

The Newsletter of the Tremont Historical Society

Vol. 8 No. 1

Spring 2004

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 Michael Smith, Treasurer. The Newsletter is ordinarily mailed to members and contributors.

From the President's Desk

The time is fast approaching when we expect the snow birds to return and the tourist season to begin. These two yearly facts tell us it is time to shake ourselves and "get with the program." Therefore it is time for me to expound on some of our plans for the year, as well as some of our needs. As with any organization, plans and needs are ongoing.

One concern we have, which was discussed by the Board of Directors, is that we would like to see younger people becoming involved and interested in the history of this town; and also taking an interest in their own family backgrounds. One way is through the School. One of our Board members is working on a program which can be presented in the classrooms; perhaps this will spark their interest in visiting the Museum. More on this project in future Newsletters.

Museum opening this year is on Wednesday, June 23rd. We will be open each Wednesday and Saturday from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. until October 13. If anyone would like to volunteer to help keep the Museum open this summer, even for a day or two, we would appreciate your help. Training is provided. Call me at 244-5268 or write at General Delivery, Bernard ME 04612.

A Rummage Sale is planned for Sat. July 17th, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Community Building. We are pleased that we will have so much more room, all on the ground floor, for the sale this year. Again, we could use volunteer help to make this event a success. Especially on Friday the 16th during the day there are hundreds of items to unpack, hang, and arrange before the sale. And on Saturday at 2:00, when the sale is over, the left-overs need packing away for removal and storage. People of all ages are welcome in this project, as we encourage the worthy activities of reusing, recycling, and redistributing the items whose old owners are through with them, but whose new owners have not yet discovered them! And our coffers will welcome a new batch of dollars to help keep the Museum and our other work growing.

If you can spend the day, bring a lunch. This will be a huge sale of great stuff, and many hands will make it not only light work but lots of fun.

Arlene Bartlett, President

Trivia Question: *In Ralph's Page there is a reference to someone who had worked at Tremont House. Do you know what and where Tremont House was?*

(You can e-mail your answer to redhousemaine@adelphia.net or call 244-0259.)

RALPH'S PAGE

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

Mount Desert Herald

Aug. 27, 1881

Miss Mary A. Carroll, of Southwest Harbor, has just closed a very successful term of school at Cranberry Isles.

Sept. 7, 1881

Marriage of Joseph H. Rummell and Miss Eliza A. Stanley, both of Tremont

Oct. 1, 1881

The steamboat wharf at Bass Harbor is progressing finally.

Feb. 14, 1882

Much anxiety is felt in regard to the schooner *S.P. Brown*, which it is feared was sunk on January 23. She was last seen drifting to sea, having anchored under Chatham, Cape Cod. The vessel was loaded with coal, bound to Boston. She was an old vessel, and was commanded by Captain James Tinker, of Tremont, a young man of much promise, and his loss will be heavily felt by the community. He leaves a wife and one child, who have the sympathy of all.

Jan. 12, 1882

At a meeting of the stockholders of the Bass Harbor Steamboat Wharf Company Jan. 12, the following gentlemen were chosen directors: G.J. Bragg, P.W. Richardson, and Lewis Freeman. The annual meeting will be held Monday evening, Jan. 23.

Jan. 21, 1882

The English brig *Shamrock*, earlier reported ashore on Baker's Island, was got off by the crew of the Life Saving Station and wreckers, and on Jan. 22 towed to Southwest Harbor by a steam tug from Bangor. The life saving crew from Cranberry Isle station were alongside the wreck of the *Shamrock* in 20 minutes after she struck, and rendered all assistance they were allowed to. They towed out two anchors, helped strike out her boats and took the crew from Baker's Island on the fourteenth, carrying them the next day to Southwest Harbor.

Feb. 14, 1882

Southwest Harbor

The brig *Shamrock* still lies on the flats. A survey has lately been called on her, and estimates made of the amount of damages. The captain is inquiring for bids to put her in seagoing order again.

Feb. 25, 1882

The brig *Shamrock*, at Southwest Harbor, was sold at public auction last Monday. H.B. Mason of Ellsworth bought the hull and masts for \$1,190. The chains, anchors, sails, rigging and boats were sold to different parties in small lots, the whole thing bringing between \$2,000 and \$2,500.

