

## President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

I imagine that you are as invigorated and grateful as I am to see the sun, blue sky and colorful summer blooms! The honey bees (which need sun to fly) are busily collecting their pollen today! Yes!!!

Spring brought our April 8th Grand Opening of the Bar Mills Exhibit, which has elicited an abundance of positive comments and continues to draw many visitors! Sincere thanks to the volunteers who worked to prepare the room, create the exhibit and host the opening! Well done!!! Featured in the opening of the exhibit was the 1914/15 American LaFrance fire truck, the first motorized fire equipment in Bar Mills. It has been in the Bar Mills Fire Department since its creation. It was brought to our open house this spring by Roland Turgeon. Currently under rehabilitation, we hope to see more of it in the future.

In Late April, we were delighted to welcome sixteen Bonny Eagle High School Maine Studies students who toured BHHS headquarters and the impressive new Bar Mills Exhibit, along with their teacher, Chris Loeff.



This first motorized Bar Mills fire equipment was on display at the Grand Opening of the BHHS first major exhibit, "All Roads Lead to Bar Mills". Shown "driving" is four year old Alden Hill, Grandson of Brent & Jan Hill. Alden has a passion for trucks of all kinds and is the son of Adam Hill and Avery Yale Kamila of Portland."



BEHS Maine Studies class following Bar Mills Exhibit Tour

Spring also saw the arrival at various times of several sixth grade BEMS students to do research at BHHS on their various collaborative Social Studies (SS) and Language Arts (ELA) projects. We were honored to receive a message from their teacher, Kristin Klin, a 20 year teaching veteran at BEMS, who wrote in response to a thank you note to her from BHHS, "It is exciting to hear about their (the students) adventures at the Historical Society. One of my students even wants to volunteer there. Ahh... music to a social studies teacher's ears! :) Just having ONE student enter your doors was a goal for me. I have come to find out that my students have been out and about taking pictures, rubbing tombstones, and

interviewing families via email or phone. I am so elated right now and so proud of this group of kids for stepping out of the box and learning how to be real historians! The internet can be wonderful—but nothing like the historical society building! Your site is also very amazing. I was very impressed. And all the videos through vimeo!! Wow—someone is so dedicated." (Go to this link to view some BEMS history projects: <http://bit.ly/BEMS-history-project>)



(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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The “All That Dance” Competitive Dance Teams welcomed spring 2017 by circling and weaving around the May Pole at the annual BHHS sponsored Victorian White Party held on the grounds of Quillcote in Hollis on May 21. Floral crown wreaths made by BHHS volunteers once again complimented dancers’ multi-colored costumes and added to the general festivities of the day, along with balloons, enticing cakes, pop corn and punch. Many thanks to Carla Turner for opening Quillcote’s grounds for the event and to our volunteers who worked to make the festivities possible. Special thanks to the Darcy Leavitt “All That Dance” Teams for participating during what is a very busy time of year for them! They are such a lovely and talented group of young ladies!!!



“All That Dance” Competitive Dance Teams (Darcy Leavitt, Director), along with a few BHHS members, in front of Quillcote in Hollis.

**BHHS OFFICERS**

Janice Hill, *President*

Barry Plummer, *Vice-President, Buxton*

Nancy Ponzetti, *Vice-President, Hollis*

Vicki Walker, *Secretary*

Betsy Clay, *Treasurer*

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Dance Teams prepare to welcome spring!

We have MORE exciting news, too! BHHS is very fortunate to have received a 2017 *Narragansett Number One Foundation* grant to complete a T. C. Hafford Basement Systems project to dry out our BHHS basement

to preserve our historical collection!!! Volunteers have already begun this ambitious project to prepare the basement for a new wall system and cement floor! Our sincere gratitude to NNOF for their vision and generous assistance!!! *If you would like to help, please contact Barry Plummer at 727-3345 to schedule a time to assist work teams with this worthwhile effort!*

