

South Bristol Historical Society NEWSLETTER

South Bristol, Maine 04568

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Spring 2019

2019 PROGRAM PREVIEW

The program schedule for SBHS in 2019 is taking shape – here it is! First on the agenda is the **Cemetery Walk, Saturday, May 18**. Everyone interested in visiting two of the oldest, and least well-known of South Bristol's 16 cemeteries will meet at the Thompson Ice House at **10 am**. SBHS historian Dave Andrews will lead the way to the McFarland Cove neighborhood. The first stop will be at the oldest cemetery in town, the Old Thompson cemetery. This small cemetery has a number of early Thompson headstones and plain stones marking unknown sailors. We will then walk over to the near-by McFarland cemetery which, not surprisingly, has numerous mid-19th century McFarland graves. Information gathered by Trustee Carolyn McKeon about those cemeteries will be available at the library. Please bring along a rake and garden clippers if you would be willing to do some cleanup in addition to searching among the headstones! Don't forget tick repellant!

Family Genealogy will be the focus on **June 19** at **7 pm** at the Union Church Parish Hall when Ryan Naylor, a student at Lincoln Academy and his father, SBHS Trustee Mike Naylor, will give an in-depth account of their family's history in West Bristol/Walpole/South Bristol from the mid 1700's to modern times. The focus will be on their Goudy & McFarland family members.



The Old Thompson Cemetery

Meeting time on **July 17** will be **6:30 pm** to make time for the **SBHS ANNUAL MEETING** before the program "**Boat Builders of South Bristol**" We have asked a number of South Bristol boat builders to share a piece of their history and to answer questions. There will also be exhibits and information on the history of boat building in our town. The meeting will be at the Union Church Parish Hall.

The program on **August 17**, again at **7 pm** at the Union Church Parish Hall, will feature the **History of Quarries and Brickmaking** in South Bristol and the surrounding area. Both were active businesses in our town for many years. A display of pot buoys used by South Bristol fisherman over the years is also planned for the S Road School in August. at the S Road School. Does anyone know the whereabouts of the pot buoys needlepoint designed by Jane Sewall and then quilted by the Ladies of the Union Church Association in the 1960s? Send an email to SBHS with any information you may have.

September 19 is the date set for **SBHS Trivia Night**, an annual favorite when members and friends gather to see how much they know, or have forgotten, about South Bristol history.

Keep an eye on the Lincoln County News and the SBHS Facebook page for information about the location and time.



Do you know where this quilt is today?

The final program for 2019 will be on **October 16** when SBHS Historian David Andrews will again present **Old Photos of South Bristol** from his extensive collection. The meeting will begin at **7 pm** at the Union Church Parish Hall.

SBHS BOARD MEMBERS

Interim President – Cynthia Garrels; Vice President – Wayne Eugley; Historian – Dave Andrews; Secretary – Deb Storch; Treasurer – Betsy Graves;
Trustees – Mary Avantaggio, Jason Bigonia, Scott Farrin, Priscilla House, Carol Kelsey
Carolyn McKeon, Mike Naylor, Donna Plummer, Warren Storch, Ellen Wells

SBHS NEWS NOTES

Just a reminder that all SBHS Board of Trustees meetings are open to any member who wishes to attend. Meetings are generally held on the third Wednesday of January, March or April, June, September, October and November. If you are interested in attending, please call Ellen Wells at 644-1584 or Deb Storch 563-7050 or email SBHistorical@gmail.com for the next scheduled meeting.

Also, keep in mind that in June the nominating committee will be reporting on recommendations for SBHS president and for trustees, so please let any current officer or trustee know if you would be willing to serve or if you have a nominee to suggest.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO *A HISTORY OF THE FAMILIES AND THEIR HOUSES*

In the Preface to H. Landon Warner's book SBHS asked readers to help identify and document any additions or corrections they believed should be made. A form for sending corrections to SBHS is provided on the last page of the book. SBHS prepared an addendum with the information received through 2014, which is available at the Museum to anyone who owns the book. We continue to welcome such material and will update the Addendum from time to time, so if you have relevant information, please either use the form in your copy of the book, or simply write to: SBHS, PO Box 229, South Bristol, ME 04568 or SBHistorical@gmail.com.

