



OLD BRISTOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A Biannual Newsletter of the Society – Spring 2020

Greetings to Members and Friends,

Transfer of Pemaquid Mill to OBHS Completed!

By Bobby Ives, Co-President

It is with great joy and a deep sense of accomplishment that we finally share (what you might already have heard) that the “Deed is Done.” On Thursday, May 21, at 4 p.m. Russ and I signed the Quit Claim Deed with



Co-Presidents Robert Ives and Russell Lane hold the papers showing the new ownership of OBHS

Covenant and Memorandum of Understanding thus transferring ownership of the Pemaquid Falls Mill, the Bristol History Center, and the roughly one acre of land along the Pemaquid River from the Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust to the Old Bristol Historical Society.

What began in late 2017 when Hammond Lumber offered the property for sale, resulted in over 400 donors coming together in a collaborative effort on behalf of OBHS and CRCT to contribute over \$430,000 dollars for the purchase of that Hammond property. CRCT facilitated the funding and arranged for the eventual purchase in 2018. For over a year CRCT and OBHS held discussions about our mutual ownership of the property which eventually resulted in CRCT deciding to hold a conservation memorandum of

understanding on the land and OBHS owning the entire property. OBHS was thrilled with this arrangement.

Already we have begun efforts in rebuilding the Mill, refurbishing the new Bristol History Center and proceeding to create an environment for nature trails, fish viewing, bird watching, and mutually sharing in this beautiful place. Russ and I offer our profound thanks to each and every one of you who contributed your time, funds, and dedication to making this dream a splendid reality.

And so I conclude this brief article with a toast that I once shared before. It is a toast to our great grandchildren and our great, great grandchildren whom I am sure will share on May 21, 2120, at the Centennial Celebration of the acquisition of Pemaquid Mill Property these sentiments:

We are so grateful to our great, great grandparents who back in 2020, had the vision, hope, and courage to create this beautiful Bristol History Center and Pemaquid Mill museum. What a remarkable place they have created for us all because not only is it a magnificent place here in Bristol, but it helps us all to remember our past, nurture our present, and most importantly guide us and the lives of our children into the future.

I wish I could be there at that Centennial Celebration in the future (although I'd be 173 years old). But most of all, I am grateful to all of you for this wonderful new beginning today.

A Piece of the Puzzle

By Russ Lane, Co-President

The other day while stuck at home like the rest of the world, I caught a report on NPR stating that jigsaw puzzle sales are up 300 percent since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. I am sorry, but I have never understood the reason behind jigsaw puzzles. What purpose could there be in taking a perfectly good picture, cut it up into a thousand pieces, and then spend hours trying to put it back together again? It made no sense, that was, until a recent visit to check on my mother. To my astonishment I found her hunched over a card table working on the border of a jigsaw puzzle. Frustrated, she was ready to quit, saying she must not have all the pieces. Looking down at the table my eyes immediately locked in on a straight edge piece that obviously went to a border. Pointing it out to her, she grabbed it with glee, shouting “Oh, thank you. That’s what I’ve been looking for.” With that one piece she connected two long sections together. You would have thought I had given her the winning numbers to the Maine State Lottery. The find gave her a second wind, and we spent the afternoon working on the puzzle as we visited.

On my drive home it hit me that history is much like a jigsaw puzzle. Over time the big picture of an event can begin to fade away. In a sense, each witness carries their own unique experience, breaking up the event into many pieces that are scattered far and wide as people live their lives.

My latest “history” puzzle began when someone asked me about my father’s family bout with scarlet fever. I had never heard of such a thing. Seizing on the moment I went directly to my aunt and discovered that, indeed, they did have scarlet fever and were quarantined for weeks if not months. She also told me that the town selectmen came to their house and burned all their books including their family Bible. It all seemed so unbelievable.