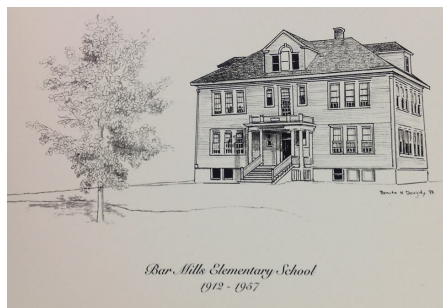
Last, we have wonderful upcoming summer programming you won’t want to miss! *The Two Narragansett Townships, No. 1 & No. 7*, a collaborative program with the Gorham Historical Society will have been presented on June 20th by the time this newsletter goes to press! You won’t want to miss the July 22nd *Nature Walk to Indian Cellar with John Mattor*. And we hope you have marked your calendar for the unique and entertaining *Brewster Barn Benefit Bash* (a lovely summer buffet followed by Bruce A. Buxton antique appraisals) on August 19 at 5 P.M. Be sure to check these program listings and more in this newsletter or on our website for details! We look forward to seeing you!

Happy Summer Everyone!

Jan Hill, *President*

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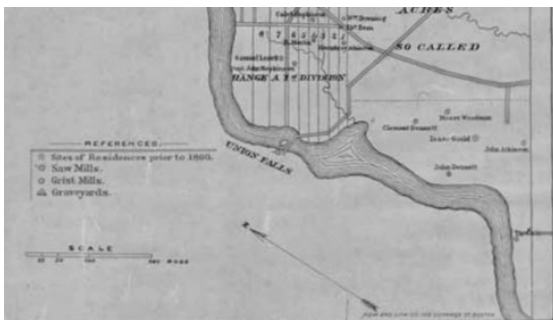
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# Union Falls, Old & New

by *Jim Libby*

Today, few people in Buxton, Hollis and Dayton can imagine that Union Falls, the quiet acreage surrounding the Saco River where Dayton and Buxton meet, was once an epicenter of activity in their towns. In fact, many do not know where Union Falls is located, or that a place called Union Falls even exists.



A map of Union Falls

The village of “Union Falls” includes the area from the corner of the Union Falls Road and the Simpson Road in Buxton all the way down to the Saco border, just north of the historic Stackpole Creek and its stone archway. On the Dayton side, acreage includes parts of Company Road, Hollis Road, Union Falls Road, and Landing Road.

Beginning in the early and middle 1700’s, the industrious and the brave pushed into the frontier (yes, Buxton/Hollis was the frontier), coming inland from the mouth of the Saco River. Settlers came in slow increments, requiring forts to be built and garrisons maintained.

The Saco Block House was built around 1728, approximately 26 years before the fort at Pleasant Point in Buxton. Sylvester reports in *Sokoki Trail* that the first and second stories were equipped with cannon, “mounted to be served from the portholes in the upper story,” as preparedness was the key to survival in these years.

A few inhabitants came by the authority of the grant of land that is now Buxton to the soldiers who fought in the Narragansett War. According to Jewett and Hannaford’s *History of Hollis*, rights on the Hollis/Dayton side stemmed from “purchases made by Major William Phillips [from] two Indian sagamores, Hobinowil and Magg Hegan, in 1660 and 1664.” Some rights were handed down and/or sold. Far more individuals settled on “unclaimed” areas of land in Buxton, Hollis and Dayton.

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## 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

The BHHS newsletter is proudly sponsored by

**Chad E. Poitras Cremation and Funeral Service**

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Chad Poitras, BHHS member

*“A local resident serving locals with dignity and respect”*

## ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER

The Buxton-Hollis Historical Society Newsletter is published three times a year, typically in the spring, summer and fall. Its purpose is to inform a network of citizens and institutions of the work of BHHS and to foster an appreciation of the importance of Buxton and Hollis history.

## VISIT US ONLINE

Be sure to check out our webpage

([www.buxtonhollishistorical.org](http://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](http://www.bhhsnewsletter.weebly.com) to

see the online version of the BHHS newsletter.

## DONATIONS NEEDED!

We are grateful to Helen Johnson and Carla Turner for their recent donations of several Bonny Eagle High School yearbooks. If you know of anyone who has BEHS yearbooks of the following years, we are hoping to add them to our collection. Thank you!

1963, 1965, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2003, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017

## A LOOK BACK IN TIME



A racecar family:  
Helen Libby with sons left to right: Richard, Phillip “Phip”, Robert “Bob”, and

George. For more photos, follow BHHS on Facebook.



