



SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER

THE NICKERSON FAMILY ASSOCIATION, INC.

William Nickerson
Signature of
William¹ Nickerson

Join archaeologists hunting for the Nickersons' 1664 homestead on History Weekend!

On Saturday, June 17 we will continue digging in
test holes as we unearth additional artifacts.
Caleb Homestead artisans will be on hand from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
See page 3 for details.



Plan to attend the commemorative NFA reunion September 8 - 10 in Chatham!

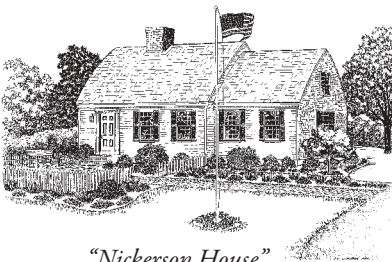
We will begin with a walking tour of William and Anne's hometown and end
with a picnic at the NFA campus.
From analyzing old photos to great
white sharks, everything in between
is sure to be memorable.
See pages 6 and 7.



Calling All Samuel Line Descendants!

If you are descended from the Samuel line,
we want to hear from you.
Do you have genealogical information,
photographs, Bible inscriptions?
Please let us know.

Help Us Commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Nick House During Reunion 2017!



"Nickerson House."

Help Us Honor Squanto

See page 13 for details

...being, in a sense, the printed voice of the Nickerson Family Association

Submit Your 1800s Family Photograph to Gail Shaffer Blankenau, NFA Consulting Genealogist

I am very excited to be joining you again this year for the Nickerson Family Reunion. I will be speaking on how to date and identify your family photographs. The fun part is I am going to use your photos in my presentation so we can learn about those intriguing faces from your past while we are together. If we get too many to cover in the presentation, we can feature them in some of our upcoming newsletters, so don't be shy.



To submit:

Send a clear, good-quality scan of the entire image, front and back (at least 300 dpi).

Measure the photograph and provide the measurements.

Provide any history or background about the person or people featured in the photograph.

Tell me how you came to own the photograph.

Provide a pedigree chart.

What is your specific question about the photograph, for instance, "Could this be my great-grandmother?"

Email your submission to gblankenau@msn.com. Add my address to your contact list so any questions I might have don't go to your junk email.

Put "Nickerson Photo Analysis" in the subject line.

Provide your full name, address and telephone number.

Gail Blankenau Dates Photo of Susan Nickerson

This photograph is a carte de visite (CdV - visiting card in French). NFA owns the album in which this image appears, labeled Susan Nickerson (wife of Collins Gould Nickerson) by an unknown person. We do not know who donated the album, so if anyone out there has a story about this album, let NFA know and we will document what we can about its provenance (origin).

The CdV did not gain widespread use until 1859, with a peak period of use from 1862-1878 in the United States. CdVs are easy to distinguish from other card photographs by their size.

Susan Nickerson, Wife of Collins Nickerson



Narrowing the Date:

Women changed fashions more than men did, but some style elements altered quicker than others, simply because they were easier and less expensive to change. Many women would add accessories to update their dress, or, if they still had the material, take off an older sleeve treatment and put new sleeves on an existing dress. Hairstyles were another easy way to update a style.

Susan's hairstyle is a variation of the Marcel Wave, created about 1872. The CdV shows only her head and shoulders, but her accessories confirm an 1870s time period. The 1870s were an era of the "cluttered neckline," and Susan is keeping up with the fashion with her accessories such as her necklace, a lace collar, and a prominent neck scarf in the front of her bodice.

Experts also measure the head size in the CdV. If the head measures less than one inch, it was produced from 1860-1864; if the head is 1.25 inches, the image date can be narrowed to 1866-1875. Because Susan's head measures about 1.5 inches, and her hair and neckline treatment are 1870s style, I would estimate this image to be about 1874-1875.

Join us on Chatham History Day, June 17

On Chatham History Day from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Archaeologist Craig Chartier and his crew will continue doing test pits in the likely site of the 1664 homestead of William and Anne Nickerson. At 2 p.m. Chartier, who directs the Plymouth Archaeological Rediscovery Project, will give a talk on his findings. Previous findings, including a pipe that William (or Anne!) may have smoked are on display.

