

# The Newsletter of the Tremont Historical Society

Vol. 9 No. 2

Spring 2006

Published periodically 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.

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## From the President's Desk

Hello once again to all the readers of our Newsletter. We do wish to thank readers for pictures and articles you send to us to be published. Compliments on our Newsletter have been received and are greatly appreciated.

Our Editor has informed me that he has some great pictures for this issue, so with that in mind I will keep my notes as short as possible.

The Museum will open for the season on Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup>, and remain open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. until mid-October.

Our programs for this year have been finalized as much as possible at this time, and acquisitions are coming in at a steady rate. (*See articles.*) Genealogies also seem to be of more interest.

One last thing: I would like to ask all of you who may be cleaning out (Spring, you know) to be very careful what you throw away. This includes people doing reconstruction work. Many things are being found in the walls of old houses that are of a historic nature and value.

Sincerely,

Arlene Bartlett, President  
244-5268

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## Some Trivia (but not trivial) Items:

- In what year was the Bass Harbor Country Store first opened as a tourist attraction? **1965**
- What distinguished local gentleman was M.C. on that occasion, in a stovepipe hat? **Oscar Tolman**
- Which Governor of the State of Maine was the featured speaker on that day? **John Reed**
- Where did the dignitaries sit during the dedication ceremonies? **On the flat roof of a storage building which was part of the Underwood Co. sardine factory, across the street from the Store.**
- What attractive young lady was a guest of honor? **Miss Maine**
- What local ladies were the "storekeepers" in period costume? **Mrs. Hilda Sylvia, Mrs. Violet Griffin, and Mrs. Constance Cummings**
- What local pastor gave the invocation? **Mr. Girard Remsen**
- What seagoing craft was featured in the parade? **An amphibious jeep from the Hancock County Sheriff's Department**

*(This information contained in an article in the Bar Harbor Times, June 17, 1965)*

# RALPH'S PAGE

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

## When I Was a Boy – H.M. Eaton to the Mount Desert Herald July 15, 1889

My grandmother Eaton was a very liberal and kind-hearted woman. People who had been indolent and intemperate used to come to the house in the spring to beg or borrow flour or meal. They would first ask grandfather and promise to return the amount borrowed, or pay for it in work. Having been deceived so many times he wouldn't trust them anymore; he told them that he would sell but had no meal or flour to give away or to lend. They would hang around the premises till they could see grandmother. They knew she wouldn't deny them. When the parson got well interested in his studies my grandmother would go into the chamber and put meal or flour into their bag and throw it out of the window. Then I was instructed to carry it to a certain place about ten rods from the house and leave it by the side of a large log, that she called "our hiding place." Very soon it would be taken away by the man who came for it, but had been refused. During my six years residence in that family I probably hid meal or flour more than a hundred times. My grandmother was always kind to the poor, however unworthy they might be; she pitied the poor wife and children, who were not to be blamed for the indolence and intemperance of the husband and father. No better woman lived, and the poor and needy were never sent empty away from her door.

When I was a boy we had a school teacher at Norwood's Cove (I spoke of him once in a former paper) named Francis B. Morgan. I attended his school four winters. He was an excellent teacher, and his school government was nearly perfect. When he punished a scholar once that was generally sufficient. No scholar could forget a ferruling or pinching of the ear. He had a long sharp thumb nail, and when he took hold of *my* ear I thought he never intended to let go. When he did let go I put my hand to the side of my head to determine whether I had any ear left!

He never took me by the ear but once in the four winters, for after having taken one of his pinches, I had a perpetual fear of that thumbnail. While he was taking off my ear, as I then thought, I didn't cry as many others had done, I was too mad to cry, I felt more like fighting. How I did wish for the size and strength of a man! He was a good man, notwithstanding that thumb nail that he used as an instrument of torture to naughty boys and girls.

Mr Morgan always prayed in his school in the morning, but he had the habit of praying with one eye open. If there was any misconduct during his prayer, punishment was inflicted with much severity. He was very popular, both as a man and a teacher. People called him an excellent Christian, and I always supposed he was until he got my ear between his thumb and finger. I was satisfied that he was not doing as he would be done by. I shall never forget that thumb nail as long as I have an ear on my head.