## Upcoming Events 2017

**Sat., July 22, 9 A.M.:** We are excited to announce a new “**NATURE WALK TO INDIAN CELLAR**” with expert tour guide, John Mattor, of the Hollis Conservation Commission. Many improvements have been made to the trails over recent years. Gather & park in the lot across from the Salmon Falls Library at the junction of Rt. 202 and Old Alfred Rd. The **Nature Walk will be followed by a delectable Noon BBQ in the Burt & Barb Pease barn** at 59 Depot St. Hamburgers, hot dogs and beverages will be provided. Anyone wishing to contribute to the menu may drop side dishes off at the Pease residence prior to the Nature Walk, or bring your contribution when you come to the cookout! To R.S.V.P. needed for cook out only, contact Roberta Ramsdell at 929-4529 or email [robertaramsdell@myottmail.com](mailto:robertaramsdell@myottmail.com). *Donations gratefully accepted.*



*Meg (Clark) Gardner sitting on a marker tree on the trail to Indian Cellar, 1947*

**Sat., Aug. 5, 9 A.M.:** “**DORCAS FEST & CAR SHOW**” – Visit us as we participate in the Dorcas Fest at our BHHS sales booth on the Tory Hill (First Congregational Church) lawn. The BHHS Research Library & Museum will be closed for this event.

**Saturday, August 12, 9 A.M.:** “**HOLLIS PIRATE FEST**” being held again this year at the Hollis Sports Complex. Visit our BHHS sales table for items of local historic interest...Looking forward to seeing you there!

**Sat., August 19, 5 P.M.:** “**BENEFIT BASH IN THE BREWSTER BARN** – Surprises await us at this entertaining and educational session as treasures of all types will be examined and valued by Bruce Buxton, a nationally known appraiser and representative of Skinner's Auctioneers of Boston, making his fifth appearance in the Brewster Barn for the Buxton-Hollis Historical Society. The Benefit Bash is the primary fundraiser to benefit the society's capital projects. Here's your chance to bring your cherished and sometimes mysterious possessions (what on earth did great grandmother use that for?), as well as serious antiques, to learn more about these interesting relics from the past, while enjoying a summer buffet including a delectable assortment of homemade pies. Tickets \$25/person. Good company, laughter, music and social hour. For reservations, send your check to Beverly Atkinson, P.O. Box 277, Bar Mills, ME 04004 or call Bev at 929-6495 to reserve your seat in this historic National Register barn at 8 Brewster Place, Bar Mills.



*Nationally respected Appraiser, Bruce Buxton, Representative of Skinner's Auctioneers of Boston, offers entertaining comments and opinions of value at the 2016 Benefit Bash in the Brewster Barn*

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**Tues., Sept. 12, 6:30: “GENETIC GENEALOGY: Case Studies to Help with Traditional Genealogical Research”** with Nancy Milliken Mason who will follow up on her first popular program with more case studies and a focused exploration of which modality to explore to answer YOUR specific questions and more. A genetic genealogist and member of many national and international historical / genealogical societies, Nancy has been doing traditional genealogy research for over 30 years. She is a member of the Maine Genealogical DIG (DNA Interest Group) and is a speaker for ISOGG. She teaches local Adult Education programs and is available for DNA research consultations. \*Suggested donations \$10; Seniors, \$8.

**Tues., Oct. 10, 6:30 P.M.: “THE COCHRANE CRAZE”** presented by Nancy Ponzetti. At its height between 1817-1819, the *Cochrane Craze* swept through York County particularly in the towns of Saco, Buxton, Hollis, and Kennebunk. Non-denominational preacher, Jacob Cochrane (1782-1836), founder of The Society of Free Brethren and Sisters, promoted the doctrine of *spiritual wifery* while encouraging *holy dancing* and frenzied *reaping* in worship. Cochrane’s ascension and demise will be discussed in this program as well as his possible influence on both the Oneida Community and the Church of Latter Day Saints. Nancy Ponzetti, historian and educator, is the current vice president of the BHHS for Hollis. \*Suggested donations \$10 ; Seniors, \$8.