April 5, 1882

The wrecked brig *Shamrock* has been towed to Bucksport, where she will go on the railway for repairs. She is to be fitted for the Grand Banks fisheries, so report says.

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Feb. 25, 1882

On Saturday morning Mr. Frank Robinson of Southwest Harbor hired a team of Mr. Holmes' and came to Bar Harbor to peddle flounders. While at Bar Harbor or on the way to or from Bar Harbor, he found some liquor, got drunk, and going home Saturday night strayed from the road and on to Long Pond, which lies between Beech Hill and Pretty Marsh. Here he tumbled out of the punga and lay on the ice all night and until half past ten Sunday forenoon, when he was found by Edward Hodgdon of Tremont. When found he was lying face upon the ice with his bare hands over his face. He was taken at once to Mr. Hessey's nearby, and Mr. Grindle was summoned. On examination his feet and legs to his body were found frozen stiff. His arms, hands, and face were also frozen so badly that it seems almost impossible for him to live, and the doctor, we understand, says the probability is that all of his limbs will have to be amputated. When found, the horse was out of the shafts and standing near him. One of the shafts and the dasher of the punga were broken. The horse was cared for by Mr. Hodgdon and taken back to Mr. Holmes Sunday afternoon. Mr. Robinson is still at Mr. Hessey's and suffering terribly. One of our reporters says it is the most horrible sight he has seen since he left the army.

Feb. 18, 1882

The schooner *SP. Brown*, of Newport, R.I., was lost off Chatham, Mass. in the gale of Jan. 23. She was laden with coal and foundered; all hands lost. Her captain was James Tinker of West Tremont, Me. who was at home at the time; the vessel being in charge of the mate, his son, James Tinker, Jr. Capt. Tinker had been called home on account of the sickness of his wife, who died the next day after he arrived, and now he loses his oldest son by the wreck of this vessel.

Tremont, March 4, 1882

The gale of the 20th inst. was one of the most terrific ever known in this vicinity, and the accompanying high tide, which was a "regular stunner" for the oldest inhabitants, was most destructive, and did considerable damage one way or another. The British schooner *Bucco*, of and from St. Johns N.B., with 150,000 long lumber for New York, dragged both anchors and went ashore, about two o'clock a.m. of the twenty-first inst., on the rocks near Lawson's beach. A crew of 13 men from Bass Harbor went aboard at high water and succeeded in getting the vessel off the rocks and in bringing her into the harbor. The vessel now lies at Richardson's wharf, full of water; rudder gone, sternpost badly damaged, and keel split. The deck load has been taken off. Carpenters are at work making a new rudder, and will try to patch the vessel up so she can be taken to Rockland and put on the marine railway.

The schooners *Pearl* and *May Wyman* broke their fastenings at C.M. Holden's wharf and went up on the beach so high that they will probably have to be launched. Slight damage was done to the wharf.

Southwest Harbor

The storm and high tide of Tuesday night, Feb. 21st did considerable damage at Southwest Harbor. A note from our reporter there received last week, too late for publication, stated that the steamboat wharf was up in the head of the harbor, the flooring out of the lobster factory, the top gone from Clark and Parker's wharf, William Ward's wharf washed away, and many small boats adrift and stove. Mr. Freeman's yacht *Fearless* was thrown upon the shore and badly damaged. The western shore of the harbor was strewn with drift stuff. The people here say the tide was the highest ever known.

April 12, 1883

The schooner *Romeo* from Bucksport, loaded with kiln wood, in going into Rockport Harbor last Monday morning, struck on a ledge but floated off without much damage. While trying to get her off, Wm. Dix, 56 years old, got overboard and was drowned. The crew was unable to recover the body, which floated out to sea.

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WAS DOROTHEA DIX FROM TREMONT?

By Maurice Joseph Marshall

There were recent efforts in Augusta to name the new state mental health facility after Dorothea Dix, a Maine native and 19th century advocate for reforms in the treatment of the mentally ill. The effort ultimately failed, but it sparked my curiosity about the question of Dorothea Dix's origins as I had heard that she was originally from Tremont as the Dix family is prominent in the town's history.

