

100 MAIN STREET, ROUTE 4A ♦ BAR MILLS, MAINE

BUXTON-HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INCORPORATED 1970 ♦ <http://www.buxtonhollishistorical.org> ♦ 207.929.1684 ♦ SPRING 2016

President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,
We hope you have "wintered" well and that you are ready for another productive and "historic" year! Your BHHS History Center OPENS on **Saturday, April 2, 2016 from 9 A.M. - Noon** for the 2016 year! Check our program listing in this newsletter and our website calendar for the year's exciting schedule of events.

Our program line up is looking great once again this year! From debunking genealogical myths to sponsoring a *Victorian White Party and Maypole Dance* at Quillcote; from a Maine Humanities Council published inquiry into how Kate Douglas Wiggin journeyed from worldwide celebrity to obscurity to kayaking the Saco; from the Box Lunch Auction fundraiser to the Dorcas Fair and Hollis Pirate Fest; from the symbolism of stone rubbing to historic and evolving funeral customs, 2016 promises to have something for most everyone! We are especially looking forward to our *November Annual Potluck Dinner Meeting* where slides of our first major exhibit "*All Roads Lead to Bar Mills*" will be presented! Those who have not already done so will have a chance to tour the exhibit. Although this first major exhibit effort is still in the works, lots of progress has been made! Be watching for our exhibit opening announcement.

Breaking news! Because of our work to save the Bar Mills School and the old Hollis High School from demolition, BHHS has been asked to participate in a four team panel on "*Success Stories: How Mainers Saved Four Remarkable Endangered Places*" at Maine Preservation's Annual Meeting in Augusta on April 30! Chris Closs, MP Field Service Adviser, wrote in a recent email that we "were the poster child for non-profit intervention and successful advocacy in Maine!" He continues to share that MP "wishes to publicly project the honor that these successful campaigns deserve." Naturally, we are excited and honored to be recognized! A few of us will be traveling together to this meeting. If you would like to join us, please let me know.

During the winter, we have been catching up on accessioning items donated in 2015. We have a number of other projects we would like to work on in 2016, too. If you have some time on your hands, we would welcome your assistance with any of the following projects that might sound interesting: moving files to an additional file cabinet, completing finishing touches of the Hollis Comprehensive Building Survey, acquiring more Buxton & Hollis census reports (after 1890), beginning to sort and file contents of storage boxes packed when we moved from the old Buxton Town Hall, working on various capital improvement projects, and cutting out and filing obituary articles. In 2016, we hope to begin a new long term project of scanning and cataloging all images in our files!

On another subject.....As I listen to the evening local, state and national news, I am frequently appalled at the crazy, increasingly crude speech and dangerous behavior of some of our nation's citizens these days. I often wonder how to effectively make a difference and bring a little sanity to the world.

Do you ever feel that way? I try to stay positive by focusing on my own attitude as much as possible. (It is only there, I reason, that I have any element of control.) Recently, while reading through some historical society info, I found this little poem below dated March 1902 (author unknown). It is simple, yet it reminds and encourages me to strive to make conscious choices based in kindness in all situations of my life. Perhaps it will cheer you a bit, as it does me, in these often disturbing times....

Happy Spring Everyone!

Jan Hill, *President*

Good Cheer!

Have you had a kindness shown?

Pass it on.

'Twas not given for you alone--

Pass it on.

Let it travel down the years.

Let it wipe another's tears,

'Til on all the Earth (as in Heaven)

The deed appears!



(L-r) Janice Lane, Jan Hill, Nancy Pierce, Meg Gardner, Bertie Ramsdell, Betsy Clay, Barry Plummer (Brent Hill was behind the camera lens)

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Janice Hill, *President*

Barry Plummer, *Vice-President, Buxton*

Marguerite Gardner, *Vice-President, Hollis*

Vicki Walker, *Secretary*

Betsy Clay, *Treasurer*

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2016 MEMBERSHIP FORM..... back cover

Here We Are!

by Meg Gardner

It had finally happened: after several years and endless meetings, the School Board of MSAD#6 and the Board of Directors of BHHS negotiated a lease joining their disparate goals for the future of the 1912 Bar Mills Elementary School. The Buxton-Hollis Historical Society, having had a peripatetic lifestyle since its inception in 1970, had saved an historic building that was threatened with demolition and had found a home that they hoped would be permanent. The School Board had relieved themselves of the responsibility of demolishing an old building that needed revitalizing and for which they no longer any useful purpose.

