

# South Bristol Historical Society

## NEWSLETTER

South Bristol, Maine 04568

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SBHS Museum flying a replica of  
Maine's first official State Flag

### 1820 –2020 Maine's Bicentennial

#### 200 Years on March 15, 2020

Great plans were made to celebrate Maine's Bicentennial on March 15th but all state and local live events were cancelled or rescheduled due to efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. One county-wide event tentatively planned for August should prove to be both fun and educational. Lincoln County Historical Association (LCHA), along with thirteen town historical societies, non-profit groups, and historical organizations will conduct a Lincoln County Pilgrimage. Starting Monday, Aug. 10th, and running through Sunday, Aug. 16th, the journey includes a special "Passport" log-book. This booklet will include a full listing of events and activities occurring throughout the week. "Pilgrims" are encouraged to get their Passports stamped at each event they visit.

SBHS will participate by having both the Museum on Rutherford Island and the S-Road Roosevelt School open for visitors. In addition, the Old Walpole Meeting House and the Thompson Ice House will participate.

Visit online [Lincolncounty2020.com](http://Lincolncounty2020.com) for more Pilgrimage information and [Maine200.org](http://Maine200.org) for state-wide updates on rescheduled events.

For a full list of planned South Bristol Historical Society 2020 events see Page 2 of this Newsletter.

### Notes and Quotes from "An Analysis of Maine's Separation from Massachusetts"

*By Ellen Wells*

Early last year, in anticipation of celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Maine's statehood, Cathy Stockwell sent SBHS a copy of "An Analysis of Maine's Separation from Massachusetts", the thesis she wrote in 1968 before graduating from Bates College. Many of you remember Cathy as the creator of numerous wonderful SBHS programs and exhibits, among them Christmas in August, South Bristol Eats, The Way We Were, The Fabulous Forties and many more while also serving as SBHS Co-President. What appears below are notes based on Cathy's thesis: the material enclosed in quotation marks comes directly from the thesis.

The earliest suggestion to separate Maine from Massachusetts came from the English Royal Governor himself in 1764, but did not find favor in England. Then in 1780, after the American Revolution, some in Britain sought to create Maine as a separate province to give Loyalists remaining in 'rebel Massachusetts' a place of refuge. While the King and the British cabinet approved the plan, Parliament did not, on the grounds that a separate province would be a violation of Massachusetts' charter.

By 1785 sentiment favoring separation appeared in the local Falmouth Gazette for reasons similar in many ways to South Bristol's reasons for separating from Bristol more

*(Continued on page 3)*

#### SBHS BOARD MEMBERS

*Co-Presidents – Larry Kelsey & Dave Andrews; Vice President – Wayne Eugley; Historian – Scott Farrin;*

*Secretary – Deb Storch; Treasurer – Betsy Graves;*

*Trustees – Mary Avantaggio, Jason Bigonia, Scott Farrin, Carol Kelsey*

*Carolyn McKeon, Mike Naylor, Donna Plummer, Warren Storch, Ellen Wells, Nancy Adams*

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## SBHS 2020 Programs and Exhibits

Please note that all events may be rescheduled due to COVID-19 precautions.  
Check our website for the most up-to-date information.

**May 16, Saturday, 10AM — Cemetery Walk at Harrington Cemetery**, Located in Bristol, Harrington Cemetery holds many individuals from South Bristol and Walpole. This event may be a joint gathering of SBHS and Olde Bristol Historical Society.

**June 17, Wednesday, 7PM — Display of Native American artifacts** from the collections of Todd Lincoln and Scott Belongie, at Union Church Parish Hall. Todd has a native American heritage and is a life-long resident of South Bristol. His collection of artifacts is a result of his keen eye while hiking our coastal areas. Scott Belongie is a member of the Dresden Historical Society and will share his findings from the Kennebec region and elsewhere in Maine. Neill DePaoli, site manager of Colonial Pemaquid will be on-hand to answer questions about Wabanaki culture.