My journey of research disproved my belief in her origins, but what I learned of her life and work begged to be shared because of her remarkable accomplishments and selfless character. According to my friend and genealogist Ray Robbins, Dorothea's family was very distantly related to the Dix families in Tremont. The years Dorothea Dix lived in Maine were few, but let us believe that a part of her character was due to her Maine beginnings.

Dorothea Lynde Dix was born April 4, 1802 in Hampden. She was the first child of Joseph and Mary Bigelow Dix. Dorothea was named for her wealthy grandmother Madame Dorothea Dix of Boston. The family lived in Hampden on land owned by Dorothea's grandfather, Doctor Elijah Dix. Dorothea's father was an itinerant preacher, a publisher of religious tracts, and an abusive alcoholic. He had married against his family's wishes.

In the years when she should have been enjoying a childhood, Dorothea was forced to become both mother and father to her younger brothers. On the rare occasion when her father was home, Dorothea had to help bind by hand the religious tracts that her father sold for their meager income. Dorothea's mother Mary suffered from depression due to the family's stark existence. One of the few bright spots in Dorothea's early life came from visits by her grandfather, Dr. Elijah Dix. Tragically, he was murdered when Dorothea was seven – she would carry in her memory for the rest of her life those rare happy times in her otherwise joyless childhood.

Shortly before the British captured Hampden in the War of 1812, the family fled to Vermont; and after a short time, to Worcester, Massachusetts. Dorothea's mother by this time had developed severe headaches and her father was drinking very heavily. About the only gift Dorothea received from her father was the skill of reading and writing. She passed this on to her brothers and found a lifelong love for these essential skills, with which she blessed many others as well.

At this time, Grandmother Dix in Boston took steps to better the welfare of Dorothea and her brothers by bringing them into her home where Dorothea's parents were being cared for by relatives. Two years later, while living with a great aunt for a brief time in Worcester, Dorothea opened her own school for small children. She earned a reputation as a capable teacher and strict disciplinarian. Five years later she started a formal school for older children in a building on her grandmother's property in Boston. This school became very popular and Dorothea threw herself into the effort totally, as she would for so many endeavors for the rest of her life once her mind was set on a purpose. Her total devotion to this school caused her beau at the time, whom she planned to wed, to turn away from her and marry another, which broke Dorothea's heart. She never again gave her love to a man and turned her love instead to society's outcasts.

The school gave Dorothea enough income to support her now-widowed mother and to bring her two brothers to Boston to live. Dorothea began as well to have health problems and suffered attacks of what was termed at the time "lung trouble" and depression. She collapsed completely from these in 1836 and her school was forced to close. For the rest of her life, only her sheer energy and determination overcame the condition which today we know as tuberculosis.

After she partially recovered later that year, she sailed to Europe for complete rest in Italy. She never reached Rome because of a recurrence of her illness in England. She received care from a friend, William Rathbone III, who nursed her backed to health. Mr. Rathbone was a humanitarian and Dorothea came to

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meet his well-known friends such as Elizabeth Frye, a prison reformer, and Samuel Tuke, the proprietor of the York Retreat for the Mentally Disordered. There Dorothea learned of the newest theories of care for the insane, such as humane treatment, seclusion from family and society, less use of mechanical restraints, and useful tasks to keep the patients busy.

While in England, both Dorothea's mother and grandmother died. Dorothea returned to Boston in 1838 and was able to slow her pace due to the comfortable income her grandmother had left for her. She visited with friends and traveled to various resorts and points of interest.

Dorothea's life changed again on Sunday, March 28, 1841. She had volunteered to teach a Sunday School class of twenty female inmates at the jail in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After the lesson she walked through the jail despite the strong objections of the jailer, probably interested because of her time with the British prison reformer, Elizabeth Frye. Dorothea eventually reached the lower levels of the building where she found what was termed "dungeon cells" where the insane were chained. Miserable, wild, and stupefied men and women were chained to walls and locked into pens. They were naked, filthy, brutalized, underfed, given no heat, and had only the stone floor for a bed. This day and visit began what became Dorothea Dix's life work to improve the conditions for the mentally ill. Shortly after this visit, she campaigned to have stoves placed in the cells and the inmates fully clothed. In this effort Dorothea had to fight many forms of prejudice, but she succeeded in the end. She then turned her attention to a first-hand study of conditions for the insane throughout the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

This began a crusade that carried Dorothea Dix from Massachusetts to across the entire country gathering evidence on the conditions of the mentally ill to lobby state legislatures to pass laws to improve the treatment of mental illness. This required a fight to overcome the mindset that the mentally ill were less than human. She took her cause as well to the British Isles, France, Greece, Russia, Canada, and Japan. Her health was not good during all this, but her determination made up for what her body lacked.

