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YARMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Yarmouth History Center
Newsletter

Summer 2015

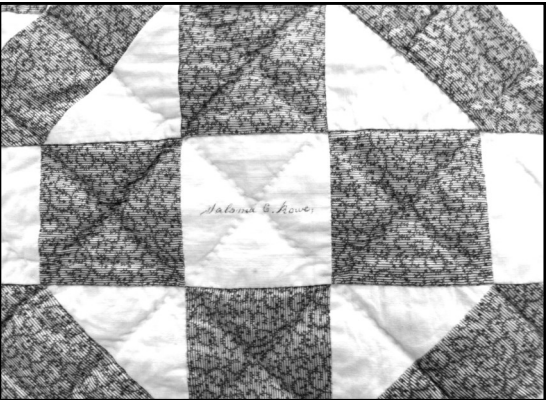
118 East Elm Street, Yarmouth, Maine

207-846-6259



Above: Pam Weeks and Laurie LaBar date our quilts and conduct research at the Yarmouth History Center.

Below:
Signature Quilt detail signed by *Saloma C. Rowe*



Quilt Curators Visit

The History Center recently hosted two quilt experts who came to the Yarmouth History Center to review the quilts in our collection: Laurie LaBar, Curator of History and Decorative Arts at the Maine State Museum, and Pam Weeks, Curator at the New England Quilt Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts. Staff member Karen Asherman, a quilt maker herself, has been working with Dick and Joyce Knight on their family’s collection of quilts. She invited the Knights to join us so we could share our visiting experts with them. The Knights welcomed the opportunity to learn more about their beautifully preserved family quilt collection, a grouping spanning four generations of Dick’s family.

LaBar and Weeks date quilts using traditional means, comparing fabrics, patterns, and stitching. They can also to tell the experience of the quilter by the stitches and stitch quality. The fabrics determine the oldest possible age of a quilt. LaBar’s and Weeks’ extensive knowledge of the history of fabrics and fabric availability helps them date the quilts they inspect. Fabric patterns and colors are either woven into the fabric or printed on the surface. These are key elements in determining the age of a quilt.

Technology has also entered into the task of dating and appraising quilts. The curators used an iPad to photograph and enlarge details of the quilt’s fabrics, stitching, patterns, and signatures to more closely examine these details. Smart phones were used to text other experts in their field to consult on construction and fabric colors. They received instant confirmation of their observations throughout the meeting.

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YARMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. Box 107
Yarmouth, Maine 04096-0107



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From the Chair

The Board of Trustees of Yarmouth Historical Society continues to work hard to fulfill its responsibilities to the Historical Society. In early May, the Board held its first retreat in several years. Led by Board member Brad Choyt, the Board engaged in a lively and productive discussion about the future potential of the History Center and how it might improve over the next five years. Since the retreat, the Board has begun prioritizing the numerous great ideas brought up at the retreat. I am confident that the History Center will be better and stronger as a result of this worthwhile exercise.

Of more immediate consequence, the Board has selected the firm of R.M. Davis in Portland to manage our three million dollar endowment. Knowing how important the endowment is to the future success of the History Center, the Board conducted a thorough and careful search before selecting R.M. Davis for this role.

In addition, the Board is in the process of putting the finishing touches on our Fiscal Year 2016 Budget. Led by our Treasurer, Stephen Parker, this important annual exercise forces the Board and Staff to focus on how much we can reasonably expect in donations and membership dues from our loyal and generous members and supporters and how best to spend that revenue. For the first time in its history, the Historical Society will have an annual budget in excess of two hundred thousand dollars.

In closing, I want to publicly thank our hardworking and talented Board members for all they do for the History Center and wish all our supporters and members a relaxing and enjoyable summer. And, if it is not a good day for the beach, don't hesitate to drop by the History Center.



Bill Harwood

Host Your Next Event at The Yarmouth History Center

Contact us for details on hosting your next meeting or event at the Yarmouth History Center. Enjoy a modern, spacious, handicap accessible facility in a picturesque setting adjacent to the Royal River. There is parking at the History Center as well as across the street at Royal River Park. (Contact information to the left.)



