

# MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report

## CHATHAM

Report Date: 1984

Associated Regional Report: Cape Cod and the Islands

**Reconnaissance Survey Town Reports**, produced for MHC's Statewide Reconnaissance Survey between 1979 and 1987, introduce the historical development of each of the Commonwealth's municipalities. Each report begins with an historic overview, a description of topography, and political boundaries. For the purposes of the survey, the historic period has been subdivided into seven periods: Contact (1500–1620), Plantation (1620–1675), Colonial (1675–1775), Federal (1775–1830), Early Industrial (1830–1870), Late Industrial (1870–1915), and Early Modern (1915–1940/55). Each report concludes with survey observations that evaluate the town's existing historic properties inventory and highlight significant historic buildings, settlement patterns, and present threats to these resources. A bibliography lists key secondary resources.

Town reports are designed for use together with a series of town maps that demarcate settlement patterns, transportation corridors and industrial sites for each historic period. These maps are in the form of color-coded, polyester overlays to the USGS topographic base map for each town on file and available for consultation at MHC. For further information on the organization and preparation of town reports, readers should contact MHC.

Users should keep in mind that these reports are now two decades or more old. The information they contain, including assessments of existing knowledge, planning recommendations, understanding of local development, and bibliographic references all date to the time they were written. In some cases, information on certain topics was not completed. No attempt has been made to update this information.

Electronic text was not available for digital capture, and as a result most of the reports have been scanned as PDF files. While all have been processed with optical character recognition, there will inevitably be some character recognition errors.

The activity that is the subject of the MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior. This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20240.



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## MHC RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY REPORT

DATE: 1984

COMMUNITY: Chatham

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### I. TOPOGRAPHY

The town of Chatham is located at the "elbow" of Cape Cod in the area often known as the Outer Cape. The town lies in latitude 41° 41' north and longitude 69° 56' west. It is approximately 95 miles from Boston. The town is bounded by Pleasant Bay and Orleans to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, the Nantucket Sound to the south, and Harwich to the west and northwest.

Geologically the town is divided by two principal surficial deposits. Virtually the entire town is covered by Harwich Outwash Plain deposits (Oldale and Koteff 1970; Oldale 1969). Chatham Kame deposits are also present in the southeast portion of the township. Beach, swamp, marsh, and dune deposits are present along the town's southern and eastern shoreline. Swamp and marsh deposits are also present in interior wetland areas. Topographically the town is hilly with numerous ridges and narrow valleys. In general, elevations average 50 feet or less, although some higher points of relief are present.

Soils within the town are generally sandy. In the Harwich Outwash Plain deposits, deposits are characterized by medium to fine sands containing scattered pebbles and cobbles (Oldale 1969). Some large boulders are also present. In the Chatham Kame areas, deposits are characterized by mostly pebbly to cobbly sand with some pebble and cobble gravel and scattered boulders (Oldale and Doteff 1979). Lumber cutting and wind erosion depleted most areas that were good agriculturally during the early settlement.

Chatham was originally covered with tall stands of pine and some oak. Cedars were also present in wetland areas. The forest cover was practically clear cut by ca. 1800, resulting in secondary growth patterns today.

Both subsurface and surface drainage patterns exist in the town. Surface drainage exists through the town's numerous freshwater ponds and wetlands. Major freshwater ponds include Goose Pond, Lover's Lake, Schoolhouse Pond, and White Pond. Surface drainage is also present through numerous tidal rivers, creeks, and ponds. Some of these areas include Crow's Pond, Ryder Cove, Oyster Pond, Oyster Pond River, Stage Harbor, Mitchell River, Bucks Creek, Mill Creek, Red River, and Mill Pond. Other major bodies of water include Pleasant Bay and Chatham Harbor.

Several islands, large bodies of salt marsh and beach areas are also present in the town. Monomoy Island, the largest island, is present at the town's southeastern tip. Stage Island and Morris Island are also present in that area. Strong Island is also present in Pleasant Bay. Large bodies of salt marsh are present

throughout the town's southern and eastern shoreline. Major beach areas in the town include the largest, Nauset Beach, a large barrier beach separating Chatham Harbor and Pleasant Bay from the Atlantic Ocean and Harding Beach at the southern tip of the town.

Chatham's coastline contains several coastal inlets which offer potential harbor locations for vessels of most classes. Chatham Harbor afforded the best anchorage for larger vessels, followed by Stage Harbor. Virtually every other tidal cove, pond, river, or creek afforded anchorage for smaller vessels, particularly those engaged in fishing.

## II. POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

The territory made up of the lands purchased in 1665 by William Nickerson from local natives, and subsequent purchases, was established as the Constablewick of "Manomoit" in 1679, with western Muddy Creek and Red River boundaries with Harwich presumably set at this time. In 1712, the district of Manomoit was incorporated as the town of Chatham. A territorial dispute with Harwich over Strong Island in Pleasant Bay was settled in 1800.

