

The Newsletter of the Tremont Historical Society

Vol. 9 No. 1

Spring-Summer 2005

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.

From the President's Desk

It is a pleasure once again to talk to the membership and friends of the Tremont Historical Society via our Newsletter.

As usual at this time of year we are kept busy with preparations for opening the Museum for the season. Our hours are 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. each Wednesday and Saturday, from June 22nd to October 12th.

This year we will have on display some of the Flapper-era dresses that were donated this year; also a display of colorful Depression Glass which is on loan for the season.

We have two projects this summer to which the public is invited.

First is the Third Annual Rummage Sale at the Community Building on Saturday July 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We have a large collection of clothing of very good quality, as well as books, housewares, and miscellaneous items.

If you could give us some help on Friday the 15th to hang clothes in preparation for the sale, please call me at 244-5268.

And, the Historical Society will sponsor a book-signing event at the Bass Harbor Memorial Library in Bernard on Sunday, August 28 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. There will be 7 local authors present to sign a total of 13 books. We invite everyone to stop by, meet the authors, stock up on books for fall and winter reading, and enjoy refreshments.

Authors who will participate in this unusual event are Wendell Seavey, Sven Davisson, Muriel Davisson, Wayne Libhart, Ginnie Libhart, Ralph Stanley, and Raymond Robbins.

See you there!

Sincerely,
Arlene Bartlett, President
244-5268

P.S. Speaker meetings are held on the fourth Monday of every month except December. Notice of these, with speaker or program topic, is published in the Bar Harbor Times, Tremont news column.

Answer to Winter Trivia Question: Concerning the origin of the name "Baldwin's Corner"

See article by Ruth S. Holmes on page 4

RALPH'S PAGE

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

Items from the Mount Desert Herald

Sept. 10, 1881

Schooner *Harvest Home*, Captain Pickering, arrived at Lamoine Sept. 4th. The captain reports having taken a gale of wind August 21, while at anchor on the Grand Banks. A sea struck the vessel breaking the main boom and main gaff, sweeping away all the boats and washing four men overboard. Two, one of them the captain's son, were rescued. The other two, being the mate William Bowden and his brother George Bowden, both of Surry, were lost. The younger Bowden never came up after he was washed from the vessel. William swam to a dory and climbed into it, but was struck by another sea and sank before he could be rescued. The captain cut the cable and was drifting towards the dory when the man went down. The *Harvest Home* had lost all her boats and anchors and came in with a broken foremast.

Nov. 12, 1881

The schooner *Harvest Home* of Lamoine, Capt. George Hodgkins, sailed last week for the Virginia coast where she is to engage in the oyster trade.

April 12, 1881

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, William Dix, 56 years old, got overboard and was drowned. The crew was unable to recover the body, which floated out to sea.

May 24, 1883

Schooners *SL. Foster* and *Rozella* were out fishing last week, but not with much success. Report bait scarce.

Willis E. Bunker has just got his schooner, the *Wild Rose*, ready for business. Charles Gilley is at work on his new purchase, the schooner *Avon*, and is well pleased with his bargain. Capt. Simpson of Deer Isle has been down to see the schooner *Baker*, with a view to purchase.

Capt. Metiah Richardson, late of the schooner *Carrie M. Richardson*, has retired from the sea, and struck out in a new line of business, going into partnership with a grocer in Boston.

June 21, 1883

Cranberry Isles

Capt. Frank Spurling of the new schooner *Emma* arrived from a mackerel cruise yesterday. Capt. Lewis Holmes of Tremont, in the schooner *Annie Lewis*, was in last week with a good assortment of freight for his father's store.

The schooner *Clinton*, Capt. Rice, from Bangor with lumber for William Stanley's new house, got on a ledge in working into E.B. Stanley's wharf, and was badly strained and otherwise damaged. She was floated half full of water, and got in, and the next day was taken to Little Cranberry Island for repairs.

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Ralph's Page, cont.

July 3, 1885

Bass Harbor

The small English fishing vessel that was seized by customs officials is still lying at Verrill's wharf awaiting Uncle Sam's disposal. The schooner *Austin R.* of St. Andrews which was seized by Deputy Collector Thomas Clark of Southwest Harbor, for landing a cargo of fish from a vessel under 20 tons, was taken into Verrill's wharf, sails taken off and a ship keeper put on board. The crew have gone home.

Schooner *Emily Swift* of Bucksport, Capt. Ed Turner, landed the largest fare of fish ever landed on James Parker's fish wharf last week: 22,000 pounds.