Once the Civil War began, Dorothea was nearing 60 and volunteered to form an Army Nursing Corps. She was appointed Superintendent of Nurses for the Union Army. She never missed a day of work in her new assignment and organized hundreds of women volunteers, established and inspected hospitals, and raised money for medical supplies. In this she found another popular mindset to overcome and won recognition for women's roles in medicine.

After the war she worked to rehabilitate facilities in the Southern States that were damaged or neglected during the War. She continued in her work until illness overtook her in 1881. She spent her last years in an apartment on the grounds of the first hospital she had planned from the ground up – the New Jersey State Hospital. She died there on July 17, 1887.

Several biographies have been written on Dorothea Dix, several hospitals are named in her honor, and, of course there is the Dix Memorial Park in her home town of Hampden.

From a simple question about Dorothea Dix and Tremont, my research afforded a great opportunity to learn about this remarkable woman who rose from humble and harsh beginnings just down the road from Tremont in Hampden, Maine. +

Ralph's Page – *continued from page 3*

June 21, 1883

Capt. E.J. Stanley of the fishing schooner *Rozella* had quite an adventure recently. Not knowing the exact whereabouts of his vessel in the dense fog, he set out in a dory with one of his crew to try to find out, and not returning it was feared they had got into the breakers and were lost. He got ashore however at Baker's Island, where he passed the night and turned up all right in the morning, to the great joy of his friends and acquaintances.

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Sept. 13, 1883

Schooner *Fannie A. Spurling*, Capt. Spurling of Portland, has arrived with 230 barrels of mackerel on board. He has landed 600 barrels since the Fourth of July, which is considered doing rather better than the average these hard times. He came in last week to land one of his men, Orrington Spurling, sick and threatened with pneumonia, as the doctor pronounced; but the danger was averted and he is out again.

Herring "struck in" a while since and some big catches were made; but they are gone again leaving their pursuers "sad but undismayed." Some of the fishing vessels, the *Wild Rose*, Banker, and *Rozella*, Stanley, among the number, are now preparing for a cruise to Wood Island for herring.

Bass Harbor, Sept. 27, 1883

The Mount Desert Fertilizing Company is progressing finally. They have built a nice wharf with two buildings thereon and are digging a large well. With this industry and the Fish Packing Company this place will take the lead, in a business point of view, of any place on the island.

Oct. 18, 1883

The Bangor papers state that Mr. Andrew Lopaus, postmaster at West Tremont, came to that city and announced to the authorities that depredation had been recently committed in his vicinity and the thief was thought to be in or about Bangor. The police took the matter in hand and about two o'clock Tuesday afternoon Officer Dougherty arrested Frank G. Ober, of West Tremont, who acknowledged his guilt soon after being taken to the station house. Ober is about 27 years of age and worked during the summer at the Tremont House. When arrested he showed signs of having drunk freely and said that the depredations with which he was charged were committed while he was under the influence of liquor. He says he bought a quart of gin, drank it all within two or three hours, and while in that condition he broke into the Post Office at West Tremont and also entered the store of Mrs. Heath at Seal Cove, taking money and various articles from both places. He went to Bangor by steamer and made a short visit to relatives a few miles to the eastward. While in the city he drank more or less. It is understood that before reaching maturity he passed several years in the State Reform School. When taken into custody he had in his possession a small portion of the money stolen and also some of the goods taken.

Gotts Island, May 1, 1884

Miss Bertha Robinson of Southwest Harbor is teaching a class in music at this place.

Swan's Island, May 15, 1884

A large class of music is being formed here to be under the tuition of Miss Bertha Robinson of Southwest Harbor

Gott's Island, May 22, 1884

Miss Bertha E. Robinson of Southwest Harbor has finished her class of music. She was liked very much and was a successful teacher. She left Saturday for home and several of her scholars went with her as far as Bass Harbor.

