

South Bristol Historical Society

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Newsletter

South Bristol, Maine 04568

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Historical Society News

The frigid weather may have shortened our museum hours, but it has not kept SBHS projects from moving forward. The 200-page manuscript "The Houses and Families of South Bristol," researched and written by the late H. Landon Warner, has been compiled in digital format. Editing for scanning and typographical errors is underway, as is the groundwork for an extensive index. As in indication of the scope of this work, the chapter headings include, "History of the Families and Their Houses South Bristol, Maine 1730-1915," "Families, Their Houses and Cottages on the S Road," "Families and Cottages of the Summer Community, Shipyard Road," "Families, Their Houses and Cottages, Thompson Inn Road and the Off-Shore Islands." Decisions will soon need to be made about final format and type of publication.

Our collections and membership software, PastPerfect, has been installed and all membership information has been entered. Historian Dave Andrews is planning for the entry of collections information which will await warmer weather for completion.

SBHS has further improved the museum building by the installation of a new, fully-grounded electrical circuit for the computer and a motion-sensor light on the front porch. We expect to have a small portable microphone system on hand for this season's programs, making them more enjoyable for all.

Perhaps some of you saw the enthusiastic review of **Ellen Vincent's** *Down in the Island, Up on the Main* which appeared in the Bangor Daily News January 5. Covering almost the entire first page of the "Style" section, the headline read: "Giving them a Voice: Recollected history of South Bristol a model of presenting the stories of Maine." Calling it a "seminal book," the article says "[I]t's a work of oral history that's rich with the details of life as it was, and as inviting to read as any picture book." SBHS will have copies available for sale all year with the same member discount as last year.

A special thank-you to **Peter Signell**, Heron Island, for the CD containing **John Stevenson's** excellent presentation on the history of Heron Island at last August's meeting. SBHS is also grateful to **Lamar Seiders** and to **Virginia McFarland** for sharing their time and their stories with Nat Hammond and Ellen Wells as additions to our growing oral history collection.

News about the SBHS Collection

In 2003, the generosity of the friends of the Historical Society continued to grow as we received many donations of artifacts and collections of South Bristol memorabilia. In no particular order, here is what came to the Society in 2003. The **Nobleboro Historical Society** has dispersed its Ivan Flye collection of historic photographs because of the closing of Pictorial Studies in Newcastle. Our historical society has received from that collection 80 prints and 99 negatives realted to South Bristol. **Neal Dale** gave 1889 to 1907 day books from Christmas Cove stores and an 1899 memorandum book of Sands French. A handmade quilt was added to our Sara and Charlotte Emery collection by **Vilma Gilbert**. From **Joanne Lewis**, we received copies of Foster family photographs.

Don Thompson gave a very extensive collection of mid 19th century calling cards of South Bristol residents, a wonderful tin-type photo album of Poole family relatives and many Thompson family photographs. A framed turn-of-the century photograph of the Thorpe/Wells house came from **Muriel Lewis**. The Society's sign collection gained from gifts by **Bruce Morton** (*Pemaquid and So. Bristol Ferry*), **Diane Haas**, **Beth Turner**, and **Dave Andrews** (*Shooting Prohibited—I. R. Miles*) and **Dwayne Sieders** (*South Bristol Post Office*). The Union Hall in South Bristol yielded a tin coffee pot and utensils, gift from **Rick Prescott**.

Dave Andrews gave 20 aerial photographs of South Bristol from the 1950's. **Kathy Norwood** added to our book collection with *Maine Sawmills: A History*. **Raymond** and **Lillian Poole** gave an 1857 hanging canvas Lincoln County topographic map. Sarah Emery's 1912 normal school diploma was given by **Donna Plummer**. **BeeBee Naylor** donated photos of Walpole and of members of the Goudy family which **Virginia McFarland** and **Marie Naylor** helped identify. A very old cannon ball was found by **Lamar Seiders** and added to our shelves.

And lest we forget, **Ellen Vincent** donated her entire show, *Down On the Island/Up on the Maine*, to the Historical Society. This collection of panels of photographs and text is a treasure of rare quality. The Society's collection is being converted from index card to computer and some of your donations, that have not been noted here, may be in the middle of that process and will be listed next newsletter.

Submitted by Dave Andrews, SBHS Historian

Important Dates for 2004—

Mark your Calendars Now

April 17 (Saturday) 9 am SBHS Meeting, Rutherford Library meeting room. Our first program of 2004 will be the annual morning coffee and cemetery visit. **Dave Andrews** will present information about the Island Cemetery and lead a visit there.