Married in Tremont July 3, 1885 by the Rev. A. Redlon, William A. Clark and Miss Cora E. Lunt, both of Tremont.

When I Was a Boy

H.M. Eaton to the Mount Desert Herald, April 22, 1889

I saw it stated in the Lewiston *Journal* last week that "seventy years ago there were but twenty-one houses on Mount Desert." That must have been an incorrect statement. When I went to Mount Desert to live, sixty-eight years ago, there were fully that number of houses in Norwood's Cove and Southwest Harbor school districts. On the whole island, there must have been at that time two hundred houses, at least.

At that time the Island, which is about sixteen miles long, embraced two towns—Mt. Desert and Eden. Twenty years ago there were two houses of worship, one at Southwest Harbor, and the other in Eden. The one in Eden was a well-finished house, and is probably standing at the present time.

In those days people traveled a great distance to go to church. The people on Cranberry Island and Sutton's Island came in large numbers. The people on Gott's Island would come off and land at Bass Harbor, then walk nearly three miles through the woods on a very rough road to Southwest Harbor. The women generally outnumbered the men. When near the church the women would take off their coarse, thick shoes, put them in a secure place, and put on some good-looking, thin shoes to wear into the church. After service was over, they changed their thin shoes for their thick ones; this was good economy. What amused me was, they called it "changing their feet." Nothing but a storm or a very heavy wind would keep them from church through the summer.

I remember going to a funeral with my grandfather sixty years ago. The poor widow seemed to mourn the loss of her husband very much; my grandfather tried to comfort her, but in vain. She said she had "got to live a poor lone widow all the days of her life." I cried to see her cry. After returning from the grave she called my grandfather aside and said, "Parson Eaton, I hope you won't say anything about my telling you that I should live a poor lone widow all the rest of my life, for I may change my mind." The poor woman cried bitterly. I was then but nine years old, but I pitied her very much. The parson assured her that he would not speak of it, and that seemed to comfort her. I knew nothing of "the ways of the world" then, and so I thought it very strange that the widow should so soon change her mind. In a few months after the funeral she married again, and moved to Eden. She was called a very good woman, and a great worker. I never saw her after her marriage, nor am I acquainted with her children. I saw one of her grandchildren a few years ago. She is living in Eden. I think. She was a very fine-looking lady, and quite intelligent, and could boast of having a gentlemanly man for a husband. When I knew them they had the respect and confidence of the people.

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H.M. Eaton, *continued*

Not long after this funeral, Parson Eaton was called to officiate at the funeral of a child in the same neighborhood. In his discourse he told the parents that it was “not certain the child had gone to heaven, that if it was not one of the ‘elect’ it was lost forever.” The broken-hearted parents were in deep distress, and the mother became almost insane. The parson was honest, for that was part of his theology, and he thought his belief was founded on the Bible.

The exclusion from heaven of the non-elect was necessarily a part of the Calvinistic creed. The Rev. Jonathan Edwards, president of Yale College, taught the doctrine, and the New England clergy were inclined to that belief. It was taught me when I was a boy, and I believed it until I became a man, then “I put away boyish things.” Very few ministers hold and teach such an unscriptural doctrine at the present day. The last minister that I heard preach that infants were not saved if they were not of the elect was a scholarly man (a graduate) who occupied a pulpit in Hancock County about thirty years ago. “The world moves.”

I was intimately acquainted with one good man at Bass Harbor, who, after working hard all the week, would walk to Southwest Harbor, or Seal Cove, to church on the Sabbath. Only a storm of great severity could keep him at home. He, being much fatigued, would go to sleep as soon as the sermon commenced. For many years he never heard a sermon; he knew the minister would preach sound doctrine, and didn’t need watching. Poor man, he had to work hard through the week, and after walking so far on the Sabbath he might possibly have thought that the sleep would do him more good than a sermon an hour and a half or two hours in length.

In those days people pretty generally believed that ministers knew a great deal; for that reason they did but little thinking for themselves on the subject of theology. As people became better educated, the outside world, and some church members, would not accept the theology of John Calvin, nor would they hear it or support it. Old theories which were objectionable to thinking and progressing men and women have been abandoned, or essentially modified, so that the theology of today is more in accordance with the word of God than it was in my boyhood days. The sects seem to be more sensible and far better united, and it is to be hoped that the time may come when there will be but “one fold and one shepherd.”

Editor’s Note: The indulgence of the reader is solicited, for the inclusion of this rather extended letter from Mr. Eaton (whose writings I have included in previous issues.) When he got on the subject of ministers and doctrine, this semi-retired preacher really got interested! I couldn’t wait to see how it would turn out..

