

The Newsletter of the Tremont Historical Society

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Winter 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.

From the President's Desk

As we enter a new year the Directors and Officers of the Tremont Historical Society find ourselves as busy if not busier than at other times of the year. This is our time to ponder and make plans for the coming summer season. Included in this planning process is the speakers' list for 2006. I should mention at this time that we have decided to eliminate speakers' programs for the months of January and February. We will begin on March 27, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the Bass Harbor Memorial Library in Bernard, with a "Story-telling Round Table." You will not want to miss this, if you can possibly attend.

Acquisitions continue to come in, and we will present them as space allows this summer in our displays. You will find a list elsewhere in this Newsletter.

This year the Museum will open on Saturday July 1st and will remain open through mid-October on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. The research room is open by appointment only.

Our Annual Meeting has been changed to July 24th for this year, and the program after the short business meeting will be "Show and Tell." Everyone is invited to come and bring old items about which you can share information or ask questions. So search your barn or attic or cellar and plan to join us for an interesting evening.

Notices of our speakers and program topics are published in the Bar Harbor Times, Tremont news column.

Sincerely,

Arlene Bartlett, President
244-5268

Some Trivia (but not trivial) Items:

(answers in next Newsletter)

- In what year was the Bass Harbor Country Store first opened as a tourist attraction?
- What distinguished local gentleman was M.C. on that occasion, in a stovepipe hat?
- Which Governor of the State of Maine was the featured speaker on that day?
- Where did the dignitaries sit during the dedication ceremonies?
- What attractive young lady was a guest of honor?
- What local ladies were the "storekeepers" in period costume?
- What local pastor gave the invocation?
- What seagoing craft was featured in the parade?

RALPH'S PAGE

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

From the Mount Desert Herald

June 14, 1889

“When I was a Boy.”

I knew but very few of the people in Eden. To a Southwest Harbor boy, Eden seemed a great way off. I used to hear of Nicholas Thomas and his son, Leonard J., who died recently. They had native talent, a fair education and quite a capacity for business. On the evening of my marriage more than 52 years ago, Leonard J. Thomas was the officiating justice. I knew him well and esteemed him highly; I knew but little of his father. He had a daughter, who ought to have been educated a lawyer. She married Wm. Haynes, Esq. of Trenton. She took much pleasure in discussing legal questions.

I used to hear of a Hamor family that was reputed to be quite intelligent, but had no personal acquaintance with the parents. I well remember three of the children, Eben, Jonathan, and James, who attended my school on Town Hill fifty-four years ago. Better boys never entered a school-room. If they were “chips off the old block,” then the good things said of “the old block” must have been true.

At the head of Somes Sound, now called Somesville, lived three brothers named Somes. The names of two of them were John and Abraham. The Christian name of the other brother I do not recall. They were old men sixty-five years ago. They were all members of the Congregational church, I think. Each of these brothers had a family of children, all of whom were intelligent and quite well educated for those times. I am not certain that any of their children are now living. Some people thought that the three brothers were somewhat “aristocratic.” This idea, that prevailed when I was a little boy, grew out of the fact that they were very temperate, steady and industrious men, lived in large houses, minded their own business, amassed some property and let other people's affairs alone. They always supported good society and were fairly hospitable.

One of the brothers was a shoemaker and he was called “a very particular man.” I was sent to his shop one day, to have my shoes repaired. He made me pay fourpence for having to clean off the dirt, a thing that I should have done before taking them to his shop. I was somewhat vexed, for in those days it was quite a rare thing for a little boy to have that much money in his pocket! However he taught me a lesson that has been helpful even to this day. There were no families in town that had a better standing in the community than the Somes families.

The children of these three families had good business capacity, lived in good houses and gave employment to quite a number of men. As I now remember them they were engaged in shipbuilding and milling. Of the third generation that is now on the stage of action, I know nothing. But I never heard of a Mount Desert Somes being a party to a disgraceful transaction.

