



# ***OLD BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY***

An Occasional Newsletter of the Society – **Spring 2014**

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

Next year, 2015, will be Bristol's Sestercentennial. As we prepare to celebrate the 250th year of incorporation of the town, the 2014 programs and events offered by the Old Bristol Historical Society (OBHS) focus upon the sea around the Pemaquid Peninsula and how it has influenced its inhabitants through four centuries. We look forward to our summer Sunday evening programs, beginning with a presentation of the importance of John Smith's exploration of our shores in 1614 and concluding with the history of the New Harbor (Fishermen's) Co-op and fishing to the current day.

We're pleased with membership participation and program attendance at OBHS functions. We're not without our challenges, however, which include the following: 1) upkeep of the McKinley School building, which has just had its ceiling treated for mold and been painted, but needs further planned improvements, including its interior and exterior walls painted and additional outside lighting; 2) involvement of our youth in local history as a means to appreciate history in general; 3) the problem of finding appropriate storage space for the historical documents and photos belonging to our society and its townspeople; and 4) active members to help with such vital projects as programs, publicity, and fund-raising as well as to serve as board members and officers.

A big boost for the Old Bristol Historical Society since our last message has been the development of our website. Look at <http://oldbristolhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com/about/>; we think you'll agree it just might be the biggest assemblage of Old Bristol's history and essence that can be found, as there is access to society news, historical literature, handed-down stories, genealogy, the likes, and thanks to webmaster, Paul Ring, it's still growing. A byproduct this spring has been to invite Bristol Consolidated School students to search the website for answers to our Local History Treasure Hunt found at <http://oldbristolhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com/stores-of-fun/>.

Thank you to our officers, board and committees for steering the ship, to Carol and Paul Ring for helping send the signals via newsletter and website, and to all of you for keeping alive and well our society's aim to foster a sense of community and pride in our collective past.

Pete and Kay Hannah



### **Old Bristol Historical Society Officers and Directors - July 2013 – July 2014**

1, 2 Co-Presidents	<b>Pete and Kay Hannah</b>	8 - Director	<b>Lawrence Hayter</b>
3 - Vice President	<b>Wayne Chadwick</b>	9 - Director	<b>David Kolodin</b>
4 - Secretary	<b>Daniel C. Purdy, Esq.</b>	10 - Director	<b>A. J. Lockhart</b>
5 - Treasurer	<b>Rev. Robert Ives</b>	11 - Director	<b>Mollie Perley</b>
6 - Past President	<b>Peter Hope</b>		

### **Save the Dates for 2014 OBHS Summer Activities:**

June 14 (Saturday) 9:00 to 1:00 Clean-up Morning and Noon Barbecue

Bring rakes, rags---whatever you like to work with---and a good appetite.

June 29 to Aug. 31 (alt. Sundays) 6:30 Summer Evening Programs listed on back of this newsletter.

July 13 (Sunday) 5:45 **Annual Meeting** followed by 6:30 program, Peter Hope's "Facets of Pemaquid Falls."

July 19 (Saturday) 9:00 - 1:00 Bristol Area Lions Club Trunk Sale

Bring items for donation to OBHS Table at Bristol Consolidated School by 8:30.

Aug. 9-10 (Sat. & Sun.) 9:00 - OBHS Booth at Olde Bristol Days

Aug. 10 (Sunday) 2:00-4:00 Old Photo and Postcard Viewing of industries in the Late 1800s-early 1900s---Pemaquid Lighthouse Park Education Building.

Aug. 16 (Saturday) 8:30 to 1:00 Bristol Area Lions Club Trunk Sale

Bring items for donation to OBHS' table at Bristol Consolidated School by 8:30.

### **Your Chance to Help with Fund-Raising**

This season we again plan to sell t-shirts and postcards as well as participate in the Lions Trunk Sales. Please, we need you to save for us those items you no longer need and bring them to the Bristol Consolidated School at 8-8:30 a.m. for the sale on July 19 and/or August 16 or call us at 563-8300. Unfortunately, because of lack of storage space, we'll need you to take home those items that don't sell.

### **Building Committee Report - April 15, 2014**

The Building Committee has made further progress this year in improving the appearance and function of the McKinley School. The firm 1-800-Water Damage from Augusta examined the mold on the ceiling of the building. Their estimate for treatment was higher than our budget allowed. We chose an alternate similar method proposed by Ron McCrary of Bristol Mills who has experience with mold problems. The ceiling has now been washed, treated with bleach, a primer coat applied, and painted. We've also had the roof examined finding no sign of leakage. The shingles are judged good for a few more years. To ensure no chimney leaks, we've engaged a mason to check the mortar joints and flashing, install a cap to seal the chimneys, and treat the brickwork with a sealer.

