

# The View from The Crow's Nest



Newsletter of the Mattapoisett Historical Society

Winter 2014 / Issue XXI

Fifty-six years of preserving the past for the benefit of the future.

## Francis Davis Millet-American Artist

by Elizabeth Hutchison

Mattapoisett, on the shores of Buzzards Bay, is a town of beauty and certainly an inspiration for many local artists. In May, the Mattapoisett Historical Society will be celebrating local artists with an Art Show. As we look forward to this event, the following article highlights the life of Francis Davis Millet, a well-known artist of the second half of the 19th century born right here in Mattapoisett.



Portrait of Frank Millet/Francis Davis Millet by George Du Maurier, from Harper's New Monthly Magazine, June 1889

Millet was the son of Dr. Asa Millet and Huldah Byram. At the age of 15, Millet entered the Union Army with a Massachusetts' Regiment as a drummer boy. He later became Acting Assistant Contract Surgeon, assisting his father, a surgeon, during the Civil War.

After the war, Frank Millet entered Harvard University, graduating in 1869 with a degree in Literature. Millet worked as a reporter for the *Boston Advertiser*, local

Francis Davis Millet, always known as Frank, was a prolific painter, illustrator, writer, and sculptor of the late 1800s and a native of Mattapoisett. He was considered a real Renaissance man, full of boundless energy and a spirit of adventure.

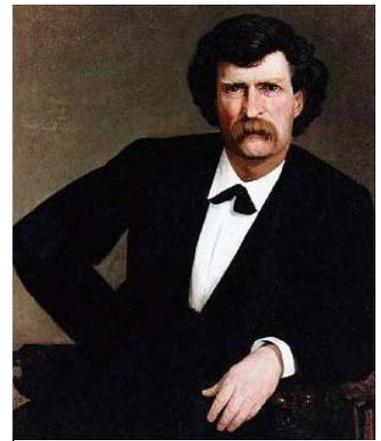
Born on the corner of Water and Cannon Streets on November 3, 1846,

editor of the *Courier* and the *Saturday Evening Gazette*. During this time, he studied lithography, a method of printing from a flat surface that has been prepared so that the ink will only stick to the design that will be printed, and in 1871 he entered the Royal Academy in Antwerp, Belgium. Within his first six weeks in Antwerp, he entered the competitive examinations, won nine out of eleven prizes offered and received an Academy Silver Medal-an unheard of triumph for a first year student.

Frank Millet returned to the states briefly in 1875 to become a correspondent for the *Advertiser* at the Philadelphia Exposition and in 1876 he painted murals at Trinity Church in Boston with John LaFarge. He also painted a portrait of Mark Twain, a good friend and future Best Man at Millet's wedding.

Adventure called in 1877, and Millet became a war correspondent during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78.

Millet worked for the *New York Herald*, the *London Daily News*, and the *London Graphic*. A friend who was with Millet at the time as shells burst around them said "Millet's pencil never stopped and he was quoting 'Alice in Wonderland.'" Both the Russian and Rumanian governments decorated Millet for his bravery under fire and for treating wounded soldiers on the battlefield.



Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain), by Frank Millet, 1877

(continued on next page)



**Francis Davis Millet - American Artist** (continued from cover)

In 1878, Frank Millet was appointed Fine Arts Juror at the Paris International Exposition. The following year, Millet married Elizabeth Merrill in Paris with Augustus Saint-Gauden, and Mark Twain as witnesses. They had four children, Edwin, Kate, Laurence, and John Alfred Parsons. They made their home in Broadway, Worcestershire, England. Broadway was where Millet and artist friends such as John Singer Sargent gathered in an artist's colony. Sargent often used Millet's daughter Kate as a model. Here at Broadway, Millet painted predominantly period era scenes, popular with the English. His art was exhibited at the Paris Salon and the Royal Academy in London.

Millet continued to travel extensively all over the world. In 1885 he traveled through the western United States and Mexico with the chairman of the Union Pacific Railroad. In 1891 he travelled the full length of the Danube, about 1,800 miles, by canoe for Harper Brothers who published his book *The Danube from the Black Forest to the Black Sea*. In 1898 he returned to his work as a war correspondent in the Philippines during the Spanish American War.

Millet continued to produce much in painting, the source of his livelihood. He also believed in the Decorative Arts. His work could be found at the capital in St. Paul,

Minnesota, Trinity Church, Boston, and the Bank of Pittsburgh among many others.