Sept. 5, 1884

First bicycle at Southwest Harbor on the street, owned by a guest at the Freeman cottage. +

ANNUAL MEETING OF TREMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

7:00 p.m. Monday June 28, 2004 at Bass Harbor Memorial Library

- **Reports of the year's activities and finances**
- **Election of Officers and Board Members**
- **Discussion of future Plans and Dreams**
- **All Members urged to attend; friends invited as well.**

Programs for Upcoming Meetings

We hold regular meetings for members and others who are interested, on the fourth Monday of each month except December. These meetings do not involve business, though there are likely to be some announcements or promotions of whatever is going on or needed. The main reason for our gathering is to present programs which we think will be of interest to people. The President has assigned each Board member the responsibility of choosing one program theme, finding the speaker or other program source, and making needed arrangements. The Tremont column in the *Bar Harbor Times* always announces the particulars of the upcoming meeting.

April 26 – Douglas Norwood speaking on Rev. Lemuel Norton

May 24 – Muriel Davisson doing a “Repeat Performance” on Ruth Moore and Eleanor Mayo

June 28 – Annual Meeting – “Picture Perusal” to help identify people and places in our photos

July 26 – To be announced

Aug. 23 – Ray Robbins – Dawes Family

Sept. 27 – Clayton Gilley – Afghanistan

Oct. 25 – Chuck Liebow – Topic to be announced

Nov. 22 – John Clark, Jr. – Topic to be announced

An item of interest is that all programs are recorded and the tapes carefully preserved. It is possible to make transcripts from these tapes, as well as to make copies of the tapes themselves. If there are requests, we can make these materials available to persons who are unable to attend the meetings. If you are interested in this possibility, please make contact through the mail, by phone, or by e-mail.

Thanks,

John MacDuffie, Editor

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207-244-0259

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ACQUISITIONS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

- **Painting of Bass Harbor by Kendwick, donated by Wayne Libhart**
- **Six framed ship pictures, donated by Patricia Thurston**
- **Tremont Larger Parish papers donated by Janice Reed**
- **Boxed typewriter donated by Marilyn Dolliver**
- **Collection of fishing net needles and spacers, donated by Marilyn Dolliver**

New Domain Name for our Web Page

Vice President and Webmaster Chuck Liebow has obtained as our domain name
tremontmainehistory.us.com

This site will be under revision and expansion as time permits.

When I Was a Boy

H.M. Eaton to the Mount Desert Herald, June 28, 1889

When Parson Eaton was about eighty years old and ceased to be the active pastor of the Congregational Church (only preaching occasionally) there was quite a religious excitement in Southwest Harbor and vicinity. The Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists were quite anxious to increase the membership of their respective churches. The old parson thought there was too much proselyting going on. He said he wanted to see the church built up of which he had been pastor for half a century or more, but that he wanted to see it done in an honorable way, and not by proselyting the converts. He said he wanted to preach one more sermon to the people, and wanted everybody to hear it.

He made an appointment to preach in the church at Southwest Harbor, and requested the members of different churches to come and hear him. The church was well filled. He took for his text the words of Jesus to Peter and Andrew, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." He had some very original illustrations. I remember one, very distinctly. He told them that when several men went a-fishing in the same vessel, each fisherman marked his fish, and they were all salted separately, and when the voyage was ended the fish were washed out and put on flakes and dried for the market. If a man was found having in his possession any fish of another man's mark, he would be regarded as dishonest and mean and never again to be trusted. He said that such a fisherman would be no more mean or dishonest than a pastor or layman who should influence a convert to join a church, who hadn't the mark of the church on him.

The sermon had the effect to check most effectually the proceedings of some over-zealous members and imprudent ministers. He advised them to let the converts alone, and give them a chance to choose for themselves what church to join. If they failed to take his advice, he thought they might have some trouble in the final settlement at the end of the voyage of life. He said if there are people in any of these churches through your influence, who ought not to have been there, then what answer can you make in the final settlement? This sermon was ever after called "Father Eaton's fish sermon."