## III. HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Chatham is a resort community located at the elbow of the Cape Cod peninsula between Pleasant Bay to the north and Nantucket South to the south, including Nauset Beach east of Chatham Harbor and Monomoy Island to the south. Native activity in the Monomoyick area was widely distributed at coastal and estuarine sites. Location of reported native village sites remained undetermined. Early 17th-century European exploration included three-week 1606 visitation by Champlain at Stage Harbor that resulted in native/European hostilities. Permanent colonial settlement was initiated in 1664 at Ryder Cove in the north. Native settlement continued through the late 17th century, with Christian meetinghouse site in the west near the Monomoy River headwaters. Late 17th-century colonial meetinghouse was established on a central site along the Queen Anne highway corridor. Settlement in the 18th century dispersed along coastal necks, with local agricultural, fishing, and whaling economy, increasingly supplemented by coasting activity. The 18th-century maritime focus at Old Harbor (south of Allen Point) was surpassed in the early 19th century by Chatham Harbor wharves to the south near the Chatham lights (1808). A secondary focus persisted at Stage Harbor in the south. Local settlement increasingly concentrated in the east, and by 1830 the civic center had shifted east to the Main Street corridor north of Oyster Pond. Mid-19th century secondary center developed at South Chatham north of Mill Creek. Shellfishing remained important through the 19th century, while the cod and mackerel fisheries saw a late 19th-century decline. Railroad connections (1887) led to summer resort activity, hotel construction (including surviving Chatham Bars Inn of 1914), and renewed growth of Chatham Village. Marconi transatlantic radio facilities, located at Chatham Port in 1913, survive. Summer home and resort development continued at Chatham Village and dispersed

coastal sites through the early 20th century. Dispersed 18th and 19th century dwellings survive, with Federal, high-story concentration in Nickersons Neck area, and partly intact Main Street streetscape east of Mill Pond. Chatham Village retains numerous mid-19th century components on Main Street with southern residential concentration along Stage Harbor Road. Subsequent late 19th- and early 20th-century resort-oriented residential and commercial development remains at Chatham Village, with notable surviving hotel and summer estate district along Shore Road. Extensive suburban development continues to threaten dispersed archaeological sites. Abandonment and commercial development persists along Route 28, with intensive strip growth west of Chatham Village, and threatens surviving 19th-century settlement components.

#### IV. CONTACT PERIOD (1500-1620)

##### A. Transportation Routes

Exact locations of Contact period Native American trails are unknown for Chatham during the period. However, several trails are conjectural on the basis of earlier period site locations, later period known trails, the destruction of environmental resources, expected trails in surrounding towns, and the sightings of Natives and explorations by early European travelers. Being located at the "elbow" of the Cape, several major trails likely traversed the Chatham area. For example, one or more trails likely passed through South Chatham in an east/west direction near the coast. This trail probably skirted the northern boundary of coastal marshes and ponds crossing tidal rivers at convenient fording places. This trail likely connected similar Native trails in Harwich and Dennis with the Chatham area. A major trail likely existed in the eastern portion of Chatham also. This trail probably skirted the western periphery of coves and ponds bordering Pleasant Bay in a north/south orientations connecting with trails in the East Harwich and South Orleans area. In fact, a fording point has been reported at the mouth of Muddy Creek (Deyo 1980: 829) along the Chatham/Harwich border. A third major trail may also have existed in the central Chatham area in the vicinity of Queen Anne Road. This road was established early, reportedly along the location of an earlier Native trail. In addition to the possible major trails listed above, secondary trails also likely existed leading from major trails to coastal areas, interior ponds and possible village locations.

##### B. Population

Little direct evidence exists from which accurate population estimates can be made regarding native populations in the Outer Cape area. Furthermore, while individual accounts often subdivide Outer Cape native populations into subgroups such as Nauset, Pamet, Sauguatucketts, Monomoyicks, etc., the term Nauset Indian generally applies throughout the Cape area. Mooney (1928:4) lists 1,200 Nauset natives before the 1617-19 epidemics. This number was reduced to ca. 500 by 1621 (Mooney and Thomas 1910:40-41). As indicated above, these statistics probably refer to the entire

native population of the Outer Cape area. Furthermore, it is doubtful whether or not those estimates are entirely accurate.

Locally, in the Chatham area, native populations are often referred to as the Monomoyicks and possibly the Potonumecots in the northern portion of town. Few references are available regarding population estimates for this group during the Contact period. However, Champlain estimated 500 to 600 natives in 1606, which was probably inaccurate. In any event, a plague in 1616 may have severely reduced the population, for in 1622 Bradford said there were few natives in the area.

### C. Settlement Pattern

European settlements did not exist in Chatham during the period. However, some contact between Natives and Europeans in the Chatham area undoubtedly took place as European explorers and fishermen frequented the area long before settlement. For example, Gosnold may have visited the area as early as 1602. Later, in 1606, Champlain spent approximately three weeks in the Stage Harbor area exploring and mapping. Champlain named the harbor Port Unfortunate since hostilities arose with the local Natives resulting in four whites and probably many more Natives being killed. Governor Bradford and other Englishmen of Plymouth also visited Chatham in 1622 on a trading expedition, obtaining corn and beans from the Natives.

Natives had settled the Chatham area for some time prior to European contact. Known Late Woodland period sites are present throughout much of the town, particularly in southern and eastern coastal areas bordering Nantucket Sound and Pleasant Bay areas. Late Woodland period artifact listings with general town provenience also indicate the extent to which this area was settled during that period. All known sites and artifact listings generally exhibit site locational preferences for various coastal estuarine areas such as marshes, rivers, and ponds.

While probable Contact period sites are present in Chatham, none actually represent village locations. Instead, probable burials and Late Woodland period sites with potential Contact period components are present. Considerable evidence is available indicating the presence of Contact period villages in Chatham. However, the problem is finding the sites and recognizing them as Contact period sites once they are found.

Native place names also survive for the Chatham area, possibly indicating the extent to which Natives either inhabited and/or used this area. For example, Monomoy Island still bears the name of the original settlement and Native tribal area Monomoyick. Morris Island also retains Native names for its locales, such as the Quitnesset area. Other Native names include Monomesset Neck (Nickersons Neck), Monnamoiet River (Muddy Creek), and Cotchpinicut Neck for the neck in the North Chatham area.

Thus, known Late Woodland and Contact period sites, artifact listings with general town provenience, and Native place names all

provide evidence of settlement in the Chatham area during the Contact period. These sources of evidence also provide corroboration of regional and Cape settlement preferences for coastal areas such as necks, estuaries, tidal rivers, and ponds.

