



# Artifacts and Anchors

*A quarterly newsletter for Members, Volunteers, and Friends of the Kittery Historical & Naval Society*



## Society's Armsden Exhibit "Capturing Kittery" has successful opening

The opening reception for the Douglas J. Armsden exhibit "Capturing Kittery" took place at the Kittery Community Center Morgan Gallery on Friday, June 2. An enthusiastic crowd heard introductory remarks by B.J. Glanville for the Morgan Gallery, and Robert Gray, President of the Board of Trustees of the Kittery Historical Society. Also in attendance was special guest Beverley Armsden Daniel, daughter of Kittery photographer Douglas Armsden.

The displays are a combination of theme-grouped panels and framed

photographs. They cover the extensive variety of Armsden's photography: publications, news, local events, Kittery Point waterfront, building Admiralty Village, brides, historic homes, family, and more.

If you were unable to attend the opening, the exhibit may be viewed at the Morgan Gallery until August 31st whenever the KCC is open. Currently on its summer schedule, the hours are Monday–Friday 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., closed Sundays.

## Summer 2023

### INSIDE

- In the Archives 2
- Board of Trustees News 3
- Artists of Kittery: Cheney 4
- Volunteer Spotlight 7
- Who, What, Where? 7



PHOTO COURTESY VIDEO TAPESTRY



PHOTO COURTESY MARGARET FARMER



PHOTO COURTESY VIDEO TAPESTRY



PHOTO COURTESY MARGARET FARMER



PHOTO COURTESY VIDEO TAPESTRY

*The opening of the Douglas Armsden photography exhibit was well-attended, June 2, 2023. At top, president of the board of trustees, Bob Gray, gives opening remarks.*

*Beverley Armsden Daniel (right), daughter of photographer Douglas Armsden with exhibit curator Janice Farmer (left).*



Officers:

PRESIDENT

Bob Gray

VICE PRESIDENT

Steven Webber

SECRETARY

Jeanne Voorhees

TREASURER

Ken Schoman

CLERK

Duncan McEachern

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Doug Cole, Barbara Estes,  
Janice Farmer, Shealagh Gray,  
William Littlefield,  
Karen Longcrier,  
Ann Pierce, Barbara West

TRUSTEES EMERITI

Richard Anderson, Lauren Gallant,  
David Morrison, Jerry Robock

ADMINISTRATOR

Janet Fleming

VOLUNTEERS

Dean Gallant  
Lauren Gallan,  
George Hoffman  
Patty LaClair,  
E.B. Leland  
Richard Minnick  
Tina Orfe  
John Perry  
Suzanne Sayer  
Suf Waleryszak  
Linda Wentworth

## In the archives



The archives and library of the Kittery Historical Society and Museum are located on the second floor of the museum building. They are part of the behind-the-scenes work that's necessary to keep track of our collections.

Our cataloging is done with PastPerfect museum software. Thousands of records document objects, paper records, videos, photographs, and more that has been acquired by the museum. The time-consuming job of transferring previous paper cataloging to digital is always an ongoing project.



Our library was recently reorganized by Trustee Bill Littlefield, who brought his years of experience working at the University of New Hampshire Library to the task.

Volunteers are always needed to help with work in the archives, as well as many other varied jobs that are needed to keep the museum operating.

### PREFACE

From our library:

## **MANNERS** Culture and Dress IN THE Best American Society

by Richard A. Wells, A.M.,  
King, Richardson & Co., Publishers,  
1890

Manners constitute the language in which the biography of every individual is written.

There is no one subject of today which embodies more practical interest to people in general, than a knowledge of the rules, usages and ceremonies of good society.

A lack of this knowledge is felt by almost every individual, whether in the city or country, at home or abroad.

True politeness is not a code of superficial rules, arranged and trimmed up for particular occasions, and then set aside at our please.

Polite manners and true culture are expressions of the heart, and have their foundation in the Golden rule.

Artifacts and Anchors is published quarterly by the Kittery Historical and Naval Society, P.O. Box 453, Kittery, ME 03904. Submission of articles by members for possible publication is encouraged. Please contact the newsletter at [editor@kitterymuseum.org](mailto:editor@kitterymuseum.org) for details.