May 21 (Friday) 7:00 pm and May 22 (Saturday), 9 am to 1 pm, Union Church hall. Two special events jointly sponsored by SBHS and the newly-organized **Old Bristol Historical Society** will emphasize our commitment to oral history. First, on **Friday** evening the 21st, **Jo Radner, folklorist and professional storyteller**, will perform a series of stories gathered from oral histories, letters and diaries. More about this unique performance appears on page 1 of the flyer enclosed—save the date and tell you friends! Then on **Saturday**, Jo will lead a **workshop in oral history techniques**. If you are interested in participating in our on-going oral history project, this is your chance to find out how it's done. To learn more and to reserve your place, see page 2 of the flyer enclosed.

June 17 (Thursday) 7:30 pm SBHS Meeting, new Rutherford Library meeting room. Our study of the history of area lighthouses will continue with guest speaker **Anne Webster**, President of the Friends of **Seguin Island**.

July 11 (Sunday) Thompson Ice House Ice Cream Social

Annual Meeting and special guest speaker, author William Bunting. Officers and directors will be elected and reports on the year's activities given at the business session. Bill Bunting is well-known to many of you as the author of *A Day's Work*, his new book, *An Eye for the Coast: The Maritime and Monhegan Island Photographs of Eric Hudson*, co-authored with Earle Shettleworth. Carl Little wrote in the *Maine Times*: "Shettleworth and Bunting make a terrific team when it comes to telling us the whys and wherefores of these vintage photos.... The images in *An Eye for the Coast* are...as comprehensive a look at a Maine island at the turn of the century as has ever been produced." We are fortunate to have Mr. Bunting come to South Bristol. The meeting will conclude with our traditional Pot-luck Dessert Buffet.

August 15 (Thursday) 7:30 pm SBHS Meeting, Rutherford Library. The Thompson Ice House is a familiar sight, but do you know its history and how it came to be preserved? A guided tour of the ice house will take place before the meeting at 6:15 pm.

Mark **September 16** and **October 21** on your calendar for SBHS Meetings, and watch your local papers for details.

The Pemaquid Messenger: West Bristol and Walpole 1889

The last issue of the newsletter provided a description of South Bristol village and Christmas Cove from an 1889 Pemaquid Messenger newspaper article. Following is a similar description of West Bristol and Walpole from the same era and paper. I have edited the article somewhat to make it fit our newsletter format, leaving out mostly the flowery praises lavished on this part of our town. While justly deserved I'm sure, I have provided "just the facts Ma'm."

Dave Andrews

That part of Bristol from the farms of R. A. Sproul and Wm. Clark on Harrington Ridge to the boundary line between Bristol and Damariscotta is an excellent farming section. We have not the space to tell you of the different farms but will mention the other most important things which we learned while making a brief visit.

Perhaps it would be well to mention the traders who supply the people with goods of various kinds. The first, and largest, store is that of **Capt. J. H. Goudy** whose large building contains his store, the post office and Centennial Hall, stands upon the high elevation above Clarks Cove. Capt. Goudy's residence is also nearby. In his store he carries a stock of general merchandise. He is Postmaster at this place, also. Centennial Hall was built in 1876. The next store is some two miles above here and is kept by **W. S. Fuller** one of the most popular trades-

men in town. Mr. Fuller's store is nothing to brag of, but his stock of goods has always been large and of good quality. He is now reducing his stock and soon expects to close out his business here. Mr. Fuller is Postmaster here at present. **Thomas Erskine** has also for several years carried (not readable) and a good store well located for business. He has been in trade here for many years. About two miles above this, **Mr. Robert Hanly** keeps a small stock of groceries. Mr. Hanly has been a large buyer and shipper of eggs, and as one of the "egg peddlers" of years ago is well known to the people of Bristol.

Bristol Ice Company is the largest firm doing business here. They have a capital of \$30,000. Their property is located at Clark's Cove and consists of two ice houses, one 60 x 200 and the other 60 x 150 besides sheds, wharf etc. Their pond contains about fifty acres. The company has been running eight years and is officered as

follows: President, **Addison Austin**; Sec. **D. W. Chapman**; directors, A. Austin, D. W. Chapman, **E. H. Goudy**, **Charles Norris**, **J. H. Goudy** and the **Edwin Flye Estate**. The two houses have a capacity of 21000 tons, and they were completely filled the past year, beside 8000 tons being shipped directly from the pond. During the winter they gave employment to about eighty-five men and boys, and during the summer, the shipping season, about thirty-five found employment. Twelve to twenty-five horses are employed during the harvesting season, and it costs about \$4000 to do the work required. To ship the ice costs the company about 32 cts. per ton. They sell ice mostly on contract. For that part of last winter's harvest for which they had a contract they received 85 cts. per ton. About twenty-five large vessels are required to carry it to various points.

Brick Making: without a doubt this can be said to be THE industry in this part of Bristol. It is a business that has been carried on here for many years. There are five yards, at present, being worked on the Damariscotta side and one at the head of the western branch of John's River. The five yards along the Damariscotta are run by **Bryant & Hammond**, **O. H. Gaul**, **Kelsey & Gaul**, **Fitch & Pitcher** and **Elden Oliver**.

