

**Clint Hammond**  
**Verses**  
**1978.007.001**

**Description:** Clint recalls some of his favorite poems written about Cape Cod and the Islands.

**Clint:** He said, when he was a young man he could remember anything, whether it happened or not. But now that he had grown older and his faculties had decayed somewhat, he could only remember the things that never happened. It's sad to go to pieces like this, but we all seem to have to do it.

The reason that I tell this little story is because I am in my 89<sup>th</sup> year and am trying to set down a few of my recollections and some other things I have learned over the years. It's hard to do.

In 1938, I came to the Cape to live and make my residence here. It's always been a hard thing to understand exactly what a native down here is. When you're in your mother's arms as a baby, you're still not a native. I have this little story that I like to tell. It involves Harold Tuttle and Luther Edwards, two people who formerly lived here in the Village.

One Sunday morning they happened to meet and Harold said to Luther, "At the rate these summer folk are coming down here and buying up property and building houses, it won't be long before you and I are the only natives left." Luther sort of snorted and said, "Native? You're no native." Well, Harold said, "I always thought I was. I was born here." "Yes," he says, "But your father was born in Harwich."

So I guess to be a native, you have to be born here, but your father and perhaps your grandfather, I don't know how far back, makes you a native.

I'm living in the town of Chatham, Massachusetts. Originally, when we came down here, I was born in Taunton. And we used to come down here in the summertime, as a boy. We came by horse and buggy and made it in about two days, which was 80 miles. Later on by the New Haven Railroad, the Chatham branch got you here. And you spent the summer here, and so forth. When

I first came to Chatham in the early days, my boyhood days, Chatham was not pronounced that way, it was always called “Chat-Ham” like Wareham, like Eastham.

Somebody asked Joe Lincoln one time, why they put the “ham” on Chatham. He said, “Well you wouldn’t say ‘hum’ sandwich, would you?”

The real reason why was called Chatham though, goes back to colonial days, when the whole oceanfront from Eastham to Chatham was called Eastham. And for many years it remained Chatham. But phonetically, it is a bit harder to say “Chat-Ham” than “Chat-Um”. So I guess we’re being lazy people, we say “Chat-Um.” However, one time I was up in “Ware-Um,” that’s the way Wareham is spelled, but they say “Ware-Um.” The story is told that one time a Methodist minister was out making parish calls, just walking around from house to house. This was back quite a ways. Along came a girl riding a bicycle, she was wearing bloomers, they were very stylish then, about to be. The girl asked the minister, “Is this the way to “Ware-Um?” And he said, “I don’t know, I never saw any before.”

Occasionally, on my way home from work I would, I was in the oyster business then, I would stop off to visit a friend by the name of Frederick C. Lane. He was a writer, a lecturer, a world traveler. At one time he had a baseball magazine. He was a biologist at one time, went down for the state of Massachusetts to study the lobster business fishery. As it existed at that time at Monomoy Point in the Powder Hole.

I guess the reason I stopped there was because it was a real education to stop and talk with this man. He was so well educated and had done so many different things. He presented me with a book of his poems. The book held about over 90 some odd poems and some of them were about the things right there that we’re looking at, like Chatham Bars, Monomoy, and all that sort of thing. I wonder that we aren’t using more of those poems today. Some of them are pretty good. One of them I like to recall is the first one in the book, entitled, *On Old Cape Cod*:

How rich is life on Old Cape Cod  
Where autumn smiles and golden rod

And marshes flame, though not with fire  
A region blessed of heart's desire  
In vain, we'd roam the seven seas  
There are no quainter shores than these  
Here nature in an indulgent mood  
Enfolds us in her solitude  
And here the cleansing winds combine  
The tonic of the salt and pine  
The wild old ocean's muffled swells  
Are chiming like cathedral bells  
The days drift by without a care  
As sweet fern odors scent the air  
While watching wheeling gulls that play  
The world of strife seems far away  
It must have been a kindly God  
Who shaped the sands of Old Cape Cod

There are many good poems in this book, but another I like to remember is, if you can picture a elderly man, gray haired man, walking along the ocean side, just out of reach of the breakers. And he came upon this little maid who was playing in the sand. And he said,

How now, little maid in your bonnet arrayed,  
with that quaint little shell in your hand?  
Not a shell, but a boat? Oh I see!  
Let it float far away from these mountains of sand.  
It will sail, so I'm told, down a pathway of gold  
Where the sun paves the sea with its beams.  
To some tropical isle, where the skies always smile  
On childhood's endeavors and dreams.  
But, honey don't cry  
If it sinks by and by