The Caleb Nickerson Homestead will be open for tours with our costumed docents. In addition, Dick Noyes will demonstrate woodworking techniques in with hand tools.

This year's History Day theme is World War I, which America entered 100 years ago in April 1917. Stop by the Nick House to read about local Nickersons who died in the war.

Join us for this fun day when Chatham's museums are all open free of admission and then join us later in the summer as our heirloom gardens blossom. We will be open on Wednesday and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. June through September and for special events throughout the year.



LOOK ONLINE FOR NEW BLOG

Board member Jim Nickerson will be writing a blog series on the food, domestic arts and medicine of our ancestors. Be sure to look for it on our website: www.nickersonassoc.com.

2017 Membership Report

by Ron Nickerson

Hello cousins! We are pleased to report that the NFA continues to attract new members from as near as Rhode Island and as far as California. International members have joined from Canada. In addition, long-standing members who faithfully renew their memberships often include generous monetary gifts which are gratefully received. Life Memberships remain an attractive option for those who have chosen to make a long-term commitment to our family. Finally, gift memberships for children and grandchildren ensure that our Nickerson legacy is carried forward into the future. Thanks to all of you who continue to make the NFA healthy and strong by your loyal and steadfast support. As we go forward together, our future looks especially bright. If you haven't already paid your 2017 dues, now would be a great time to do so. Go to www.nickersonassoc.com. Under "Membership" print and mail the form with a check to the NFA. Easier still, go into the store and renew through Paypal.

We Welcome Nick Cousins!

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Thank You!

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and the 2016-17 Chatham Capital Campaign**



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Thank You!

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and the 2016-17 Chatham Capital Campaign**



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Landscaping Directed Gift: Edmond R. Nickerson

We are pleased to announce that the
WOMEN'S CLUB OF CHATHAM
through its
Community Investment Grants Program,
has awarded the Caleb Nickerson Homestead
a \$500 grant to be used
toward the archaeological dig.

Nickersons Look Forward to Exploring Roots During 120th Annual Reunion in Chatham

That Chatham is a town rich in history is not something that need be told to any descendant of William and Anne (Busby) Nickerson, the original English settlers of Chatham.

For our 120th anniversary reunion we are returning to our roots in Chatham where William Emery Nickerson held the first reunion in 1897. It is also 380 years since William and Anne emigrated from England.



We begin Friday afternoon with an informative walking tour of the Main Street area with Tim Wood, the editor of the Cape Cod Chronicle. The walk extends from the iconic white church at the rotary that William Nickerson founded down toward Chatham Light at the other end of Main Street. Highlights along the way include the Orpheum Theater, the town's original theater which has been restored as a top-of-the-line movie theater and restaurant, the Eldredge Public Library, where a plaque features the town's pioneers, and several churches as well as galleries and shops in historically-interesting buildings.



In the evening our cocktail party will be in the Mural Barn at the Atwood House Museum, home of the Chatham Historical Society. The museum's interesting changing and permanent exhibits will be open to us.

Saturday morning we convene in the town's old Main Street School, now a beautifully-refurbished Community Center. Here Gail Blankenau of Nebraska, our genealogist who is working on the Samuel line, will speak to us about our old family photos. Be sure to see elsewhere in this newsletter how you can send Gail your old photos for her to analyze. We will follow this with a tasty box lunch at the Community Center.

In the afternoon you might like to explore more of Chatham. The Chatham Light overlook is a great place to start. Here, the Mayflower turned around in 1620 and sailed up the arm of the Cape to Provincetown.



Below you is the ever-popular Chatham Lighthouse Beach and behind you is Chatham Light—the one light that remained after its twin was removed in the 1920s. You might then investigate the quaint old streets of Chatham's Old Village, home to interesting old architecture. Or shop in Chatham's many fine stores and galleries. Or perhaps you'd like to pursue some family genealogy in local cemeteries.



The Chatham Marconi Maritime Center at 847 Orleans Road, North Chatham, features ongoing exhibits about Chatham's wireless communications in World War II and earlier. It is open Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Chatham Railroad Museum at 153 Depot Road is located in the restored 1887 depot that served Chatham for nearly 50 years. It is open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more suggestions on what to see in Chatham visit the Chatham Chamber of Commerce booth at 533 Main St. or online at chathaminfo.com.

