

# The Newsletter of the Tremont Historical Society

Vol. 7 No. 1

Spring 2003

Published quarterly at Bass Harbor, Maine. The Society is a non-profit organization, whose officers are: Arlene Bartlett, President; Charles Liebow, Vice President; John MacDuffie, Secretary; and Joe Marshall, Treasurer. The Newsletter is ordinarily mailed to members and contributors.

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## From the President's Desk

Spring greetings to all! Winter was a tough one in many ways for everyone, but let us not give up. Maybe we got just a little spoiled during the last few winters.

Now we are looking forward and making plans for the coming summer season. We invite anyone reading these words to join us in attending our monthly speaker meetings, 7:00 p.m. at the Library in Bernard on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month (see schedule of upcoming speakers elsewhere in this issue.)

Or perhaps you have items you might donate to our Yard Sale. This will take place on Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Fire Station in Bass Harbor. We have a storage building available if you'd like to have your items picked up anytime prior to the day of the sale. For more information, call me at 244-5268.

We are in need of volunteers to keep the Country Store Museum open on Wednesdays and Saturdays, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., from June 25 through October 15<sup>th</sup>. It is a most enjoyable opportunity to meet our museum visitors and share all that we have to offer. Training will be provided for volunteers.

The Tremont School is planning a field trip to the Museum before the end of school. We are looking forward to sharing our museum with the youngsters.

We've had some great speakers and programs this year, and plan to continue seeking out folks who can share interesting historical information and experiences. Please know that you are invited, as our meetings are for everyone, not just members. And please try to bring a friend. If you have not joined or been active with us, we hope you will accept our cordial invitation to do so. We do not try to put folks to work unless they are willing, but we surely would like to have your company.

Hoping you'll visit the Museum this summer,

Arlene Bartlett, President

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## Trivia Question for December is still unanswered!

I still have not found out what is meant by the letters **dv** after someone's name in a newspaper story in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the person died in an accident or disaster and the newspaper did not know the home town of the person. The nearest thing to it is the words Deo Volente, meaning "God willing" but the custom in this case is to put periods after the two letters, **"d.v."** Can anyone help us unravel this mystery?

*Ed.*

## Dr. Joseph Dana Phillips– Automobile Activist

By Maurice Joseph Marshall

Whenever I look into our local history, a small inquiry leads into so many related large subjects that it is hard to keep from being seduced by them to divert from my original intent. So much of our local history involves actions that affect other developments in seemingly unrelated areas as dominoes falling in order leading to an end that we see ahead only when upon it.

The struggle over automobiles in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century on Mount Desert Island has been written from many different perspectives depending upon the author's background. The Rusticator's Journal contains an essay from an environmental viewpoint. The Living Past by Virginia Somes-Sanderson gives the view from the village of Somesville. Several years ago, Yankee magazine covered one incident in 1909 involving my grandfather, Dr. Joseph Dana Phillips, in their short one-page format. He was the second resident of Southwest Harbor to test a March 1909 law prohibiting automobiles in Eden (Bar Harbor), Mount Desert, and Tremont; but not Southwest Harbor.

My mother referred to my grandfather as being "from away"- he was born in Orland and grew up in Hancock. At eighteen he began what would be four summers working on a fishing vessel on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. His earnings from this period paid his way to the Maine Central Institute in Pittsfield. His older brother George was a doctor in Bar Harbor; Joseph chose to follow him into medicine and graduated from the University of New York in 1886. He set up a practice in Southwest Harbor after spending time working with his brother in Bar Harbor. The new Dr. Phillips faced difficulties reaching his patients on the offshore islands due to the weather. His experiences on the Grand Banks gave him skills that enabled the residents of Cranberry Isles, Swans Island, the Duck Islands, Mount Desert Rock, and the smaller islands to receive medical care. Many times he arrived too late to save a life and could only console a grieving family while stranded on an island due to rough weather. He was noted for his care of those suffering from pneumonia, staying with a patient day and night through the worst of the affliction. Dr. Phillips once sat with an expectant mother rocking in a Great Cranberry Island kitchen until the baby decided to enter the world. He was trained as an obstetrician.