Deacon George Freeman at Pretty Marsh was a zealous Congregationalist. He was firmly glued to his religious sect. As a business man he had considerable tact and perseverance. He was quite a stern old fellow and it was safe for boys who were loafing around to keep out of his way. When the deacon gave an order, it was understood that it had to be obeyed and no questions asked. I taught my first school in his district fifty-six years ago and knew something of his family. He was very hospitable and no one left his house hungry, except of “their own free will and accord.” The deacon called at my grandfather Eaton's very frequently on church matters, and before leaving I was always ordered to bring on a decanter of W.I.[West Indies] rum, water, sugar, etc. All church members were treated in the same way at the parson's house. They had a very talkative time

Ralph's Page, cont.

when they got enough of a certain kind of spirit in them. The deacon had one child living a year ago, Lewis Freeman of Bass Harbor. He is now an old man. I think he is the only child living.

Capt. William Heath, who lived on the west side of the Island, was a man of tact and intelligence. He would have made a successful lawyer had he been educated for the bar. I knew him quite well and was some acquainted with his father. Capt. Heath died many years ago. I knew but little of his family. It is said that one of his sons is a successful lawyer in the city of New York. If he inherited his father's wit, logic, tact and perseverance, he is no doubt a success. I have learned that one of his sons lives in Tremont on the western side of the Island. It is said that he is quite a brainy fellow and quite a politician. I never heard him "evil spoken of." He has held various offices and no doubt given good satisfaction. I often inquire for him, but have never seen him.

Deacon Milliken was quite a man of business when I was a boy. He was deacon of the Baptist church and very highly esteemed when I knew him. After I left the Island he moved to Trenton and built a two-story house, between "The Narrows" and Ellsworth. He raised up quite a large family and was deeply interested in their education. I knew three of his children who became teachers, Simeon, Cummings, and Samuel. Some of them became ship masters. The deacon died many years ago. His oldest son died when quite a young man. When I was a boy, the Milliken family was quite influential, especially in religious matters.

Major John Manchester lived at "Sandy Point" near Northeast Harbor. The major was a good deal of a man. He came to my grandfather's often when I was a boy. I taught school in his district about fifty-five years ago and several of his children were in my school. His eldest daughter is dead. Some of his children are probably living now. The major was very social and always gentlemanly. He was a fine officer. No one made a better appearance "training day" than Major Manchester. He was tall and as straight as a "West Pointer." It was customary in those days to treat the company. They were brought up in line and a man detailed to take a pail filled with rum, water and molasses and commence at the head of the company and give every soldier a drink. They used a half-pint tin dipper instead of a tumbler. None of the company drank enough to fall out of the ranks, but some of them were a little troubled about keeping step. They moved like cross-eyed people.

There were many men of decided ability on this Island sixty-five years ago, and had I the time to speak of others it would afford me pleasure to do so.

Thus far I have made no mention of the Thompsons, Babsons, Brewers, Higginses, Rodicks, Robertses, and many others who deserve honorable mention, and last but not least Thomas Knowles, of Town Hill, who was never known to change or modify his political and religious views! If still living he is an old man, but ready, probably, to defend his life-long faith. He was "no man's fool."

H.M. EATON

Though this portion of Mr. Eaton's writing is not very interesting to read, I found it rather endearing that he had such respect for education and for probity in business, so that a man's reputation in those arenas was the mark of sterling character and the highest measure of success in life. I thought at first that he was "name dropping," then decided he was recounting the company of those whom he most admired and respected. Ed.

SOME STANLEY CHRONICLES

from the Bar Harbor Record

Cranberry Island, Jan. 6, 1908

The severe storm of Saturday did much damage to boats here. Mr. Richie Stanley's large sloop boat went ashore on Stanley's Point and was much damaged.

Ralph's Page, concluded

March 18, 1908

Richie Stanley's sloop, so badly damaged in the last great storm is being repaired by Clement and Rice on the beach near where she was damaged. Richie Stanley is going fishing in the schooner *Mary A. Downs* of SWH.

March 25, 1908

Charles and Ernest Stanley, Henry Bunker, and Richard Stanley went this week on the *Mary A. Downs* trawling in Machias Bay, on account of the bait there being in large quantity.

April 12, 1908

Mr. Gilbert Stanley arrived this week in his large new sloop boat from Friendship.

