands. His family has given the Collection his papers on his research for "Stones to the Sun", Gosnold and other early explorers, the Island of Pasque where the Mavors vacationed and his investigation into the origin of the name "Woods Hole". These papers are a valuable addition to the Collection for both our knowledge and for researchers. We are very grateful for this donation.



**WOODS HOLE  
HISTORICAL  
MUSEUM**

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***OPENING PARTY***  
***Friday June 15, 2007***  
***5—7 p.m.***

***GALLERIES AND MUSEUM OPEN FOR THE SEASON***  
***Saturday, June 16, 2007, 10 A.M. — 4 P.M.***

**LIGHTHOUSE CRUISE on the PATRIOT TOO**  
**JUNE 22, 7—9 P.M.**

**ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Thursday August 2, 2007, 7 P.M.**