Information about The Kittery Historical and Naval Museum may be found on our website: [kitterymuseum.org](http://kitterymuseum.org) or on [facebook.com/KitteryMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/KitteryMuseum).



# BOARD OF TRUSTEES News

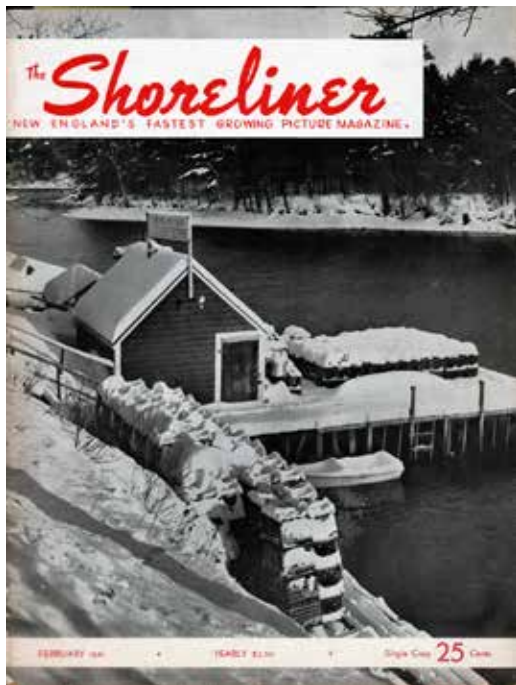
Membership renewal letters are going out in June with Trustees hoping for a robust response.

President of Board, Bob Gray, is working with Kittery Town Manager Kendra Amaral to apply for a Federal Archives grant to scan the 200 years-worth of Town Records currently in our care. If the grant application is successful, the information will be added to our Portal for the public to do research.

The large sign on the side of the Museum facing Rogers Road Extension

was damaged during a wind storm earlier this year. We are in the process of replacing it with a new sign which will be the same size as the original, but have a fresh, new look.

We were reminded of our collections policy: Due to tight storage space at the Museum, our policy for accepting donations is necessarily restricted to objects specifically connected to Kittery and that do not duplicate items in our collection.



*The Shoreliner* was a monthly magazine focused on the seacoast region of Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. Published by Herbert and Justine Georges from July 1950 to December 1952, *The Shoreliner* was combined with *New Hampshire Profiles* in 1953.

The February 1951 cover (left) featuring Herb Witham Lobsters on Chauncey Creek was one of many photos Douglas Armsden contributed to the magazine as photo editor.

# News and Events

## Third-graders return

After a COVID19 hiatus, the Mitchell School third-graders visited the Museum on May 24. This is a fun experience for the students where they participate in the traditional “scavenger hunt” of historical objects in our displays.

## Independence Day Ceremony

**June 24 at the Thresher Memorial next to Town Hall**

The ceremony included the traditional reading of the Declaration of Independence by “General William Whipple,” the Piscataqua Rangers Junior Fife and Drum Color Corps, and the PNSY Color Guard. Special guest Senator Susan Collins also attended. Refreshments were provided by the Town and served at the Museum.

## Armsden Exhibit

The exhibit can be seen any time the Kittery Community Center is open, and will be on view until August 31st.

## Kittery Block Party

**June 17, Kittery Foreside**

The Museum participated again this year. Our tent was set up with items for sale from our gift shop, plants from Trustee Doug Cole, and a free handout of our “A Brief History of Kittery” booklet.

*June is Membership Month!*

*Don't forget to renew your annual membership — or if you are not yet a member, why not BECOME ONE!*

*Go to our website or click on this link to* [Participate](#)

## Artists of Kittery Series

# Russell Cheney



### SERIES ON KITTERY ARTISTS

Our featured artist this issue is  
Russell Cheney.



Russell Cheney (1881–1945).

We hope everyone has had (or will have) a chance to visit the KH&NS sponsored exhibition, “Capturing Kittery: Douglas Armsden Photographs 1930s to 1990s” at the Kittery Community Center’s Morgan Gallery. This exhibit, curated by Trustee Janice Farmer, is in the Gallery from May 15 – August 31, with an opening reception on June 2 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. It is an exhibition not to be missed, especially for all those who have known Kittery for a long time.