Although the old school was structurally sound, the interior needed to be completely renovated in order to make it suitable for use by BHHS as a museum and library. There were also several substantial capital projects that needed immediate attention. Additionally, all of the books, documents, and artifacts that BHHS had collected over the years, most of which were being stored, had to be moved from several different locations to the “new” building. There was no question about the work involved. This was an enormous undertaking for a relatively small organization.

The poet Alexander Pope wrote in one of his poems that “fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” Many, if not most, thought that this might be the case with this new project. In spite of the challenges, and taking a deep breath, BHHS members prioritized projects and work schedules. Buxton and Hollis community members, many of whom had not been active with BHHS until then, joined in the effort. A small army of volunteers came together and devoted numerous hours of often very hard work into rehabilitating the building.

In addition to the hands-on volunteers, generous financial contributions, both initially and continuing, have made it possible to hire necessary craftsmen and professionals and to purchase or to donate needed materials. One of the biggest initial boosts to the project was the faith shown by the board of Narragansett Number One Foundation. Jan Hill, BHHS President, knew that the project needed grant support along with fundraising to make some of the capital expenses possible. The first of these immediate needs was the installation of a new boiler and water heater. She submitted a grant for this purpose to the Foundation during the negotiations with the school board, when the outcome was still uncertain. Narragansett Number One Foundation awarded the grant contingent on BHHS’s ability to acquire the building within the year. This initial support, and a matching grant from Maine Preservation, served as impressive and crucial impetus for the project, verifying the determined support for repurposing the building.

The lease that was signed with MSAD#6 on April 30, 2013, was for a four year renewable term (in accordance with State law). We were advised to continue to move forward with the expectation that the lease will be renewed for as long as BHHS has need of the building, provided that both we and the School District maintain its terms. We are now entering our fourth year with that expectation and the time has come to reflect about what has been accomplished over the past three years and what remains to be done in order to assure that the Buxton-Hollis Historical Society will remain in this beautiful place for a very long time.

Let’s enumerate some of our major accomplishments. That first summer was brutal. It was very hot, and some of the most labor intensive and frankly unpleasant work had to be completed. This entailed tearing down partitions and pulling up carpeting that was adhered to the hardwood floors. The first floor rooms were to be used for the research library, office, museum store, and community room. Lowered ceilings had to be removed, tin ceilings and walls needed to be patched, and everything needed repainting. The community room trim and some wainscoting needed to be reproduced and replaced. The handsome woodwork downstairs was stained and coated with polyurethane. Hardwood floors needed to be sanded and refinished. A new kitchenette tucked into an existing closet required plumbing, shelving, and a counter. New electric outlets were installed. Old florescent ceiling fixtures were replaced with reproduction school house lighting. Attic windows and some cellar windows were replaced and a new boiler and water heater was installed. Although contractors were hired when necessary,

(Continued on page 3)

(cont. from page 2)

all of the demolition, patching, painting, cleaning, and much of the carpentry was done by volunteers. All of this work was completed that first summer! Work continued during the spring, summer, and fall of 2013 in spite of a very busy series of programs, dozens of genealogical queries that we researched, and many visitors to the library and museum. Community members responded to our opening with donations of wonderful artifacts and memorabilia. The library and museum artifacts needed to be accessioned, a fascinating but time consuming job!

Again, volunteer workers contributed considerable time and talent to these projects. In the midst of this purposeful activity, building rehabilitation continued into 2014-2015. We added fourteen new windows; installed attic insulation and replaced roof supports; redecorated two bathrooms; created a larger handicap entrance with more direct access to our community room; replaced the handicap entrance door unit, and continued to rehabilitate more rooms on the second floor. Recently, slate black boards on the second floor have been exposed, removed, cleaned and replaced. Nearly 4000 hours of volunteer time has been recorded to date in building rehabilitation alone. This figure does not include the countless hours spent researching, accessioning, writing, programming, and all of the other activities that are necessary in developing an effective permanent history center.

