

Old Bristol Historical Society Newsletter

Spring 2005



President's Message:

2004 was a very successful year for the Old Bristol Historical Society. Membership and finances far exceeded expectations and provide a solid foundation for future growth. The programs offered were interesting and well attended, particularly the open-house with postcard collections of Gordon and Kendall Fossett.

Three presentations on genealogy led to the start of a genealogy club which has been meeting regularly, with a lot of enthusiasm.

The architectural survey of Round Pond is nearly completed. All structures over 50 years old have been identified and photographed, with a survey card filled out for each. We have applied for a grant to continue the survey work on another Bristol community.

The OBHS collaborated with the South Bristol Historical Society in sponsoring an oral history weekend led by folklorist and oral historian, Jo Radner. Starting an oral history project is a goal for 2005, and we hope that this year will bring continued success and growth.

Pete Hope

Membership Renewals, New Members, & Money Matters

As stated in the September newsletter, our first calendar year was a long one, extending from Oct., 2003 to Dec. 31, 2004; therefore, 2005 membership renewals are now due. We have purposefully kept dues low compared to other organizations, because a solid membership with active participation and new ideas is our primary goal. We hope our membership will grow beyond the however-pleasing 137 who joined us our first year. Thank you to the 39 members who have renewed for 2005. Of these, 12 are "honorary" and nonpaying (awarded for program presentations). Please don't hesitate to invite any friends to join who might have an interest. Please use the form on the back page.

We're extremely appreciative of the donations, currently totaling \$3,118, that have been received since our inception. Since our last newsletter the following have given: Shaw's Fish & Lobster Wharf Restaurant, Lillian Wallace, Paul and Carol Ring, Margaret Sproul, Laura Sproul Stubbs, Senior Coastal College, and Edward and Gene Moll of Bath.

These, along with dues payments, allow us with reasonable ease, to handle the continuing update of our building and provide us with our current midwinter checkbook balance of \$2,043. Upcoming requirements include installation of a second exit, a propane heater, and shingles for the roof (the Carpenter's Boatshop will provide the labor).

Kay Sawyer Hannah, Treasurer

Carol Jean Rottner, Membership

OBHS Officers

President: Peter Hope
Vice-President: Pat Landry
Treasurer: Kay Hannah
Secretary: Suzy Collins
Publicity: Kathy Gustafson
Membership: Jean Rottner

Board of Directors

Marilyn Chadwick
Judy Hope
Bob Fossett
Carol Brightman
Bob McLaughlin

Newsletter Committee

Suzy Collins
Kay Hannah
Pete Hope
Jean Rottner

Thelma Baker - An Oral History

by Peter Hope

Thelma Sproul Baker was born June 20, 1912, in the house on Sproul Hill next to where she presently lives. Dr. Goudy, from Bristol Mills, was in attendance. Her family goes back to James Sproul, a Scotch-Irish pioneer, and his son, William. The Sproul property went from the present-day Bristol Road clear to the Pemaquid River. This property was farmed by Thelma's grandfather, Everett, as it had been by generations of Sprouls. Thelma remembers what it was like to grow up without electricity, phones, automobiles, or all the conveniences we take for granted today. The following is from our taped interview:



"We lived up here in a two-family house. We lived in one side and my uncle lived in the other. He had a blacksmith shop there and a barber shop in Bristol Mills, and my grandparents lived next door. We were pretty self-sufficient with a huge garden and the big barn (now condos) was filled with animals. My grandfather had 20 to 25 cows and there was always a side of beef hanging up. There were four to five horses, pigs, sheep, hens, ducks, and geese. We raised everything, even tobacco. There were blueberries down near the river. I've never seen so much food as we put up every year. We supplied everything; bins and bins of potatoes and apples, rows of canned vegetables. Everything was stored in the basement. My grandfather sold his milk to the Fossett Creamery in Pemaquid (the late Bessey Legrow's farm). My chores were to do dishes and help feed the animals."

"We heated with wood. We had a wood range in the kitchen to cook with and heat hot water. The outhouse was in the barn. I remember that trip in the wintertime! We got plumbing and electricity when I was fourteen and a freshman in high school. That's when they put the line in to Round Pond. The electricity cost \$5 a month. Can you imagine that?"

The postoffice was in Bristol Mills and mail was delivered to a big mailbox at the end of the Sproul Hill Road by horse and buggy and Thelma would walk down to get it. The Sprouls kept several horses and had a carriage and sleigh. Says she, "We'd go up to Damariscotta every so often. Every spring we'd take the train (from Newcastle) to New Hampshire to visit my grandparents" (her mother's parents). Thelma was an only child and there were no other kids in the area, so she would walk to Bristol Mills for playmates in the summer. She remembers going to the Bristol Fair at Bristol Mills (Seaside Grange) every year.

"My Grandfather died when I was seven", she goes on, "We were living in Damariscotta at the time where my father worked in the boat yard. We moved back down here and took over the farm, but he hated that business and didn't stay with it. When we were here, my grandmother lived with us."

