

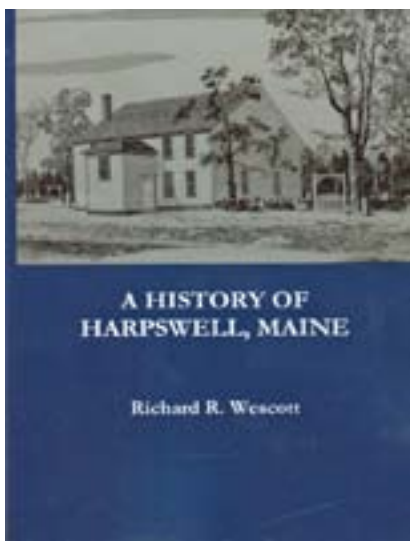
Harpswell Historical Society



Newsletter

Spring 2011

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.



A History of Harpswell, Maine

by **Richard R. Wescott**

Published cooperatively by the Harpswell Historical Society, Curtis Memorial Library and Blackberry Books, it sells for \$15 and is available from the HHS and Gulf of Maine Books.

Excerpt from book:

Harpswell (named so at the whim of Governor Thomas Pownall) achieved independence from

Continued on p. 3

President's Report

I should like to report that our Museum started its 10th season on Memorial Day. There are still things that need repair and many hopes yet to be realized. For an organization the size of ours to have an operating Museum for 10 years is a very wonderful achievement!

We are well visited by the locals as well as those from away. When I say those from away, I mean as far away as Australia. Recently, a Southern California travel guide suggested visiting Harpswell, Maine and, "While you are there be sure to visit the Harpswell Historical Society."

Continued on page 2

Contents

A History of Harpswell, Maine	1
President's Report.....	1
As You Like It.....	4
Uncles of Casco Bay.....	4
A Sociological Study of Bailey Island, Maine	5
Response to Fundraising Appeal	6
Board Meetings & Members ...	6
Where We've Been and How Much We Have Changed.....	7

Continued from p. 1 (President...)

This summer bring friends and family to visit our Museum, The Old Town Meeting House, Centennial Hall, The District # 2 School, The East Harpswell Church and The Fisherman's Memorial Statue, the places that are cared for by our Society.

Our increased holdings come with increased costs. We have put a new roof on Centennial Hall at a cost of \$11,000. The roof should be good for the next 50 years.

We have done structural repairs to the front of the museum and painted it as well. This was done at a cost of \$4,600.

Centennial Hall has been home to Harpswell Community Theater for the past 8 years. We have provided the Hall at no cost to them, and we have been repaid in kind with repairs to the building. This year, they have paid to put an exit door and stairs by the stage for their use and a second entry and exit. Good things beget good things! This year's performance will be on August 13, 14, and 15. People have come to Centennial Hall for 134 years for a good laugh, and you could be one of them.

Respectfully submitted
David Hackett III
President



Dances twice a week without distractions from television, cars, etc. would do wonders to promote a sense of community.

Continued from p. 1 (History...)

North Yarmouth over church support, the British Crown over tea and Massachusetts over 35 years. The last separation may have been the most difficult.

The separation from Massachusetts debate began in 1785 and was never resolved until 1820. Harpswell's position on separation was always very clear. We backed into it kicking and screaming. We wouldn't let go. There was plenty of secession support from inland communities, but coastal towns such as Harpswell regularly opposed severing the umbilical connection. It wasn't because of any great love of having the seat of state government be 120 hard miles away in

Boston. We resisted because the Coasting Laws of 1789 "required all coastwise vessels to clear United States customs in every state they passed by during a voyage except those states which were contiguous to the vessel's home port state. Since the District of Maine was part of Massachusetts, a schooner or sloop from Harpswell could sail all the way to New Jersey before it had to enter and clear customs, for Massachusetts proper bordered every New England state as well as New York." An independent Maine is contiguous with New Hampshire.

We have a colorful and fascinating history. This is just one item from Richard Wescott's History of Harpswell that will broaden every resident's appreciation for our town.



Gurnet Bridge July 28, 1907

As You Like It

At Harpswell, village of delicious name,

Our cottage stands, and here, with hearts at ease,

We live, drink wine, eat simply, read and write.

Our friends shall come and go, just as they please.

• From *Quietly in Harpswell* by Henry W. Wells, privately printed in 1974.

• The Harpswell Historical Society has one copy in its library.

Uncles of Casco Bay

(first and last verses)

The uncles I mean were just old men

Not related to me at all;

They used to be 'round in the old days when

I was a boy, quite small.

Their eyes were keen as a splitting-knife

And bright as summer's morn,

While their lower jaws were fringed with white

And the upper, unadorned.

Their fingers crooked from the hours spent

With a "tiller" 'neath their grasp-

Were knurled and knotted, hooked and bent

But strong as an iron hasp.

Yes, they were "Uncles," dear to me-

Those men of yesteryear;

They loved their God and loved the sea-

They loved their families dear;

And I like to think that band of men

Who lived in days of yore

Will meet and spin their yarns again

Upon another shore.

