



BUXTON-HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Celebrating 50 Years ♦ www.buxtonhollishistorical.org ♦ 207.929.1684 ♦ FALL 2021

Fall 2021 President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

Here's hoping that you had a wonderful, productive, and enjoyable summer! At BHHS life has been slower than usual because of the continuing COVID variant threat and our board's decision to keep our patrons safe vs. holding our usual monthly educational programming. Instead we continue to meet with masked folks by special appointment for various projects on which they are working. Also, a dedicated crew of volunteers led by Sue Schaller and Vicki Walker have worked diligently throughout the summer to accession (identify, number, and document) the many donated items that continue to flow from donors. Special thanks to them and other volunteers working with them!

As mentioned in the spring news, we are continuing to investigate how the attached portable building space might be modified or expanded for better use. Adequate storage space continues to be a challenge for donated items (as it is for all historical societies). The Maine Historical Society, for instance, actually purchased a large warehouse several years ago, out of which their items rotate for display.

Among the many interesting and greatly appreciated recent donations to BHHS, are two large cabinets now located on the first floor. Donated by the Sjulander Family and Dwight and Liz Havu, they will help us display items beyond our second-floor exhibits, as well as help us clear the tables loaded with many donated items set up in our public meeting room! Many thanks to our donors and to Brent Hill (shown), Dwight Havu, and Michael Prescott, who helped move them into place!



Oak display cabinet made by Joy Valley Woodworks of Buxton and donated by the Sjulander Family.

For the second year in a row, we are planning another ZOOM annual meeting in lieu of our regular pot luck annual meeting. It really is disappointing, as we would so very much enjoy meeting with all you members and friends! But, knowing the increased incidents of the more easily transmittable COVID variant (and having been in quarantine recently because our younger son, Adam, caught COVID at Maine Med during his two-night stay for intense ankle reconstruction surgery), we have seriously considered the health risks a large group meeting would entail! We must elect officers for 2022, however, so I hope that many of you will join us to do so. Please see the DATE, TIME, slate of officers, and the invitation reservation enclosed. We will continue to be open throughout the coming fall and winter months by special appointment with masks required.

If you're interested in volunteering, give us a call! A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO ALL NEW and RENEWING MEMBERS for your financial support that makes our continuing volunteer work possible!

Enjoy this beautiful fall season and please stay safe!

Best Regards,
Jan Hill, President



Brent Hill with the 8' tall antique cabinet gifted by Dwight and Liz Havu of Hollis

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"Early Families of Buxton" Update

By Brent Hill

The new genealogy book by Fred Boyle, *Early Families of Buxton*, has made good progress this summer. Here are some of the families in draft: Andrews, Appleton, Atkinson, Berry, Billings, Boynton, Bradbury, Brewster, Brooks, Came, Coffin, Dennett, Dearborn, Dunn, Dunnell, Edgerly, Elden, Emery, Flood, Garland, Hancock, Hanson, Harmon, Hazeltine, Hill, Hobson, Hopkinson, Kimball, Lane, Leavitt, Libby, Lord, Martin, Merrill, Moore, Pennell, Redlon, Roberts, Rounds, Sands, Sawyer, Steele, Usher, Wentworth, Wingate and Woodman. This is perhaps half of them. If you have genealogical information about a family living in town by 1790, please let us know and we would be glad to consider it for potential use in the new book.

For more information about the book, see the interview of Fred Boyle on Saco River Community TV or the internet version of it at <https://vimeo.com/611752985>.