Visit www.yarmouthmehistory.org

Early this year the Yarmouth History Center approached Phoenix Massey Studios to help create a new website for the Yarmouth Historical Society. Suzy Massey met with the History Center staff to guide us through our site's navigation plan and teach us a bit about coding. The staff worked for weeks drafting text and gathering photos for the new website. It is a long process of revising and reviewing but we are happy with the results. The staff's aim was to organize the website so visitors could easily access information.

The website welcomes visitors with the "Yarmouth Now and Then" slide show and a listing of upcoming events at the History Center. It is a great source of information for those interested in the town and region's history. Visit the site often to keep up-to-date on events taking place at the History Center. Check for new items too as the website continues to be a work in progress.

Additions are already taking shape. Plans are in place to add a new section on the website about Oral Histories. We would like to encourage all of our community members to help the Yarmouth Historical Society build our archives of the community's history from 1930 to now by interviewing our elder Yarmouth residents. It will be a great way to collect your own family history. An oral history will make a great gift for your children, grandchildren, and the Yarmouth Historical Society.

Please visit the website and tell us what you think. We would love to hear from you!



The Exhibit Gallery
at the Yarmouth History Center

Bernard Elfring, September 1930 - May 2015

IN MEMORIAM

Bernie Elfring was a "Jack of all Trade," remembered for his skill, knowledge and humor. Executive Director Amy Aldredge has a memory of Bernie Elfring being on the third floor of the Merrill Memorial Library on her first day at the Yarmouth Historical Society. He was fixing her desk drawer when she arrived. Bernie was responsible for building most of the shelves and display cases for the Society. In the days when funds were limited and a budget nonexistent, Bernie somehow made the place come together on a shoestring. He not only built the storage shelves for the collection but he also knew the stories behind the artifacts stored on those shelves. Everyone relied on his knowledge and skill.



Bernie's involvement in the community went beyond the Historical Society: the Jaycees, the Boy Scouts, and the Mayflower's John Howland Society, to name a few. His membership in the Pilgrim John Howland Society and his interest in genealogy dovetailed perfectly with his work at the Yarmouth Historical Society. Bernie will be remembered for his dedication of time and energy preserving and sharing Yarmouth's history. There has been a genealogy record recently donated by the Merrill Memorial Library to the Society's collection, *The Merrill Family Genealogy*, prepared on 3 February 2005 by Bernard J. Elfring. Bernie and all of his contributions to the Yarmouth Historical Society have been and will always be a part of our history.

History Center Presents Katie

Hi all! I'm Katie Worthing, the new Program Director at the History Center. I'm so pleased to join the staff here and start meeting our volunteers and supporters as I begin to learn more about programming plans and opportunities. I'll look forward to meeting more of you at our upcoming events this summer and fall. Please say hello!

A bit more about myself: I grew up on Mere Point in Brunswick and now live in Portland. I attended Bowdoin College, where I studied Art History and Environmental Studies, and then the University of Glasgow in Scotland, where I earned my doctorate in Art History. I worked at Victoria Mansion in Portland for several years and continue to teach Art History at Southern Maine Community College. I'm thrilled now to be working in a place that blends local history with education, art, and beautiful natural surroundings.

What's Happening at the Yarmouth History Center:

On view in the Stonewall Gallery through June is contemporary art by members of Yarmouth's own Tuesday Morning Painters group. Stop by the History Center to enjoy this harmonious mix of landscapes, marine scenes, and still lifes in watercolor, oil, and encaustic.

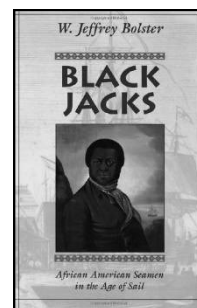
On Friday, June 26 at 7:00 p.m., we will continue our film series in collaboration with the Royal River Conservation Trust. We will screen *180° South*, a 2010 film that follows adventurer Jeff Johnson as he heads to Patagonia to retrace the epic 1968 journey of his heroes Yvon Chouinard and Doug Tompkins.

