

South Bristol Historical Society

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Newsletter

South Bristol, Maine 04568

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Historical Society News

Announcing our Webpage

It's time to make an important addition to your internet "favorites" list! www.tidewater.net/~SBHS will lead you to our new webpage, created by **Bill Glendinning** and awaiting your visit. The site includes the SBHS museum address and phone number, names of officers and trustees, meeting dates, a list of contents of all SBHS newsletters to date, news about publications. A reprint of an issue of the newsletter will be featured on a rotating basis, and detailed information about meeting topics and speakers will be posted. Many thanks to Bill for getting this up and running. There is still room for more information, so please give Bill your ideas – he can be reached by email directly from the site.

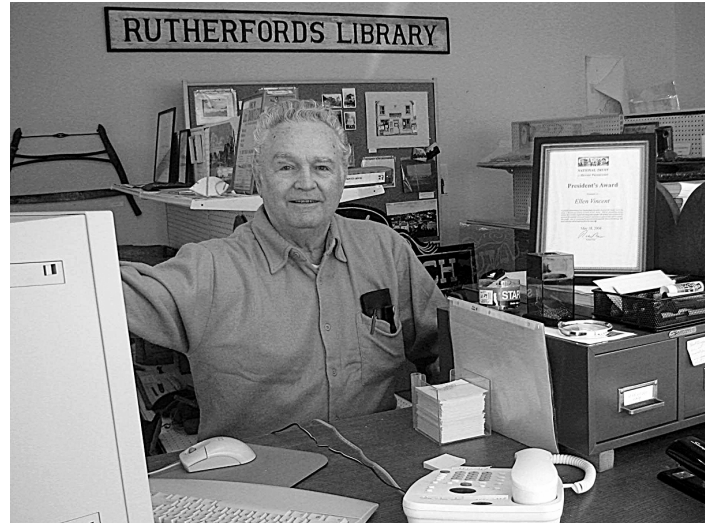
Ann Hillis Photo Collection

Shortly after the Fall 2005 Newsletter went to press, SBHS received a marvelous gift: **Ann Hillis**, whose family first began to spend summers at Christmas Cove in 1940 and is now a Brunswick resident, gave SBHS all of the photos of South Bristol people and places she took in the late '70's, begun as an assignment at the Maine Photographic Workshop in Rockport. A sampling of her amazing portraits of South Bristol people appeared at Round Top Center for the Arts in 1998, in conjunction with the first showing of Ellen Vincent's work. There are over 300 prints and literally thousands of negatives, the developing and printing all done by Ann herself. During our Winter Workshops this past fall, members placed the prints in archival plastic sleeves and identified virtually everyone depicted. **Dave Andrews** organized the negatives and contact prints in three large notebooks. This is truly a treasure, and we are most grateful to Ann for entrusting it to the Society.

The Warner Manuscript

As this newsletter goes to press, **H. Landon Warner's** comprehensive *A History of the Families and their Houses: South Bristol, Maine* is also well on its way to the printing shop. The Preface and Acknowledgments, and especially a biographical note by **Charles C. Warner** about his father, tell the story of the book. The contents include an introduction that summarizes the early history of the town and discusses architectural styles and sources, maps that pinpoint the location of the houses mentioned in the text, two sections covering the period 1730 to 1915, and eight sections each telling the story of the summer community on a particular road or neighborhood.

Three important new tools have been added to make Warner's voluminous research more accessible; an index,



supplemental maps prepared by modern computer techniques, and tables cross-referencing the numbers which appear on Warner's maps to the town tax maps.

Watch the newspapers for information about price and availability, probably in late June.

S Road (Roosevelt) Schoolhouse

Beginning with the October 2006 SBHS meeting, we will sharpen our focus on the restoration of the S Road Schoolhouse. This will be a huge project, requiring SBHS to raise substantial sums for physical restoration and to gather as much information and as many artifacts as possible to tell the story of the last one-room schoolhouse in town not converted to other use. We urge everyone to scour their attics and basements for items associated with the schoolhouse: for example, school text books, notebooks, slates, class photos. And most important of all, search your memories for tales about the school and its teachers. Write them down, come to the October meeting (see below for details) or call SBHS at 644-1234 to let us know that you have a story to tell.