**July 22, Wednesday, 6:30PM**, at Union Church Parish Hall — **Annual Meeting** followed by **Historian Jayne Gordon presentation**. On the South Bristol peninsula, what physical evidence survives of *life in 1820*, the year that Maine gained statehood? **Using Clarks Cove as a case study**, since it is one of the oldest areas in South Bristol, historian Jayne Gordon will investigate surviving landscapes, buildings, artifacts and documents to build a representative picture of that time period.

**August 10-16 — Maine Bicentennial** will be celebrated county-wide and in South Bristol at these locations: Roosevelt Schoolhouse on S Road and SBHS Museum will be open August 10-15 from 10AM-4PM  
Various hours: Old Walpole Meeting House, Thompson Ice House, Union Church, and Walpole Chapel

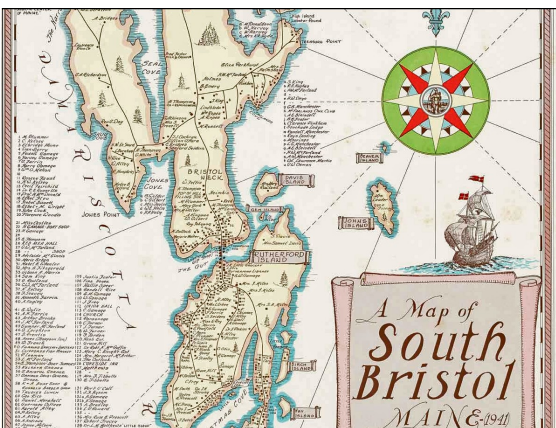
**August 13 (6PM-8PM), August 14 and August 15 (10AM-4PM)**

**Exhibit: Down on the Island, Up on the Main**, at the SB School Gym

A special showing of the exhibit “Down on the Island, Up on the Main”, created by the late Ellen Vincent. The exhibit, shown first in 2003, had its origins in 1995 when Vincent began collecting oral histories from longtime residents and making copy negatives of family photographs, antique postcard collections and other memorabilia. Vincent recorded more than 80 hours of interviews from twelve women and eleven men, and gathered more than 380 photographs. The exhibit is organized into sections that reflect the different aspects of life in South Bristol such as women's work, fishing, farming, boat-building, children's games, and local characters. Each story serves as the caption or explanation for a photograph, and the resulting combination of pictures and words is sometimes poignant, often humorous, always informative. It represents a collective memory of place, spoken in the words of its people, in stories and pictures gathered by artist and author Vincent.

**September (date to be announced) Annual South Bristol Themed Trivia** at Coveside Restaurant

**October 7, Wednesday, 7PM** — SBHS Co-President Dave Andrews will present a program showcasing old photographs and maps.



### MORE ONLINE

SBHS has a YouTube Channel where we will post videos of recorded programs and events, as well as local historical footage from year-round and seasonal families. To visit the Channel, click the YouTube logo at the bottom of our website [southbristolhistoricalsociety.org](http://southbristolhistoricalsociety.org) or go to YouTube.com and search for “South Bristol Historical Society”.

A new website [SandboxAtlas.org](http://SandboxAtlas.org) is a collection of blog posts and podcasts that cover a variety of topics in human geography, cartography, travel, and place-based narratives. The first project, “Postcards from Gus”, written by Cathy Jewitt and Ben Meader, looks at South Bristol and how 2 brothers left important historical imagery for future generations.

## "An Analysis of Maine's Separation from Massachusetts"

(Continued from page 1)

than one hundred years later. There were claims that "the distance to the capital seat in Massachusetts was inconvenient and travel (to Boston in this case) too expensive; that a separate government would be less expensive; that different interests prevailed in Maine and Massachusetts; due to Maine's weak voice in the legislature her interests were being neglected; and that the District was taxed much more heavily than the rest of the state."

A series of meetings to promote separation were held, "but each saw dwindling attendance. The memorial (seeking separation) was withheld until 1788 at which time the General Court (in Boston) tabled it with no apparent outcry from Maine representatives or inhabitants. The first phase of the separation movement had sunk without creating more than an "ayaah" from a native Mainer." Private citizens of Massachusetts paid little attention to Maine then or over the next several years, though "one letter from a Charlestown, Mass. resident to a friend in Falmouth, denounced the town as ...that seat of rebellion – that nest of disturbers of the publick (sic) tranquility."