Drop-in cribbage is planned for Saturday, June 27th from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Stop by the History Center for a few games of cribbage. Feel free to bring your own board and deck of cards. Bring a friend or make some new ones!

Throughout the month of July, we'll celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Yarmouth Clam Festival with a look back at the festival's first half century, interpreted through objects and film. In August the Stonewall Gallery will be hosting the Artisans Collective.



Program Director Katie Worthing in the Center's Stonewall Gallery



The 2015 Fall Lecture Series

September 15, 7:00 p.m.

Jeff Bolster "Black Jacks in the Age of Sail"
African-American sailors in the 18th and 19th centuries.

October 13, 7:00 p.m.

Ron Romano "The Life and Times of Bartlett Adams, Gravestone Cutter"

Adams was a stone carver who crafted a number of headstones in Old Ledge Cemetery.

November 1, 7:00 p.m.

Kathleen Fleury
"The History of Down East Magazine"

The history behind this iconic Maine publication.



Interested in Knitting?

Keep a look out for information about an upcoming trip to a working Maine mill and a drop-in knitting program.

This lecture series is sponsored by Leon and Lisa Gorman.

Curators Visit

Continued from Page 1

One quilt from our collection of particular interest to our experts was the Society's 'Sampler Album Quilt,' signed by some 19th century Yarmouth residents.

There are two distinct kinds of inscribed quilts; single-pattern quilts are often referred to as 'friendship quilts' and the more formal quilts made of different blocks are called 'sampler album quilts.' The Society's sampler album quilt was determined by our experts to be a Civil War era quilt. Our Curators recognized some of the family names on this quilt from their encounters with other inscribed quilts made in Maine.

During the visit, our experts found some quilt pattern variations that were not familiar to them, always an exciting event for these curators. Ms. Weeks was especially excited to find a hexagon-based pattern in a quilt that was from Maine and not made in Pennsylvania.

Weeks also came to the Yarmouth History Center to do some research relating to the Maine State Museum's Davis-Dow Civil War era quilt. The quilt has the inscribed signature of Isabella Prince of Yarmouth on one of its blocks. Weeks was impressed by the extensive documentation in our collection about Isabella, her sister Mary, and the rest of the Prince family.

Both curators are currently working on books. Pam Weeks is writing a book on 'completed-in-sections quilts.' She has found the Casco Bay area to be a 'hot bed' for such quilts. Laurie LaBar is currently dividing her time between writing a book on Maine quilts and planning future exhibits at the Maine State Museum. The curators have agreed to return to the History Center to present a program, a date yet to be determined. LeBar and Weeks are scheduled to present a program in Yarmouth to the Calico Quilters of Yarmouth on March 7, 2016.



Dick and Joyce Knight discussing their family's quilt collection with our visiting curators.



Clam Festival Celebrating 50 Years

Yarmouth's Chamber of Commerce is preparing a 50-year celebration for this year's Festival. To honor this milestone the History Center will present an ongoing Clam Festival photo and ephemera exhibit in July. In addition, during festival weekend, the Center will be showing vintage parade clips, video of 16 mm films on loan to the history Center from Ann Stowell.

Thank you Ann!



Programs, Events, and News: Please check our **website** www.yarmouthmehistory.org
Facebook Yarmouth ME History **and Twitter:** @Yarmouth History
To receive our monthly e-newsletter, e-mail info@yarmouthmehistory.org

The Mission to Educate

Part of our mission is to educate the community about “Yarmouth’s proud past.” As I write this, thank you notes from the Yarmouth Elementary School’s 2nd grade students surround me. The History Center has presented the *Royal River and the Mills* program to the second graders for the last five years.

