



OLD BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

An Occasional Newsletter of the Society - Spring 2013

Presidents' Remarks to the Membership of the Old Bristol Historical Society



New Harbor in 1911 - Craig Elliott, Collector

As we mark our 10th year of existence as an historical society, there is so much to focus on that we wonder why we didn't start sooner! Photos, old buildings, businesses, oral stories and battles, among other things that catch our interest.

Early postcards are a recurring theme this season as we learn about the collection of the Penobscot Marine Museum, see its early photos of Old Bristol, and later view those of Gordon Fossett and Craig Elliott. We will also be selling copies of early postcards as part of our fund-raising efforts.

In May we attended a Maine Memory Network workshop which brought to our attention the rich resource of old photos our state gathers to make available to schools and the general public. The South Bristol Historical Society is working with their middle school students through a grant to create an online exhibit on www.MaineMemory.net. We would like one day to work similarly with Bristol Consolidated School students.

McKinley School, our primary location for programs, meetings, and events, continues to demand our attention as this June we begin activity in 3 areas of need: 1) stabilizing the rear foundation, 2) installing a handicap access ramp, and 3) improving air quality inside the building. We've received a boost for these endeavors with a couple of generous gifts. We also have in mind the need to find a way to securely store old photos, postcards, and documents.

We are sorry to announce that as of July 14 we'll be losing the service of the following 5 directors: Carol Brightman, Marilyn Chadwick, Ken Coombs, Robert McLaughlin, and Kathy Wright. Kathy has been Treasurer for nearly 2 years. The others have all given a remarkable 10 years of service on the Board of Directors. We're sure members join us in being extremely grateful to them all for their expertise and many hours of dedication. We hope they will remain active members and consider returning to the board in the future.

This year for the first time we have invited several past members of the board to become Honorary Members. These individuals, greatly appreciated for their devoted and exemplary service to OBHS within the past 10 years, will be recognized at our Annual Meeting on July 14.

The OBHS was greatly saddened by the passing of one of its members, Mary Lee Rushmore, on March 17. She served as a Director for the past two years sharing her views as a former middle school teacher and active public servant. She is sincerely missed.

And so, members and friends, a hearty thank you to those of you who are supporting us with your ideas for our future, donations of time and energy, attendance at programs and events, and your overall interest. Each and every one of you counts. A special thank you to Paul and Carol Ann Ring for formatting and editing our Newsletters.

Pete and Kay Hannah

2013 Calendar for Old Bristol Historical Society Events

Date	Day	Time	Event
June 15	Saturday		Work Day and Noon Picnic
June 30	Sunday	6:30 pm	Speaker: Kevin Johnson, Penobscot Marine Museum Archivist
July 7	Sunday	2 - 4 pm	Open House at McKinley School Hosted by Genealogy Group
July 14	Sunday	5:45 pm 6:30 pm	Annual Meeting-McKinley School Speakers: C. Reilly, D. DeLong, & J. Brackett "Stores and Past Goings On---New Harbor Hill"
July 20	Saturday	9am -12 9am-1pm	Paddling by Historic Sites on the tidal Pemaquid River with Walt & Nancy Johansson (in co-op. with PWA) Lions' Sale OBHS table contributions
July 28	Sunday	6:30 pm	Speaker: Kent Wilkinson, etc. "Prime Days in Pemaquid Harbor, 1880-1900 & On"
Aug. 10 11	Saturday Sunday	10-5 pm 9 - 2 pm	Old Bristol Days Booth Old Bristol Days Booth
Aug. 11	Sunday	2 - 4 pm	Open House at McKinley Sch. - Old Bristol Days Photo viewing---Gordon Fossett, Craig Elliott
Aug. 18	Sunday	6:30 pm	Speaker: Russ Guibord, "Mills on the Pemaquid River" Follow-up Walk 24th
Aug. 25	Sunday	4 pm	OBHS Board Meeting
Sept. 1	Sunday	6:30 pm	Speaker: Robert Ives "Stories of Muscongus <u>Bay</u> "
Sept. 5	Thursday	2:00 pm	Commemoration of Battle: <i>Boxer & Enterprise</i> Pemaquid Lighthouse Park--Education Building



Old Bristol Historical Society Officers and Directors – July 14, 2013

1,2 Co-Presidents	Pete and Kay Hannah	8 - Director	Marilyn Chadwick
3 - Vice President	Wayne Chadwick	9 - Director	Kenneth Coombs
4 - Secretary	Mollie Perley	10 - Director	Robert McLaughlin, Esq.
5 - Treasurer	Kathy Wright	11 - Director	Daniel C. Purdy, Esq.
6 - Director	Peter Hope	12 - Director	Rev. Robert Ives
7 - Director	Carol Brightman	13 - Director	David Kolodin

Pemaquid Post Offices by Peter Hope

Old Bristol town records stored in the town hall reveal that Bristol sent a post rider to New Hampshire to bring back three newspapers for each section of town. One was also brought to William Sproul's inn in Harrington (Pemaquid). Reverend Alexander McLean read the newspaper aloud Sundays in each meeting house. This is how Bristol found out about events leading up to the Revolution and how the Revolution developed. At some point the post rider began bringing back mail from Falmouth.