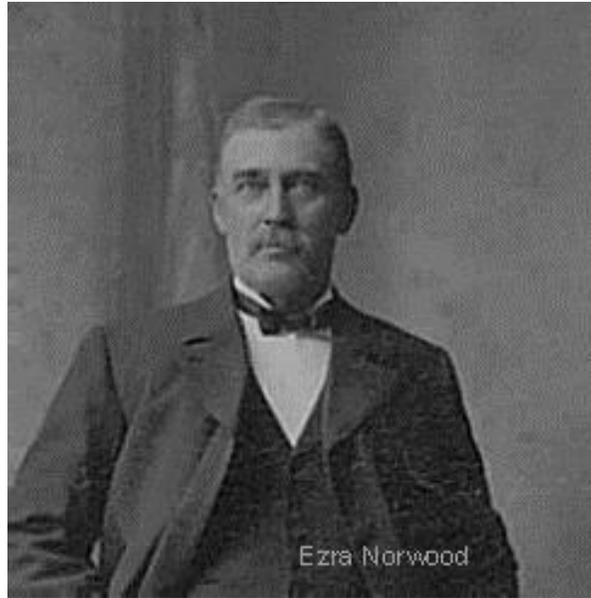
Joseph Dana Phillips soon began working to better the public health in Southwest Harbor by forming the Water Company in 1893 to bring fresh drinking water from Long Pond to the community. In 1895, he served as a Trustee of the newly-formed Southwest Harbor Public Library. He helped organize what became the Causeway Club, worked to establish the Mount Height Cemetery, participated in the Village Improvement Association, and helped to establish the Pemetic Odd Fellows Lodge, serving as Treasurer for many years. Dr. Phillips took an active role in the affairs of Southwest Harbor before and after the area separated from Tremont in 1905.

But to the automobile wars. In 1903, the Maine Legislature passed an act allowing Bar Harbor (then Eden) to ban automobiles from certain roadways in the town. Opponents of automobiles on Mount Desert Island as a whole lobbied Augusta and in March 1909 a special act was passed to "prohibit the use of automobiles in the towns of Eden, Mount Desert, Tremont, and Southwest Harbor on the island of Mount Desert." At special town meetings, Eden, Mount Desert, and Tremont voted to accept the special act.

However, at their special town meeting on July 16, 1909 Southwest Harbor voted 110 to 84 to reject the special act. This meant that a resident of Southwest Harbor could operate an automobile within the town, but could not use one to travel to Trenton or Ellsworth without violating the law in the other three towns.

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## Ezra Norwood of Tremont, Maine



Secretary of State, Washington

*American vessel Jessie McGregor, Portland Maine arrived yesterday. Master lost overboard, storm Feb 5 1901 near Bermuda. Shall I appoint new master? AYME, Consul Guadeloupe*

This vessel arrived about 3:15 P.M. Feb. 25 and came to anchor off the quarantine station near the mouth of the harbor. I noticed the vessel had the colors at half-mast and went to the office of the Captain of the Port to find what was the matter. There I learned that the master was reported as having been lost overboard. The local health officer said that he intended, under the circumstances, to keep the vessel under strict quarantine for five days although it had a clean bill of health.

The first mate, acting as master, informed me that in a furious gale, north of and near Bermuda, a huge wave had swept over the vessel about 3:00 P.M. Feb. 5, carrying the master overboard, tearing the man at the wheel away therefrom, and very seriously injuring him, flooding the cabin and storeroom and doing very considerable damage to the vessel itself.