Caption: Jonathan Hutchinson family, circa 1890 Front L-R: Mary A. Martin Hutchinson b.1837; Jonathan Hutchinson b. 1831; Back (unknown order): Alice G. b.1878 (married Zenas Martin); Hannah M. b.1875 Annie M. b.1873 (married Frank Waterman)

BHHS OFFICERS

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NANCY PONZETTI, VICE-PRESIDENT, HOLLIS

VICKI WALKER, SECRETARY

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N.C. Watson One Room School House, Report

by Vicki Walker, Chair

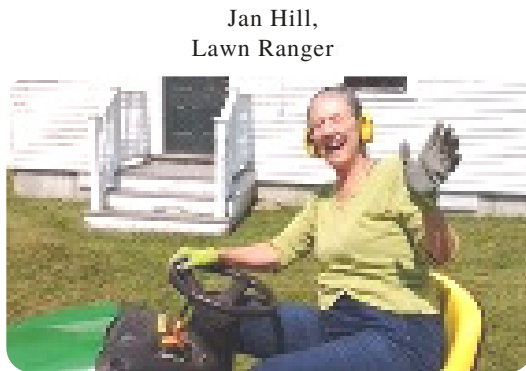
Hello All-- not much to report. Until we are comfortable being open, we have been laying low. However, the lawn is in great shape. Here is a shot of our President, Jan Hill, filling in as the Lawn Ranger! What a good sport. Meanwhile, Brent Hill and I tackled weed-whacking. A satisfying endeavor, at least for me. I also took a picture of Lilly Guadiano's Garden behind the School House. It has grown wonderfully since this mid-summer shot. Bette Robicheaw reported some lovely vegetable donations to the Buxton Food Pantry.

We also have an open four-year spot on the School House Committee. If anyone is interested and would like to know more, please call me. And if you would like a private viewing of the School House or would like to arrange a class for a history lesson of an old one-room school, please call me, Vicki Walker (207-929-3662). Stay safe everyone.

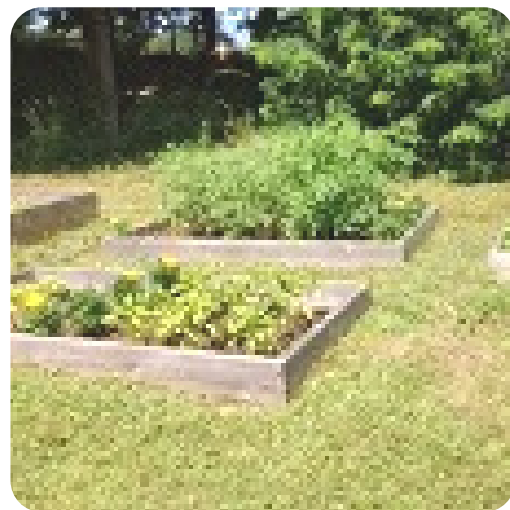
Thank you, Lilly!



N.C. Watson Chair,
Vicki Walker



Jan Hill,
Lawn Ranger



Lilly's Garden

Plans for Buxton's 250th

Save the date – August 4 and 5, 2022!!! The main events of Buxton's 250th incorporation anniversary (Sestercentennial) will happen around Buxton Lower Corner (Tory Hill intersection of Rt 202 & 112). There will be concerts, a fireman's muster, children's activities, Dorcas events, the parade, double fireworks (double fireworks!!!), and much more!

The historical society will fully participate. So far we are considering suggestions for a guided historical bus tour, a self-guided version of that tour, extended library and museum hours, multiple showings of the three-hour Buxton Documentary, and a commemorative item for sale. We will be discussing our plans this fall and winter. We also need a written history to include with the program. We will have to evaluate and adjust to the Covid situation as we get closer to the date. Please let us know if you have ideas for Buxton 250th.



At the Buxton Bi-Centennial in 1972, Barry Plummer of the Bi-Centennial Committee presents the award for "Best Beard" to Harold Smith on the stage at the Hanson School gym.

Shrubs and Cordials: Summer Fruits & Early American Food Preservation

by Sue Schaller



Food preservation in native and colonial settlements shared a common challenge in saving food from the growing season into the winter. Early options for preserving were limited to smoking, drying, and salting until canning, pickling, and fermenting techniques created more variety and extended the season for fruits and vegetables.

Shrubs and cordials offered a way to preserve fruits for later enjoyment and shrubs could be made with any available fruit, vinegar, and sugar. No doubt honey was often served if sugar wasn't available. Common fruits were raspberry and elderberry, and gooseberries were likely used when available. Shrubs have gained more attention lately as the base for fancy cocktails. Contemporary offerings include blueberry, strawberry, peach, cherry, and pear with additions of ginger, basil, orange zest, thyme, lavender, and more (see www.taitfarmfoodslocal.com).

