

# ST. CROIX HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Holmes Cottage



Dr. Job Holmes House 1850



Whitlock's Mill Lighthouse 1909

Editor: Lura Jackson

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## A Historical Holiday Season

By Lura Jackson

In spite of the record-breaking and frequently frightful weather of the past winter, the Historical Society managed to rally the community with an abundance of warm cheer. The Holmestead was adorned in glorious fashion with each of the upstairs rooms decorated by families from the area, showcasing their spectacular collections of family heirlooms and antiques. Members and guests alike enjoyed the great variety of pieces, many of which imparted a sweet nostalgia.



The cottage was similarly festooned in decorations befitting the season and its merry spirit blazed in full evidence from the windows. Inside, members of the society recreated a period appropriate Victorian Christmas for visitors to enjoy.

The Holiday Homes tour was postponed on account of the weather, which became increasingly frightful as December progressed. The tour was rescheduled to the following evening and enjoyed excellent participation in consideration of the circumstances. SCHS President Al Churchill and Jerry LaPointe dressed in period attire and entertained their guests at the cottage with a bit of tipsy cake and hot mulled cider. The evening ended on a high note that was carried home in the throats of wassailers as they gaily celebrated the season.



With temperatures consistently 3 degrees lower than normal each month, an ice storm to rival that of the 1998 season, and enough snow to make it the twelfth snowiest winter on record, the winter of 2013-14 proved to be formidable. However, it only takes a quick look through the historical photos to be grateful for how easy we have it in our modern times, as Al reminded us with this photo taken before the plow facilitated snow removal near the modern entrance to Marden's on Main Street.



## Past Meetings

December 5, 2013: During the holiday get-together at the Holmestead, Al gave a presentation on historical postcards from the Christmas season. Postcards were extremely popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, acting as a relatively cheap and quick method of communicating with friends, family, and loved ones. This one reads: A goose and a frog, they met in a bog / A serenade was the reason / And here is displayed my short serenade / "The Compliments of the Season".



March 3, 2014: Winter continued to bear down on the area, and with particularly stormy conditions once again a concern, former SCHS president Brand Livingstone authorized that the March meeting be cancelled in the interest of member safety.

April 7, 2014: Despite the ongoing struggle with cold temperatures and icy weather, several members made it to the April meeting to enjoy a presentation by Jerry LaPointe on the churches in the St. Croix Valley. This area has been home to a large number of architecturally stunning churches, many of which no longer remain. Shown here is the First Congregational Church, destroyed by fire in 1992.



May 2, 2014: Al returned from his trip to Italy to give a presentation on World War I and the local Sherman brothers. This year is the hundred-year anniversary of WWI, and it remains a singular event in the effect of its enduring significance on the world stage (with all of our modern conflicts directly arising from its consequences). The Sherman brothers were among the many hundreds of young men that enlisted from Calais, but they had the misfortune of being the only two fatalities of the city's troops. They met their fate a month apart on separate battlefields in France.

June 2, 2014: With sunshine and warmer weather finally arriving, members were slightly late trickling in to the June meeting, but gradually more and more came to enjoy the conclusion of Al's Sherman brothers program. Afterwards, Brand displayed a .45 Colt revolver that had been issued to his father-in-law, Fred Seeger, during the First World War. Brand's relative, Guy Livingstone, was among those listed from Calais as having enrolled within the first month of the war, and he would later be captured by the Germans before eventually returning home to raise a large family.



## Contributions to our Archives since the last Newsletter

The Society would like to give thanks to Thelma Eye Brooks for her donations. Thelma contributed her extensive original genealogical research on the area, which she prepared for her recently published book, *Calais, Maine, Families: They Came and They Went*. She also donated her championship sweater from the 1940-41 girls' basketball season at Calais Academy. Pictured below: Front row- left to right, M. Beckett, N. Dinsmore, T. Eye, E. Campbell, M. Smith, M. Perkins, S. Ripley. Back Row- left to right, Coach Keay, D. Nixon, A. Millett, R. O'Neil, G. Short, D. McKay, D. Saunders, E. Fenderson, K. Porter.



Thanks also to Sharon Howland, who graciously provided us with the vital records of Calais and Alexander. These records are an important addition to our library and will serve as a valuable resource for the historical research done by the Society. We are grateful for this contribution.