Saturday evening we will reconvene at the Captain's Golf Course in Brewster for a cocktail reception and buffet dinner. Our speaker will be John J. King II of the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy in Chatham who will give a talk called "Close Encounters of the Ocean Kind" about Chatham's newest attraction: white sharks. King is a noted speaker and wildlife photographer who has traveled the world taking photos.

On Sunday, Nickerson Sunday services will be held at the First Congregational Church of Chatham, that William Nickerson founded. After church we will enjoy our cookout on the grounds of the NFA campus. This is the time to explore the c. 1829 Caleb Nickerson Homestead and also view where archaeologist Craig Chartier will be again digging at the site of William and Anne's 1664 homestead. A cookout will be served at noon, followed by a talk by Chartier.

The registration form will be mailed in June as well as posted on our website at www.nickersonassoc.com. We will mail maps and directions after you register. Updates to the weekend will be added to the website as they are confirmed.

**Questions may be directed to
Reunion Coordinator Lin Webber:
linswatercolors@gmail.com**

or call her or Virginia Devine at 508-385-4441.

120th REUNION SCHEDULE

Friday, September 8

1 p.m.: Walking tour of downtown Chatham with Tim Wood

5 to 7 p.m.: Welcome Party at the Atwood House Museum, 347 Stage Harbor Road, Greetings from Danielle Jeanloz, executive director of the Chatham Historical Society

Saturday, September 9

9 a.m. to 10 a.m.: Registration and coffee hour at the Chatham Community Center, 702 Main St.

10 a.m. to noon: Annual Meeting featuring a talk by genealogist Gail Blankenau on old family photographs.

Noon to 1 p.m.: Box lunch at the Community Center

Afternoon: Free time to visit sites of interest in Chatham

5 p.m. to 6 p.m.: Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at the Captain's Golf Course, 1000 Freeman's Way, Brewster

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.: Dinner followed by speaker John J. King II of the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy in Chatham. King will talk about the sharks that visit Chatham each summer

Sunday, September 10

10 a.m.: Nickerson Sunday at the First Congregational Church of Chatham

Noon: Picnic/Cookout at the Nickerson Family Association followed by an observance of the 20th anniversary of the dedication of the Nick House and the 120th anniversary of the first reunion

1 p.m.: Archaeologist Craig Chartier will discuss latest finds on the 1664 Nickerson Homestead site



From Africa to North Dakota: Three Brothers

Three brothers born in far-flung parts of the globe are new NFA members. We asked their mother, Virginia Nickerson Alander of Illinois, about this.

"My husband's job as an engineer took us to Africa," Virginia says. "At that time, 1956, it was colonial Africa, so incredibly different from the Africa that we see and hear about today."

The couple's oldest son, Dirk, was born in Leopoldville, Belgian Congo. Today that country and its capital are known as Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Recently Dirk, now an orthopedic surgeon, returned to the country of his birth to volunteer for three weeks at the Vanga Mission Station in South Central Congo. The mission, established in 1928, offers medical care as well as the first family practice residency program in the Congo. Dirk arrived with suitcases of medical supplies for the trip. Electricity was sometimes limited to the hours of 5 to 9 p.m. Dirk operated there for three weeks until his supplies ran out.

Erik, the couple's second son, was born in the British colony of Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, then a part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Southern Rhodesia is now known as Zimbabwe.

During college, Erik visited his birthplace and was impressed with the beauty of the capital, the downtown botanical gardens and purple blossoms of the jacaranda trees.

And the couple's third son, Link, was born in Parshall, N.D., a town on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. And why North Dakota? "This was the period of the Cold War and my engineer husband was busy putting missiles in the ground," Virginia says.



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A word from President Nancy Nickerson Corey...

Nicks: Someday is Now!

Dear Nickerson Cousins:

This past month I have been reminded of just how precious life is. The Corey family and our friends have experienced numerous serious illnesses, and the passing of one very dear friend. I'm happy to report that most everyone seems finally to be on the mend. These experiences have reminded me not to put things off, live for today! And this relates to the NFA.