April 29, 1908, Islesford

Lamont Spurling's sloop yacht *Rambler* is again in commission after being in Stanley's yacht yard all winter.

March 24, 1908, Duck Island

The friends of Mrs. Lucy Getchell Stanley were sorry to learn of her death at Bernard last week. Mrs. Stanley spent her summers here and will be greatly missed. Much sympathy is felt for her only son William F. Stanley who resides here.

April 14, 1909

John Stanley & Sons have bought the steam yacht *Princess* from Castine summer parties and will go whaling in her this summer. The *Princess* is a flyer, very fast, with 215 H.P. and is 72 feet long.

April 21, 1909, Duck Island

Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Stanley left here for Cape Elizabeth Friday where he has been appointed keeper at that light station.

March 22, 1911, Cranberry Isles

A sad accident occurred to one of our young men on Tuesday when Maurice, son of Stillman Stanley was fatally injured by a gasoline engine. He had just started on his first trip of the spring fishing with Capt. Wilfred Trussell in the sloop *Spray* and either overcome by gas or fainting, fell so that the flywheel pin gave him some severe blows before he could be pulled away. He was immediately taken to Corea where a physician was summoned and later taken to Bar Harbor where he died on Wednesday night last week.

He was 17 years of age and leaves to mourn his loss father, two brothers and two sisters, besides a host of relatives and friends. Funeral services were held at the church here on Sunday, Rev. Alexander P. MacDonald officiating.+

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

1. Book *Working the Sea* (Wendell Seavey)
2. Rollers or Floats, found in the wall of a house (John Clark)
3. Hangers (2) from Sawyer's Store, McKinley (Doris Reed)
4. Kerosene Lamps—1 plain, 1 hand-painted by Muriel Davisson (Doris Reed)
5. Notebooks of Pictures (Pat Thurston)
 - Ships
 - Civil War
 - Classic Stories (3)
 - Trolley Cars and Automobiles
 - Antique Dolls
6. Proclamation by Gov. Angus King "Tremont Sea Memorial Day" August 2001
7. Coverlet, embroidered all in red, dated 1893, made by Addie Murphy Chapman (Joan Pratt)
8. 4 pairs white gloves (Joan Pratt)

9. Roster of Maine Men in World War I – Vol. I 1917-1919 (Paul Hinton via Carey Donovan)
10. Glass Syringes (2) Thought to have been used to treat animals (Jim Geary)+

Arlene Bartlett

THE STORY OF THE COVERLET

By Joan Pratt, Sept. 2005

This coverlet was made by Addie (Murphy) Chapman, who was the daughter of Amanda Harper and Nathan Addison Murphy.

She was born November 4, 1875 in Tremont. Addie had four younger brothers, William, Everett, Delmont and Merton. Their father died when the children were young and their mother married James Turner in 1889. Jim was a kind, loving step-father and helped to bring them up.

They lived on the now Turner Road. The house was demolished several years ago. Addie taught herself to play the organ, and her favorite piece was "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen."

In her teens she went to work at the Seaside Inn in Seal Harbor, and it was probably there that she met Melville Chapman. They were married at Tremont December 17, 1893 by Rev. A.B. Carter, and it has been thought that the coverlet was for their wedding, and that Melville also worked on this project.

They later moved to Bucksport where my father, Walter Chapman, was born in 1896. Addie died on May 8, 1900. One record states that she died of "Consumption," but it may have been pneumonia or some virus unknown at that time. She is buried in the old Murphy lot at Center Cemetery, Seal Cove, only a short distance from her old home.+

This coverlet is most intricate and interesting, with a great many symbols and words incorporated. Plans are being made to have it on display at the Museum this summer. Ed.

SOMETHING YOU MAY HAVE MISSED!

Depression Glass Exhibit 2005

By Ginny Libhart

Of interest to many museum visitors last summer was a display of Depression Glass loaned to us for the summer by several Tremont residents. You probably could find a piece of this glassware in almost every home, that have been handed down from mothers or grandmothers.