• From *Home Folks of Harpswell and Other Poems* copyright 1961 by Frank Linwood Bailey,

• Available for sale at the Harpswell Historical Society



CUNDY'S HARBOR, ME. The Old Hotel

Painting the Old School-house



These pictures show eight students from Bowdoin College who came to help Dave Hackett and Ed Phinney scrape and paint the Old School House during Bowdoin's Common Good Day

A Sociological Study of Bailey Island, Maine

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for honors in the field of Economics and Sociology

(first chapter)

A Stranger Travels To Bailey Island

A person going to Bailey Island for the first time might go by boat or car. If it were during the winter season, and he

wished to go by boat he would have to catch the steamer, as it left Portland at 2:15 in the afternoon. The boat would reach the island about 4:30. There probably would be one or two individuals on the dock to see it come in. He undoubtedly would be the only passenger to get off at the island at this time of the year.

If, on the other hand, he chose to make his journey by car, he would drive to Brunswick from Portland, a distance of twenty-eight miles and then proceed to Bailey Island.

The road from Brunswick to this little village is in very good condition for approximately the first eight miles. The remaining distance, extending from Great Island to Bailey Island is a bumpy, country road with treacherously deep ruts at this time of the year. An hour would probably be required to make this portion of the journey.

Should this trip be made during the summer months, the visitor could leave Portland on the ten o'clock morning boat or the one leaving at five o'clock in the afternoon. Arriving at the island, he would be greeted by a large number of summer visitors and island people on the steamboat wharf. It is a great social event "to meet the boat". A number of private cars that are used as taxis would be awaiting his service, and the stranger would find himself surrounded by the interesting characters and charming background of Bailey Island.

- A Sociological Study of Bailey Island, Maine by Beatrice Moore 1933
- The Harpswell Historical Society has one copy in its library.

Response to Fundraising Appeal

Thank you to the members and friends of the Harpswell Historical Society who responded to the Society's May fundraising letter. Your donations, totaling about \$3,171 have been a big help. Unfortunately, our projected income for this year is still considerably short of covering our deficit, caused in large part by storm damage and other maintenance issues. If you have not already given this year, please consider making a donation as soon as possible. We will be conducting a new membership drive in the fall, so please encourage your friends and neighbors to join. Your society very much appreciates your support. Thank you.

The Society would be grateful if you decided to send in your membership or membership renewal dues with this newsletter. You are welcome to use the form below. Many of you have missed several years. We will welcome you back.

Harpswell Historical Society Membership

Please give whatever amount you feel is appropriate for you.

Name _____

Address _____

Town, State, Zip _____

Winter address, if different _____

Your Contribution is tax deductible.

Please make your check payable to Harpswell Historical Society and mail it to Harpswell Historical Society, 929 Harpswell Neck Road, Harpswell, Maine 04079

Board Meetings

All members are welcome to attend 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, Harpswell, 04079.

Board Members

Paul Dostie, Dave Hackett. Ed Phinney, Rob Porter, Burr Taylor

Thanks

Many thanks to the following people for volunteering on Sundays last summer at the Harpswell Historic Museum: Dave Hackett, June Phinney, Sue Baker, Joanne Rogers, Rob Porter, Paula Conley, Eleanor Wilson, Hope Tanguay, Dave Chipman and Kate Chipman.

Where We've Been and How Much We Have Changed

Below are excerpts from 1930's brochures from Camp Tam-A-Rack, a seashore camp for boys once located at Dipper Cove Point on Orr's Island. The camp was founded in 1934 and remained open at least until WWII. If you know when it closed, please let us know.

"Camp Tam-A-Rack occupies fifty acres of forest and field on the shore of Harpswell Sound on Orr's Island, Maine (connected with mainland)."

"Season - From June 30th to August the 25th.

Protestants only. Enrollment - 35. Ages - 5 to 17 years. Tuition - \$200, \$250 and \$300. No extras."

"Tam-A-Rack for Protestant Boys." "Tam-A-Rack provides right associations and environment with careful, homelike attention to the individual needs and safety of the boys; with ideals of manliness and fair play." "Every regular boy longs to be in a sail boat and know how to sail it. It is his nearest approach to the freedom of the birds."

"Counsellors - Counsellors are chosen with meticulous care. Each one is an example of true manliness, vitally interested in boys, with both a knowledge and genuine love of the out-of-doors. There is absolutely no smoking by campers or counsellors." "Competent men are in charge of every activity and over every cabin

group at Tam-A-Rack."

"Maine Climate - The 1932 meteorological summary of the United States Weather Bureau reads, "Maine has the healthiest climate in the country and the equal of any in the world, summer and winter. This is largely due to a rare combination of pine woods, a down slope from the White Mountains and the sea. A wind from any quarter is laden with health-giving qualities. Sunshine averages close to 60 percent and exceeds portions of Florida, North Carolina, and other southern states. Moisture is ample and droughts are rare."

"T-Ledge, 'The Seashore Camp for Girls', is under the same management, two and a half miles away."

"President Eliot of Harvard said: 'The organized summer camp is the most important step in education that America has given the world.'"

NOTE: The remains of a big stone fireplace are one of the few signs today that a boys' summer camp once stood at Dipper Cove Point, now developed as a site for new homes.



Harpwell Historical Society

929 Harpswell Next Road

Harpwell, Maine 04079

<http://community.curtislibrary.com/hhs/>

Harpwell Day

Saturday, June 25, 2011

from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.