

# South Bristol Historical Society

Est. 1998

## Newsletter

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### SBHS News

#### A FEW REMINDERS ...

##### *Honoring South Bristol Veterans*

Trustee Carol Kelsey is leading a project to honor all South Bristol veterans who served in the United States armed forces from the time South Bristol became a town in 1915 to date. The first step is to identify the South Bristol men and women who served in the armed forces from 1915 to the present - not an easy task! You can obtain the preliminary list by January 1, 2014, on the SBHS website, or by calling SBHS (207-315-2558) or emailing SBHS (sbhistorical@gmail.com) Carol Kelsey (ckelsey@tidewater.net). If you think you know of someone whose name should be added, let us know at any of those addresses. Our hope is that an honor roll can be dedicated during the Town's 2015 Centennial celebration. We welcome your suggestions about its form and location.

##### *SBHS and the South Bristol School on the Internet*

If you haven't seen it yet, don't miss "A Town is Born: South Bristol, 1915." Produced by SBHS and the South Bristol School 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders last spring, it tells the story of South Bristol's history from its separation from Bristol to the present day. Easy to reach now – just go to the SBHS website – southbristolhistoricalsociety.org – and click on See our new exhibit: A Town is Born: South Bristol, 1915. You will be taken directly to the exhibit on the Maine Memory Network. Read the opening essay, then click on each of the "slideshows" in turn. These are best enjoyed by clicking on "list view" as you begin each one. The students and SBHS are proud of this project and look forward to integrating it with the Centennial celebrations next year.

##### *Celebrating the Bridge*

Although when the swing bridge over the Gut will be replaced still remains somewhat uncertain, we are working on a display for next summer that will recall all the bridges which have connected 'Down on the Island' to 'Up on the Main' over the years. Now is the time to let us know if you have photographs, paintings, videos, stories and anecdotes, memories (amusing and otherwise), poems or songs about any of the bridges. Does anyone remember the building of the current bridge? As a kid, did you ride on the bridge when it was in operation? Did you ever urgently need to cross the bridge when it was stuck open? What's the funniest thing you can remember about the bridge? If you have been meaning to take a picture of the bridge or create a

painting of it, now is the time! If you have anything you would be willing to give or loan SBHS for this display, please contact any officer or trustee, or email us at SBHistorical@gmail.com, or leave a message at 207-315-0558.

##### *Winter "Wednesdays" are BACK*

As of November 6, Winter Wednesdays are in session from 1-3 pm once again. There is always much to do to organize and protect our collection, and there is no shortage of fun and laughter, either. No special skills are needed, just come and join in. We will take a break from Thanksgiving until January 8.

##### *Additions or Corrections to A History of South Bristol: The Houses and Their Families*

This wonderful book is completely sold out, so by year's end we will be ordering a second printing of H. Landon Warner's book. We are asking once again that anyone who has an important addition or correction send it to SBHS as soon as possible. We do ask that you state the source of your information – a deed, family correspondence or reliable family lore – as well as noting the page to which your information relates. Send it to SBHS by email sbhistorical@gmail.com, or regular mail P.O. Box 229, South Bristol, ME 04568.

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### At the S Road School

#### Part 1 – "South Bristol Eats"

It was difficult to believe that the roomful of good things to eat and wonderful memories to be shared was really a one-room schoolhouse, but the S Road School had been transformed once again. Last August, memories of Christmas were featured at the old schoolhouse; on August 17 this year, the theme was "South Bristol Eats," all about the many different places in South Bristol where dinners, lunches, snacks, candy or ice cream were sold in years gone by.

Close to 150 visitors stopped by, some for a few minutes, some for much longer. Several S Road School "alums" came early to see what their old school had become this year. Among them were Kathy Norwood, Amy Rice Poole, Cynthia Thompson Dodge, Edgar Thompson, William Rice, and Arrolyn Gilbert.

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***At S Road School: Part 1 – “South Bristol Eats”..... continued from page 1***

Decorating the desks in the center of the room was a selection from the amazing lunch box collection gathered by Wayne Benner, South Bristol's postmaster. Adorned with pictures from beloved TV series of the past, they brought back memories – if not of school lunches, then of favorite programs. Donuts made and donated by Betsy Graves of Harborside were devoured before noon!

Many families with young children were no doubt lured by the promise of penny candy, little cupcakes to decorate, Moxie soda and tea sandwiches. Several had never tasted Moxie, and the reviews were mixed. As folks entered, children were offered plastic eggs filled with pennies so they could choose and pay for their own penny candy. The decorate-your-own cupcake corner enjoyed many visits as well.