We have been very fortunate in having a number of young people step forward to offer their help in various ways. Their presence and enthusiasm is always a delight. A particularly important task was replacing the decking of the handicap-accessible ramp. Daniel Smith chose replacing the ramp decking (along with painting a second floor room) as his Eagle Scout project. He and friends he recruited worked long and hard removing the old ramp decking, soliciting local business for necessary materials, and providing the manual labor to make sure that this special entrance to our building is safe, meets ADA guidelines, and looks good. He will be back this spring/summer to finish staining. All of us are very proud that he is an Eagle Scout and grateful that he selected BHHS for his project.

Other young people who have volunteered and have provided us with many hours of support are Lily Carter, a wonderful, friendly, enthusiastic and very helpful Jill-of-all-trades; Patrick Stanley, who was a great assistance answering the phone and helping with various projects; three friends of Lily's who assisted us with our Annual Meeting dinner preparations; and Wheaton College student Asa Rubin, who did a wonderful job staining trim and painting the ceiling and walls of a second room during his Christmas break. We are grateful for the interest and energy of these young people who share a respect for history. We hope that their volunteer experience with us has encouraged them to follow their interests and to continue volunteering throughout their lives.

Until now our priorities have been mostly self-evident. Now, we need to take time to breathe a bit more and to reflect about our future. This reflection needs to consider our pending and future building preservation and collection growth needs. We need to continue to focus on the creation of our first major exhibit "All Roads Lead to Bar Mills," as well as to plan future exhibits. Our goal is to spend meaningful time this year beginning to purposefully envision long term activities. After all, it was Confucius who said, "Study the past if you would define the future."

So, here we are. A lot has been accomplished, but there is more to be done. Interestingly, the most rewarding aspect of the new face of the Buxton-Hollis Historical Society is not just a list of accomplishments, as proud as we are of those. It is rather the sense of community that has been engendered, the appreciation for those who have worked so hard in all spheres in the past to build our communities, and finally, and probably the most important, all the fun that we have had and continue to have as we work together to grow and celebrate this special place.

VISIT OUR HISTORY CENTER

100 Main Street, Route 4A, Bar Mills, Maine

OPEN:

Thursdays 4:00–8:00 p.m.

Saturdays 9:00–12:00 a.m.

Except holiday weekends

ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER

The Buxton-Hollis Historical Society Newsletter is published typically in the spring, summer and fall. The purpose of the BHHS newsletter is to develop, inform and foster a network of citizens and institutions, in the Buxton-Hollis area of Maine and beyond who unite in thought and action in collecting, preserving and publishing the early and late history of the towns of Buxton and Hollis. Contact info. provided on pg. 1.

DONATIONS NEEDED!

We have many local resources available for research at our research library and museum due to generous donations over the years. Two things very helpful and interesting to genealogical researchers are needed—**Saco River Telegraph & Telephone phone books before 1965** and **Bonny Eagle High School yearbooks**. If you have either of these items or know of someone who might donate them we would be very glad to accept them for our collection and future use!

VISIT US ONLINE

Be sure to check out our webpage (www.buxtonhollishistorical.org) and Facebook page, both managed by our own "Molly Woodman" for event photos and more news than we have room for here. Additionally, visit www.bhhsnewsletter.weebly.com to see the online version of the BHHS newsletter.

The BHHS newsletter is proudly sponsored by **Chad E. Poitras Cremation and Funeral Service**

Funeral Home ☎ Cremation Provider

498 Long Plains Road, Buxton

929-3723

www.mainefuneral.com

Chad Poitras, BHHS member

"A local resident serving locals with dignity and respect"

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

Bar Mills bridge during the 1936 flood. Follow BHHS on Facebook for more historical photos!



Roger's Fiber Office - front small building

Upcoming Events 2016

Tuesday, April 12, 6:30 P.M.: *"Debunking the 'Three Brothers Came to America' and Other Family Theories" OR "Separating Fact From Fiction"*

Join writer, lecturer, genealogist, and a retired ordained American Baptist minister, Douglas Cruger, as he debunks some treasured family stories of where we came from. Many of these traditional family myths are frequently wrong! Unfortunately, what your great grandmother remembered about your family's roots may not stand up to the modern techniques of genealogical research. Explore some popular family folklore in light of what the facts may actually tell us. *Refreshments served. *Suggested donations: \$10, Seniors \$8.*