SOUTH BRISTOL'S NEW VETERANS MEMORIAL

As reported in the Fall 2018 SBHS Newsletter, a new Veterans Memorial will be erected, as proposed by SBHS Trustee Scott Farrin to the Selectmen in 2015. It has been completed, and will be erected at the West Bristol Cemetery in Walpole, probably before Memorial Day this spring. Watch the Lincoln County News for information about the dedication.

GETTING READY FOR 2020 – MAINE'S BICENTENNIAL

First, a quick history review: the Massachusetts General Court passed enabling legislation on June 19, 1819 separating the District of Maine from the rest of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The following month, on July 19, voters in the District approved statehood by 17,091 to 7,132. The Maine Constitution was unanimously approved by the 210 delegates

to the Maine Constitutional Convention in October 1819. On February 25, 1820, the General Court passed a follow-up measure officially accepting the fact of Maine's imminent statehood. On March 15, Maine became the nation's 23rd state as part of the Missouri Compromise.

The Maine Bicentennial Commission has been created to encourage and organize the commemoration of 200 years of statehood. The Lincoln County Historical Association has taken the lead in our area by putting together a lecture series, receptions and site visits. SBHS will coordinate its participation through LCHA, including visits to our museum and to South Bristol historical sites. Any suggestions for activities to celebrate the Bicentennial will be much appreciated!

WITCH ISLAND, SOUTH BRISTOL

Since Part II of *Grace Courtland, Witch of Wall Street* is featured in this issue, a brief geography lesson about the island which got its current name from her is appropriate. According to *Islands of the Mid-Maine Coast: Pemaquid Point* to the Kennebec River, by Charles B. McLane and Carol McLane, an early chart shows the name of the island to be 'Hamilton's'. Land records in 1804 call it 'Stuart's'; when sold by Nathaniel Gamage to Samuel Davis in 1830, it gained the alternate name of 'Davis Island.' In 1887, the Davis heirs sold the island to Grace Courtland and Daniel G. Chittenden. How it came to be called 'Witch Island' is revealed in the article featured in this newsletter.



The South Bristol 'Gut' and nearby Witch Island

GRACE COURTLAND, WITCH OF WALL STREET PART II

by David Andrews

For those of our readers who missed the first installment of this article, here is a very brief summary: Grace Courtland, whose real name was Anna Loomis, was brought up in Milwaukee and married Morris Davis there when she was 15, divorcing him in 1872. She appeared on the stage in character roles and as a clairvoyant, meeting Dan Chittenden at some point and travelling with him to Europe. On returning to the United States, she apparently became a successful speculator in stocks and advertised herself as "Witch of Wall Street," offering her services as a consultant on Wall Street.

By 1885, the combination of bad press and the Stock Market panic of 1884 put an end to Grace Courtland's career on Wall Street. She did continue, however, to travel from city to city offering her palm reading services until at least 1905. She also became a head-liner performer on the dime museum circuit. A dime museum was a place for entertainment and moral education for the working class. Popular during the late 19th and early 20th century, they provided cheap "lowbrow" entertainment for the masses. Part freak show, part early vaudeville, dime museums could include exhibits human oddities like the bearded lady and pickled embryos in jars as well as variety acts such as comedians, jugglers, escape artists, magicians and mind readers. She pursued this theatrical career until the dime museum faded away in the early 1900s under pressure from vaudeville and the movies. The Witch of Wall Street family seems to have been in the business too. She was managed at various times by Dan Chittenden and her son, Leonard. Daughter Carrie married a piano player and entertainer. Carrie followed in her mother's footsteps as a medium under the stage name of Ollie Courtland. Even Grace's grandchildren were stage performers.

On October 29, 1887 Daniel G. Chittenden, of Montclair, New Jersey and Grace Courtland, who called herself the Witch of Wall Street, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, each paid Thomas Boyd \$200 for an undivided half interest in Davis Island in then Bristol, Maine. Boyd was the guardian of the minor heirs of Samuel Davis, former owner of the 10-acre island. Grace and Dan immediately changed the name to Witch Island. How Chittenden and Courtland found their way to South Bristol and why they decided to buy an island is unknown. It should be noted that 1887 is an early date when it comes to the rustication of South Bristol. The first cottages in Christmas Cove were built only the year before.