I was a small boy then but remember very distinctly that it made quite an impression on my mind, for I thought it was rather sensible. It was the only sermon that I listened to as a boy, any part of which I can remember! I only remember this sermon on account of his illustration; it has been helpful to me during my ministry of almost fifty years. Illustrations make a lasting impression on the minds of the young, and help people of more advanced years to see truth and duty in a much clearer light than any doctrinal or metaphysical discussion that is not illustrated.

I think this was Parson Eaton's last public discourse in this town. His wife and many of his children had gone home to the spirit world, and he soon left Mount Desert and went to Sedgwick to spend the sunset of life with his only living daughter, Mrs. Richard Currier. He died at her home, aged eighty-seven years. Better men than Parson Eaton are not very numerous. He had quite a farm at Southwest Harbor and a wood lot, and hired men to work for him for many years.

I heard him say in the pulpit when he was an old man that "he had never sued a man and never was sued, he never took snuff, smoked or chewed tobacco," but he added, "My friends, I have drank a leetle rum." As I lived in his family nearly eight years in all, I knew his habits well. He always took a table-spoon-full of West Indies rum and about the same amount of wormwood with a little sugar and water three times a day except Sunday. It was one of my duties to prepare it for him. When he treated his company he never drank with them except they were there at meal time when he took his regular "bitters." He signed the temperance pledge some years before he died. +

Curious Punctuation

The following specimens of curious punctuation were given by the *Printer's Register*:

- A man who was suddenly taken sick “hastened home while every means for his recovery were resorted to. In spite of all his efforts, he died in the triumphs of the Christian religion.”
- “A man was killed by a railroad car running into Boston, supposed to be deaf.”
- A man writes: “We have decided to erect a school-house large enough to accommodate 500 scholars five stories high.”
- On a certain railway the following luminous direction was printed: “Hereafter, when trains in an opposite direction are approaching each other on separate lines, conductors and engineers will be requested to bring their trains to a dead halt before the point of meeting, and be careful not to proceed till each train has passed the other.”
- A steamboat captain, advertising an excursion, says, “Tickets, 25 cents; children half-price to be had at the office.”
- An Iowa editor says, “We have received a basket of fine grapes from our friend W., for which he will please accept our compliments, some of which are nearly two inches in diameter.”

Recollections of School Days in Bernard

By John MacDuffie

The only winter we spent in Bernard prior to my retirement in 1995 was 1941-42. My parents had ended their association with the MacDuffie School for Girls in Springfield, Mass. (the school founded by my grandparents) and my dad, Malcolm Sr., had begun his studies at Bangor Seminary. He also had begun his duties as student pastor at Ellsworth Falls Congregational Church, but as that church did not have a parsonage it was up to us to find housing. The old Benson homestead under the hill from Shirley and Cora Kelley's home had become our summer place, so it was pressed into service with a kerosene-fired cookstove in the kitchen and coal heater in the living room. My mother (Margaret) who had done precious little cooking in her married life due to having a full-time teaching job and a German nannie, now learned how to do it on a shoestring. It was a time of change and adjustment, and of course with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor occurring that winter on Dec. 7, the nation and the world were in upheaval.

My brother Malcolm Jr. was in the 7th grade that year, and I was in the fifth. We met in the front room at the Bernard School with Bernard Johnson as the teacher of grades 4-8. One row to a grade, we were, and maybe about 30 kids in all. The lower grades were in the room at the back, and I'll admit I had no awareness of them at all. Maybe they used the playground for their recesses at different times than ours, or at least another section. The only school mates in that year and that room that I can remember are Arlene Mitchell and Rosie Benson, who were close friends, and I think Dick Stanchfield, Joe Wooster's grandson, who became one of Malcolm's pals. I had no special friends at the school, but during one brief encounter I found an enemy in Tommy Murphy, who tended to beat up on smaller kids. When he tried it on me, I lost my temper and apparently “windmilled” him in good style. I got a bloody nose out of it, but Rosie did commend me for stopping Tommy—for the moment at least.

