

BUXTON – HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

100 Main Street, Route 4A , P. O. Box 34, Buxton, Maine 04093 June 2024

Incorporated 1970 www.BuxtonHollisHistorical.org (207) 929-1684

President's Message

By Nancy Ponzetti

Welcome to BHHS's fifty-fourth year!

Founded in 1970, the Buxton Hollis Historical Society planned its Spring opening for Thursday, April 4. However, Mother Nature had other ideas with a last snowstorm which canceled our plans. One week later, April 11, we opened our doors for our 54th year. A volunteer training was also held that day with BHHS receiving new, enthusiastic helpers. BHHS will now be open every Thursday from 4-8 pm until November-- so stop by, research your genealogy, view our exhibits, and chat with folks knowledgeable of local history.

Besides opening our public hours in April, our monthly programs began with a fascinating presentation by Michael Dekker on *The French and Indian Wars in Maine*. Thanks to our partnership with Saco River Community Television you may view this program online at:

<https://vimeo.com/939190346>.

Other programs this season will feature discussions of local Native American nations, factory girls, immigrant groups, and vintage songs of reform. Please join us and bring a friend or two.

Please note that our memberships coincide with the calendar year, and we'd hoped to have all renewals in by the end of April. If you have not renewed for 2024, please return the membership form in this newsletter with your donation. Your support allows BHHS to continue with our numerous projects: concluding the Hollis Roadside Survey, transcribing over 100 documents donated to the society, and accessioning the many donations of artifacts such as a recent addition of a flax wheel to our collection.

Our Board hopes that you may enjoy the many rituals of the Spring season: graduations, weddings, book sales, craft fairs, and my personal favorite, Red Sox baseball at Fenway Park! Hope to see you at the "Clubhouse" for one of our upcoming programs or a Thursday visit into local history.

Theodore Elwell: Constable, Builder, Tax Collector and More

by Linda Towle

In 2021, Scott Havu invited Brent Hill to look through an ell that was being cleaned out at the former Elwell home. And so Brent found a box of documents. The documents were folded, with some stains, some tears, and occasional holes. The papers were carefully unfolded, sorted chronologically, and interleaved with acid-free tissue to conserve them. They now comprise the Theodore Elwell Collection

at BHHS. Since then, Dorothy Bell and Linda Towle have worked to transcribe them and create a database of the people named in them. Over 100 have been transcribed so far and others remain to be completed. Letters, deeds, writs and more are a treasure trove of information about Elwell and his many roles in the history of Buxton.

Theodore Elwell bought and sold property, was a constable and deputy sheriff in Buxton, a proprietor, farmer, builder, surveyor of roads, tax collector, court assigned guardian, and an active member of the Society of Baptists. The documents

(Theodore Elwell ~~ continued page 6)

A Quilt Donation and the Pleasant Hill Sunshine Club

BHHS recently received a donation of a quilt from Martha Huff, in memory of Evelyn C. Hanson, Mildred Woodbury, and Gloria Hanson. The quilt is large—90 inches square (7.5 ft), made of 81 stitched squares, each with an embroidered name or initials, and is backed with a brown printed calico. A couple of squares are dated 1911 and three squares are dated 1914. The quilt is known to have been stitched by members of the Sunshine Club for a local family who had had to burn their bedclothes due to diphtheria.

The Pleasant Hill Sunshine Club was a charitable and social organization in west Hollis that was founded in 1914, and which centered on the neighborhood around Deerwander, Mansion, and Pleasant Hill Roads. The founders were Georgia Bradbury, Eva Smith, Eva Haley, Edna Hanson, Annie Hanson, Emily Hanson, Sadie Hanson, Emma Hanson, Jemmie Burnham (or Jennie?), Nina Palmer, Ella Fluent, Nora Hanson, Alice Whitehouse, Luella Hartford and Cora Tarbox. Their motto was: Service and Sociability..... which is still a worthy combination for building relationships and community.

The Sunshine Club remained active into the 1990s with community projects that included making robes for veterans at the Togus VA Hospital. Meetings were held in the old schoolhouse on the corner of Mansion and Deerwander Roads. A Sunshine Club scrapbook was also recently donated from the Family of Joan and Robert Weeman; it documents neighborhood gatherings to celebrate birthdays and holidays.

