



OLD BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

An Occasional Newsletter of the Society - Fall 2014

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

The Old Bristol Historical Society (OBHS) has had a good year, thanks to its membership, the leadership of the Board of Directors, and its programs and events so enhanced by the informative speakers and presenters we have been fortunate to have.

We have mentioned 4 challenges in the past: i.e. 1) upkeep of the McKinley School, 2) involvement of our youth in local history, 3) addressing our problem of storage space, and 4) securing a more active membership. We are making progress!

The school is looking better literally from top to bottom with the plaster/paint work done on the inside and the front outside, which was scraped and painted. We initiated involvement with the youth of our community by offering a local history challenge explained in this newsletter and hope to continue working with the Bristol Consolidated School in new meaningful ways. We are beginning to address our storage space needs by initiating a committee to address inventory of what we have and what is potentially "out there," such as genealogical and photographic materials. Our 4th challenge is aided by enthusiastic new board members, greater division of duties among board members and officers, and by gaining new members and program attendees, but the challenge to create a more active membership will probably be around for awhile. To this end, we're reaching out by sharing more information and encouraging participation through our new "Old Bristol Historical Society" presence on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OldBristolHistoricalSociety> in addition to our history-rich website begun last fall: <http://oldbristolhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com/about/>.

Our programs for 2015 will reflect Bristol's celebration of its Sestercentennial. <http://oldbristolhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com/sestercentennial/> We are beginning to line up summer programs and events and are delighted that Warren Riess has agreed to present a lecture on June 28th of what life was like in 1765, the year Old Bristol was incorporated. Who in Old Bristol has the oldest diary or journal? We are open to other ideas of what you would like us to offer during this celebration year and urge you to share them with a member of the Board to help make 2015 a special and enjoyable year.

Cordially,

Pete and Kay Hannah P.O. Box 87, Bristol, ME 04539
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Old Bristol Historical Society Officers and Directors – July 2014 – July 2015

Co-Presidents Pete and Kay Hannah
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Local Students Support Celebration of the Town's 250th Year of Incorporation

One of the prime goals of the OBHS is to instill in area youth an interest in local history and history in general. Last spring the society decided to sponsor a local history quiz and essay contest for Bristol Consolidated School (BCS) students in grades 5-8 linked with our website: <http://oldbristolhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com/stores-of-fun/>

Students could participate in responding to 20 multiple choice local history questions presented as a Treasure Hunt by finding the answers on the new OBHS website. They also had the option of writing an essay responding to the question, "Should the Town of Bristol celebrate the 250th anniversary of Old Bristol and why?"

One or both sections of the challenge were entered by 23 students, who were presented with local history awards at the school's End of the Year Awards Assembly. Logan Eckel won First Place in the 7th-8th grade category and overall. Adelaide Mullen won First Place among 6th graders. Jewel Farrin won First Place and Kaleb Pendleton Second Place for 5th graders. All winners received monetary awards as well as certificates from the Old Bristol History Society (OBHS) for their efforts.



Left to right: Logan Eckel, Adelaide Mullen, Jewel Farrin, Kaleb Pendleton

Students who volunteered to participate in the essay portion of the contest were: Caleb Armstrong, Lauren Benner, Zachary Farrin, Caden Lewis, Barrett Maxey, Brooke Seiders, Logan Blaske, Allison Chadwick, Liza Cheney, Lucas Easter, McKenna Fitzpatrick, Wyatt Flower, Jasmine Lewis, Madison Opert, Annalee Presby, Isaac Rose, Tyler Shea, Dawson Wall, and Emily Yokabaskas. The society is very appreciative of the efforts of all participating students in this project and those of the principal and supportive teachers, especially Lynn Prentice and Becky Cooper.

All students convincingly wrote that they thought Bristol should celebrate its sestercentennial, which will occur in 2015, 250 years after it was incorporated in 1765. Logan Eckel's essay follows on the next page.

Knowledge is Power

by Bristol Consolidated School, eighth-grader, Logan Eckel, April, 2014

“Let’s go to the fort!” the boy said longingly to his parents during their stay in midcoast Maine. “I want to see it,” he said intently.

“That’s a good idea,” remarked his father. “It will be good for him to learn about the history of Bristol. The family gazed out the window of the car surveying the countryside as they traveled by.