#### D. Subsistence Pattern

Since European settlements were not present in the Chatham area during this period, European subsistence probably followed that of the native inhabitants in the area. While some food was undoubtedly carried with early explorers, traders, and fishermen, the bulk of their subsistence was probably secured through hunting, fishing, the gathering of wild plants and shellfish and the trade, stealing, or purchase of agricultural products (e.g., corn or turkey wheat) from the local Native Americans.

Native American subsistence during the Contact period in the Chatham area was probably similar to that practiced in other Cape areas. The combined use of wild and domesticated food resources formed the basis of the subsistence system. It is unknown at present exactly when agriculture or, more specifically, horticulture, was introduced to the natives in the Cape Cod area. However, in the Contact period sufficient quantities of corn, beans, and squash were being purchased for storage and at times for sale or trade to English settlers. Shellfishing, fishing, and hunting were also important subsistence pursuits. In Chatham, numerous tidal areas contain mixed beds of virtually every type of shellfish available in the Cape area. In particular, bay scallops and quahaugs have been historically important and plentiful in the Pleasant Bay and Stage Harbor area. Both fresh and salt water species of fish are also available in the Chatham area. Chatham's several fresh water ponds contain numerous species of fish for consumption. In particular, alewives are present in the Muddy Creek, Frost Fish Creek and Lovers Lake may have had a wider distribution in the past. Pleasant Bay, Stage Harbor, Oyster Pond, Nantucket Sound, and the Atlantic Ocean also provided a wide variety of fish for utilization. Sea mammals, such as whales and seals, were also available.

The wetlands and forested areas of Chatham provided numerous species of mammals for hunting. Wolves were present as well as deer and various furbearers. Various species of ducks were also present in fresh water wetlands and coastal estuarine areas.

### V. PLANTATION PERIOD (1620-1675)

#### A. Transportation Routes

Major transportation routes in the present Chatham area continued to be Native trails throughout most of the period. Few Europeans were settled within the present limits of Chatham at this time. Thus an extensive road network was not needed for settlement areas. Some developments were, however, made. Queen Anne's Road, or the Old Monomoy Road (also called the Barnstable Road), was established shortly after settlement. This roadway is probably the oldest in the area and was apparently developed from an older

Native trail. Other possible Native trails may also have been upgraded or used as roadways during this period. However, most development did not occur until later in the Colonial period. As settled areas began to develop, secondary roads or trails to farmsteads were also likely constructed. As most of the initial settlements were near coastal areas, water travel may also have been important.

#### B. Population

Native populations were in constant decline throughout this period. In fact, by the end of the Plantation period it is unlikely more than 100 Natives remained in the present limits of the township. In 1674 Richard Bourne reported 71 Praying Indians in the town. However, it is unknown where these Natives were living or whether the estimate is correct.

European populations in Chatham were also small during this period. Actual population estimates are difficult to determine since an official census was not made until 1765 and a church congregation was not established until the following Colonial period. Deyo (1890: 594) lists 17 families in Chatham before 1700, some of whom may have been present before 1675.

#### C. Settlement Pattern

While the actual location of specific settlements is unknown, the Chatham area was occupied throughout the Plantation period by Natives known locally as the Monoyicks (Monomicks). By the time of settlement and into the Colonial period, these Natives were reportedly concentrated in the eastern portion of the town. The Potonumecot Indians may also have been present in Chatham, concentrated in the northern portion of town. Richard Bourne began missionary activities with the Natives of Chatham late in the Plantation period. In 1675 he reported 71 Praying Indians in the town.

William Nickerson of Yarmouth purchased lands from the Monomyick Natives as early as 1656. At that time he purchased much of the land in the central portion of town from the sachem Mattaquason. This sale was disputed until 1672 since Nickerson made the purchase without the consent of colonial authorities.

Europeans first settled the Chatham area in 1664 when William Nickerson settled on the west side of Ryder's Cove near the head of the cove. Shortly after Nickerson's settlement, five of his six sons and his three daughters with their husbands also settled in the town. Other settlers also followed, when Nickerson began selling tracts of land in 1674. However, settlement was small and dispersed throughout the period.

#### D. Economic Base

The present-day Chatham area was inhabited by both Europeans and Natives during this period. The Monomyicks and possibly Potonumecot Natives continued to combine wild and domesticate food

resources as their subsistence base. Corn agriculture was important, as were beans and squash. Tobacco may also have been grown. Hunting and fishing were also likely important. Shellfish, whales, seals, and fish were probably exploited along the Nantucket Sound shoreline, in Pleasant Bay, and in the numerous harbors along the coast. Alewives also continued to be important.

Agricultural pursuits characterized all of the early settlements in the Chatham area. Corn was a major crop, as were rye, wheat, and later, flax and tobacco. In the marshes, abundant salt hay was cut for animal fodder. English may also have been grown. Cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, and oxen were also present.

In addition to agriculture and husbandry, European settlers also probably hunted, fished, and gathered wild plants and shellfish to supplement their agricultural subsistence base. Some commercial fishing may also have been present at this time. Europeans may also have exploited drift whales at an early date. Mills are not reported in Chatham during this period.

## VI. COLONIAL PERIOD (1675-1775)

### A. Transportation Routes

While some Native trails may still have been in use during this period, most had been upgraded to roadways sufficient to handle wagon or coach travel. Main roadways continued to be Queen Anne's Road, which also branched to Harwich and Brewster and the Harwich Road (Route 28). Secondary roadways were also present leading to settled areas such as Nickerson's Neck, Eldridge Neck, Ragged Neck (Harding's Neck), the neck between Oyster Pond River and Buck's Creek, and Old Harbor. In coastal areas, wharves were also probably present. However, wharves during this period were probably smaller and not as permanent as later wharves built after the Revolutionary period.

