

Thomaston Historical Society

Fall Newsletter No. 49 – October 2018



It was a very busy summer with many special projects and events. We were closed while moisture prevention work around the foundation of our 1795 museum building was in progress. See the article below on what has been accomplished and what is left to be done in this farmhouse restoration project.

We had a follow up to 2017's archaeological dig in a particularly interesting part of the Thatcher Street field. The talk by the archaeologist Harbour Mitchell in September was fascinating – look for the display of the finds next summer.

We kicked off plans for cemetery “leaning and cleaning” work days with a 4-day training workshop in August during which over 25 stones were repaired and cleaned in the Thomaston Village Cemetery.

The August tour of Brooks Trap Mill given by Mark Brooks was fascinating. I never knew how lobster traps were custom-made to meet fishermen's preferences.

We introduced a new Gold Business Membership category – look for images of the first nine members scattered throughout this newsletter.

You can learn more about these and other projects in this newsletter. Also visit our website and Facebook page!

Susan Devlin
President, Thomaston Historical Society

A Peek at Old Thomaston High Yearbooks: 1956 Basketball Team

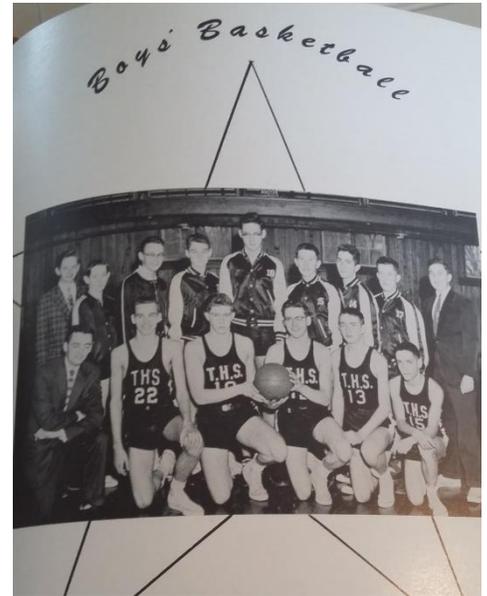
How many current residents realize that the starting 5 on this team all resided on Knox Street? An unusual occurrence and perhaps the only time this has occurred. At that time Knox Street was alive with school students and those who went to the high school all walked up Knox Street and across Gleason Street to the school.

The front row of the picture shows the starting five. They were senior center Dave Stone lived at #39, senior forward John Elliot lived at #30, junior forward Pete Melgard lived at #70, sophomore forward/guard Bill Flint lived at #54, and sophomore guard Bill Gay lived at #49 (these house numbers are the current address numbers). All beautiful old homes full of kids. Around 15 kids lived in those five homes.

The balance of the team consisted of Coach Frank Leary (his third year of coaching), Fred Upham, George Elliot, Leroy Cook, Blake Donaldson, Bob Beckett, Pete Gay, Phil Reynolds and managers B. Abrahamson and C. Bourne.

High scorers for the team were Dave Stone with 377 points and Bill Flint with 185 points. The team was not quite as successful as the prior year when the team won the Knox Lincoln County championship.

Bill Gay, Vice President



Saluting to Veterans – October 20th

What we hope is the first annual Veterans reception was held at the *Orient Lodge 15 of Masons*. What a great day for the 130 Veterans, family and friends that attended. The event was open to everyone. People came from as far away as Massachusetts to show their support.

The day started with music by Jo Anne Parker with the *Midcoast Community Band* as people came to honor and remember Veterans. As the room filled up the event started with the *American Legion* color guard, made up of 6 members from area posts. They advanced the 6 flags walking through the crowd and up the center aisle to rest the flags in their stands. The *Boy Scouts, Thomaston Troop 215*, led the Pledge of Allegiance and saluted as the band played the National Anthem.

A very emotional coffin flag folding was performed by Navy Veteran John Coombs, Vietnam with Ron Gamage, from *Orient # 15 Lodge of Masons, Thomaston*, reciting the meaning of the 13 folds. The flag represented all the Veterans we have lost, but the flag used was the actual flag that was draped over the coffin of Navy Veteran Richard Moore, Vietnam. The folding starts with “our flag is a symbol of life; second fold signifies our belief in eternal life” and continues until the flag is folded into a triangle. The other end of the flag was held by Air Force Veteran Robert Moore, Vietnam, the twin brother of Richard.



Other significant events of the day were awarding The Citizens of Maine Appreciation Certificates and wonderful coins that represent the war era the Veteran served, by Peter Ogden, from the *General Henry Knox Museum*. Donna Brookings, from *Quilts of Valor Foundation*, whose mission is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts, awarded 7 beautiful quilts to area WWII and Korean War Veterans.

Then Midcoast Community Band broke into the U.S. Medley - Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force and Marine. As the music from each branch of service filled the room the Veterans stood to represent their branch of service. The pride was so evident on everyone's face.

Joy Asuncion talked about the 1st class trip to Washington D.C. sponsored by *Honor Flights Maine* and how to get on board. The *American Legion Maine* had a representative, Maureen Malley, present to talk to Veterans about the benefits they are entitled to.

At the end, the American Legion color guard closed the ceremony by retiring the colors. Everyone was invited to enjoy refreshments from the *Thomaston Historical Society* and the decorated cake from the *Lady Knox Chapter, DAR*.

We "paid tribute to all military personnel, from every service branch, and every time period in American History. " Please visit the Thomaston Historical Society Facebook page for pictures.

Sandy Moore, Veterans Project Chair

25+ Cemetery Stones were Cleaned/Repaired in Summer Workshop

On four very hot days at the end of July, about a dozen people took gravestone conservator Joe Ferrannini's workshop. We learned the right and wrong techniques while cleaning and repairing over 25 gravestones in the general area of Gen. Henry Knox's gravesite.

Shown is a picture of our youngest participant, Gabriel Moore, grandson of board member Sandy Moore. He is working with our instructor and Greg Hamlin.

One moving find was the half buried parts of a small monument for two brothers, Eugene and Harris Stackpole (ages 18 and 20). Eugene was killed in the Civil War.

We plan to have "leaning and cleaning" work days starting next spring with those of us now trained teaching others to join the team. Let us know if you want to help – perhaps giving a face lift for your ancestors.

Susan Devlin – Project Leader



Water Remediation Project – the Outside Story

The best way to tell you about the museum’s moisture remediation project is to tell the story through pictures. But there is no dramatic picture for the most important part of the project – facing some hard truths. **The bottom line** we learned was that to control moisture in our museum building, we needed *to keep water and moisture out of the building*. It might not be easy and it would not be cheap. But it had to be done.



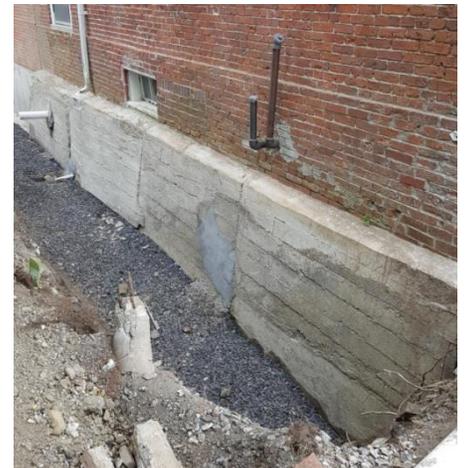
With a project that involved digging around the foundation of a building built in the 1790s and then laying pipes out to the street in an area famous for impenetrable “ledge”, **there was a lot that could go wrong.**

The foundations of buildings built in the 1790s were built of stone and this wasn’t the most important building on the original property so maybe it wasn’t the best stone. If the foundation was in poor shape, it would have to be uncovered slowly and carefully during excavation. And any damage found in the foundation would have to be repaired. And that would take time -- and money.

Luckily, somebody beat us to it. What we found was a foundation already protected by an outer wall of concrete, likely during the early 20th century, after the building had been converted into Thomaston’s Railroad Station. Thanks!

The damage to the protective concrete was fairly easy to repair. Holes were patched and the top of one corner needed to be

rebuilt. The “new” foundation (around the extension building) was still in good shape.



