



HISTORICAL

highlights

Summer 2019

Cohasset Historical Society Newsletter

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From the President

Dear Members and Friends,

Maritime! Maritime! Maritime! That is what this issue is all about. The Society's Maritime Museum, formerly the ca. 1754 Bates Ship Chandlery, is in the final stages of a restoration project funded in part by the Community Preservation Act. In addition, the Society has received a generous donation from the Parker Family in memory of their mother, Constance Woodman Peterson Parker. Connie was the first woman president of the Society and served from 1974 to 1986. A new stairway to the second floor will be constructed, based on recent research, with a plaque bearing her name.

Since the exhibits at the Maritime Museum have been placed in storage, the empty building is a perfect venue for our fundraising event on Saturday, September 14. Plan to join us for craft beer and oysters, appetizers and music from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. This is a wonderful opportunity to see the restoration in progress.

Speculation about a ghost at the museum began at the 1962 Annual Meeting. During a talk there by Fran Hagerty about old sailing ships, odd noises were heard from the second floor that sounded like heavy footsteps. Over the years, other people also have experienced that same occurrence. Surprisingly enough, I am one of them. For more about such paranormal activities, I recommend David Wadsworth's pamphlet, *Do We Have a Ghost????*, which is available at the Pratt Building.

Unfortunately, I am sad to report that the Society has lost a treasure. Eleanor Gleason Bleakie passed away peacefully at home on July 2, 2019. She was a wonderful friend and supporter of the Society, especially at the time we purchased the Pratt Building. She co-chaired the benefit auction, *A Backward Glance and the Art Deco Gala* in 2006, *More Stately Mansions Tour* in 2008, *Gardens at the Gulf* in 2010 and the *Seaside Mansions Tour* in 2015. A Society board member from 1986 to 1992, an Honorary Director in 1996 and 1997, Eleanor served again on the board from 2011 until her passing.

The Society will be celebrating Eleanor's life and times with an exhibit at the Pratt building from September 12 through Thursday, September 19. I encourage you to come and share your stories.

My very warmest regards,

Kathleen L. O'Malley, President

Our Current Exhibit

Ongoing at the Pratt Building is our exhibit **Signs, Signs, Everywhere a Sign!** Balancing stories about Cohasset natives – innkeeper Thomas Smith and shoemaker Philander Bates among others – are the remarkable accounts of Oscar F.B. Petersen, who arrived from Denmark in 1896 and within two years started Petersen's Real Estate, and Carlo Conte, cabinetmaker from Amarone, Italy, who came to the United States in 1923, and Hungarian Hugo Ormo, who opened Hugo's Restaurant on Border Street in 1926.





A NEW DIARY SERIES Margaret Hall 1876-1963

This is the second installment from Margaret Hall's memoir, a typescript narrative documenting her year on the western front in France in 1918.

Soon after we left the harbor, we were in war form. Guns pointed outward, lifeboats swung out, ladders ready. In two hours the zigzagging began which we are to keep up most of the way across.

At three o'clock we had our lifeboat drill. Having watched the soldiers we knew what to do, and did it as a matter of course. Our boat is discouraging; there are three children, the three nurses in my stateroom, some third class passengers, two officers, and five nuns, a rather helpless collection. We adjusted each other's life preservers, and noticed that those on the small people doubled over a good deal in front, and those on the large people wouldn't meet at all; but there was no joking about it.

At the bugle call at sunset, the port holes are closed and although they are painted black, wooden covers are put over them to make doubly sure that no light can escape. Every once in a while the first night, a soldier would forget and light a match, but it was instantly put out.

It has been hot and breathless in the Gulf Stream. The balloons, chasers and aeroplanes, (which paid us occasional visits), left us one by one the

first day, and now we are sailing along calmly in a safety zone. It is sociable to have so much company on the ocean. Wherever you look there are big transports camouflaged in crazy ways, one a perfect zebra, all going in different directions but all keeping together. A tanker passed us a little while ago and the battle ship fired three shots over her bow. She was allowed to proceed, however, after giving a satisfactory account of herself.

Besides the large organizations, we have representatives of the Friends, and of Christian Scientists, some of the Smith Unit - Ruth Gaines, author of "A Village in Picardy;" a Miss Colgate, who is to join the Anne Morgan unit, as a master mechanic in charge of ten trucks - they can be turned into ambulances if necessary - one of which was given by her family. She is little, slight and attractive, and plays the piano most charmingly. I hate to have her a mechanic for fear something will happen to her fingers. She has studied with Leschetizky, and has evidently been a mechanic for some time. I know less than anyone, almost, on board and feel I'd better ship for home right away.