It is a fun week for us here at the History Center. The students bring a lot of energy and laughter into the building as well as a number of thoughtful questions about Yarmouth’s history. They are always curious about the brick ruins, remnants of the Forest Paper Company, in Royal River Park. Throughout the years I have heard comments from students about how many times he or she has been here with a class during their time in Yarmouth’s schools. By the time a Yarmouth student gets to high school chances are they have learned about the mills along the Royal River, shipbuilding in our harbor, education in a one-room schoolhouse, the evolution of their Main Street and an overview of Yarmouth’s history.

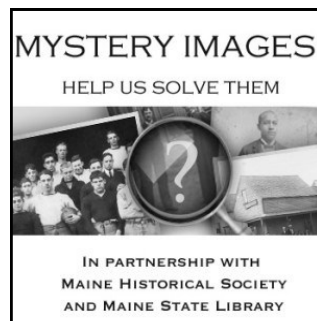
This year we have had students visit the History Center to research Yarmouth’s harbor dredging, make a record of how their town has changed through the history of the Andy’s Handy store, and perform community service hours while learning about who we are and what we do. The History Center is working to become more actively engaged with the schools by increasing our programming to include North Yarmouth Academy and home schooled students.



Amy Aldredge presents a school program in the History Center’s exhibit gallery.

If you are reading this and have a program idea or would like to talk to us about hosting a group, please contact our Program Director, Katie Worthing. We feel this connection with the schools is one of the primary reasons we’re here.

Amy Aldredge



Mystery Image Night at the History Center

Everyone loves a mystery – and we invite you to help us solve some! Join us at the History Center on Tuesday, June 30, from 5:30–7:00 p.m. as we help Maine Historical Society kick off a fun new program related to the forthcoming “Mystery Corner” of Maine Memory Network. We will sort through old photographs and historic objects from local collections that are missing identifying details. We need the public’s knowledge and memories to help name people, places, and events. Bring your own mystery photos!

If you have questions about some of your own photos, bring them along and we will project them for everyone to see — and maybe solve your mysteries, too. Bring originals, copies, or scanned photos on a thumb drive. The evening will include sharing ideas, telling local stories, and socializing with friends and neighbors. In addition to solving the mysteries, we will explore the new “Mystery Corner” of Maine Memory Network. The event and refreshments are free.

Seniors’ Breakfast Club



Some of our local seniors who gathered for coffee at the Yarmouth McDonald’s found themselves displaced earlier this spring when the restaurant closed its doors. As they were searching for a new place to meet we offered this group the William D. Hamill room at the Yarmouth History Center. It was the group’s unofficial coordinator Craig Martin who put the wheels in motion by contacting our seniors about the new meeting spot. Craig arrives early to brew the coffee and, with some coordination with Yarmouth Cares About Neighbors, puts together a great breakfast buffet which includes his homemade biscuits.

The coffee socials have been well attended and sound like a good time when the peals of laughter reach our desks. We hope that our seniors are happy with their new venue. The History Center staff is particularly excited about having the seniors here. They have been an incredible resource. Since the seniors have been gathering at the Center, they have kindly offered their knowledge of Yarmouth, helping us with research facts and collection identification. The group has helped us identify individuals in photographs, offered details of events from the past, and helped us name old kitchen utensils for a temporary exhibit. We are grateful for their help.

Our seniors have also been very generous to us by donating items such as a cast iron tobacco cutter, Yarmouth class photographs, and old scrapbooks

filled with newspaper clippings recording past weddings and other events in Yarmouth. We are excited to have these items as part of the collection to record the history of our town.

We hope the group continues to grow. If you’re a senior or know of one who would be interested in visiting with some old friends (or new friends), over coffee and a light breakfast please stop by the History Center on a Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday morning from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Above:
Yarmouth seniors and friends gather for coffee & conversation at the History Center.

Right:
Craig Martin sets up the coffee for the next seniors’ gathering



Volunteer Opportunity: We are looking for volunteers this summer to help us host Yarmouth’s senior citizens here at the History Center. The volunteer should be available on Thursdays and/or Fridays from 7:45 to 10:00 a.m. through the summer. Please call 846-6259 for more info.