After preparing the drainage ditch for laying the eventual drainage pipes, the next step was sealing the foundation . . . which involved a

crew who coated the wall of protective concrete around the museum’s foundation with waterproofing tar and then bonded and glued orange waterproof panels to the wall to keep moisture away from the foundation and to force water to drain down the boards and into the drainage ditch where it will be taken away by drainage pipes.

Drainage is achieved using two sets of pipes, a. for ground water and b. for any water pumped out of the basement by our sump pump or run-off from new gutters with pipes which go directly to the drainage system.





The water is pulled to a new drainage well with a powerful pump which sends water out from the drainage well through underground pipes we've laid under the driveway road out to the storm ditch on Thatcher Street.

The picture immediately on the left picture shows the exterior part of the new systems for controlling moisture and temperature in the annex, as well as the cap of the drainage well.

Finally, this exterior work included a new wheel chair ramp which meets today's code and is more user friendly.

In the spring newsletter, I'll bring you up-to-date about the changes our new moisture control and heating system has allowed us to make inside the museum.

Bill Eberle – Restoration Overseer



Home for the Holidays = 2018

Mark your calendars! Our 12th annual *Home for the Holidays* fundraiser will take place on Friday, December 7th from 5-7 PM and Saturday, December 8th from 10 AM-3 PM!

This year's beautiful historic home is the Alpheus Sherman House located at 54 Knox Street, thanks to our hosts Greta Van Campen and Mike Silverstein. This beautiful home was built circa 1854 by James Overlock and features the iconic fleur de lis decorative carving on the side porch which came to identify many Overlock houses.

Friday night is the wine reception with sweets and savories available. There will be a live auction of special items, featuring auctioneer Carol Acterhof of Thomaston Place Auction Galleries. House tours will be available, highlighting the beautiful architectural details of the home as well as the owners' art and collectibles. The first viewing of our many Silent Auction items will also be available. Saturday will offer house tours and a final opportunity for attendees to place bids in the Silent Auction. Winners will be contacted a day or two after the event concludes. Many guests use this opportunity to purchase holiday gifts for themselves and others while helping to support the Thomaston Historical Society.



Tickets for Friday Night are limited to 100. Members are \$18; non-members are \$20. Tickets for Saturday are unlimited. Members are \$8; non-members are \$10. Friday night tickets are good for Saturday as well.

Contact Mimi Zwick for tickets at 354-7029.

Meet Our Financial Chair and Grounds Person – Brooks Stevens

Brooks grew up in East Thomaston (Rockland) and graduated from Rockland District High in 1995. He is the son of Jim and Maureen Stevens, who own what was formerly known as Mason Johnson's Farm on West Meadow Rd. At an early age he was anxious to see the world and went off to Stonehill College, about 20 miles south of Boston. His time there also afforded him the opportunity to study abroad at University College Dublin in Ireland. After graduating with a degree in International Studies and Communications, he lived in Salem and Gloucester, Massachusetts, which attracted him due to their rich histories and maritime character. His first "real" job was at a travel agency in downtown Boston. (Picking beans at Weskeag Farm, raking blueberries, picking crabmeat, mowing lawns and shoveling driveways don't count!!)



The time away from home was important in his personal growth but the longing to move back to Maine had become too strong. Brooks and his soon to be wife, Lynda, a native of Revere, Massachusetts, moved back to Rockland in 2001. Thomaston's architecture, history, and small town feel prompted Brooks, Lynda, Gracie and Charlotte to move to town in 2016.

Brooks works as a financial advisor at Camden National Bank. He volunteers on the Thomaston 4th of July committee and coaches basketball for the Thomaston Rec. Department. He is pleased that he is able to live and work in mid-coast Maine and enjoys the natural beauty, the resilient people and the pace of life here. He and his family like to spend time outdoors and traveling.

Help Needed!!

