



Fall 2016 Newsletter

The Nickerson Family Association, Inc.

Keepsake Edition

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH  
& ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG

CENTERPIECES OF THE \$150,000  
NICKERSON CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

2017-A  
YEAR OF  
MILESTONES

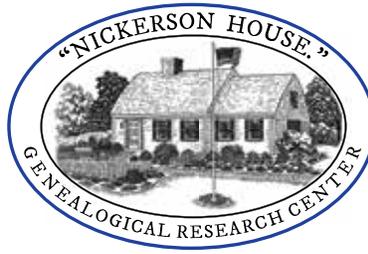
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380 YEAR OLD NICKERSON  
RELICS UNEARTHED IN  
CHATHAM

PAGE 3



Gift Idea -An NFA Membership!



## Nickerson Capital Campaign and Chatham Capital Campaign

At NFA, we have embarked on a capital campaign to raise \$150,000 through the NFA membership as well as through the town of Chatham residents.

Funds will support:

- The Nickerson Archaeological Dig - one of the most important happening in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts today and at one of the nation's earliest homesteads!
- The genealogical research and assembly of the Samuel line by our Genealogist, Gail Blankeneau. The highly anticipated publication date of Part V, Samuel, is 2017. We know you are eagerly awaiting this fascinating read.
- Ongoing upkeep and improvements to the buildings and grounds at our pristine Chatham-On-Cape Cod headquarters as well as our operations and office overhead.
- Preserving the Caleb Nickerson Homestead, first owned by Caleb<sup>7</sup> and Priscilla (Eldredge) Nickerson, offering tours by docents in c. 1820 period clothing and funding of our newly-branded Hands On History programs, centering on Early American life with open hearth cooking, beehive oven baking, heirloom gardening, colonial carpentry, weaving, looming, spinning, decorative arts and much more.

Your support to the NFA will be greatly appreciated. Stay tuned for our campaign letter.



*Caleb Nickerson Homestead pumpkin people created by Caroline Lane were on display during Octoberfest in Chatham.*

### *Meet Caroline Lane*

Caroline Lane is a marketing, communications, branding and fundraising consultant. She joined the NFA in April as part-time Director of Development. She is bringing energy and recognition to the NFA on a local and national level, cultivating new donors and increasing membership.

Caroline is focused on fundraising - both through the NFA and within the Chatham community. She is reinvigorating the programming at the Caleb Nickerson Homestead and managing the Nickerson Archaeology Dig. She is passionate about history and early life on Cape Cod. In her free time, Caroline plays tennis, rides her bike or creates flower arrangements from the NFA gardens.

# Has William or Anne Nickerson's 17th century pipe been found?

What lies beneath the tangled undergrowth beyond the lawns of the NFA down by the marker that delineates William and Anne (Busby) Nickerson's c. 1664 homestead??



*Digging a test pit*

Preliminary archaeological test pits say that the homestead site has been located, if not yet pinpointed, and the site may also include a blacksmith shop. If so, this could be one of the most potentially significant 17th century archaeological sites in New England.

An archaeological dig there would represent “a really rare opportunity to learn more about this person from the seventeenth century,” says archaeologist Craig S. Chartier of the Plymouth Archaeological Rediscovery Project. On the Sunday of the 119th annual reunion weekend, after a picnic lunch on the NFA campus, Chartier spoke to the Nickerson cousins about the dig which had continued that very morning as Chartier's team excavated further test pits in the brambles.

Based on a seventeenth century pipe stem, pottery, iron nails and animal bones found during test pit digs in June and September, Chartier says he is “very, very sure” that the Nickersons' c. 1664 homestead—the first in Chatham—lies hidden in this area on the NFA campus. “We get a lot more details from the trash he [William Nickerson] left behind than from any kind of diary.”

The archaeological crew also found slag, a stony waste resembling a meteorite that is separated from metals during the smelting of ore. If Nickerson was indeed running a blacksmith shop on the property, the blacksmith shop would represent “the oldest such site ever found in Massachusetts and one of the few ever found in New England,” Chartier wrote in his preliminary report.

In the blacksmith shop Nickerson may have been repairing brass kettles. Or he may have been making brass beads to trade with the Native Americans. “He was a pioneer here

living on the frontier,” Chartier says. “You think of Yankee ingenuity, the type who doesn't throw anything away.”

Reunion goers were mesmerized watching as Chartier and his crew dug several 19-inch square, 15-inch deep test pits. For several hours, the crew sifted soil from the pits through one-quarter inch screens then sorted the material caught by the screen. Some of the significant finds from June include Staffordshire slipware, Bellarmine pottery, Westerwald stoneware, glazed redware potsherds, a ceramic pipe stem, part of a ceramic bottle, a square-topped nail, charcoal, brick, bones from cattle, sheep, sturgeon and chicken, and shells from quahogs, clams, oysters, mussels and whelk. To an archaeologist, potsherds although homely in appearance, are extremely valuable as they are used to date a site. Pipe stems, in particular, can be dated with precision. “Suddenly we have a whole

new perspective on William Nickerson and what he was doing down here,” Chartier says.