In 1880, Frank Millet became a member of the Society of American Artists and an elected member of the National Academy of Design, New

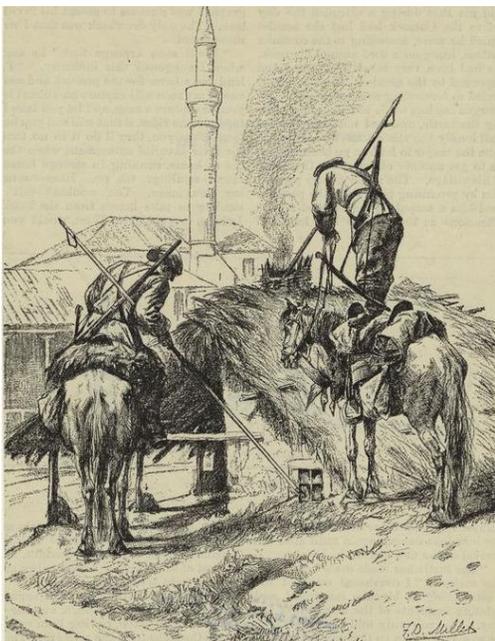
York in 1885. He was a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and on the advisory committee of the National Gallery of Art. In 1893, Millet served as Director of Decorations at the Chicago's World Fair. It was there that Millet was credited with creating the first spray paint. He worked with a number of World Fairs including Vienna, Chicago, Paris and Tokyo.

Always one to promote the Arts and Art Education, Millet helped found the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and helped create the American Federation of Arts. He was involved in the American Academy in Rome from its start, was a founding member of the United States Commission of Fine Arts and was a member of the Society of American Artists.

In 1911 Frank Millet headed to Rome as Chief Administer for the American Academy. In April 1912 he booked first-class passage back to New York aboard the doomed *Titanic*. Frank Millet, along with his friend Major Archibald Butt and John Jacob Astor IV, the richest man on board the ship, were last seen helping women and children into the lifeboats, smiling and waving as the lifeboats were lowered into the ocean. Francis Davis Millet's body was recovered and identified by his possessions. It was returned to East Bridgewater, where Millet had mostly recently resided, and was buried in Central Cemetery.

In the *New York Evening Post*, William A. Coffin wrote: "His friends were legion....and wherever he was known he was as much esteemed as he was loved. His place really cannot be filled....for he was capable of filling a number of responsible positions at the same time, and filling them all better than anybody else could do. Notable, useful and honored as he was, Millet was much more than a useful citizen. He had a rare capacity that is given to but few, that he could fill almost any responsible place, requiring knowledge and experience....His record of achievements in various fields is a fine one, almost unique, and as for the man himself, the name Frank Millet, wherever it is spoken, in these days of sorrow for his loss, evokes such tributes of admiration and affection as are bestowed on the memory of very few men, at any time, in any country."

Not bad for a man from Mattapoissett.



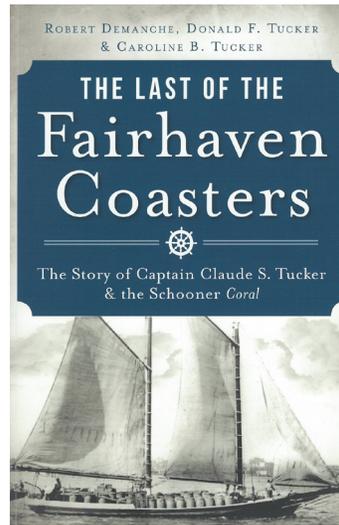
**Millet - Cossacks raiding a Turkish village**



## The Last of the Fairhaven Coasters

by Lisa Hill

On a sunny and frigid Sunday afternoon in January, a group of 60+ hardy souls were told a fantastic tale of a man, a schooner, and the last of a way of life. *The Last of the Fairhaven Coasters* written by Robert Demarache, Donald F. Tucker, and Caroline B. Tucker and tells the story of Claude S. Tucker and his Schooner *Coral*, the last of the coastal schooners.



The three different authors each brought a unique perspective to the book and to the lecture delivered to a captivated audience at the museum. Donald Tucker is the son of Captain Claude S. Tucker, and grew up hearing his father's stories. Caroline Tucker is married to the grandson of Captain Tucker, and Robert Demarache is a family friend. Don brought his knowledge of the personal parts his father's voyages, the cargo and the characters that his father met through his work as a Schooner Captain to the project. Caroline did the genealogy research on the Tucker family, and Robert wrote the maritime history of the Schooner and other boats from that time, detailing voyages of the *Coral* and the world through which she sailed.