### B. Population

Native populations continued to decline toward extinction throughout this period. In 1685, Governor Hinckley reported 115 Praying Indians in Chatham (Hawes 1913: 21). From this figure Hawes estimated a total Native population of 400 to 500 individuals, many of whom lived outside of Chatham. This estimate may greatly exceed the actual population. In 1698, fourteen Native houses were reported at Monomoit, from which Hawes estimates a Native population between 50 and 70 individuals. This estimate appears much more realistic than Hawes's 1685 figure. By ca. 1764 the Native population in Chatham may have been extinct. In 1759, guardians were appointed for Natives in Harwich, Yarmouth, and Eastham, but none for Chatham. In addition, during the Provincial Census of 1765, four Natives are reported in Eastham, 91 in Harwich, but none in Chatham (Hawes 1913: 22).

European populations grew rather slowly in the Chatham area. In 1694, 150 inhabitants were reported at Monomoit (Hawes 1913: 22).



Deyo (1890: 594) lists 17 families in Chatham before 1700, with 16 additional names after that date. Subsequently, between 1700 and 1720, Hawes (1913: 20) lists ten families in the town. Thus from 1675 to ca. 1720 varying estimates of Chatham's population are present, ranging from around 50 to 150 inhabitants. In 1765 the first Provincial Census was taken, listing 678 individuals, followed by 929 individuals in the 1776 census. It is likely the population boom from ca. 1720 to 1765 resulted from increases in fishing and other maritime-related trades.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Following the initial settlement of Chatham in ca. 1664, William Nickerson and others continued to purchase land from local Natives and sell rights to new settlers. After the central portion of town and Stage Neck had been purchased, William Nickerson in 1679 then purchased from John Quason land west of that tract to the Harwich bounds. At this point, Nickerson had purchased most of Chatham except eastern lands where North Chatham and Chatham Village were located. In 1682 additional meadowlands were also purchased from John Quason. In 1689, William Nickerson, son of the original William Nickerson, purchased the North Chatham area. In 1691, Samuel Smith of Eastham purchased a tract of land east of Mill Pond known as Tom's Neck. Lands in the western and southern portion of town were reserved as common lands which were later divided in 1712. Many of the Colonial period settlers of the Chatham area were from Yarmouth and Eastham, the second and third generation of offspring of the original settlers of these towns. Settlements were dispersed throughout the period and were not characteristic of village patterns. Most of the town areas were sparsely settled at this point. These lands included the Ryder's Cove area, Nickerson's Neck, Eldridge Neck, lands between Oyster Pond River and Buck's Creek, Old Harbor, lands around White Pond and Emery Pond, and other areas west of Pleasant Bay. Some areas such as Monomoy Point were settled or used for fishing activities.

Prior to 1679 the Chatham area (Monomoit) was under the jurisdiction of Eastham. In 1679, Chatham or Monomoit was made a constablewick. Town records began at some point between 1693 and 1695. However, a meetinghouse was probably in existence before that time. A new meetinghouse was voted in 1700 and enlarged in 1773: still the only one in Chatham. On June 11, 1712, Chatham was incorporated as a town.

During the Colonial period, most Natives were apparently living in the eastern portion of Chatham. In 1698, fourteen Native houses were reported at Monomoit (Hawes 1913: 21). However, this estimate may not have included traditional Native housing (wigwams), which may also have been present. Prior to 1700, a Native meetinghouse was erected near the site of the East Harwich Methodist Church, within the present limits of Chatham. Native settlements in Chatham may have been extinct by ca. 1764.

#### D. Economic Base

As settlement expanded in Chatham during the Colonial period, so did the town's economic base. Agriculture continued to be important. However, because of the cutting of woodlands, drifting sands, and possibly overfarming, soils began to fail early, particularly in the southern portion of town. Husbandry was still pursued, particularly sheep-raising, which was important as early as 1700.

While agriculture was important early and sheep husbandry continued into the 19th century, by ca. 1700 seafaring, fishing, and other maritime-related trades were clearly the chief industry of the town. Whaling was conducted along the shore by shore-based whale boats aided by coastal lookout towers before 1700. The importance of whaling is indicated by the fact that as early as 1690, William Nickerson (son of the founder) was appointed whale inspector for the town. Whaling continued up to the Revolutionary War, during which it ceased and never recovered.

The mackerel and particularly the cod fishery developed in Chatham at an early date. The first fishing station was established in ca. 1711 by Daniel Greenleaf. Even shellfishing was important early, probably as a support industry (bait) for cod fishing. Clams were so important to the town that by 1768 laws were passed prohibiting nonresidents from taking them. By 1774, Chatham had 27 vessels of almost 30 tons each in the cod fishery employing at least 240 men. The actual number of vessels and men employed in the fishery may have been higher since smaller, coastal vessels are not included in the total. Cod fishing virtually died out during the Revolutionary War. Weir fishing may also have been important prior to the Revolution.

In addition to fishing, freighting was also important in Chatham prior to the Revolution. Hawes (1913: 50) notes seafaring as the prevalent occupation of the town by 1740. Some time between the Revolutionary period and 1800 a packet business was also established.

Shipbuilding was probably conducted as early as fishing or freighting. Because of the remoteness of Chatham, water travel was important to connect the settlement with other settled areas on the Cape as well as to Boston and Plymouth. Vessels were probably built along the entire coast, possibly more so in the south where better harbor facilities are found. Prior to the Revolution, smaller type boats were probably built, as were some vessels in the 20-40 ton class. Shipbuilding fluctuated with the local needs of fishermen and freighters.