Each of the artists in our Kittery Artist series — George Wasson, Douglas Armsden, and now Russell Cheney — have given us scenes of Kittery through their art and their unique perspectives. Russell Cheney lived on Bowen Road from 1927 until his death in 1945, and Kittery was the subject of some of his most successful and mature paintings.

Russell Cheney was born into a wealthy silk manufacturing family in Manchester, Connecticut, in 1881, the youngest of 11 children. He attended Yale University and after graduating in 1904, his family acquiesced to his wish to study art rather than follow most of the other men

in the family into the family silk business. He first studied at the Art Students League in New York City for three years, then sailed to Paris to study at the Académie Julian. After three years in Paris, he returned to New York to the Art Students League, where he became President in 1912.

Also in 1912, he began painting with Charles Woodbury at his summer art school in Ogunquit. Woodbury and Cheney stayed in touch throughout Cheney’s career and Woodbury visited Cheney when he painted in Kittery to provide welcome critique of Cheney’s work.

Patricia L. Heard wrote about Charles Woodbury and Russell Cheney: “Woodbury... taught his pupils that you don’t draw what you see of a wave — you draw what it does. Despite his close association with Woodbury, Cheney himself never painted the sea by itself and rarely a landscape without people or houses. It was said Woodbury painted with verbs; if this is true then it can be said that Cheney painted with nouns. Cheney’s paintings have a sense of place rather than movement. He loved the tactile properties of still lifes and his landscapes have an atmospheric stillness with few scudding clouds.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1916, Cheney established his art studio on his parents’ estate in Connecticut. Not long after, however, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis (a disease which had already claimed two of his siblings), and he was sent to a sanatorium in Colorado Springs, where he spent nearly two years recovering from the disease. Treatment and recovery were long because effective antibiotic treatments for tuberculosis had not yet been developed. Cheney’s health continued to be somewhat precarious.

*(Continued on page 6)*



Russell Cheney, *Hauled Up*, 1937.

<sup>1</sup> *Russell Cheney — Artist of the Piscataqua* by Patricia Heard, catalog biography from the exhibition of the same title at the Portsmouth Athenaeum, Randall Gallery, June – Aug. 1996.

From the Friday, January 24, 1936 issue of

## *The* **KITTERY PRESS** by Horace Mitchell

### Cheney's Show

That amiable and well-built gentleman whom we have seen fussing around with paints and canvas is to have another exhibition of his work. We know him as Russell Cheney of Gunnison's Neck, a resident of Kittery, who has done more than any other one man to spread the beauties of his town before the people of the entire nation.

The world knows him as one of the foremost living artists. His pictures have been exhibited by invitation in the major galleries of this country.

Russell Cheney has taken this vicinity to his heart and has permanently preserved the best of it. His landscapes seem to smell like home. The east wind can be felt and in some of them, even Whalesback can be heard.

Cheney has worked hard for years to reach the peak he now occupies. When he first came here as a summer person his pictures were good. The layman's eye would have said they could not be better so far as reality was concerned. Then, year after year they magically grew better.

Perhaps his boyhood summers in York has some part in steeping him with the feel of this locality. Perhaps it is only the talent of genius that catches a million unseen fragments without conscious thought. Whatever the cause, his pictures of Kittery are the best sub-

stitute known for homesick sons of southern Maine.

Among his portraits of local people are those of Cecil Ladd, Horace Hanlon, Norman Toennesen, and George Collins.

Streets and houses of Portsmouth and Newcastle have also been transferred to canvas from the tips of his brushes. One of Bow Street is of particular interest inasmuch as it shows a horse hitched to a delivery wagon. Cheney says, in regard to it, that he can paint horses better in winter than in summer, because in winter, horses are covered with blankets.

[New Mexico Senator] Bronson Cutting purchased a Cheney painting the day before he was killed. The portrait was of Jesus Baca, the Sheriff of Santa Fe, a close friend of the late Senator.

A good number of this artist's pictures have been executed in the Southwest. These make an odd companion for the New England pieces.

The new show, at the Grace Horne Galleries in Boston, will, however, be chiefly concerned with Kittery. New pictures that were completed this fall. On every day except Sunday the galleries will be open to the public without charge and every person who knows this part of the country is cordially invited to be there.

