

HISTORICAL *Highlights*

Cohasset Historical Society • Quarterly Newsletter • Spring-Summer 2016

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From the President

Dear Members and Friends,

The theme for this newsletter is Collections. All kinds of museums and historical societies depend on the generosity of collectors, who, often as not, are amateurs, and collect items as a hobby. When these items are grouped together, they become collections. The Cohasset Historical Society is no different. We have been the beneficiary of many wonderful things donated to us over the years by avid collectors of items related to the history and culture of our town, its families and businesses.

Many of the board members of the Society have their own personal collections, ranging from antique glass bottles to teapots, embroidered samplers to Pueblo pottery from New Mexico. Other examples include postcards; all kinds of clocks; knitted lace; Staffordshire plates; pink luster; 19th century and earlier botanical prints; and razors. I too am a collector, passing the basket on Sunday at church.

To quote from my favorite resource, Wikipedia, "A collectable (collectible or collector's item) is any object regarded as being of value or interest to a collector (not necessarily monetarily valuable or antique). An antique is a collectable that is old. A curio is a small, usually fascinating or unusual item sought after by collectors. A manufactured collectable is an item made specifically for people to collect." We are proud of the Society's many collections and sharing them is a pleasure. Please keep in mind that donations to these collections with Cohasset provenance continue to be appreciated.

My wish for all of us is to collect many wonderful summer days and happy memories living by the sea.

Enjoy!

Kathleen L. O'Malley, *President*

Historical Highlights

For information on membership and programs, please visit our website
www.CohassetHistoricalSociety.org

or contact us

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From the Collections: Paintings

Lynne DeGiacomo

Since the Historical Society began in 1928, it has been the recipient of many gifts. (There are now over 30,000 items in our collections and archives.) At the Society's first board meeting on October 30, 1928, the first gift recorded was a photograph album of old views of Cohasset, donated by Miss Louvan Hyde. The directors also voted to purchase a "stone ax dug up in Cohasset by some Italian laborers." That evening, Miss Charlotte S. Tower, former head librarian of the Paul Pratt Memorial Library, was nominated to be Curator.

In 1934, the Society acquired its first painting, Cohasset Shore From Kimball's Point, by Winckworth Allan Gay of Hingham, given by Mrs. Georgianna Thayer. Since that time the Society has acquired through gift or purchase over 100 paintings; in 2003, after moving to the Pratt Building, 26 more paintings were added to the collection. Many of these are by local artists whose works are eagerly sought by the Society. Others are of local scenes by well-known American artists who came to Cohasset to paint attracted by the beauty of its shores. A portion of these post-move acquired paintings will be on display at the Pratt Building this summer, along with the Society's most recent acquisitions.

Recently, the Society was offered the opportunity to purchase an oil painting by Frank Henry Shapleigh (1842-1906). Shapleigh, born in Boston, studied at the Lowell Institute of Drawing and in Paris at the studio of Emile Lambinet. In 1870 he married Mary Studley of Cohasset, and they lived in New Hampshire but returned often to Cohasset. During this time Shapleigh painted a series of Cohasset seascapes and landscapes, along with his popular views of the White Mountains.

The Society currently has five Shapleigh paintings and is extremely grateful for the opportunity we now have to buy his painting of the Israel Nichols House, the first dwelling built on Jerusalem Road. We plan to exhibit the painting at the Pratt Building this summer and hold an art fund raiser to raise the funds to cover the purchase price. The seller has been gracious in allowing us time to raise the funds and will be loaning us another significant Shapleigh to display as well.

If you would like to help the Society acquire the painting by contributing funds or helping with the fundraiser, please contact us at 781-383-6413 or cohassethistory@yahoo.com

View of Harbor, Cohasset 1878



*Old Lincoln House in Cohasset, 1874-1879
(first house on Jerusalem Road)*



From the Collections: Postcards

Rebecca Bates-McArthur

Early postcards were very simple - the address on one side, the message on the other. They were used for quick messages like "I will be arriving Monday on the 4:15 train" or "I will send you a letter next week after my company leaves." Souvenir postcards were introduced in 1893 to advertize the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. After 1906, the Post Office allowed postcards to have both the address and message on the same side. A new world of collecting pictures through postcards opened up. You could send pictures of your vacation to family and friends without having a camera or show off the town to family members living out of state.