#### E. Architecture

Residential: All inventoried surviving examples are story-and-a-half, double pile, interior chimney types; the vast majority are five bays in width with a center entry, although a four-bay and two three-bay examples are known. A gambrel roofed

five-bay example survives, and several of the gable roofs are described as bowed.

**Institutional:** The town's first meetinghouse (1700) was a square structure "of 20 and 2 foot floor and 13 foot in wall" (Smith 1920: 4). It was rebuilt in 1730 with interior galleries on three walls, and a high pyramidal roof, square in plan and two stories in height. In 1773 it was enlarged by 17 feet at both the east and west sides, as well as with a porch over the entry; it was to be painted stone color on all surfaces but the back porch and roof, which were to be Spanish brown.

## VII. FEDERAL PERIOD (1775-1830)

### A. Transportation Routes

The primary 18th-century highways remained in use through the period. These included the souther, east-west road to Harwich (Main Street/Route 28), and the northeast Queen Anne Road, with branches to Brewster and Orleans. Local roadways led to Nickersons Neck, Ryder Cove, Allen Point, Stage Harbor, Oyster Pond River, and other coastal areas. Freeman (1802, p. 145) described Chatham roads as "sandy, but better than those of Wellfleet or Truro." More important were local wharf facilities. In the late 18th century, docks were probably located at the heads of Seaview Street, Stage Harbor Road, Bar Hill Road, and numerous other local sites. By ca. 1830, two docks were active north of the town's twin lighthouses, and packets to Boston operated from these. To the south, a wharf was also located at Harding Beach.

### B. Population

"Chatham," Freeman wrote in 1802, "contains more inhabitants in proportion to its extent than any other township in the county." Freeman may not have been counting Provincetown (96.6), the only one of the Cape towns to exceed Chatham's 84.9 persons per square mile. But for P'town, Chatham and the four towns which followed it, Orleans (78.7), Yarmouth (71.6), Dennis (68.0), and Harwich/Brewster (not yet separated, 65.6) formed a population core, though the town of Chatham ranked seventh in absolute population.

Between 1790 and 1830, Chatham was the second fastest growing town in the study unit after Provincetown, with a growth rate of 174.5%, nearly three times the county average. After a decline during the War and Embargo years, the town averaged 50 new residents a year in the 1820s and probably for some part of the previous decade. Although the town would continue to make substantial gains until 1860, this was the town's greatest growth period prior to 1940. In 1830, Chatham's population stood at 2,130.

The town's fourth emigration, to the Kennebeck area in Maine, took place ca. 1800. Seasonal work on inland farms in Rhode Island, etc., is also mentioned.

The town's Baptists continued to worship in Harwich until forming a society here in 1824. With the increasing popularity of Methodism, particularly in the north of the town, the East Harwich house was rebuilt more conveniently to them, 1812, and a new society organized in 1816. Universalists organized a society in 1822.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Settlement remained dispersed at the end of the 18th century. Some concentration of activity had developed in the Old Harbor area in the northeast, and a possibly secondary focus had emerged at Stage Harbor in the south. However, cottage residences remained scattered on many sites in proximity to the town's extensive coastline. Stylish, affluent residences continued to be built on the north shore in the early 19th century. Saltworks concentrated on Nickersons Neck, but were located along the entire coast from Pleasant Bay to Red River. However, by 1830 the focus of local activity had shifted to the southeast near the wharves by the twin wooden lighthouses built in 1808, and a village developed north and east of Mill Pond.

Through the period, the 1729 Congregational meetinghouse remained the civic focus. In 1800, this edifice (enlarged in 1792) was still the only religious structure in town, and it remained located at the original, central burying ground site on Old Queen Anne Road. By 1830, however, three additional churches were active locally, and in that year the 18th-century meetinghouse was removed and a new structure was built to the southeast, closer to the growing population center. In 1808 local Methodists built a small church east of Mill Pond on Water Street. In 1820, this was replaced by a larger edifice, which was located to the west at the Methodist Cemetery north of Main Street and east of Crowell Road. In 1824, a Universalist church was located east of the Congregational Church and north of the Methodists (Stepping Stone Road near Crowell Road). At about the same time (ca. 1825), a Baptist church was built on Old Queen Anne Road east of the Congregational church. Finally, in 1830 a new Congregational church was built on Main Street near the present Union Cemetery, a location closer to the three other local churches.

### D. Economic Base

The fishing industry dominated Chatham in this period, as it had prior to the Revolution and would until 1860. For the first part of the period, Chatham must have been the Cape's leading cod fishing town, losing out after the end of the War of 1812 to P'town and the other towns of the outer Cape. "Few towns are so well provided with harbors," the Rev. Freeman wrote in 1802, and the principal business was done near Old Harbor. In 1774, 27 vessels were reported in the Chatham cod fishery, sharply reduced during the war to only 4-5. After the war the business revived, and in 1802 25 fishing boats were again sailing out of Chatham. Part of the encouragement to the industry must have been Chatham's clam beds, which the fishermen harvested for bait. As early as 1771 the town voted that only people curing fish in the town could

catch clams on Chatham shores. After the war, in 1786, the town again voted the measure, also imposing a fine. Perhaps for this reason, 40 fishing vessels were reported in Chatham harbor. Freeman emphasized that they weren't all from Chatham, but they did cure their fish on Chatham's shores -- thus presumably allowing them to catch local clams. (The clam beds were also the cause of Chatham's continuing border disputes with Orleans and Harwich for the rights to the harvest on Strong Island.)

Of the fishing fleet in 1802, Freeman wrote:

A few of the young and middle aged men are engaged in mercantile voyages, and sail from Boston; but the great body of them are fishermen. Twenty-five schooners from 25-70 tons, are employed in the cod fishery. They are partly owned in Boston and other places, but principally in Chatham. About one half of them fish on the banks of Newfoundland; the rest on Nantucket shores, the shore of Nova Scotia, and in the straits of Belle-Isle [Labrador]. On board these schooners are about 200 men and boys, most of whom are inhabitants of Chatham.... Besides these fishing vessels, there are belonging to the town five coasters, which sail to Carolina and the west Indies.

