



OLD BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

An Occasional Newsletter of the Society – Spring 2019

Dear Members and Friends,

For some time now, your Board of Directors has been trying to conceive of ways to take OBHS to the next level. Despite Bristol's long and significant history and unlike many Maine towns with long established historical societies, the OBHS was formed relatively recently in 2003. Since our founding, we have grown steadily, sharing Bristol's history with residents and visitors, recording oral histories, collecting artifacts and images, and working with our school-children, and still we know that there's more we can do to preserve and share Bristol's history and grow as an important resource for our town.

In our last newsletter, we reported that a community-wide fundraising campaign (under the fiscal sponsorship of the Damariscotta River Association, now named Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust) was just getting underway to purchase the Hammond Lumber/Poole Bros./Pemaquid Mill property. As you are undoubtedly aware by now, that campaign was successful and the property was purchased by Coastal Rivers in December with the understanding that OBHS would become caretakers of the historic mill. We're excited to report that over the winter, there's been an additional new development. The OBHS has also arranged to take over the former retail store, which will become the new home of the society. Our vision is to create a center for Bristol history which will include not only the restored mill and history museum, but also a separate building featuring a reception area, research room and library, a climate-controlled, fire-proof archival vault, and additional exhibit space, as well as much needed office space for administrative work and the processing of collections.

It will obviously take time and money to turn our vision into reality, but your board is dedicated to making it happen. We are already busy researching grants and planning fundraisers. Thanks to the generosity of architect Randy Smith, we already have a professional design for the archival vault, and the newly formed Mill Committee is busy planning its first work projects on the mill. You can learn more about these developments and other exciting society news further on in the newsletter.

We hope that you are as excited as we are about our vision for a new home and this opportunity to take the Old Bristol Historical Society to the next level. As things progress, there will be many ways by which you can support this effort from renewing your membership, attending our fundraisers, making special donations, or volunteering your time. We thank you in advance for all your support and look forward to the day (hopefully soon!) when we can welcome you at the new Bristol history center!

Cordially yours,

Belinda Osier & Chuck Rand
Co-presidents, OBHS

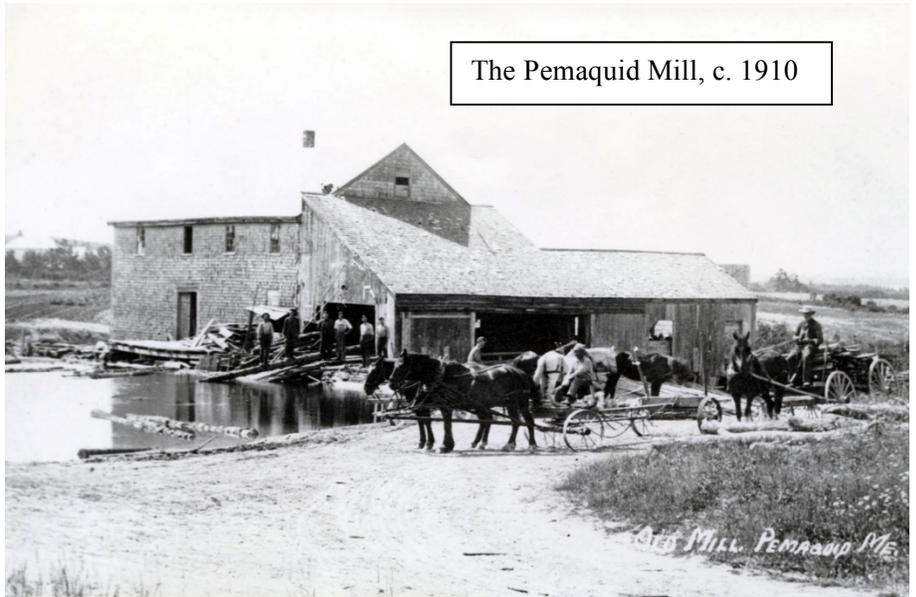
Officers and Directors of the Old Bristol Historical Society, July, 2018 - July 2019

*Co-Presidents: Belinda Osier, Chuck Rand
Vice President & Treasurer: Donald Means
Secretary: Jay Crooker*

*Directors: Phil Averill, Larry Hayter, Margaret Hayter, Russ Lane,
Rachel Fossett, Bobby Ives, Mollie Perley, Pamela Rice,
Joyce Prior Thompson*

Pemaquid Mill Update

OBHS is still eagerly awaiting the day when the official agreement between ourselves and the Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust can be signed. For liability reasons, mitigation of the arsenic found on the property needs to be completed before we can legally take possession of the buildings. As of this writing, we anticipate a date near the end of June, though the date is not yet confirmed. Once the mitigation is complete, the mill and retail store will be sold to the OBHS for \$1, while the land beneath the buildings and a five-foot perimeter around them will be leased to us for 99-years. Other than the buildings, the property will continue under the ownership and stewardship of Coastal Rivers which has plans to create the Pemaquid Falls Preserve.