Our postcard collection tells the story of Cohasset through the years with pictures. Let's take a look back at a few places in town.

Cohasset Common

The earliest postcards of the Common include a penny post card of the First Congregational Church, Town Hall and the Frank Browne house (taken by eminent domain by the town and eventually becoming

the town hall parking lot) from 1903 and a card of the "Soldiers and Sailors Memorial" (DAR plaque), at the corner of North Main and Highland Avenue. From 1911, we can look across the Meeting House pond and see the Unitarian Church. There are postcards from before the flagpole was placed on the north end of the Common in 1915. Many of our early postcards show the magnificent trees that ringed the Common.

Cohasset Harbor

Our postcards of Cohasset Harbor show the evolution of the working harbor. An early postcard shows many sailing vessels, and a few motorized boats. A 1909 card has Tower Brothers store, lobster traps and the working areas along the coast. Later, we can see the Town Landing and John Smith Historical marker. More recent pictures include the Lobster Claw, Hugo's Lighthouse and the rapids at Mill Bridge, with work sheds on Government Island in the background. The most recent postcards are aerial shots of the harbor. The

Government Island cards show both work sheds, both Lightkeeper's residences and Beacon Rock, with the structure at the top. We also have cards showing the first and second Sailing Club buildings.

Paul Pratt Memorial Library

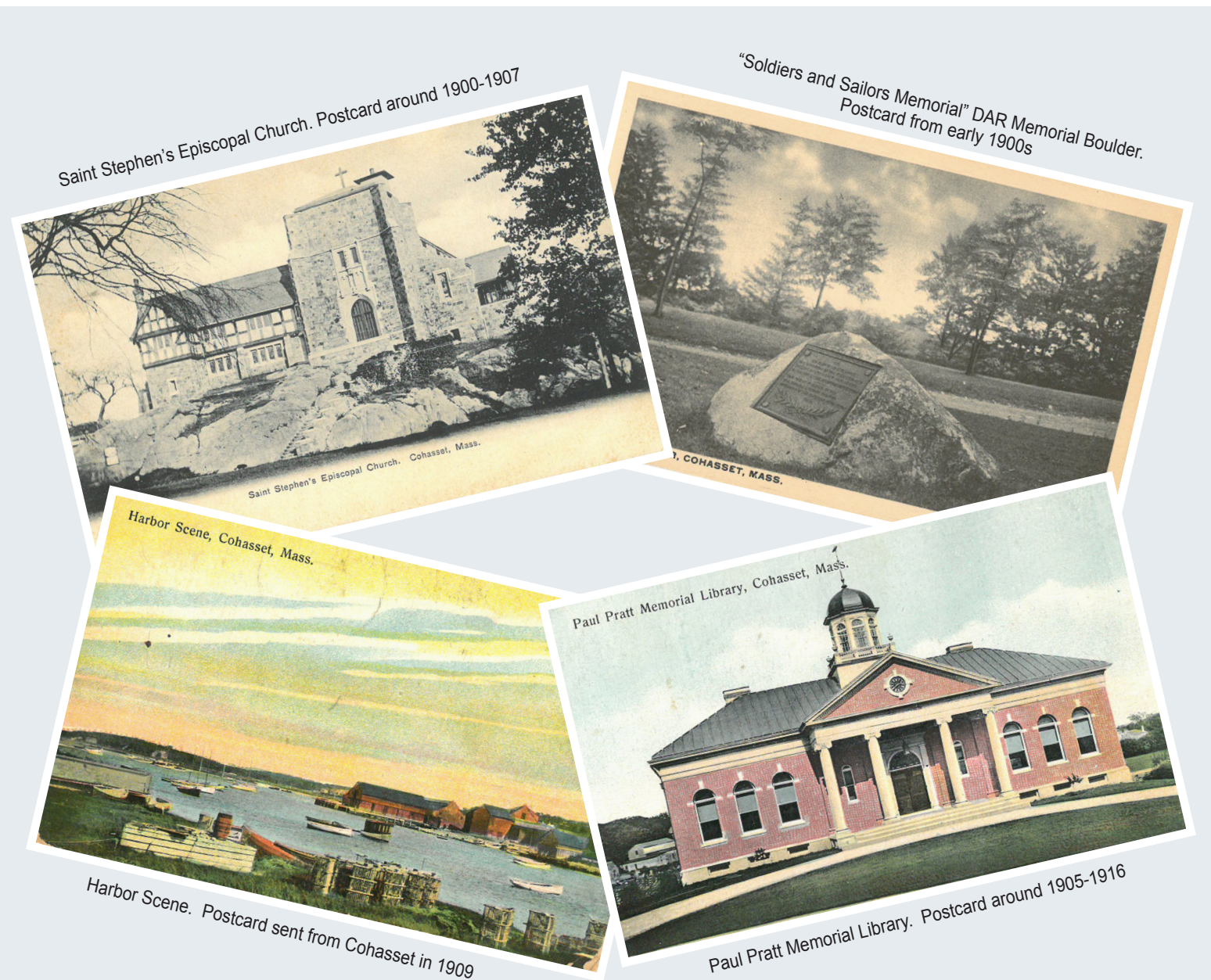
The Paul Pratt Historical Society Building collection starts with a black and white picture, dating to 1905, with the address on one side and a picture and room for a message on the other. Another postcard is a Private Mailing Card and indicates where the one-cent stamp goes. Some cards have no landscaping around the building. A later one shows a car at the front door. Another card shows trees and shrubs growing around the building. For a time, the building had awnings on the windows. A color picture shows the detail of the bricks.