If you think, "*I'll attend a NFA reunion someday,*" ***I would say this should be your year!*** At the reunion in Chatham on Sept. 8-to-10 you will meet **Gail Blankenau**, our genealogist, and see first-hand how the research on the Samuel-line genealogy project is progressing. Gail will speak on Saturday about dating and identifying family photographs using your family photos. (Please see her call for photos elsewhere in this newsletter.) **Lin Webber** has once again planned awesome activities that are sure to please young and old alike!

And if your intention is to get more involved in your family association "*someday,*" or "*when I have more time,*" or "*when the kids are older,*" again I would encourage you that the time to participate is now. Volunteer opportunities exist both on the Cape and from any corner of the world. In Chatham you can experience activities at the **Caleb Nickerson Homestead** from period gardening, authentic wood-working, archaeological digs and general historical activities. Volunteers are always welcome and **Tish Noyes** and the other volunteers will be happy to put you to work. Stop by any Wednesday from April-to-September to see the goings-on and discuss opportunities with Tish. Tish has taken over as program coordinator of the Caleb Nickerson Homestead and she looks forward to a great season of programs. Our development director **Caroline Lane** left us when her husband's job moved him to the Boston area. We thank Caroline for her hard work on our capital campaign and wish her well in her new endeavors.



If genealogy is more your style, you can help with the genealogy section of the website, do genealogical research, or file/digitize genealogical information at the Nick House. You can spend as much or as little time as you wish. If this interests you, please contact me and we can discuss needs in these areas. We have a great group of volunteers, and more are always welcome.

If you're ready to jump in with both feet and are experienced in management, development, fundraising, genealogy, organizing skills, etc. perhaps you would consider joining the NFA Board of Directors. We are always looking for members who desire to serve on the board. Again, if this interests you, please contact me and we can discuss it further.

As for me, after attending my son's wedding in Falmouth on Sept. 6, I will attend the NFA reunion with numerous family members including four-to-five grandchildren. I look forward to introducing the NFA to the next generation. As I contemplate retirement, my husband and I recently bought a camper and we look forward to traveling and relaxing. Perhaps we will see you on the open road soon!

We look forward to seeing you in Chatham at Reunion 2017!



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Volunteers Dick & Tish Noyes: A Passion for the Colonial

By Debra Lawless



If your passions are Colonial history and old houses, how do you build a life revolving around those in the second decade of the 21st century?

Dick and Tish Noyes of Orleans have found ways. A woodworker, for many years Dick has served as a craftsman and interpreter at the c. 1829 Caleb Nickerson Homestead in North Chatham. Tish has mastered open hearth and beehive oven cooking and is also a costumed interpreter at the homestead. This season she will also take over as program coordinator at the homestead. She works at Vintage in Vogue in Orleans, a clothing store selling apparel dating from 1870 to 1970.

"I have always felt more comfortable with early periods," Tish says. Today the pair is visiting the NFA campus with the Caleb Nickerson homestead visible a few yards away through the window behind Dick. Also visible is the early American outhouse Dick built using no power tools.

Aside from their jobs, the couple's biggest antique project is their own house. In 1993 they moved a c.1750 three-quarter Cape to a lot in Orleans where they have made their home ever since.

Dick grew up in Simsbury, Conn., where his father worked in Hartford's insurance industry. Later, Dick earned a degree in journalism at Boston University. He first worked for newspapers, then segued into the public relations field. Tish, meanwhile, grew up in New Haven and earned a nursing degree – a field for which she decided she was not suited. The couple met while both were working for the non-profit Schooner, Inc. in New Haven. They spent their honeymoon in the picturesque Days' Cottages in North Truro, where Dick had vacationed with his family in the mid-1950s.

When Dick turned 40, "I said it's time for a new career," he recalls. He loved old houses and woodworking, and he started working as a restorer in the 1980s when New Haven was "a hotbed of restoration because of tax credits." But by the end of the decade, "the bottom fell out of real estate and my business was going down the tubes." In one horrible week, Tish was laid off from her job, and the couple's landlord

announced he was selling the house they were renting. The pair took these as signs that it was time to change their lives.

"We packed everything into a U-Haul," Dick says. They drove to Cape Cod and stayed with friends while looking to start over.