As I searched for more answers, bits and pieces began to surface. Bristol Town Reports from the 1930’s spoke of local schools being closed and the need to burn school books in an effort to fight off disease. It became clear that those who lived through the Great Depression and World War II were not only battling poverty and an enemy intent on conquering the world, but these people faced diseases that were taking the most vulnerable among them.

While searching the archives of the Lincoln County News, I discovered more about my father’s family. His sister, Mary, who we were always told died of eating poisonous berries at three years old, actually passed away of complications from the whooping cough. The newspaper promised more tragedy. It reported that while the Lanes buried their daughter, their two youngest sons (age two and five) remained at home close to death. After a little math, it became quite evident that the doomed two-year-old was my father.

Over the years the Old Bristol Historical Society has strived to preserve as much of our past as possible—all pieces of the puzzle—to help us fill in the blanks of our own history. Thank you to all who have given so much of your time, your talent, and your finances. We have come so far and still have so much further to travel as we piece together the plan for the future of the Pemaquid Mill and the Bristol History Center. We welcome you to come alongside and become a part of what promises to be a beautiful picture. You may have just the piece we are looking for!

Officers and Directors of the Old Bristol Historical Society, July, 2019 - July 2020

Co-Presidents: Robert Ives & Russ Lane
Vice President & Treasurer: Donald Means
Summer Secretary: Larry Hayter
Winter Secretary: Belinda Osier

Directors: Phil Averill, Larry Hayter, Margaret Hayter, Pat Porter, Alitha Young, Dan Purdy, Kay Hannah, Chuck Rand, Belinda Osier, Pamela Rice, Mark Ziarnik, Chuck Farrell

Newsletter edited by Kay Hannah and Alitha Young, formatted by Debbie Mikulak

Where have all the Buildings Gone?

By Bobby Ives

In 1955 the famous folk singer Pete Seeger wrote the words: *“Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing? Where have all the flowers gone, long time ago?”*

The OBHS plans to introduce a new column for its biannual Newsletter with a similar theme to Pete Seeger’s famous folksong. We call it: *Where Have All the Buildings Gone?* Over the years and even centuries many of the buildings of Bristol have been moved from where they originally were built to very different locations. The Harrington Meeting House, for example, was constructed in 1772, but was originally built in Bristol Mills. Likewise, the Louds Island Church constructed in 1914 was originally built on Malaga Island in the New Meadows River. The theme goes on and on including the Methodist personage in Pemaquid Falls which is now on the Pemaquid Harbor Road, and the Pemaquid Harbor Post Office which is now on the Old County Road. And last but not least, is our own Bristol History Center (AKA Poole Brothers Retail building) which was originally built on the Harrington Road. We are deeply grateful to Don Osier who will initiate this new column in our next newsletter by sharing how his family’s home made its way from Louds Island into New Harbor.

Covid19 Forces Temporary Suspension of the OBHS Oral Histories Project

By Chuck Rand OBHS Collections Manager April 28, 2020

In February 2019 then co-presidents Chuck Rand and Belinda Osier submitted a grant application to the Maine Community Foundation for funds totaling \$5,396 to purchase video-recording equipment and necessary editing software to develop and implement an oral histories project in Bristol, Maine. In a letter dated May 1st Maggie Drummond-Bahl informed the OBHS that our application was successful.

These video-recorded recollections of Bristol community members regarding primarily the fishing and tourist industries and what they have witnessed in terms of changes to Bristol’s socioeconomic structure and how these changes have impacted them personally will be invaluable historical resources.

During June 2019 the items enumerated by the grant application were purchased. During the summer, co-president Russ Lane, an experienced videographer, achieved a working familiarity with the Sony PXW-X70 XD compact camcorder with 4K Upgrade and its accessories by recording the OBHS’s summer presentations as well as a panel of community members discussing what it was like to grow up in New Harbor.

In the fall 2019 Rand, Lane, and co-president Dr. Robert Ives determined that a dry run was necessary to work out issues that might occur during interview setups in various situations. We determined to interview Ives in his Pemaquid Harbor home. Rand was the interviewer.