The couple had a small cottage erected by 1888. The new owners initially planned to develop the island but that never happened. The cottage was expanded but the foundation remains on the island today indicate a modest size structure.



Grace Courtland on Witch Island circa 1914

The *Pemaquid Messenger* carried this article on Witch Island in its August 22, 1889 issue.

If you have ever visited South Bristol and neglected to call on "Grace Courtland," the famous "Witch of Wall Street" at her summer home on Witch Island you have missed a great treat. The Island was bought two years ago by the "Witch" and her husband D. G. Chittenden, who make their home here during the summer months. For the past few weeks they have been entertaining a large party of friends from New York and Providence. They have a small cottage tastefully furnished and two tents also furnished. It is a beautiful spot for a summer home and a visit to the island plainly shows that the owners are enjoying every moment. Should you ever contemplate a visit to this island, do not anticipate meeting a veritable witch, for you will be disappointed, but instead will meet a lady of middle age, prepossessing in appearance who will make stay delightful by her interesting conversation and easy manners, and you will take your departure, saying, that indeed it must witchery that has converted Davis' island of the past into such a cozy retreat as "Witch Island" of the present.

Grace was a well-known local character in South Bristol. Apparently, she wasn't shy about exercising her psychic powers with whomever she met. There is a story told of her asking a local fisherman what he was doing one day. He replied he was going to pull traps out by Thrumcap Island. "No, you're not", she said, "You're going to Pemaquid to buy a cow." Sure enough, at the end of the day he was seen coming from Pemaquid Harbor towing a scow with a cow on board.

On November 14, 1916 Daniel Chittenden and Grace Courtland sold Witch Island to William McPherson a real estate agent in Portland, Maine probably because they had fallen on hard times. McPherson, in turn, sold the Island to Mary Rowland, a mainland neighbor to the island, on December 5, 1916. Given the short time between the sales, it's possible McPherson was working for the Rowlands.

Daniel Chittenden purchased a house on the north side of the intersection of Route 129 and West Side Road on Rutherford Island in December 1916. He lived in the house until his death in 1925. It's unclear if Grace ever lived there.

Grace Courtland died in Manhattan, New York on April 20, 1919 at the age of 80 and is buried under the name of Anna Chittenden in the Cypress Hills Cemetery in the Brooklyn. Interestingly, the death index record indicates that Grace/Anna was a widow at the time of her death though Dan Chittenden was still alive. It should also be noted that Dan Chittenden is reported to be a widower in the 1920 US Census for South Bristol. Daniel G. Chittenden died on June 19, 1925 in South Bristol. He is buried in the Island Cemetery on Rutherford Island in South Bristol. The inscription on his stone reads "Uncle Dan – Everybody's Friend".

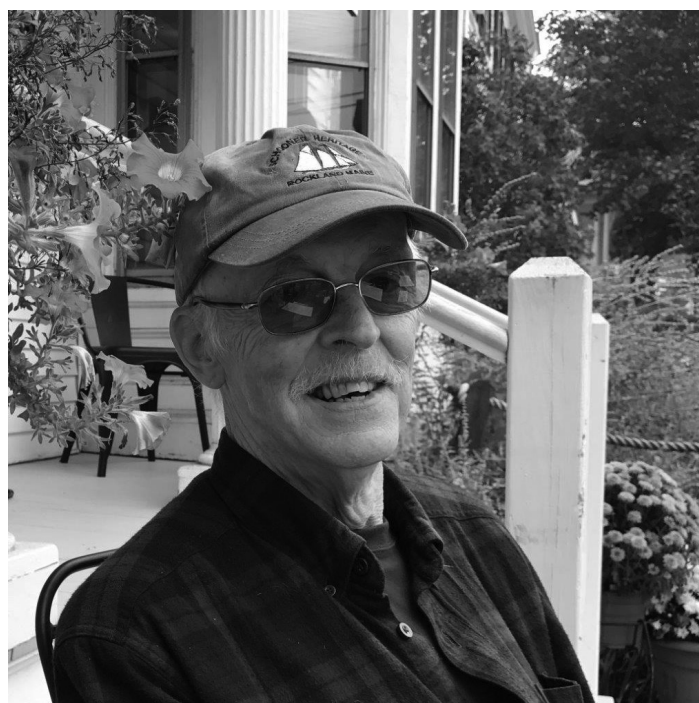
Editor's note: *Hetty Green, an American businesswoman and financier, sometimes called "the richest woman in America" was far more widely known as the "Witch of Wall Street" than was Grace Courtland. Hetty became a major and feared operator on Wall Street, where, in addition to extensive holdings in railroad and other stocks and in government bonds, she maintained a considerable liquid fund for lending purposes. In the aftermath of the panic of 1907, a number of major investors found themselves in her debt. Her eccentricities and miserliness made her a frequent subject for gossip and newspaper stories. She is reputed to have left an estate of more than \$100 million.*