## Society Officers Stepping Down

It is with sincere regret that the Society accepted the resignation of two of its officers over the past few months, each of whom has contributed significant amounts of time and energy to our organization. Grace Meader resigned from her position as Secretary, which she has held since 2002. Grace has diligently recorded the minutes of each society meeting for the past twelve years, but has chosen to resign on the grounds of her understandable concern of not being able to attend meetings in inclement weather.

Gayle Moholland resigned from her position as Vice President due to family concerns. Gayle held the position for three years, during which time she never failed to display boundless exuberance in planning and coordinating activities and admirable capability in publishing the newsletter.

We would like to thank Grace and Gayle for their contributions to the Society and look forward to seeing each of them at meetings and events whenever time and convenience permits. If you are interested in taking an active role as an officer in the society, contact Al at [jaclaw1@gmail.com](mailto:jaclaw1@gmail.com) and let him know the position for which you would like to be considered.

## Upcoming Events

*With the warmer weather squarely ahead of us, the Society is eagerly making preparations for an eventful summer and the many festivities of the annual Homecoming.*

**July 1:** The Holmes Cottage will be opening for visitation on the first day of July. One of the earliest homes built in Calais, the cottage contains many historical artifacts from the area and it has been restored to its original condition as a working doctor's office wherever possible. There is no charge for visiting the cottage. If you would like to serve as a docent (and answer questions for its guests—Jerry will give you the answers!), please contact Jerry at 454-3036. The cottage is open Monday through Saturday, 1:00-4:00, or by appointment.

July 11-12: The Border Historical Society will host a reenactment of the 1814 British invasion of Eastport. For a schedule of events, visit <http://borderhistoricalsociety.com/Britishtwo.html>.

July 13: The Society will hold its annual members' picnic at the Stone House, the home of Brand Livingstone. Come and join us for an afternoon enjoying this historical home and its scenic landscape along with refreshments and of course the company of fellow history lovers. The picnic starts at noon.

July 19: The Carters will be holding their family reunion at Pembroke Elementary School. Contact Art Carter at 454-8238 or [Cartera2@earthlink.net](mailto:Cartera2@earthlink.net) for information and schedule.

August 5: This year's Tea and Treasures at the Holmestead will feature paintings by Mary Livingstone. Along with her husband, Brand, Mary was a pivotal member in the restoration of the Holmes Cottage. One of her drawings of the cottage can be seen at the end of this newsletter. The tea begins at 11:00 and will last until 2:00 with two settings.

August 6: The Fourth annual Cemetery Tour will feature another eight citizens from the past, bringing the vibrant history of Calais to life once again with period costumes and reenactments. The tour will begin at 5:30.

August 10: Al will be conducting a tour of the Main Street Business District beginning at 11:00. Meet at the Holmestead and join us for a walk down memory lane!

## SCHS Joins Facebook

For those looking to connect with a virtual version of our historic community, the Society has recently created a page on Facebook dedicated to publishing interesting photos and sharing recollections from our vast repertoires of each. Stop by and have a look—perhaps that look will become a “like”! The address is [www.facebook.com/stcroixhs](http://www.facebook.com/stcroixhs).

## Memories of Calais: Jessie B. Getchell

*In this issue of the newsletter, we are pleased to present the memories of Jessie B. Getchell, who was born in the early 1870s. –ed*

I am Jessie B. Getchell, and I am a descendant of Daniel Bohannon, one of the early pioneers of Calais. I was born, educated and taught school there in my young days and now at the age of 89, I am turning the clock back and looking at Calais as it was a long ago.

At that time, Calais, situated on the banks of the beautiful St. Croix River, was a grand old city with fine old residences along the principal streets and prosperous farms extending from the City proper to Red Beach where the granite and plaster mills were doing a flourishing business. A large general store with a post office was in the center of the village and the three school rooms were filled to capacity. I had 64 pupils in my room, the primary department in 1898. Fourteen schoolhouses were built along the highway from Red Beach to Milltown and pupils walked to and from school, through mud in springtime and snow drifts in winter, but somehow, they got there. Some students who attended the old Calais Academy walked from the Bog Brook district, a distance of three miles, to school, and graduated with honors.

While I attended high school, the Soldiers Monument was erected, and each student was asked to earn fifty cents for the monument and we did just that. I sawed a pile of hardwood with a dull saw to earn my fifty cents and believe me, I really, and truly earned it. I can almost feel the blisters on my hands now.