Correspondence from Ruth S. Holmes

To the Editor,

According to a news item from Tremont in September 1954 (see *separate quote*) Baldwin’s Corner was named for Captain Thomas Baldwin, who owned the house there before the Herman Farley family took possession. Does your Society have any photos of the original buildings on the lot? There must be people who remember the landmark barn

The residence of J. Baldwin is shown on the map of Mt. Desert Island (p. 49) in *Colby’s Atlas of Hancock County, Maine, 1881*. Ray Robbins, Jr., in his history of West Tremont houses (Vol. II, p. 273) wrote that

it was the original home of John Baldwin.

The graves of James Baldwin and his wife Betsey (d. 6 July 1891, 65 y.) are located in the Benson Cemetery. The marriage intention of James Baldwin (no town listed) and Betsey Dalby of Tremont was entered on 13 Aug. 1885 by Seth Higgins Clark, Tremont Town Clerk. A stone for John K. Dalby (1849-1905) is in the Benson Cemetery. Also buried there are William Baldwin, d. 4 Mar. 1903, 46 y. (perhaps a son of James?) and his daughter Bessie (dau. of William and Josie; no stone for Josie) who d. 28 June 1894, 4 m. 10 d.

Probably a search of vital records of Tremont, deed transfers, and census records from 1850 would reveal more facts about the early Baldwin residents. I find no Baldwins listed in the Mt. Desert towns in the census records of 1790 through 1840.

Kenneth Watson Stewart of Eastbrook, Maine, researcher of many Tremont area families, names a Baldwin ancestor of Clifton M. Rich, who built the Olsen Memorial Chapel. Clifton's son Roger had a filling station on Baldwin's Corner in the 1930's (Fall-Winter 2004 *Newsletter*, p. 5)

Rebecca Baldwin, (b. 8 Apr. 1770, Billerica MA; d. 30 May 1790, Tewksbury, MA) married 4 Mar. 1788, Tewksbury, James K. Kelley, Sr. (b. 1766, d. 25 Apr. 1859, Tewksbury). Their son, James K. Kelley, Jr. (1788, Tewksbury-1859, Tremont) m. 1806 Ann Norwood (1780-1870). Their son, James K. Kelley III (1815-1894) m. Dorcas F. Atherton (1819-1898). Their daughter, Charlotte Baldwin Kelley (1856-1925) m. John M. Rich (1853-1919) and they were parents of Clifton M. Rich.

On a recent visit to Maine State Library in Augusta, I browsed through *Vital Records of Tewksbury, Massachusetts* (to 1849) published in 1912. I found the marriage of James K. Kelley and Rebecca Baldwin recorded on 3 Apr. 1788. A son James was born in 4 Oct. 1788. A son William was born on 22 Mar. 1790. Rebecca Kelley, wife of James, died from consumption on 30 May 1790, in her 21st year. James and his second wife, Molly Mears, married on 27 Oct. 1791, produced a large family of children.

James K. Kelley III and his wife Dorcas F. Atherton had a son, James K. Kelley IV (1859-1939) who m. 1881 Mary Lois Hodgdon (1863-1954). Their daughter, "Lottie" Charlotte Baldwin Kelley, m. 1924 "Lew" Llewellyn J. Norwood (1874-1946). She was his second wife. Llewellyn's first wife (m. 1900) was Amanda E. Richardson, the popular librarian, who died in 1918 at age 46. A Bernard newspaper columnist wrote that Amanda "was the first victim of influenza in this place." Llewellyn and Amanda had a daughter Frances E.; I believe she married a man from South Dakota.

Llewellyn was the son of Capt. Ezra R. Norwood of Tremont, who was lost overboard from the vessel *Jessie McGregor* in Feb. 1901 (*Newsletter*, Spring 2003, p. 3) and his wife Lucy E. (Booth). A stone in Head of the Harbor/Marsh Road Cemetery shows 1900 as the year of his death.

Amanda (Richardson) Norwood's parents were Perry Warrington and Frances Amelia (Robinson) Richardson. Frances was the sister of my great-grandfather, "Captain Jud" Adoniram Judson Robinson of Southwest Harbor. Perry, as you well know, was the proprietor of the store building, built in 1900, which is now the home and museum of the Tremont Historical Society.

Ruth S. Holmes

Notice to Members and Friends: The Annual Meeting of the Tremont Historical Society will take place on Monday, June 27, 7:00 p.m. at Bass Harbor Memorial Library in Bernard.