1791 brought a significant reawakening of the separation movement, though it, too, ended in a defeat for the Maine separatists. Added to the long-standing arguments for separation was the fact of population growth in Maine equal to that of five states already admitted to the Union, and making possible the argument that Maine could pay its own way. However," the seacoast areas which benefitted from commercial activities with Boston were most ardent against separation, for separation would alter the existing coasting trade. The present law did not require vessels traveling between ports of adjacent states to enter and clear at custom houses, but to all other states they must. If a separate state, Maine would only be able to trade with New Hampshire

without clearing; the inconvenience of clearing to trade with Boston convinced the seacoast towns that union with Massachusetts was desirable."

The years between 1791 and 1820 saw a series of referenda and conventions in Maine, all with varying votes either for or against separation. The story of those years and the final vote in 1820 to create a separate state will be the subject of a future newsletter article. Needless to say, the growing influence of political parties, the War of 1812 and tensions between southern and northern states had significant influence during that time.

### ...and in South Bristol

Citizens of South Bristol, perhaps related to that 1788 "nest of disturbers" mentioned above, expressed concern over their position within the much larger Town of Bristol by petitioning the state legislature to incorporate a new town as early as 1824. That effort failed, but the dissatisfaction continued to grow, fueled by the sense that they had little voice in local government and increasingly little in common economically with the rest of the town, much as Mainers had felt about Massachusetts. For example, distance from Bristol's town house was too far over almost impassable roads, resulting in practical disfranchisement of South Bristol voters; distance and occupations too diverse; failure of Bristol to address problems with roads in South Bristol. This growing discontent led to petitions to the state legislature to authorize creation of a new town of South Bristol in 1911 and again in 1913, but it wasn't until March 1915 that the Maine State Legislature approved an 'Act to Divide the Town of Bristol and incorporate the Town of South Bristol.' ■

### Flag Facts

"Soon after achieving Statehood in 1820, the legislature passed a law regulating the Maine Militia. In 1822, the Quartermaster General was directed to furnish the regiments with the "appropriate colors" of the new State. Painted by John Penniman of Boston the design shows the shield of the Maine Arms with a White Pine Tree and a Recumbent Moose on white with the State Motto "Dirigo" on a ribbon above the North Star (with one point down) over a torse. Below, on another ribbon, is the name of the State, "Maine." Below that is another ribbon that was printed to read "\_\_\_ Regt. of Infy. \_\_\_ Brige. \_\_\_ Div." with space for the insertion of the appropriate numbers of the regiments."

(Source: Online History Pages)

The flag design seen on page 1 became Maine's first official State flag when an "Act to establish a State Flag" passed both houses of the legislature on March 21st, 1901. The Maine legislature approved our current flag design eight years later on February 23, 1909. ■



# News and Notes





## Lincoln County News Digital Archives

The digital archives of The Lincoln County News are now available online through Skidompha Library. LCN will soon offer access to subscribers as well. Announced to the public in a LCN story dated November 27, 2019, this incredible historical research tool is the result of many people's efforts.

Skidompha received a \$30,000 grant for the digitization project from the Burns Family Foundation. Additional funds were provided by the Maine Community Foundation, the historical societies of Bristol, Damariscotta, Edgecomb, South Bristol, and Whitefield, and numerous individual private donors.

SBHS Historian Scott Farrin has been combing the archives and has shared some interesting and enlightening clippings, included here on these pages and on the SB Facebook public group.

The list below shows all source material for the online archive.