In 1790 a post office was established in Wiscasset, which was the easternmost post office in the District of Maine. Mail to the villages of Bristol was delivered by private contractors. Early in the 19th century the first of many post offices in Pemaquid Falls was begun by Captain John Fossett in his home which is the cape on the corner of Fir Hollow and Harrington Roads. Mail was brought here for New Harbor, Pemaquid Beach, Pemaquid Harbor and Pemaquid Point. Professor John Johnston in his *History of Bristol and Bremen* wrote that Fossett was postmaster until his death in 1848. This is not correct however, because Fossett went bankrupt and moved from Pemaquid Falls in 1823.

According to a short history of post offices in Pemaquid following John Fossett, written by Adelaide Poole in 1988, the post offices of that time were located in stores or private homes until the last one closed in 1988. Mail at this time and well into the 1900's was delivered twice a day and getting it was a social occasion when one would visit with neighbors.

Poole writes that after Fossett the next post office of record was at the home of Oakman Ford who owned the mill at Pemaquid Falls, the first mill of record in 18th century Bristol. In 1845 he built a cape on the west side of the Pemaquid River now owned by Al and Jeanne Rottner. Jeanne says that the post office was in the ell which had been Robert Givens' home. Ford moved the Givens house across the road to attach to his cape. Oakman's wife was probably postmistress until Oakman died in 1865. His son inherited the mill, the house, and the job.

In 1897 the post office was at A. J. Dodge's store, which was located where the mansard-roofed former Red Men's Hall is today. (A. J. was the grandfather of locally known Mike Dodge.) When the Dodges moved to Massachusetts the post office moved to Myrick Marson's house, now owned by Bob Howell. Some time in the early 1900's Annie Elliott became postmistress. Her post office was located in her husband's store, E. S. Elliott and Son General Store, later known as the Riverview Market.

Gertrude Myers became the next postmistress but I don't know where her post office was located. Then Alice Prentice Poole, wife of Chester Poole Sr., became postmistress. The Pooles lived diagonally across from Bob Howell's current house directly across from the former Fossett Sproul's General Store. Chester had a store there and was Foss's competitor in the 1920's. In 1939 Castner Blaisdell bought the store and property from E.S. Elliott. Blaisdell's wife, Doris, became postmistress. The store was in the front part of the building and the post office came next, with living quarters behind that. (continued on the next page)



In 1963 Grace Redfield, the last Pemaquid postmistress, took over from Doris Blaisdell. At first the post office was in a filling station that Grace's husband, John, had built in the early 1930's on the lot where the Redfield's house was built. At that time this was on the main road but in 1965 the Pemaquid Falls bypass was built and the road became Fir Hollow. About this time John had an ell built on the house for the post office. Grace said that her post office handled mail from where Dee's Variety is now to the Walpole line and north up the Bristol Road to Bessie LeGrow's house. About 1970 Olive Wright retired from the Pemaquid Harbor post office and Pemaquid Harbor's mail came to Grace's also. Grace retired in 1988 after 25 years as post mistress. Grace said that zip codes came into use in

the the early 1960's and is proud of the fact that when she retired she convinced the post office to allow Pemaquid to keep their same zip code. People like my family, the Hopes, got mail boxes and from then on depended on rural free delivery.

SUMMER EVENTS

Annual Meeting Notice

On Sunday evening, July 14, at 5:45 p.m. the Annual Meeting of the Old Bristol Historical Society will be held at McKinley School on Harrington Rd. in the village of Pemaquid Falls. A short business meeting will be held during which building needs and progress will be discussed, new Honorary Directors will be recognized, and nominations for Officers and Board Members of the society will be presented and voted upon. The evening program begins at 6:30 p.m. Refreshments will be available.

Open Houses

Our Sunday Open Houses will occur in July and August. The local genealogy group will be present at McKinley School on July 7 from 2 to 4 to offer help or to discuss topics regarding our ancestors. This group enjoys meeting monthly from fall through spring. The August Open House will occur on the final Sunday of Old Bristol Days, Aug.11. We're pleased to feature Gordon Fossett and Craig Elliott sharing and discussing informally their fantastic photo and postcard collections.

