

Yarmouth History Center Newsletter

Spring 2019

118 East Elm Street, Yarmouth, Maine

207-846-6259

REVVING UP HISTORY



Above: 1973 photo of Yarmouth's old water district building with the Chevy pickup in view.



Above: 2018 photo of the Chevy pickup outside of the History Center.

By Katie Worthing

History is alive and well in Yarmouth. Sometimes it even has four wheels, a pristine apple green paint job, and a custom cap.

Regular newsletter readers may recall our cover article from last summer, which detailed the work then ongoing with the historic structure survey here in town. Alongside the story, we ran a photo from the 1972-73 building survey that showed the old Water District building, built in 1923 and decades later modified into today's History Center. The photo was taken on November 29, 1973. Although intended to be a snapshot of the building, the photograph's most salient detail is the Chevy pickup perfectly centered in the shot.

Thanks to the sharp eyes of Gordon Corbett, who immediately recognized the truck as his father-in-law's beloved 1971 Chevrolet, we were able to recreate the photo this past October. Gordon, who has kept the truck in immaculate original condition, kindly drove the pickup to the History Center and parked it as near as possible to where it had been on that day about 45 years earlier. He shared some stories with me about the truck and its original owner, Myron L. Estabrook.

Myron Estabrook was born and raised in Yarmouth. He served in the Army during WWII, eventually joining General Patton's 3rd Army in Europe, and then

returned to family life back home in Yarmouth. He went to work for the Yarmouth Water District, where he remained for 39 years, retiring in 1984 as Superintendent.

Myron purchased the 1971 Chevy pickup brand new, opting for the best available model with power steering, 4-wheel drive, automatic transmission, and custom bumper and cap. With its bright green paint, the truck quickly became a recognizable local "celebrity," Gordon recalled. Although he purchased the truck as a hunting vehicle, Myron apparently only used it once for hunting as it quickly became his pride and joy.



Above: Gordon Corbett with his 1971 Chevrolet pickup.

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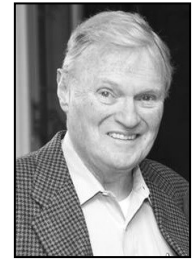
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From the Chair



Thanksgiving is four months past, but we here at the Yarmouth Historical Society are currently giving thanks for the generosity of our Annual Fund donors. The Society's programs and the maintenance of its East Elm Street home (latterly the headquarters of the Yarmouth Water District) depend on the continuing support of you who care about our community and the identity we have developed.

To the many who have given to this year's Annual Fund appeal, THANK YOU! If you're among the few who have not yet responded, we look forward to your support.

Meanwhile all should check out these upcoming events, see page 6 for dates and times of events:

The Royal River Film Series has two remaining films on its schedule. In February *Mission Blue*, a feature-length documentary about legendary oceanographer, marine biologist, environmentalist and National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence Sylvia Earle, and her campaign to create a global network of protected marine sanctuaries. The film ranges from the Galapagos Islands to the Deep Water Horizon oil well disaster. Showing at the end of March is *Losing Sight of Shore*, a film that follows the extraordinary journey of four brave women known as the Coxless Crew as they set out to row the Pacific Ocean from America to Australia unsupported. As they row more than 8,000 miles during their 9 months at sea, they face extreme mental and physical challenges. This is a story of perseverance, friendship and the power of the human spirit.

In the Stonewall Gallery the paintings of Shelley Breton will be on exhibit March through April. Ms. Breton is a self-taught Maine artist who has been painting and studying in oils for more than 10 years. Ms. Breton's paintings beautifully capture figurative work, floral still life, and the wondrous effects of early and late-day light on the local land and seascape. She believes that her background in science has helped to shape her appreciation of the natural world we live in, both the seen and the unseen. Ms. Breton's connection to Maine is long and deep. Her Scottish ancestors traveled to Brunswick in 1716, and established a shipyard there. Remnants of the shipyard can be seen on the rocks where Shipyard Road meets the New Meadows River.

At the end of March the Lecture Series will feature Dr. Nancy W. Ellenberger who will discuss *Young Winston Churchill and the British Empire*. Dr. Ellenberger is a Professor Emerita, at the U.S. Naval Academy, specializing in the History of Britain and the British Empire. Ellenberger's research interests have included confronting human aggression in the 20th century, unpacking a Late-Victorian country house party, aristocratic masculinity in fin-de-siècle England, the transformation of London 'society' during Victoria's reign, and many others over her distinguished career. This talk is very likely to be of interest to those of you who participated in February's book club discussion of *Churchill and Orwell: The Fight for Freedom* by Thomas E. Ricks.