The down river farmers supplied the city with rich milk, cream and butter. Of the many farms three stand out clearly in my memory. The John Todd farm, with its delicious apples and the lovely evergreen grove was a spot we all adored. It is now owned by the Country Club. The large and beautiful Slaton farm on the River Road I can remember as a place where my sister and I, as children, sold wild strawberries at 25 cents per quart. It was owned by Mr. Young and is now the home of Jay Hinson, I am told the owner and editor of the Calais Advertiser. The other farm, owned by Nicholas and his son, John Noble, and later by Fred Hall, has been transformed into a truly beautiful place now known as Heslin's River View Motor Court and Motel.

The old days were busy ones - long hours and small pay but there was no unemployment. All worked at something. Many men worked in the woods cutting logs that were driven downstream and manufactured in saw mills at Milltown and the Union. Six horse teams brought the lumber to wharves in Calais where it was loaded on ships and delivered to different parts of the U.S.A. The old St. Croix River was very much alive in those days. Many two and three-masted ships loaded with lumber sailed down the river, returning with cargos of corn, coal and other commodities. Three big steamers, the Belle Brown, Houghton and Rose' Standish in turn carried passengers to and fro, and the two tugboats, the William Hinds and the Henry Wellman towed ships up and down the river. Rowboats and yachts were numerous.

Our Sunday Schools were large then and each summer they enjoyed a picnic down river. Usually a tug boat and scow took the crowd and fortunately there were no accidents, but one time the scow sank at the lower wharf, just 30 minutes after the crowd had safely landed.

The names of prominent businessmen then were Gates, Wentworth, Hall, Young, Murchie, Eaton, Todd, Pike, Barnard, Boardman, Gardner, Nickerson, Newton, Tarbox, Pineo, Haycock, Sawyer and others. The doctors were Vose, Swan, Black, Townsend, Knowles, Mason, Seymore, Webber and McKellar. Money was scarce, so many dosed up home with herbs, and oft 'times, a bit of whiskey.

The churches were much the same as now, and the clergy that I well remember were Rev. R.J. Padelford, C.G. McCully and A.W.C. Anderson.

The American House, Border City Hotel, the St. Croix Exchange, Andrews House and the Boundary House in Milltown entertained the traveling public, as there were no motels and overnight camps then.

Some of the store-keepers then were Waite, Porter, Bates, Pike, Lord, Whitlock, Wolf, Beckett, Bradish, Woods, Murray, Neill, McGlinchey, Morrill, Treat, McAllister, Percy L. Lord, Kalish, Robins, Young Ross, Bailey, Pineo, Brooks, McMann, Waterman and Lyford. The lawyers were McNichol, Hanson, McKusick, McGarrigle, St. Clair, Rounds and Gardner.

The telephone, city water and electric lights, when introduced, made life much brighter and easier.

The laying of the cornerstone of the Cotton Mill was a big event and even though the mill was in Milltown, New Brunswick it meant employment to many in Calais as did the shoe factory built at a later date, and when the electric car made its first trip July 4, 1894 Calais was then really tops.

F.A. Pike and J. Shephard Pike's gifts to the city have endured. They were the library, the mile-stones and watering trough of Stone. Henry Eaton and his wife made a very generous contribution to the new high school and also gave the fountain in the park. Other gifts have also been made. A fine modern hospital has recently been built, new stores, a better post office and the streets are much better.

Times are ever changing and Calais has tried hard to keep pace with the times. The horse and buggy days are gone forever and with them went Cone's and Hall's lovely stables and their fancy trotting horses. Electric cars and the railroad passenger trains have given place to automobiles, buses and trucks.

Pupils are now transported to modern, central schools and the radio and TV have brought the outside world to our door.

Many improvements have been made, and improvement is the Watch-word of today, but I still miss the old organ grinder with the monkey, and the man on Main Street with his blue wheelbarrow piled high with delicious lobsters for ten cents each.

All of that has passed out of the picture, but Calais, my birth place, is the same dear old city, and the St. Croix is the same beautiful river as it was in the Long Long, Ago.