Maureen Burns graciously made a list of names and initials on the quilt. The 34 names on the quilt are:

Mrs. A S Atkinson	ME Hanson	Ina F. Harmon	Mrs. . M. A. Palmer
Louise G Berry	Orin Hanson	Lena W. Harmon	Mrs. E. M. Smith
Mrs. Lizzie Bradbury	Pearl Hanson	Lucinda Harmon	Mrs. M. E. Tripp
Mrs. Margaret Bradbury	Sadie A Hanson	W. H Harmon	Mrs. . M. C. Tripp
Mrs. S. G. Buzzell	Ella G. Harmon	Luella Hartford	Theo M. Willey
Martha Colclough	George A. Harmon	Edith Hughes	J. H. York
Mrs. F Hall	Ina F Harmon	Mrs. W. S . Moulton	
Emma E Hanson	Mrs. C. G. Harmon	Nellie Moulton	
Granville H Hanson	Grace M Harmon	Mary F. Palmer	

The 37 blocks of initials on the quilt are listed below (in alphabetical order by the last, then first initial).

Sunshine Club founders are provided in parentheses where they appear to match the initials.

GEB (Georgia Bradbury), JLB (Jemmie Burnham), ADD, CSD, HWF, EJF (Ella Fluent), OGG, ABH, ALH, AMH, (Annie Hanson), BMH, EAH, EEH, EKH, ELH, EMH, (Emily Hanson), FJH 1911, HPH, JHH, LGH (Luella Hartford), MJH, OEH, WEH, WWW '11, C JL, GML, WWL, LEM, DLP, MAS, ES (Eva Smith), ES_, BOT, CAT & CET (Cora Tarbox), AMW (Alice Whitehouse), WHW, and CHY.

Lastly, 16 squares provide only first names: Ansel, Bernice, Poor Colonel, Dorothy '14, Edith & Verlie, Eva, Florence, Jack, Janet, Jerrold, Margaret H '14, Margaret M '14, Marion, Mildred, Nina (Nina Palmer), and Sybil. While we assume these honor people, one has to wonder who Poor Colonel might have been since it is unlikely that he stitched his own quilt block.

Please let us know if you can help us identify more of the names or initials on this time capsule equivalent, or other projects of the group. Charitable and social clubs have been at the heart of our Buxton-Hollis community for many years to the benefit of many.

Article by Brenton Hill, with contributions from Maureen Burns and Sue Schaller

Founding ladies of the Pleasant Hill Sunshine Club in 1914: (L to R) Mrs. Susan Foss, Mrs. Ella Fluent, Cora Tarbox, Miss Sadie Hanson, Mrs. Josephine Smith, Mrs. Eva Smith, Mrs. Edna Hanson, Mrs. Nora Hanson, Mrs. Lizzie Tarbox, Mrs. Annie Hanson, Miss Irene Hanson, Miss Alice Whitehouse, Miss Laura Smith, Miss Gladys Huff, Mrs. Carrie York, and Mrs. Eva Haley. Children (L to R): Florence Hanson and Maxine Smith.



Below: The recently donated Community Quilt made by the above Sunshine Club in 1914.



French & Indian Wars

by Michael Dekker

Mike is an historian, author, speaker, and academic coach. He opened our 2024 programs on April 16th.

The French and Indian wars in Maine spanned a period of 80 years, during which time Maine was mostly a battleground, with short intervals of peace. The chapters of this era were:

King Philip's War	1675-1678
(Chief Metacomet's War)	
King William's War	1688-1699
Queen Anne's War	1703-1713
Dummer's War	1721-1726
(after Gov. Dummer of MA)	
King George's War	1745-1749
The French & Indian War	1755-1759
Expulsion of the Acadians	1759

King Philip's War was a pejorative reference ridiculing the idea that Chief Metacomet (who had taken the Christian name Philip) was equal to the English king. The conflict grew out of ongoing Anglo-Wabenaki difficulties. Years earlier, Native Americans were struck down by Anglo-European diseases that arrived from contact with early fishing fleets. Hence, the period between 1616-1619 was known as The Great Dying when native communities experienced ~70% mortality, and as much as 90% mortality in some areas. An influx of Europeans arrived soon after (Pilgrims in 1620) and for a time relations were peaceful. Barely a decade passed however before smallpox arrived in the 1630's, bringing another wave of mortality, ~30%, to the surviving Native populations .