The talk was peppered with a great many interesting personal stories of the life of a Schooner Captain, including Don's tale of winter escapades: "One winter night the *Coral* was loaded with a "whole" house bound for Jamestown, RI. The *Cook Borden and Company* in Fall River, asked Captain Claude to deliver materials (lumber to nails) needed by a contractor in RI before winter set in. Captain Claude wanted the *Coral* in Newport for the winter, so he said he would take the trip. It would also help form a business bond with *Cook Borden and Company*. Claude sailed from Fall River to Newport alone!! When he docked for the night in Newport, he went to get something to eat and saw a thermometer that read -3 degrees."

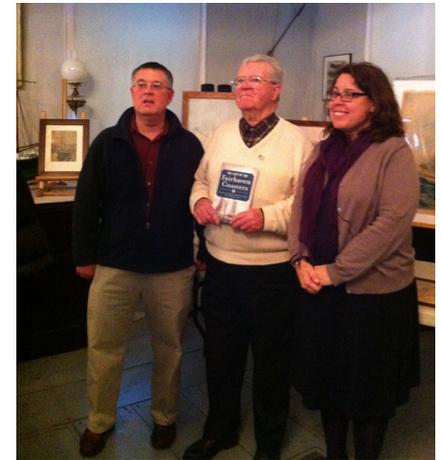
Caroline told of the Tucker's and their settling in the South Kingston area of Rhode Island. As the next generation came along, the land was parceled up to give to that generation. Years of that practice made the parcels too small to make a living, so Captain Claude Tucker's father moved his family to Lincoln and then to Portsmouth,

Rhode Island. In Portsmouth, he became the caretaker of the poor house. Claude, not liking working on the farm, began building beehives and raising bees to create an income. Claude was asked by an orchard owner to take a catboat in trade for some bees for pollination. The catboat was the beginning of the sea life for Captain Claude S. Tucker, culminating in his Schooner *Coral*.

Robert added to the lecture by telling the story of the life of the Schooner *Coral* from before Captain Tucker acquired her, through to her last days. The *Coral* was built in 1878 in Port Jefferson, Long Island, NY. She was a shallow draw at 6'4", built as a sloop, and could be sailed solo or with a crew of 2 to 3 men. When Captain Tucker owned her, the cargo that was transported aboard her was cordwood, gasoline, oysters, brick and building materials. With each cargo that Robert named, Donald had an entertaining story to go with it. At one point, Donald and Robert played a recording of Captain Tucker talking about the cedar wood from Mattapoissett where he bought 30 cords and sold it to *Newport Coal and Wood*. It was a great local tie-in to this very interesting story. In all, Captain Tucker owned the *Coral* for 23 years until the 1938 Hurricane damaged her and the money ran out before she could be repaired.

The story of Captain Claude S. Tucker and the Schooner *Coral* is a story of a Captain, a Schooner, family and friends. It is also a very fascinating look into the coastal trade industry that brought money into so many communities along Buzzards Bay from colonial times through the 1930s. It is a book to be

read to learn how the Captain knew Clifford Ashley, the painter of the mural at the museum, and Dr. Seuss and how Captain Tucker is linked to the wreck of the *Wanderer* and the saving of the *Morgan*.



**Robert Demarache, Donald F. Tucker, Caroline B. Tucker**



## Calling all Fashionistas of Mattapoissett

The Mattapoissett Historical Society is very lucky to have a wonderful collection of clothing featuring everything from underwear to beaded dresses, from intricate hand sewed and personally fitted outfits, to store-brought items. And it is time for this collection to emerge from its boxes.

This summer, Docents and anyone who would like to volunteer some time to this project, will be going through over 65 boxes of clothing, each box containing multiple items. Each item will need to be examined for decay or wear and tear, matched with its catalogue number, marked, photographed and re-folded. We will then attempt to match each item with an acquisition form. All of this information will be entered into our Museum database to allow the collection to be easily searchable.

We are challenging ourselves to make it through the whole collection by the end of the summer, so if you would like to donate some time to this project (teenagers welcome), we would love to have you. Please feel free to call 758-2844 or email [mattapoissett.museum@verizon.net](mailto:mattapoissett.museum@verizon.net) with any questions or to sign up to volunteer.

