

Chatham, Massachusetts

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Chatham is a town in Barnstable County, Massachusetts, United States, Barnstable County being coextensive with Cape Cod. First settled by the English in 1664, the township was originally called **Monomoit** based on the indigenous population's term for the region.^[1] The population was 6,125 at the 2010 census.^[2] Chatham is home to the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, located on Monomoy Island,

For geographic and demographic information on specific parts of the town of Chatham, please see the articles on Chatham (CDP) and West Chatham.

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History

Native American tribes who lived in the area before European colonization included the Nauset, specifically the Manomoy or Monomoy people. The expansive lands over which they roamed were known to them as Manamoyik or Monomoit. Explorer Samuel de Champlain landed here in October of 1606 at a place he christened "Port Fortuné", where he contacted (and skirmished with) the Nauset. Twelve years later another group of Europeans gave it the name "Sutcliffe's Inlets".^[1] Neither name stuck, and

Chatham, Massachusetts

Town



Central Chatham, April 2010



Seal



the location was not permanently occupied by Europeans until English settlers reached Monomoit in 1664.^[1] The town was incorporated on 11 June 1712,^[1] at which point it was renamed after Chatham, Kent, England. Its territory expanded with the annexation of Strong Island and its vicinity on 7 February 1797.^[1]

Located at the "elbow" of Cape Cod, the community became a shipping, fishing, and whaling center. Chatham's early prosperity would leave it with a considerable number of 18th century buildings, whose charm helped it develop into a popular summer resort.

Chatham is home to the Chatham Lighthouse, which was established by President Thomas Jefferson in 1808 to protect the ships circling the Cape. The 1808 towers were replaced in 1841 by twin brick towers that were eventually lost to erosion. The pair were rebuilt in 1877 out of cast iron across the street from its original location, where the light is today. The northern of the two was moved to Eastham to become the Nauset Light in 1923, when the northern tower was declared surplus. Today, the keeper's house is home to a Coast Guard station which patrols the waters of the Atlantic and Nantucket Sound from Wellfleet to West Yarmouth. The first reforestation project in America took place on Great Hill in 1821 when Selectmen had pine trees and beach grass planted to prevent erosion and to keep sand from blowing over the village.^[3]

Although urban sprawl has invaded the Cape, the town of Chatham still boasts a quaint and walkable Main Street, home to numerous family-owned and -operated shops, restaurants, and businesses. The main shopping area features pedestrian-friendly crosswalks, on-street parallel parking, and some parking lots that are off Main Street. During the summer, concerts are held in a gazebo on Main Street, and not far from the shops is where the Chatham Anglers baseball team plays, as part of the Cape Cod Baseball League on the peninsula for collegiate-age players.

Chatham, like much of Cape Cod, is suffering from an exodus of young people and young families due to high housing prices and a lack of social and professional opportunities.^[4] The majority of homes in Chatham sit empty in the winter months until the summer when second-home owners come to use their summer/vacation homes, or they are used as weekly rentals for tourists.^{[5][6]} As of February 22, 2012, the average listing price for a home in Chatham was \$1.3 million.^[7]

Location in Barnstable County and the state of Massachusetts.	
Coordinates: 41°40′55″N 69°57′37″W	
Country	United States
State	Massachusetts
County	Barnstable
Settled	1665
Incorporated	1712
Government • Type	Open town meeting
Area • Total • Land • Water	24.4 sq mi (63.2 km ²) 16.1 sq mi (41.8 km²) 8.3 sq mi (21.4 km²)
Elevation	46 ft (14 m)
Population (2010)	
 • Total	6,125
 • Density	380/sq mi (146.6/km ²)
Time zone	Eastern (UTC-5)
 • Summer (DST)	Eastern (UTC-4)
ZIP code	02633
Area code(s)	508 / 774
FIPS code	25-12995
GNIS feature ID	0618250
Website	www.chatham-ma.gov (http://www.chatham-ma.gov)

In summer, Chatham grows to a population of an estimated 30,000. Facilities are overcrowded, and there continues to be limited parking in the Main Street Business District. Beaches are affected by this increase of population. Limited parking exists in established parking areas, and the town's most popular beach, Lighthouse Beach, has only off the street parking, which sometimes involves a long walk to her sandy shores.