The delay in mitigation, however, hasn't prevented us from having access to the mill. The Mill Committee has been busy researching the history of the mill and other buildings on the property, as well as the machinery still found inside.



A scale model made by the late Huston Dodge of the 19th century Hatchtown Mill located on the Pemaquid River, on the Lower Round Pond Road in Bristol Mills.

Thanks to the generosity of Roger Panek, architect and founder of Architectural Resource Conservation in Damariscotta, a professional architectural survey of the mill has been completed. We have also started the application process for National Historic Register status, having passed the first hurdle and received the approval and recommendation of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. Over Memorial Day weekend, the first work party at the mill took place with volunteers removing the more modern lumber racks. Prior to removing them, the racks were measured, drawn, photographed, and videotaped with commentary from Craig Leeman, who worked on the property from 1968-2009. Once the sale is complete, plans are to begin restoration on the front of the building, bringing it back to its 19th century appearance preserved in a later photograph taken c. 1910.

If you would like to donate your labor and help with future work projects, please contact OBHS Mill Committee chairperson, Phil

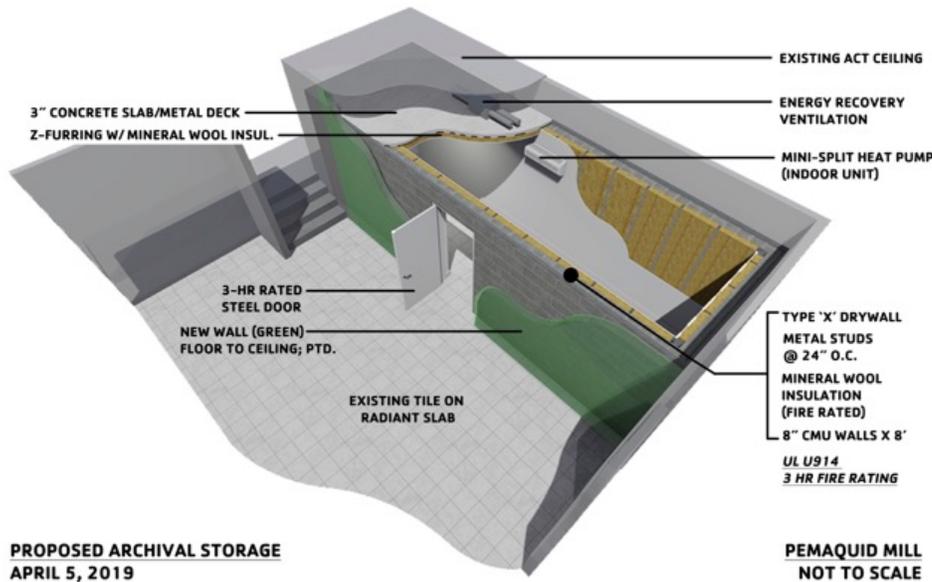
Averill at pemaquidmill@gmail.com or 529-5349. Financial gifts can be designated for "Pemaquid Mill."

Archival Storage Update

Since the Society's founding in 2003, one of the greatest challenges we've faced has been finding adequate storage space for our collections. Over the years there have been many discussions and a number of failed attempts to get a movement going to build a climate-controlled, fire-proof vault somewhere in town. Unable to build a vault at McKinley School due to lack of space, last fall the Board of Directors developed a secondary plan to improve upon our current storage by renovating the kitchen area using fire resistant materials, adding year-round heat, and securing the small area with exterior doors. Before beginning work on that project, however, acquisition of the Pemaquid Mill property unexpectedly became a possibility and then a reality. As

reported in the President's letter, OBHS will soon be moving into the former Hammond Lumber/Poole Bros. retail store, and the entrance area, which is built on concrete slab, happens to be an excellent location for a

concrete, fire-proof vault. Thanks to the generosity of architect Randy Smith who donated his professional services, a design has already been drawn up. Estimates of the cost run between \$20k and \$30k, depending on options and how much volunteer labor we can gather. In March the town voted to give \$9500 in support of archival storage and we have also received two \$1000k donations bringing the total raised so far to \$11,500. A good start, but we still have a ways to go! If you would like to make a special donation to this very important project that will provide much needed protection for our historical



documents, records, (including old town records) and photographs, please designate your gift to be used for the "Archival Storage Vault".