There was a man at Southwest Harbor named Mayo; he was not a man of wealth, but a very upright man. In common conversation he stuttered badly, but when he prayed he didn't stutter at all. People thought it strange that he didn't stutter when talking to the Lord. But such was the case. He has one child still living, I believe; his large family with that exception has passed away. A grandson of his graduated from college a few years ago. I am not aware that any of his descendants have been intemperate or engaged in disgraceful transactions. There were good blood and brains in the family, which were more important than wealth and popularity resting on a false basis.+

## RICH & GRINDLE BOATBUILDERS—SOUTHWEST HARBOR

By Meredith Rich Hutchins

In 1946 my father, Roger Rich, and Ralph Grindle went into the boat building business together in Southwest Harbor. Their sign said “Rich & Grindle Boatbuilders, General Repair Work, Wire Splicing and Rigging” and their boat shop was located in the barn behind our house on Clark Point Road.

Ralph and his family lived across the street from us. He had grown up in Stonington but he would spend summers with his grandparents in Hall Quarry, arriving on the *J. T. Morse*. During the depression he spent two and a half years at the CCC Camp, where he worked in the woods, drove a park truck and then became tool clerk, “Which was best,” Ralph said, “Because you were your own boss.”

My father did a stint in a Mount Desert Island CCC Camp too, though I don’t think he enjoyed it much. But he and his brothers, Ronald and Robert, drew straws to see who would have to go and my father got the short one. With no work available, the thirty dollars a month the government paid the men’s families made the difference between independence and going on the town.

At camp my father had hoped to do carpentry work, but there were older, more experienced carpenters already there, so he was assigned to dig out stumps. I once asked him what he did there and he said, “Mostly I had KP duty and peeled potatoes, because I was always in trouble. And it was some damn cold in the winter.”

He got out as soon as he could and his experience peeling potatoes may have come in handy after all because Ben Worcester, who had a logging operation up on Carroll’s Hill, gave him a job as “cookee.” This was good, my father said, because sometimes Ben would let him go home weekends. Later he opened a filling station in Bernard, not a good idea during a depression, and after that failed, he spent World War II at the Henry R. Hinckley Yacht Co. In 1946 Ralph, who’d done wartime service in the navy, was at the spar shop in charge of wire splicing and rigging. According to my father, Ralph was one of the best wire splicers in the business.

Their departure from Hinckleys’ came about like this: “Roger and Henry had a misunderstanding,” Ralph said. “Henry had built a boat for Jim Willis and then built another supposedly just like it. But Roger didn’t like the shear on Jim’s boat, so he changed it when the second one was built. Both boats were on their moorings, side by side, and the second boat looked so much better that Jim was teed off. So Jim went to Henry and gave him hell. Henry cut the shear down on Jim’s Hinckley and Roger got sent to the spar shop.”

“I was getting ready to leave, myself,” Ralph told me. “And then Roger said, ‘Let’s go build a boat in my barn.’”

The first boat to come out of the Rich & Grindle partnership was the 32’ *Eva G.*, built for Vernon Dalzell of Frenchboro. Servicemen returning to the Maine coast after the war had money and wanted new boats. My father’s brother, Robert (Bobby) Rich, who was already building boats at his Bass Harbor Boat Shop in Bernard, had more boats to build than he could handle, so he gave Rich & Grindle the contract.

After the *Eva G.*, Rich & Grindle built a launch for Carroll Tyson, and a 32’ boat for Nelson Rockefeller’s

captain to use. In May 1948 they launched the 34' *Guardian* for the Maine Sea & Shore Fisheries Patrol.

*The 32' open boat, pictured outside the Rich & Grindle boat shop on Clark Pt. Rd., Southwest Harbor, was built for Carroll Tyson in 1948. Ralph said that he built the windshield and "the oak I used was dry, so each piece had to be steamed."*

"Roger kept the books," Ralph said, "We received one third when the contract was signed, one third when the planking was finished, and the final third upon completion."

When times were slack the partners framed an addition to the Carroll Building on Main Street and worked on the roof. They also laid linoleum nights for H. G. Reed. My father was skilled at laying linoleum. His uncle, Hollis Reed, for whom he had worked off and on since high school, was always trying to get him to do another linoleum job.

Then in January 1949, Ralph became ill with what was eventually diagnosed as Guillan-Barre Syndrome. Paralyzed except for his lungs, he was hospitalized at Eastern Maine General Hospital in Bangor.

When he was able to leave the hospital and go to his sister's house in Bangor to recuperate, my father built him a wheelchair. "It was a funny looking thing," Ralph told me, "but it worked. And only once did I have to let someone take me to the bathroom. After that I managed by myself."

