

South Bristol Historical Society

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Newsletter

South Bristol, Maine 04568

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Historical Society News

Down on the Island, Up on the Main: A Summer Success Story

Thanks to the talent and dedication of **Ellen Vincent**, the priceless memories of our South Bristol tradition-bearers and the help of literally dozens of SBHS members and friends, the *Down on the Island, Up on the Main* summer was a tremendous success. More than 650 copies of the book have been sold by SBHS, and close to 700 have been sold in bookstores across the state through the Tilbury House Publishers distribution network.

Close to 600 people visited the Ellen's show at the South Bristol school in August, and their comments tell it all: "Fabulous." "Well done." "What a feat—Congratulations." "American communities now have a blueprint about telling their stories!" "What a wonderful gift." "Can't wait to read the book." "So nice to learn more about my ancestors." The reception on Sunday, August 3, was a marvelous community event, one that will be remembered for many years.

Not only have the book sales meant a very substantial contribution to the SBHS coffers, but the book and show

inspired over 100 people to become new SBHS members. Encouraged by this tremendous show of interest in local history, we shall use some of the income from the book to move forward with several long-awaited projects. First of these will be the preparation and publication of the late H. Landon Warner's monumental work on the history of the families of South Bristol and their houses. There are several manuscripts, approximately 200 pages in all, plus maps and lists of houses with dates and owners. The first step, converting these into digital format, is underway. Once this is done, work can begin on developing a complete index.

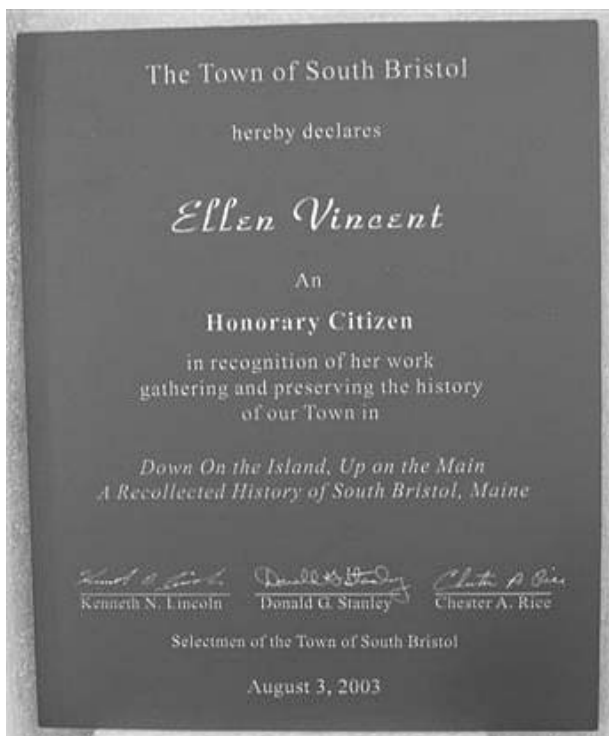
At the same time, we will be contacting historical societies elsewhere in the state with the offer to bring Ellen Vincent's marvelous show to their communities. Thanks to the South Bristol Selectmen, the panels containing the photos and stories are safely stored in the basement of Town Hall. Proceeds from book sales will pay for transportation of all or part of the show, and SBHS volunteers are ready to help set it up.

Book sales income will also be used to purchase comprehensive museum software program which will give us the capability to catalogue the SBHS collection so that visitors to the museum can readily access items of particular interest. New tape recording equipment is also being investigated, as is the purchase of a simple amplifying system to make our programs more readily available to all members of the community.

The good fortune of South Bristol, and especially the South Bristol Historical Society, to have had **Ellen Vincent** choose our town for her unique project is impossible to measure. Her talent, perseverance and incredible hard work over so many years gave us a gift that will retain its meaning long after this summer. We can only say "thank you" once again.

To all those who helped with the many aspects of the show—**Kay Arsem, Bob Jones, Emily MacKenzie, John and Theo Turner, Beth Turner, Stan and Ellen Wells, Norm and Barbara Hamlin, Michelle Christensen, Kathy Norwood, Thelma House, Michelle Yates, Jeanne Clampitt, Ruthie Clark, Gordon Claar, Gail Seiders, Letitia Ufford, Ann McFarland, Penny Mardoian, Brookie Andrews, Dave Andrews, Lois Drukker, Pat Spock, Joe Guttentag, Kathleen King** – Thank you! And thanks also to **Carolyn Kelsey, Kay Arsem, Thelma House, Muriel Lewis, and John Rounds** who faithfully kept the SBHS museum open Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday all summer, making

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sure folks could purchase their books and enjoy our collections.

Our appreciation also goes to **Bill Glendinning**, SBHS Treasurer, who spent countless hours tallying up book sales, deciphering the sometimes almost undecipherable record sheets, making sure there was always change on hand, and getting the sales tax numbers right. Besides all that, Bill had the happy, but no doubt tedious, responsibility of keeping track of all our new members!

Thompson Ice House Ice Cream Social

Another major element in the wonderful summer of '03 was the Thompson Ice House Ice Cream Social in July. Once again, **Ruthie Clark** organized the SBHS contribution to this very special community event, bringing **Ellen Shew** and her spinning exhibit and demonstration to the Ice House yard. Old and young alike were fascinated by Ellen's dexterity and the many samples of spinning materials and wheels, and several tried out the craft with Ellen's help. The weather cooperated, the ice cream was superb and the crowd was large and appreciative.

Membership News

Our membership rolls now list memberships, of which are couples or families, meaning that some individuals are now members. There are life members and sustaining memberships. It is a great pleasure to welcome new life members **Jim** and **Sara Birkett**, and the following new individual and family members:

Peter Aalberg, Mary Avantaggio, Howard and Janet Barnett, Charles and Kate Beaudette, Barbara R. Beckerlegge, Jeff Belcher, Jeff Benton, Donald W. Bourne, Thomas S. Brackin, Cheryl S. Buendia, Neal W. Dale, Alan and Jeanne Davis, Kristina Osgood Donahue, Beverly Eugley, Charles F. Evans, Sandy Falconner, Pauline Farrin, Alice Flanagan, Steven and

Eva Frey, Betsy Graves, Sharon Greene, Eileen Guthrie, Lillian Hall, Lisa Harrington, Pat and Hank Haskell, Bruce Hassan, Bushnell Pearce Henry, Roy Henwood, Ann R. Hinck, Margo W. Hope, Marlene Hosey, Elizabeth House, Natalie G. House, John L. Howland, George & Susan Hughes, Ida Humphrey, Robert and Linda Johnson, R. Burke Johnson, Larry Kelsey, Kathleen King, Anton and Alison Lahnston, Tom & Susan Lamia, George V. Lauder, Elisha F. Lee, Jr., Joanne Foster Lewis, Anne R. Lewis, Beverly Lincoln, Lori Lyon, Ken Maguire, Peter Martin, Lily Mayer, Miles McFarland, Roland McFarland, Eric and Nancy Mears, Thomas E. and Karen S. Melican, Ernest E. and Elizabeth K. Mildrum, Bob and Dee Montgomery, Elizabeth C. Moorhouse, Francie Richardson Murray, Fred and Marie Naylor, Jim Nelson, Kerry Nelson, Mike Nyboe, Michael and Evelyn Page, Dick and Brena Parsons, Sarah Peshkin, Charles and Cheryl Plummer, Mark Preston, Sharon Lovejoy and Jeff Prospovich, Beatrice Rice, Peter & Susan Rotch, Lee Schiller, Michael and Evelyn Schneider, Dwayne Seiders, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Shand, Bill & Deborah Shenton, Ann R. Sheriff, Eunice M. Sherman, Alice and Ed Sherman, Barbara and Bill Smith, Linc & Robin Spaulding, Janice O'Brien Sprague, Karen and Skip Sweet, Daniel and Arden Thompson, Sally B. Tso, Elizabeth Y. Turner, Josephine Vander Hoeven, Connie Vickery, Robert and Nancy Ward, Sue Watt, Barbara C. Welles, Bill Wilde. Special thanks to our new "sustaining" members, indicated by the stars.