The fact that Native culture relied on oral traditions and pictographs meant that population losses took cultural skills and history to the grave. Meanwhile, the survivors were traumatized in loss and grief. Native self-sufficiency began to break down, as survivors experienced challenges providing enough food for themselves. They became more reliant on trade goods that included kettles, salted

meat, hardtack, dried corn, and textiles. Arrowheads were no longer flint-knapped... they were made from repurposed iron kettles. Knives, and axes also became valuable trade goods. As a result, native people became more dependent on trade goods by the 1620s.

The wars grew out of five sources of conflict that accumulated as Natives and the English lived in proximity. Those were land, trade, language and cultural differences, sovereignty and autonomy, and justice for infractions between Natives and English.

Land issues arose from differences in Native use for agriculture vs. the introduction of livestock by English settlers which interfered with traditional food resources. Livestock would trample native cornfields and eat the crops. Pigs grazed on acorns (a native food stock), dug up grain caches, foraged the clam flats, and altered native food chains. The addition of dams to rivers interfered with fish passage and blocked traditional sites of seasonal fish seining, interfering yet again with Native food supplies and access to food resources. Natives often made broad seasonal use of varied resources while the English settled onto a location and occupied it exclusively.

Trade and traders brought conflict because they were of variable honesty. Beaver pelts were a valuable commodity; some traders traded for alcohol, and delivered a new scourge on native communities. Natives became dependent on firearms that they got through trade, and the powder and shot needed to hunt with firearms. When threatened, traders would withhold powder and shot, pushing Natives to starvation.

Cultural and language differences created yet more opportunities for misunderstanding. Willful misrepresentation of written documents occurred in communications by the translators, as well as accidental miscommunication—not knowing the correct word, or subtle meanings. Sometimes Natives took documents to the French for translation, which provided a different opportunity for misrepresenta-

tion as the French and English pursued their own agendas via Native proxies.

Social structure, autonomy, and sovereignty added layers of obscurity to communications as Native tribes and clans had their own alliances and enemies. When Champlain asked about the name of tribes (themselves or others) he got responses such as “we are the people”, “they are the little dog people”, and a more distant tribe was called by “our eternal enemies”. So that’s what can happen when your enemies assign your name.

Maine tribes included the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Malicites*, Micmac, and Abenaki. Within these tribes are also kinship-based clans and communities with multiple leaders. Hence, it was difficult to determine who, or what groups were represented under any of various agreements. And then sometimes those who were not consulted before signing a treaty that affected them refused to agree to abide by it after the fact.

Lastly, social codes and justice were another source of conflict. When an English settler wronged a native person, the English courts or the wronged person was supposed to go to the tribe. The different cultures had different ways to address transgressions. The English approach was to punish the wrongdoer. The Native communities sought to reform the transgressor by drawing that person more closely into their community.

Major William Phillips, was an early settler on the lower Saco River by the 1630-1640’s. Joining together, three large landowners (Boynton, Blackman, and Phillips) built mills – one for lumber, one for grist on the Biddeford side of the Saco and Phillips became the local magistrate. In the early 1660’s, Phillips purchased a tract at Salmon Falls (the furthest upstream Anglo purchase) from natives Mogghagen and Hobinwell and began to develop mills at Salmon Falls. War erupted in 1675.

When King Philip’s War broke out, it was a culmination of issues and not solely the flipping of Sachem Sqando’s canoe with his wife and the drowning of their infant. By the 1630-1640’s English

warrants were being issued for Natives accused of killing livestock and pigs. When war broke out Boynton’s and Phillips’ mills were attacked because they blocked anadromous fish passage and were affecting food supplies.

The Treaty of Casco imposed conditions on the English by the Native clans. Each English family owed a tithe of 1 peck of corn to the clans, and Major Phillips was singled out to provide a bushel of corn. This was an effort to bring the English community into the Native system of justice. Native communities paid tribute to other communities under agreements but the English resented paying tributes and largely ignored their obligations. The failed agreement became yet another example of cultural differences in sovereignty, justice, and autonomy.

Conflicts continued over English cattle trampling Native crops, so Natives shot the cattle. Benjamin Blackwell then seized ~20 Natives hostage (who had participated in King Philip’s War), and precipitated King William’s war. The fort on the Biddeford side of the Saco River was attacked and the Maine frontier soon abandoned east of Wells. Only Wells, York, Berwick and Appledore Island remained as English settlements.