Some of our historical documents that need protection: Handwritten Bristol Town proclamation naming a day of celebration upon the end of the War of 1812 (1815); Barker Loud ship's log (1833-1836); Hunter Farm Diary (1853-1856); Capt. Arthur Cox diaries (1868-1915); William Boyd tax collectors list (1876); handwritten Bristol High School valedictory speech (1913); Pemaquid Beach Streetlight Society ledger (1924-1932); Pemaquid Beach Community Club records (1924-1976).

Digital Images Archive News

OBHS is excited to announce plans to make our Digital Images Archive available to the public through our website sometime within the next six months. Started in 2015, the society has collected approximately 3000 digitized images, many of which were scanned from photographs and postcards loaned by members of the community. Co-President and archivist Chuck Rand has been busy creating individual records for each image and entering both the image and record into PastPerfect software which will enable the collection to be searched using a variety of terms. Over 1300 images have been catalogued so far and will become available initially online. Over Memorial Day weekend, the society held a vintage furniture tag sale which raised \$1200 to benefit this project, enough to upgrade our current PastPerfect software to the web version and pay the \$495 annual hosting fee for almost two years. If you have photographs or historical documents to donate or loan for scanning, please contact Chuck Rand at oldbristolhistoricalsociety03@gmail.com or by calling 207-553-0034.



New Harbor, Maine, c. 1910

Oral History Project

Over the winter, OBHS submitted a grant application to the Maine Community Foundation for funds to develop and implement an oral histories project. In a letter dated May 1st, Maggie Drummond-Bahl from the foundation informed us that our grant application was successful. The OBHS will be receiving \$5396 for the purchase of video-recording equipment and necessary editing software to implement this project. Co-President Chuck Rand, who has conducted over 60 interviews for the Brodtkin Contemporary Western Artists' Project at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, will direct the project and pass on interview tips to OBHS directors, while director Russ Lane will be in charge of videography and editing. The project will begin by focusing on the fishing industry, which will complement our previously announced project of photographing our old fish houses and barns. Equipment will be purchased in June, with interviews beginning this summer and continuing through September 2020.

Growing up in Pemaquid, Maine, Mid 1940-1959 by Larry Jones

When I heard about the sawmill-museum project, I began to think that quite possibly I could be one of the last ones living that actually saw it in operation. As the years go by I find myself remembering more and more how lucky I was to grow up in Pemaquid.

My family spent one summer there before moving there in mid-fall when I started school in the 3rd grade. As a child, I was always fascinated by anything mechanical. So, moving into an old farm house right next to a water powered sawmill was pure delight for me.

At that time, since the dam was at full height, it formed a nice pond in front of the mill. Across the road next to our house was a much larger pond. In fact, it was large enough so that my dad put in a small dock and bought a small rowboat that I spent many hours rowing around the pond.

The mill would start sawing at 7:00 a.m. and would saw about 3-4 hours before the pond was drawn down too much. The logs were kept in a boom in front of the mill. From there they were moved over to the ramp by poles where they were winched up to the saw



Larry Jones, BHS Class of 1955

dry before being moved back to be planed to thickness. The slabwood was tossed out back and the shavings and sawdust were blown out back too. All this was done with water power. To stand below the dam and watch as the water turbine was turned on was an awesome sight! In the spring below the dam the alewives were so thick you could catch them with your hands.

On the pond, next to our house where the pond narrowed there was what we called an eel dam. Actually, it was more like a fence where the eels were led into a trap in the center of it. They were harvested around New Years and shipped to New York. If you had good balance you could walk across it. I never saw anyone working on it.

When we moved from Springfield MA I was in the 3rd grade in a large school. I did not like school and can remember putting any answer down to addition problems. I might have had to stay back a year. So, when I started school at McKinley school right up the road all was new.