Sunday, May 22, 1-3:30 P.M.: *"Victorian White Party with Maypole Dancing"*

Celebrate the arrival of spring with your entire family come rain or shine as we gather on the front and south lawns at Quillcote, Kate Douglas Wiggin's historic summer residence on 20 Salmon Falls Rd. in Hollis to experience a traditional *"Victorian White Party"*, a popular community social event in the days of KDW. May pole dances will be performed by the *Movers and Shakers Competition Dance Team of All That Dance Studio* of West Buxton. You or your kids might like to take a turn dancing around a Maypole, too! There will be music, refreshments, horse shoes, croquet, and an opportunity to make your own, or purchase, a pre-made Flower Crown Wreath to adorn your hair on this festive day! FMI, contact Jan Hill 929-8895. **Donations gratefully accepted.*

Tuesday, June 21, 100 Main St., Bar Mills, 6:30 P.M.: *"Kate Douglas Wiggin: From Celebrity to Obscurity"*

Join Nancy Ponzetti of Hollis as she shares her love of history and her fascinating research perspective on Kate Douglas Wiggin, who in 1915, as recorded by her sister Nora Archibald Smith, was named by the Women's Board of the Exposition for the San Francisco World's Fair as one of the six most distinguished women in the world, "one of the feminine luminaries of art, learning, and achievement". This program will address the questions: *Who was Kate Douglas Wiggin?; What were her accomplishments?; and How did she journey from celebrity to obscurity?* Ms. Ponzetti's research on Kate Douglas Wiggin was connected to a three-year *Teaching American History (TAH)* grant awarded through MSAD #11 Gardiner, ME from 2004-2007. The end product of this grant was a biography of Kate published by the Maine Humanities Council. **Suggested donations: \$10, Seniors \$8.*

Saturday, July 23, 10 A.M.: *Cruising the River II & BBQ*

We had such a good time "Cruising the River" last year, we decided to do it again! So, bring your kayak or canoe, your safety gear, sunscreen and water for another excursion on the glorious Saco. This time, we put in at the Skelton Boat Landing in Dayton (formally Hollis) and flat paddle to Cook's Brook, Pleasant Point, Indian Cellar and finally to the Larry property below the Bar Mills Dam, Hollis side. A delectable BBQ follows in Bar Mills in the wonderful Burt and Barbara Pease barn on 59 Depot St. Hamburgers, hot dogs and beverage provided. We would love it if you would like to bring a side dish to share! R.S.V.P. for the cookout by *August 17* to Berty Ramsdell 929-4529 or email robertaramsdell@myottmail.com **Donations gratefully accepted.*

Saturday, August 6, 5 P.M. : *Box Lunch Auction*

Support your new Buxton-Hollis Historical Society History Center Capital Projects Fund by joining us for a unique, delightful and fun filled evening!!! All you need do is pack a light supper in a decorated box or container. Then, attach a description of the meal you provide, which will then be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Bruce A. Buxton, auctioneer extraordinaire, is back by popular demand! The venue is the magical Royal Brewster Barn at the corner of Rt. 202 and 112. Social hour begins at 5.P.M. Wine, refreshments and door prizes galore! FMI and to reserve your seat, call Bev at 929-6495 or email *ratkin585@aol.com*

Saturday, August 13, 9 A.M.—3 P.M. - Hollis "Pirate Fest" being held at the Hollis Sports Complex
Visit our BHHS sales table with items of local historic interest. Hope to see you there!

(Cont. from page 4)

Saturday, August 20, 9 A.M.- 2 P.M. - Dorcas Fair (BHHS Table)

There is no Buxton Community Day this year and the Dorcas Society has moved its Dorcas Fair back to its traditional date. Come visit us at our BHHS booth on the lawn of the First Congregational Church (Tory Hill), corner Rt. 112 & 202. View and purchase local items of historic interest. Credit cards accepted.