The next step inside is to paint the walls. We hope to have assistance this summer from the Sheriff Dept. work crew in painting the school's exterior. An electrician has been engaged to install a light over the access ramp and make some other improvements in lighting and electrical access. We further plan this summer to have a group level the privy, apply a new roof, and paint the exterior. For any who could lend a hand on any of these worthwhile projects to help preserve Mckinley School, please call 563-8300.

Pete Hannah, Acting Chair

Committee Members: Wayne Chadwick, Walt Johansson, Alexandra Wilson, Larry Hayter and Dan Purdy.

## SAWYER'S CORNER as related by Stanley Sawyer and Kay Sawyer Hannah

"Where is Sawyer's Corner?" Sawyer's Corner is where the Lower Round Pond Road from Bristol Mills connects with Route 32 just west of the sign welcoming folk to Round Pond Village. Now here is the rest of the story, according to handed-down information and vital statistics.

The inhabitants of the home on Sawyer's Corner, like many others in Old Bristol, have a story to tell that has both its heartbreaks and joys, starting with Thomas Fossett, the great-grandfather of Stanley Sawyer.



Thomas Milton Fossett (1835-1869) was a carpenter. He was building the Greek revival home for his family on the corner of what was then part of the area called "Sheeps Huddle" in the late 1860s. He was constructing it on the foundation of a cape built there in the 1700's, which had been struck by lightning and partially burned. Some of the timbers and the front door and sidelights were salvaged and can be seen to this day. Sadly, before completely finishing the home, Thomas cut his hand and, as a result, died from blood poisoning. He was 34 years old.

His wife, Jane Ellen (Fountain) (1838-1911), was left alone in the unfinished home to bring up their six children: Gardiner, Ida, Mary Eliza, Lillian, Hattie, and Nettie, ages 5 through 12 at the time. The story handed down in the family is that neighbors helped, bringing garden produce and other things when they could, but the years the children were growing up were difficult and the family was quite poor. At least the children didn't have far to walk to attend Tennyson School, just up the hill.



The fortune of Mary Eliza Fossett (1861-1895), the third child of Thomas and Jane Ellen, brightened when at the age of 24 she was invited by Rockie E. (Cox) Yates, the wife of Capt. John E. Yates of Round Pond, to accompany them on a voyage to South Africa. On board was first mate, Orlando Sawyer (1862-1929) of Jonesport, Maine. Mary Eliza and he fell in love on that trip and were married in Bristol on February 25, 1886.

They made their home with Jane Ellen on the corner and had two children, Arthur and Ethel. Then misfortune fell. Mary Eliza, at the age of 35, became ill and died when the children were ages 7 and 5 respectively.

Since Capt. Orlando Sawyer was away at sea most of the time, Jane Ellen was left again to bring up young children, but this time Orlando was there to send money for expenses.

Mary Eliza, Ethel, Arthur & Orlando, about 1892

Continued on the next page.

Orlando later married Rockie Loud of Round Pond. After that he maintained two homes, one for Jane Ellen and his two children on Sawyer's corner, and another with his second wife in her home, which is the house opposite what is today Julie's Greenhouse on US Route 32 in lower Round Pond. Arthur and Ethel visited there when their father was home from sea.

No doubt Captain Sawyer lived an adventuresome life. He was a captain of three- and four-masted ships that he sailed, among other places, to Spain, the West Indies, South and Central America, Africa, and ports along the east coast of the United States, but his life is another story of its own. After his retirement in the 1920's he returned to Round Pond to live full time until his death in 1929. He is buried in the Bristol Mills Cemetery along with his first and second wives and Jane Ellen Fossett.

In 1910, Orlando's son, Arthur Sawyer (1888-1960) married his neighbor up the hill, Verna Yates (1892-1982), daughter of Albert Yates and Emma (Leeman). They lived with Jane Ellen until she died the following year. As the family looks back, it believes Jane Ellen must have lived a very hard life. She had grown up without knowing her father, Rufus Fountain (1812-1838), because when she was less than a year old he had drowned in Muscongus Bay. The family believes he was trying to save a companion who couldn't swim but was ultimately rescued. She had lost her husband when she was 31, brought up 8 children by herself, and had outlived her own 6 children who all died as adults with tuberculosis. It is hoped she had her rewarding moments. Jane Ellen lived long enough to hold her first great-grandchild, Muriel, the new baby of Arthur and Verna, in her arms. Later, siblings Ellery, Kenneth, and Stanley joined the household.