It was a one room schoolhouse, grades sub-primary through 6th. It had no running water with a stove in the back. Eleanor Sproul was a great teacher. In fact, I did so well I was the top student in the 6th grade! Okay, I'll be honest; I was the only one in that grade.

Living in the old house was great. I could boat, swim, skate on the pond edge in winter. Caleb Fossett who owned the farm house where the Carpenter's Boat Shop is now used to plow and harrow our garden with his horses. With one of my friends we used to ride in his hay wagon to tramp down hay for a fuller load and then

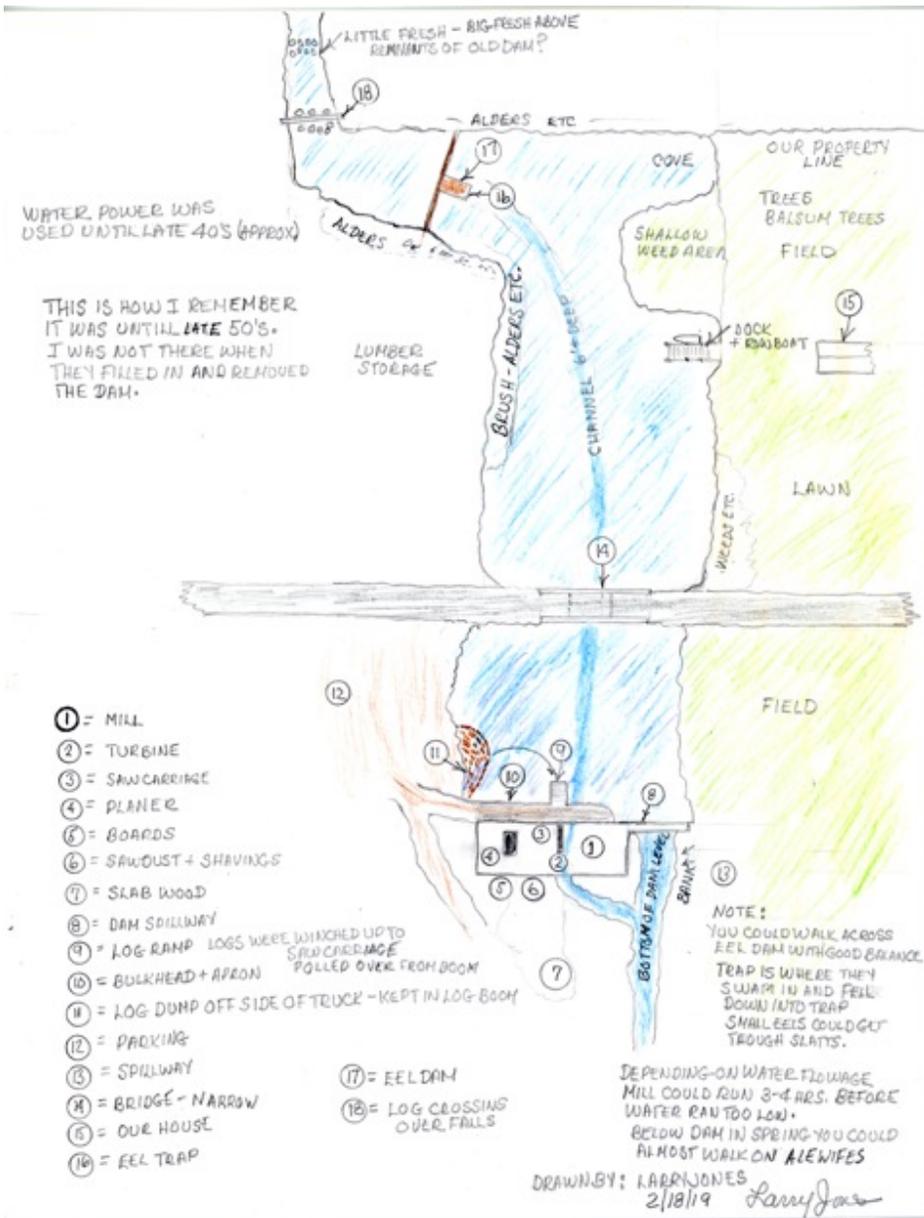
watch as he lifted it up in to the hay loft of the barn by rope and pulley with tongs by his horses.

As kids, we could walk anywhere, swim in "Big Fresh", and sled on any available hill. There were no keep out signs anywhere. I walked to school and one day I got a harsh reminder of where our food comes from.