Ralph got back to Southwest Harbor in May 1949, but his days of climbing in and out of boats were over. On January 1, 1950 he opened Grindle's Store on Main St., which he ran until 1980, when his son, John, took over.

In the meantime my father had another boat to build, the *Aquarelle II*, for Talbot and Jessica Hamlin, uncle and aunt of Cyrus Hamlin, a naval architect in Southwest Harbor. The contract had been signed on December 21, 1948.

Due to Ralph's illness, work on the boat was delayed, and I recall that the summer of 1949, with the Hamlins in town waiting for their boat to be finished, was not the easiest my father ever put in.

Despite any tensions, the Hamlins said some nice things about my father when they wrote their book We Took To Cruising. "Roger Rich is one of the fifth generation of boat builders. He has the feel and know-how ... for boats ... he is also an excellent mechanic and ... has an immaculate sense of standards. His father (Cliff Rich) —also a boat builder—came over and helped during the last rush weeks of construction."

Finally on September 9 the *Aquarelle II* was ready to be launched. To be set afloat the boat had to be dragged out of the shop onto Clark Point Road, turned a hundred and eighty degrees and then hauled down a rough graveled way to Tracy Cove. The Gordon & White Garage tow truck was hired to pull the boat along in its cradle.

Unfortunately the night before the launching, an express truck driver with a load of fish had swerved to avoid a skunk, tipped his truck over and wrecked it. The wrecker was needed to salvage the express truck, so the *Aquarelle* had to wait.

The next day was warm and sunny. "When we got down to the shop," the Hamlins' account says, "we

found the *Aquarelle* already being pulled along in great jerks by the wrecking car... At the gutter she stopped. Much discussion. Then they commandeered another truck, a heavy oil truck, and chained it to the wrecker and snaked (the boat) over the gutter... and switched her round to the required angle... From then on the way was easy—just down hill.”

“At the bottom there was a flat space and as (*Aquarelle*) began to slide down the ways there was a satisfactory crash as the champagne spurted over the dark blue bow ... then ... the stern hit the water--she was afloat.” My father was aboard. He started the engine and brought the boat into the dock.

A few days later the Hamlins left Southwest Harbor for their homeport in Stamford, Ct. “One bell had struck before we finally left the float of Beal’s lobster pound,” they wrote, “There we had taken on 70 pounds of ice—Roger Rich lugged it down himself— we were happy to be on our way.”

And so was my father, I might add. It had been a long summer and I suspect that for once in his life he didn’t mind lugging 70 pounds of ice onto a boat..

With *Aquarelle* out of the shop my father began to build a 32’ cabin cruiser for John Wolfe, a textile manufacturer in New York. In the spring of 1950 my mother and father delivered the boat to him on Long Island for what turned out to be a really special vacation. Mr. Wolfe had someone show them around New York City and got them tickets to South Pacific.

*This boat, pictured in Southwest Harbor, was built for John Wolfe of Freeport, N.Y. in 1948-49. Roger and Lucille Rich delivered this boat to Mr. Wolfe on Long Island in the spring of 1949.*

After they had returned home, a large box of fabric arrived, a gift from Mr. Wolfe. Inside were bolts of material my mother had selected in New York, enough for living room curtains, plus a contrasting design that she used to reupholster the chairs and couch.

A second box that Mr. Wolfe had shipped to us consisted of fabric samples in many designs and colors. Supposedly these large squares were for Rich & Grindle to use as paint rags. Needless to say, my mother saw to it that they never went near the boat shop, and soon there were decorative pillows scattered about the house.

During the 1950s my father built a number of other boats, including the 34’ *Driftwood* for Henry Wass of Southwest Harbor. This boat was built from western red cedar that came from a water tank Henry had owned, and he expected to use the boat to go tuna fishing. But in 1953, after he had a heart attack, it was sold. In 1988 Jarvis Newman bought *Driftwood* from the Blaney family of Ironbound Island. He rebuilt the boat and sold it to Garrett Lansing of Northeast Harbor, who renamed it *Chicken of the Sea*.

Then my father, who had never enjoyed the business end of the building business, the losing money part, that is, decided to go lobster fishing. So he built himself the 27’ *Meredith I*. The cabin and windshield were plumb and she had a raised deck. I felt very proud to have a boat named after me.