The final chapter of war was declared in 1755. Sir William Phips, (born in Arrowsic) and then Lt. Gov. of Massachusetts, signed a proclamation of war and declared a bounty for collection of Native scalps. The bounties were highest for men – roughly the equivalent of a half year’s income -- and less for women and children. Thus began a war of genocide, sponsored by the English government. It finally ended in 1759.

Native people have not disappeared. Native families and communities are still here, everywhere, part of history, and part of the future. We are at an inflection point trying to remedy some early cultural destruction. Hopefully progress is being made.

**French & Indian Wars In Maine*, Michael Dekker, 2015, The History Press.

Errors or misrepresentations are the fault of the scribe’s barely legible notes. Scribe: Sue Schaller

Theodore Elwell.... *Continued from page 1*

also tell us a lot about the community at large with deeds, court orders, and receipts that add up to a great source of information about others during the same period.

In his many roles, Elwell is mentioned in at least 75 of the first 100 documents, spanning 1798 to 1819. In the first 21 documents, Elwell was buying and selling land as well as petitioning for land rights. One of the earliest documents is a deed for his first purchase of land in Buxton: 30 acres from Thomas and Ruth Clay on October 26, 1792, for 34 pounds, 8 shillings. Over the next 18 years, the documents show that he purchased over 130 acres of land in various parts of Buxton, and shares in two sawmills. The first time he sold land was the sale of 30 acres to Morrill Hobbs for \$900 on April 10, 1810.

Theodore Elwell became involved in court business around 1805 (based on the documents we have) when he was called to testify in a legal dispute between Nathan Elden, Jr. and Joseph Rankins (April 9, 1805). Elwell was first referred to as a constable in a writ which required him to either collect a debt from, or arrest and jail William West. Six months after the order was given, Theodore Elwell noted "received six dollars & sixty two cents of the within execution in full."

Elwell's work as constable included tax collection from Buxton residents for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. One document authorized Elwell to collect \$247.99 from a list of residents in 1812. If people did not pay, he was ordered to seize and sell goods or property to settle the amount owed. Tools necessary for the owners' trade, or utensils necessary for housekeeping, were exempt from seizure.

Elwell is at times named as defendant in court documents. He was twice asked to appear in court for debt owed to Boston merchants. In the later document, Nathaniel Fisher, a Boston merchant, won a case against Elwell in September 1818 for a debt of \$203.87 plus \$14.92 for costs of suit. The debt was

finally paid January 23, 1819, after a writ ordered the money to be paid or Elwell himself would be arrested and jailed.

Resources in the BHHS Library provide us with further information about Theodore Elwell. Fred Boyle's book, *Early Families of Buxton*, lists Theodore as the third child of Benjamin and Abigail (Ingraham) Elwell. Theodore was born in Saco on September 2, 1768. While Theodore was growing up, his father was a private in Capt. John Elden's Company as early as 1775. Benjamin served in the Continental army at Cherry Valley and was discharged from service in 1780. Theodore married Anna Harmon, September 16, 1796, and fathered 12 children. Only seven of Theodore and Anna's children survived to adulthood. Many were born in Saco, though census records show they were living in Buxton by 1800.

The book, *Recollections of Old Buxton, Maine*, describes the work of a committee to design a powder house in Buxton Center for storing powder, balls, flints, and camp kettles. Theodore Elwell was awarded the contract to build the structure and completed it in 1813 for \$59.

Records of the Proprietors of Narraganset Number One lists Theodore Elwell as one of the founding members of the Religious Society of Baptists in 1808 (p.381). An 1805 document states that Elwell was selected to serve on a committee along with Benjamin Leavit and Benjamin Elwell, to solicit donations for the purchase of property for Elder Abner Flanders, Teacher of Religion for the Baptist Society. Theodore's contribution was \$15.

Theodore Elwell died in Buxton on June 10, 1843. His will, dated March 23, 1839 (*York County, Maine Will Abstracts 1801-1858, pages 811-1812*), provided for the support of his wife Anna for the remainder of her life, and left a few dollars to each of his five daughters. To his son Nathaniel, Elwell initially left his homestead, where Anna was living, on Skip Road. To his son Theodore, also his executor, he left the Clay lot across from Joseph Elwell's Farm and

the old dwelling place on the homestead. However, a codicil to his will indicates he removed Theodore, Jr. and instead, all was left to Nathaniel, including the appointment as executor. Theodore Sr. and wife, Anna are buried in the Elwell Cemetery on Long Plains Road.