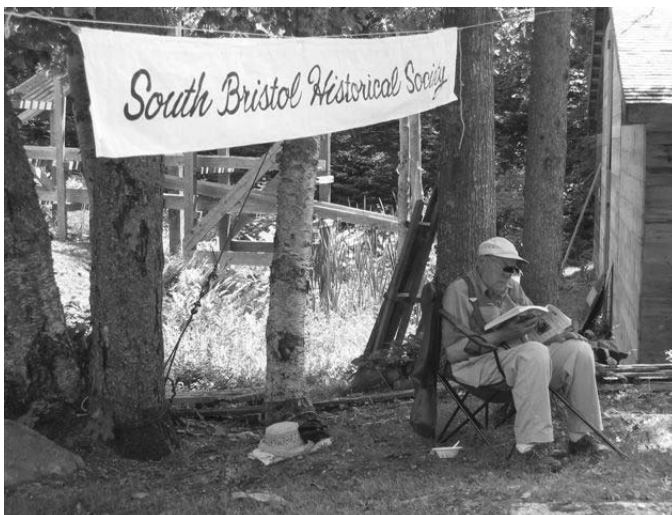
Other News

Carolyn Kelsey requests that if you have any old obituaries in your family files that you send them to SBHS (Box 229, South Bristol 04568). She will copy them and return the originals. Carolyn and **Yvonne Chapman**, our genealogists, say that these obituaries are a treasure trove of information.

Anyone interested in helping document the locations of old town roads, cemeteries, schoolhouses and other historical locations on our new SBHS town map is asked to contact SBHS, either by mail or by calling Ellen Wells, 644-1584.

Historian **Dave Andrews** will report in the spring newsletter on the many new items recently donated to the SBHS museum and genealogy collection. Dates and programs for 2004 programs will also be announced.

Be sure to read the enclosed flyer on how to order copies of *Down on the Island*, *Up on the Main* for Christmas gifts.



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South Bristol 1889

(1345)

With the decline in fishing and the arrival of the summer visitor in the latter part of the 19th century, South Bristol underwent significant changes. In 1889, a reporter from the local newspaper, the Pemaquid Messenger, wrote a long piece on "a few things seen and facts learned on a recent visit to this pleasant and rapidly growing part of Bristol". The article, published in the August 22, 1889 issue, is about 20 column inches long and includes many laudatory phrases about the area so common to the self-promoting newspapers of the day. I have excerpted the article to fit our newsletter, but the following is otherwise "as published."

Dave Andrews

South Bristol, Its Industries and Surroundings

Christmas Cove at the extreme southern part of the island is gaining in popularity as a summer resort that is becoming wide-spread and that will, at no far-distant day, make it one of the principal resorts on the coast of Maine. A few years back an extensive fish business was carried on here by J. & E. Thorp and many large bankers were outfitted by them for long cruises on the Western Banks... The fishing business declining, this industry here was gradually given up and the safe, snug harbor...is becoming the rendezvous of yachts and pleasure boats.

Summer cottages have been erected here 'till there is quite a colony. The following are owners of cottages: J. C. Tibbetts, Boston; W. C. Ashorn, Damariscotta; William Nash, Portland; J. L. Clifford, Damariscotta; Hon. Marcellus Coggan, Malden; J. W. Coggan, Bristol; William Seaver, Boston; Miss Frances Coburn, Showhegan...

C. M. Jones, keeps a stock of groceries, &c, to supply the trade here at present and Mr. Sands French is now erecting a store to be filled with a stock of groceries, fruit, confectionery, &c.

Inner Heron Island but a short distance from here is also a part, and a pretty and important part, of our town. It is owned by the New England Land Company of which L. J. Gunn of Greenfield Mass. is President... Hon. L. J. Gunn has a handsome summer cottage here; Mr. Newell Snow another and Mr. F. M. Thompson is the owner of two; Hotel Madocawando and annex are the Co.'s property, and are pretty buildings. Thompson Brothers have a neat little store here and supply customers with meat, poultry, vegetables, milk, butter, groceries, &c. This store, a branch, is under the charge of Mr. Nelson Thompson, one of the brothers...