It is true that the archaeology has already changed ideas about the Nickersons' life at their homestead. For example, there is speculation that Anne Busby Nickerson may have smoked a pipe at home. Two pipe stems were found. One is a red clay pipe that Chartier says was made in Charlestown near Boston in the 1670s to 1680s while the other is a white clay pipe. Whether Anne or William or both smoked a pipe is up for debate.

Although Chartier has not yet found the site of the Nickerson homestead—he expects to find a cellar hole, traces of a hearth and walls—he knows he is getting close because he has discovered the “halo” of trash tossed out from the homestead. The homestead cannot be more than a hundred feet from the trash.

“Suddenly we have a picture of William Nickerson's life that's more full than just what you get from the history books,” Chartier says to the group. “It's a deeper part of life that you can only get from archaeology.” For example, we already know what William and Anne ate—they had a fondness for shellfish dug in the nearby Ryder's Cove—and what types of pottery they ate off.



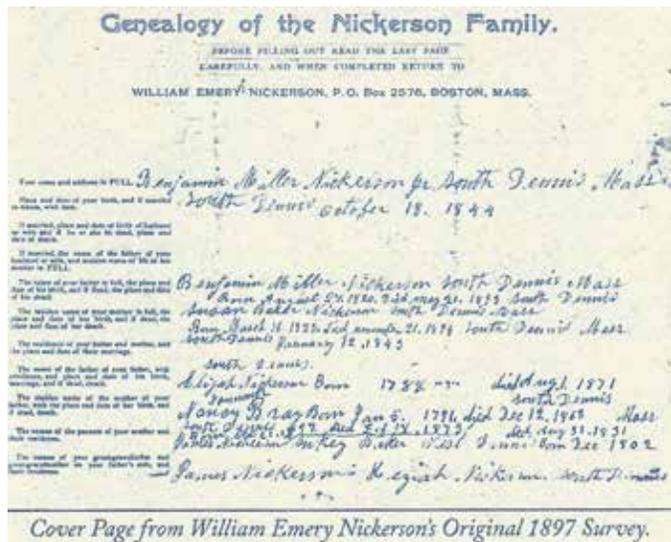
*Rebecca Arnold examines a potsherd*

Chartier's crew also found two postholes that may have been holes for an outbuilding such as a barn or a stable.

Chartier concludes that the site was possibly also a Native American home site. He speculates that a freshwater spring near the site would have attracted the Native Americans and, later, William and Anne.

# 2017: A Triple Milestone Year for Nickersons

In April 1897 William Emery Nickerson (WEN) of Boston mailed a circular inviting “the Nickerson clan” to a first-ever reunion on June 19. Response was enthusiastic and about 500 Nickersons descended on Chatham for the event.



Cover Page from William Emery Nickerson's Original 1897 Survey.

In sending out his circular, WEN had several goals. One was to erect a memorial for “the family patriarch.” That goal would not be met until 1915 when a stone was placed in a small burying ground at the end of what is now A. Leonard Way, not far as the crow flies from William and Anne’s homestead off Orleans Road. Another was to collect and publish genealogical material. To that end, WEN printed 1500 genealogical blanks and distributed all but 60 by the time of the reunion. He calculated that the second printing would number 3000. And WEN’s third goal was to create a permanent family association. Next year, during our reunion in Chatham, we will commemorate the 120-year milestone of that “first general meeting,” as WEN dubbed it.

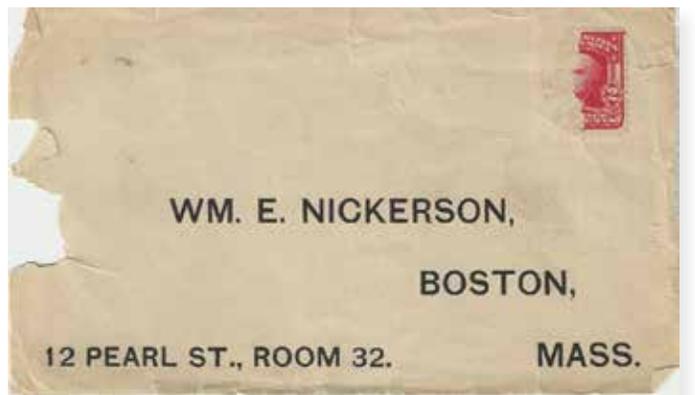
WEN was systematic in founding the NFA. He immediately established an executive committee on which he would serve as secretary. The other four members were cousins Osborn, Edward, Walter and Augustus Nickerson.

WEN, born in Provincetown in 1853, was on his father’s side a ninth generation descendant of William Nickerson, and on his mother’s side traced his line back through Pvt. Solomon Covell of Eastham who fought in

the American Revolution. He graduated from MIT in 1876 with a degree in chemistry. In 1901 he turned his skills to improving the new Gillette safety razor by creating a sharpening machine. Although it is frequently remarked that WEN did not have a head for business, he amassed a fortune through his work with King Gillette.

On the morning of Sat., June 19, Nickersons from as far away as Chicago stepped off the trains in Chatham. It was fortunate that the train spur had finally reached Chatham just ten years previously, in 1897, or the group would have had to travel by stagecoach from Harwich. Meanwhile, local Nickersons from all over Cape Cod poured into Chatham “by teams and barges.”