Bryant & Hammond have their yard at Clark's Cove, an excellent place for the business and they have been working it for three years, Their annual product is about 400,000.

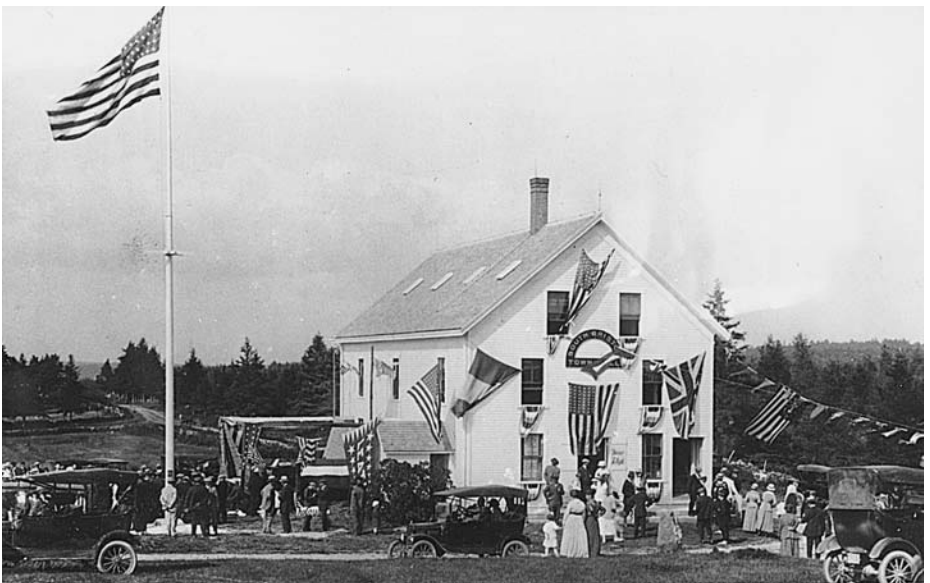
O. H. Gaul: Capt. Gaul has for many years been a seafaring man and resided at Damariscotta. The past year he moved to his father's place here and commenced preparation for the manufacture of bricks. He employees four hands in his yard and this being his first year will make but about 30,000 this season. Capt. Gaul also has a one-half interest in the yard known as the "Bryant & Kelsey Yard", he having purchased the interest from the late Capt. John Bryant. At this yard they will make about 400,000, employing four hands.

Mr. Timothy Fitch owns an excellent yard which he has run for many years and, with his son-in-law **Mr. Alonzo Pitcher**, he is now doing a large and successful business. They have already

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American Ice Company ice slide at Clark's Cove.



Centennial Hall, built in 1876 as a general store and post office, later becoming Town Hall.



Old store, Clark's Cove.

about 28 arches, or between five and six hundred thousand in number, as an arch is said to contain eighteen thousand. They employ about five hands generally.

The next and last yard in Bristol is owned by **Mr. Elden Oliver** whom we think is the largest manufacturer in town, this year, he having made 700,000 and this, too, has been done by four men.

Mr. Clark, whose yard we mentioned as located at the head of John's River, will burn his first kiln this season and will probably make between two and three hundred thousand .

A Review of the Brick Industry: As near as we were able to ascertain there will be made at those six yards about 2,500,000 bricks whose value, if reckoned at \$6 per thousand an average price, will be \$15,000. The help's wages to make these will not be far from \$5,000 and in burning them probably 1000 cord of wood will be consumed. This wood is brought at an average price of \$3.25 per cord. Work is commenced in the yards about middle of April and ends about the middle of September. To ship all these bricks gives employment to a large number of our vessels and many of them make this their whole business.

Highland Stock Farm: (*The farm belonged to Capt. Goudy.*) We never visit this part of Bristol but we notice changes and improvements going on at this farm. Among other things is the removal of the old stone wall north of the house. A trench over 400 feet long; 6 feet wide and 4 ½ feet deep is being dug by **Mr. Lorenzo Feltis** and the unsightly wall will soon be buried from view; so may it be with all of them on our roadsides. Among all the horses **Ruben, the Cleveland Bay**, attracts the most attention. In color, he is a beautiful dark bay with black point: stand 15.3 hands high and weighed, when two days over two years old, 1102 pounds.

Another thing which we noticed particularly was the soldier's monument which has been erected to the memory of the brave soldier boys who went from this part of town. It stands on the elevation opposite the burying ground and shows to good advantage. The school-house stands at the top of the hill just beyond and presents a tidy appearance. But a short distance from here is the chapel which is being erected by the ladies of this place. When completed it will be a neat little structure and will be a credit to those having it in charge and to the Town.