Three years later, they found their dream house. The story goes that the house had been flaked and moved to the Cape from Nantucket. It became a part of the salt works on Lonnie's Pond in Orleans.

Although the 1000-square-foot post-and-beam-style house was in great condition, it was not for everyone. Ceilings are six-feet-two-inches high, and doors are five-feet-ten-and-one-quarter inches. Dick stands five-feet-ten and when he wears loafers, he bangs his head in the doorways. Also, the house has no closets.

Despite these shortcomings, the house was perfect for both of them. While Dick, with his woodworking skills, could do whatever restoration work was needed, Tish felt right at home. "We were very lucky," she says.

The house came with one big challenge: It had to be moved from its location. So after they outbid another interested party and obtained the house for \$1, they purchased an empty lot.

The couple hired Bob Hayden of Hayden Building Movers, Inc. in Cotuit. Moving a house is complicated for many reasons, one of which is that utility wires have to be raised or lowered along the entire route. In this case, the 11,000-pound house traveled a mile and a half during the last week of July 1993, on the one day of the week when it was not raining. This annoyed some beachgoers who were stymied by blocked roads. Others enjoyed the uncommon spectacle, Tish says. In the end the move cost \$11,000 for the permit and the move.

For the next four months the couple's new house languished on a trailer as they waited for the bank to approve their mortgage for the lot. When the mortgage came through, they found themselves at the beginning of one of the bitter-cold winters of the early 1990s. The man who came over to dig the septic pit broke his blade off in the frozen ground, and all work ceased until the spring.

In April 1994, the house was finally set on its new foundation, the septic system was installed and functioning, and the pair moved in. Tish's one regret is that because the house has been moved, she cannot search for contemporary artifacts in the yard. "I don't have any of the history in the soil," she says.

Like Dick's father and grandfather, Tish was once an antiques dealer. People sometimes ask her what the best deal she ever got was.

"My house," she says.

This article originally appeared in the Cape Cod Chronicle in slightly different form.

ROOTS AND BRANCHES

NEW TWIGS

NFA President Nancy Nickerson Corey of McCook, Neb., announces the birth her granddaughter **Olympia Joan Marie Warren**, born to Alyssa and Brett Warren on Feb. 23, 2017. She joins siblings Bryanna, Payton, Natalya and Everleigh as a 14th generation Nickerson. Olympia's lineage: Olympia Warren¹⁴, Alyssa Corey Warren¹³, Nancy Nickerson Corey¹², David Nickerson¹¹, Roy¹⁰, Jesse⁹, Horace⁸, Bassett C.⁷, Bassett⁶, Issacher⁵, Nathaniel⁴, Lt. Thomas³, William², William¹.



Shirley Dalaska of Hastings, Minn. reports the birth of her grandson, **Adam Stanley Burg**, born to Katie and Andy Burg in Denver on Feb. 28, 2017. Adam's lineage: Adam Burg¹⁴, Andrew Burg¹³, Shirley (Kelly) Burg Dalaska¹², Barbara (Adams) Kelly Luff¹¹, Ethel (Gates) Adams Stoderl¹⁰, Franklin Gates⁹, Hubbard Gates⁸, Henrietta Nickerson Gates⁷, Joseph Nickerson⁶, James⁵, Joseph⁴, William³, Joseph², William¹.

FALLEN BRANCHES

Evelyn L. Nickerson, 102, died on Oct. 19, 2015. A native of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada, she came to the U.S. in 1945 and was a long-time resident of Birmingham, Mich. Her husband Cleveland H. Morrell pre-deceased her after 45 years of marriage. She leaves a daughter and two grandchildren. She is the sister of NFA member **Vaughn Nickerson**. Evelyn's lineage: Evelyn⁹, James⁸, James⁷, Stephen⁶, Hugh⁵, Elisha⁴, John³, John², William¹.

Roxanne Duffy Fenney, 78, died on April 8, 2016. Roxanne grew up in Leicester, N.Y. and graduated from Nazareth College in Pittsford, N.Y. While working at the Hartford Department of Social Services she met her future husband George Feeney. The pair raised their daughter in Manchester, Conn. Roxanne's line: Roxanne¹³, Eleanor Nickerson Duffy¹², Walter Cleveland Nickerson¹¹, John¹⁰, James⁹, John⁸, Hezekiah⁷, Seth⁶, Seth⁵, Ebenezer⁴, Thomas³, William², William¹.