The beauty of the coastline and the deep rich history that it possesses makes this town and others like it along coastal Maine so special. It can be argued that the Maine coast is second to none, and Bristol is proof. Bristol is not only geographically beautiful, but it has a history going back hundreds of years making it unique. It has history with the Native Americans, Europeans, and has even seen battles fought off its coast. The lighthouse, beach, fort, villages and the picture perfect coast are just some of the reasons people come to visit. Our history makes our town unique from the rest. It’s visited because of that. Should we not be proud of that and celebrate it?

We all know how lucky we are to live here. For me especially, just 14 and living with my parents here is special. This is something to be proud of. Shouldn’t we show that pride? Bristol has that chance in celebrating its sestercentennial. There are other benefits, too, and reasons why it is important to do this.

First off, the celebration will bring additional tourism to our seaside community. It is a large part of our economy and people from across the world come to experience Bristol. Celebrating Bristol’s sestercentennial would boost the economy, a benefit that our residents will feel. Vacationers, neighboring communities, and our residents in attendance will help the local businesses. These visitors will explore the sites of our town and money will be spent.

Aside from the economic benefits, one of the most important parts of why we should celebrate the sestercentennial is because it provides us with an opportunity to inform our residents and others about Bristol history that may be otherwise overlooked. This history is significant to who we are and it might not get out any other way.

In 1597, Sir Francis Bacon said that “knowledge is power.” Those same words were uttered by Thomas Jefferson in 1820. This quote signifies the importance of knowing where we come from. Celebrating Bristol’s sestercentennial is a way to inform and teach people about our town. That’s powerful because if we know how we got here, we can hopefully make wise choices in how we move forward.

In the end, this celebration has benefits to all. It’s a means to boost the economy, an opportunity to educate the people, and remind us how we became who we are today. Besides, it should just make the people who call Bristol home feel a sense of pride. Celebrating is a way to express that, and so much more.

History of the Riverview Market, Pemaquid Falls

by Pete Hope



In 1872 John Sproul and Captain William Poole bought the eastern half of the Rufus Curtis farm located in the village formerly called Pemaquid Falls on what is now identified as Harrington Road. They divided the property at the road with Poole getting the southern half stretching to the Pemaquid River. In 1878 Poole built the farm house that Kathy Wright and her husband, Jeff Eilenburg, own now. In 1879 Poole sold property at the eastern end of his lot to his brother-in-law, Captain Isaac "Ike" Fossett, and his nephew, Captain Frank

Wells for \$50. The eastern boundary was the old William Fossett house which Jeanne Rottner now owns. The next year Captain Fossett died of yellow fever on a voyage to Brazil.

Some time in the 1880's Capt. Wells built Pemaquid Hall, a large 3-story hall that we now call Riverview Market. Around 1887 Wells sold this to Elmer Elliott (1864-1945). Over the years Elliot and his son, Stanley, had various businesses there. He built a general store downstairs and had a great variety of social functions on the dance floor upstairs. The Pemaquid Hall had dances, plays, and performances of all kinds. The Pemaquid Concert Band, directed by *Pemaquid Messenger* editor, W.E. Lewis, played there many times.

Various articles in the *Pemaquid Messenger*, the newspaper printed in Pemaquid Falls from 1876 to 1897, give a good review of what happened in the Pemaquid Hall. In October, 1887 Page's Orchestra from Damariscotta played for a dance. In May, 1888 the Ideal Minstrel Troupe put on a "one of a kind performance that brought down the house." In August, 1888 the Curtis Comedy Club performed there for a week. December 28, 1888 a turkey supper was put on before the New Year's Ball. On December 12, 1889 the Juvenile Society put on the first of many "entertainments" to raise money to build a sidewalk. In July, 1889 Gales Orchestra from Rockland played for a "social dance." And in July, 1891 a big dance was held to celebrate the 4th of July. This is a good sampling of what went on at Pemaquid Hall.

Elmer Elliott became an undertaker around 1900 and the building now had another function. Embalming may have been done downstairs near the store and B.J. Russell, a former owner of the Riverview Market, believes that the caskets were made on the 3rd floor and passed down through the trap door. At some point Stanley Elliott joined the business. The front of his house, the former Burrill House, served as the funeral parlor. The *Maine Register* lists Stanley Elliott as also selling furniture. Stanley Elliott was shot in a hunting accident at Forks in 1935 and Elmer Elliot, who was probably near retirement anyway, decided to sell out.