**Sat., Nov. 4, 5 P.M.: “APPRECIATING ANTIQUE HOMES, FROM ARCHITECTURE TO ENERGY EFFICIENCY”** Join us for our *Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner* with well respected Real Estate Specialist, Linda Griffin of Linda Griffin Homes. She will be presenting local home slides, identifying styles and features and discussing numerous ways to make antique homes more energy efficient. As a preservationist and Vice-President of the Windham Historical Society and President of the Cornish Historical Society, Linda is concerned that many people these days are purchasing new homes because they are unaware of relatively easy ways to make older homes energy efficient. To reserve your seat at the table, please R.S.V.P. Roberta Ramsdell at 929-4529. She will solicit your potluck dish as well, so be thinking of what you would like to contribute to this delicious feast. \*Suggested donations \$10; Seniors, \$8.

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

## Upcoming Course

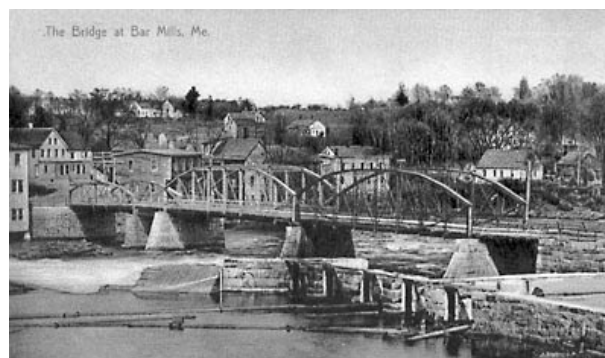
Looking to learn a bit more about local history? Join Nancy Ponzetti, BHHS Vice President, Hollis, for the upcoming York County Senior College course in the fall; registration is through the YCSC website ([www.yorkcountyseniorcollege.org](http://www.yorkcountyseniorcollege.org)). Cost is \$25 for the course and \$25 for a membership to YCSC.

**Course Title:** Saco Villages—Buxton and Hollis

Begins Thursday, September 14, 2017, for 8 weeks

From 1:00—3:00 p.m., at Trinity Episcopal Church, Saco, ME

**Course Description:** This course will explore some of the historic figures from the Saco River villages, Buxton and Hollis: painters Gibeon Bradbury and John Brewster, writers Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith, controversial preacher Jacob Cochrane, Civil War nurse Rebecca Usher. The course will include a field trip to the Buxton Hollis Historical Society to view its latest exhibit, *All Roads Lead to Bar Mills*.



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Erection of the Saco Block House was the single most important element of progress that allowed Union Falls to fully develop into an industrial and residential area. The Block House was the first major fort and trading post located near Buxton and Hollis. The fort was later called the “Truck House,” as its purpose shifted toward trade and away from defense.

Access to the Block House was difficult in the 1730’s. The river was one option to transport travelers and goods. Some walked. Others rode via horseback on the “Rope Walk,” or attempted carts led by oxen through the muddy, rooted forest ways. According to *The Records of the Proprietors of Narraganset Township Number One*, Rope Walk was a name for the long, narrow township of Little Falls and the pathways forged on the west side of the Saco River through what is now Dayton and Hollis. For a time, eastern access to Union Falls from the Buxton side of the river was more treacherous than access from the west.

The settlement of Buxton and Hollis came nearly a full century after the successful settlement of Biddeford. This slow progression inland was emblematic of the difficulties of living away from the coast during those early years. The necessity of some men to serve in King George’s War in the 1740’s also delayed permanent settlement of the area.

Sylvester best explains the general living conditions of the early to mid-1700’s:

“These were the days of temporary dwellings. They were thrown together at haphazard, covered with bark, for their builders knew not when the woods would echo with the whoop of the Sokoki, who left always a trail of smoke to indicate their passing. It was essentially a one-room cabin, scant in the necessities of living—when the old woman and her herbs were potentials; when a sip of wintergreen was always asteeep on the hob and a swallow of thoroughwort was worth more to a man’s liver than the entire contents of the modern drug store.”

As time passed, more families were able to stray further from the protection afforded by the garrison, but the river remained a critical resource to Union Falls. Jewett and Hannaford write about early complaints that the netting of salmon and other fish species near Biddeford was preventing fish migration. From fish runs to log runs to the development of power for the mills, the mighty Saco was central to the way of life. With the eventual establishment of a grist mill, sawmills, tanneries, and farms, employment in Union Falls surged through the 1760’s and 1770’s, particularly on the Hollis side of the river.