Postcards also give us a record of buildings that are no longer here. Our only visual record of Cohasset's speakeasy is a postcard of the Breaden Cheese Tree Motor Club on Forest Avenue. It is an advertisement inviting people to take a motor trip to Cohasset for

dinner at the club. A postcard of Bassings Beach shows the beach with trees. A St. Stephen's Church postcard shows the church before the Bell Tower was built.

On a personal note, a few years ago I was going through a box of my parents' items and found postcards from all over the South Shore and New England. I sent many of them back to local historical societies and received many kind notes in return. The most interesting response came after I sent two postcards to Chicopee where my mother grew up. I received a thank you and an article about the Indians that had lived in the area. My grandfather was a civil engineer and he had worked on the layout of Westover Air Force Base in 1940. During this time, he found many Indian arrow and spear heads at the base and had put together a mounted collection of them. They had been found in the attic of his house after he died and they were given to the Chicopee Historical Society. His collection has become a major part of the Society's artifacts on Indians in the area.

Postcards can be enjoyed as souvenirs of our current trips and adventures; we can collect them and then look back years later and



On Exhibit: World War II Era Dimestore Toy Soldiers

Joy Pratt Schiffmann

In preparing for our annual Memorial Day Weekend Veterans' Reception this year, we were lucky enough to receive the loan of a fantastic collection of World War II toy soldiers. Local collector Bob Healy (profiled below) was kind enough to assemble a selection of his prized pieces at the Pratt Building.

Dimestore soldiers are a name first given by collector and author Don Pielin to American-made toy soldiers sold individually in five and dime stores from the 1930s to the 1950s before being replaced by plastic toy soldiers called army men. Though most figures were hollowcast metal, composition and plastic dimestore figures were also made. The popularity of the toy soldier reflected public interest in wars around the world and America's own military preparedness of the era.