With that training success, we went on to conduct interviews with Lorraine Morong and Reginald and Betty Reilly in their homes in Madbury, New Hampshire and New Harbor respectively. Rand and Ives were the dual interviewers and Lane captured the moments.

While this enterprise is on hold for the time-being, we consider this an ongoing project. In the future we hope these interviews, complete or in-part, will go viral (pun-intended) by means of an OBHS YouTube channel, its online presence, and Facebook.

Progress Report for The Mill at Pemaquid Falls – First Quarter 2020

By Phil Averill

Work continues at the Mill at a steady pace despite virus issues. Alexandra Jansen (our window whisperer) has spent many hours cleaning and restoring both windows found in the mill and ones that match that we have found in salvage yards. Roger Panek has been helping with the windows as well as fixing up the east wall of the

building. Roger has also been the lead person coordinating the gathering of contractor estimates for roof replacement and structural repairs to the mill building, both priorities for this year.



We have had a steady stream of historic structure experts come through to look at the building as we continue to try to figure out how old it is. We have been using the new digitized Lincoln County News to search for references to the mill from 1851 to the present. It has been interesting but we still cannot answer basic questions about when additions were put on, when power sources were changed, what products were produced when, etc. We recently noticed that the mill is listed on the

1857 Lincoln County map as a “C & G Mill” (carding and grist). In the 1869 “Water Powers of Maine” book, the mill is described as a grist and carding mill. We do have a copy of a page from the mill’s account book with an 1873 letterhead showing sawmill products like long and short lumber, laths and shingles. So, apparently, the saw mill was started between 1870 and 1872 but this needs to be confirmed.

We had a good meeting with staff from GZA, the company that handled the arsenic mitigation work. A lot of misinformation was cleared up and we are now prepared to plan out landscaping, parking and other site use issues.

The smaller mill use team that was formed last fall has been meeting weekly on Zoom to discuss and plan projects such as roofing and siding plus issues like insurance and site modifications. All actual work on the building is being done in accordance of National Park Service standards for preservation and rehabilitation. We have met with contractors to view the building and see who is interested in tackling some of the big structural support issues. We have settled on people to do the following tasks: stone foundation repair, sections 4 & 5 (north end) shed roofing, east (road) side shingling and structural repairs to the building itself. This work is intended to make the building safe to use as an exhibit space and also return its outward appearance to what it was in the early 1900’s. We are also about to hire a structural engineer to guide us through all these projects. Due to contractor scheduling, much of the structural work will be delayed until fall of 2020 barring any other delays from virus spread or inability to raise money. We will use this time to photo-document the building before more work is done to create a current conditions file for use by future historians.

The 2020 fundraising brochure has been printed. Once OBHS owns the property, we will start a fundraising campaign with a goal of about \$250,000. You will be hearing from us soon. If you want to jump the gun a bit, contributions can be made to OBHS, PO Box 87, Bristol, ME 04539 with “mill” written on the memo line. Mill funds will be held in a separate account within OBHS to be used for that purpose and not the general operating funds of the group. We have been working off of donations that have come in but now are getting into the more expensive parts of the project. You will be hearing from us soon as we start a public campaign on the order of \$250,000. We have recently received a grant from the DAR for \$7200 for structural repair and we will be seeking other grants. Thanks to Lara Sargent for her great work on identifying grant opportunities.

We have developed a questionnaire to send out to all of you for guidance as we move forward. Things like what type of museum are we after, how rustic or finished should the exhibit space be, and what topics should we try to cover need to be decided. We have an exhibits team to plan the exhibits and this survey will give them suggestions and guidance. Many of you receiving this report have been involved in the mill project since we began in 2018 and we would like to keep you involved in this work. We each have an idea of how this project should turn out. Collecting those ideas will guide us to a successful conclusion. As the summer approaches, look for progress at the mill and many more volunteer opportunities.