We are thirty-five Red Cross workers, twenty nurses, not altogether prepossessing all of them, and fifteen of our kind. Our leader, Dr. Bradley, is especially nice. She is taking over films to show the people how to take care of the young and

coming generations. I have the nicest nurses of all in my stateroom. They are from Seattle, Minnesota, and Canada. The Salvation Army girls are most dignified. The one I have talked with joined the Army because she wanted hard work. One of the Knights of Columbus who speaks to Mrs. Earle and me turned out to be a New York ex-policeman, who has been at the East 35 th Street Station a long time, and knows our locality like a book. He is a great big man of very liberal views. He tried to make the service

in every way he could, but was too old, and finally accomplished his end in this way. His wife would have come if it had been allowed, a daughter has already gone, one son is in the Navy, another is an aviator, as are three nephews. He is living up to his conviction that if America is not good enough to fight for, she is not good enough to live in, and those who won't fight or work for her had better get out.

At ten o'clock a fine looking and finely developed young lieutenant gives us setting up exercises, and any woman who wants to take them, can. I turn out, as I've always wanted a chance to do the military exercises.

We furnish much amusement to the on-lookers. After dinner we are called to attention by the bugle and stand up for medical inspection. "We," the Red Cross, being semi-official, come under military control.

In the next installment, Hall continues to describe her fellow passengers and what daily life is like on board the USS Chicago.

Maritime Museum News

Come celebrate with us the beginning of fall on September 14th and a new chapter in the life of the Society's 1754 ship's chandlery. As we plan new installations for our permanent maritime collection, we welcome your ideas and your time:

- Researching the ship voyages of a Cohasset sea captain
- Discovering Cohasset women who went to sea
- Preparing an exhibit on ship building in Cohasset during the great Age of Sail
- Locating objects for a ship's chandlery to be installed on the first floor

And, for those of you who restore old ship models: We have at least six that need basic repairs, and another six that require expert care. If you are not a hands-on lover of boats, then consider Adopting-a-ship or sharing in the funding of the restoration of one.

Or, if you are a map person, help us plan an interactive exhibit that tells the story of Cohasset, from when it was a small fishing village to its prominence as a ship-building town during the great Age of Sail.