The largest manufacture of toy soldiers in the United States in the 1930s and early 1940s was the Barclay Manufacturing Company. Prices of the soldiers were mostly kept to five cents, making them affordable to children. Other manufacturers made similar figures

in mostly comparable sizes. The soldier's uniforms changed with military fashion, going from high collar to open collar and from puttees to leggings.

In 1942 lead toy production ceased when American toy soldiers were manufactured in composition, plastic and paper. Production resumed in 1945 with molds reconfigured to the M1 helmet but prices rose to 10 and later 15 cents. In the early 1950s Barclay conserved metal by designing new figures with a large "pod foot" instead of the usual base.

The low cost of mass amounts of unpainted plastic figures, the increasing cost of the price of metal, and the dangers of metal toys led to the demise of the dimestore soldier.

Barclay's biggest rival, the Manoil Manufacturing Co., ceased trading in 1959. Barclay ceased trading in 1971.

Source: O'Brien, Richard, *Collecting American Made Toy Soldiers, Edition #3, 1997, Books Americana*



Barclay and Manoil "Medical Core Group" lead military toys



A regiment of lead cast "Dimestore" Barclay and Manoil lead toy soldiers

Member Profile: Bob Healy

Joy Pratt Schiffmann

Collecting is a passion for Bob, a lifelong resident of Cohasset, and frequent visitor to the Society.

During the town's 2015 celebration of the landing of Captain John Smith, Bob loaned us his collection of artifacts and photographs from Native American sites around town, which included arrowheads and shots of fire pits on the banks of the Aaron River Reservoir. Currently, we are featuring his extensive antique toy soldier collection dating back to World War II at the Pratt Building.

Bob is a 1980 graduate of Cohasset high school and spent 35 years as a lobsterman. At one time he had as many as 500 traps. Bob thinks of the ocean and the waters around Cohasset as an important extension to his formal education. He now does landscaping and spends a great deal of time searching for Cohasset artifacts. Whether he finds them in a house that he is helping to clear out, or he digs