The Nickersons made their way to town hall which was not far from the railway depot on Depot Street. Town hall “was soon crowded to the doors with more than 500 Nickersons of all ages and sizes,” the Boston Globe reported. A banner made from a large window shade hung in the back of the hall bearing what WEN wanted to become the family motto: “I desire to wrong no man, nor do I wish by any to be wronged.” The quote is attributed to William Nickerson.



The program opened with the group singing “America.” They prayed, and listened to a historical address by WEN as well as six or eight five-minute speeches. WEN wrote a song for the occasion with the lyrics: “We’ll shout the name of Nickerson/Til earth and sky shall ring.” Luncheon consisted of a choice of a hot fish chowder or quahog chowder, bread and butter, doughnuts, tea and coffee for fifty cents a plate. This food was thought to suffice to “supply the ‘Inner Man,’” according to Osborn Nickerson, a selectman and the local coordinator.

## Reunion Returns to Chatham in 2017



Next year, to celebrate our milestones, what could be more appropriate than returning to the place of the very first reunion in 1897: Chatham?

Plans are underway now for events and speakers covering Chatham's history and even Chatham's recent love affair with sharks!

In a nod to Chatham's history as a fishing village, we will host our Friday evening welcoming party at the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance headquarters in the recently-restored Captain Harding House. Saturday morning our annual meeting will be held in the Chatham Community Center on Main Street. After lunch you are free to explore Chatham's many attractions such as shops, art galleries, beaches, and more. Those interested in cemetery genealogy will want to visit William and Anne (Busby) Nickerson's commemorative grave marker and explore Chatham's old cemeteries.

Saturday evening we will dine in the Captains Golf Course in nearby Brewster. And Sunday morning, after church services at the First Congregational Church of Chatham, William Nickerson's church, we return to the NFA campus for our annual picnic.

The Caleb Nickerson Homestead and the Genealogical Research Center will be open for tours and research during the weekend. Mark the dates in your calendars now: September 8-10, 2017.



The Boston Globe dubbed this a “Nickerson day in this Nickerson town.” The reunion also coincided, almost to the day, with the 260th anniversary of the Nickerson family's arrival in Boston on the John and Dorothy or the Rose, two ships that sailed together from England. (In 2017 we will celebrate the 380th anniversary of the Nickersons on that ship.) At the end of the afternoon most Nickersons caught the afternoon train for Boston while a few dallied to enjoy “the natural beauties” of Chatham. Then, as now, June wasn't quite “in season,” so reunion goers who wished to tour Chatham afterwards would not be tormented by summer crowds. Reunion goers would have been able to make the most of the daylight as the reunion was held just two days before the summer solstice—Chatham did not yet have electricity, and the nights were very dark.

THE FIRST  
**General Meeting of the Nickerson Family,**  
WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE 19th OF JUNE, 1897, AT  
**CHATHAM, MASS.**

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND.

TRAINS ON THE N.Y.N.H.&H.R.R. WILL RUN AS FOLLOWS.

GOING WEST	LEAVE	ARRIVE	FARE	RETURNING
8:15	7:30 A.M.	BOSTON	\$12.75	5:15 P.M.
8:30	7:45 "	ROCKFORD	6.18 "	
8:45	8:00 "	MIDDLEBORO	5.51 "	
9:00	8:15 "	FLORENCE	4.84 "	
9:15	8:30 "	FREETOWN	4.17 "	
9:30	8:45 "	FALL RIVER	3.50 "	
9:45	9:00 "	NEW BEDFORD	2.83 "	
10:00	9:15 "	TAUNTON	2.16 "	
10:15	9:30 "	FREDERICKTOWN	1.49 "	
10:30	9:45 "	HAVERHILL	81c "	
10:45	10:00 "	CHATHAM	14c "	

ROUND TRIP FARE IN CHATHAM SOCIETY, THE ROUND TRIP.

**A**LL who come from points sufficiently near to leave their homes and return to them the same day are requested to bring their own LUNCH as it will not be convenient to provide for so many people at the first meeting in Chatham. Those who come from too long a distance to make the entire trip in one day, will be furnished with a light lunch. All who desire to remain in Chatham over Sunday, will be able to find accommodations, and the return tickets will be good for five days. Special rates can be obtained from all Cape Towns not specified, by notifying the Local Ticket Agent 5 days in advance of meeting.

If it is your intention to attend the meeting if circumstances permit, please notify the undersigned, as soon as possible of the fact. Use your influence to induce backward members of the family to go.

Yours fraternally,  
**WILLIAM EMERY NICKERSON.**

P. O. Box 2676, Boston, Mass.

By 1898, the committee of five had met, and it was determined that membership in the fledgling association would cost \$1 and be limited to Nickerson descendants. And in April 1899 Emery hired Anna Kingsbury of Needham to serve as a temporary “amanuensis” for the genealogical work. Kingsbury proved to be “very efficient and satisfactory--” she stayed on with Nickerson for three decades.