Union Falls Bridge before 1922 dam

According to *The Records of the Proprietors of Narraganset Township, No. 1, now Buxton, Maine*, Union Falls gained its name from “the fact that the first mill-builders and owners – the Dunns, Gordons, & Haleys – were all united partners in business.” Some doubt this account, but it is the best documented explanation for the village’s name. At times in the early 1800’s, Union Falls was also referred to as Hopkinson’s Mills, after Stephen Hopkinson, an important investor, mill owner, and public figure.

During the early 1800’s, Union Falls expanded at a brisk pace on both the western and eastern shore, as well as on roads leading away from the river. When the freshet of 1837 wiped out many of the mills and

buildings nearest to the river, reconstruction came quickly. Cousins and Hannaford’s describe the scene in 1845 in *“Recollections of Old Buxton, Maine”*:

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[There was] “A double sawmill, double whipper mill, grocery store owned by Thomas Carll...a blacksmith shop [and] a shoeshop owned by Fenderson.” “On the south bank was a Grist Mill; farther down, a tannery; a shop where coffins were made; and a boat yard run by Shorey where vessels (for river use, probably) were made. A mill which made clapboards and shingles was located at the foot of the falls.” For a time, Union Falls had its own store and post office, operated at its end by Jesse Harmon.

Thus, from 1760 to 1850, Union Falls was the economic hub for the citizens of Buxton, Hollis, and Dayton. The last store, located near the west entrance of old covered bridge, was sold around 1890, as activity had moved to Salmon Falls, the Barr (Bar Mills), Moderation (West Buxton), and beyond.

The scene on the right depicts the demolition of the old Union Falls Bridge on November 3rd, 1921. The economy that once thrived in Union Falls had long-since faded. This was the last covered bridge completely within the boundaries of York County (the Porter-Parsonfield covered bridge between Oxford and York County still remains today).



Demolition of the old Union Falls Bridge

A few residences from the era remain on both the Buxton and the Hollis/Dayton side of the river. Old logging roads and dirt ways that were once town roads can still be traversed. A walk along the shore or a trip in your canoe below the Skelton Dam will reveal the old bridge abutment. A ride in your vehicle will still display the lovely old brick and stick-

built homes of the past. Your off-road bicycle trip should include the graveled part of the Dennett Farm Road in Buxton, all the way down to a turnaround located on a bend of the Saco. A walk through the woods will even yield an abandoned home, piles of bricks and granite, and some of the eeriest graveyards you’ll ever see, smack dab in the middle of the woods. It is a peaceful place - a place of the past. Union Falls, Maine.

*\*\*We are delighted that Jim Libby agreed to write about Union Falls for this issue of the newsletter. A faculty member from Thomas College and a visiting professor at Colby College, Jim has had a distinguished career as an educator, an author, and a politician; all of these vocations are encompassed in this brief history of Union Falls. He also is an expert at the sport of basketball! Jim has written four books to date. Two of these are available for purchase at the BHHS gifts hop: Buxton: A Postcard History and Took Three Lives, a century-old story of a murder in a "haunted house" in Standish. This article was written in collaboration with Meg Gardner.*

## N.C. Watson School One-Room School



Groveville Road  
 (behind Buxton Centre Baptist Church)  
 Buxton Center  
*Open 2nd Saturday of each month  
 from June—October  
 1:00 to 4:00 P.M.*

For more information, to schedule a group or to make an appointment outside posted times, please contact Stacey Gagnon  
 cell: (207) 229-9540  
 email: [staceygagnon19@gmail.com](mailto:staceygagnon19@gmail.com)



**THANK YOU!**

**Questions?** Please call 929-1684 and leave a message OR visit *Contact Us* on our website [www.buxtonhollishistorical.org](http://www.buxtonhollishistorical.org).

**Send to:**  
Buxton Hollis Historical Society  
Attn: Membership Chair  
P. O. Box 34  
Buxton, ME 04093

**Please make checks to:**  
Buxton-Hollis Historical Society

**Annual Dues Level**  
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Sustaining (\$100) \_\_\_\_\_  
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Individual (\$450) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please note that membership year runs from January 1 thru December 31.**  
(Please Print Clearly)

**Buxton-Hollis Historical Society  
Membership Year 2017**

**BUXTON-HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**P.O. BOX 34**

**BUXTON, MAINE 04093-0034**



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