Historical sites and museums

- Atwood House (1752)
- Caleb Nickerson House (1772)
- Chatham Railroad Museum (1887)
- Josiah Mayo House (c. 1820)
- Old Grist Mill (1797)

Geography



Chatham Lighthouse during Hurricane Earl on September 3, 2010

The town occupies the southeast corner (the "elbow") of Cape Cod. The town's villages include Chatham proper, Chatham Port, North Chatham, West Chatham, and South Chatham (west of West Chatham). Chatham is bordered by Harwich to the west, Pleasant Bay and Orleans to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, and Nantucket Sound to the south. The town is 35 miles (56 km) south of Provincetown and east of the Sagamore Bridge, 20 miles (32 km) east of Barnstable, and 85 miles (137 km) southeast of Boston.

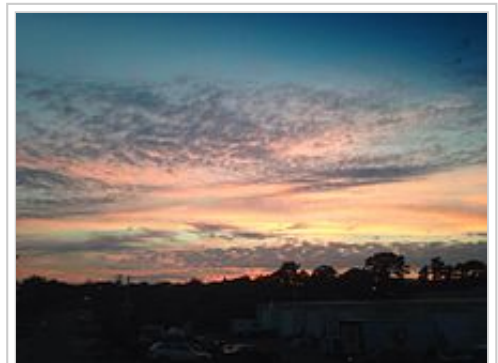
According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 24.4 square miles (63.2 km²), of which 16.1 square miles (41.8 km²) is land and 8.3 square miles (21.4 km²), or 33.88%, is water.^[2]

The mainland portion of the town is typical of Cape Cod, with several ponds, brooks, rivers, harbors, and inlets around the town. The town includes two narrow strips of land which serve as a barrier between the Atlantic and the mainland; the northern of these is the southern part of the Cape Cod National Seashore. There are several islands, including Strong Island, Tern Island (which is a sanctuary), Morris Island, Stage Island, and Monomoy Island, a

7.25-mile-long (11.67 km) island south of the corner of the town which is home to the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge.

Transportation

All five roads that exit Chatham cross into Harwich. The two state routes that pass through the town are Route 28 and the southern end of Route 137. Route 28 circles through the center of town before exiting and heading north toward Route 6A, joining that route until the roads end at the Orleans Rotary.



Sunset in Chatham, MA

Rail service no longer extends to the town; the former rail bed is a bicycling path, and is called the Old Colony Rail Trail. In addition, another bicycle route passes through the town, starting at the end of the Rail Trail, and providing views of Chatham Fish Pier, Chatham Bars, and Chatham Light.^[8]

The town is the home to the Chatham Municipal Airport, which provides local service to other small airports on the Cape and islands. The nearest national and international air service can be reached at Logan International Airport in Boston.

Demographics



As of the census^[9] of 2000, there were 6,625 people, 3,160 households, and 1,886 families residing in the town. The population density was 408.4 people per square mile (157.7/km²). There were 6,743 housing units at an average density of 415.7 per square mile (160.5/km²). The racial makeup of the town was 96.03% White, 1.77% Black or African American, 0.18% Native American, 0.27% Asian, 0.02% Pacific Islander, 0.92% from other races, and 0.82% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 1.00% of the population.

During the summer months (generally Memorial Day through Labor Day), the population of the town triples to approximately 20,000, not counting the additional transient tourist population hosted by the town's many hotels, inns, motels, and bed and breakfasts. While the tourist industry is very strong in Chatham, fishing still represents the town's main industry.

There were 3,160 households out of which 15.3% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 51.2% were married couples living together, 6.0% had a female householder with no husband present, and 40.3% were non-families. 34.7% of all households were made up of individuals and 18.8% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.00 and the average family size was 2.52.

In the town the population was spread out with 13.3% under the age of 18, 4.4% from 18 to 24, 19.8% from 25 to 44, 28.2% from 45 to 64, and 34.3% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 54 years. For every 100 females there were 89.3 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 85.4 males.

The local K-12 school system has approximately 700 students, making for average high school grade sizes between 30 and 40 students.