A HUGE THANK YOU TO NAT HAMMOND

The Pemaquid Messenger was a weekly eight-page newspaper 'devoted to the interests of Bristol and vicinity', published at Pemaquid Falls beginning June 1, 1886 and continuing to at least March 18, 1897. A one-year subscription was \$1, single issues sold for 9 cents. Its first Editor and Publisher was



Pemaquid Messenger caption



Nat Hammond

B. T. Cox, followed by W. E. Lewis, 'Editor and Proprietor' beginning with the fourth issue. The Oct. 6, 1886 issue stated 'The Pemaquid Messenger is booming. Not quite three months old, over 500 subscribers, an office of 6 or 8 active workers.' By June 1887 circulation was at 1000 per week, and up to 1350 by 1890. (image of Pem. Messenger masthead, which appears below, if space allows)

There were weekly columns from each of the various localities with columns covering important events, such as who visited whom, who was under the weather, social happenings such as candy pulls, 'sociables' and dances, arrivals and departures of various steamers, schooners, smacks, and other boats, and prices and catches of lobsters, clams, and other fisheries. Some issues contained feature stories or letters from subscribers describing steamer and schooner trips. The editors kept readers up to date on local businesses, new hotels such as the Pemaquid Hotel and land developments including those at Heron Island, Christmas Cove, and Pemaquid Point. Over the years the columns on South Bristol, Walpole, Clark's Cove, and West Bristol tended to be somewhat sporadic, as they didn't always have active correspondents in those localities.

Nat Hammond bought several copies of the *Messenger* at an auction more than 15 years ago, and was 'hooked'. He has spent countless hours since then compiling a record of all the South Bristol area news items that appeared in the *Messenger*. After completing the first 8 copies, Nat began going to the Maine Historical Society in Portland where he photographed the individual pages of all the copies they had, took them

home and continued carefully transcribing interesting items about South Bristol and its neighbors into MS Word files on his home computer.

Believing there must be more copies of the *Messenger* around, Nat kept searching and eventually discovered 90% of the more than 500 issues. Among the various repositories were the Darling Center, the Maine State Library and the Old Bristol Historical Society. At each location, Nat again painstakingly photographed the individual pages, took them home and scoured them for news of our town. In 2015, Nat and his wife Karen gave to the South Bristol Historical Society printed copies of all the news items he had typed into his computer – a notebook of some 200 pages, a major resource for researchers and other visitors to the SBHS museum.

Here is an example of what Nat worked from and some excerpts from his transcriptions about brick yards and quarries in South Bristol.



Pemaquid Messenger, 1887

FROM VOL II ~ 1887, 1888

Mr. E. P. Gamage has commenced clearing up the land owned by Mrs. Pierce and thinks of opening a granite quarry, things look quite favorable now and if the granite is of good quality it will be a large benefit to this place.

Another granite quarry has been opened on the land owned by A. & M. Gamage. That on Mrs. Pierce's land did not prove good.

Mr. E.P. Gamage had a bee to work on his granite quarry, last Friday, to clear up a road to haul the granite. There were between thirty and forty there.