Fruit shrubs are easy to make – a mash of fresh fruit, vinegar, and sugar, strained off and bottled – with or without alcohol. The addition of vinegar lowered the pH and brought the sweetened juice mixture closer to being shelf-stable (pH 4.1 or lower). Better yet, some (or quite a bit of) brandy greatly extended shelf stability. The following recipe for Raspberry Royal reflects early techniques. Current food safety standards would likely bring it to a boil for 5 minutes before adding the brandy and bottling without cooling, in pre-warmed sanitized containers. (For more food processing safety, I consult the Ball Canning Book, and refrigerate after opening...)

Raspberry Royal

(From The Early American Cookbook, Dr. Kristie Lynn and Robert W. Pelton, 2005)

- 4 cups raspberries
- 4 cups cider vinegar
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups brandy

Put the fresh raspberries into a stone jar and pour the cider vinegar over them. Stir in the sugar and pound the raspberries into a paste with a wooden pestle, or mash them with a wooden spoon. Let this mixture stand in the sun for 4 hours. Then strain through cheesecloth. Squeeze out all of the juice. Blend the brandy with this strained berry juice. Pour into sterilized bottles and seal.

President Polk would stir 2 tablespoons of this into a tumbler of ice water when he wished for a refreshing drink. It was his favorite while relaxing. Polk used to lay the bottles on their sides in his cellar. They were then covered with sawdust until needed.

Here's a more contemporary shrub recipe; it was shared forward by Eric J. Wilson, Superintendent of the Homemade Beverage Dept, at Evergreen State Fair, Monroe, WA, and sent on to me by a friend.

Blackberry Shrub

(From Homemade Root Beer and Soda Pop by Stephen Cresswell, 1998)

- 2 lbs blackberries
- ½ cup vinegar
- 2 cups sugar

Place the berries and vinegar in a saucepan and mash with a potato masher. Heat on low heat and add sugar gradually until it is all dissolved. Bring to a boil, then remove from heat. When cooled to room temperature strain into another container and refrigerate. To make a serving stir ¼ cup of mixture into a glass of water and add ice.

Documents: Windows into the Past,

by Sue Schaller and Vicki Walker

BHHS was recently gifted a box of over 100 early documents from the 1790s to the 1830 by Scott Havu. The box contains letters, deeds, and court documents from Theodore Elwell during his tenure as Constable in Buxton, plus scores of small receipts in various forms. We have several weeks of work ahead of us to complete the accessioning of all of this material but hope to share some of the more interesting, and humorous finds as we progress.

This letter to a brother in spirit comes from Samuel Robbins, then a minister in Newport, Rhode Island. Reading these letters requires some practice as they nearly always contain spelling errors, and also as they may refer to topics of the day. This particular letter discusses mistenianism which was a philosophical position proposing that the hard problem of consciousness cannot be resolved by humans. Otherwise stated, mistenians believed that consciousness is a mystery that human intelligence will never unravel.



Newport Rhode Island, March 29, 1836

Dear Brother _____ Elwell

I have to long delayed writing you and I fear you have not felt pleasant about it. But I can assure you that it has not been for want of regard to you why I have not written. But partly because I didn't want to make you cast and partly because I expected to have come to your place before this time. But I have concluded not to come until the ways become good. Believe me, I have not forgot you nor your pleasant family. Nor have I forgot the Two reformations I witnessed in Buxton one of the Lord and the other of Satan. It has often been mysterious to me why I should suffer so much in that place. I hope your two deacons, and Mr. Bickford, have repented, and found mercy of the Lord. NB my brother, I hope you don't belong to that church. You are not of sentiments, nor do I think you will be so useful as you might somewhere else. I wish you might be free from them if you live and die alone. But this you kneed do not I trust my brother, you are fearing God and keeping his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. I am in Newport RI and it is a pleasant place as much as any in the United States. The church where I am, doesn't belong to any denomination at present but I think will soon join the Free Will Baptist. When I came here the congregation was small but is on the constant increase. I receive enough to make me comfortable. My brother, you know that mistenians, providency being about good. Sometimes, the barking of dogs will drive strayed sheep to the flock. And if I had stayed with the Baptist I should never felt safe I should have felt as the rat said of the cat when she rolled herself in the meal, it may be meal and it may be something else. We have boarded out this winter at five dollars per week. And am going to housekeeping in a few days. We are all well with the blessing of God.