### The Picture Project

*by Betty Pennington, Volunteer*

The Mattapoissett Historical Society has thousands of photographs of the people, buildings, landmarks, artifacts, and events of Mattapoissett. These photographs are used in some of our exhibits, many of our publications, and viewed or borrowed by individuals and other agencies for their use.

Curator Elizabeth Hutchison has developed a plan to digitize these pictures so as to (1) preserve them and (2) simplify access to them. As you can imagine, this is a huge project. Currently we are sorting the photographs, clarifying the documentation, and organizing how they will be entered into the computer. However, there are many photographs that are not identified. Here is one example:

Do you recognize this picture? Do you know what school this is? There is a notation that identifies it as Center School, but note the religious pictures on the wall. Can you identify any of the children, or the teacher? Do you know the date of the photo? If you can help identify this picture please e-mail the Museum – [mattapoissett.museum@verizon.net](mailto:mattapoissett.museum@verizon.net) and give us your details.



Also, our picture collection is rich with photos from the mid 1800's to about 1920, but not much after that. We would LOVE to get pictures of the townspeople and activities from the 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's. (Yes we are all becoming historic). If you

send them to us, please identify who, what, when, where, and why. We will record and scan the picture and either add to our physical collection, or return to you, whichever you prefer.

Finally, we are going to have a Picture Identification Weekend this coming September. Some of our pictures will be on display. You are invited to stop by and view them, and help with our identification. Even if you can't identify them, they are interesting, and some are very beautiful. Be on the lookout for the date, and come by for a visit!!

## Curators Corner

by Elizabeth Hutchison

Despite the snow, we are already in full swing planning for our summer season! We are looking forward to a wonderful exhibit, interesting programs, and fun for all ages. We even have a special and fun project for our wonderful Docents to dive into during their time here at the museum. For more information, see the separate article entitled “Calling all Fashionistas of Mattapoissett“.

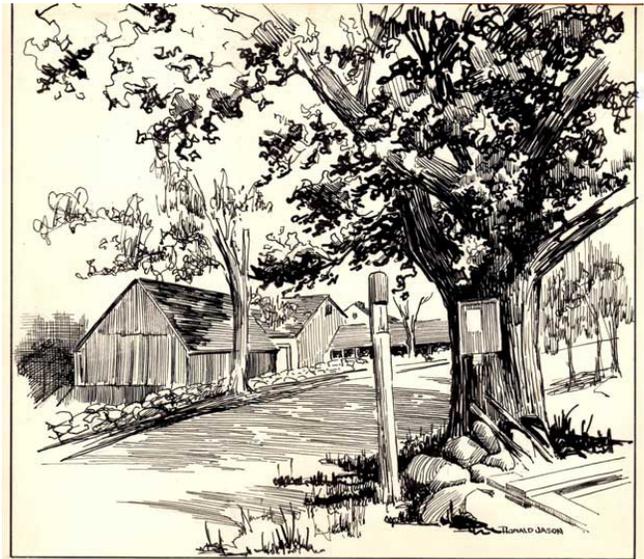
As many of us do, I spend the winter months catching up on the “inside work” at the museum, organizing and cleaning out. If you are one of those people who loves to rummage through other people’s stuff, I would love to have you come in and help us sort through our collections to properly catalogue them in our computer database. All hands are welcome, and any time you can donate is truly appreciated. Please feel free to call me at 758-2844 or email me at mattapoissett.museum@verizon.net if you have an interest.

This Spring we are offering some wonderful programs that we hope will entertain and educate. The New Bedford Harbor Sea Chantey Chorus will return to regale us with their toe-tapping repertoire of songs from the sea. The museum will also be hosting an Art Show Small Town-Big Art: Celebrating Local Artists in order to showcase some of the amazing artistic talent found on the shores of Buzzards Bay. We hope you will stop by to meet some of our local artists and to find art work that adds inspiration to your life.

As always, we love to see our members and supporters, so we hope you find the time to attend our programs, volunteer your time, and visit us for our Summer exhibit featuring the history of the Mattapoissett Fire and Police Departments.