Bristol's Liberty Pole

By Chris Hall

The first Liberty Poles were erected as early as 1766, just three years after the 1763 Treaty of Paris ratified the conquest of French Canada and removed, in colonial minds, the need for British protection of the American colonies. In particular they celebrated the 1766 repeal of the hated Stamp Act, such as the one erected in New York dedicated to 'George III, (William) Pitt and Liberty.' The poles resembled ship's masts, topped with a flag, a Phrygian or liberty cap, or both.

Some of the first skirmishes of the struggle for independence were fought over Liberty Poles, such as the 1770 Battle of Golden Hill in New York, in which few bodies, but much pride, were badly bruised. As the tide of revolt rose, Liberty Poles were set up throughout New England, such as that in Taunton, Mass., in 1774, erected 'by the Sons of Liberty in Taunton, fired with a zeal for the preservation of their rights as men, and as American Englishmen' as its inscription proclaimed. They were repeatedly cut down by loyalists and raised again by patriots as the conflict spread.

After independence, Liberty Poles again became flashpoints for conflict, as partisan rancor rose by the turn of the nineteenth century. Republicans advocated for an activist citizenry that aimed to impede any unjust exercise of federal power. Federalists, however, argued that representative government implied an obligation for citizens to defer to their elected officials when they take action for the common good. The conflict reflected a divide running through American politics and jurisprudence to this day: the right of the citizen to do whatever they wish, versus freedom from harm from one's neighbors. A Liberty Pole in Vassalboro, Maine, was dedicated in 1799 by the burning of copies of the Alien and Sedition Acts, which Federalists had enacted to restrict immigration and punish dissent in the face of a renewed French threat. To quote University of Toronto historian Shira Lurie, 'By raising and destroying liberty poles, both sides put into practice the type of popular participation they envisioned for the republic.'



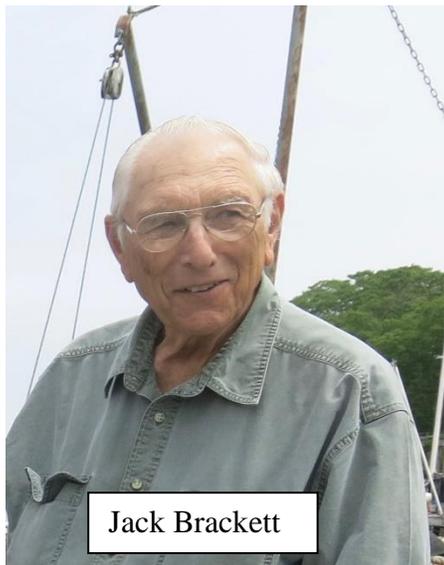
Russ Guibord standing by the Liberty Pole

In Maine, the Liberty Pole tradition faded until renewed by the upwelling of support for the union in the Civil War. In the early 1860s poles were erected on village greens as rallying places for patriotic demonstrations and the recruitment of troops. Bristol was a little late to the party: our Liberty Pole was erected in 1864, by which time the stream of volunteers had run out and conscription introduced. (When the Town filled its quota with the men of Loud's Island instead of mainland boys, the islanders declared their secession from the Town of Bristol, the State of Maine and the United States – but that's another story.) The pole's dedication to Bristol's Union veterans meant that the Town did not see the need for one of the stone monuments of soldiers (often mail ordered from Sears, Roebuck and Company) that were set up by so many Maine towns in the 1870s and 80s. Bristol's pole was set up on the green outside the New Town House (built 1840). It was formed in ship's mast style, with a lower mast supporting crosstrees and an upper pole or hoist, using pine poles from the woodlot of Joseph Crooker, whose farm lay between the Poor Farm Road and the Pemaquid River. These were probably the largest remaining mast pines within easy distance of the Bristol Mills Town House as much of the town had been cleared of trees for farming by this date. It is worth noting that the 1860 census counted 3,335 people in Bristol, the highest recorded total for the Town. It took until the 2000 census for the combined populations of Bristol and South Bristol (which separated in 1915) to climb back to that level.