About 1929 Cheney, with his partner, Francis Otto Matthiessen, Associate Professor of English at Harvard University, purchased the old Fernald House on Gunnison's Neck. From the maps in Stackpole's book it would seem as if this was the original house of Jonathan Dam, occupied by him between 1635 and 1700.

## **Upcoming Exhibit at the New Mexico Museum of Art— Out West: Gay and Lesbian Artists in the Southwest 1900-1969**

**November 11, 2023 - September 2, 2024**

"Out West recognizes the contributions of gay and lesbian artists to the history of modern art in the Southwest. Despite social stigmas of the time certain communities in the Southwest offered a safe space for early queer artists to live unhampered by the stigmas and social restrictions present in other parts of the country. This exhibition will explore the influential careers of LGBTQ artists, including Cady Wells, Marsden Hartley, Russell Cheney, and Agnes Sims in the Southwest, and how their legacy remains a vital part of Southwestern cultural history."

From the website of the New Mexico Museum of Art  
<https://www.nmartmuseum.org/exhibitions/outwest/>



Russell Cheney, *New Mexico*, 1929. Oil on canvas, collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art.



(Continued from page 4)

ous throughout his life, requiring him to seek dry, warm climates to escape New England winters. His paintings include scenes of the American Southwest, California, the south of France, Italy, and other warm climates, painted while traveling for his health.

On a ship to Italy in 1924, he met his future life partner, F.O. Matthiessen, who was on his way to Oxford, England, for his second year as a Rhodes Scholar. Their meeting developed into a close romantic partnership that lasted until Cheney's death in 1945. Matthiessen was also a Yale graduate, and after completing his studies at Oxford, completed his MA and PhD at Harvard. He taught first at Yale, then at Harvard and over time became an influential scholar and literary critic in the new field of American Studies. At Harvard, Matthiessen chaired its undergraduate program in History and Literature, and served as Senior Tutor at Eliot House.

In 1927, Cheney and Matthiessen purchased a home together in Kittery Point – “the Shurtleff House on Old Ferry Lane”<sup>2</sup> (now Bowen Road), where Cheney set up his studio and planted the garden and flowers seen in so many of his paintings. For Cheney, the home was his full time residence when he was not traveling. For Matthiessen, it was where he came to relax and work after long weeks at Harvard. Both Cheney and Matthiessen became very attached to their home in Kittery and both integrated into the community. Cheney

<sup>2</sup> The former Cheney house now has an address on Bowen Rd., Kittery Point. The name Shurtleff House is from a painting by Russell Cheney of his own home, which he titled *The Shurtleff House on Old Ferry Lane, Kittery*.

was soon recognized around Kittery and in Portsmouth behind an easel, painting familiar scenes. An enlarged photograph of Cheney standing at an easel in front of Frisbee's Store in the 1930s with a child Frank Frisbee at his feet, is displayed in downtown Kittery in front of the Kittery Art Association. Both Cheney and Matthiessen enjoyed gatherings at their Kittery home of friends from the community and from Harvard.

Cheney's work was well received all during his lifetime. He painted portraits of friends and acquaintances, his beloved cats, F.O. Matthiessen, his flowers, his porch, his house and interiors, the riverfront, the shorefront, towns, streets, factories, and domestic scenes. His work was shown in galleries from Paris to New York to San Francisco. He travelled widely and painted wherever he was. His work comes from Connecticut, Vermont, New York City, Colorado, Venice, France, the Southwest, California, and closer to home, Kittery, Berwick, Portsmouth, and Ogunquit.

Cheney enjoyed his time in Kittery and his works from this period are some of the most prized. He was fortunate that during his lifetime he was able to see his work celebrated by colleagues and art critics. But his health problems continued all during his life, and in 1945, at the age of 63, he suf-



Russell Cheney, *View of Christian Shore*, Portsmouth, NH. Gift of the Richard Hyde family in memory of Milton Hall, long-time Trustee of the KH&NM.

fered a fatal heart attack at his home in Kittery Point.

Interest in Cheney's work has increased, especially since a major exhibition of his works at the Portsmouth Athenaeum in 1996, and another in 2008, also at the Athenaeum. If auction prices are any indication, his star is certainly rising again. A website, established by his great-niece Carol L. Cheney and Art Historian Professor Richard Candee, is a great source of information and images of Cheney's paintings. The website is <https://russellcheney.com>. Carol Cheney and Richard Candee are also interested to hear from anyone who has additional painting records, information, or questions.