...(W)e will, for the moment, look over the business carried on nearer, and on, the mainland. For stores, the first we will enter is the large one of N. W. Gamage who has one of the best arranged ones to be found in the county. He carries a stock of groceries, meats, &c., and does a large business. His store is located at the head of the steamboat wharf, where his freight is landed... (T)he lower story of his building (is) for his own use and the upper part (is a) partnership (with) A. T. Thorpe & Co. This firm carries a large stock of clothing, furnishing goods, hats and caps, paints, oils, hardware, glass-wares, fishermen's (sic) outfits and many other things to numerous to mention here...

Thompson Brothers, (a)cross the street is a new and tasty little store... This building was erected this spring for

this purpose. It was opened the first of June and receives an excellent patronage. It is well-stocked with canned goods, meats of all kinds, butter, vegetables, fruits, confectionery and fancy groceries. It is presided over by Mr. Merritt Thompson...

Mrs. A. A. Pierce carries a stock of dry and fancy goods and notions. She has been in trade here about four years... Mrs. J. W. French also carries a fine stock of dry and fancy goods, stationary, ribbons, lace, &c. She opened her store here last year... Emerson Gamage, in the basement of Mrs. French's store keeps a small stock of groceries, with confectionery, fruit, small beers, &c.

Boat and Yacht Builders. South Bristol has a generous share of fine workman in the above branch of business... Mr. W. A. MacFarland is the veteran builder and has won the reputation of the building some of the finest yachts that sail in these waters... Mr. Henry Poole is also a builder of some nice boats, as also is Mr. Sands Tibbetts. We are unable to learn the extent of their businesses. Mr. Milton Thompson who also is engaged in boat and yacht building is a young man, but his work is highly spoken of by all who see it. He has the lumber on the spot to build a new shop, which will be located on the little island about midway of the bridge. Mr. W. A. MacFarland's son is also an excellent workman at this business.

E. P. Gamage's Paving Quarry. Mr. Gamage is a young man of push, and is working hard to build up a business that will be remunerative to himself and a benefit to the place. Last year he opened a quarry on the mainland for the quarrying of paving, but it proved of poor quality and he abandoned it for one on the island... He employed from seven to twelve hands and got out one or more cargos. The first was shipped some months ago but as near as we can learn the quality was poor and this too was abandoned; but Mr. Gamage is not one to "say die" so has opened another and from appearances it would seem his efforts will be crowned with success. He has already shipped three cargos...

The A. & M. Gamage & Co. The above firm, builders and repairs of fishing vessels, porgies steamers, yachts &c., do the most business of any firm here; and by their excellent work and their fair, honest dealings they have won a wide-spread and enviable reputation. They have been in business here since 1853, and have built, since that time, sixty-one vessels of various sizes and on some the repairs have been extensive. They have employed, on the average, ten hands, and have done a business of eight

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thousand dollars...

Worth mentioning in connection with this part of our town are the two handsome cottages

on the north point. They are the property of Mrs. Ellen Otis and Mr. Phineas Ball and were built by Mr. L. A. Gamage... Wm. Sawyer, Jr., of Boothbay Harbor, also owns a cottage in the handsome oak grove where the menhaden factories were formally located...

Since summer travel commenced here, three years ago, there has been built at South Bristol, including Heron Island, seventeen cottages, a hotel and annex; two good wharves for regular steamboat landings and one for excursions. Steamer Enterprise arrives here from Portland Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. We must not forget to mention Mr. Charles McFarland, the barber, who can give you a shave or cut your hair as good as the best.

The people in South Bristol are industrious, hospitable people and are nearly all are located in comfortable homes of their own... They have good schools, Anchor Lodge, F. & A. M., is located here and also a lodge of I. O. G. T. They also have one or two halls for dancing and social entertainments.

Witch Island. If you have ever visited South Bristol and neglected to call on "Grace Cortland," 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, Mr. D. G. Chittenden, who make their home her during the summer months. They have a small cottage very tastefully furnished and two tents also furnished... (D)o not anticipate a meeting with a veritable witch, for you will be disappointed, but instead you will meet a lady...who will make your stay delightful...and you will take your departure, saying, that indeed it must be some witchery that has converted Davis' Island of the past into such a cosy retreat as "Witch Island" of the present.



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