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My vague memories of the school day were that after opening exercises we took standard subjects like the three R's in order, grade by grade from younger to older. I suppose that while another grade was working with Mr. Johnson we had some desk work to keep us busy. When he had passed on to the next higher grade, I remember being quite interested in the slightly more difficult work they were doing, and while I made believe to attend to my assignment I was trying out the arithmetic problems or learning the vocabulary words he was teaching to them. I think that was one of the great virtues of one and two-room schools, for kids who had a hunger for learning. And, perhaps, if we paid attention to what was being done in a younger grade, we might even get some remedial help if that was needed!

I do remember one special day when the eighth grade boys were having a lesson in science or mechanics or whatever it was called. Mr. Johnson had been telling them how a siphon worked. They were total skeptics—such a thing simply could not happen! I got interested in what was being discussed three rows away because they were getting louder and louder as they tried to shout the teacher down. But Mr. Johnson said, “After lunch I’ll show you that I am right.” And of course this became a special happening for all five grades that afternoon. Mr. Johnson came back from lunch hour with a long piece of copper tubing. He opened the top half of one of the big windows on the front of the building, and draped the tubing up over the sash and down on the other side. Then he put one end of the tubing in a pail of water, applied suction to the other end, and Voila! the siphon worked! I wish I could remember some of the reactions of those big boys who must have felt a bit foolish to see their teacher prove them wrong.

For some reason I have no recollection of any disciplinary action by Mr. Johnson. Maybe we were a group of perfectly-behaved children—though I doubt it! Or maybe he was a genius at keeping us interested and engaged so that we had no time to misbehave.

Two other memories are strong for me. One was that after Pearl Harbor, every morning Mr. Johnson gave us a brief digest of the war news, I’m sure carefully edited to make it less devastating than the events he was reporting. I suppose it seemed very unreal to us, at our tender ages, to hear of battles fought worlds away. But I came away feeling that with Mr. Johnson there, though the news was bad we were going to get through this terrible time. Somehow I got a more reassuring feeling from his demeanor than I got at home, as my mother listened to the news on the radio every evening—I think from Lowell Thomas—with an expression of great pain and anxiety on her face. Apparently she felt that we were too young to be told about the war, so all we got was the sight of her face. I don’t remember whether she knew that Mr. Johnson was telling us about it every morning. (She probably did, for though I didn’t believe it at the time, I found out eventually that my mother was one smart lady!)

The other memory is of a day in early spring, as I recall, when one of the older boys came to school and announced to the whole room, “Everybody, be quiet! Cecil Rich is dead!” Cecil was the youngest son of Cliff and Elizabeth Rich, whose older sons Roger, Ronald, and Robert (Bobby) were all promising boat builders. It was said that already, at age 17, Cecil showed more natural talent than any of his brothers. But that day he had died—I believe of scarlet fever. The war news came from a far distant place, and probably did not move us very much. But the death of a teenager who lived hardly more than a stone’s throw from the schoolhouse was a real tragedy in our lives and brought us to absolute stunned silence that day in 1942.

By the time school opened in Sept. 1942 my Dad had been called to serve the Congregational Church in Ellsworth, and we had moved to the parsonage on Bridge Hill. Bridge Hill School was just down the street, and we found ourselves in rooms with just two grades each. Life and school went on, but as the reader can tell from the foregoing, plentiful memories of a year at the Bernard School have remained. +

PLANNING FOR THE 2005 SOUTHWEST HARBOR CENTENNIAL

By Maurice Joseph Marshall

Planning for the centennial of the formation of the Town of Southwest Harbor in 1905 has continued in earnest for almost a year. The effort is led on behalf of the Town by the Southwest Harbor/Tremont Chamber of Commerce and its Executive Director, Bruce Carlson and his wife, Becky Hodgdon Carlson. Many community members representing different areas of interest comprise the Steering Committee and additional volunteers are needed. Please contact Mr. Carlson at the Chamber office at 244-9264 if you'd like to help.

There will be a book on the history of Southwest Harbor, a documentary film on DVD directed by Southwest Harbor filmmaker Thom Willey, walking tours on the Manset Shore Road and Clark Point Road in Southwest Harbor as well as monthly events on different aspects of Town history.

The Southwest Harbor Centennial in the year 2005 will be a great opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of historic preservation for all of Mount Desert Island.



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
Bass Harbor ME
04653
Permit No. 7

SPRING 2004 NEWSLETTER

Prepared especially for