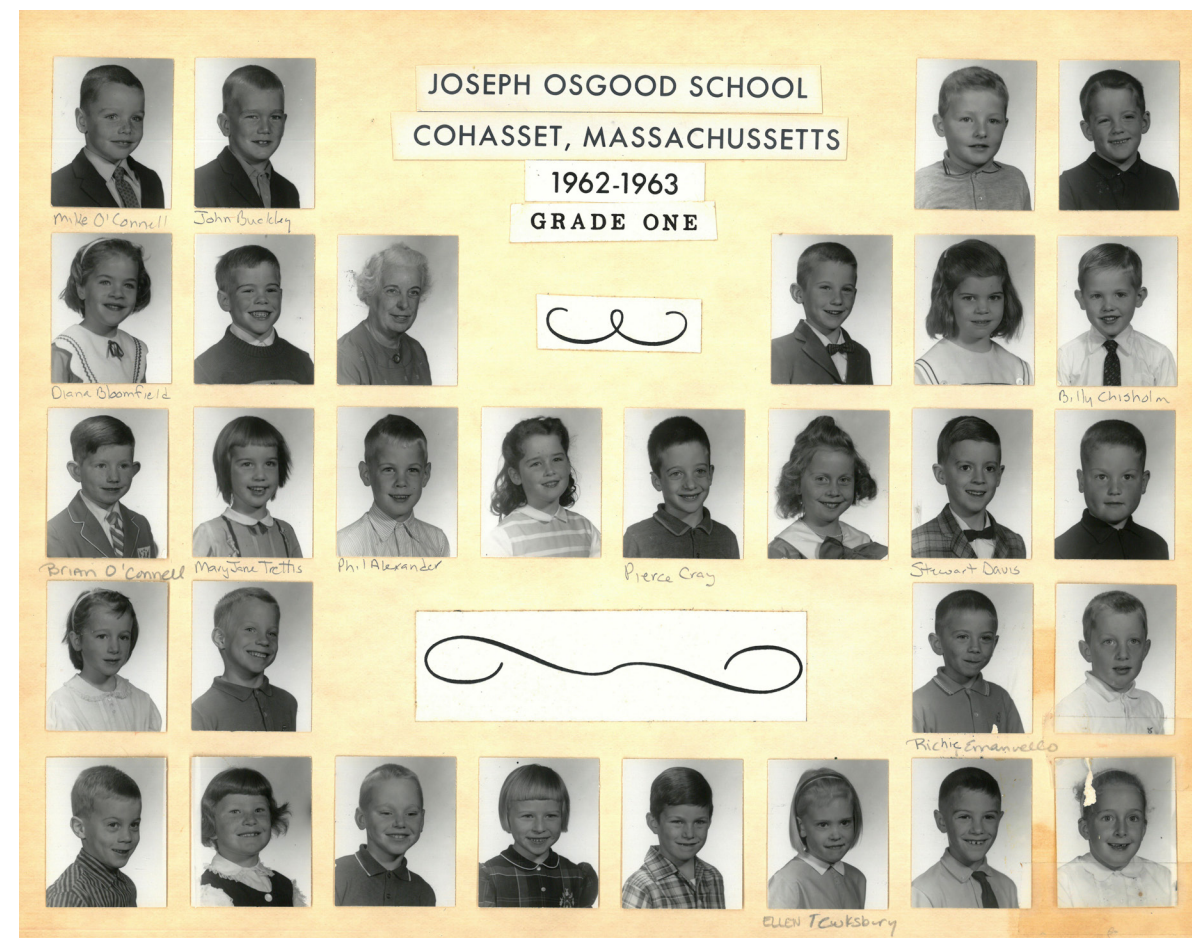


them up in the woods or along the shore, "Bob's treasures," as we have come to call them, are often intriguing and always tell a story. He enjoys visiting the Society and loves the people who he sees there. "They are interested in the things that I find and the stories that I have to tell."

He lives near the village with his wife, Michelle. In addition to loving Cohasset, he has traveled a great deal, enjoying trips to St. John's, Nova Scotia and the Virgin Islands, Texas, California, Aruba, Maine and cabins in New Hampshire. His other interests include fishing, hunting, camping, gardening, and spending time with his canine companion, Willy, the black Labrador retriever.

What he likes best about the Society is that we are helping to preserve the Town's history. His greatest wish is that the Native American caves and sites in Cohasset could be protected.

Current Exhibit: Photos from the Osgood School



The Historical Society recently received a large collection of photographs from the Osgood School. This is an exciting collection that fills many gaps in our archives and we are eager to share it with you. Photographs range from the 1950s through the 1990s, with a few photographs from the 1930s and 1940s sprinkled in. We are planning on exhibiting the collection at the Pratt Building through the summer. Please stop by and help us identify some of your classmates! We have identified a few of these students but we still need your help with the rest, along with many of the other photographs in this new collection.

Gracie Pennant Update

In the Autumn 2015 newsletter we updated you on our progress toward the restoration of the *Gracie* pennant (profiled in the Summer 2015 newsletter). We are happy to report that we have now received the funds required to complete the restoration. The pennant has been delivered to Marie Schlag, textile conservator, and restoration began on June 1, which just happens to be Grace Everett Tower's birthday. Grace's Cohasset ancestors went back nine generations. According to Davenport's Cohasset Genealogy, her father Levi was a hair dealer and the founder of the Atlantic Musical Association. He also was the owner of the *Gracie*, the schooner yacht he named after his eldest child. The family resided on Highland Avenue near the Common.

Once the restoration is complete we must decide whether to store the pennant or place it on exhibit. While our preference would be to have the pennant on display in the lobby of the Pratt Building, we would need to continue our fundraising efforts in order to do so.

Therefore, we will continue to accept donations to the "*Gracie Fund*" in the hope that once the restoration is complete, this beautiful pennant can be mounted in the Pratt Building as a visual reminder of Cohasset's maritime past.