As we mark the 380th anniversary of the Nickersons' arrival in Massachusetts and the 120th anniversary of the founding of the NFA, we also celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Genealogical Research Center on the NFA campus. The first of our two buildings was dedicated in 1997. When we searched for a piece of real estate in the 1990s, serendipity brought us to purchase the very land where William and Anne had built their first homestead in 1664. It is fitting that in this milestone year we hope to initiate a formal archaeological dig of their homestead.

# *Falmouth Reunion a Tremendous Success!*

By Lin Webber

The 2016 reunion, held for the first time in Falmouth, began Friday afternoon with a walking tour of Falmouth led by a docent from Museums on the Green. Walkers found shade on a warm afternoon in the enchanting streets and lanes of Falmouth, the birthplace of Katharine Lee Bates, author of “America the Beautiful,” whose home we saw.



*Native daughter  
Katharine Lee Bates*

Friday evening we boarded the Pied Piper, a tour boat out of Falmouth harbor. Captain Jim Burry and his wife Sandy (a Nickerson!), took us on a lovely cruise along the Elizabeth Islands. At the farthest point we stopped to enjoy the spectacular sunset.



*Captain Jim Burry and  
his mate Sandy Burry*



*Betsy Langley, Dede Nickerson,  
Ed Nickerson, Dan Nickerson*



*Bob and Lin Webber*



*Brian Nickerson and  
Capt. Jim Burry*



*Group Photo*

On Saturday morning we held our annual meeting at the Flying Bridge restaurant on Falmouth Harbor. We were welcomed by Falmouth Chamber of Commerce CEO Geoff Nickerson who urged us to explore his town. NFA President Nancy Corey reviewed the accomplishments of the year including the successful “We’re Fixin’ up the Houses” fundraising campaign. Thanks to the generosity of NFA members and grants from the Chatham Community Preservation Act and the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, we were able to make many necessary repairs to the NFA campus. Roof and siding shingling, new HVAC, window replacements, electrical upgrades and landscaping were just a few of the projects completed. Corey also reported that ge-

nealogist Gail Blankenau has completed about 20 percent of the research for our next publication, the Samuel Nickerson book. Volunteers are always needed to help Gail dig through records for information. Contact Nancy to volunteer.

Thirteen-year-old Davis Stanko gave a heartfelt remembrance of former NFA President Mary Griffin Ramseur, our friend and cousin who died in August.

Nancy introduced Caroline Lane of Chatham, our new director of development who has extensive experience in her field. Already the Caleb Nickerson Homestead has been branded with a new brochure, a separate website and lots of plans for the future thanks to Lane’s expertise. Lane told us about the exciting results of archaeologist Craig Chartier’s digs at the William and Anne (Busby) Nickerson homestead site. Many artifacts have been found already-- they are on display at the Nick House. The NFA hopes to conduct an ongoing excavation at the site in hopes of finding remains of the original homestead.

Lane described the upcoming capital campaign which will have two parts: one directed toward NFA cousins and one directed toward the residents of Chatham who benefit from our efforts. The focus of the campaign will be on maintaining the campus, ongoing research for the Samuel book, raising the profile of the Caleb Nickerson Homestead, and the start-up and ongoing costs of an archaeological dig.



*Nobska Point Light*



*Sunset Cruise*

Past NFA President Brian Nickerson told us about the efforts of the Friends of Nobska Light which is tasked with maintaining the light and former U.S. Coast Guard quarters on the site.

Our keynote speaker, Ramona Peters, Historic Preservation Officer for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, told us about the history of the tribe which has records going back 12,000 years.

After lunch overlooking the harbor, many attendees visited Nobska Light as well as the many other attractions in town.

Our evening banquet was at the Sea Crest Beach Hotel in Falmouth. Board member Debra Sweetman presented awards to the oldest attendee, Grace Connolly, 94, the youngest attendee, Lillie Bordeleau, and the furthest traveled, H. William Nickerson, who came from Tucson, Ariz. First-time attendees posed for a commemorative photo.



*Dr. Susan E. Humphris, of WHOI*

Our evening speaker was Susan Humphris, senior scientist and geologist from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. She showed us pictures of the seven incarnations of ALVIN, the deep-sea research vessel which was first built in the 1960s. Humphris has been on several dives to increasingly deeper parts of the ocean floor. Her main research has a study of the activity of vents which spew hot chemicals from underwater volcanoes into the cold ocean. It was a fascinating look at another world.



*Ruth Derick, Edmond and Bessie Nickerson*

On Sunday we gathered at the NFA campus in Chatham. Before lunch, we dedicated a granite bench to long-time NFA genealogist Burton N. Derick of South Dennis, who died in 2014.

Derick's wife, Ruth, thanked the group for remembering her husband and all of the work he did for the organization.

A brief rain shower fell just as our picnic lunch was served under the tent. Maureen Leavenworth, our open-hearth colonial cook, prepared mussels steamed in herbs from the Caleb Nickerson Homestead garden. Ruth Smith won the raffle for the painting of Nobska Light. Smith has been trying for years to win, buying multiple tickets every year. By now, she could have bought the painting outright!