Meanwhile, parents and grandparents took the time to read the many informative posters lining the blackboards with reminiscences of such places as Bob's Lunch, the Christmas Cove Tea Room, The Galley, Ed Gamage's Drug Store, Everett Gamage's Ice Cream Parlor, Topo's, Captain Wells' Ice Cream Deck, and the Sea Tang Tea Room. Other posters reported that stores such as Nat House's, Farrin's and Staples in the village and Earl Haley's store at Clark's Cove could be counted on for a quick snack.

Of course, when the large summer hotels were still on the scene, they were good places for a meal. Much could be learned by reading the posters about the Holly Inn (or Inns, since the original one burned down and was rebuilt, then that one burned down and was rebuilt only to meet the same fate), Thompson Inn, Summit House, Russell House (later Coveside), and the Christmas Cove House.

This wonderful event would not have happened without the ingenuity and careful research of Cathy Stockwell, South Bristol Historical Society Co-president, and the generous loan of so many historic items and furnishings by South Bristol people interested in honoring the town's history. Many thanks to everyone who participated!



*Paying with pennies picked up at the door in plastic eggs, children delighted in the selection of penny candy just as their grandparents once did in the old stores of South Bristol.*



*Home-made donuts welcomed visitors to the old snack bar while posters on the blackboard described places for a snack, soda, or ice cream that once existed in South Bristol.*



*Mini cupcakes, frosting, sprinkles coconut and walnuts await the creative talents of young visitors.*



*The lunch box collection of South Bristol's postmaster Wayne Benner held center stage at the old schoolhouse. The three-tiered stand to the right was filled with tiny tea sandwiches with old-style fillings like cream cheese and olive.*



## At S Road School

### Part 2 – SB Students Go to Class

The school bell pealed loudly through the cool autumn air to welcome thirteen first and second graders to the S Road School on a recent October afternoon. After a walk in the woods from the South Bristol Elementary school Miss Nichol's class arrived at the granite steps and entered the one room school for a lesson with 'Miss Emery' and to experience what school was like in the 1930s. Donna Plummer took the part of Sarah Emery who taught in this school for 30 years.



*South Bristol School first and second graders on the steps of the S Road School, ready for a lesson inside the recently restored one-room schoolhouse.*

The children entered the school house, restored in 2009 by the South Bristol Historical Society, in an orderly fashion, hanging their jackets in the coat room. 'Miss Emery' instructed them to sit two to a desk, girls on the left and boys on the right. After standing and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the 48 star flag, 'Miss Emery' checked each student's hands for cleanliness and asked if they had brushed their teeth that morning. Several children, mostly boys, replied honestly that they had not!

The topic of the lesson was how birds build their nests. 'Miss Emery' read to the class from their textbook which described the materials birds use to build nests of various sizes and styles. She then asked them questions about what they had just heard, and the students answered in unison. She then read a poem about a family of robins and passed around three very different bird nests for the students to examine. They noted that some were made of grasses and straw, one was made mostly of mud, and another had bits of feathers. Each child used crayons to draw a picture of what they had learned and the drawings were hung on the chalkboard around the classroom.

At the end of the day the students were asked what was different about the S Road School and their school. Answers



*Inside the schoolhouse the students are hard at work – fortunately no one had to wear the dunce cap in the corner!*

included the books, desks, and chalkboards, but the most different thing was the bathrooms! No plumbing, just old-fashioned privies, one for girls and one for boys!

At recess, the children had a good look at the old smoke-house which once sat on the shore at the Gut in South Bristol, but is now located behind the school building. From the rafters hung rows of herring on wooden dowels and smoke rose from the small iron stove. In another two days, the fish would be ready, thanks to a group of local fishermen and neighbors who keep the stove filled with wood for at least five days and nights. A few days later, 'Miss Emery' visited the South Bristol elementary school and brought Miss Nichols and her students some samples of the briny, smoky fish!



*Miss Emery (aka Donna Plummer) explains how the fish are hung and smoked.*



# The Pemaquid Messenger - Nat Hammond reports

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. Its first Editor and Publisher was 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.

There were weekly columns from each of the various localities, but 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.

Over the past couple of years I've spent some time at the Maine Historical Society in Portland photographing all of the individual pages, then downloading them into my computer at home, and transcribing interesting South Bristol items, and a few others, into MS Word files that can be printed out. When I finish the project I'll print them all out to display in a notebook at SBHS. The MHS Library has a wonderful collection but is still missing many issues, some of which can be found at other libraries in the state.

Here are a few interesting tidbits:

## Tuesday June 1, 1886, Volume I, No. 1

### Under "South Bristol"

N. W. Gamage, postmaster.  
Mail, leaves every morning, arrives every evening.  
A. & M. Gamage & Co., builders of vessels, yachts, &c.  
L. D. Gamage, Flour, Groceries, Boots & Shoes.  
N. W. Gamage, Groceries, Fishermen's Outfits, &c.  
J. & E. Thorpe, fish stores.  
Mrs. A. A. Pierce, Fancy Goods, Millinery, &c.