Upgrade to SBHS building

March 15 was a busy day at the SBHS building, with **Gordon Claar** and **Cotton Damon** and Sheriff Steve Peaslee's crew from the Lincoln County Sheriff's Work Program on hand to put insulation into the attic. Gordon had made the arrangements with Sheriff Peaslee, Cotton went to Brunswick to pick up the insulation and the blower, and both welcomed the crew with hot coffee at 9 am at the Union Church Community Hall. The work went quickly and well, taking only half a day. The insulation will help

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protect our growing collection by allowing us to keep some heat in the building during the winter. We are most grateful to Gordon and Cotton, to the Sheriff's crew, and to the Union Church for use of the Hall.

Other News Notes

Gail Seiders, SBHS secretary, who has been seeing to the minutes and attendance as well as contributing sound

advice and good ideas for more than five years, has decided the time has come to retire. We greatly appreciate all she has done for SBHS, including the recruiting of a fine replacement. Please welcome **Michele Christensen** who will step in as secretary in May.

Many thanks to the **people of South Bristol** for approving a contribution of \$500 to SBHS to help pay for keeping the building slightly warmer and less damp.

A Reminiscence of 1812

Some years ago, Arletta Thorpe Rice gave five sheets of yellowing paper, inscribed with fading but elegant handwriting, to her cousin Stan Wells. She did not know their origin, but had found them among Thorpe family papers. The story of the Boxer and the Enterprise is well-known, and this version may have appeared first elsewhere and been copied, or it may be original. If any of our readers know anything about this particular piece of writing, please let SBHS know. (punctuation and spelling as in the original)

The winter morning was bright and clear, over cliff and rock, - on the struggling growth of spruce the snow lay mantled thick. The glittering outline of Pemaquid stretched out into the sea, broken here and there by patches of evergreens and dotted with houses.

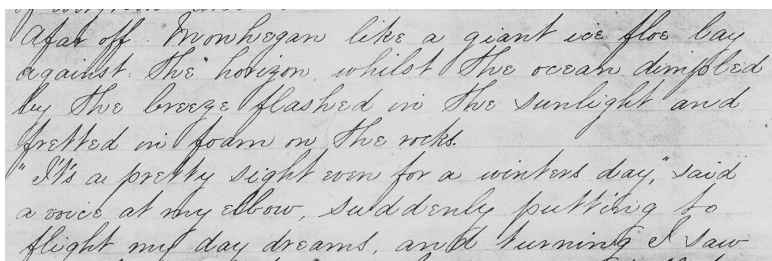
Afar off Monhegan like a giant ice floe lay against the horizon whilst the ocean dimpled by the breeze flashed in the sunlight and fretted in foam on the rocks.

"It's a pretty sight even for a winters day," said a voice at my elbow, suddenly putting to flight my day dreams, and turning I saw an old man standing beside me. A tall figure slightly bent with age, whose strongly marked intelligent features furrowed by times withering touch betokened he had passed beyond three score and ten.

"You're a stranger here eh?" he continued "and you want to know something about the place, for by your looks you seem to like it. I'm - well let me see, - I was born in 1802 on the 19th day of April, that's a long time ago - and I've lived here all my life - my name's Thompson. You want to know if I saw the fight between the "Enterprise" and "Boxer"? Yes, I saw it - it was in the year '13 early in September, this is how it was."

"All along the coast the people were scared about the British vessels coming and landing their men to burn the houses and some of 'em really took to the woods and hid. There were two British vessels cruising off the coast. The "Genedos" and "Boxer"; well do I remember seeing their boats filled with men pulling past Pemaquid Point, and someone, I don't know who it was fired three guns at 'em. - I was running about the hill here playing, I heard the report and saw the flash, and the smoke drifting away before the wind. The boats fired canister into the bushes and an awful rattling it made. Many a time have I heard old Sam McIntyre swear when he was in liquor that he fired nineteen shots at the boats, although some said he was so scared on hearing the firing that he ran off and hid under a bridge.

"Well one Saturday afternoon just after I had driven the cows home, I saw the "Boxer" coming into John's Bay and anchor just back o' the Island between it and Pemaquid



Point; and the folks were pretty well scared about it and some of 'em was nigh going to the woods. But father who had seen the last o'the Revolution and was a Free Will Baptist besides; was not a mite uneasy about the Britisher."