In the meantime, the business of the salt manufacture by solar evaporation, introduced in Dennis in 1776, was initiated in Chatham by Reuben Ryder by 1800, and soon thereafter by many others. (By 1809 Ryder had much the largest works, constituting 16% of the town capacity.) Chatham in the Federal period was one of the five major salt producing towns, and works were scattered all along its shores. Salt manufacturing and fishing were together responsible for the growth of Chatham village, and the first pair of wooden lighthouses were built there in 1808. After the war, both fishing and salt manufacture expanded. Ancillary activities part of the 1820s prosperity included coopers to make mackerel barrels, boat and ship builders, and a maker of tackle blocks for the saltworks. The coasting trade was also important; Deyo claimed that "early in the present century ... more freighting was done from Chatham than from any other town in the county" (Deyo, p. 582). Boston packets, however, sailed from Brewster until about 1830.

Of agriculture, Freeman was very disparaging:

Very little English hay is cut; but the marshes yield salt hay enough for the use of the inhabitants. Butter is made in summer; but butter for winter and cheese is procured from Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Boston. Beef and provisions of all kinds for the fishermen are brought from the last mentioned place. Not more than half enough English corn for the consumption of the inhabitants is raised. ... As the land, particularly in the center and south part of the township, is every year growing worse, by the drifting of the sand, there is little to encourage agricultural industry.

## E. Architecture

**Residential:** The most common house type remains the story-and-a-half, double pile, interior chimney form; more than twice as many survive from this period than from the Colonial period. The majority is still the five-bay version, known from ca. 30 examples, some with extended stud height. About five three-bay examples are inventoried, as well as ca. 8 of four bays; occasionally the four-bay examples have no window on the smaller side of the entry. Larger 2 1/2-story houses have been inventoried for this period. As a group, these houses are double pile in depth, five bays in width, most with hip roofs; most are center chimney forms with pedimented entries (ca. 5), two have end chimneys, a single double interior chimney example and a four-bay, interior chimney example are known. Gable roof examples are rare: a four-bay, interior chimney example, and an L plan end and interior example are inventoried.

**Institutional:** In 1792 the meetinghouse was repaired and modified by enlarging the porch to enclose stairs and closing the end entries. A new house was built in 1830, with paired entries in the gable and a small square based spire, two stories in height. Other denominations also constructed houses including the Universalists (1823) and the Baptists (1827).

## VIII. EARLY INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1830-1870)

### A. Transportation Routes

The early 19th-century roads continued in use. Packet service from the Chatham Harbor wharves continued to Boston, New Bedford, sometimes Nantucket, and occasionally to New York. Secondary wharf activity continued at many locations.

### B. Population

Chatham's population continued to expand until 1860, when its peak population of 2,710 was reached, making Chatham still seventh in population size among the towns of Barnstable County, but third in persons per square mile. This growth rarely averaged less than 20 persons per year except in the 1840s (and perhaps late '30s?) when it fell to 10.5, probably associated with decline of the fishing fleet.

Chatham's foreign-born population in 1855 (1.6%) consisted mainly of a small number of Irish (numbering 26).

The Methodists reorganized in 1847 in the town. The Baptists diminished and their building was sold to the Masons. In the 1850s a group who objected to the worldliness of the churches called themselves Comeouters and constructed a meetinghouse in West Chatham before dying out in ca. 1860.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Settlement continued to be dispersed throughout town, but development was increasingly concentrated along the Main Street corridor. Local churches and civic institutions became more concentrated in the Main Street area at the head of Oyster Pond. Development continued at the southeast end of Main Street between the Chatham Harbor wharves and Mill Pond on School Street, Silver Leaf Avenue, and Main Street. Twin brick lighthouses were built here in 1840. From Chatham Harbor, residential development extended on Main Street west through the civic and commercial center to Crowell Road, and houses were built north on Old Harbor Road and south on Stage Harbor Road. The third Methodist church was built on a new site on Old Harbor Road near Depot Street in 1832. This was abandoned in 1851, when the group built a new edifice on Main Street at Cross Street. The town then took over the old meetinghouse as a town hall. In 1850, the Second Universalist Church was located on Pond Street, near the north shore of Oyster Pond. The same year, the Congregational church was enlarged, but in 1866 that building was replaced by a new structure on Main Street at Old Harbor Road. Early in the period, the Baptist church was moved to Old Harbor Road. By ca. 1850 Granville Academy was also located in the Center area, and in 1860 the Ocean House Hotel was opened on Main Street. Linear residential development extended west of the Center along Main Street, and near the border with Harwich, a denser cluster of houses occurred at South Chatham west of Meetinghouse Road, with extensions south on Pleasant Street and Forest Beach Road. A small meetinghouse for "Come Outers" was located at West Chatham.

### D. Economic Base

The mainstay of Chatham's economy, the cod and mackerel fishery, rose and fell in this period in direct proportion to the shifting position of Nauset Beach. In 1832, the Treasury report noted that:

Business of all kinds is declining in Chatham, in consequence of the injury done to the old harbor, in consequence of the extension of Nauset Beach. ... The entrance of the harbor has become obstructed with bars, so as to make it difficult for vessels to enter with safety. One half of the fishing vessels formerly owned here have been sold within a year.