On the way to school there was a barn where right next to the door there was a stall with a pig they were raising. It was clean and friendly and I used to pet it every morning. Then one afternoon there it was hanging from a tree as it had been slaughtered for winter food of course.

From 6th grade I went to New Harbor for grades 7 and 8 and then to Bristol High right near my house, a school of 54 students where I also did very well. From there I went to Gorham State Teacher's College, now part of the University of [Southern] Maine, where I graduated as an industrial arts teacher.

I tried very hard to get a job in Maine and none were available so I ended up teaching at Glastonbury High School in Connecticut for 35 years having a very successful career there. Glastonbury



High is a large school of well over 2000 students. I often think how I survived there coming from such small schools. All of my classmates that I know of did very well in college, business, and fishing. We all got an excellent education from the town of Bristol school system.

I am very thankful that I was lucky enough to have grown up in Pemaquid. I know I would not have had the success I've had if my family had stayed in Springfield, MA.

(These were my teachers: grades 3-6, Miss Sproul; grades 7-8, Mrs. Blaisdell; High School, Mr. Kempton (Principal, math, science, baseball coach); Mr. Rawlings (business, basketball); Mrs. Lewis (English, Latin); Mr. Barlow (industrial arts--why I became a teacher); others, Mr. Porter (Principal); Mr. Cooper (Principal, baseball))

Old Bristol Historical Society, 2019 Summer Calendar

- May 25 Furniture Tag Sale to benefit the Digital Images Archive
- May 31 5th Grade Bristol History Tour
- June 23 Chad Hanna, "World War II and the Lives of Carroll and Harney Hanna."
Pemaquid Lighthouse Park Learning Center, 7:00 pm
- July 7 Michael Dekker, "Resistance and Reprisal: The Scots-Irish of Mid-Coast Maine During the French And Indian War."
Pemaquid Lighthouse Park Learning Center, 7:00 pm
- July 21 Annual Meeting
Pemaquid Lighthouse Park Learning Center, 6:15 pm
Followed by:
Jim Lyon, "History of Chamberlain and Long Cove Point, 7:00 pm
- August 4 Chuck Rand, "After Dunbar: The Pemaquid Forts, 1732-1909."
Bristol Mills Church Fellowship Hall, 7:00 pm
- August 7 Olde Bristol Days Special
Belinda Osier & Chuck Rand, "Down Memory Lane-Old Bristol Slides and History."
McKinley School, 7:00 pm
- August 10-11 Olde Bristol Days Booth at Colonial Pemaquid
- August 18 Russ Lane, "A Story of Heroism."
Bristol Mills Fellowship Hall, 7:00 pm
- September 1 Dr. Neil DePaoli, "History of the Pemaquid Mill."
Pemaquid Lighthouse Park Learning Center, 7:00 pm

Become a member today!

Exciting things are happening at OBHS! If you would like to be part of this next phase in the development of our organization, please consider becoming a member. Renewing members should have received a renewal form in the mail in February. Additional membership forms are available on our website at oldbristolhistoricalsociety.org!

2019 Membership Form

Please return to: Old Bristol Historical Society, P.O. Box 87, Bristol ME 04539

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Summer Address: _____

Winter Address (if different): _____

Please choose the appropriate Membership Level

If you would like to make an additional donation, please designate where you would like your gift(s) to go.

- Membership One Year Single \$15 _____
- Membership One Year Family \$20 _____
- Lifetime Membership: \$200 _____
- OBHS Operating Fund _____
- Pemaquid Mill Fund _____
- Archival Vault Fund _____
- _____
- TOTAL _____

We always need help! Please check if you'd be willing to help in any of the following areas:

- _____ Fall Clean-up (November)
- _____ Maintenance Projects at McKinley School & History Center
- _____ Help at Talks (refreshments, membership table, sale table, etc.)
- _____ Help at Fundraising events (ex.: yard sales, bakes sales, etc.)
- _____ Help during Old Bristol Days (booth, talks, open houses, etc.)
- _____ Share photos with our Digital Images Archive
- _____ Volunteer photographer for our Fish House/Old Barn project

Thank you!

The Old Bristol Historical Society is a non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. All donations to OBHS are tax deductible.

Old Bristol Historical Society
P. O. Box 87
Bristol, ME 04539