 Browse By Title 	 Browse By Year 
<b>Lincoln County News</b> (1874-2008) 92,024 Pages	<b>1850-1859</b> 16 Pages <b>1910-1919</b> 2,305 Pages
<b>Waldoboro Press</b> (1939-1968) 14,571 Pages	<b>1860-1869</b> 4 Pages <b>1920-1929</b> 4,190 Pages
<b>Sheepscot Echo</b> (1891-1918) 3,211 Pages	<b>1870-1879</b> 1,239 Pages <b>1930-1939</b> 3,977 Pages
<b>Herald and Record</b> (1877-1878) 262 Pages	<b>1880-1889</b> 1,051 Pages <b>1940-1949</b> 10,474 Pages
<b>Village Herald</b> (1876-1877) 162 Pages	<b>1890-1899</b> 2,859 Pages <b>1950-1959</b> 9,022 Pages
<b>Lincoln Democrat</b> (1851-1853) 16 Pages	<b>1900-1909</b> 4,068 Pages <b>1960-1969</b> 8,633 Pages

### Sheepscot Echo, Oct 18, 1918 So. Bristol Soldier Dies of Spanish Flu

Wellington M. Jordan succumbed to the 1918 H1N1 flu pandemic, called "Spanish Flu" which killed an estimated 50 million people worldwide, including an estimated 675,000 people in the United States. Jordan died Oct. 10, 1918 at Camp Devens, a military base near Boston. He is honored on the War Memorial opposite Union Church as well as the new War Memorial at West Bristol Cemetery.

South Bristol has lost two of her soldier boys recently. Ensign Richard Wells of Christmas Cove who was one of the victims when the German pirates shelled the life boats of the Ticonderoga, the other was Private Wellington Jordan, who died at Camp Devens of influenza. His remains were brought to Christmas Cove on Sunday afternoon, and the funeral held at his late home. He leaves an invalid mother, who is heartbroken, one brother and one sister, to mourn his untimely death. The flag at the town Hall was flying at half staff on Sunday and Monday, afternoons in honor of our dead.

THE SHEEPSCOT ECHO



March 18, 1916

## Bristol

### SOUTH BRISTOL TOWN MEETING

The first annual town meeting of the town of South Bristol was held at Centennial Hall on Monday, the thirteenth. Notwithstanding it was a tough snow storm all day, nearly one hundred voters assembled. The Steamer "Tourist" brought a large number from the Island. It was a very quiet meeting. On motion of V. D. Kelsey, Everett W. Gamage was nominated and elected Moderator.

On motion of Leonard Tibbetts a committee of five was appointed to nominate a list of town officers. The committee appointed was E. W. Haley, M. D. Sproul, A. C. Thorpe and E. P. Gamage with the following result: All were elected as nominated. Clerk, Everett A. Poole; Selectmen, Assessors and Overseers of the Poor, Wilbur F. Bearce, Chairman, Frank B. Wells, 2nd, R. H. Woodward, 3d; Collector and Treasurer, Everett W. Gamage; Auditor, Elliott P. Brewer; School Board, E. A. Poole, Drummond Farrin, A. P. Hatch; Surveyors of Wood, Lumber and Bark, W. F. Bearce, O. T. Gamage, A. P. Hatch; Fire Ward, Gilbert B. Curtis; Constable, William B. Alley; Fence Viewers, M. D. Sproul, Frank S. Emery, M. A. Thompson; Truant Officer, Nelson W. Gamage; Public Weigher, Edward W. Gamage; Auctioneer, M. E. Thompson; Board of Health, V. D. Kelsey, Albert W. Poole, Eliphalet McFarland.

Under article 3, to hear and act upon the report of the town officers, voted to accept the report.

Article 6, the compensation of town officers was as follows:

Selectmen, chairman	\$100.00
Second and third, each	50.00
Town Clerk	25.00

# Sproul Homestead—Historic House Highlight



Sproul Homestead, today called Rote Farm, is one of four structures in SB on the National Register of Historic Places. The cape portion of the house was built by Robert Sproul prior to 1751.