Mar. 1, 1901. We find the following damage has been sustained by the vessel on the voyage: the spanker boom was broken but was well fished and is in safe condition to be used at sea; examining the steering gear we find that the shaft of the wheel is badly bent and all the covering to the screw gone; we find a break in the port rail; the deadlight leading to the lazarette carried away, companionway to the cabin badly broken; evidences that both the cabin and lazarette had been full of water; examination of the outside of the hull showed under the counter all around the sternpost the oakum hanging out the seams and think it likely that much water must have found its way into the cargo.

Mar. 9, 1901. I took the deposition of Walter Cook. "This vessel was loaded with oak shooks and carried a heavy deckload of lumber. From personal inspection I have to report that this deckload was piled so high on deck as just to permit the booms to swing over it. The vessel seems to have run into a strong

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northwest gale Feb. 3 which increased in violence. Feb. 5 the gale was at its height and the deck load was working loose. The vessel was running before the wind under lower topsails and the chief endeavor of the master seem to have been directed to saving this deckload. It was not his watch on deck but he came up and directed the mate to try and make the load secure. There is no doubt that a furious gale was blowing that day for the commander of the U.S.T.S. Essex now in port informs me that he was not far from where the McGregor was on that day and that some of his officers measured waves 45 feet in height and 450 feet base length. With the master gone and the mate disabled there were but six men to work the vessel. I have to report that all of these men appear to have worked well and faithfully, and since their arrival have worked well and faithfully.”

The vessel will be entirely discharged tomorrow and will then move out into the stream and await the arrival of the new master. There may be some delay in the arrival of the new master who doubtless will be landed at some port north of here and there wait for an English Royal Mail Boat to bring him down.



Jessie Macgregor on a Lee Shore

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**Automobile Activist**—*continued from page 2*

Garage owner Sim Mayo of Southwest Harbor was the first to test the new law by driving an auto from Southwest Harbor north to Somesville. Of course he had a practical business reason to see automobiles allowed on the whole island. Ironically, S. Leslie King told me once that many summer residents of Northeast Harbor during this period kept their automobiles at Mr. Mayo’s garage and would travel to Southwest Harbor to operate them. Apparently automobiles were fine so long as they weren’t allowed in certain areas.

Sim Mayo’s appeal to the Supreme Judicial Court of Hancock County took place in October as my grandfather drove his auto, a Maxwell, north from Southwest Harbor on a journey to Ellsworth. The residents of Somesville were alarmed at hear what resident Dr. Robert Grindle termed “devil wagons”

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approaching the village. Dr. Phillips' medical colleague attempted to block the road to hold the lawless physician for the authorities, but wasn't swift enough for the Maxwell, and J.D. sped on to Town Hill. A resident of that village phoned the Bar Harbor constable and a deputy sheriff arrested Dr. Joseph D. Phillips. The Bar Harbor Municipal Court fined him 20 dollars after he pleaded Not Guilty. The good doctor appealed to the Supreme Judicial Court for Hancock County and also to the Law Court where the original 1903 Bar Harbor ordinance was upheld. The court noted that many of the public highways on Mount Desert Island were on mountainsides and even sheer cliffs and the ban on automobiles promoted the general welfare of the people.

The automobile prohibition remained until 1915 when it was relaxed with some restrictions. Once that happened the automobile traffic grew unabated. The relaxation was mainly the result of the lost seasonal business in Bar Harbor. Some historians blame the automobile for the demise of the steamboats and trains, but many other factors also contributed to their passing. John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s carriage roads were built in response to the automobile's presence on Mount Desert Island, to preserve an area of tranquility that remains today.

My grandfather went on to serve his community as a member of the Maine House of Representatives in 1917 and the Maine Senate in 1923 and 1925. Perhaps his 1909 activism sparked an interest in the political arena.

As we wait in line at Parkadia in July and August, Dr. Joseph Dana Phillips should share some blame for our automotive situation. But I like to think that every life saved by an ambulance traveling the roads of Mount Desert Island is also a result of an October 1909 drive in a Maxwell from Southwest Harbor to Somesville and Town Hill.