Stephen Nickerson, 69, died on July 8, 2016, after a long battle with Alzheimer's Disease. Stephen, who was born in 1946 in Rochester, N.Y., retired in 2004 as a parks superintendent in the Westchester County Parks Dept. His widow Pat says, "He was very proud to be a Nickerson." Stephen's lineage: Stephen¹², Wendell¹¹, Maurice¹⁰, James⁹, James⁸, Heber⁷, Lombard⁶, Gideon⁵, William⁴, William³, William², William¹.

Regina J. (Liska) Nickerson of East Harwich died on Aug. 21, 2016. Regina moved to Chatham in 1944 and attended the Chatham schools. She met her future husband, William G. Nickerson, in 1953. She and William ran a painting and wallpapering business from their home. William died in 2010. Regina leaves two children. William's lineage: William G.¹⁰, Weston⁹, William⁸, Zebina⁷, Theodore⁶, Christian⁵, John⁴, William³, Joseph², William¹.

Gail Kuhns Nickerson, 86, of Chatham, a long-time Wednesday volunteer at the NFA, died on Nov. 17, 2016. She was born in Mineola, N.Y. and with her first husband raised two children while working as a school librarian at Phillips Academy, Andover. In 1980 she married Reginald L. Nickerson, a president of the NFA from 1985-to-1986 and 1998. Gail and Reggie retired to Reggie's hometown of Chatham in 1984. Reggie Nickerson died in 2011. Gail is survived by two children and four step-children. Reggie's genealogy: Reginald¹¹, George¹⁰, William⁹, George⁸, Zephaniah⁷, Zephaniah⁶, Bassett⁵, John⁴, William³, Joseph², William¹.

Frances (Edwards) Nickerson, 95, of Chatham, died Nov. 19, 2016. A daughter of Andrew and Alice Edwards of Chatham, she was for 52 years the wife of Willard Hammond Nickerson Jr. She is survived by her son Willard "Nick" Nickerson III, daughters Phyllis Nickerson Power and Barbara Nickerson, all of Chatham, three grandchildren, and three great-granddaughters. Fran graduated from Chatham High School and from Bryant College as a business major. In 1950 she and her husband opened Nickerson's Fish and Lobsters which they ran for 35 years at the Chatham Fish Pier. Willard Nickerson Jr.'s genealogy: Willard Jr.¹¹, Willard¹⁰, Rufus⁹, Rufus⁸, Zenas⁷, Silas⁶, Silas⁵, Silas⁴, William³, Joseph², William¹.

William Nickerson, 81, of Pocasset, died Dec. 22, 2016. An avid sailor and fisherman, William attended Deerfield Academy and Trinity College and served in the National Guard. He is survived by his sister, Nancy Nickerson Fry, two children and five grandchildren. William's genealogy: William¹⁰, Stacey⁹, William⁸, Thomas⁷, William⁶, John⁵, Joseph⁴, William³, Joseph², William¹.

Geraldine D. Nickerson, 96, of Chatham, died on Jan. 29, 2017. She married Joseph A. Nickerson Jr., a longtime member of the NFA, in 1984. Together they co-authored the 2008 book *Chatham Sea Captains in the Age of Sail*. Geraldine earned a Master's degree from Julliard School of Music and had a distinguished career in music as both a performer and teacher. She later served as executive director of the Hartford Conservatory. She is survived by Joe's seven children. Joseph Nickerson's lineage: Joseph Jr.¹⁰, Joseph⁹, Rufus⁸, Zenas⁷, Silas⁶, Silas⁵, Silas⁴, William³, Joseph², William¹.

Ruth Smith, 70, of Saylorburg, Penn., died on March 26, 2017. She was the wife of Brian Smith, president of the NFA in 2013. The Smiths would have observed their 43rd wedding anniversary on April 6. After retiring from a career in retail in 2007, Ruth volunteered in her community. As well as her husband, surviving Ruth are her daughter, grandson and sister. Brian's lineage: Brian Smith¹¹, George T. Smith¹⁰, James A. Smith⁹, Thomas D. Smith⁸, Peleg Crowell⁷, Robert B. Crowell⁶, Archelaus Crowell⁵, Judah Crowell⁴, John Nickerson³, Nicholas², William¹.