Map shows "R. Sproul" (in lower center section). Known residents 1751, Published in "A History of the Towns of Bristol and Bremen in the State of Maine, Including the Pemaquid Settlement" by John Johnston, 1873

The Sproul Homestead in South Bristol was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. It consists of a circa 1815 Federal period building, which was joined to a circa 1749 colonial Cape style house. H. Landon Warner wrote in his *A History of the Families and Their Houses: South Bristol, Maine* :

"Another family who settled in Bristol as early as the Kents were the Sprouls. The father, James Sproul, was also Scotch-Irish, born in Belfast, Ireland, emigrated to Boston and then to Bristol in 1729, one of the few who came with David Dunbar to Walpole. He settled his family on the west side of the Pemaquid River in what is still the Town of Bristol, but his son Robert, also born in Ireland, acquired a 200 acre tract south of the Kent's along the Damariscotta River in Walpole from George Craddock of Boston, one of the "Proprietors of the Pemaquid Patent," and built a cape-style house there. Robert died in 1793 and left his house and farm to his son James...In 1826-27 the son, James Sproul II purchased the adjacent land, house and barn of Robert Merrill from the Merrill heirs. The Merrill house, built after 1815, was a two-story dwelling in the federal style, located on the east side of the town road. James Sproul II in 1833 moved it across the road and attached it to the original cape to form the imposing house that exists today. It was occupied until 1922 by James, his son Arthur, and granddaughter Delea Frances, married to Gilbert B. Curtis.....The Sprouls were farmers and also masters of vessels engaged in the coastal trade."

Jay Robinson, current owner with his sister Lucia Robinson, relayed that Gilbert Curtis became a widower and lived at the farm until Miss Mildred Hight purchased it in 1922. Jay's father John Robinson, purchased the property from Hight's heirs in 1960. ■

## Bristol

Robert A. Sproul, a lifelong resident of South Bristol, passed away at his home, Saturday morning, after a brief illness. Mr. Sproul was a prosperous, well-to-do farmer, a more than ordinary successful business lover of home life. His family will miss his kindly counsel. He was heard to speak evil of no one. He was conscious almost to the last and made all the arrangements for his funeral, requesting that it be very simple with only a prayer. He was a member from early manhood of Bristol Lodge, F. & A. M. He has joined the Grand Lodge above where all good Masons hope to meet. In early life he married Miss Angie McClintock, who survives him, also leaves three sons; William, who is one of the most successful Master Masons in the area, Charles, who runs and manages the farm, and Austin, who was with the 54th Artillery at Fort McKinley in training last winter. He was taken seriously sick with measles which developed into pneumonia. He has since been invalided at home. One brother, Capt. J. D. Sproul, of this place, and Mrs. Sarah Goudy, of Damariscotta, all that is left of a large family, all being the children of the late Drummond and Mary Sproul. The funeral was held on Monday afternoon at one o'clock. Rev. Geo. M. Woodwell offered prayer, and undertaker Harrington had charge. Interment in the West Bristol cemetery.

At right: Lincoln County News Digital Archive  
Clipping from the Sheepscot Echo, Oct 18, 1918  
Obituary for Robert A. Sproul, descendant of original settler James Sproul

## South Bristol Historical Society

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South Bristol, ME 04568

### *HELP US BUILD OUR MEMBERSHIP*

## South Bristol Historical Society

We are “Making History Matter”  
Pass the Word !

Join online: [southbristolhistoricalsociety.org](http://southbristolhistoricalsociety.org)  
or send a check by mail to:  
SBHS, PO Box 229, South Bristol, ME 04568

Individual	\$10
Family	\$20
Sustaining	\$40
Individual Life	\$250
Family Life	\$350



### History comes alive on our YouTube Channel !

Watch **Captain Henry Jones** and crew aboard herring carrier seventy-seven foot *Sylvina W. Beal* in Christmas Cove. Surrounded by seine nets and dory boats local South Bristol men take in a big mess’a fish.

The film was taken in the 1950s by summer resident Amos Neal Prescott.

To visit the Channel, click the YouTube logo at the bottom of our website [southbristolhistoricalsociety.org](http://southbristolhistoricalsociety.org) or go to YouTube.com and search for “South Bristol Historical Society”.

(Photos of Henry Jones, SBHS Collection)