"On Sunday morning she laid there to an anchor her black hull shining in the sun, one of her boats with an officer had pulled over to Monhegan. Our folks were so unsettled on account of this vessel that none of 'em went to meeting. It was nigh onto one o'clock, and boy like I was mighty hungry and thinking about my dinner, when all of a sudden I saw they appeared to be in a great hurry aboard the "Boxer" getting her under weigh and presently she was standing out under all sail."

"Climb up on the smoke house and tell us what you see" said my father." Our house was built on rising ground, and the smoke house was about 15 feet high and built of poles. From the top of it I could see all around. Away to the W's't'd I saw a vessel coming down under all sail with the stars and stripes flying. I commenced to feel pretty safe then. It was not long before they neared each other, and almost at the same time, a sheet of flame and smoke burst from their sides, and I could see the water torn up in spray by the shot. The American vessel was a good deal the best sailer and she outmaneuvered the "Boxer". The firing was so rapid that they were soon hid in smoke; once in a while through a rift in the cloud I could catch a glimpse of their battered sails and rigging. They drifted out towards Monhegan looking like a cloud of thick vapor from which burst incessant spouts of flame. I guess the folks forgot all about dinner and everything else when the deep boom of the guns woke the echoes among the rocks, and the windows rattled in their frames. Watching the fight it seemed to me an age, although it only lasted forty-five minutes, I

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tell you sir I have never forgotten that sight, though sixty years have passed" – and the old man's withered cheek flushed and his eyes kindled as he spoke - .

"By and by the firing slackened and the smoke rolled away to leeward, one of 'em had lost his mainmast head and the sails of both hung in ribbons from the yards. I almost strained my eyes out o'my head to get a glimpse of the colors but they were too far off to make them out. By seeing 'em drift away to the E's't'd the folks thought the "Enterprise" was beat. The suspense among us was awful even the women folk catching their breath with a sob and many prayed aloud. Presently I saw them set their courses, back and stand to the West'd then we felt the Britisher was whipped. I tell you I was a tired boy when I come down off

that smoke house, just as if I had worked hard all day chopping kindling wood. I remember Henry Tibbetts, and his brother David pulled out in a dory from Christmas Cove to see how the fight had gone, but they could get no satisfaction in answer to their hail. It was said that when the "Boxer" was boarded her decks were slippery with blood, and lumbered up with splinters, coils of rigging, and bodies of the dying and the dead, many of whom had been tossed overboard just before her colors were hauled down, to conceal their losses.

I've heard that her boat's crew watched the fight from Monhegan, and when her main-topmast was shot away one of them exclaimed "There it goes! And four of our best men..... [end of the fifth page]

From the Historian's Cluttered Desk

By Dave Andrews

Several years ago, Yvonne Chapman rescued a valise of family photographs from the Bristol dump. Where else do you get historic treasures? She gave it to the Historical Society hoping the photographs might find a home with us. Unfortunately, none of the photographs were identifiable as people from South Bristol or had connection to the area so we tucked the bag into a corner of the storage room to be dealt with later.

Recently, while cleaning up the back room, Ellen Wells and I took a second, closer, look at the pictures. Most of the snapshots and 20th century images were found to be from the Andover, Massachusetts area. Ellen contacted a historical society out there but got no reply. I tackled the earlier 19th century collection of carte de visite, cabinet and post card portraits. This collection not only had a number of identified individuals but also several group photographs including "School No. 7" and a large gathering of some sort of social club on an outing. The photographer imprints showed that the bulk of the pictures were taken in the Shipley, Bradford and Leeds region of England. A search on the internet turned up the Bradford Historical & Antiquarian Society as a possible recipient of the photographs. I exchanged emails with the Society's Membership Secretary Mr. J. Allison and he said that they would be delighted to have the collection. The 40 odd photographs were sent off promptly and a very nice thank you email received. It appears Yvonne's pictures have found a home at last.