Arthur and Verna Sawyer inherited the house on Sawyer's Corner. Arthur's sister, Ethel continued living there with them for a while when she taught at the Long Cove School in Chamberlain to which she walked from home. Arthur was a marine engineer by trade, starting his career at sea with his father in his late teens. During much of his career he was on vessels involved in coastal shipping from Florida to Maine. He retired from the sea in the early 1930's to pursue a life ashore. The family operated a filling station on Sawyer's corner across the road from the house and Arthur opened the Sawyer Agency, selling life insurance, property insurance, and real estate. He served the town of Bristol as a selectman from 1934 to 1944.

At the start of World War II Arthur worked at Sample's Shipyard in Boothbay Harbor where he installed engines in mine sweepers built there. A year or so later he was hired at Bath Iron Works where he worked with crews installing engines in the U.S. Navy destroyers. He spent much of his time on sea trials at the mouth of the Kennebec River. He was also on board in the engine room every few weeks when the ships were turned over to the Navy at the Boston Navy Yard. Retiring in about 1932, he lived on in the home until his death in 1960.

The occupants of the Sawyer home: daughter Muriel, and sons Ellery, Kenneth and Stanley, led busy lives, just as the generations before them. The children pitched in with the subsistence gardening, farming and other chores that needed to be done since their father was away so much. For example, they raised turkeys, geese, and even silver fox for a while. Their free time included activities around the harbor in the summer and sliding and ice skating in the winter. In 1925 when the Tennyson School closed, Muriel (14), Ellery (11) and Kenneth (10) moved to the Washington School in Round Pond village. Ellery and Kenneth spoke about having Vivian Richards as their teacher at Washington School. Continued on the next page.

Stanley, who also attended Washington School for kindergarten through 8th grade, had Ellen Francis in the lower grades (through the 4th grade) and then upstairs his teachers were Hazel Gifford, Mrs. Devoe, Mattie Tibbetts, and his all-time favorite, Lillian Wallace, who he calls a "ray of sunshine." For high school Muriel boarded with a family in Pemaquid Falls, but Ellery and Kenneth walked the 6 miles to and from "the Falls" each day with neighborhood pals. Attending much later, Stanley got rides to Bristol High School. We'll leave untold for now the rest of the stories of their lives after they graduated.

Verna kept the family stories alive. She lived on the corner until moving to the Fieldcrest Nursing Home in 1979 where she later passed away at the age of 89. Stan Sawyer is the sole resident of the home now. He retired from teaching after 34 years. He enjoys his neighbors and takes great pride in caring for the home that has existed on Sawyers Corner for 145 years, always keeping in mind the times there of his forebears.

*( We hope that this story will inspire others to tell their stories for there are so many of them out there just waiting to be passed on and, if not, may be lost forever. This story can also be found with additional photos and anecdotes on the OBHS website:*

*<http://oldbristolhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com/handed-down-stories/sawyers-corner/> )*

### Membership

Membership dues haven't increased since we began in 2003. Dues are greatly appreciated because they are what "get us by." Keep in mind it's important for recordkeeping that you **please date the form**. We encourage you to offer your help and to share your ideas of potential events speakers, or fundraisers, etc. by writing such on the back of your returned membership slip. Those members who have paid their 2014 annual dues will find an M (for Membership) before your name on your address label. **Thank you heartily for your support!**

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### 2014 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 \_\_\_\_\_ 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 each summer program.

Thank you for sending annual 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

Tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code  
Please remember that our continued efforts depend upon your generous support.

## 2014 OBHS SUMMER PROGRAMS

Theme: “**The Sea Around Old Bristol: How It Has Influenced Us**”

Speakers to touch upon the influence of the sea from the early 17th century to the late 20th century.

**Sunday Evenings 6:30** at **McKinley School in Pemaquid Falls** unless otherwise noted. Following are the dates for each program and the century that will be emphasized:

**June 29** (1600s)

Warren Riess: John Smith’s exploration in the area in 1614 (400th anniversary), its context and importance to world history. Note: This program at **Pemaquid Lighthouse Park Education Building**.

**July 13** (1700s)

Peter Hope: Facets of Pemaquid Falls from Colonial to Current Time.

**July 27** (1800s)

John Allen: History of the Pemaquid Lighthouse to Current Time.

**August 10** (1800s-early 1900)

Sunday Open House 2-4 p.m. **Pemaquid Lighthouse Park, Education Building**

Nelson Webber, Bremen; Craig Elliott & Gordon Fossett, Bristol; David Andrews, South Bristol, to share and discuss their photos of late 19th and early 20th century industries, in Old Bristol.

**August 17** (1900s)

Former and current residents: Remembrances of the Pemaquid Beach Community.

**August 31** (1900s)

Brian Sawyer: History of the New Harbor Co-op, a Fishermen’s Cooperative from 1972 to Current Time.

<http://oldbristolhistoricalsociety.wordpress.com/about/>

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