Archie Nickerson Recalls Father's 1950 Drowning

by Debra Lawless

Sixty-seven years after the sad event, Archie S. Nickerson recently reminisced about the afternoon of Oct. 30, 1950, when his father and his father's fishing partner drowned crossing Chatham Bar.

Archie, now 82, is the sole remaining member of the family in which he grew up. This afternoon he is sitting at the kitchen table in his ranch house not too far from Ridgevale Beach. He opens a thin manila envelope labeled "1950 Dad's Boat Pictures." In it are four glossy 8x10 photos, a black and white postcard of fishing boats in Aunt Lydia's Cove, and several yellowed newspaper clippings. The clips tell a terse and grim story that made its way into the 2009 bestselling book *The Finest Hours: The True Story of the U.S. Coast Guard's Most Daring Sea Rescue* by Michael Tougias and Casey Sherman.

Fishing partners Archer Elwood Nickerson, 44, and Elroy McLean Larkin, 50, had headed out from Old Harbor at 2 a.m. in Archer's 41-foot fishing boat, the *Catchalot*, on Oct. 30, 1950. After a day of fishing, they were returning with the rest of the fleet. While the autumn weather was fair elsewhere, at Monomoy the fog was thick, and "a heavy sea was running," according to a Cape Cod Standard-Times article of Oct. 31, 1950. The captains were all having trouble navigating back to the Chatham Fish Pier.

At one point the *Catchalot* passed Archer's brother Kevin "Cobbie" Nickerson in another fishing boat. (Cobbie was the grandfather of NFA member Shareen Davis.) Cobbie later recalled that Archer was in the boat's cabin at the helm and Larkin was on deck. A little later, Cobbie witnessed an appalling scene. "Suddenly the sea seemed to curl up behind the *Catchalot* and drove it over on to the bar and then pitched it over, all at once," he later said. Various newspaper accounts mention that the boat hit a rock, or the sandbar, when the wave hit. Whatever happened, as Tougias and Sherman sum it up in *The Finest Hours*, the boat was "tossed end over end, 'pitchpoling' the vessel." The two men were thrown from the boat. Larkin's body was soon plucked from the churning waters either by another fishing vessel or the Coast Guard. Archer's body could not be found.

Archie was 16 at the time, and working at the Chatham Fish Pier as a fish packer at Old Harbor Fish Co. He was no longer a student because when he turned 16 the previous August, "I didn't want to go back," he says.

Word of the accident would have spread quickly as the fishing boats, minus the *Catchalot*, returned to the fish pier.

"They told me about it," Archie recalls. One of his sisters was working as a telephone operator, and she heard about the accident through the telephone exchange. "It was a shock to us all." Between them, the men left eight children. At 15, Archie's brother Elwood Henry Nickerson was the youngest of Archer's children.

The Coast Guard searched for Archer's body until darkness drew in in the late afternoon; searchers resumed their task again at dawn on Oct. 31.

Bernard C. Webber, a young Coast Guard coxswain, was among those searchers from what the newspaper referred to as the Chatham Light and Lifeboat Station. Webber, in fact, was using the 36-foot wooden rescue boat CG-36500 for the search. Webber later received the Coast Guard's Gold Lifesaving Medal after he and a crew of three in CG-36500 rescued 32 shipwrecked sailors from the doomed tanker Pendleton which broke in half off Cape Cod during a nor'easter in February 1952, a year and four months after they searched for Archer's body. Tougias and Sherman cite Webber's participation in the search for Archer to note that it was then that Webber's respect for the treacherous Chatham Bar was cemented.

The *Catchalot* washed up near the weather station at Morris Island, Archie says. It was upside-down in the sand, and was righted with a great deal of difficulty. The 16-year-old Archie appears in some of the news photos, standing among the men looking on from the beach.

Although the Coast Guard's amphibious plane from the Quonset Naval Air Station and Coast Guard vessels widened their search to Pleasant Bay, Archer's body was never recovered.