Thanks to the many who helped organize this year's reunion especially Brian Nickerson, Debra Lawless, Jinny Devine and Ken Needham. We are already hard at work making reservations and plans for next year which will be held entirely in Chatham. It is not too soon to make plans to attend what is sure to be another wonderful gathering of the NFA September 8-10, 2017.



*New volunteer Janice Bianculli of South Chatham*



*First-Timers (left to right) Jim Nickerson, Stella Roberts, Suzanne Roberts, Lillian Nickerson, Burnley Nickerson, Kathy Connolly, Daniel Connolly, Bill Nickerson*



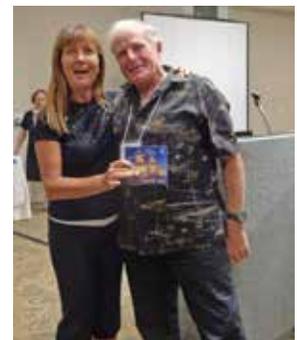
*Speaker Ramona Peters and Lin Webber*



*Sea Crest Beach Resort*



*The board leads "America the Beautiful"*



*Farthest traveled - H. William Nickerson with Debra Sweetman*



*Youngest and Oldest: Lillie Bordeleau, 10 and Grace Connolly, 94*



## 2016-17 OFFICERS

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*McCook, NE*

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## *A word from President Nancy Nickerson Corey...*

### **Nicks around the globe**

In 2017, the NFA will celebrate three milestones: the 120th anniversary of the founding of the NFA by William Emery Nickerson and the first reunion in 1897; the 20th anniversary of the dedication of the Nickerson Genealogical Research Center; and the 380th year since William<sup>1</sup> and Anne (Busby) Nickerson arrived in America in 1637.



We had a wonderful reunion last September, and I remain overjoyed with memories of our “togetherness” weekend in Falmouth and Chatham. I thank the Reunion Committee of **Lin** and **Bob Webber**, **Jinny Devine** and **Debra Lawless** for their hard work throughout the year and during the weekend itself. The committee executed a three-day event that ran so smoothly, it looked effortless. And I commend **Brian Nickerson** for his direction and assistance in selecting many interesting sites to visit in Falmouth. Thank you! We appreciate that each of you gave your time and resources to the success of the reunion.

Now, do you know an archaeological dig is underway at the NFA?

The Nickerson Archaeology Dig, managed by archaeologist **Craig Chartier**, was successful beyond expectations in its preliminary dig last June, unearthing 1,230 artifacts from the ground where William<sup>1</sup> and Anne (Busby) Nickerson’s 1664 homestead stood. These artifacts are now on display at the Nick House. On Sunday of reunion weekend Chartier and his team dug more test pits so reunion goers could observe the work in progress. The prospect of this dig must delight each of you as items handled by Anne and William come to light, allowing you to experience firsthand the everyday things of our ancestors. Your staff is working on raising money to continue the dig.

Also during the reunion, the “Caleb Nickerson Homestead - Hands On History--” our newly-branded name and tag line to increase awareness, programming, and fundraising-- was abuzz with volunteers dressed in early American dress. Longtime volunteer **Maureen Leavenworth**



served open-hearth steamed mussels as tours were conducted throughout the homestead, including the heirloom garden and outhouse.

Every Wednesday in the summer **Ken Needham** and his volunteers-- **Leavenworth, Dick Noyes, Anne Firth**, and our newest volunteer, **Janice Bianculli**, also a new Lifetime Member-- share facts with visitors about life in Chatham, c. 1664 and c. 1829. Our new director of development, **Caroline Lane**, plans to expand the Caleb Nickerson Homestead's annual events as she leads the effort to make the homestead one of Chatham's outstanding historic sites. Lane is embarking on a \$150,000 capital campaign, reaching out to Chatham residents and also to you, the Nickerson membership, to support these growth plans.

Those who attended the final day of reunion weekend witnessed the results of last year's successful "We're Fixin' Up The Houses!" campaign. Your generosity helped raise close to \$40,000 toward the necessary updates and ongoing maintenance of the two houses and the campus. The board of directors is grateful that you make the NFA a priority in your life through your gifts of support.

Weathered slabs of granite, converted into four new bench seats, have been placed around the NFA campus, a generous gift from **Bessie M. Nickerson** with the installation facilitated by **Edmond R. Nickerson**. One bench is inscribed as a memorial to the late **Burton Nathaniel Derick**, "Historian, Genealogist, Friend," and a dedication ceremony was held before the reunion picnic. Burton's widow, **Ruth Derick**, joined us to mark the occasion.

Inside the Nick House are a host of updates including several newly-upholstered desk and living room chairs; a new flat-screen TV; electrical upgrades; and the less visible, yet essential, maintenance including a general deep cleaning; pest control measures; replacement of the HVAC system at the Caleb Homestead, and repairing the HVAC system at the Nick House. A new microwave and refrigerator are on order replacing old appliances in the Nick House.