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Historical population		
Year	Pop.	±%
1850	2,439	—
1860	2,710	+11.1%
1870	2,411	−11.0%
1880	2,250	−6.7%
1890	1,954	−13.2%
1900	1,749	−10.5%
1910	1,564	−10.6%
1920	1,737	+11.1%
1930	1,931	+11.2%
1940	2,136	+10.6%
1950	2,457	+15.0%
1960	3,273	+33.2%
1970	4,554	+39.1%
1980	6,071	+33.3%
1990	6,579	+8.4%
2000	6,625	+0.7%
2010	6,125	−7.5%

The median income for a household in the town was \$45,519, and the median income for a family was \$56,750. Males had a median income of \$41,064 versus \$30,365 for females. The per capita income for the town was \$28,594. About 1.9% of families and 4.8% of the population were below the poverty line, including 5.1% of those under age 18 and 3.7% of those age 65 or over.

Government

Chatham is represented in the Massachusetts House of Representatives as a part of the Fourth Barnstable district, which includes (with the exception of Brewster) all the towns east and north of Harwich on the Cape. The town is represented in the Massachusetts Senate as a part of the Cape and Islands District, which includes all of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket except the towns of Bourne, Falmouth, Sandwich, and a portion of Barnstable.^[10]

The town is patrolled by the Second (Yarmouth) Barracks of Troop D of the Massachusetts State and the Chatham Police Department. Chatham also provides Chatham Fire Rescue, a 24-hour fully staffed fire department.^[11]

On the national level, Chatham is a part of Massachusetts's 10th congressional district and is represented by William R. Keating. The state's senior (Class II) member of the United States Senate, elected in 2012, is Elizabeth Warren. The junior (Class I) senator is Ed Markey.

Chatham is governed by the open town meeting form of government, administered by an elected Board of Selectmen and an appointed Town Manager. The town operates its own police department, which is headquartered in West Chatham, near the Chatham Airport. The main fire department is located in the downtown area, and there is also a branch firehouse in South Chatham. The town has four post offices, all located at various points along Route 28. The town is home to the Eldredge Public Library, named for its benefactor and designed by a student of H. H. Richardson. The town operates several piers, beaches, boat landings and recreation areas throughout town. The nearest hospital is Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis.

Education

Until 2013, Chatham operated its own school system for the town's 700 students. The Chatham Elementary School served students from pre-kindergarten through fourth grade, the Chatham Middle School served students from fifth through eighth grade, and Chatham High School served grades nine through twelve. Chatham's athletics teams were known as the Blue Devils, and wore blue and white. In December 2010, Chatham and the neighboring town of Harwich voted to regionalize their school systems into the Monomoy Regional school system. The Monomoy teams are known as the Sharks and their colors are navy blue and silver. In March 2013, construction began in Harwich on a new high school to serve the region, expected to open in 2014. High school students may attend Cape Cod Regional Technical School in Harwich free of charge. Other private schools are located in nearby Brewster and Harwich.

Notable residents

- Zered Bassett, pro skateboarder, grew up in Chatham
- Shirley Booth, actress
- Harry Connick, Jr., actor and singer

- Bernard Cornwell, best-selling author
- Franklin Cover, late actor
- David Drumm, former CEO of Anglo Irish Bank^[12]
- Todd Eldredge, champion figure skater
- Lisa Genova, best-selling author
- Bobby Hackett, musician
- Julie Harris, actress
- Gilbert Knapp, Wisconsin State Assemblyman
- Joseph C. Lincoln, author of *Cape Cod Stories*
- Joseph Lord, Puritan pastor
- Sandra Day O'Connor, Supreme Court justice; has a residence in Chatham
- Sara Pennypacker, children's book author
- Christopher Seufert, film director/photographer
- Archelaus Smith, Nova Scotia pioneer
- Bob Staake, cartoonist & illustrator
- Tisquantum (Squanto), died in Chatham and is buried in an unmarked grave on Burial Hill, overlooking Ryder's Cove
- Ruby Braff, musician, died in Chatham

Gallery



The Atwood House



Chatham Lights



Chatham Light



Old Linden Tree (April 2012)



Seals in Chatham Harbor



Cross Trees





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External links

-  Chatham travel guide from Wikivoyage
- Town of Chatham official website (<http://www.chatham-ma.gov/>)



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Towns in Massachusetts

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