Diary of Drusilla Snow Percival 1857-1858



Captain John Peter Turner Percival and his wife Drusilla Snow Percival lived in Cohasset on South Main Street. Starting on October 7, 1857, Drusilla and two of her children accompanied Captain Percival on a voyage to Constantinople during which she kept a diary of their experiences. This is the thirty-fourth installment of her diary, written while crossing the Atlantic on the bark Vesta and on the Pathfinder during the return journey. (Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are as they appear in the diary.)

Friday, May 28th, 1858

Calm all night this morning at 6 o'clock a breeze from the West a head wind. Very pleasant and nearly calm.

This afternoon a breeze from SWest and a head sea we are opposite the Western Islands, though some distance to the North of them

Saturday, May 29th, 1858

Moderate this morning wind SWest, and is against us. We have no luck in fair winds. we are too far to the North.

This afternoon we have a strong breeze from SWest and a strong head sea. The vessels motions are very easy and comfortable when she rises and falls. wind increased towards night with rain squalls.

Sunday, May 30th, 1858

Pleasant again this morning with a Southerly wind but during the forenoon had heavy squalls and took in light sail.

During afternoon squalls continued, reefed top sails, a heavy head sea, but no water on decks. wind moderate towards night and pleasant.

If we were not so far to the North this wind which is SWest would be fair for us.

Monday, May 31st, 1858

This is the last day of May pleasant, wind the same, after breakfast saw a Schooner to the windward. She made signals to speak with us, she was bound East with a fair wind. We immediately tacked ship and waited for her, at half past ten o'clock AM within hail. They wanted some bread and flour. Capt Kallock told the Capt to send his boat alongside and he would send him some, which he did, they had not a biscuit on board. Capt Kallock sent then a barrel of bread and some flour.



They sent in exchange some fresh Castine Nuts. It was an English Schooner The Shark from Peru S America had been out 35 days They had one Lady Passenger wind increased towards night. The Schooner was bound to Liverpool.

Tuesday, June 1st, 1858

A fresh breeze from the NWest with squalls with a head sea, which makes it rough more so than it has been since we have been out, yet we have no water on the decks and we are comfortable any way, but we should feel better satisfied if we were going on direct course home but we gain some notwithstanding. The wind and waves are against us.

My thoughts are at home to day. This is our little Drusy's birthday, she is one year old. I would like to have been at home but could not. The children spend it as a Holiday in memory of their little Sister.

Wednesday, June 2nd, 1858

The weather continues the same during the last 24 hours rain squalls and sunshine, sometimes blowing a gale and then nearly calm, we are under short sail reefed top sail and courses. This is the third day of rough weather and the sixth of head wind we are doomed to have our share of contrary winds anyway. We have passed the Western Islands. We have not headed our course direct for 8 days.

Thursday, June 3rd, 1858

Today is much more comfortable, the wind has moderated and the sea is smoother, and squalls are not so frequent, but the wind is still NWest, we are heading South West and have been some days.

The wind is gradually dying out, and the weather is very pleasant, we may have a fair wind tomorrow There are vessels in sight to day, one has not been for several days with the exception of one or two bound East.

Friday, June 4th, 1858

This morning is very fine and moderate, the wind is still NWest and very light. At 12 o'clock PM nearly calm. Capt Kallock and all hands engaged in painting the vessel. This afternoon we have a little breeze from the Westward, a head wind again.

In the next installment, the passengers of the Pathfinder have a rare sighting of a humpback whale near the vessel as they continue the journey home.

Image source:
The Blue World Web Museum

Osgood School Kindergarten Visit



On Friday, May 6, twenty-two Osgood School kindergarten students from Mrs. DeWaal's class visited the Pratt Building as part of their "Learn About Your Town" curriculum. We had a wonderful hour that sped by with a scavenger hunt and an object guessing game, along with a healthy dose of history and many questions. It would be hard to name a highlight of the morning as the students loved the WWII toy soldier exhibit and the MacIvor Reddie murals.

While the students sat around the Society's meeting room table, we had a chance to tell them what the Historical Society does. Many promised to return. We hope they do!

