



This Issue:

[Page 1](#)

The Forgotten Strike

[Page 2](#)

From the Chair

Film Series
Schedule

[Page 3](#)

Strike
continued

[Page 4](#)

Meetinghouse
Events

Lecture Series

[Page 5](#)

Stroll Haunted
Yarmouth

Students Visit

[Page 6 & 7](#)

Strike
continued

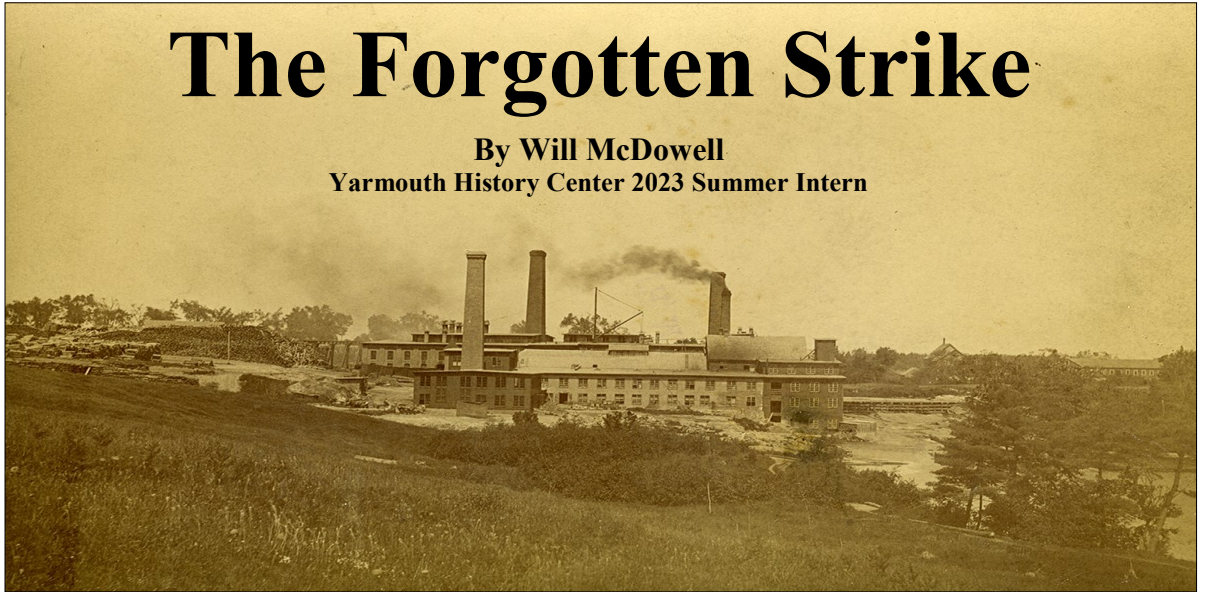
[Page 8](#)

Thank you
Business
Members for
your support!

The Forgotten Strike

By Will McDowell

Yarmouth History Center 2023 Summer Intern



Above: View of the Forest Paper Company Pulp Mill c.1900, Yarmouth Maine

Anything can happen on a Friday. But on this Friday, two weeks after the first tanks fought in France, there was no doubt in anyone's mind. September 29th, 1916, saw the tail end of a crumbling strike in Southern Maine. The paper producer Cumberland Mills, located in Westbrook, along with the pulp mill of Forest Paper Company in Yarmouth, had struck in tandem. Both mills were owned by the S. D. Warren Company of Boston, with Cumberland Mills operating at a limited capacity for the past 11 days, seeing a total of up to 900 of the mill's 1,400 workers walk out on day one. But the tide had turned, and after a grueling deadlock between management and union, the strikers held a final vote: 132 to 11. The union in Westbrook had capitulated, casting Yarmouth adrift in the dark.

In 1865, as the South collapsed after four long years of fighting, heavy industry began to take root in Yarmouth, harnessing the might of the Royal River. Yarmouth Paper Company began operation of a new mill at the third falls, which manufactured paper until it went up in flames in 1870. Just two years later, the third falls were again furnished by the bulwarks of a mill, this time producing soda pulp, the first of its kind in New England. In 1874, this mill was bought by Samuel Dennis Warren and George W. Hammond, renaming it to Forest Paper Company. Over the next three decades, F. P.

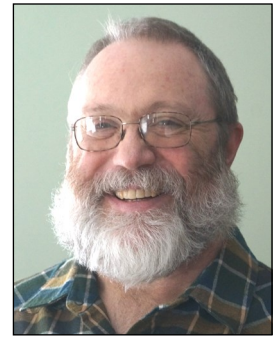
Co. would transform into the largest soda pulp mill in the world. At the turn of the century, S.D. Warren's Yarmouth Mill was eating up 30,000 cords of poplar wood and 20,000 tons of coal each year, with an output of 50 tons of soda fiber everyday. After the age of shipbuilding in Yarmouth came to a halt in 1890, F. P. Co. served as the economic backbone of the town, employing at least 200 people each year for the first two decades of the 20th century. And on August 20th, 1916, Local #89 of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers was formed, bringing organized labor to Yarmouth's industrial heart. Meanwhile, in Westbrook, unrest was growing. John Ebenezer Warren died on a Friday. It was an unceremonious death, one you could see coming and yet one in which the precise time of nonexistence could not be predetermined. At age 74, after having suffered an illness for multiple months, the nephew of Samuel Warren was finally laid to rest in 1915, leaving behind a legacy at Cumberland Mills. From 1884 until his death, John Warren served as resident manager to S.D. Warren's Westbrook facility, which had been purchased by the company in 1854. For over half of the mill's life until that point, his management had made the mill generally tolerant and fair towards its paper workers. But nothing lasts forever, and when his son

Continued on Page 3



From the Chair

Question: Published in 1982, this novella describes a scene where the main characters cross the Royal River. The story was made into a movie in 1986 introducing a group of young actors - River Phoenix, Corey Feldman, Kiefer Sutherland, and John Cusack, among others. What is A) the name of the movie, B) the novel and C) the author?? (Answers found in paragraph 2)



Yarmouth
Historical Society
**BOARD
OF TRUSTEES**

Chair
Binks Colby-George

Vice-Chair
Jessie McGrath

Treasurer
Sarah Day

Secretary
William Nugent

Pamelia Adams
Julie Benavides
Cecilia Guecia
Kendall Harnett
Jim Highland
Ted Jordan
Caroline Knott
Betsy Langer
Eric Leinwand
Ed Libby
Melina Roberts
Peter Sillin
Brittany Strout
Sarah Wallace

Executive Director
Katherine G. Worthing

Development Director
Maura Goessling

**Administrative
Assistant**
Karen Asherman

**Museum
Assistant**
Grave Atwood

Yarmouth Historical Society
118 East Elm Street
PO Box 107
Yarmouth, ME 04096
207-846-6259

Published quarterly for
Yarmouth Historical
Society members.

It has been a busy summer for the Yarmouth History Center. We collaborated with a number of local groups to showcase Yarmouth History. In August we worked with Merrill Memorial Library to put together a walking Yarmouth History scavenger hunt. This weeklong event had teams pick up a guide at the MML so participants of all ages could take the self-guided hunt to 7 sites around Yarmouth. The week's hunt culminated with a presentation from Katie Worthing at the Center and in Royal River Park.

We also partnered with the Town of Yarmouth's Comprehensive Planning Committee to put on a trivia night at Brickyard Hollow. Multiple teams gathered to see who could answer the most Yarmouth history questions (and learn about Yarmouth's Comprehensive Plan update). For those looking for the answers to the sample question above they are A) "Stand by Me" B) "The Body" and C) Stephen King. Now you are ready for the next trivia night on Wednesday, December 6th at Brickyard Hollow. Join us and test your knowledge!

Our collaborative projects continue into the fall with Stroll Haunted Yarmouth. This is the 6th year the Historical Society has joined Royal River Community Players to present Stroll Haunted Yarmouth in the cemetery of the Old Meeting House on Hillside Street. History lessons mixed with spooky atmosphere, presented live and outside. (See the story on page 5)

Finally, Yarmouth History Center, Merrill Memorial Library, and Kinonik are uniting again to present 16mm film screenings of classic films. As I mentioned last year when we introduced this series there is something special about seeing the flicker of a film bulb and hearing the click of the film as it winds its way through the projector. It is a movie experience like no other. Join us this season for a show! (Film series schedule and movie titles below.)

These collaborations help support our mission to share Yarmouth's history. This would not have been possible without your support as members and with your gifts to our Annual Fund. We hope you will continue to support us as we find new ways to share Yarmouth's history with the community. Thank you!

Binks Colby-George
Chair, Board of Trustees

Film Series Returns

We are excited to once again partner with Merrill Memorial Library and Kinonik to offer a slate of film screenings this fall and winter. Films will be projected from 16mm film, not a digital version. Join us for an evening together in the glow (and sound) of a real projector!

This season the films will be screened at the **Merrill Memorial Library**.

- November 8 7:00pm **Rear Window**
- December 13 7:00pm **Wizard of Oz**
- January 10 7:00pm **12 Angry Men**
- February 28 7:00pm **High Noon**
- March 13 7:00pm **Bringing Up Baby**
- April 10 7:00pm **Maltese Falcon**



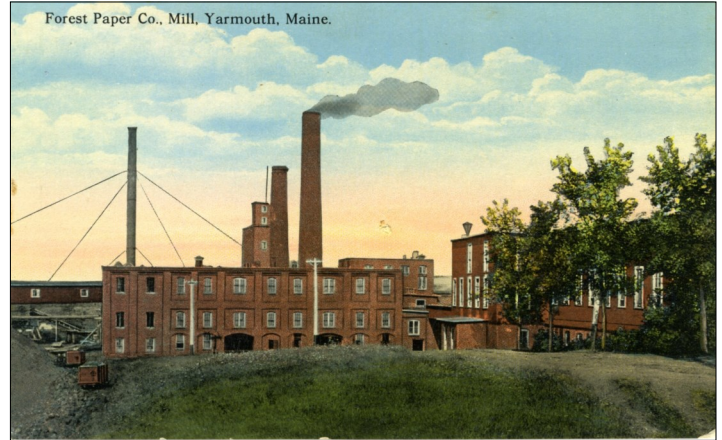
The Forgotten Strike

Continued from page 1

Joseph Adam Warren took the reins, matters seemed to proceed differently. The year after Joseph Warren became manager of Cumberland Mills, a new, unpopular system of pay was implemented. On top of this, workers had to deal with new foremen who they thought to be domineering. And as a final blow, the company began to work their employees on Sundays for the first time. Thus, in 1916, workers at the mill unionized, creating a new chapter of the International Brotherhood. Unable to effect gains without negotiation, Westbrook sought to secure recognition of its union. On Monday, September 18th, delegates from the union requested official acknowledgement. Cumberland Mills did not comply.

Management had awakened something, the scale of which they could not fully understand. Around 900 workers, roughly 600 of which were unionized, promptly walked out. This comprised nearly two thirds of the entire workforce of the mill. The very next day, between 30 and 60 of the 200 women in the cutting and sorting room of the mill joined the strike, swelling their numbers. Mill workers paraded the streets of Westbrook, gathering support and demonstrating their strength. When would S.D. Warren break? With the backing of nearly a thousand laborers, recognition was foreseen for the future. The uncertainty that still remained regarded the exact moment in which it would happen.

By Thursday the 21st, the town of Westbrook sought to find a solution. The town Board of Trade formed an arbitration committee to settle the matter. The members of this committee fully demonstrated the seriousness of the situation: it consisted of the Mayor of Westbrook, the President of the City Council, and the President of the Board of Trade. And yet, it didn't seem necessary. The ball was firmly in the picketers' court, and the bad news for S.D. Warren was continuing to pile up. Two days later, on the 23rd of September, the recently formed union at F. P. Co. in Yarmouth threatened to strike in solidarity with Westbrook. And the very next day, after manager Frederic E. Gore refused Local #89 recognition, 172 of the mill's 200-250 workers walked out in a labor demonstration the scale of which Yarmouth had never seen before. This prompted the complete closure of the pulp mill, with no plan in place to reopen. And tomorrow, the Maine Federation of Labor would declare its official endorsement of the strike. Since it all began on September 18th, the walk out had gained a wave of momentum, utilizing the combined resources and laborers of two separate towns. They had held parades and meetings, garnering support from nearby communities. They had greatly diminished the production of their monstrous paper mill, and had effected a complete shutdown of their pulp mill in a colossal blow to management. They were at the top



Above top: Postcard, Forest Paper Co., Mill, Yarmouth, Maine
Above: Postcard, Warren Paper Mills, Cumberland Mills, Maine

of the world. What could possibly stop them?

When you drive up Interstate 95 north of Bangor, Maine, you begin to notice something. The traffic begins to thin out, the distance between each town begins to grow, and the farmland typical of central-southern Maine begins to give way to vast, unending expanses of forestland. If you continue up until Exit 244, 60 miles north of Bangor, and

Continued on Page 6

Amy Toney's - Portraits of Yarmouth

November 7, 2023 - January 6, 2024

Opening Reception November 10 from 4-6pm



In and Around the History Center

Final 2023 Fall Lecture

Wellcome Prize Winners Join Us at 7pm on November 15, 2023

This year's winners present their research on local history topics. The lecture will be in person at the History Center. Free and open to all.

Summer Events at the Old Meetinghouse

Since taking over the management and administration of the Old Meetinghouse on Hillside Street the Center has held and hosted a number of events this summer. To increase accessibility for our visitors a group of volunteers assisted director Katie Worthing with the installation of a wheelchair ramp. Throughout the summer another group of volunteers shared their time and knowledge of the Meetinghouse at four Open House events held in June and July. Community members took great pleasure in the chance to explore the interior and learn some of the building's history.

The Meetinghouse was also the location for the Yarmouth Historical Society's Members and Donors event. Out of caution the scheduled August 18th date and time was moved to the following day in response to the forecast calling for heavy rain and strong winds. The following day offered perfect weather for our patrons to see the interior of the Meetinghouse in the late afternoon sunshine.

The Meetinghouse was added to the summer concert series of the DaPonte String Quartet who reserved the Meetinghouse for two concerts in August and September. So impressed with the acoustics of the Meetinghouse the Quartet is talking about returning sometime in the future to perform for an afternoon concert.

The Meetinghouse is available for weddings, funerals, church services, concerts, appropriate theatrical productions and other events from May through October. Please contact History Center staff for more information about scheduling events, rental fees, and other considerations: info@yarmouthmehistory.org or (207) 846-6259.

From the top left working down: Sam Heck and Matt Schumacher assemble a ramp inside the Meetinghouse; summer intern Will McDowell and trustee Caroline Knott host the July open house; image of the Meetinghouse at dusk; trustee Pam Adams and Development Director Maura Goessling set up for the Society's members and donors event; and concert goers assemble for the DaPonte String Quartet concert at the Meetinghouse.



In and Around the History Center



Above: Cast and crew visit the Center; Stroll Haunted Yarmouth exhibit; Stroll tour guide Shari Roberts, cast member Dave Mason (aka Philip Torrey), and the production's producer and Historical Society trustee Melina Roberts tour the museum.

Stroll Haunted Yarmouth Cast, Crew, and Families Visit

The History Center recently hosted the cast, crew and families participating in this year's production of Stroll Haunted Yarmouth for an afterhours visit to the museum and to see a new exhibit featuring information and artifacts about this year's characters.

Now in its sixth season Stroll Haunted Yarmouth has become a popular annual show performed by the Royal River Community Players. Since 2018 audiences have met dozens of long-gone residents of Yarmouth, including sea captains, silk thread makers, inventors, bakers, healers, religious leaders, city planners and civic leaders. This year will be no different as the troupe will bring to life a host of new Yarmouth characters.

These stories are fictionalized pieces from factual information provided by the History Center to the RRCP writers. After the scripts are produced, the cast selected, costumed, and rehearsed, the stories are then performed graveside in the historic Hillside Cemetery. Audiences stroll from scene to scene along a dimly lit path surrounded by dramatic lighting. The illuminated cemetery sets the stage for the spirits to tell their stories.

For audiences who prefer traditional seating or would like to see the show without the evening stroll there will be a Sunday matinee on October 29th at 2pm at the RRCP playhouse. Show runs the weekends of October 20-22 and 27-29. Tickets can be purchased at RRCP.me.

Students Visit Center

It is sad to see the end of summer, but the new season never fails to deliver enthusiastic groups from our local schools. This year we have already hosted Yarmouth High School's Advanced Placement French and Spanish classes as they searched for artifacts that illuminate our culture, the Horror and Science Fiction Creative Writing class looking for inspiration (look no further than the amputation kit on display), and the Advanced Placement U.S. History classes. There was even a visit from kindergartener Lucas Monk who found the desk from the old West Main Street Elementary School a perfect fit. When asked if he would like a similar desk at home he politely declined responding that he already spent his day at a desk so there was no need to have one at home. Way to keep that work/life balance in check Lucas! Do you have a group interested in visiting? Contact Katie Worthing at info@yarmouthmehistory.org to set up a visit.

Left: Yarmouth High School AP French and Spanish class visit to choose an artifact for a writing assignment.

Left inset: Kindergartener Lucas Monk sitting in the West Main Street school desk that is on display in the museum.



The Forgotten Strike

Continued from page 3

then drive 20 minutes into the interior, you'll end up on Penobscot Ave, Millinocket, Maine. But as S.D. Warren's mills continued their ascent in the 1880s and 90s, the town of Millinocket did not exist. However, this town has a birthdate clearer than any other. Not in 1829 when the first European family cleared land to farm, not in 1894 when the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad was extended to the area, and not in 1901 when it became incorporated. No, the town as we know it began on May 15th, 1899, the day construction began on a paper mill. Powered by the confluence of the Millinocket Stream and the West Branch Penobscot River, the mill, owned by Great Northern Paper Company, began to revolutionize the town.

In the ten years after the 19th century became the 20th, Millinocket grew from 1,002 people to 3,368, an increase of 236%. From here, the town's population would again double by its peak in the 60s and 70s, earning it the nickname *The Magic City*. This growth was almost entirely spurred by the paper mill, which gave the town a reason to exist. The forests out of which Millinocket had blossomed were also the forests that nourished and grew the town, providing the lumber for the iron heart that manufactured 240 tons of newsprint everyday. But inevitably there comes a day when you can't do it anymore. When the things you think you know are turned upside down. Sometimes it's too much for our world to handle. In the 1980s, the mill, and thus the town, began to decline. There were a variety of factors, a few of which were an increasingly competitive global market, recession, and the advent of the internet. In the end, it was all too much for the mill. It had built the town, and for over a century it had stood as a constant, stable sign of the resilience of Millinocket and her people. In 2008, it closed, never to be reopened.

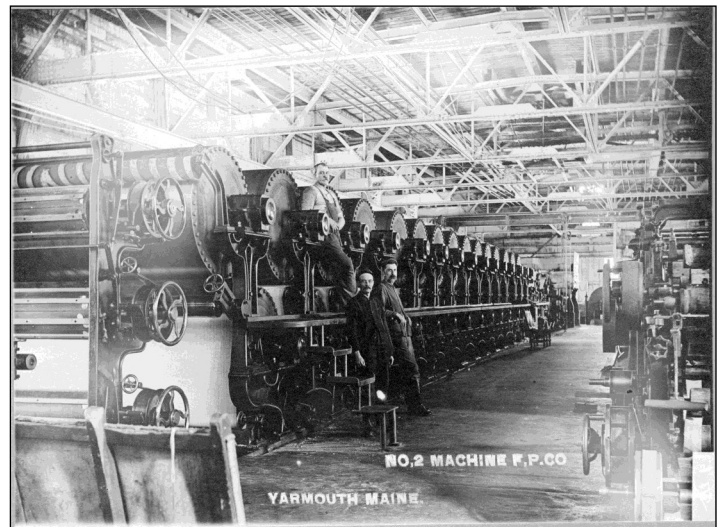
One of the great themes I've explored during this internship with Yarmouth Historical Society has been time, and how it shapes us. Nothing lasts forever, things are bound to change. Nothing has been more apparent in these last few days, before I bid my coworkers goodbye and settle down to enjoy the remaining humid August days before summer gives way to fall. When I started this internship six weeks ago I had a general idea of what was in store for me. Yet, I could not have known how much fun I was going to have. The first week or so involved spending time reading through a giant binder of previous newsletters, which was perfect in introducing me to the job. Following this, I worked on a variety of projects. We went to the Society's offsite location and picked our way through old desks, trunks, and spiders (that was mostly Executive Director Katie, I just recorded them). One of my favorites of all the interesting things I've been given

the opportunity to do this summer was talking with locals up at the Old Meeting House on the Hill. Hearing their stories and discussing the history around us was greatly enjoyable and compelling in a way that I hadn't experienced before.

I also got the chance to try my hand at transcribing old cursive, which, as I've learned, can be particularly difficult to the untrained eye. This did, however, open a new avenue for me: the exploration of Forest Paper Company's union minutes, detailing the major points of each union gathering. From here I became acutely aware of three men: Daniel W. Frye, James C. McCray, and James E. Bradley. Frye was the President of Local #89, McCray the Vice President, and Bradley the Secretary (who had written the minutes). It was uniquely fascinating to feel as though I had gotten to know people from over a hundred years ago, albeit in a decidedly one-sided manner. No matter that they had been dead for eons in comparison to my 17 years of life, I had felt a connection with them. In my mind, they were eternally tied to their mill. But as with everything I've come to learn this fall, the status quo may not always be maintained as long as desired.

The same autumn day in 1916 that the Maine Federation of Labor endorsed the strike at S.D. Warren's mills, it was likely that 50 workers became the first to cross the picket line. Even as the protest gained support, the cracks began to show. Approximately a third of the 900-strong strike in Westbrook were not members of the International Brotherhood, and were less likely to hold out should the stalemate become prolonged. But there was a more

Continued on next page



Above: Forest Paper Company c.1915. Photograph of interior of Machine Room no. 2. by F. M. Corliss, Yarmouth, Maine

The Forgotten Strike

Continued from previous page



Above left and right: Two group photographs of Forest Paper Company mill workers c.1915

insidious threat. While Forest Paper had fully shuttered its operations, Cumberland Mills hadn't. As early as the 19th of September, manager Joseph Warren articulated that seven of the 12 paper making machines were still running, even if only two were likely to have full crews. This was critical for two reasons. First, it allowed the company to continue to make money, keeping it afloat for longer and increasing the likelihood that strikers would run out of capital or grow weary. And secondly, it left the door open. Almost any picketer could, at any point, cross the same picket line he had been defending and receive his job back. It was too much.

Following the first break in ranks on Monday, the 25th, it all began to fall apart. Over the next few days, it is presumed that several hundred workers at Cumberland Mills began to capitulate. Like a Jenga tower on its last legs, the spirit of the strike began to topple. On Thursday of that same week, a union meeting of 322 men was reported, suggesting that over 200 union men, those who were supposed to stay loyal, had conceded. This gathering was held to decide whether or not the demonstration should continue, and the votes were split roughly half and half. Because, according to union rules, a two thirds majority was necessary, the strike continued. The writing was on the wall, however. The next day, another meeting was held. This time, the vote to end it all carried - 132 to 11. The fact that only 143 laborers voted in this meeting suggests that over half the remaining strength of the walkout had returned to work this day, despite the previous day's vote to remain.

Yarmouth, like observing a car crash in slow motion, watched from afar as Westbrook melted down. There was nothing they could do. By Saturday, September 30th, 1916, Cumberland Mills was back at work, except for a list of 32 men who were not to be rehired. On this

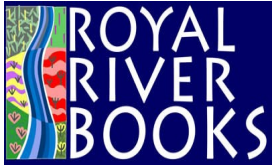
day, F. P. Co. manager Frederic Gore presented a blacklist of his own, containing the names of 12 workers. By this point, the strike was faltering significantly in Yarmouth. On October 2nd, over 150 voted to return. As quickly as it began, it was over.

Among the names on the blacklist were Daniel Frye, James McCray, and James Bradley. Afterwards, they continued to support and maintain the union, but their time at Forest Paper had come to an end. Nothing lasts forever. As inextricable as I desired these three men to be from their mill, they were separated from it in a somber fashion. So it goes. Millinocket, where my Grandfather was a mill worker, lost that same mill, the thing that had put it on the map. And my internship, now at the end of its sixth week, is nearly over, too.

In 1923, seven years after the strike that rocked Yarmouth, Forest Paper Company shut down. Tariffs on the import of Swedish pulp had been lifted, destroying the company's ability to compete. In 1931 many of the buildings on the site of the former mill burned in a giant fire, visible for miles. The strike may have gone out with a whimper instead of a bang, but the same could not be said of the facility itself. With every ending is a new beginning, and in the 1980s, the space was converted to be used in Royal River Park. Every time I walk through the park, I'm reminded of the names of three men who died long ago, who fought for something in the face of changing tides. Their stories, just as ours, must not be forgotten.

Will McDowell, a history enthusiast and a member of Yarmouth High School Class of 2024, was Yarmouth History Center's 2023 summer intern. We hope Will continues his quest of mastering the lost skill of deciphering cursive.

Thanks to our Business Members!



For the joy of gardening!
Estabrook's



Kennebec Savings Bank



SimplySized HOME
Downsizing Made Easy!



NORTH YARMOUTH ACADEMY



Museum and Shop Hours Tuesday – Saturday 10am to 4pm

Non-Profit
Postage PAID
Permit No. 46

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