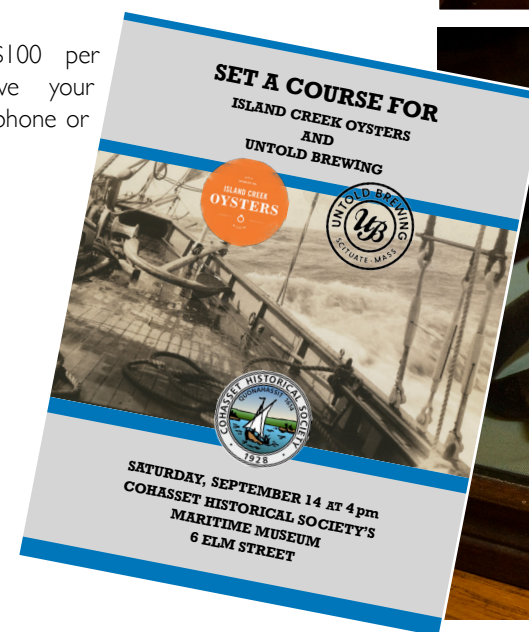
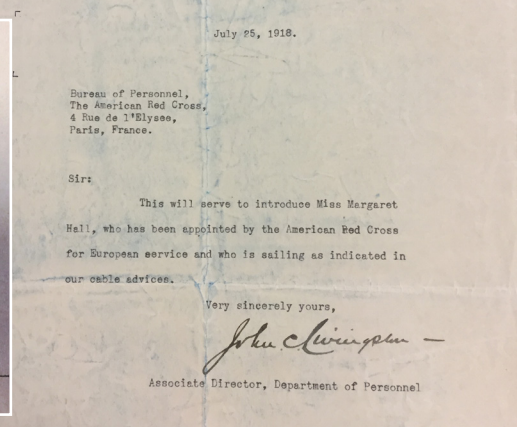
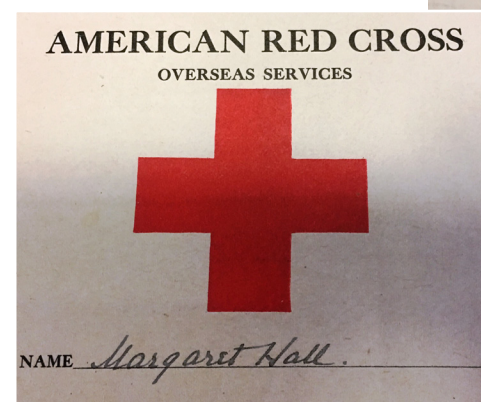
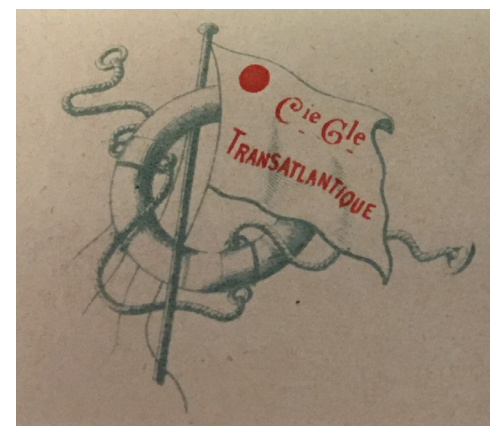
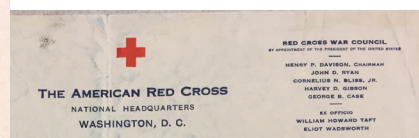
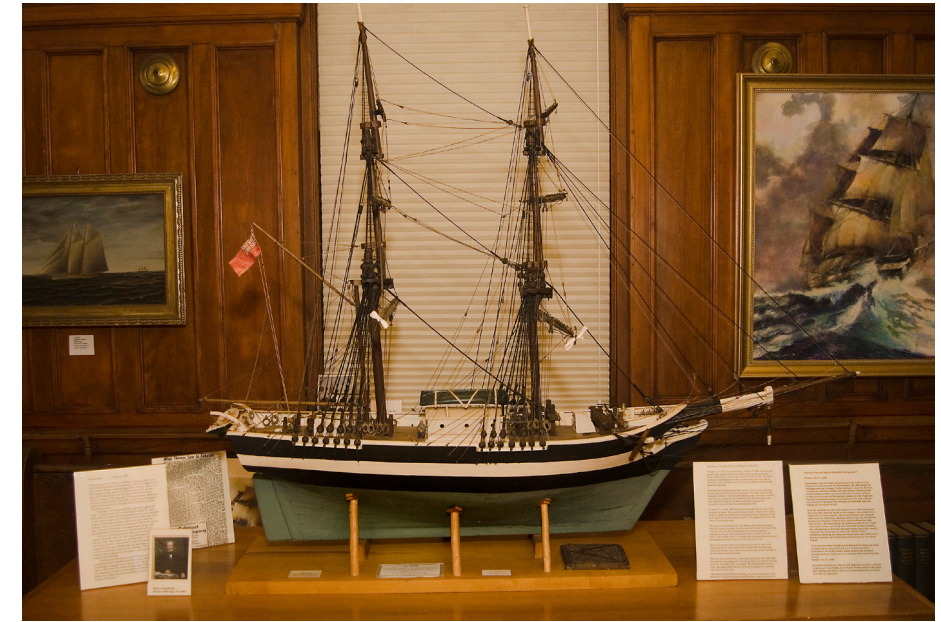
Further funding is also needed before we can reopen, hopefully in summer 2020. While the building was undergoing restoration, we found evidence of the original location of the staircase to the second floor. We also are sure that there were wood planks on the first floor walls. An exterior shutter with original hardware was discovered when we opened up the north side wall. Other architectural elements were located as we emptied the building for restoration. Your gifts - small and large will serve to insure that visitors have the most historically appropriate as well as pleasing environment as possible.

Join us for our fund raiser on Saturday, September 14 from 4:00- 8:00 p.m. Craft beer, oysters, appetizers and live music will kick off the celebration at our Elm Street museums.

Tickets are \$100 per person, reserve your spot today by phone or email.

Space is limited.

E-vite to follow.





Cohasset Historical Society
106 South Main Street
Cohasset, MA 02025

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SUMMER 2019 NEWSLETTER

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2019

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18

David Fresina, documentary producer
and screenwriter

Walking Tour: When the Witches Came to Town

1:00 p.m.

Meet at the First Parish Unitarian Church
on the Common

\$10 per person, kindly contact us
781.383.1434 to reserve your spot

MONDAY, AUGUST 19

Gael Daly, author and photographer *Cohasset from A to Z*

Children's Program
1:00 p.m.

Pratt Building

Through group activities, Daly will encourage
childrens' imaginations and observation skills.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Memorial Service for Eleanor Gleason Bleakie

2:00 p.m.

First Parish Meeting House

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Celebrate Fall, Fundraiser

Craft beer and oysters, appetizers and music
4:00-8:00 p.m.

Maritime Museum

SAVE THESE DATES

SATURDAY-SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19-20

Marley Rabstenek, art appraiser

Appraisal Weekend
Details to follow

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

Cohasset Historical Society 2019 Annual Meeting

Venue and Speaker TBD

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

Holiday Party

6:00 p.m.

Pratt Building

6 "table-top" decorated trees for sale

OPEN HOURS

Pratt Building, 106 South Main Street
Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

1810 Captain John Wilson House
Open until August 24

Thursday-Saturday, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Ca. 1754 Maritime Museum
Reopens in Summer 2020

Beechwood Meetinghouse and Museum
Friday-Saturday, 1:00-3:00 p.m.