

OBHS Spring 2010 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OBHS started in 2003 and I feel that we have accomplished a lot in that time. Our mission is to "collect, preserve and share the documents and artifacts of old Bristol"(This includes South Bristol). Through the architectural resource survey, oral history interviews, genealogy groups, summer programs and small but growing collection of documents we are doing that. I think that we have a great lineup of speakers for the summer programs. One novel idea is to have a reunion of McKinley school students. Join us to hear stories of what the "old days" were like in a one room school. I am disappointed to have to say that we will not be able to proceed with efforts to get Bristol Mills designated a National Historic District. I think you will enjoy Carol Brightman's story on her house, the Carl Bailey house. In case you don't know Carol is a professional writer and also does our wonderful publicity stories in the Lincoln County News. Please renew your membership. Dues are what keep us going.

GENEALOGY GROUP

The genealogy meets once a month, usually at Jeanne Rottner's house. They continue to gather information on the first families of Bristol. Meetings are always informational and fun. There are always plenty of stories of the "old days." Call Jeanne Rottner to join. 677-2095

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NEWS LETTER

Pete Hope

Jeanne Rottner



Bailey house

The Carl Bailey house by Carol Brightman



E. Blunt house 1880's

I first came to Round Pond to visit Maple Grove Cemetery in 1980 with Michael Uhl and our year-old son, Simon. Crossing the Maine border from Vermont we picked up a real estate brochure, and Michael leafed through it. I was too excited at being there to look at houses, and don't remember paying any attention to the one he found, "waiting for all the necessary improvements," until I saw it a few days later.

I'd heard about Round Pond from my father, who summered there. My great-father B.F. and his brothers ran a pogy factory in Muscongus until the pogies fled, and he gathered his family, which included his second wife, Ida Morton Brightman, and their two children and went to Alaska to start a herring fishery. My father heard of their adventures from his father, who died before I was born. But driving east, my thoughts were on "the rocky coast of Maine," as one of those ancestors called the Pemaquid peninsular. Not until I visited the cemetery and explored it thoroughly, finding Leander Morton and family located side by side with the Brightmans (B.F. slumbering beneath the tallest obelisk, Michael observed, bowing low), was I ready to go in search of the old house.

It was late summer, the leaves were full, and the Round Pond road we took to get to the Bristol Road was half-tarred. We headed south until reaching the Foster road and turned right. After passing some FHA-style houses we drove on a mile or two, past a large Wisconsin barn and silo on the left and up a hill and round and round to the oldest house I had ever seen. Tucked behind three huge cedars and a lofty row of ashes, horse chestnuts and basswoods facing a large maple, smaller cedars and pines, it was surrounded by fields and woods and faced a dense forest. This was country cousin to the larger hip-roofed Federals along the upper Bristol Road in Damariscotta, a poor cousin abandoned around 1960, its four twelve-over-eight windows covered by plywood, its front door supported by 2 by 4's, its chimney in sorry condition.



1980

My heart was racing. An odd feeling of familiarity had overtaken me, certainly not from any place I ever lived. Perhaps it was the visits to the cemetery and to Round Pond, which was listing from the picturesque but clinging to a fine harbor, teeming with lobster boats. Or maybe it was the old Morton house we found in the center of town, and the Granite Hall store where my grandfather watched silent movies and bought penny candy, or the Little Brown Church which lost its steeple, or the King Ro Market which an old gentleman told us was named after the King's Row of captain's houses built along the main road over a hundred years ago.

But this house was built long before that; a few years before 1800, the real estate agent told us that afternoon. He let us in the side door, and we entered an empty kitchen with a metal bed in one corner. No sink, no plumbing or electricity, he said. As is. Carl Bailey, who was born and almost died here, carried water every morning up the hill to water the cows. In the wintertime he went to Poland Springs and cut meat at a large hotel, turning the cows over to Gerald Foster on the farm down the hill. It was said that he met some rich New Yorkers who gave him some financial tips, and sure enough one day an odd fellow showed up to tap the stone in the basement walls for treasure.

The Bailey house wasn't ours right away. We were broke, and the house, barn and outbuildings, plus 20 acres, cost \$40,00, which sounds like nothing but followed a leap in old house prices on the Maine coast. (A true saltwater farm with 99 acres in all.) It took awhile before the mortgage arrived and we returned to our Brooklyn loft and borrowed some money. It helped when I had checked the property records in Wiscasset and found the original owner, James Morton, was a remote ancestor.

We became summer folk for the next four years until I got a book advance which let us move up here year round. By that time Michael and I had made real progress on the house-with the help from some new friends, who climbed down from the house they were building in the woods nearby to help us. They called us the BUB(Brightman, Uhl, Bailey) Estate, and looked after it during winters. I came up Memorial Day weekend to plant the garden, and we returned on the 4th of July for the rest of the summer.



Carl on right

The Carl Bailey stories never stopped. Robert Fossett who used to ride up our driveway in his tractor was an unding source. His wife Gwen once showed me a photo of Carl working the fields in the hot sun with Sarah Emery running after him with a parasol. But Gerald Foster was his closest friend, and he and Gladys seemed to take us in as if we were the children Carl never had.

The abandoned house was often taken over by young people who spent nights there. In time it became the haunted house. After we got it we kept hearing from people who took walks here, or had wanted to buy it. Michael and I separated in 1996 and he built a house on the lower right had corner of the land. This year I gave Simon and his wife Amanda the opposite corner. Amanda's father, Eric Sykes, will build the house. Avalee, Simon's and Amanda's daughter, is only two now; in time she'll have her own stories.

MEMBERSHIP 2010 RENEWAL/NEW APPLICATION

Name.....Date.....
Dues.....\$10 single membership.....\$15 for family membership
This is a renewal.....or new application.....

The following information is required for a new application only or if address has changed

Address(local).....Seasonal.....
.....
Phone.....E-mail.....

Please give or mail to: Jean Andersen, 1298 Bristol Road, Bristol, Me. 04539

OBHS PROGRAMS FOR 2010

All programs are free of charge and are at 6:30 in the McKinley School on the Harrington Rd.

Sun. June 20: Anne Foster Bourne and Joan Grant on Bob Foster, auctioneer

Sun. July 18: Dave Andrews on steamboats in the area

Sun. Aug. 8: Suzy Collins, Maddy Hobbes, Loraine Sturtevant and Candy Condon, spending
The summers in Bristol

Sun. Aug. 22: a reunion of McKinley School scholars ; stories of a one room school

Sun. Sept. 12; Paul Aldrich, Bill Benner, Pete Hope; the birth of the town of Bristol