*Maurice Joseph Marshall lives in his grandfather's 1901 house in Southwest Harbor. He is Treasurer of the Tremont Historical Society, President of the Southwest Harbor/ Tremont Nursing Service, and a Trustee of the Southwest Harbor Public Library.*

## **EBENEZER EATON**

(From Traditions and Records of Southwest Harbor and Somesville by Mrs. Seth S. Thornton)

Ebenezer Eaton of Sedgwick was a man of natural ability, very religious, and had conducted "meetings." He came to Southwest Harbor and preached several times and was pleasing to the people. He keenly felt his lack of education and refused ordination because of it, but a letter written by Rev. Peter Powers in 1799 says, "Our Association has licensed dear Mr. Eaton to preach." A call was extended to him in 1801. He bought 270 acres of land which included all of Clark Point ... built his house ... and allowed his parishioners to bury their dead on a sunny hillside on his land, first without regard to plan, but later arranged with some design, and being the first public burying place on Mt. Desert Island.

Any account of the Congregational Church of Mount Desert would not be complete without a full tribute paid to the memory of Ebenezer Eaton, the beloved minister who served the church, the community and the whole island for nearly a half century. That he was not as severe toward the erring

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ones as most ministers of that day is inferred from a record in the first clerk's book where it is noted that on July 5, 1803 the church, after a day of fasting and prayer, felt called upon to censure Brother Eaton for "not having dealt with [a certain member of the church] so seasonably as he ought." ... Perhaps his leniency brought him more of the affection of the people, and accounted for his long pastorate among them.

Mr. Eaton was the son of Theophilus and Abigail Eaton of Deer Isle. They came in 1768 from Haverhill, Mass. where Theophilus was born in 1720. He first moved to Sandown, NH, then to Brunswick, ME and from there to Deer Isle. Mrs. Eaton, mother of Ebenezer, died in 1824, aged 102 years, 8 months at the home of her son James Eaton in Prospect, ME.

Ebenezer's educational advantages in youth were very limited but he was a close student and his principal books, according to a letter written by his grandson Herrick Eaton, were the Bible and Henry's Commentary. His days when in his home were spent in study and he preached entirely without notes. He always rode horseback. He began preaching when 26 years of age.

In 1823 he yielded to the wishes of his people and consented to be ordained. After this the records refer to him as Reverend or Father Eaton. In 1831 as Elder Eaton was advanced in years and the task of riding over his wide territory was taxing his strength, it was decided to obtain an assistant for him ... Elder Eaton now wished to resign his pastorate. His wife had died and was buried in the little burying ground on their land with a son and daughter, and the health of the old man was failing. So a call was issued on May 24, 1834 to Rev. Micah Strickland ...

Rev. Eaton soon after went to Sedgwick to visit his daughter, Mrs. Currier, and died while there in 1841 at the age of eighty-seven. The older people of the church hoped that his body might be brought back to the town where he labored so many years, to rest on his own land by the side of his wife, but the years passed and it was not done.

*Or further information on the parents of Rev. Ebenezer Eaton see THEOPHILUSEATON p. 71 in Hosmer's Historical Sketch of the Town of Deer Isle, Me.*

## **AN INTERESTING "FIND"**

The Editor of this publication is a long-time member of an organization called The Brothers and Sisters of the Way, an Order of Protestant clergypersons whose mission is to provide spiritual retreats for parish ministers from the design created by Rev. John Henry Wilson, a Unitarian minister who built a retreat house on Fisherman's Island, Boothbay Harbor, modeled after those on the Isle of Iona in Scotland. Rev. Wilson held his first retreat in 1930. These retreats continue today, being held during May 2003 in Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Missouri.

One of the early leaders of the Order was the Rev. Charles R. Monteith, who served the Congregational Church in Rockland for a number of years and made that community his home until his death. Among his papers given to the Order by his son I found a sermon and several copies of a church bulletin providing a reminder of some local history which may be read with interest by our members.