Schooner Sawyer, Bryant, has finished loading at Timothy Fitch's brick yard and sailed for Boston

Clark & Goudy are building their summer cottage, for the purpose of boarding their brick yard men, as they intend to build a brick yard and burn a kiln of brick this season. Success to you gentlemen.

W. H. Bryant is in Boston selling a cargo of brick. They intend building a large kiln this summer.

FROM VOL III ~ 1888, 1889

We are glad to hear that the granite quarry opened at South Bristol by two of our enterprising citizens, Mr. E. P. Gamage and Mr. James Farrar is proving a successful venture. Mr. Allen, of Tenant's Harbor, foreman of the quarry, states that the quality of the paving quarried equals any he ever saw in Maine. A larger crew is being put on.

E.P. Gamage has bought a heavy pair of oxen, to work on his granite quarry. He has eight men employed and the prospect looks well for a plenty of granite and of good quality. If successful, it will be a great help to this place.

Sch. Two Brothers, Hatch, is in Damariscotta river, waiting to take a load of granite from E. P. Gamage's quarry, at South Bristol.

Sch. Two Brothers, Hatch, is loading paving for New York, from the quarry of E.P. Gamage.

There are three new brick-yards to be built this spring, beside two new cook houses for boarding the men, this will make seven brick-yards on this side of the town.

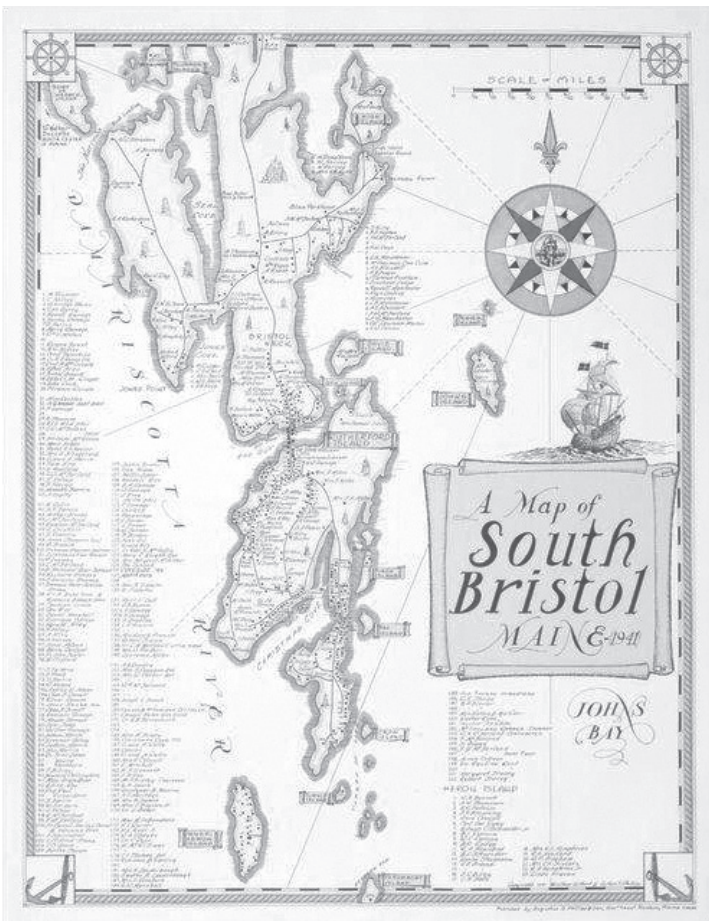


South Bristol's new Veterans Memorial has been erected at the West Bristol Cemetery! Dedication is expected sometime around Memorial Day. Continue to check the Lincoln County News for date and details.

South Bristol Historical Society

2124 State Route 129 | PO Box 229

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LATE NEWS

You can now purchase from SBHS a wonderful map of South Bristol as it was in 1941, complete with locations of homes and names of home owners.

It is decorative as well as informative and is available for \$20 a copy: if you would like SBHS to mail it to you, add \$3 for a tube and \$4 for postage for a total of \$27. Suitable for framing, it measures 20"x 26".

Contact Donna Plummer at 207-644-8443 or dfplum@tidewater.net to order.