In 1845 only 13 fishing vessels were reported. J.W. Barber, however, noted that Chatham was one of the wealthiest towns in the county, and a large amount of shipping was owned by Chatham natives in other places. The first reported fishing station on Monomoy Point in 1847 may reflect a need for new sites unrestricted by the changing course of Nauset Beach. In the 1850s, Nauset Beach opened again, again making Old Harbor a fishing port. By 1865, the cod and mackerel fleet numbered 39 and by 1875 would rank third in the county.

The harvest of shellfish in 1865 was the town's second largest industry, employing 77 men; 90,000 lobsters were also collected, already more than any other town in the study unit.

The saltworks reached their peak in 1832 with a production of 36,800 bushels, fifth rank in the county. Joseph Young, who had begun making blocks, pumps, and rollers for the saltworks in 1828, mechanized the business in 1847 with reputedly the first block-making machines in the state (Deyo, 602. Deyo also claims Young to be the only blockmaker on the Cape, though the 1832 Treasury report for Yarmouth records such a shop in that town also.)

The sandy conditions noted by Freeman in 1802 were little abated. In 1865 only 11 farms were reported in Chatham -- fewer than in any other towns in the study unit except Provincetown and Truro which reported none. Cranberries were grown on 27 acres of Chatham bog -- also one of the smallest figures; the county average was 82 acres in that year of 1865.

Chatham retained a moderate-sized fleet of coastwise vessels, numbering 17 in 1865 (rank 6 among county towns). Shipbuilding and repair remained active: in 1863 a marine railway was moved from Nantucket to Union Wharf. Other activities included a shoe factory (1856-1863) organized by a Lynn shoemaker, employing 30 men. The seven gristmills mapped on the 1830 map had been reduced to three by the end of the period.

#### E. Architecture

**Residential:** In the early years of the period, the story-and-a-half, gable roof, double pile house continued to be built, still most often in five-bay widths, but also in three- and five-bays. Increasingly more popular was the similarly sized gable front house, 1 1/2 stories in height, double pile, and three bays with side entry. About fifteen have been inventoried, most ornamented with simple cornices and entries of Greek Revival entablatures; one example has a porch within the body of the house supported by four Doric columns; occasionally there are three rather than the normal four windows on the second tier facade. Small single-pile examples with shed leantos and small windows under the cornice survive. Two-and-a-half-story variations have also been inventoried, in both three- (one) and four-bay (two) examples. Isolated examples with Gothic ornament, bargeboards, and facade gables survive. Somewhat later in the period Italianate ornament cornice brackets, door hoods, labels, on at least one 1 1/2-story gable front, as well as a 2 1/2-story, three-bay, gable roofed house, and a three-bay double interior chimney of 2 1/2 stories; a large 2 1/2-story L-plan example with a full tower is also known. One small 1 1/2-story, four-bay mansard roofed house has been inventoried.

**Institutional:** The Congregational Church was remodeled in 1866 and moved, and now appears as a single-story gable roofed structure with center entry under a Renaissance Revival hood, corner pilasters, and tall windows on either side, a fully entablatured pediment treatment at the gable with small square tower above with belfry and spire. A school constructed after 1858 (when grading was instituted) is a 2 1/2-story structure with



hip roof with wide overhang with bracket supports, three bays in width with side entry under a hood and corner pilasters.

Commercial: A Gothic ornamented store survives, 1 1/2-story center entry with facade gable and bargeboards, large windows on first floor.

## IX. LATE INDUSTRIAL PERIOD (1870-1915)

### A. Transportation Routes

The 19th-century road network continued in use, as did local packet service. From 1881 to 1887, twice daily steam packets from Stage Harbor connected to New Bedford. This service ended, however, with the opening of the Chatham Branch Railroad in 1887. This line, which connected to the Cape Cod Central Railroad at Harwich depot, entered town from the west at South Chatham, and followed a route parallel to the Main Street corridor to a depot west of Old Harbor Road.

### B. Population

Chatham's population declined steadily throughout the period, from 2,411 in 1870 to a low of 1,564 in 1910. Between 1910 and 1915, however, the number of residents began climbing again, prelude to a continued rise throughout the Early Modern period. The rise was substantial -- 20.6 persons per year -- and predates the automobile-related expansion of Dennis and Yarmouth, more akin to the growth pattern of Barnstable and Orleans. The number of foreign-born in Chatham in this period is virtually negligible.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Most period development was summer resort oriented, particularly after the opening of the Chatham Branch Railroad in 1887. Institutional additions continued at Chatham Center. St. Martin's Masonic Lodge was located in the old Baptist church in 1873. A new town house was located on Main Street west of the Congregational church in 1878. A third Universalist church was built on Main Street in 1880 after the second edifice burned. The Eldridge Library was built on Main Street in 1896. The Catholic Church of Holy Redeemer was built to the north on Highland Avenue in 1915. Commercial development continued on Main Street, with a brick business block (1914) added to the east. Hotel and inn construction intensified in the 1880s and 1890s, and included the Baxter House (1886) on Old Wharf Road, the Old Harbor Inn (1898), the Rhode Island House on Holway Street (1880), the Hotel Mattaquason, and the landmark Hotel Chatham (1890) on Nickersons Neck in the north. Period hotel construction culminated with the Chatham Bars Inn (1914) in the east on Shore Road. Residential additions were made to the established residential area, with resort estates and summer homes concentrated on the east end of Main Street and along Shore Road. In the east, lifesaving stations were located on Morris Island and Monomy Island in 1874, and at Old Harbor in 1898. In 1913, a Marconi Radio Station complex was built on Orleans Road in Chatham Port in the north.