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On Sunday Feb. 20, 1938 a notice in the bulletin reads as follows:

“The PREACHER today at Southwest, West Tremont, and Seal Cove is Mr. Charles R. Monteith, a senior at the Bangor Theological Seminary.”

Further perusal of the bulletin reveals that it served not only the churches listed, where Mr. Monteith was to preach on that day, but also Tremont, McKinley, Manset, and Hall Quarry. The seven churches thus named comprised the Southwest Harbor-Tremont Larger Parish. The churches would be more completely described as the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southwest Harbor\*, the Manset Union Church, the Olsen Chapel in McKinley (Bass Harbor), the Tremont Congregational (Head of the Harbor) Church, the West Tremont Methodist Church, the Seal Cove Baptist Church, and the Union Church of Hall Quarry.

\*The Southwest Harbor Church is inferred as being Methodist at that time because the bulletin has reference to Quarterly Conferences recently held there and at West Tremont.

Other gleanings are that this Weekly Bulletin is No. 216, so the parish must have been existence for over four years at that time; that there is apparently only one minister for the seven congregations, so it is clear that regular assistance from seminary students or other supply preachers would be required; that there is a unified choir formed from all the churches called the Parish Singers, as rehearsals of an Easter Cantata are announced; that a Junior Choir is also in existence; that Cub Scouts are apparently sponsored by the Parish; that a monthly Council meeting for the Parish is held at the Parsonage, though the location of this residence is not hinted at; and that beginning with this Bulletin, on a monthly basis the attendance at the seven churches would be listed, with a further note that Young People's Societies' attendance would also be given. Attendance recorded here ranged from 4 to 77, and totals for January from 42 to 217.

At a later time, Manset began its long-running yoke with Southwest Harbor, existent to this day; Hall Quarry became a part of the Mt. Desert Larger Parish and eventually closed; and the churches within the town of Tremont formed the Tremont Larger Parish which existed until the Olsen Church withdrew. For a number of years the services on the West side of the island alternated, winter and summer, between the West Tremont and Seal Cove church buildings. Today services are held only at the Head of the Harbor church, and in addition the West Tremont Church in summer.

There is much personal memory involved in this report, which the writer admits may well be faulty. The best result of this writing would be that one or more persons with much better memories of these churches and their activities from the 30's onward, would write articles for the Newsletter or at least report the facts as they know them to this Editor, who humbly signs his work,

*John MacDuffie*

## **NOTICE**

It has come to the attention of the Tremont Historical Society that there are several families who loaned family pictures to the Society for the purpose of making enlarged copies. It is our understanding from what we have been told that some of these originals were never returned to their owners. This unfortunate situation goes back to the summer of 2000 when a large picture display was placed at the Community Building for Tremont Days. It is the desire of the Board of Directors to try and solve this problem. If you are one of those families would you please contact Arlene Bartlett at 244-5268 as soon as possible, so a meeting can be arranged with you to discuss what can be done.

## RALPH'S PAGE

### Being a reproduction of articles of historical interest, selected by Ralph Stanley

Bar Harbor *Record*, Jan. 2, 1890

Last Friday, during the strong northwest wind, schooner *Hunter* of Bangor, bound to St. John, while beating in the Western Way misstayed and went ashore on Cranberry Island side and remained ashore until Saturday night. The life saving crew from the station responded quickly and with the necessary lines and anchors and a steam tug from Rockland, the schooner was gotten afloat.

The station crew reports that the captain left Deer Island with both anchors foul and hanging at the bow and beat in through the Western Way to clear them, and when she misstayed and on a lee shore, had no anchors to use and was obliged to drift ashore.