While we can learn much about the life of Theodore Elwell and life in Buxton at the time these documents were written, many questions are left to the imagination of the reader. How did he become selected for these many jobs? Was he always an upstanding citizen or did he at times take advantage of his position to trade one's debt for a piece of land, or stretch the limits for his own debt? Why did he disinherit his son, Theodore? We continue to work on the remaining documents and plan to share more about them. We have placed the completed transcriptions of these documents in binders at BHHS and encourage you to come by and read them. They are informative and entertaining windows into our Buxton history.

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Below: The Elwell Homestead, 1217 Long Plains Road, in Buxton, around 1910.



N.C. Watson School House Update

by Vicki Walker

It was a long hard winter for the N.C. Watson School building. Students from The Learning Center, an Alternative Education Program of Bonny Eagle High School, donated their time and energy on a monthly basis to help restore the school house. The picture shows some of the students who contributed to refinishing the front door and to re-glazing and repainting the broken window at the left side of the building. This is part of their community service work. Their teacher and supervisor was Eric Klein. They were also responsible in cleaning the lot and path in the fall and spring. A great big thank you to each and everyone.

It is not hard to see that the building needs a good scraping and painting. Students can't do that because it's lead paint... as are many historic buildings. It would be wonderful if there were volunteers who would assist in such a project. If you can help, please contact BHHS at 929-1984 and leave a message for Vicki.

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From L to R: Josh Dunlap, Dominic Metayer, Tye Grant, Shawn Carson, Lilly Nason and Hayden Remington.



Demolished: an historic commercial building on Depot Street in Bar Mills, by the river

As noted in the American Journal, April 25th edition, bulldozers made quick work of this landmark. In the 1870s it was Meserve's Store, later a grain store and eventually Buxton Glass Co. Before the 1870s, the site had an early water powered grist (grain) mill. Architecturally the design was transitional with elements of early post and beam, combined with newer balloon construction. Fifty years ago the building might have been restored but a good use never materialized, and it fell derelict. A residence is planned. Photo:1974. Brenton Hill

**Raspberry Shrub**

Raspberry Shrub was a common summer beverage in the early colonies. This colonial recipe was reprinted in *Food, Drink and Recipes of Early New England*, published by Old Sturbridge Village. Food preservation without refrigeration relied on salt, spices, acidity, alcohol, or some combination. Lemons were not readily available in colonial days -- vinegar was used to increase the acidity for preservation. Once the juice-based shrub recipe had been boiled, it could be bottled and held for an extended time. Shrubs are currently enjoying something of revival as a non-alcoholic, minimally sweetened summer beverage. They are also used as mixers with seltzer, over ice, and maybe with a spirit added. Online recipes can be found, although this one is more detailed than most of that era. Shrubs were made with other fruits in season including strawberries, peaches and elderberry.

A recipe for Raspberry Shrub, from Lydia Maria Child, *The American Frugal Housewife*

Put raspberries in a pan, and scarcely cover them with strong vinegar. Add a pint of sugar to a pint of juice; (of this you can judge by first trying your pan to see how much it holds;) scald it, skim it, and bottle it when cold.

Summertime, and the livin' is easy ~ as we welcome the season of company, graduation, uppta camp, lobster rolls, beach days, swimming in the river, kittens, cookouts, coolers, croquet, sitting in the shade, hot dogs, Sea Dogs, Red Sox, taking the ferry, and the scent of sunblock. May you and yours enjoy it all in good health.

Membership Year 2024 (by Calendar Year)

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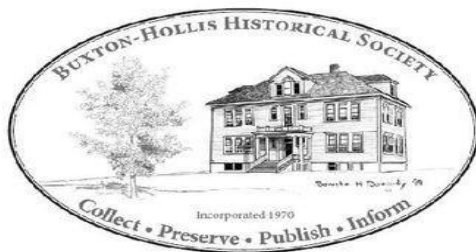
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Attn: Membership Chair

P O Box 34

Buxton, ME 04093

Thank you for your support!**BUXTON - HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY****P. O. BOX 34****BUXTON, ME 04093**

BHHS is Open Thursdays 4-8 pm

June 18th 7 pm Dangerous Temptations:

Textile Factory Girls - by Elizabeth DeWolfe

August 10th -- Hollis Pirate Fest**August 17th Buxton Dorcas Fest****September 17th Immigrant Groups****October 8th – Vintage Songs of Reform****Annual Meeting, November 2nd (Sat.)**