"I started school when I was seven. My mother got me reading and I read every book I could get my hands on, so I started school in the second grade. This was the Washington School that later burned. My mother or father would take me by horse and buggy or sleigh in the winter."



Thelma (on horse), her mother (on buggy) and her grandfather

"It was so cold in the winter we heated soap stones to keep warm. I remember one morning when we got to school and my eyes were frozen! I went to school all the time unless there was a really big storm and we couldn't get through. Then they'd have to shovel the road out by hand. All the men would go out to clear the roads. There were two rooms and two teachers at the Washington School. Bristol was made up of different communities, each had its own school. You didn't really know kids from other communities."

When Thelma went to the Washington School in Bristol Mills it was a 2-room school, grades 1-4 on one side and grades 5-8 on the other. Thelma loved school, went to college and then taught school for 36 years while raising her two children in between years of teaching. She still lives among her memories in Bristol.

2005 PROGRAMS

1. **Sunday April 24, 2 p.m.: Anne Baty, "Cemeteries of Bristol"**
2. **Wed., May 25, 7 p.m.: Joan Lyford, "The Forgotten Wawenock Indian Tribe"**
3. **Wed., June 22, 7 p.m.: Revell Carr, author, *Seeds of Discontent*, on "William Vaughn and the 1745 Louisburg Expedition".**
4. **Wed., July 13, 7 p.m.: Short annual meeting; Also, Paul Aldrich on "The Genealogical Search for the Families of the 1790 Census".**
5. **Wed., July 27, 7 p.m.: Kent Wilkinson "Recollections of Summers in Pemaquid Harbor"**
6. **Sunday, Aug. 7, 10 - 2 p.m.: Open House, with old post cards and photos.**
7. **Sunday, Aug 21, 2 p.m.: Wayne Reilly, "The Storm and Pemaquid Point Shipwrecks of 1903".**
8. **Sunday, Sept. 11, 2 p.m.: Mark Biscoe, "Ship Building on the Damariscotta River.**
9. **Sunday, Oct. 9, 2 p.m.: Leonard Osier: "Growing Up in New Harbor"**

2005 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / NEW APPLICATION

Name: Date:.....
I (we) wish to a pay Dues: ...\$10 Single Membership or ...\$15 for Family Membership
If this is a New Application or you have an Address Change, please provide:
Address (permanent): (seasonal):
..... /
..... /
Phone:.....E-mail.....
Main Interest--how I might help:.....

Please mail to: Kay Hannah, 13 Devoe Rd., Bristol, ME 04539

cut and send

GENEALOGY INTEREST GROUP

As a follow-up to the successful series of genealogy programs OBHS presented in October, a group of 10-15 enthusiastic genealogists has met several times since November on Sunday afternoons at the home of Jean Rottner to learn about and share information-gathering techniques, common lineages, new discoveries, etc. This is a friendly and flexible group, just starting to formulate some objectives, that welcomes anyone with an interest. When it warms enough, meetings will be held at our McKinley School Meeting House at Pemaquid Falls. Contact person: Hazel Genthner, 677- 2108

Old Bristol Historical Society Newsletter

June, 2005

The Annual Meeting of the Old Bristol Historical Society will take place Wednesday, July 13, 7:00 P.M., at the McKinley School, Harrington Road, Pemaquid Falls. The business meeting will take place before the scheduled program. The main item on the agenda will be to re-elect Officers and Board of Directors. Jeanne Rottner, Warren Riess, Ken Coombs, and Rose Marie Ballard Boak have been nominated to be new members on the Board of Directors. All members are urged to attend.

Listed below are the very interesting programs we are presenting this summer—

Wednesday, July 13, 7:00 P.M., Paul Aldrich, "The Genealogical Search for the Families of the 1790 Census"

Wednesday, July 27, 7:00 P.M., Kent Wilkinson, "Recollections of Summers in Pemaquid Harbor"

Sunday, August 7, 2:00 P.M., Open House, with old post cards and photos

Sunday, August 21, 2:00 P.M., Wayne Reilly, "The Storm and Pemaquid Point Shipwrecks of 1903"

Sunday, September 11, 2:00 P.M., Mark Biscoe, "Ship Building on the Damariscotta River"

Sunday, October 9, 2:00 P.M., Leonard Osier, "Growing Up in New Harbor"

A Reminder—our membership year runs from January, 2005, to December, 2005. Some have not yet paid the 2005 dues. At the bottom of this page is a form—we hope you will fill it in, and with check, return it to Kay Hannah, if you have not already done so.

Hope to see you at McKinley School, Pemaquid Falls, on dates noted.

2005 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / NEW APPLICATION

Name:.....Date:.....

I (We) wish to pay dues:.....\$10.00 Single Membership, or\$15.00 Family Membership

If this is a new application, or you have an address change, please provide:

Address (permanent):

(seasonal):

.....

.....

Phone:.....

E-mail:.....

Main Interest—How may I help:.....

Please mail to: Kay Hannah, 13 Devoe Road, Bristol, Maine 04539