*This small article is included in anticipation of a story about the Life Saving Station on Islesford, which Capt. Ted Spurling has promised in the near future. The history of the Life Saving Service is a fascinating one, full of adventures and rescues and perils and fearsome weather. Ed.*

Bar Harbor *Record* Sept. 27, 1889

At Bartlett's Island: -- Mr. Edwin Bartlett died very suddenly on the 19<sup>th</sup>. He was in company with Capt. John Dix in the fishing boat *Little Lena* and had just returned from Ellsworth. The wind commenced to blow heavily from the southeast. They concluded to make a harbor on the west side of this island. Mr. Bartlett had just hauled the job down previous to anchoring and immediately fell forward on his face. Capt. Dix went forward and let the anchor go and brought the boat up, spoke to Mr. Bartlett but received no answer. His pulse had ceased to beat. Probably heart disease.

Mr. Bartlett was a very worthy man, a good neighbor, and had no enemies. He leaves a wife and one son. His age was 63.

Bar Harbor *Record* May 15, 1907

Mrs. Caroline H. Stanley, widow of the late Capt. Enoch B. Stanley died last Monday at 4 o'clock a.m. of paralysis, her entire left side having been stricken suddenly twenty-four hours previously. Mrs. Stanley would have been 85 years old next Christmas Eve. She was always a very active woman and had lived on Big Cranberry Island more than 60 years. She was the mother of 10 children, 8 of whom are now living and 7 were present at her funeral, as they were at their father's funeral over 4 years ago. There was a large attendance, 10 relatives coming from Winter Harbor.

*These two items remind us that there are members of our Society and our communities who carry the same names as some notables in our history. No doubt an inquiry to Ralph Stanley or Bob Bartlett would elicit an answer to the question "Was this person an ancestor of yours?" in a resounding affirmative.*

*Ed.*

## Upcoming Programs for Society Meetings

*Meetings occur on the fourth Monday of the month; time is 7:00 p.m.  
Meetings are held at the Bass Harbor Memorial Library, Bernard*

May 26 "Readings from clippings in the Museum" – Bob and Arlene Bartlett

June 23 (Annual Meeting) "Rear Admiral Byrd" – Spencer Ervin

July 28 "Post Card Collection" – Earl Brechlin

### Two Programs in August

Aug. 18 "The Dix Family" – Raymond Robbins

Aug. 25 "Samuel Eliot Morison" – Wayne Libhart

Sept. 22 "Ruth Moore" – Muriel Davisson  
"Theatrical Society of Tremont" – Harvey Kelley

Oct. 27 "Life and Times of Capt. Bob Bartlett" (film) – Bob Bartlett

Nov. 24 "Fish Tales by Local Fishermen" – speakers TBA



## RESPONSE FORM

Please clip and mail to Tremont Historical Society, P.O. Box 215, Bass Harbor ME 04653

Yes  I/we wish to begin membership in the Tremont Historical Society

Yes  I/we wish to renew membership for another year.

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$10.00 per person for annual dues.

*Please make checks payable to Tremont Historical Society*

Dues paid at any time of the year will provide membership status through the next June.

Contributions to the Annual Fund in any amount carry membership status until the following June.

Please list names of all persons for whom dues are paid, or all donors of contributions.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street or Box # Town State Zip

Check if this is a summer address

If different, please enter winter address below:

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street or Box # Town State Zip

**MISSION STATEMENT**  
**Adopted June 24, 2002**  
**By the Membership**  
**Tremont Historical Society**

The Tremont Historical Society shall be dedicated to preservation of the history of the towns of Tremont and Southwest Harbor and adjacent islands. It will achieve this mission by gathering, cataloging, preserving, and making available to the public historical materials, such as genealogies and information showing the growth and development of the towns, as well as artifacts.

Tremont Historical Society  
P.O. Box 215  
Bass Harbor ME 04653

Non-Profit  
Organization  
Postage Paid  
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04653  
Permit No. 7

Prepared especially for

*FALL 2003 NEWSLETTER*

*WINTER 2004 NEWSLETTER*

*SPRING 2003 NEWSLETTER*

*FALL 2004 NEWSLETTER*

*SUMMER 2003 NEWSLETTER*

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