During the winter of 1956-57 he and his friend, Francis “Mickey” Fahey, went to Plymouth, Massachusetts to build a replica of the Pilgrims’ shallop, while at the same time a replica of the *Mayflower* was being built in Plymouth, England. The shallop, 33’ long and equipped with a mainsail, a jib and oars, was the vessel that had remained with the Pilgrims in 1621 when the *Mayflower* sailed back to England.

My father's brother, Robert Rich, was a friend of George Davis, owner of Plymouth Marine Railways, who had the contract. Mr. Davis, whose father and grandfather came from Washington County, claimed that Maine boat builders were the best. He subcontracted the job to my Uncle Bobby, who then hired my father and Mickey to actually go and build the boat.

In 1959, when my father was working at Hinckleys' again, he hired his brother, Ronald, to build him a bigger boat. Ronald was renting the Rich & Grindle shop and there he built the 35' *Meredith II*.

After he gave up lobstering the boat was sold to Northeast Harbor fisherman Sheldon "Snicker" Damon, who renamed it *Mum's Mink*. Whenever I went to his market in Bar Harbor to buy fish, Snicker would ask after my father and I never told him I wasn't quite reconciled to the name, *Mum's Mink*.

A few years ago, when he and my father and Ronald were no longer alive and the boat was in bad shape, Snicker's sons decided to restore her. They replaced the rotten wood, put in a new head, a full galley and awl-gripped the hull. It was a fitting salute both to the boat and the men who'd known her when she was young. They would have been delighted with the "new" *Meredith II / Mum's Mink*. +

## **A NOTABLE OCCASION**

By John MacDuffie

Among a collection of fascinating artifacts which came to us from Audrey Moore, courtesy her grandson Michael Radcliffe, is the program of the "Twenty-second Annual Meeting of the Mount Desert Island Federation and Hancock County Union of Women's Clubs, Eighth District."

This day-long event was held in Tremont (venue unspecified) "By Invitation of the Woman's Club," on May 22, 1937. A handsome printed program was prepared, listing 16 clubs from all the towns on Mt. Desert, plus Bucksport, Castine, Ellsworth, Franklin, Hancock and Sullivan. Among the officers are listed Mrs. Oscar A. Tolman as Reporter, and Mrs. Edmund B. Reed as District Director. Tremont listed both its Woman's Club and a Millay (Junior) Club. Only Bar Harbor and Ellsworth also listed two member clubs within their borders.

Other Tremont ladies whose names appear on the program are Mrs. Reed who was the leader of the singing by the Assembly of the "Maine Song" (which I will share at the conclusion of this article;) Mrs. Clarence Smith, who gave the Invocation; Mrs. Ralph Benson who gave Greetings from the Tremont Woman's Club; and again Mrs. Reed who gave Remarks by the District Director.

The morning session included reports from the clubs, business, and a Memorial Service led by the Northeast Harbor Club. One imagines that all were then ready to enjoy a lunch which, as both cooks and eaters were ladies who possessed legendary culinary skills, must have been, in itself, a notable event.

In the afternoon session the program lists an appearance by the High School Orchestra, a lecture titled "Puritan Influence on American Life and Thought" by a Miss Ida Folsom from Dover-Foxcroft, and a special presentation titled "Garden of Music" by the Tremont and Southwest Harbor Clubs. Among the papers coming to us from Audrey Moore's collection was a full script for this very creative and interesting collation of songs, poems, and commentary to illustrate its theme. Names listed as presenters of material were Miss Cora Mills as pianist, readings by Miss Helen Crocker, a solo "Trees" by Mrs. Brotemarkle, another solo by the same lady, a song "When the Snow-birds Cross the valley" by Charlotte Robbins, a song, "Little Old

Lady” by the Millay Club girls, and a song “God’s Garden” by Mrs. Mildred Hall. The Tremont Woman’s Club also rendered “Whispering Hope,” and the assemblage was led in the chorus of “In the Garden” as a duet of the verses was sung.

The considerable amount of thought, planning, and creative writing which went into this presentation reminds us of a similarly ambitious effort of the Tremont Woman’s Club, which was the serial writing by a large number of members of the Club of two short novels of adventure and intrigue, which our Historical Society published in 2002 under the title “Two Tall Tales.” These writings took place over a period of several years when at every meeting, a designated member read the chapter which she had written, and between meetings the subsequently appointed author prepared her contribution to continue the story.