Bill Nugent

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In and Around the Yarmouth History Center



Above: Donnie Richards sharing his story with his nephew Bob Demont.

Sharing History

Lifelong Yarmouth resident Donnie Richards met with Yarmouth History Center's Katie Worthing to share his stories of growing up in Yarmouth. Donnie's nephew Bob Demont also joined them. A 1951 North Yarmouth Academy graduate, Richards went on after high school to train race horses and become a harness racer.

Donnie Richards became a top racer, his achievements being well known in the harness racing community. Donnie's oral history has been recorded and will soon be transcribed and made a part of the Yarmouth Historical Society's collection. We thank Donnie for sharing his stories of growing up in Yarmouth.



Above: YHS Trustee Betsy Langer helps schoolhouse visitors achieve high marks in penmanship.

Schoolhouse Field Day

This fall Yarmouth Historical Society's Old Ledge Schoolhouse opened on a sunny Sunday afternoon to welcome visitors and share the history of the schoolhouse. The building, located just west of 121 West Main Street in Yarmouth, is a reconstruction of one of Yarmouth's original one-room schoolhouses. Visitors were invited to tour the schoolroom, practice their fanciest cursive, play the classic game of hoops and sticks, try their hand at marbles, and create some old-fashioned crafts like making a whirligig. There was something fun for everyone!



Above: Yarmouth History Center Executive Director Katie Worthing skates the Royal River.

A River Skate

In January, before the snow, sleet, and freezing rain arrived, there was a prolonged freeze that resulted in the formation of clear, thick ice on the Royal River. It was seasonal treat for skaters, hockey players, fat tire bicyclists and Nordic skiers. One skater monitoring the ice formation was the Center's Executive Director, Katie Worthing. After witnessing a group cut and measure a 5-inch ice thickness Worthing knew the moment had finally arrived. She laced up her hockey skates and took a jaunt up the river to enjoy the smooth river ice. The perfect winter lunch break! Do keep in mind, when considering skating anywhere, especially a river, to use extreme caution. As the saying goes:

*Thick and blue, tried and true.
Thin and crispy, way too risky.
When in doubt, don't go out!*

In and Around the Yarmouth History Center



Above and Right: Guests view quilts at the opening of the Art Quilts Maine show at the History Center.

Art Quilts Maine Show

The Stonewall Gallery is the latest venue for *Off the Beaten Path*, a quilt show that will continue its year-long journey to galleries and libraries around the state. For the show, members were challenged to depict a road, trail, map, or even an aerial view in their quilt. The result is an engaging collection of visual delights.

Art Quilts Maine is dedicated to supporting members in their exploration of contemporary quilt art, inspiring creativity and individuality, and promoting the understanding, appreciation, and recognition of contemporary quilters in the state of Maine.

Off the Beaten Path will be on view in the Stonewall Gallery through March 2, 2019.



Swing by on Wednesday

Now in its fourth year, English Country Dancing, offered by Yarmouth Historical Society and 317 Main Community Music Center, hosts a fun and active evening for dancers of all levels. On Wednesday evenings through March 27 at the Yarmouth History Center dancing master Robb Spivey will guide the group through each dance accompanied by musicians from 317 Main.

If you can walk and know the difference between your left and your right, you already have much of the skill to get started. Most of the movements are simply based on a walking or skipping step. Dancers move in a number of specific “figures” sometimes holding hands, sometimes by themselves. Each dance will be taught and every movement is “called” by Robb in time with the music, so you don’t need to rely on your memory alone to know what to do. Drop-ins of all levels are welcome and encouraged. Drop-ins are \$12.00 a class. Dancing is from 6:00-8:00 pm



Above: Dancers at the Yarmouth History Center.

Upcoming Events and Programs

ONGOING



Wednesdays, through March 27, 6:00-8:00 pm
English Country Dancing

A fun and active evening for dancers of all levels. See page 5 for more details.
\$12.00 a session for drop-ins

FEBRUARY

Thursday, February 28, 7:00 pm

Film: *Mission Blue*

More than four years in the making, this documentary presents oceanographer Dr. Sylvia Earle's life and career along with her current efforts to protect and preserve the oceans. The film series is co-hosted with the Royal River Conservation Trust. **FREE**



MARCH

Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 pm

Lecture: *Young Winston Churchill and the British Empire*

I Nancy Ellenberger, Professor Emerita, U. S. Naval Academy, will present a talk on "Young Winston Churchill and the British Empire."