Bar Harbor Times, Tremont column

Sept. 2, 1954

The “Old Barn” on Baldwin’s Corner which has been a landmark of the town for 200 years has finally been razed as a safety measure. The nearby house owned by Mr. and Mrs. Herman Farley is 150 years old and is part of the same property on which the barn stood. It was once owned by Capt. Thomas Baldwin and his family before the Farleys acquired it.

The barn has been a favorite subject of artists for years and in several famous museums hang paintings of the old farmhouse and barn. It will be missed, as many who return each year look for it as a familiar sight.

Query from Ruth S. Holmes:

Are the Tremont Kelleys (and Clifton and Roger Rich) related to the original Baldwin Corner family? If I had time and place, I’d work on it—but I haven’t...

The Editor believes that someone who reads this publication will have an answer for Ruth on this matter...

The House that Ruth and Eleanor Built

By Muriel Trask Davisson

In 1947 Ruth Moore and Eleanor Mayo, well known local Maine authors, realized their dream to return to Mount Desert Island, where both grew up. Ruth was born and raised on Gott’s Island just off Bass Harbor Head, where her parents Lovina and Philip Moore ran the island store and post office, and Eleanor grew up in Southwest Harbor, the daughter of Fred and Lillian Mayo. Each had sold two novels and the sale of Ruth’s *Spoonhandle* to be filmed as the movie *Deep Waters* made the return to MDI possible. One of their first projects was to build the house they would live in for the rest of their lives.

They purchased 18 acres on the Bass Harbor Head lighthouse road and began building in early June of 1947. They built the house themselves with the guidance and help of Eleanor’s father, a builder by trade. They hammered nails, sawed lumber, shingled and painted. Only tasks requiring specialized skills, such as plumbing and wiring, were done for them. The initial house was modest with a large room doubling as living and bedroom, a small kitchen and a bathroom. Closer to the road they also built a double garage with one side for their car and the other serving as a workshop. The story of their home building is as true to Maine as the novels they wrote.

At the end of World War II with lumber scarce and funds short, they scavenged much of the raw material that went into the house. For \$225 they bought an old CCC camp building on Eagle Lake that provided dry wood for timbers and flooring. The seasoned pine was so hard that it made driving nails like “pounding in angle worms” according to Eleanor. They bought 100-year-old doors from a second-hand dealer in Lamoine who thought the doors may have come from the old Thompson house on Thompson’s Island. Some joists and timbers came from two century-old houses being torn down. Some of the lumber came from beachcombing. Thresholds for the doors were fashioned from a new, two-by-eight, 20-foot-long piece of Oregon spruce that Ruth surmised in an article she wrote, may have been lost from some ship’s deck load.

They dragged it a half mile across the island where they found it and boated it home in their skiff. The uprights over the front windows are made from a tapered spar, a sloop's boom. Somewhere in the planking is a lifeboat seat. Ruth estimated that the original house was completed for a cost of about \$7000.

While they were building, the Fire of '47 raged on the east side of Mount Desert Island. Ruth wrote that they often paused to watch the smoke rising over the mountains and wondered what would happen if the wind shifted. They moved in on Thanksgiving Day in 1947. They had no electricity or plumbing and carried water from the pasture spring, but they were at last at home in the house they had built. In the early 1950s they added two bedrooms that jut from the house at right angles and provide large desks for writing workspaces as well as sleeping rooms.

Eleanor's father was a skilled cabinet maker, a skill she inherited. Virtually all the furniture in the house was hand made by Eleanor, including oversized built-in bureaus, large heavy tables for writing desks in each bedroom, two large open shelf cabinets and a dry sink in the living room, a floor model case for a record turntable and record storage and a hand carved chest in one bedroom. The living room has a handmade table that occupies about two by four feet but opens out to seat 10 easily. The simple, unpretentious style of the house reflects Ruth and Eleanor's lifestyle and philosophy. They lived in the house until Eleanor's death in 1981 and Ruth's in 1989.

In Sept 2004 the house was put on the National Register of Historic Places thanks to Christi Mitchell of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and Mary Jones, a Bass Harbor resident who serves on the Maine Historic Preservation Commission board.

Acknowledgements: material for this article was drawn from 1947 articles in the Bangor Daily News and Bar Harbor Times and an article written by Ruth for the Boston Sunday Tribune and reprinted in the Moore and Mayo short story collection "When Foley Craddock Tore Off My Grandfather's Thumb" edited by Ruth's grand nephew Sven Davisson.

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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
Bass Harbor ME 04653

Address Correction Requested

Non-Profit Organization Postage Paid Bass Harbor ME 04653 Permit No. 7

SPRING-SUMMER 2005 NEWSLETTER

Prepared especially for