

INTRODUCTION TO CHEBEAGUE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MISSION STATEMENT

To acquire and preserve material culture related to Great Chebeague Island and its environs and to share information related to the history of Great Chebeague Island: to create a sense of place and enrich the lives of those with island connections and the general public through exhibits, research, technology, and publications.

This mission will be accomplished by:

- The acquisition, preservation, and display, both physically and digitally, of material objects, documents, photography, oral histories, and videos related but not limited to: the history, geography, genealogy, economics, culture, of Great Chebeague Island and its environs;
- Using its collections to show Chebeague's connection to the communities in and around Casco Bay, the State of Maine, and the Atlantic world.
- Researching, recording, and sharing, both in written and digital form, and through lectures, the story of Chebeague's past so the public will better understand the present as they plan for the future;
- Operating a high-quality archives, a research center, a museum, and a museum shop.

Material culture includes: tools, weapons, utensils, machines, ornaments, art, buildings, monuments, written records, religious images, clothing, and any other ponderable objects produced or used by humans. If all the human beings in the world ceased to exist, nonmaterial aspects of culture would cease to exist along with them.

Adopted by the CIHS Governing Board on March 15, 2021

HOW WE MEET OUR MISSION

Exhibits

Since opening the museum, the CIHS has produced twelve exhibits depicting the history of our island. Past exhibits included: *Chebeague's Domestic Architecture*, *Tourism*, *The Church on Chebeague*, *World War II Comes to Chebeague*, and *Chebeague and Maritime Enterprise*. A complete list of our exhibits can be found on our website, chebeaguehistory.com.

Our current exhibit Growing up on Chebeague attracted several hundred visitors in 2022 and we expect the same number, or more, in 2023. Our Exhibit Committee is currently developing a permanent exhibit that will be supplemented by varying bi-annual sectional changes.

Programs

CIHS offers a variety of programs to the community. The Ellsworth Miller Memorial Lecture Series offers a wide variety of topics monthly via Zoom and are free to attend.

House tours, walking tours, and historical programs are just some of the ways we impact our community.

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Publications

The Sloop's Log has been published for twenty-five years (usually twice a year) and is provided free of charge to island residents and members. The Log has provided hundreds of stories about the island's history and heritage. Many of our past Sloop's Logs are available on our website. All past issues are available at the Museum.

In addition to our monthly newsletter, which often includes "mystery photos" for readers to identify, publications often accompany our programs, such as a description of the houses on the house tour or photos and descriptions of East End houses from our walking tour.

Collections

Thousands of photographs and hundreds of artifacts are securely stored at our museum. The photos and artifacts have played a critical role in producing our exceptional exhibits.

Resource to the Community

Our curator has provided thousands of hours of research and information for the public. Often you can find our curator, Donna Damon, at the museum with a visitor – perhaps an island resident or perhaps descendants of an island family who have made a special trip to Chebeague to learn of their heritage.

In addition to the public, the Historical Society serves as a resource to the Town, the Church, and other island organizations.

Fundraising

Fundraising is always a challenge. Our organization raises funds in a variety of ways. The Annual Appeal is mailed in the fall to hundreds of current, past, and prospective members. Our Museum Shop offers a variety of gifts related to the island and Maine life. We have been fortunate to receive grants from the Recompense Foundation, the Raymond Family Foundation and other organizations to assist in a variety of projects – from technology to heating systems to exhibits. In addition, while many of our programs are free, some are fee-based and make significant contributions to our operation.

How We Do It

Our Board and employees are the key to our success. While we have very limited staff, their dedication ensures critical tasks and projects are completed.

The Board meets monthly. The work of the organization is accomplished through committees or project teams. Board members and/or volunteers lead these activities. Since we have few staff, Board members are expected to actively participate in one or more committees and volunteer for projects. 100% of the Board contributes financially to the organization.

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MORE DETAILS/INFORMATION

- The current exhibit of “Growing Up on Chebeague” has been well received. We are now developing a permanent exhibit which we plan to introduce in 2024.
- CIHS is a 12-month operation:
 - The building and the archives must be maintained 12 months a year.
 - The museum is open from May into the fall, and around some holidays.
 - In season, the museum and the museum shop are open six days per week
- The Ellsworth Miller Memorial Lecture series has grown from a seasonal enterprise to a monthly program of far-ranging topics with expert speakers.
- CIHS is staffed primarily by volunteers. While the financial leadership is all volunteer, we engage a bookkeeper (with expertise in non-profit organizations) who supports us remotely.
- We employ a curator, membership manager, and part-time clerical staff.
- We have an outside CPA who advises us and prepares the IRS Form 990. We are not required to do formal annual audits.
- CIHS is on a calendar year fiscal year. We budget to breakeven and have been successful in meeting that commitment.
- CIHS is fully insured, including Directors & Officers coverage.