What is this object? It was difficult for them to guess. Can you? The children thought it could be used to lift something or maybe used to pick something.

2015 Annual Appeal Update

Captain John Wilson Society Donors

- Meredith Golden, *in memory of Albert and Edith Golden*
- Virginia Gray, *in memory of Adelaide and William Pratt*
- Jane Krone, *in memory of Irwin and Elizabeth Golden*

Special Thanks

- Peter Logan and Rick Curtis of Curtis Liquors - donation for the Veterans' Reception
- George H. Mealy, Post 118 - donation for the Veterans' Reception
- Marie Schlag, for ongoing assistance with our Textile Collection
- Cohasset Brownie Troop 76171 and their Leader Kathryn Williams for their interest in town history and their kind donation to the Society

Wish List

- \$275 to frame MacIvor Reddie coast-line watercolor
- \$450 to frame MacIvor Reddie Captain John Smith watercolor
- \$310 for a machine to convert our extensive video collection to a digital format
- \$415 to print photographs of the Cohasset Horse Show, c. 1930 from existing glass slides

New Members

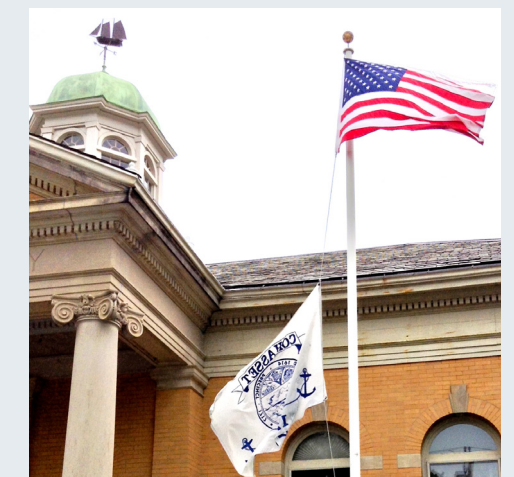
Stephen Sinopoli	Christine Staples
Sheila Sullivan	Eugene Suzedell

The Society notes with sadness the passing of

Vivien Bobo	Edwin Pratt
Jane Dolph	Eileen Pratt
Thomas Healy	Darleen Ritter
Barbara Meehan	David Weltman
Joseph Perroncello	Ellen Winn

Gift Shop Item: Cohasset Town Flag

Order your Cohasset Town Flag today for only \$45 and fly it proudly beneath Old Glory this 4th of July, and throughout the year. Flags can be purchased at the Pratt Building or from the website: www.cohassethistoricalsociety.org



Richard Pickering with Society member Lanier Grassie, his Braintree High School French teacher

2016 Annual Spring Dinner

The Society's Spring Dinner was held on Sunday, April 24 at the Atlantica Restaurant on Cohasset Harbor. Richard Pickering, Executive Director of the Plimoth Plantation, portrayed Phineas Pratt.

Richard is one of our favorite guests. His previous portrayal for the Society was of Captain John Smith.

Calendar of Events

LECTURE SERIES

September 14, Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Light refreshments

7:30 p.m. Speaker: Jack Buckley

Topic: *Cohasset Maritime Institute and Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research*

Pratt Building

October 12, Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Light refreshments

7:30 p.m. Speaker: David Noonan

Topic: *Scituate Art Colony*

Pratt Building

November 16, Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Light refreshments

7:30 p.m. Speaker: Eric Eisenhauer

Topic: *The History of Roses*

Pratt Building

SAVE THE DATES

September 10, Saturday

(Rain Date, September 11, Sunday)

Clambake

4:00 p.m. Sandy Beach

October 23, Sunday

2016 Annual Meeting

5:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Bancroft Hall - Government Island

OPEN HOURS

Pratt Building • 106 South Main Street

Monday- Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

1810 Captain John Wilson House and c.1760 Maritime Museum located at 4 Elm Street

open from June 18 through August 27

Wednesday - Friday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

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SPRING-SUMMER 2016

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