Speaking of old photographs, I have been studying the dating of 19th century photographs after attending a seminar on the subject last fall. Using the style of dress, mostly of women, photograph setting, card type and photographer marks, you estimate the year a photograph was taken quite closely. This is a handy way to date old Town photographs and to solve genealogical problems – Is this a picture of Great Auntie Mae or Great Great Grandmother Fiona? If you have a photo you would like to date, give me a call, perhaps together we could figure it out.

Recently, I had the good fortune to obtain 6 glass plate

negatives taken about 1897 of South Bristol village and shore by an amateur Massachusetts photographer. There is a beautiful image of the village and two pictures with two, two-masted and one three-masted schooner in the western gut. The Society has a set of prints made from the glass plates if you are interested.

More pictures. Calvin Dodge, president of the Damariscotta Historical Society and owner of Cooper's Red Barn Antiques, purchased over 200 photographs of Harvey Gamage built boats taken by Ivan Flye. The images date generally from World War II to the late 1970s. This collection came from the now closed Pictorial Studio in Newcastle. The SHBS received a number of photographs from the same source a while ago. Calvin has generously allowed me to make copy photographs for the Society. I had looked at this collection on several occasions but there were still many I hadn't seen before.

On a different subject, many of you know I have been researching the boats and boat builders of South Bristol for some time. Recently, a very important registry of vessels built in the second half of the 19th century has become available on the internet. I checked out our boats, of course, and turned up a puzzle. Nelson Gamage, in his *A Short History of South Bristol*, writes that the schooner *A & M Gamage*, launched in 1873 by his brothers Albion and Menzies Gamage, sank on its first voyage with the loss of a South Bristol crew. However, the on-line American Lloyds Register lists the boat from 1873 to 1883. The list is based on an annual registration that cost money so it is unlikely that the boat would be carried for ten years after it sunk. On the other hand, it's hard to believe that Nelson Gamage would have gotten this wrong. It was his brothers' boat, after all, and his nephew, George Gamage, was one of the unfortunate crew members. The Captain of the ill-fated ship, John Farrar, died in 1873 according to *Old Bristol and Nobleboro Vital Records*, so I am inclined to believe Nelson and not the official record. I guess the moral of this story is don't trust everything you see on the internet, even if it's a scanned version of an original record.

2006 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, April 29 - 9:00 am at the new RUTHERFORD LIBRARY for coffee, tea and pastries. **Larry Kelsey** will provide introductory information and lead visits to the **Main, King's Colony** and **McFarland cemeteries**.

THURSDAY, May 18 - 7:30 pm at the SOUTH BRISTOL SCHOOL gym. It's **movie night** again, with more selections from old home movies made in South Bristol

THURSDAY, June 15 – 7:30 at the RUTHERFORD LIBRARY. Watch the newspaper and look for posters announcing the topic and speaker.

SUNDAY July 2 (tentative) – **Thompson Ice House Ice Cream Social**

THURSDAY, July 20 – 7:00 pm at the Union Church Community Hall. **Annual Meeting & election of trustees and officers**; 7:30 pm **Dave Andrews** will present “**Boats and Boat Builders of South Bristol.**” Some of you will remember Dave's presentation of his preliminary research several years ago: Dave prepared this revised and updated talk for presentation in May at the Maine Maritime Museum symposium. Opening of **Ann Hillis** exhibit. (see next item below)

THURSDAY, July 20 through SUNDAY, July 24, 2 - 5 pm at the Union Church Community Hall. A special exhibit of photos of South Bristol people and places, circa 1968, taken by **Ann Hillis** will open at the Annual Meeting and continue Friday, Saturday and Sunday. (see “Ann Hillis Photo Collection” above)

THURSDAY, August 17 – 7:30 pm at the Union Church Community Hall. Introduction of the new SBHS publication, ***A History of the Families and their Houses: South Bristol, Maine*** by the late Hoyt Landon Warner.

THURSDAY, September 21 – 7:30 pm at the new RUTHERFORD LIBRARY. “**Old**” **South Bristol** “– an evening of stories, Q & A, photos led by Donna Plummer and panel.

THURSDAY, October 19 – 7:30 pm at the new RUTHERFORD LIBRARY. **The S Road Schoolhouse** – introduction to the history of the schoolhouse; photos, artifacts collected to date; discussion of plans for making its restoration a reality.