We need expertise in two areas for special projects we want to start:

- ***Book Editor*** - As mentioned in the last newsletter, we have received a copy of the last book Brad Beckett was working on when he was stricken by cancer. The Olson House goes back to tell the story of the first Hathorn who was given land in Cushing by Samuel Waldo. It follows the descendants of the property to what is now known as the Olson House, made famous by Andrew Wyeth and is now part of the Farnsworth Museum. The book is in fairly good shape but it needs a little editing and originals of pictures need to be traced down.
- ***Preparing News Releases and Posters*** - This position has been open for some time with our president filling in (along with other duties). We need one or two folks to share the load of writing news releases and preparing posters for our events.
- ***Technical Support to Expand Our Footprint Electronically*** - Several of our projects tell stories through pictures, such as 20th century boat builders, veteran profiles, and stories of growing up in Thomaston,

that would be even more effective if accessible via a computer. We need help to figure out how to do this. We also need the technical know-how to transform Peggy McCrea's history of different streets into walking tours. We need the technical know-how to help us jump start these projects.

2019 Schedule Preview

Our talks have been increasingly popular. Moving our talks to Watts Hall permitted attendance to exceed 70 three times this year. This move also allowed expansion of our exhibit space on the first floor of the museum.

Our preliminary schedule of events for 2019 follows:

Tues. May 14th – East Main Street Touchstones. Historian Margaret McCrea will guide us on a virtual tour of East Main Street and talk about the houses, architecture, and people who lived in them.

Sat. June 15th – Summer House Tour 1-4 PM at Rob and Jeanne Short's house--33 Hyler St.

Tues. June 18th – Three Mid-Coast Writers and a Bookseller. For over five years, South Thomaston resident Judith Tydings, PhD., interviewed Thomaston memoirist and centenarian Luthera Dawson, Cushing writer Elisabeth Ogilvie, Maine poet laureate and Appleton resident Kate Barnes, daughter of Henry Beston of "The Outermost House", and Vivian York, owner of Lobster Lane Bookshop in Spruce Head. Dr. Tydings will bring these people dedicated to writing and books to life.

Sat. July 27th - General Henry Knox Memorial Service. This 10:30 AM service honors Revolutionary War General Henry Knox, who was also the first Secretary of War. It takes place at the gravesite in the Thomaston Town Cemetery off Erin Street. A reception follows on the Knox Museum grounds.

Tues. Aug. 13th – Thomaston Baptist Church: The First 200 Years. Jolene and Morris Berry, long-time educators in the St. George, Thomaston, and Rockland areas, will present stories they learned while collecting research for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Thomaston Baptist Church.

Tues. Sept. 10th – Genealogy Research: Beyond Ancestry.com. Certified Genealogist Helen Shaw, board member and former president of the Maine Genealogical Society, will talk about ways of tracing and documenting your family.

Tues. Oct. 8th – Finding your Digs. Archaeologist Harbour Mitchell, will again offer an informative talk on the digs he has been working on and he invites people to bring their finds from old "dumps" around their houses for identification.

2nd Annual Veteran Reception – Date TBD.

Fri. & Sat. Dec. 6th-7th – THS's 13th Home for the Holidays House Tour. The house featured will have a Friday reception from 5 to 7 PM with wine and hors d'oeuvres, live music, and a small live auction. The tour and silent auction continues on Saturday between 10 AM and 3 PM. Reservations are needed for the Friday night event and tickets may be purchased at the door on Saturday.

Aleta Kilborn, Program Chair

New Membership Categories

This spring we revamped our membership and added some new categories that we didn't have before. Our new Business Membership has done very well in its first campaign. We currently have nine new Gold Business Members that have joined since the campaign started thus giving us a total of 9 to date. You will see their business card images below. We want to thank all these businesses for their support of the Thomaston Historical Society as we strive to add new ones with the next business campaign.

Although we have a steady flow of renewals coming in, we'd like to remind our Individual and Family members to send their 2018-2019 renewal form to the Thomaston Historical Society, P. O. Box 384, Thomaston, Maine 04861.

If you are interested in any type of membership please reach out to us at the above mailing address, on our Facebook Page, or email info@ThomastonHistoricalSociety.com. Our Member categories include Individual (\$20.00), Family (\$30.00), Lifetime for Seniors 75+ (\$250.00), Silver Business Members (\$50.00) and Gold Business Members (\$100).

Sally Ploski, Membership Chair



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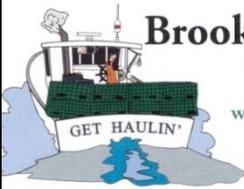
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