History Paddle Tour

July 20th is a big morning because we again have "Paddle Through History on the Tidal Pemaquid," led by Walt and Nancy Johansson. This year it will be co-hosted by the Pemaquid Watershed Association. Kayakers and canoeists embark at high tide from the landing at Pemaquid Falls to hear about the fascinating history of this section of the river.

Old Bristol Days

For the first time, we are joining in the celebration of Old Bristol Days, this year back at the fort grounds again. We will have a booth to inform folks of what we do and to display items we have for sale. If anyone would like to help decorate an old car with signs, etc., we could even participate in the parade!

The Battle of the Boxer and the Enterprise

Come help us celebrate at Lighthouse Park a once in a lifetime occasion, the 200th anniversary of the battle between the British brig, Boxer, and the American brig, Enterprise. This well-known local battle of the War of 1812 was fought on September 5, 1813, about halfway between Pemaquid Point and Monhegan Island. Jack Tingley of Pemaquid Point, with the help of the Maine Maritime Museum, will be gathering maps, artifacts, and program presenters, including author, Jim Nelson, and the music of Castlebay to commemorate the battle that our ancestors viewed with excitement off the shores of Old Bristol.

Sunday Evening Programs

We have a very fine array of programs for the 2013 season. They all begin at 6:30 p.m. and are held at the McKinley School in Pemaquid Falls, just off route 130, north of Hammond Lumber. Sweets and cold drinks are provided as we follow each with chitchat.

On June 30 our first program will be presented by Kevin Johnson, photo archivist of the Penobscot Marine Museum. He will inform us about the process of photo collection by the museum as well as show us some of the postcards of the area in the collection.

Following our Annual Meeting on July 14, three New Harbor Hill men will discuss their knowledge of businesses and events that have their history on "the hill". David DeLong of Hanna's Garage, Carl Reilly of Reilly's Store, and Jack Brackett, a Fireman for 62 years and New Harbor Hill resident for 58 years, will share their perspectives on what's happened here.

Kent Wilkinson of Pemaquid Harbor in his 2nd appearance with OBHS will bring his fellow residents, no doubt, and stories about the glorious prime days of Pemaquid Harbor from 1880 to 1900 and years following. Madeline Hobbs will assist him with some history of Riverview, a part of Pemaquid Harbor on the west side of the peninsula.

On August 18 Russ Guibord will present "Bygone Mills on the Pemaquid River." He'll share his knowledge of the busy mills that once lined our river from Bristol Mills to Pemaquid Falls. If enough express interest, Russ has agreed to give a walking tour of a few sites the following Sat., August 24th.

Closing the Sunday evening program season on September 1, Bobby Ives will share some of his experiences and perspectives regarding the islands and seas off the southern shores of Old Bristol in a program titled, "Stories of Muscongus Bay."

Membership

Those members who have paid their 2013 dues will find an M (for Membership) before their name on this newsletter. Please note that in February the Board voted to add a Lifetime Membership category. If you care to share your ideas regarding potential speakers, events, or fundraisers, please feel free to write them on the back of your returned membership slip. Thank you sincerely for your support of the Old Bristol Historical Society!

2013 OLD BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION New _____
Date: _____ Renewal _____

Name _____ (Only need to fill in following info. if new member or changes.)

Address _____ Seasonal Address _____

E-mail _____ or Phone _____ (dates _____)

Thank you for sending dues of \$10 Single or \$15 Family made out to: Old Bristol Historical Society

Lifetime Membership: \$200 Single or Family

P. O. Box 87

Bristol, ME 04539

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Please remember that our continued efforts depend upon your generous support.

Building Report --- Pete Hannah, Interim chair

The Building Committee has been focusing on the 3 priority areas of needed improvement of McKinley Schoolhouse. At some point in its history a 6-foot addition with a chimney was added to the rear of the building. While the floor is generally on one plain, it slopes about 4 inches from the front to the point of the addition, which slopes down about another 3 inches. Estimates range from \$3,000 (to stabilize the rear foundation) to over \$46,000 (to level the entire building and stabilize the foundation).

The Board decided this spring to invest to a lesser degree in materials and labor for improvements. The plan is to stabilize the rear corners, level to some extent the rear wall, add supports, close in the area with clapboard, shingle, or other boarding, and to provide ventilation under the building. It's believed a crew comprised of members and friends could be organized to do this. We'd like to begin this project in early June.

We also need a platform and ramp leading to and from the second door that was installed on the west side of the building a few years ago. Under the direction of Walt Johansson, we plan this summer to build a 6-foot by 6-foot platform with a ramp along the west side of the building leading to this door. The third area of concern is air quality inside the building, presumably due to mold. A mold test kit has been purchased to do this test which should indicate the next step.

Committee Members: Daniel Purdy, Alexandra Wilson, Walter Johansson, Robert McLaughlin, Ken Perley

Old Bristol Historical Society
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