Gov. Washburne, Senator Gunn and ten others of Massachusetts, have paid \$2500 for Inner Heron Island. They propose to establish a home colony similar to that on Squirrel Island. A wharf will be built this season and probably several cottages.

## Wednesday July 14, 1886, Volume I, No. 3

### Under "Pemaquid Locals"

Capt. C.A. Farrin's team containing four ladies collided with Mr. G.R. Fossett's team near Augustus Fossett's Sunday afternoon. As the road at that point was quite descending Mr. Fossett's horse was struck with considerable force, nearly knocking him down, and tearing a large piece of flesh out of his fore shoulder. The wagon was knocked



A sample Pemaquid Messenger front page as photographed by Nat Hammond

around and very nearly upset, but Mr. and Mrs. Fossett very miraculously escaped being thrown out, which had they been at that point, the accident must have resulted very seriously.

### Under "West Bristol"

The people of this vicinity are much pleased to see a good looking stage on this line, and now hope to get the much needed post office here. The matter has been talked about for a long time but has never been pushed away. Now would be a good time to start one.

The stage down Tuesday night was so full of passengers (summer boarders) that the driver was obliged to sit in the bottom of the stage. Mr. Justin Foster is driver.

**Wednesday September 15, 1886,  
Volume I, No. 11**

***Under "Over Town"***

WANTED - A young man of good moral habits, temperate (when he can't get anything to drink), good looking (in the dark) with a small amount of pocket money and a yoke of steers, wishes to correspond with a good looking young lady, with a view to matrimony. No objection to one with "store teeth."

Daniel Coats, Round Pond, Maine

**August 22, 1889, Volume 4 Issue #4**

***South Bristol - Its Industries and Surroundings  
Witch Island***

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, Mr. 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 very tastefully furnished and two tents also furnished. The island contains about eleven acres and is covered with a heavy growth of oak. It is a beautiful spot for a summer home and a visit to the island will plainly show that its owners are enjoying every moment. Should you ever contemplate a visit to this island, do not anticipate meeting with 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 be some witchery that has converted Davis' island of the past into such a cozy retreat as "Witch Island" of the present.

**July 24, 1890, Volume 4 Issue #52**

***Under "South Bristol"***

The bridge question is again becoming a theme for considerable conversation. A number of wealthy summer residents have offered to subscribe \$25 and \$50 towards putting a "draw" in the bridge when work is again resumed. If the voters of our town had fully understood the situation here we should have had granted us a good straight bridge which would have been an ornament to the place and a credit to the town. No part of our town is gaining faster than this and we maintain that it is for the interest of the whole town to have the roads and bridges here in as good a condition as possible. A "draw" would be a great advantage.

**August 9, 1894, Volume IX, No. 1**

***Under 'An Ideal Summer Home'***

A member of the Lewiston Journal Staff Finds Rest, Comfort and Hospitality at South Bristol.

By the way, the writer spent a few weeks this summer, in South Bristol, and found an ideal home among the hospitable sea-goers and fishers of the Maine coast. Many way-side farmhouses are full of guests. The places like South Bristol, not spoiled by swallow-tailism, are unusually well patronized, this season...

Speaking of South Bristol, the writer was fascinated by the cordial and unaffected quality of the inhabitants... Capt. Clifford owns a great stretch of shore and cove, and one enjoys his lawn and fish nets through ardent hospitality, without being warned off by civilly selfish legends: "no trespass," and all that. The kind-hearted youngster whom we call our first mate, Irving Clifford, hauls his lobster traps and keeps us stocked with lobsters for our sea picnics which we enjoy...

And speaking of the lobster—there is a lobster-pound at South Bristol at which are 30,000 lobsters owned by Portland wholesalers, who supply live lobsters in refrigerator cars to the cities as far West as Chicago... Capt. McFarland in charge of the pound, is as diligent in welcoming visitors as in attending to the pound.

They build fine boats at South Bristol. A young man of 17, Mr. Frank McFarland, one of a boat-building family, last winter built a cat-rigged boat of fine model and workmanship—his unassisted effort. I went out sailing and fishing in the prodigy's boat, and she behaved admirably, like her owner. Is it not better to be a skilled worker at 17 with a trade and an ambition than to wind the smoke of cigarettes through one's lungs and nasal twang and devote one's self to la-de-da trousers and curls?

And I bade good-bye to Landlord Gamage and the unspeakably good Methodists of his family, with unalloyed regret, since the Summit House supplies good food, good water, superb views and the milk of human kindness uncurdled and free from the bacilli of ungodliness and devoid of the parasites of unexpected charges. May the Isle of Rutherford and the home of all the Gamages continue unsullied by civilized affectations!

**South Bristol Historical Society**

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