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



## 2016-17 DIRECTORS

**VIRGINIA DEVINE**  
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**WILLIAM GRANT**  
*Snohomish, WA*

**EDMOND RHODES NICKERSON**  
*South Dennis, MA*

**JAMES NICKERSON**  
*Cromwell, IN*

**DEBRA SWEETMAN**  
*Ontario, Canada*



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*Pendleton group*

**Several Nickersons played roles on the night of February 18, 1952, when *The SS Pendleton* sank off Chatham.** Ben Nickerson, a Coast Guard reservist, drove survivors from Chatham Fish Pier to the Coast Guard Station. Jane Nickerson West gave birth to daughter Suzanna. Disney interviewed these Nicks for a bonus documentary shown in September to accompany “The Finest Hours.”

At the showing (left to right): Karen Nickerson, Ben Nickerson, Ron Nickerson, Phyllis Nickerson Power, Barbara Nickerson, Jane Nickerson West, Ginny Nickerson, Samantha Elena Nickerson, Suzanna Nickerson, John Nickerson.

### **TAG Article Now Online**

This article, “The English Ancestry of William<sup>1</sup> and Anne (Busby) Nickerson of Chatham, Massachusetts, and of Nicholas<sup>1</sup> and Bridget (Cocke) Busby of Boston” by Richard L. Bush, printed in *The American Genealogist*, in the October 2011 issue, Vol. 85, No. 4, is now available through our website. The author asserts that the ancestry of William<sup>1</sup> is incorrect and based on faulty research by genealogist J. Gardner Bartlett in English documents in the early 1920s. The NFA is currently researching the controversy. Please visit [www.nickersonassoc.com](http://www.nickersonassoc.com).

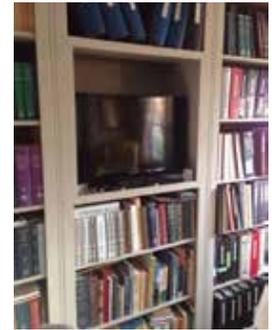
*We thank board member Debra Sweetman of Ontario, Canada for her generous gift of numerous books, many of which pertain to Canadian genealogy.*

## **Work continues on the NFA campus –many improvements afoot**

By Edmond Rhodes Nickerson  
Chair, Building and Grounds

We had a busy and successful day at the NFA campus at the end of August, with tradesmen descending on the campus at 8 a.m.

We now have a fully-operational, state-of-the-art HVAC system installed at the Caleb Nickerson Homestead, with the work having been done by Energy-One of West Warwick, R.I. Electricians from Chase Electric of Dennis were the next to arrive, and we now have a time-clock driven night light on the flagpole, enabling us to display the flags 24 hours a day if we wish; an electrical outlet and cable outlet in the parlor bookcase to accommodate cable TV, a flat-screen television and CD player (and thus freeing-up more valuable floor space in the parlor); the ability to switch off-and-on all the downstairs Wm. E. Nickerson Archives Room lights from the head of the stairs; repair of the noisy second floor bedroom timeclock, and-- best of all-- an understanding of where the outside pole lights, exterior flood lights and flagpole lights are controlled from. (*Answer: The flood lights are controlled by the second floor bedroom time clock; the flagpole and pole lights are controlled from time clocks in the basement electrical closet. All are now clearly labeled.*)



*New flat-screen TV*

Finally, later in the morning, the irrigation contractor arrived and did a thorough walk-through with Ron Nickerson and me, highlighting the many reasons the system was not working properly-- not the least of which was the compost bin being located partially over a sprinkler head, a work table blocking the line-of-sight for the spray; vegetation gone completely out of control on three sides of the yard and otherwise broken or damaged heads. We are proceeding to have all of the problems rectified. Needless to say, we must have the tangle of vines and growth cut back three-plus feet to recapture the heads, and will be doing so shortly before the reunion in conjunction with some brushing work attendant to the surveying project. As to that project, the bounds have been located, but we must brush cut lines from point to point in order to set concrete bounds in September and install corner posts of split-rail fencing at certain points. Earlier in the week, heirloom gardeners Anne and Bob Firth were on campus and detailed the landscaping around the entire property. All of these projects were long, long overdue, and today was completion day for them all! The resources

to cover the costs associated with these projects will come from the successful “We’re Fixin’ Up The Houses!” Capital Campaign. Thank you to our generous donors, the Driehaus Foundation and the voters of the Town of Chatham who approved the Community Preservation Act grant.



*Work on the grounds*

# CALEB NICKERSON HOMESTEAD CALENDAR OF EVENTS



## Join Us for the Annual Beehive Oven Baking Event January 22, 2017, noon to 3 p.m.

Baked beans, Indian pudding, pie and more—Sunday, January 22 is your chance to bake your grandmother’s favorite recipe in the Caleb Nickerson Homestead’s beehive oven, one of the only operating beehive ovens on Cape Cod. Enjoy a day in the keeping room as Maureen Leavenworth leads a hands-on baking event from noon to 3 p.m. Come early (at 9 a.m.) to see how Ken Needham fires the oven up to baking temperature. Or come at noon to help prepare food or bring your own dish, ready to be shoveled into the beehive oven and shared with all.