—Lauren Gallant



Russell Cheney, *Cove in Winter*, Kittery Point. 1929

# VOLUNTEER Spotlight

The KH&NS is fortunate that when Barbara West retired from her 35-year career in the Kittery schools, she decided that she had some time to give to the community and her love of history led her to volunteer at the Museum. Barbara has been a volunteer docent for over a year, and is the most recently elected member of the Board of Trustees of the Society. Barbara has taken on the responsibility for stocking and managing the gift shop of the Museum and her enthusiasm for that task is evident when talking to her about her activities at the Museum. Look for interesting and charming additions to the stock and feel free to talk to her if you have ideas or suggestions for the gift shop.

Raised in Billerica, Massachusetts, Barbara and her future husband, Kittery native Don West, met as children at a lake in Acton, where both families had summer camps. When they married they moved to Kittery to build a home on land given to the newlyweds by her father-in-law (a Kittery tradition

à la John and Margery Bray?). They raised their family in Kittery and Barbara worked at Kittery schools, first at the old Frisbee School, then at the Shapleigh School when it was completed.

Barbara said that during her years working and raising a family she saw the Kittery Museum frequently when she was driving by on her way to somewhere else. She had always meant to visit, but it didn't happen in her busy working life. Barbara retired in 2020. She attended a lecture given by Kim Sanborn on Kittery cemeteries. At the end of the lecture, Kim explained about the Museum's need for volunteers, and Barbara signed up that very evening. She has been working at the Museum since 2022 and joined the Board in 2023.

Barbara says she enjoys meeting the people who visit the Museum. She says they all have very interesting stories to tell, come from all over,



*Volunteer Barbara West in the Museum's Andrews-Mitchell Garrison exhibit.*

and come for many reasons—to see Kittery artifacts, to research ancestors and old records. She thinks the Museum is a wonderful resource for out-of-town visitors and Kittery residents alike.

When asked if there were any issues she thought the Museum should address, she said she thought the Museum needed to attract more Kittery residents, as well as out-of-town visitors. She says the Museum has so much information about every aspect of Kittery and is so well laid out. “It is an unknown treasure—it is well worth a first visit, and once they come, they will come back.”

—Lauren Gallant

## Spotlight on Collections

### Who, What, Where

A print advertisement for Dan's Super Market when its location was in Kittery at the intersection of Shapleigh Rd., Woodlawn Ave., and Whipple Rd. Can you guess where and when this ad was printed?

ANSWER: Page 8



Kittery Historical and Naval Society  
 P.O. Box 453  
 Kittery, ME 03904

**Ron-Bet Excavation**  
 99 State Rd Kittery  
 ME

Tel: (207) 439-5868      Ryan Chick  
 Cell: (207) 703-6646      ryan@ronbet.com

**Kennebunk Savings**  
 BANKING · INSURANCE

800.339.6573 • [kennebunksavings.com](http://kennebunksavings.com)  
 Member FDIC

Proud to support  
 the Kittery  
 Historical &  
 Naval Society!

**TIME TO SPRUCE UP  
 YOUR HOME?**

**Ron-Bet** Co. Inc.  
 Home Improvements  
 Established in 1947

- Gutters
- Windows
- Awnings

99 State Rd., Kittery, ME  
 207-439-5868 • [ronbet.com](http://ronbet.com)

**Visit the Florist at Cole Gardens!**  
[www.floristatcolegardens.com](http://www.floristatcolegardens.com)  
 603-229-0655

**COLE GARDENS**

**SEND BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS ANYWHERE!**

**Answer to Who, What, Where** (p. 7): This advertisement for Dan's Super Market appeared in the November 1952 issue of *The Shoreliner* magazine. The Kittery Historical and Naval Museum has a number of issues of this magazine in its collection. *The Shoreliner* was published from 1950 to 1952, then combined with *New Hampshire Profiles* in 1953. Dan's was a staple of grocery shopping in Kittery for many years, moving to a larger store across Shapleigh Road into what is now the Post Office and Blue Mermaid Island Grill. At one time there were also Dan's supermarkets in Portsmouth, Dover, and Rochester, NH.