Like a fluttering bird to its nest.  
With wild waves that play  
In their blundering way  
Like the oncoming years, never cease.  
My heart-

Just off shore from Cape Cod are two islands, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Though they are not Cape Cod, they are frequently mentioned, and the paper would say, "Cape Cod and the Islands." And there are some good stories- of course, that's where whaling was done in its early days. And there are some good stories there, for instance, I guess about everybody has heard about the limerick about the "Man from Nantucket who kept all his cash in a bucket. His daughter, named Nan, ran away with a man, and as for the bucket, Nantucket. Pa followed the pair to Pawtucket, the girl and the man with the bucket, he said to the man he was welcome to Nan, but as to the bucket, Pawtucket. The pair followed Pa to Manhasset, where still held the cash as an asset. The girl and the man stole the money and ran, and as for the bucket, Manhasset."

Well the upshot of it was that I got to thinking about it one night I couldn't sleep. And so I wrote another verse to the limerick. And I wrote to the Nantucket Savings Bank and told them the story that, I thought the thing was pretty much left up in the air, and I thought we ought to try and finish the limerick. So I made up a little verse about, "Well at last, the old man from Nantucket went in search of the cash and his bucket, he discovered that Nan had returned with the man to bank the cash back on Nantucket." And I said it's back at the Nantucket Savings Bank, where it belongs. We can lay this to rest and feel much more comfortable about it.

*The following is a repetition:*

*Follow the pair to Pawtucket, the girl and the man with the bucket, he said to the man, he was welcome to Nan, but as for the bucket, Pawtucket.-*

*And some other periodical contributed the following: Pa followed the pair to Manhasset- no, the pair followed Pa to Manhasset, where he still held the cash as an asset. The girl and the man stole the money and ran, and as for the- I guess I should say, and as for the bucket, Manhasset. At last, when the man from Nantucket went in search of his cash and his bucket, he found out that Nan had returned with the man to bank the cash back on Nantucket.*

One of the banks, Nantucket Savings Bank, used to advertise over the radio how easy it was to put money in there and how difficult it would be to take it out because it would be a little unhandy to go over to Nantucket to get it. So I guess I wrote them a letter and I said, “Well the opposite is true with me, it was hard to get it in there but easy to take it out.” However, I had hoped that they might reply to my letter, but I never heard anything from my bank because I guess they couldn’t- maybe they don’t have a sense of humor.

While we’re talking about Nantucket, we ought to mention the alarm skipper, many a long, long year ago, Nantucket skippers had a plan of finding out while lying low how near New York their schooners ran. They greased the lead before it fell and then by sounding through the night knowing the soil was stuck so well, they always got their reckoning right.

The skipper gray, whose eyes were dim,  
Could tell by tasting just the spot  
And so below he’d douse the glim  
After, of course, his something hot.  
One night it was Jonathan Marden’s watch  
A curious wag, the peddler’s son.  
And so he thought the wanton wretch to not  
Have a grain of fun.  
They’re all a bunch of silly fools  
To think the skipper knows by tasting  
What ground he’s on

Nantucket schools don't teach such stuff with all their basting.  
And so he took the well-greased lead and rubbed it over a box of herbs  
that stood on deck a parsnip bed  
And then he sought the skipper's berth.  
Where are we now sir, please do taste?  
The skipper yawned, stretched forth his tongue  
And opened his eyes with wondrous haste  
And then upon the floor he sprung  
The skipper stormed and tore his hair  
Thrust on his boots and roared at Marden  
Nantucket sunk and here we are rolling over old Marm Haggert's garden.

Many people who come to Cape Cod, after they've been here a-

The name of Tepper (sp?) up in Sandwich. He wrote a poem and it goes like this:

I dreamt that I went to a city of gold  
To heaven resplendent and fair  
And after I entered that beautiful fold  
By one an authority there I was told  
That not a Cape Codder was there  
Impossible sir, for from my own town  
Many sought this delectable place  
And each must be here with a harp or a crown  
Or a conqueror's palm and a clean linen gown  
Received through unmerited grace  
The angel replied, all Cape Codders come here  
When first they depart from the earth  
But after a day, or a month, or a year  
They disappear  
And sigh for their land of birth.

We give them the best that the kingdom provides  
They have everything here at their nod  
But not a Cape Codder in heaven abides  
A very brief period here he resides  
Then hikes his way back to Cape Cod

(Muffled voices)

**Voice:** Well I think it's running fine. Let me see here.

**END OF RECORDING**