



The Godfrey Windmill

Chatham, Massachusetts

Chatham 300th Souvenir Edition

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chatham Historical Commission
Chatham Parks and Recreation Commission
Community Preservation Committee
The Chatham Historical Society

The Chatham Windmill Group is comprised of local citizens interested in the restoration of the Godfrey wind powered grist mill. The Chatham Windmill Group founders include: Frank Messina, Chairman; Jennifer Ukstins, Bill Cullinane, and Dan Tobin, Director of Parks and Recreation.

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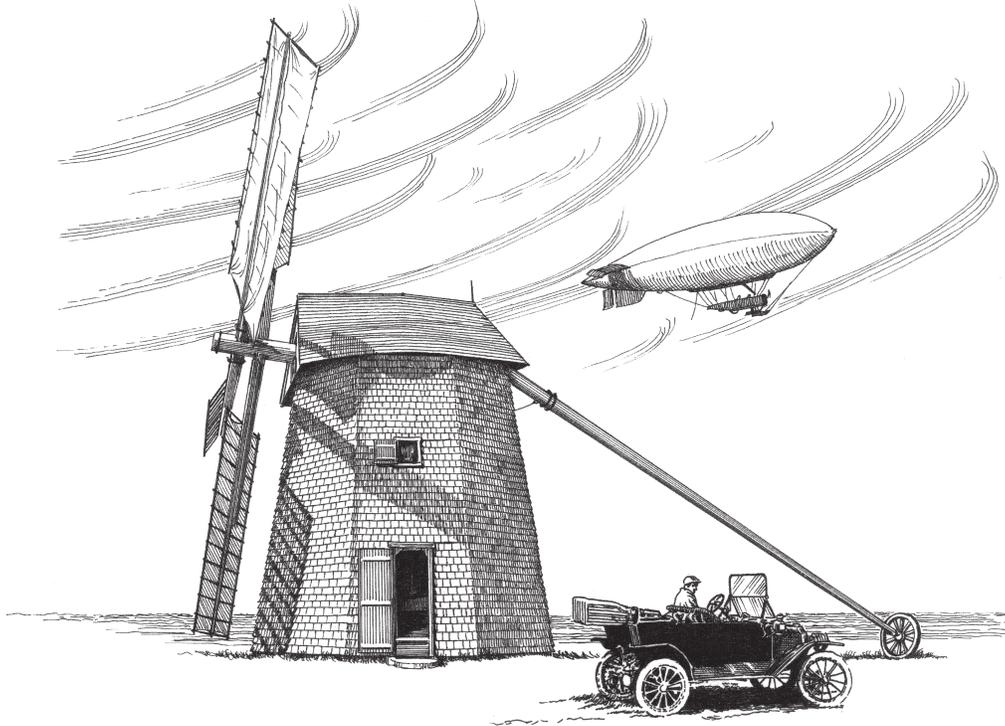
THE GODFREY WINDMILL CHATHAM, MASSACHUSETTS



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Drawing by Jim Owens

THE OLD MILL

By Mattie Godfrey

My grandfather's mill
Still stands on the hill,
"Lonely, spectral, somber and still,"

A relic of former days
When, with arms, sails and wind ways
It ground into meal the golden maize.

What an attraction it seemed to me
If in working order it would be
For the summer guests to see!

It would give me a thrill
To see once more on the hill
The revolving arms of that old mill.

It would awaken memories galore
Of days now no more
When Grandfather stood at the old mill door.

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“The mill goes toiling slowly round with steady and solemn creak.”

Eugene Field

CHATHAM 1797

Just imagine Chatham on a windy day in 1797. You might be bringing a wagon full of corn up the hill overlooking Mill Pond. Colonel Godfrey used this hill as the site for his new windmill, for which the farmers are so grateful. Having a gristmill in town saves a long ride to Plymouth to get corn ground.

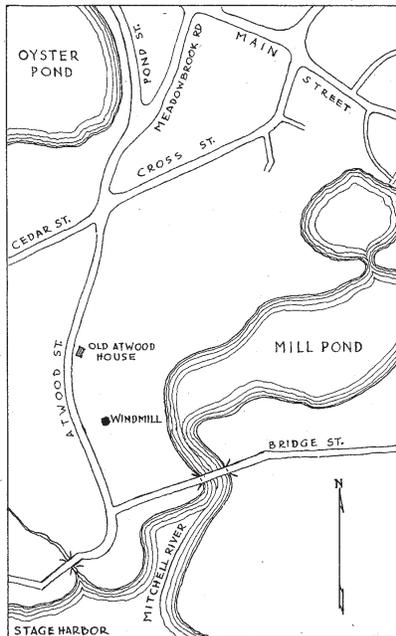
The eight sided mill is an impressive sight from land and sea, standing thirty feet tall on top of Mill Hill. It has three stories, making it taller than most mills.

As the arms turn around in the wind you see they are covered with sails made from flax that was probably grown and woven by one of your neighbors. You also hear the grinding of the mill stones that were probably brought from Germany, France or England as the ballast on a ship returning to Chatham from faraway ports.

Since you live in a town with water on three sides, it is interesting that the cap of the mill looks like an up-side-down boat. The miller turns the cap using the long tail pole, so that the sails will pick up the wind. If the wind keeps blowing strongly, you will get your bag of corn ground in about ten minutes.

If it takes longer because of a slower wind, you can visit with your neighbors and share the latest news. While you are waiting you might be hoping the newly ground corn will be used to make Indian pudding to have with your dinner.

The mill that Colonel Godfrey built served the town of Chatham for many years until its active commercial use ended in 1898.



Map showing original location of the Godfrey Wind Mill, built in 1797, off Atwood Street, (Now Stage Harbor Road).