When Archer drowned, his family was living on George Ryder Road, and two of Archie's older sisters were married. (Four years later the third, Beverly, married Richard Livesey, who was a member of Webber's crew.)

"It was just my brother and I in the house," Archie says. After their father died, their mother Dorothy continued working in Chatham Drug Company on Main Street.

Archie himself later took up fishing, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. He then served in the U.S. Coast Guard and was stationed on a weather ship off New York for four years. Eventually he returned to Chatham and raised a family. Today his daughter Cheryl lives with his grandson in Nebraska while his son Glen, a fourth generation fisherman, lives with him here in the ranch house he bought in the 1960s. Retired from 14 years as a custodian in the Chatham school system, Archie works mornings as a caretaker for a Shore Road house and in his free time makes complex ship models.

Dorothy Nickerson outlived her husband for eight years, dying at age 48. Etched on her gravestone in Seaside Cemetery is a memorial to her late husband Archer, whose body rests in the sea: "Lost at Chatham Bars."

This article originally appeared in the Cape Cod Chronicle.



Looking forward to 2020: The Year the *Mayflower* Landed

Nearly 400 years ago, when the *Mayflower* landed in Plymouth, life began for the Pilgrims in Plimoth Colony. A great helper to the Pilgrims was the Native American Squanto, who had led an unusual life. Captured as a slave, he traveled in Europe before returning to America, and spoke English. He is known to every schoolchild as the Native American who taught the Pilgrims to enhance their crop of corn by fertilizing it with dried fish.

Squanto died under mysterious circumstances in Chatham in 1622. Whatever the cause, Squanto died a short distance from the present-day campus of the NFA. That's why, about 15 or so years ago, the Chatham Historical Society moved its Squanto stone from the lawn of the Atwood House to the lawn of the NFA.

In 2012, when Chatham celebrated the 300th anniversary of its incorporation, many historic sites, including the NFA, were given recognition plaques. One was created for the local Native Americans. Because William Nickerson was the first English settler in Monomoit in the 1660s, the lawn of the NFA was selected as the most appropriate spot for this plaque. We will now add a second plaque, one that commemorates Squanto. The Squanto plaque will be our contribution to the tributes to the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' arrival.

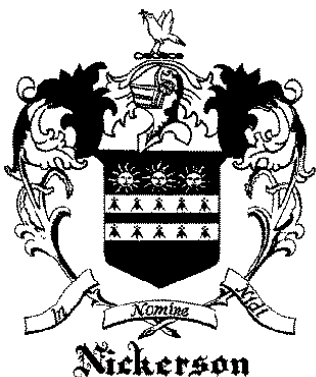
"No more graceful act could be performed by the grateful descendants of the Pilgrims than to erect upon the highest eminence at Chatham a simple monument to this unhonored, but most deserving, friend and protector of their forefathers." So historian William Smith writes in his *History of Chatham, Mass.* And now the Nickersons will fulfill this dream.



On November 1, 2016, Ron Nickerson and Jeannette McKay accompanied the *Mayflower* on its departure from Plymouth Harbor as it began its journey to Mystic, Conn. A major overhaul is now underway in preparation for the upcoming 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims arrival in America. The *Mayflower* will be back in Plymouth in 2019.



Our Facebook "likes" have now topped 1,000!



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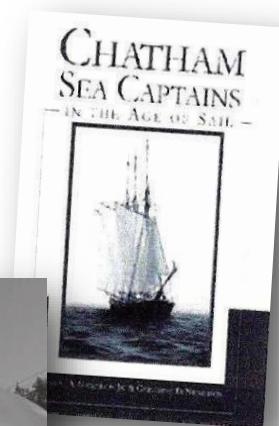
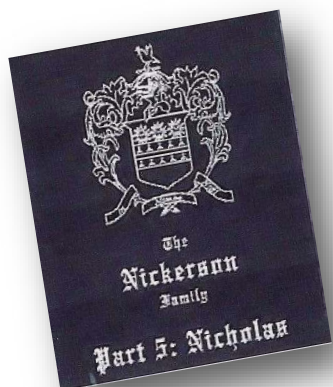
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