### Recent Acquisitions:

- 2013.19 painting by George E. Errington *Salt Marshes on Buzzards Bay*
- 2013.20 *The 1938 Hurricane. An Historical and Pictorial Summary*
- 2013.21 two Yankee screwdrivers
- 2013.22 Donald Jason pen and ink drawing of Tinkhamtown Corner for the Presto Press Print “Weetamoo” from Bryant’s 1878 *History of the United States*
- 2013.23 two boxes family papers and photographs from the Mendell, Purrington and Freeman families
- 2013.24 army uniform from the Ike Eisenhower era
- 2014.1 straw boater hat, early 20th century



Donald Jason pen and ink drawing of Tinkhamtown Corner for the Presto Press



### Facebook Page

The Mattapoissett Historical Society is now on Facebook!

Please be sure to check out our page and like us!





# Mattapoissett Historical Society Calendar of Events Spring 2014

- March 26 **Quiz Night at the Inn at Shipyard Park at 7:30 pm.** Join us for a fun night of Mattapoissett themed questions and see how well you know your town. Enjoy food, drinks and laughter as you help the Mattapoissett Historical Society raise funds to support our Programming efforts. Be on the lookout for more specific information.
- April 27 **New Bedford Harbor Sea Chantey Chorus at 2:00 pm.** Our favorite sea chantey singers are back to get our toe tapping to some wonderful maritime music. Come join us for a truly enjoyable program. Program is Free, Donations Accepted. Mattapoissett Historical Society, 5 Church Street.
- May 16 **Small Town-Big Art: Celebrating Local Artists Reception at 6:00 pm.** Join us for an Art Show that celebrates our local artists. Meet local artists and find treasures for your own art collection. Hors d'oeuvres will be served. Free, Donations accepted. Mattapoissett Historical Society, 5 Church Street.
- May 17 **Small Town-Big Art: Celebrating Local Artists 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.** Join us for an Art Show that celebrates our local artists. Meet local artists and find treasures for your own art collection. Free, Donations accepted. Mattapoissett Historical Society, 5 Church Street.

## WORD SEARCH *by Lisa Hill*

A	T	O	O	C	U	A	O	Y	S	E	L
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D	N	A	L	S	I	T	D	N	A	R	B
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## *Mattapoissett Village Streets*

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| GRAND VUE     | HILLERS    |
| HOWARD        | SHELL      |
| BRANDT ISLAND | JOES       |
| MOLLYS        | PEASES     |
| TOWN          | CONNETT    |
| PICO          | ANGELICA   |
| CRESCENT      | STRAWBERRY |
| NYES          | NEDS       |
| FRESH POND    | AUCOOT     |
| HOLLYWOOD     |            |



# SUPPORT YOUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Mattapoissett Historical Society is supported through the generosity of individuals, families, foundations and businesses who wish to help us *Preserve the Past for the Benefit of the Future*. In addition to being a member, please consider other ways you can support our efforts:

**Memorial Gifts or Contributions in Honor:** Mark an anniversary, a passing, or honor a loved one with a donation to the Historical Society

**Bequests:** Naming the Mattapoissett Historical Society as a beneficiary in your will will leave an enduring legacy for the future.

**Corporate Matching Gift Programs:** Please check with your employer to see if they offer a matching gift program.

**Business Sponsorships:** We offer many ways for local businesses to sponsor the Historical Society and its efforts.

**Thank you to the following Businesses for their support:**

Brownell Systems, Inc.      Fisher & Rocha, Inc.      Reynolds DeWalt Printing      W Wood Painting  
 DG Service Company, Inc.      Mr. Andrew McIntire      Rogers Gallery

## VOLUNTEER!

If you have an hour or two a week and are looking for an interesting and fun way to spend some time, please join our year round Volunteer Program.

Are you interested in:

- ◆ Programs (both public and school groups)
- ◆ Acquisitions Registration
- ◆ Public Relations
- ◆ Museum Shop
- ◆ Exhibits
- ◆ Office Administration
- ◆ Research
- ◆ Museum and Artifact Maintenance

If you have a particular interest, we have a need! We look forward to hearing from you!

Please call or e-mail Elizabeth Hutchison with any questions.  
 (508) 758-2844 mattapoissett.museum@verizon.net



### *Mattapoissett Historical Society*

<i>President</i>	Jennifer McIntire	<i>Members at Large</i>	Nate Bekemeier	<i>Curator</i>	Elizabeth Hutchison
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# MATTAPOISETT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## 2013 Christmas Exhibit at the Museum



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