Tuesday, September 20, 6:30: "Life in Stone"

Stone rubbing is the practice of creating an image of surface features of gravestones on paper and can reveal what was going on in an area or a specific time. Paul Barasel will discuss gravestone funeral art symbolism from the early 1600's through the late 1880's. Mr. Barasel, who has done numerous talks on the subject, began his fascination with gravestone rubbings over 40 years ago. Most recently, Mr. Barasel authored an article entitled "*This Hobby Makes 'Getting Stoned' Have a Whole New Exciting Meaning*", which appeared in the "Up Portland" Newspaper, February, 2016 edition. *Refreshments served. *Suggested donations: \$10, Seniors \$8.*

Tuesday, October 18, 6:30 P.M.: "The Evolution of Funeral Customs in New England"

As with so many other things in our daily lives, *funeral traditions* stemming from the earliest days of America have changed and evolved over the years. Customs at colonial funerals were quite different and some might even be considered strange today. Victorian society dictated strict rules for the observance of rituals related to death and dying. Today, many modern funeral customs are focused on personalizing arrangements tailored to fit the life of the deceased. Explore changing funeral customs with Chad Poitras, serving area residents and their families since 2001. Chad is Funeral Director at Chad E. Poitras Cremation and Funeral Service. *Refreshments served. *Suggested donations: \$10, Seniors \$8.*

Saturday, November 5, 5 P.M. - Annual Meeting & Potluck Dinner "All Roads Lead to Bar Mills" Exhibit Celebration

Once again, we will gather together at 100 Main Street, Bar Mills, for our Annual Meeting, election of officers and delicious potluck dinner! The program will be slides of our new Bar Mills exhibit creation process and a chance to view the exhibit. Exhibit visionary, local history resource and past BHHS President Brenton Hill, assisted by Curator Steven Atripaldi; BHHS President Jan Hill; Buxton Vice-President, Barry Plummer; and graphic design guru, Beth Gardner, have been working to create and complete our first major BHHS exhibit. It has taken an incredible amount of time and energy and we trust that you will find it well worth the effort! For dinner reservations, call Berty Ramsdell @ 929-4529 or email robertaramsdell@myottmail.com. **Suggested donations: \$10, Seniors \$8.*

**Please note that suggested donations are used to support on-going capital improvements to our new history center building.*

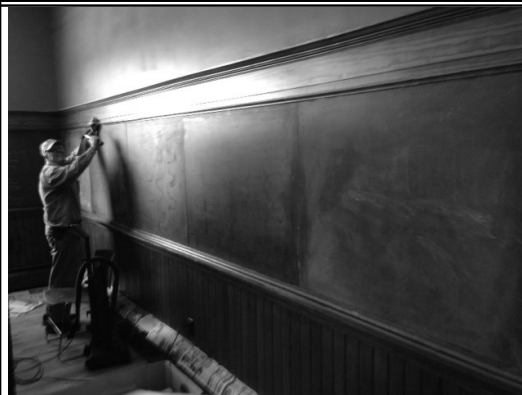
BHHS Building Updates

Before



Eagle Scout, Daniel Smith, and his father, Jim Smith, taking photos of second floor left room before the walls are painted. Note the missing blackboard.

After



Barry Plummer is putting finishing touches on this same blackboard area, now without its cork covering and with missing sections of slate replaced.

Titbits*: A choice or pleasing bit of anything, as news or gossip...

by Meg Gardner

Did you know that the fashion for white lawn and organdy dresses we associate with Victorian era tea parties were a break-through of women's rights? Although it was becoming a more popular and socially-accepted drink during the mid-nineteenth century, Queen Victoria wasn't allowed to drink tea when she was growing up. One of her first actions after her coronation in 1837 (she was eighteen years old) was to order a cup of tea. She liked the drink so much that she began serving it to ladies only in her boudoir; the first "tea gowns" were light and airy and bore a resemblance to night gowns and robes. Until this time, coffee had been the reigning drink and it was served socially in all-male coffee houses. When tea drinking began to replace coffee, the idea of using it as a basis for a social opportunity that included both men and women moved out of the boudoir setting and into more public areas. However, the white filmy dresses remained "de rigueur." They were a welcome breath of cool and freedom from the heavily corseted, hooped, cumbersome, and hot costumes that women were expected to wear. Another advantage was that young women were more seductive in these pretty, airy dresses, and were much appreciated by the young men in attendance.



Maypoles and their companion dances were rites of spring celebrated from the murky days of the Druids. Even in fifteenth century England this celebration of the return of spring and promise of new life was referred to as "from ancient days." The custom of raising a pole decorated with fresh flowers and stylized dancing that involved winding and rewinding ribbons around it flourished all over northern Europe in similar forms. The dances are often variations of the traditional and ancient Morris dance; these are thought by many to have originated from the Druids' Maris dances, which were fertility and agricultural dances. In England the dancing was often bawdy and included men dressed like clowns, dragons, and bushes or trees. As the centuries progressed and society was less approving of improper public behavior, maypole dancing became less rambunctious and more genteel and became the form we know now. From its beginnings the celebration is associated with the first of May, or May Day. The earliest May Day celebration (including dancing and a maypole) was held in Massachusetts in 1627 or 1628 and was resoundingly censured by the Puritans, particularly by Governor William Bradford.