The program for this event in 1937 lists a Collect or gathering prayer, which expresses many of the ideals of this group of women:

*Hear us, O Father, that with all our seeking for the beautiful in Truth, Literature, Music, Art, Humanity, we may be endowed by Thee with wisdom, understanding and charity.*

*Teach us to be governed by our admirations and generous impulses.*

*May we be considerate of the feelings and opinions and the rights of others.*

*Vouchsafe to us the queenly graces of patience, tolerance, friendliness and courtesy in all our associations with one another.*

*Enrich our affections so that a golden thread of friendship shall be woven into our relations for mutual benefit. Amen.*

And finally, the “Maine Song” (no author listed) to be sung to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic:

We love the matchless beauty of the fine old state of Maine,  
Its children, though they wander, to its arms return again.  
It gives the guests within its gates the peace they would obtain,  
The Pine Tree State of Maine.

*Refrain:*

Maine, we sing thy matchless beauty!

Maine, we sing thy matchless beauty!

Maine, we’ll ever do our duty to honor thy dear name.

We have blessed its noble women, we have cheered its able men,  
We have praised its homes and churches, and we laud them once again.  
To river, shore and ocean, Yes, to mountain, vale and glen,  
We lift our loyal song.

*Refrain.*

A notable occasion, indeed! One wishes those simpler, kinder days might return to our Tremont neighborhoods once more! +

### **Speaker Programs for 2006**

***Held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Bass Harbor Memorial Library***

May 22 – Poem Recital by Edna Lewis

June 26 – Ralph Stanley – “History of Boat Yards”

July 24 – Annual Meeting – “Show and Tell”  
 Aug. 28 – Raymond Robbins – “Pomroy Family”  
 Sept. 25 – Spencer Ervin – TBA  
 Oct. 23 – Meredith Hutchins – “Dr. George Neal—Photos of Tremont”  
 Nov. 27 – Wendell Seavey – “Round Table Discussion”  
**No programs Dec., Jan., Feb.**

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

- Photo by Samuel Chamberlain, published 1941 in The Coast of Maine by Stanley F. Baker.  
*Gift of Meredith Rich Hutchins, whose grandparents, Clifton and Elizabeth Rich, lived across the road.*

*Herm Farley’s Barn, Baldwin Corner, Bernard. Demolished when the road was widened. Herm Farley build innumerable punts for the local fishermen (such as the example seen in front of the barn.) His son Raymond continued to build the same model punts after his father’s death. One little story about Herm: once a customer stopped to ask about a used punt which was displayed for sale. “Is she a good punt?” asked the visitor. “I’ll say she is,” replied Herm. “Why, I’ve known her ever since she was a little punty!”*

- From Audrey Moore, mother of Lester Radcliffe, courtesy grandson Michael Radcliffe—a collection of memorabilia including photos of the workforce at Underwood Co. sardine factory in 1915, programs from Grammar School and High School graduations, notes about events taking place in McKinley and Bernard.
- 10 large and 4 small framed pictures; Umbrella (black) with carved wooden handle and tassel; Apron (half) white with crocheted lace on bottom and pocket
- Philco radio (table model) with 4 extra tubes
- Picture (oval, unframed) of lady from Seal Cove, name on back “Pierce”
- “Captain’s Report & Chief Officer’s Abstract Log” from Sept. 23, 1919 to Nov. 15, 1919, signed by Daniel Norwood, Southwest Harbor.
- Stoles from sheep’s wool which was cleaned, carded and hand spun by Marilyn Dolliver. The colors were made from a dye solution or formula which Marilyn produced from plants she collected in her own back yard. These two stoles were donated to the Tremont Historical Society posthumously 4/24/2006.
- 9 Bottles, 2 Sauce Dishes, bunch of old Nails, Wooden Peg, Handle, Newspaper clippings 1923, Post card, color Comic Page 1923, Paper, “Globe,” 1923
- Sample Wall Paper
- 9 Posters, 34”x 23,” 1909

### *Editor’s Note:*

*The following Response Form gives readers of the Newsletter an opportunity to show support for our work in recording Tremont history and making various artifacts and materials available to the public through the Country Store Museum. Membership by payment of dues is only one way of doing this. Another is by responding to our Annual Appeal each year in late summer or early fall. For those who live in the area, we invite your offer of time and effort to help by staffing the Museum or work in other areas of interest to you. Please let us know of your interest in contributing to the fulfillment of our Mission.*



**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 \_\_\_\_\_

Check if this is a summer address \_\_\_\_\_ If different, please enter winter address below:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**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

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04653  
Permit No. 7

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**Address Correction Requested**

# *SPRING 2006 NEWSLETTER*

Prepared especially for