*Dick and Tish Noyes*

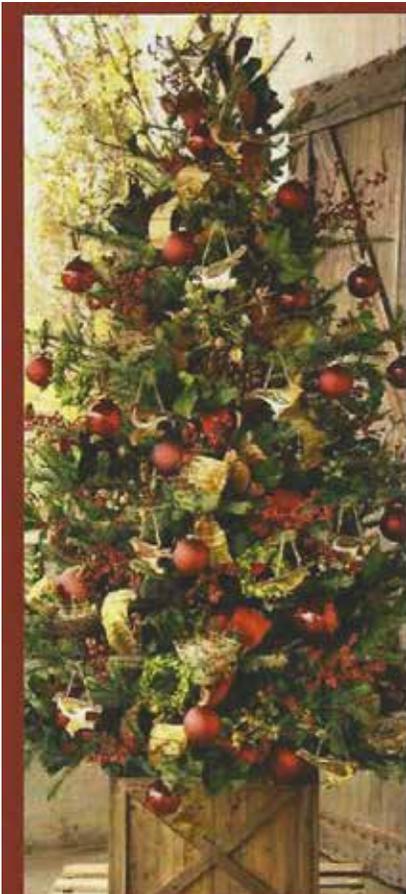
**The cost of this popular event is \$15.  
To make a reservation call Caroline Lane  
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[caroline.lane@comcast.net](mailto:caroline.lane@comcast.net).**



*Maureen Leavenworth*



*Holiday fare*



## CALEB NICKERSON HOMESTEAD



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13th Annual Holiday  
Hearthside Open House  
Saturday, December 3, 2016  
1 pm - 4 pm

Open Hearth Cooking and more...  
Publick Welcome

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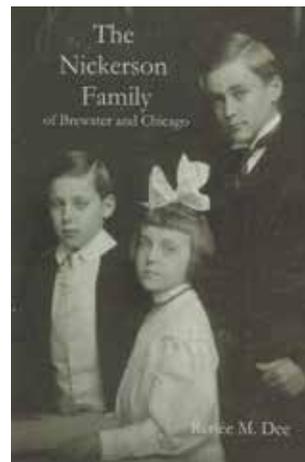


# The Nickerson Family of Brewster and Chicago

by Renée M. Dee (2016)

With research help from NFA genealogist and Past President Virginia Devine, author Renée M. Dee of Brewster tells the story of the Samuel Mayo Nickerson family of Chatham, Brewster and Chicago in *The Nickerson Family of Brewster and Chicago* (2016).

The 97-page book is a tale of a Gilded Age businessman who rose from humble roots in Chatham and then returned to Brewster to live in splendor in his final days. Dee begins her account of Samuel (1830-1914) on a spring morning in May 1906, as the house he built for his only son Roland, Fieldstone Hall on the Old King's Highway (Route 6A), in Brewster is ablaze. Without an adequate water supply, the house burned to the ground. The loss of the house and its opulent furnishings and art was calculated at \$500,000. The insurance was \$3000.



Book cover

At the time of the fire, Samuel was seventy-six, and had returned to Cape Cod after a successful career as a banker in Chicago. A descendant of William and Anne (**Busby**) **Nickerson**, who first came to Chatham c. 1664, Samuel was born in Chatham in 1830 not far from William and Anne's original homestead. His parents, Ensign and Rebecca **Mayo Nickerson**, sent him to New Hampshire for his education. As a young man, he went into the mercantile business in Florida and in 1857 Samuel's first fire burned his business to the ground. Samuel returned to Cape Cod where he married his cousin Mathilda **Pinkham Crosby** of Brewster.



1890 tower At Ocean Edge

Soon after their wedding, the young couple moved to Chicago, where the Crosbys ran a distillery. Not long after, Samuel opened his own distillery—S.M. Nickerson and Co. On 27 July 1859 a son, Roland **Crosby Nickerson**, was born. After the Civil War, Samuel moved into banking, and was one of the founders and for 25 years president of the First National Bank of Chicago. On 30 September 1871 the second fire in Samuel's life burned down a warehouse he owned. And on 8 October most of Chicago was in flames including Samuel and Mathilda's house at 40 Erie St.

By 1883, Samuel had rebuilt the family home, since 2008 the Richard H. **Driehaus** Museum. At NFA's annual reunion in 2014, Lise Dubé-Scherr, executive director of the Driehaus Museum, lectured us on the house museum during our banquet dinner.

Samuel's son Roland lived with his family in Fieldstone Hall on Route 6A in Brewster. The house was only 20 years old in 1906 when it burned down.

Philanthropy had long been a hallmark of the Samuel Nickerson family and in 1934 Roland's widow Adelaide **Trego Daniels** donated her Bungalow Estate on the south side of Route 6A to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The 1900-acre Roland C. Nickerson State Park is a memorial to both Addie's late husband and late son. Fieldstone Hall is now open as Ocean Edge Resort and Golf Club.

The book is available through the NFA.

## CALLING ALL DESCENDANTS OF SAMUEL NICKERSON!

Do you trace your Nickerson line back through William and Anne's son Samuel Nickerson? If so, do you have any photographs, Bible apocrypha, mementos, signatures, letters, diaries or anything else pertaining to this line? Please let us know. We are hard at work tracing the Samuel Nickerson genealogy.