Depression Glass was mass-produced inexpensive glassware in many colors and patterns, manufactured in the early to mid-1930's. It was found in cereal boxes or other products as inducements to buy, or given as prizes. The most common color seemed to be green.

Patti Wharton, a collector of the green glassware, loaned the museum some of the more ordinary pieces such as a measuring cup, but also some unusual pieces in several patterns. Of special interest to local people was the collection owned by Dawna Spence and Leola Higgins. They have several place settings of the pink dogwood pattern and were kind enough to let us borrow a setting for our display. Pieces in this pattern were given as prizes at the [Neptune] movie theater over H.G. Reed's Store in Bass Harbor. Pieces of Ruby Glass, produced

shortly after the Depression period in the late 30's and early 40's, were loaned for the exhibit by Joanne Davis and Ginny Libhart.

Our sincere thanks to all of the above folks for lending their Depression Glass to the Museum for this exhibit.+

A STORY ABOUT CLIFF AND RUTH

As told to John MacDuffie

This is one of those legends of life in Tremont back in an era which is remembered by the inhabitants of the area who are perhaps over the age of 70 or so. At least, I am over 70 and I was told this story by someone, sometime earlier in my life! I knew Cliff very well, but never had the privilege to meet Ruth.

I am talking about Cliff (Clifton M.) Rich and Ruth Moore, of course. The story may have been told in a different form to some who will read this, and I would certainly enjoy hearing what variations of it there may be floating around.

Cliff Rich was a legendary boat builder of this town, living at Bernard Corner (then Baldwin Corner) with his shop nearby. All of Cliff's sons became boatbuilders save the youngest, Cecil, who died of leukemia when he was still in his teens. Ruth had grown up on Gott's Island, gone away to edit and write for a living, and was at the time of this story returning to the island for the summers.

It is told that she came to Cliff's shop one day in the early Fall as she was departing for the city for her winter's work. "Cliff," she said. "This winter I'd like you to build me a peapod."

Cliff replied, "Well certainly, Ruth, I'd be glad to. But tell me, what are you planning to do with her?"

"Well," said Ruth, "I'll row her sometimes of course, and I might sail her some. But I plan to get a small outboard motor to put on her."

"Godfrey, Ruth," exclaimed Cliff. "You ought to know you can't put an outboard motor on a peapod!"

Ruth said, "Yes, I can. I'll build a little bracket on one side back aft so I can clamp the motor to that. I've seen such things, and they seem to work just fine."

"Yes, Ruth, you can do that if you've a mind to," said Cliff. "But it's an awful gaummy thing, and that pod is too narrow back there to be very easy to work in when you're puttin' gas in the tank or crankin' the thing to start it up. What you ought to have is a skiff! Nice wide stern to work with, good place to mount your motor, easy to do everything."

"No, Cliff, my mind is made up. What I want is a peapod, and I'm asking you to build me one this winter. Now I want to know if you are willing to do that!"

"Well, Ruth, if you're sure you know what you want, of course I'll build whatever you say. It always helps if the customer knows her own mind. Don't worry, when you come back in the Spring, your boat will be ready."

They took leave of one another in good humor. Time passed. Spring finally came. Ruth returned to spend the following summer on Gott's Island. She came to Cliff's shop to pick up her boat. There in the yard, all done and painted and equipped, was—a handsome skiff!

Cliff said, "Ruth, after you left here I kept thinking about you and that peapod you asked for, and the more I thought about it the more I felt sure that in the end you'd thank me for building you a skiff so you could run that outboard motor. So there she is, and I know you'll come to love her."

The person who told me the story did not say how mad Ruth was, or whether she rejected the item she had sworn she did not want, or whether she kept the skiff so she could tell the story forever after about dealing with a Maine coast boatbuilder—or even how that outboard motor worked on the stern of that skiff!

I'm waiting for somebody else to tell me those things.

However it turned out, because I knew Cliff and hung out at his shop as a kid of 12 and for years after, and because I knew his sons Roger and Ronald and Bobby and his grandsons Chummy and Walter, I value my acquaintanceship with the Riches of Bernard most highly.+

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
Bass Harbor ME 04653

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WINTER 2006 NEWSLETTER

Prepared especially for