



Harpswell Historical Society

Newsletter

Spring 1998

The Harpswell Historical Society is dedicated to the discovery, identification, collection, preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of materials relating to the history of Harpswell and its people.

Report from the President

The Harpswell Historical Society wishes to record its sincere thanks to Peg Newberg, our retiring President. Peg has given generously of her time and talent for a very long time and the society is much the better for this. Peg will be staying on as a board member and head with us into the millennium.

By my perspective as a past President and the new President, our Society is healthy and growing.

As the Stewards of Harpswell's unique and colorful past our society has done much and has much to do.

Respectfully Submitted,
David Hackett, III

Centennial Hall Update

Things are progressing well with the Historic Park. Earlier in the spring the electrical system was installed by Accurate Electric for track lighting and plenty of receptacles. The track lights allow for spotlighting of individual displays and are on dimmer switches for better control of light levels.

The security system and sound system wiring will follow shortly. A well has been drilled by Fred Perry and Daughters Well drilling and the septic system design has been put out to bid for installation in the spring. Thanks to Don Newberg for the design.

Two generous donations were received for construction of a bathroom in the hall and a facility will be constructed in the southeast corner of the hall by Memorial Day.

Highlights Of The Collection

During the recent cataloging project of old town papers, several interesting documents have come to light. A three page document was discovered dated April of 1787 (just prior to the signing of the Constitution) in which various officers

and officials of the town were required to swear Oaths of Trust to their Country and to renounce all allegiance to the King, Queen and government of Great Britain.

Several letters written during the Civil War were found including one written in 1864 by a soldier in the 20th Maine Regiment which chronicles life in the army from the end of May through the end of June. (Further research found that this soldier, George Ramsdell of Brunswick, was killed in October of 1864)

Proposed Calendar for 98-99

- Oct 28th — Board Meeting—7:00 p.m.
Old Town Meetinghouse
- Nov. 18th — Board Meeting — 7:00 p.m.
Old Town Meetinghouse
- Dec 9th — Board Meeting—7:00 p.m.
Old Town Meetinghouse
- Jan 28th — Board Meeting—7:00 p.m.
Old Town Meetinghouse
- Feb. 24th — Public Meeting—7:30 p.m.
Genevieve M. LeMoine, Curator, The
Perry/MacMillan Museum
Cundy's Harbor Community Hall
- April 28th — Board Meeting—7:00 p.m.
Old Town Meetinghouse
- May 26th — Public Meeting —
Orrs Island School House*
- Memorial Day— 10-1 2:30 a.m.
Centennial Hall
- July 28th — Board Meeting—7:00 p.m.
Centennial Hall
- August 18th — Public Meeting—
John Goff
Preservation architect, Link to the Sea:
300 Years of Boatbuilding in Harpswell,
Maine, Slide Show and discussion
Centennial Hall*

*Topic and speaker to be announced.
All members are welcomed to both the board meetings and the public meetings. If you wish to attend a board meeting, or have a comment please contact David Hackett (833-6322), Box 121,

Officers and Directors 1998-99

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| David Hackett, III (President) | John Sylvester |
| Mary Moser | Virginia Stuart |
| Peg Newberg | Burr Taylor (Secretary) |
| Russell Robinson | Gerald York (Treasurer) |

*We need two directors...Anyone interested? Call David Hackett (833-6322)

Many thanks to contributors of artifacts:

- Lester Card
- Jack Dunlap
- Shirley Thompson
- Jim Cornish,
- Edward Johnson
- Eleanor P. Soule
- Comforting Circle of the King's Daughters
- The Sukeforth Family

Centennial Hall Funding Report

Centennial Hall has benefited from the 1990's bull market with several donations of stock that have been received by the Society. In this way individuals have helped the Society while avoiding capital gains tax on their appreciated stock. Gifts of securities are received in the name of the Harpswell Historic Park Committee.

Discount broker dealer Jack White & Company, Division of Waterhouse Securities, houses the account and Registered Investment Adviser, Russell Robinson acts as investment council. When a person wishes to make a donation to the project, the securities are usually transferred by wire to the account and later the donor receives a letter acknowledging receipt of the gift and that the transaction is tax-deductible under IRS rule 501 (c) 3. This method of support is more effective than writing a check because the full value is tax-deductible for the donor, but the donor only pays the original cost of the stock. Because the securities transfer prior to their sale, no capital gains tax liability accrues to the donor.

Please consider donating a security (or two) for completion of Centennial Hall. It's win-win-win (you, HHS and Harpswell).

For more information call: David Hackett, President,

From Our Collection

Following is an image with transcription of an oath Harpswell officials took at the time of the Revolution.

Oaths Of Trust To Their Country
Before Wm. Sylvester
Justice Of The Peace
April 6th 1767

I, Nathaniel Purinton, Do Truly and Sincerely acknowledge, Profess, testify and Declare that the Common Wealth of Massachusetts is and of right ought to be, a free, Sovereign and Independent State; and I Do Swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Said Common Wealth; and that I will Defend the same against traitorous Conspiracies and all hostile attempts whatsoever; and that I do Renounce and abjure all allegiance, Subjection and obedience to the King, Queen or Government of Grate Britain and every other foreign Power whatsoever; and that no foreign Prince, Person, prelate, Stule or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, Superiority, preeminence authority, Dispensing, or other power in any matter; Civil, Ecclesiastical, or Spiritual within this commonwealth; except the authority and power which is or may be vested by their constituents in the Congress of the United States; and I do further testify and Declare that no man or body of men hath or can have; any right to absolve or discharge me from the obligation of the Oath; Declaration or affirmation and that I do make this acknowledgement, profession, testimony, declaration, denial, renumeration, and abjuration heartily and truly according to Common meaning and acceptation of the foregoing words; without any Equivocation, mental evasion or secret reservation whatsoever so help me God I, Nathaniel Purington, do Solemnly Swear and affirm that I will faithfully and Impartially Discharge and perform all the Duties Incumbent on me as a Selectman and an assessor according to the best of my abilities and understanding agreeably to the rules and regulations of the Constitution and the Laws of this Commonwealth. So help me god.

Cumberland April 6, 1787 Then the above named Nathaniel Purington made and subscribed to the Declaration and Oaths as Selectmen and assessors before me.

William Sylvester, Justice Peace

Cataloging Project

In the past year the Harpswell Historical Society has made significant progress toward one of its primary goals of cataloging and indexing the old Harpswell Town papers, which have been residing in cardboard boxes in the vault at the Old Meeting House.

In December of 1997 a computer and printer were donated to the society allowing us to design a base file which can be used to search for specific information or a specific document. Over the next few weeks two vertical file cabinets and two flat file cabinets were purchased and installed in the old selectmen's office on the second floor of the meeting house as well as a copy stand and associated equipment for use in copying historic photographs. Archival quality conservation supplies were ordered to allow proper cleaning and storage of these fragile and rare documents.

Several board members met with conservation experts at the Pejepsot Historical Society to learn about their conservation and cataloging techniques and several workdays have been held this fall during which members began the cataloging process. Work is expected to taper off during the winter months but as warmer weather returns in the spring the society will be looking for volunteers to assist in cleaning, documenting and preserving these historic documents. The process is not difficult to learn, computer skills are not necessary and volunteers would not be required to commit to any more time than they can spare. Interested volunteers can contact:

