



Holt House News

Volume 21, No. 2

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Newsletter of the Blue Hill Historical Society
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A Story Waiting To Be Told



In the Historical Society vault, we have a man's leather wallet, dating to the early 20th century. The wallet is ordinary - we have others like it - but its contents were not. It was stuffed with foreign currency. The colorful bills were crammed into the wallet and therefore, very wrinkled. They were also dry and brittle with age. In order to examine them, they needed to be hydrated and flattened. This process is commonly done to old paper. When they were ready to be examined, we saw that some of the bills had writing in three different languages, all of which appeared to be Cyrillic or Arabic.

To find out more about the wallet and collection of currency, I interviewed Iosif Taniashvili, a Surry resident and a native of the province of Georgia. To my surprise, all of the items were bearer bonds, not actual currency, and came from the countries of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. They were dated 1918 - 1920 - a time of great upheaval in that area.

Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan were independent nations prior to the Russian Revolution in 1917. After the revolution, Russia began to build the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which we know as the USSR. In 1920 Russia invaded Azerbaijan and Armenia. In 1921, their target was the nation of Georgia. The items in our collection are dated to this period - 1918 - 1919. After 1921 the currency was "normalized" and Russian Currency was used throughout the entire USSR. The currency of the original nations ceased to exist.

Ann Durgin

Annual Meeting, October 12

Members of the Blue Hill Historical Society gathered at the Howard Room of the Blue Hill Public Library for the Annual Meeting. Current President Anna Roelofs began by listing off some of the Historical Society's recent accomplishments and called for an election of new board members and officers. Following a brief President's report and Treasurer's report the speaker for the evening was introduced.

University of Maine History Professor Liam Riordan spoke on the upcoming bicentennial and Maine's path to statehood beginning in the 1780's and culminating in a vote for statehood in 1819.

Maine became the 23rd state on March 15th 1820. There were 6 votes for statehood beginning in 1792 and Dr. Riordan discussed the likely consequences of separation that many people who lived in the District of Maine understood.

There was much uncertainty during that time and many people in Maine had family roots in Massachusetts. He noted that Hancock County over the course of time was the county most opposed to separation. In 1807, every county gave a majority to stay a part of Massachusetts except Kennebec County. The reason for this large amount of support for remaining a part of Massachusetts, Dr. Riordan pointed out, was at a time when James Sullivan was the governor of Massachusetts. James Sullivan was born in Maine and lived in Georgetown and Biddeford. Mr. Sullivan succeeded in the governorship because of overwhelming support of people from Maine.

Other votes for statehood failed for other reasons such as maritime laws which were favorable to Maine staying a part of Massachusetts.

During the War of 1812 the people of Maine suffered much from the lack of promised funding for the militia by the state government of Massachusetts. By the end of that war Maine had determined to become its own state and this year is the 200th anniversary of the 1819 vote for independence.



Meet Our New Board Members

Val Libby is a retired associate professor of landscape history & horticulture, Temple University. She specialized in public landscape issues and preservation. In 2016 she became vice-president of the Blue Hill Garden Club and teaches short courses for Acadia Senior College during the winter. She has authored many articles about women's history & landscape design, and is currently working on a book for a garden conservancy in Oregon.

Phil Norris A resident of East Blue Hill since 1985, Phil is a piano tuner, an organic farmer, and the tree warden for the town of Blue Hill. He became interested in Blue Hill history after an encounter with a gravestone in the Old Settlers Cemetery. He has a special interest in water-powered mills.

Dena Sozio worked as the office manager at the Holt House last summer and works at the Blue Hill Consolidated School the rest of the year.

Thinking back on Adelaide Pearson

*M*y wife and I attended an interesting panel discussion this summer by three speakers at Blue Hill Public Library. Adelaide Pearson (1874-1960) founder of Rowantrees Pottery, was highlighted first for her world travels, then her founding of the pottery and finally her support for the library, in heading up the drive for funds for the new building.

The first speaker debunked some myths about her and her connection to Blue Hill. Was Adelaide Pearson from away, yes or no? It appears she was both. Although she grew up in Massachusetts only summering in Blue Hill in her youth, her grandparents were from here. There is genealogy to prove it. In this discussion I learned that the person most responsible for the creation of the Blue Hill Public Library, Adelaide Pearson, had family from the area, namely, her grandmother Louler Grindle Bowden from Penobscot.

During the Q&A session I also discovered that the Historical Society had recently been told about a model ship named Louler Newton. This was a model of a schooner built in 1867 by Albion P. Gray in Blue Hill, and was named after Adelaide's mother. This discovery was made by one of the people in the library audience, Bob Slaven, the man who owns the model. He, in fact, had no idea who Louler Newton was until the speaker told of Adelaide's mother's name and the local connection. This connection was made clear from Louler's mother's maiden name, Grindle, which by the way, was from a direct line of the local Grindle family, who were early settlers first in Penobscot and then throughout the Blue Hill peninsula.

For those of you who do not know, Adelaide Pearson was responsible for starting up Rowantrees Pottery in 1934. In 1938 she met Gandhi in India and learned that pottery was serious business. She expanded and Rowantrees which employed 30 people at its height in 1950.

She brought back to Blue Hill video footage of potters in India and elsewhere performing their craft at the wheel, footage taken in the 1930's. She was also an ambulance driver in WWI and achieved many wonderful things during her lifetime, some of which were very obviously beneficial to the town of Blue Hill. Much of her personal collection of artifacts, documents and photographs from her world travels are in the archives at the library. –R. Sawyer



Adelaide Pearson died in Cuernavaca, Morelia, Mexico at the age of 85. She is buried there.



Our People

Officers:

President: Ann Roelofs

Vice President: Win Turner

Treasurer: Lesley Litwiller

Recording Secretary: Diana Page

Curator: Ann Durgin

Board Members:

Rick Sawyer

Brandi Candage

Brittany Courtot

Duncan Hamilton

Greg Bush

Camilla Saly-Monzingo

We would like to thank out-going board members Jim Dow, Kat Hudson and Jean McKillop who all left the board this year and all have contributed in special and significant ways to the board during their tenures.

Incoming Board Members:

Val Libby

Phil Norris

Dena Sozio

New Officers (beginning in Jan 2020):

President: Brandi Candage

Vice President: Brittany Courtot

Treasurer: Lesley Littwiller

Recording Secretary: Diana Page

Curator: Ann Durgin

Your annual membership form is enclosed.

Please fill it out right away and send it in with your check.

Remember that you can increase your level of membership or make a donation in addition to your membership.

We thank you for your past generosity and hope you will continue to support the Blue Hill Historical Society.

If you have any information pertaining to Blue Hill history or are interested in donating Send us an email at: bluehillhistoricalsociety@gmail.com or call us by phone: 374-2976

These events and other updates can also be found on our newly updated website: www.bluehillhistory.org.

President's Report:

We have had an active and successful year maintaining the Holt House and Carriage house - most recently replacing the door on the Carriage House and installing a new sign in front of the House.

Over the summer, there were six walking tours of Blue Hill led by Brittany Courtot. There was an exhibit displaying the accomplishments of Mary Ellen Chase organized by Ann Durgin.

We also offered lectures on Blue Hill music history, on Katherine Butler Hathaway, and a presentation about Mainers, in particular men and women from Blue Hill who were involved in the Gold Rush.

We worked to modernize our communication systems through Facebook and a more interactive website.

We were able to hire summer staff for the second summer - a great advantage to our outreach ability. Dena Sozio was on staff this summer and has now joined the Board. Our intern, Max Rhine, worked closely with Dena and enjoyed leading tours through the Holt House.

We became members of the Maine Assoc. of Non-Profits to take advantage of the resources they offer. We also joined the Chamber of Commerce.

Anna Roelofs

NEW DOOR
ON THE
CARRIAGE
HOUSE



DISCOVERING TREASURES FROM THE CLOTHING COLLECTION

On October 20th Blue Hill Historical Society board member Camilla Saly traveled from New York City to Blue Hill to embark on her special mission: to examine and evaluate the clothing collection belonging to the Blue Hill Historical Society. Ms. Saly is a New Yorker who comes up to the Blue Hill area every summer, and joined the BHHS board in order to help evaluate and preserve the society's clothing collection. Her passion for historic clothing preservation comes from her work with historic preservation at the Morris-Jumel Mansion in New York City, and from her love of 19th and early 20th Century fashion.

On October 21st Camilla was joined at the Holt House by intern Max Rhine of the Harbor School and newly elected Board member Val Libby. They worked for five days at the Holt House – on the very cold 2nd floor – going through trunks, drawers and other places where clothing and accessories have been stashed over the years, including those pieces hung up in the “costume room,” carefully examining and cataloguing each item.

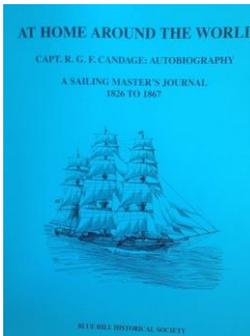
Camilla, Max and Val found some beautiful clothing items. Among them were dresses from the 1800s, 1910s and 1920s, children's christening gowns and nightgowns, men's formal wear, and military uniforms. The task of the group is to identify and catalogue clothing age, provenance – where possible – and relevance to the Blue Hill Historical Society's mission. As much as possible, clothing was wrapped in archival tissue and put into archival boxes, which are designed to preserve clothing and prevent damage from the elements.

Camilla, Max and Val intend to continue this work with the help of new volunteers. It is also hoped that some of the group's discoveries will lead to exciting new exhibits at the Holt House in celebration of the Maine Bicentennial.

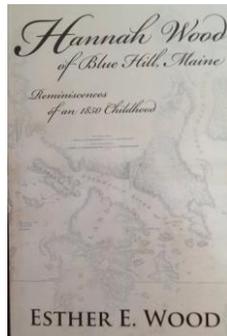


Do your Christmas Shopping here in Blue Hill !

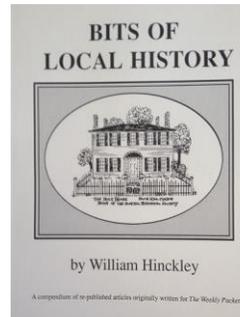
You can purchase Historical Society Publications at *Blue Hill Books* or on our website



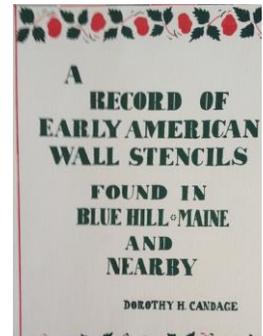
“At Home Around the World” by R.G.F. Candage - For the arm-chair sailor - \$25.00



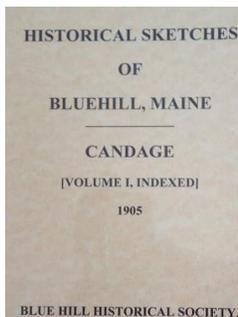
“Hannah Wood of Blue Hill, Maine” by Esther Wood - For the child in all of us – \$17.00



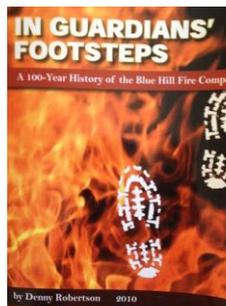
“Bits of Local History” by William Hinckley – articles reprinted from the *Weekly Packet* \$15.00



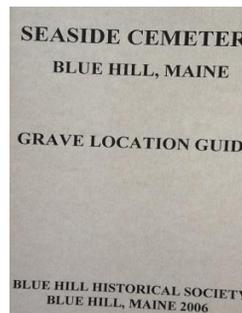
“Early American Wall Stencils”, by Dorothy Candage – A must-have if your home has stencils – \$15.00



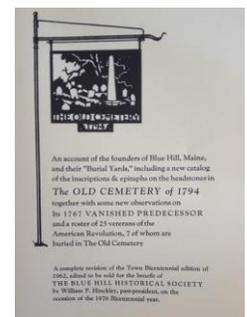
“Historical Sketches of Bluehill, Maine” by R.G.G. Candage - families before 1900 – Vol I or 2 - \$15.00 ea.