The building was bought by Castner "Cass" and Doris Blaisdell around 1938. They lived in an apartment in the building, continued the store and kept having dances. Doris, from 1953-1963, had the post office there. The Blaisdells named the building Riverview Market.

(continued on the next page)

The couple had two daughters, Donna and Dorothy "Dottie", and took in their niece, Anne Blaisdell, after her parents died. Her sister, Mary Lou, went to live with her other aunt and uncle, Chester "Chet" and Ella Blaisdell Poole. Anne (Blaisdell) Walenta describes the store the way she remembered it. "The store, not big, had two large picture windows in the front and there was a wood stove in the middle. On the left-hand side there were shelves for groceries, sugar, fruit, and staples, and on the other side Cass had a large meat counter---he had sold meat in town before he bought the store. There were baked goods in the back. Bristol was a little slow to end Prohibition and finally did in 1964. Many of us were quite pleased when the Riverview Market had the coldest beer in town."

In 1983 Cass Blaisdell sold the building to Ken and Molly Perley and Stuart and Betsey Mahan. They put in a large, very nice apartment in the back of the store and another apartment in the ell. Molly and Betsey ran the store. In 1986 they sold the Riverview Market to B. J. Russell of Round Pond. He sold the business in 2005 and regrettably it is no more. Walpole artist, John Walker, now owns the building and has no plans for the historic old building.

Peter Hope is a resident of Pemaquid and the past president of the Old Bristol Historical Society. He is the author of Two Harbors and a Hill and Special Places: Round Pond and Louds Island. He is currently writing his 3rd local history, The Pemaquids. He has been the author of numerous articles for the OBHS newsletters and presented several programs for the Society.

Membership in the Society

Your membership dues, the same since we began in 2003, contribute significantly to our building maintenance and other expenses. We invite you to renew or become a new member. We also invite you to share your skills and interests with us. If you have ideas for potential events, speakers, or fund-raising, don't hesitate to contact us or write on the back of your returned membership slip. Sincere thanks for renewing or becoming a new member and lending your support! *Please date the form for our record-keeping.*

2015 OLD BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New _____ Renewal _____ DATE: _____

Name _____ (Fill in address information only if new member or changes.)

Address _____ Seasonal Address _____

_____ (dates leave and return) _____

E-mail _____ Local Phone _____

_____ Please check here if you prefer to have your newsletter sent by E-mail.

_____ Please check here if you'd like E-mail notification of summer programs.

Thank you for sending annual dues of \$10 Single or \$15 Family made out to: Old Bristol Historical Society
Early Special by 1-1-15: \$7 Single or \$12 Family P. O. Box 87
Lifetime Membership: \$200 Single or Family Bristol, ME 04539 USA

Tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code

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

Special thanks to the following, some of many, who have helped us out in 2014:

- ~ Spring spruce-up/building & grounds helpers--Wayne Chadwick, Larry Hayter, Kay & Pete Hannah, Mollie Perley, Dan Purdy, Alexandra Wilson
- ~ Speakers for the season's outstanding Sunday Evening Programs
- ~ Presenters of historic photos of Old Bristol Industries--David Andrews, Craig Elliott, Gordon Fossett, and Nelson Webber
- ~ Donors--Jen Pye, Dir. of Monhegan Mus., photo album belonging to Lorimer Brackett; Ernest Richards--List of All Graduates of Bristol High School (1907-1964); Genealogy & History of the Richards family, compiled by Mary Morton Richards
- ~ Newsletter writing--Kay Hannah, Peter Hope and Logan Eckel
Formatting, editing, printing, & mailing--Paul & Carol Ring, K. Hannah
- ~ Publicity--Larry Hayter
- ~ Lion's Trunk Sale workers--Kimball & Valerie Gott, P. & K. Hannah, Mollie Perley, Cathy Spikula-Galvin, Kathy Wright and all who contributed items for the sale.
- ~ Old Bristol Day booth tenders--Suzy Collins, Kimball and Valerie Gott, P. & K. Hannah, Pete Hope, Sandy Lockhart, Mollie Perley, Sally Woolf-Wade, Fran Wagner
- ~ Membership list manager--Margaret Hayter
- ~ Organization supporters--Bristol Area Lions Club, Bristol Parks & Recreation, Sheriffs Dept.
- ~ Refreshment providers--Madeline Hobbs, Margaret Hayter, P. and K. Hannah

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