*Photographs in this newsletter were taken by  
Bob Webber, Rebecca Arnold and Debra Lawless*

# ROOTS & BRANCHES

## NEW TWIG



**Frances S. Nickerson** celebrated her 95th birthday on June 20 at her North Chatham home with grandson **Michael E. Nickerson-Power**, son of **Phyllis Nickerson Power** of Chatham, his wife **Elizabeth** and their baby **Isadora Aubrie Nickerson-Power**, born May 26 in Cambridge, Mass.

## FALLEN BRANCHES

Past NFA President **Mary Griffin Ramseur** of Millbrae, Calif., died on Aug. 10, 2016 at the age of 84. Mary began her career teaching kindergarten. Later she was elected to the Millbrae City Council, also serving as the city's mayor, and then to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. She is survived by her husband, Walter F. Ramseur, a retired United Airlines pilot; she was previously married to the late Donald F. Griffin. She leaves her children John Griffin, Mary Griffin Eid and Zachary Griffin. She also leaves three step-children and seven grandchildren. Mary served as NFA president from 2006-2008.



**Alfred Mayo Newell** (Annie Nickerson<sup>10</sup>, Charles<sup>9</sup>, Seth<sup>8</sup>, Levi<sup>7</sup>, Joshua<sup>6</sup>, Joshua<sup>5</sup>, Caleb<sup>4</sup>, William<sup>3</sup>, William<sup>2</sup>, William<sup>1</sup>) of Shelburne, Co., Nova Scotia, died on May 17, 2016. Alfred was born during a major snowstorm in February 1932. He later taught in several local high schools. He was the first president of the Archelaus Smith Museum. Through the years he spent a great deal of time working on his genealogy. He is survived by his wife JoAnne, step-daughter Cora Jane Newell, grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

**Evelyn Dixon Hill** (Clarence Hill<sup>10</sup>, Mary R. LaVoice<sup>9</sup>, Mary Alzina Nickerson<sup>8</sup>, Stephan<sup>7</sup>, Stephan<sup>6</sup>, Daniel<sup>5</sup>, Daniel<sup>4</sup>, William David<sup>3</sup>, John<sup>2</sup>, William<sup>1</sup>) died on May 11, 2015 at the age of 98. A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, she is survived by her son Rodger and daughter Lenore F. Dixon.

## NFA Receives Trove of 19th Century Nickerson Letters

*February the 16 Day 1842*

*Dear brother,*

*I take my pen in hand to let you no about the times in Chatham.*

So begins Simeon Young Nickerson's letter to his younger brother Zebina Horton Nickerson (1818-1885), who lived in East Orleans.

In the 12-letter collection ranging from 1842 to 1850, Simeon (1812-1890) touches upon topics such as fishing, his rheumatism, and family matters.

So why was Simeon writing to his brother in Orleans when the distance from Chatham's town hall to Orleans's town hall is less than eight miles and the distance from one brother's house to the other less than that? Well, those miles were farther in the mid-nineteenth century. *"The day that I left Orleans I arrived to Chatham the same night about 7 o'clock,"* Simeon wrote. *"It was dark and stormy."* Was he traveling on foot? Was he riding in a horse-drawn cart? He doesn't say.

The letters, as well as receipts for property taxes (\$6.33 on Sept. 1, 1856), insurance, purchases of clothing and a message sent through the Western Union Telegraph, were donated by Brittany Pierce of Westport, Mass., in late October.

*"I recently inherited the letters and wanted to ensure they are shared with the community and preserved for future generations,"* she said during a visit to the NFA. *"I know the Nickerson Genealogical Research Center will take care of them."*

The letters and other documents will be archived and displayed.





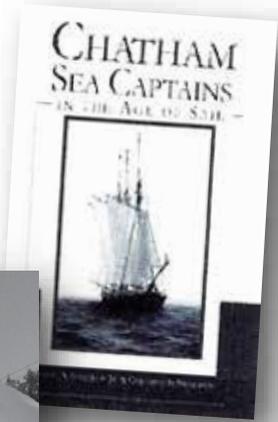
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<b>NICKERSON T-SHIRTS:</b>					
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	MD 38-40			\$30.00	
	SM 34-36			\$30.00	
<b>NICKERSON POLO:</b> Blue or white, w/embossed crest		XXL		\$35.00	
in color, w/ or w/o pocket, cotton.	White	XL		\$35.00	
Specify POCKET or NOT (circle one)	Blue	L		\$35.00	
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<b>BASEBALL CAP:</b> Navy w/Nickerson crest	Navy			*\$20.00	
<b>CAPE COD LAPEL PIN:</b> With "Nickerson" across Cape, bright gold, red star shows Chatham				*\$5.00	
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Engraved in simulated scrimshaw, in color	Caleb House			\$20.00 ea.	
	Nickerson Crest				
<b>NICKERSON CREST KEY RING</b>				*\$2.00	
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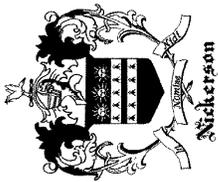
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