Volume 48, January to June (inclusive) 1909, of *Good Housekeeping Monthly Magazine* describes "The Fair at Quillcote," Kate Douglas Wiggin's summer home in Hollis. This fair was a fund-raising event held by the Dorcas Society (which had been founded by Ms. Wiggin). Proceeds of the benefit supported "the old church at Buxton Lower Corner" and drew hundreds of visitors from near and far. Quillcote's gorgeous grounds, delicious food stuffs, and beautiful homemade items for sale, as well as the unique "gift tree," all contributed to the festive atmosphere. According to *Good Housekeeping* "There are diversions for every taste and within the reach of every purse, and best of all is the splendid feeling of friendliness." One of the very special "diversions" is the maypole: "Farther down the lawn is the varicolored Maypole, around which eight pretty girls dance through picturesque old figures to the accompaniment of their singing and a guitar played by Miss Smith**, a violinist assisting."

**"Titbits" is the British version of the American word "tidbits." Since the derivation of the word is British, it seems to me that "titbits" is most appropriate. There is a lot of heated discussion among etymologists about which one is correct — all tit-for-tat (British, 16th century) if you ask me. To further complicate the matter, "tit for tat" in Cockney rhyme means "hat."

**Nora Archibald Smith was Kate Douglas Wiggin's sister and often co-authored children's books with her.

Bringing in the May!



Celebrate a Victorian White Social at Quillcote, Summer home of Kate Douglas Wiggin, with Maypole dancing, flowers, music, games, refreshments, and laughter

Sunday, May 22, from 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

20 Salmon Falls Road, Hollis

Featured Dancers *Movers & Shakers Competition Dance Team*

from ALL THAT DANCE STUDIO, West Buxton

Bring the whole family, try dancing around the Maypole, have lemonade and cake, make (or purchase ready-made) flower crowns, play horseshoes and croquet. The "Victorian White Party" was a social event popularized by Kate Douglas Wiggin when she was in residence at Quillcote. WELCOME SPRING! Come rain or shine. FMI contact Jan Hill, 929-8895. Donations are always gratefully accepted.

N.C. Watson: Student Exchange!

by Stacey Gagnon

The Bonny Eagle School District hosted a group of 23 exchange students from Okinawa, Japan. Although they were only here ten days, they have left a lasting impression on our community. We had two students at our house!! On Monday, March 14, they enjoyed the N.C. Watson School Museum, asked many questions, and were very respectful. A great time was had by all!



The N.C. Watson One Room School Museum, Groveville Road, Buxton Center
Open 2nd Saturday of the month, from April to October, 1 to 4 p.m. or by special appointment
Call Stacey Gagnon at 929-2141 or email staceygagnon19@gmail.com

2016 Membership Form

(Please Print Clearly)

Name (s): _____

Street Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email address: _____

Phone: Home _____ Cell _____ Work _____

Send my newsletter electronically _____

Send my newsletter by U. S. Mail _____

Please send us your updated email address annually to help keep our contact list current!

We are in need of volunteers to help rehabilitate our new headquarters, assist patrons in our research library and help create our new museum displays at 100 Main St., Bar Mills, Maine. Please note below how you would like to help.

2016 Annual Dues Level

(Our membership calendar year is January 1 to December 31)

___ Individual (\$10) ___ Family (\$20) ___ Patron (\$50)

___ Sustaining (\$100) ___ Founder (\$500) ___ Other

Donations are Tax Deductible and are Gratefully Accepted!

Please make checks to: Buxton-Hollis Historical Society

Send to:

Buxton Hollis Historical Society

Attn: Membership Chair

P. O. Box 34

Buxton, ME 04093

Questions? Please call 929-1684 and leave a message on our office answering machine OR go to *Contact Us* on our website www.buxtonhollishistorical.org

THANK YOU!

BUXTON-HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 34

BUXTON, MAINE 04093-0034