#### D. Economic Base

The cod and mackerel industry continued to vascillate, in Chatham as nationwide. In the early part of the period, the fishing fleet continued to gain ground. In 1875 the mackerel catch was worth \$76,543, third highest among the four towns (others: P'town, Wellfleet, and Dennis) reporting a significant catch; and the value of cod caught, \$69,560 was second to P'town (though they were the only two towns reporting). Town residents petitioned for a lighthouse on Harding Beach in 1878, constructed two years later. In the early 1880s, the catches began declining, and by 1887 the mackerel business in Chatham had disappeared to almost nothing. The incorporation of the 7-mile Chatham Railroad that year, the town taking nearly a third of the stock, was a major effort by the town to retain its commercial prosperity.

Chatham retained an important maritime business in shellfisheries, especially lobsters. Throughout the period Chatham was the leading lobster town, and by 1915 the town shared prominence in oysters with Barnstable and Wellfleet.

#### E. Architecture

**Residential:** Although the population of the town continued to decline, construction of large houses, presumably increasingly for the summer visitors, went on. Large 2 1/2-story Queen Anne houses (about four) have high pyramidal or hip roofs, projecting gabled bays on the facade, and occasionally the side of the main block plus porches often on two or more sides. Later Shingle Style forms dominated here as in other region towns; most employ a large gambrel form in 2 1/2 stories in height, with shed dormers and porches; smaller 1 1/2-story examples are also known. One large wide gable form survives.

**Institutional:** the Edredge Public Library was constructed by the town in 1896; it is brick, and designed in the Romanesque Revival style by A. A. marble; it is 1 1/2 stories with a gable roof, and facade gable over a recessed segmental arched entry and bay window, full open reading area on one side and divided into two floors on the opposite.

**Transportation:** The railroad depot of 1887 has been restored. It is the typical gable roofed structure with wide overhang supported by brackets and a turret. The lighthouse residences constructed in the 1870s and 1880s are 2 1/2-story, gable roofed, with clipped gables, one rectangular, one L-plan, and one crossed gables.

**Commercial:** The exceptional 1914 Brick Block is constructed in a Tudor Revival/Arts and Crafts vocabulary, designed by Harvey Bailey Alden, with masonry details including elaborate patterns in projecting and glazed headers. He is also responsible for a small Tudor Revival bowed front 1 1/2-story commercial building.

**Hotels:** The Chatham Bars Inn (1914) is three stories under a gambrel of with two tiers of shed dormers in a crescent shape, with porch and two deck layers.

## X. EARLY MODERN PERIOD (1915-1940)

### A. Transportation Routes

During World War I, a U. S. Naval Air Station was established at Eastward Point on Nickersons Neck. By 1919, dirigible and seaplane hangars had been constructed, as had extensive concrete landing areas. The next year, however, the facilities were abandoned. Subsequent local transport improvements focused on the upgrading of local roads as automobile highways. By the mid 1920s regional Route 28 looped through Chatham from Orleans to Harwich (Orleans Road, Old Harbor Road, Main Street). By 1930, auto use had become widespread enough that the Chatham Branch Railroad was closed. By period's end, improved local roads included Route 137 (Meetinghouse Road) north to East Harwich, and a local shore loop on Stage Harbor Road, Bridge Street, and Shore Road.

### B. Population

Chatham grew by 28.1% between 1915 and 1940 -- only slightly less than the county average for the period. Its rate vascillated, however, between a nearly stagnant .8 persons per year average in the early '20s to 38 p/y in the last half of the decade. The growth continued through the depression years, closing out the period with a resident count of 2,136 persons, still seventh rank in the county in population.

### C. Settlement Pattern

Resort development continued as summer houses were built on numerous shore sites. In 1925, there were 406 nonresident-owned buildings, compared to 785 resident-owned structures. The Eastward Ho golf course was built on Nickersons Neck, the Chatham Beach and Tennis Clubground in 1925, and the Queen Anne Inn was opened in 1936. A brick intermediate school (1925) was built at Chatham Center, and a new library (1934) was built at South Chatham. Summer homes were built at Forest Beach in the southwest, and along Cockle Cove Road and Ridgevale Road. Another concentration of cottages developed south of White Pond along the Main Street corridor. Elsewhere, summer estates continued to be built along Shore Road and Nickersons Neck, and a cottage colony was established south of Chatham Light (one was removed to Nauset in 1923) on Tom's Neck. Some automobile-oriented commercial development occurred along Route 28 (Main Street) at the eastern edge of Chatham Center, including a car dealership.

### D. Economic Base

Chatham remained a fishing town: 291 fishing boats were reported in 1915. Of the fish reported, the leading species was again cod, though at a value considerably below its earlier levels. Like most towns, Chatham showed a substantial rise in fish product value from \$3632 in 1905 to \$21,464 ten years later. (In both cases, Chatham ranked second to P'town.) Sources for the remainder of the period are unclear as to the extent of the industry.

In 1922 Old Harbor was wide open to the sea again, Nauset Beach having been broken through.

By the early 1920s the summer season annually increased the population to over 5,000; summer residents paid 42% of the town tax. In the number of hotel rooms in Chatham, 460, the town ranked third in the county, after Falmouth and Barnstable; among the ten hotels in Chatham was the largest and most expensive on the Cape, the 162-room Chatham Bars Inn, constructed in 1914. In 1925 the town assessed the houses of 785 residents and 406 nonresidents.

#### E. Architecture

Residential: Some Shingle Style houses (see Late Industrial Architecture section) were built in the early part of the period. Later, smaller homes, including variations on the Cape, and bungalows, were built. At the end of the period a large Georgian Revival structure was designed by T. Sears Reed, with a main block of five bays, 2 1/2 stories in height, and high hip roof and cupola with two ell's of 1 1/2 stories.

Institutional: The Eastward Ho Country Club is composed of three older houses attached to one another and restored (1930); two were moved from outside the region.

#### XI. SURVEY OBSERVATIONS

Although most inventory forms meet minimum standards, there are familiar problems of inappropriate or no dating, and photographs that preclude additional evaluation.

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