Augustus has been to school ever since we came here at three dollars per quarter. Mrs Robbins sends her love to all your family and wishes to see them and when she says anything about them looks cheerful and then sad. I subscribe myself your sincere friend in Christ Theodore Elwell.

Samuel Robbins

BHHS Activities During Covid, Year 2

by Brent Hill



The historical society has been open for in-person appointments this summer, but without public hours or meetings, we have greatly missed our normal public contact. However, we have been able to keep to our mission by responding to historical inquiries, accepting and accessioning donations, and continuing to organize and digitize our collections.

One side of our dry basement is now set up as a new scanning and accessioning area for volunteers, complete with a kitchenette. On the other side of the basement this fall, Jan and Brent have been moving bookcases, painting walls and floors to prepare rooms for more dry storage. The commercial-grade dehumidifier (part of the T.C. Hafford floor and wall system) is keeping the air in the whole basement lovely and dry. We appreciate the many volunteer hours that have gone into these efforts.

In addition, because of Covid and the hopefully temporary cancellation of our public programming, we have had more time on our hands this fall to begin focusing on cleaning out the portable classrooms that have been languishing while we worked for the past 8 years to rehabilitate the historic 1912 building! Great effort and progress has been made in this area as we have sorted, grouped, organized, and cleaned. This project is continuing and ongoing. It has been challenging, but very rewarding! Many thanks to leader Jan Hill and helpers Brent Hill, Liz Havu, and Jim Dearborn!

We now have nearly 1100 digitized images, over 300 scanned documents, and dozens of scanned key reference books. This provides us with much easier search access to the materials for inquiries and our print and online publications. Much remains to be done though. We have dedicated personal computers for accessioning, obituaries, image scanning, and document scanning. Please let us know if you would like to help with any of these activities this winter or with just the general organization of our collection. We observe Covid prevention protocols, but also have a good time!

This image is a tintype that we scanned this summer of the Hollis Center Railroad Station before about 1911. *Can you find the problem with it?



Hollis Center Railroad Station, circa 1911 (*printed backwards!)

Annual Meeting Details

Due to Covid, the annual meeting this year will again be an online Zoom meeting on Tuesday, November 4 at 6 PM. The meeting will be for:

Secretary's Report

Treasurer's Report

President's Report

Election of Officers: President, Vice Presidents

Hollis and Buxton, Secretary, Treasurer, and a Director for the Watson School Committee

Discussion of winter activities

Please reserve your spot at the meeting by contacting Jan Hill at 929-8895, or hillclan@sacoriver.net OR leave a message at BHHS headquarters 929-1684, or bhhs@buxtonhollishistorical.org.

THANK YOU, TEAM!

Thank You to all of you who have renewed your membership for 2021! We are so very grateful to you for supporting the historical society with your treasure AND your time during the COVID pandemic. You are key to our sustained efforts and goals.

If you have not yet renewed for 2021, please use the form on the back of the newsletter to do so. For those of you who receive paper copies of the newsletter, check the label for your membership expiration year. Your membership card, which you will receive following your renewal will also state your membership year.



BUXTON-HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 34

BUXTON, MAINE 04093-0034

Buxton-Hollis Historical Society

Membership Year 2021

*Please note that our membership year runs from January 1 through December 31.

(Please Print Clearly)

Annual Dues Level

— Student (\$5)

— Individual (\$10)

— Patron (\$50)

— Sustaining (\$100)

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— Couple (\$500)

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Att: Membership Chair

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Questions? Please call (207) 929-1684 to leave a message OR visit Contact Us on our website

www.buxtonhollishistorical.org.

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