In 155 years, Bristol's Liberty Pole has seen several restorations. It was moved slightly, to its current position and concrete base, in 1955 when the state paved and widened Route 130. The current work to complete the restoration of the pole, led by Russ Guibord, has taken three years of volunteer effort. It was originally expected that only the crosstrees and hoist would need repair, but on detailed assessment it was found that the lower mast would need to be replaced, due to the original wood rotting inside the waterproof fiberglass and epoxy resin coating that had been applied at an earlier restoration in 2002. The new mast has been formed by the Boothbay Harbor Shipyard from a pine donated by Jay Crooker, whose great-great-grandfather furnished the original mast in 1864. The upper hoist has been saved, due to painstaking work by Russ, the pole's neighbor across the river in Bristol Mills, who was able to remove rot that had in places affected two-thirds of the diameter of the pole, and scarf in new wood and binder material. Perhaps the hardest part of the whole reconstruction was excavating the stump of the old mast from its concrete base, lined with steel casing, in which the bottom four feet of the mast had effectively become petrified – harder than granite. It defied successively larger drilling bits, and attempts to burn and even blast the wood out, until finally Paul Kelsey, with the big rig of Reilly's Well Drillers, succeeded.

May the dedication and effort that has gone into the restoration of the Bristol Liberty Pole keep the pole aloft and its traditions alive for another 150 years!

We Remember Jack Brackett



The OBHS lost one of its favorite contributors of local History in the passing of Jack Brackett on March 24 this spring.

Jack enjoyed sharing his handed-down stories and personal experiences, especially of fishing and being on the sea, as well as of his 65 years of service with Bristol Fire and Rescue. His interest in history and excellent recall made it a pleasurable experience to listen to his accounts. Because of his participation in a number of public programs and tape and video recorded sessions, including "Life on New Harbor Hill," "Fishing Out of New Harbor," and "Growing up in New Harbor," the community has been enriched and the OBHS is able to pass on some of his repertoire for future generations.

The Digital Images Archive Goes Online

By Chuck Rand OBHS Collections Manager April 28, 2020

The Old Bristol Historical Society (OBHS) is pleased to announce that on Friday, April 24th PastPerfect Online (PPO) began hosting the OBHS database of collection records derived primarily through the extremely successful Digital Images Archive (DIA). The PPO can be accessed via the OBHS website at: <https://oldbristolhistoricalsociety.pastperfectonline.com/>

Initiated and implemented by then co-presidents Belinda Osier and Chuck Rand in the spring of 2015, the DIA has increased its holdings considerably since then. Currently, the number of loaned and donated items is over 8,500.

By early 2016 the OBHS had purchased hardware and the museum software PastPerfect to provide in-house access only to the DIA. PastPerfect allows for the creation of records which enables users to search for images (both loaned and donated) in a variety of ways including by subject, names, dates, keywords and advanced searches using a combination of fields simultaneously.

On April 24th this in-house OBHS PastPerfect database was made available to the world-wide public via the PPO hosting. Currently, there are 2,408 searchable records including 2,054 photo records, 284 library records, 65 archival records, and 5 object records. Collections Manager, Chuck Rand says he has a long way to go before all 8,500 items are cataloged even as the DIA continues to grow.

On May 25, 2019 the OBHS held a “vintage furniture sale” to raise money toward making this inhouse database available online. Enough money was raised to pay the annual hosting fee of \$600 for the next two years. We are hopeful that once community members are able to explore and enjoy this wonderful resource on their own, there will be strong financial support for continuing this service far into the future.

The OBHS wants to thank all those donors and loaners for their generosity in sharing their family heritage items with us. Historians, genealogists, and others interested in Bristol’s history and culture will greatly benefit from their contributions to our Digital Images Archive made available in small part by PPO.