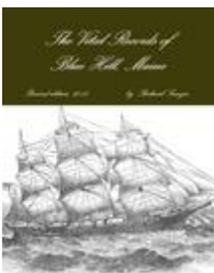
“In Guardian’s Footsteps”, by Dennis Robertson – for the first responder on your list- \$15.00



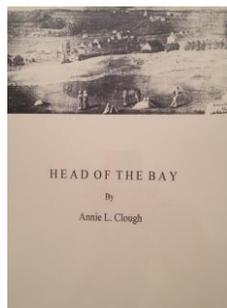
“Seaside Cemetery, Blue Hill, Maine”, by the Blue Hill Historical Society – has fold-out map- \$5.00



“The Old Cemetery”, by the Blue Hill Historical Society – including inscriptions and epitaphs \$3.00

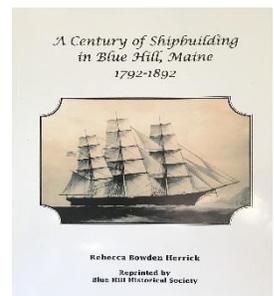


“Vital Records of Blue Hill, Maine” revised ed. 2018 by Richard Sawyer – vital for the genealogist--\$25.00

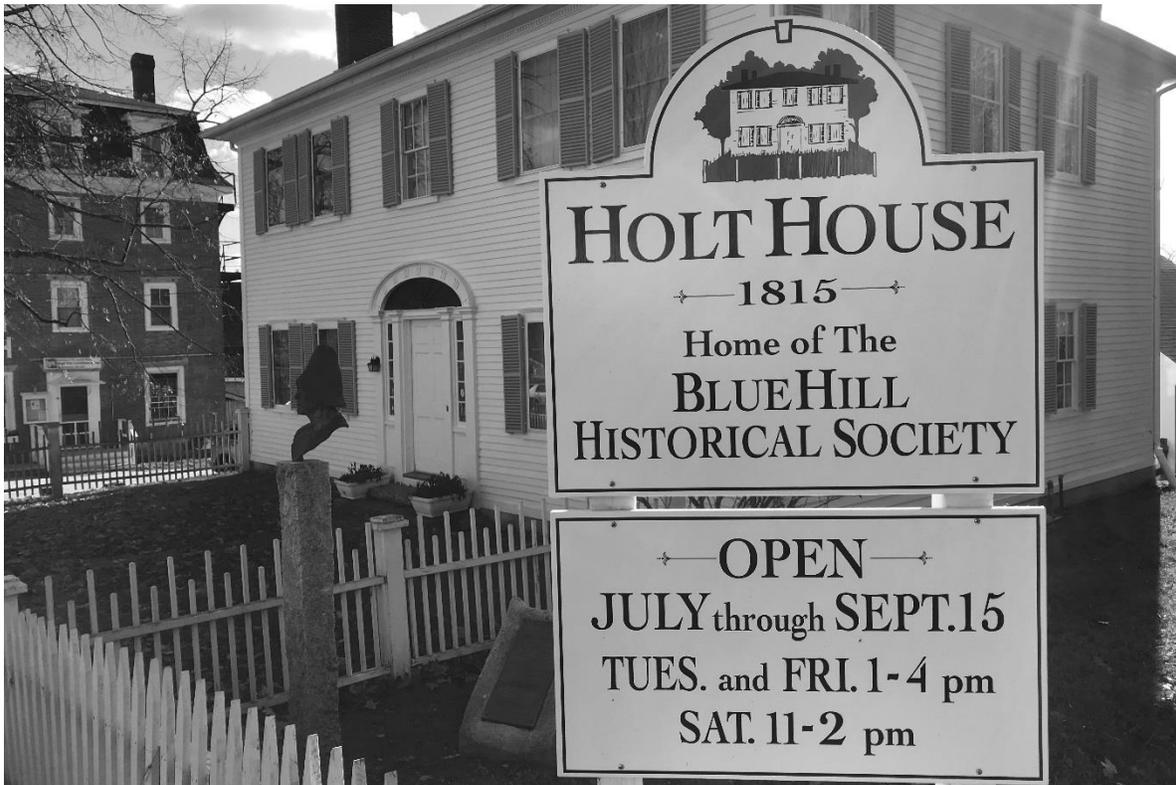


“Head of the Bay” by Annie L. Clough – The essential history of Blue Hill, reprinted -\$15.00

And our newest addition...



“A Century of Shipbuilding in Blue Hill” by Rebecca Wanbaugh has comprehensive information on ships built in Blue Hill, as well as on the early shipbuilders, their owners, the captains, and the locations of the yards and more-\$20.00



New Holt House sign painted by Reed Hayden of Surry