The lecture is FREE for members and \$5.00 for all others.



Thursday, March 21, 7:00 pm

Film: *Losing Sight of Shore*

F This documentary recounts the feats of the Coxless Crew, a team of four women who rowed from San Francisco to Australia in support of two charities. The film series is co-hosted with the Royal River Conservation Trust. **FREE**



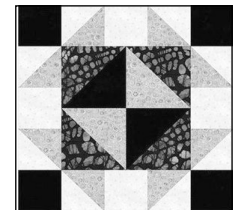
APRIL

Tuesday, April 23, 7:00 pm

Lecture: *Feedsacks and Fancy Work: Quilts of the 1920s and 1930s*

I Quilt historian Kathy Kenny will share her knowledge about the era of feedsacks and fancy work in quilt history. Kenny will show and tell about aspects of this timeframe beyond Sunbonnet Sue and share the awareness of the richness and purpose of these quilts.

The lecture is FREE for members and \$5.00 for all others.



MAY

Tuesday, May 21, 7:00 pm

Lecture: *Hodge Podge of Hometown History*

I Jay Robbins, Historian, Researcher, and North Yarmouth Academy Archivist will present a selection of Yarmouth's historical people, places, and things.

The lecture is FREE for members and \$5.00 for all others.



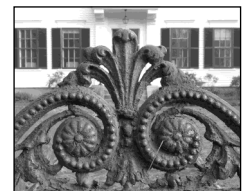
JUNE

Tuesday, June 18, 7:00 pm

Lecture: *"Reading" An Old House*

I Using clues from the details of a structure from foundations to dentil trims, Julie Larry, Director of Advocacy, Greater Portland Landmarks, will share information on how to find clues to help you 'read' the history of an old house.

The lecture is FREE for members and \$5.00 for all others.



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Revving Up History

Continued from Page 1

The heaviest loads it ever carried were the clothes, books, and student possessions of his children as he drove them back and forth to the University of Maine in Orono. Gordon mentioned that Myron frequently parked the truck apart from the other Water District vehicles to prevent any accidental dings or dents, which is likely why it featured so prominently in the original survey photo.

Gordon is now the proud caretaker of Myron's pickup. With just over 28,000 miles on the odometer, the truck is in pristine condition and full of family memories. Myron's gloves are still inside, a small step for his wife Pauline remains on the passenger side, and even the original AAA and dump stickers are there. The truck is beautifully preserved and yet still on the road, a living connection to Yarmouth's recent past. Keep an eye out and you just might see the pickup cruising around Yarmouth next summer, keeping local history alive.



Above: Interior detail of Gordon Corbett's Chevy



Above: The Rockmere sign hanging over the hotel's porch on Littlejohn Island.



Above: Alan J. Rand and Mike Darling remove the sign from the side of the barn.

From the Collection

Our summer 2018 newsletter included a story entitled *Destination Yarmouth*. It was a short piece about the era of the grand hotels along Maine's coast and highlighted some of Yarmouth's most popular summer destinations of the time. The Rockmere Hotel on Littlejohn Island was one of the featured destinations in that story. The building stood on the hilltop overlooking the Littlejohn wharf from 1894 until 1973 when the building was torn down.

One surviving piece of the Rockmere is the sign that hung over the building's grand, wraparound porch. The sign, until recently, had been hanging on the side of a local barn. It was removed from its spot in order to be gifted to the Yarmouth History Center by Vesta Vaughan Rand. She donated the sign to the Society in honor of her parents Virginia W. and Roger N. Vaughan, the last owners of the Rockmere Hotel, and to carry on her family's tradition of supporting the preservation of local history and the Historical Society.



Above: Mike Darling, Katie Worthing, and Alan J. Rand prepare the Rockmere sign for its trip to the History Center.

SAVE THE DATE
COCKTAILS
AT THE
CAMP *YH*
APRIL 26, 2019
 Camp Hammond, 275 Main Street, Yarmouth
 All proceeds support Yarmouth Historical Society

Antiques
Appraisal Day
 Saturday, May 4, 2019
 Yarmouth History Center
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