The Old Bristol Historical Society has joined the ranks of many Maine institutions in its use of PastPerfect Online (PPO) including the Bangor Historical Society, Camden Public Library, Maine Historical Society, and the Penobscot Marine Museum.

Barns & Fish Houses Project

For the past couple of summers, our Barns & Fish Houses Project has made site visits to document some of our wonderful old buildings in Bristol. Some of these buildings are in great shape and will still be with us for more generations. But some, unfortunately, are in a state of serious decline. Our mission is to photograph barns and fish houses, document their architectural details and get histories on them when possible. Eventually, there will be a section in our online archives devoted to the project.



This was one of the barns surveyed by Margaret Hayter's team last summer. It belongs to Jay Crooker and his family and will be discussed in the lecture Jay is scheduled to give on his family history for the Old Bristol Historical Society on August 30th this summer.

Currently, our Barns & Fish Houses project is on a temporary pause while we wait for the conditions related to the COVID-19 to improve. We hope to be contacting members soon to set up a schedule for photographing more buildings. If you have a barn that was built any time up through the early 20th century (we love those Sears Roebuck kit barns!), or a fish house that is still standing, we would love to include you on our list. We really enjoy talking with owners about their buildings. The easy way to reach us is via email at old.bristol.membership@gmail.com or margarethayter@gmail.com.

Town of Bristol Newsletter

Chris Hall, Bristol’s Town Administrator, distributes an interesting and useful newsletter with important information about events impacting our area. Normally this is a quarterly newsletter, but Chris is sending these out weekly during this time of the coronavirus pandemic. To subscribe to the newsletter, send an email to CHall@BristolMaine.org.

2020 Summer Talk Series - (Tentative - Pending COVID-19 Regulations)

1. "Social Clubs of Bristol (Masons, Odd Fellows Red Men, Grange)"
Speakers: - Grange - Beth Callahan
IOOD - Buddy Poland
Masons - Terry Loud
Red Men - Stan Benner
Date: July 5, Venue: To Be Determined
2. "Samoset" - Speaker: Jody Holmes
Date: July 19, Venue: Pemaquid Point Learning Center
3. "History of Bristol in 1820 - or
Diary of a Bristol Civil War Soldier (Loring Fossett)" - Speaker: Prof. Heather Cox Richardson.
Date: Aug. 2, Venue: To Be Determined
4. "Down Memory Lane Old Bristol History" - Speakers: Belinda Osier and Chuck Rand
Date: Aug. 5, Venue: McKinley School house
5. "How Maine Became a State" - Speaker: Zac McDorr
Date: August 16, Venue: Pemaquid Point Learning Center
6. "A Family Diary" - Speaker: Jay Crooker
Date: Aug. 30, Venue: To Be Determined

Membership Report

OBHS is continuing to find ways to communicate better with our members. One way that we communicate is through timely emails. We send program notices to members a few days in advance of each meeting and also notify members of any special events that are coming up. Now that we are gearing up for activities at the Mill, we would like to be able to periodically keep everyone informed more frequently than our semi-annual newsletter.

If we don't have your email address, we can't keep you informed. Please let us know your preferred email address and we will be happy to put you on our communication list. We will not inundate you with emails, nor will we ever share your email address with any person or organization. We will be happy to add your address to our growing list of members and friends if you email us at old.bristol.membership@gmail.com.

Thank you to the many members who have renewed their OBHS dues for the 2020 program year. If you wish to renew your membership, please use the form below. We would especially like to express our thanks to our new members and to those who became Life Members this year. Even though our annual dues are low, they are much needed to help sustain our operations.

2020 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 for any of the following:

- _____ 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.

Painting the OBHS Sign



Bill Schwaneman, pictured to the left, is carving and painting our logo on the back of the original sign he made us, which will allow it to be viewed from north or south by those passing our new History Center on Rt. 130. OBHS is deeply grateful to him for his donation of time and skill.

Old Bristol Historical Society

P. O. Box 87

Bristol, ME 04539