## **H.E. Lamb Writes about the Soldiers Monument**

*In the 1950s, noted SCHS historian and journalist H.E. Lamb wrote about the dedication ceremony of the Soldiers Monument that Jessie mentioned. —ed*

Very few of those looking at this picture ever thought they would see one like it. It rolls back time and gives you a glimpse of Calais 61 years ago, Thursday, May 30, 1893 when all of Calais who could turned out to see and hear the dedication of our Soldiers Monument to the memory of Calais and neighboring places who had

fought in our Civil War. There were around 500 in this region who had enlisted during the four years of Struggle. Oh Yes, there were some from across the border.

Look up and see how many good things came to Calais during the Nineties. But the idea of a Soldiers monument went back into the eighties. It was the Ladies who started the idea.

Early in the seventies the Ladies organized the Ladies Memorial Society and started to raise money by many entertainments in homes and in St. Croix Hall. When a working man's wage was about a dollar a day it was slow work getting much together. At last they had \$3,000 and they held a public meeting and some of the men leaders said this was not enough so they went to work and collected \$2,000 more and so you know what our monument cost. The City bought the Deacon Samuel Kelley homestead. (If you would like to see his short cane go to your library and they will show it to you.)

In the picture you can see the Deacon's fine brick house and the stone wall along by the sidewalks. It was and is a beautiful situation for a monument with the wide lawn and the tall trees.

Parker, the photographer, seems to have caught the picture fact after Mrs. Albert Edward Neil had unveiled the monument. Hon. A. MacNichol was chairman. The first address was given by Ashley St. Clair. The prayer was by the Rev. C. G. McCully. The monument was presented to the City by Hon. E. B. Harvey. It was dedicated by the Joel A. Haycock Post, G.A.R. An Ode written by Miss Annie L. Holmes was recited by Miss Josephine Moore. Hon. G. A. Murchie was mayor and accepted the Monument for the City.

The G. A. R. went to the cemetery to decorate the graves of their dead.

Many have said that it must have been raining that day. Not necessarily for in those days ladies carried parasols and you will notice that the tops of the carriages are back.

It was a big, day in Calais although it was more than ten years B.C. and therefore in what is thought of as the dark ages even if the streets had electric lights since 1888.

There should be an inscription on one of the empty panels reading something like this. Erected by the Ladies of Calais and Dedicated Thursday, May 30, 1893.



Then go around and read the inscription:

**“The soil out of which such men are made is good to be born on,  
Good to live on,  
Good to die for,  
And good to be buried in.”**

## Remember When?

*4<sup>th</sup> of July is a favorite holiday for many New England towns. Here are a few scenes from past parades in Calais.*



*July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1959—this segment of the parade is passing Bank corner. The St. Croix Hotel is visible to the far right.*



*This 1928 photo of the Bungalow Community Club is from Washington Street in front of the old Day house on the corner of Church Street (next to St. Anne's Church).*

### 2014 Tentative Meeting Schedule

July 13 Picnic  
Sept 8

Oct 6  
Nov 3

Dec 5 Christmas Party

**Contact the SCHS:**

Do you have questions about local history, suggestions for events or presentations, or comments and concerns regarding the newsletter? Let us know!

President: Al Churchill [jaclaw1@gmail.com](mailto:jaclaw1@gmail.com)

Vice President and Assistant Editor: Jerry LaPointe

Editor: Lura Jackson [luraejackson@gmail.com](mailto:luraejackson@gmail.com)

*With special thanks to Gayle Moholland for her assistance!*

**Thank you to members renewing for 2014. If you haven't yet paid your dues, please remember to do so. If your newsletter has an orange mark on it, your dues for this year are due.**

***Financial Update***

*From 4/1/14 through 4/30/14, income was \$25.00 from dues. Expenses for the period totaled \$229.74 leaving us with a checkbook balance of \$4,473.28. The savings account balance is \$1576.19. The value of the 100 shares of Qualcomm stock is \$5,843.30.*

**GIFT SUGGESTIONS:**

*Available by mail from SCHS, prices include postage*

**Note Cards:**

**4 Views of St. Croix Island - 8 cards & envelopes**  
**Paintings by Mary Livingstone - \$15**

**Books:**

**Champlain's Journal - translated from French - \$8**  
**"Washington County, Maine in the Civil War 1861-66" by Ken Ross - \$32**  
**Ganong's, "Champlain's Island" - \$12**  
**"Beginnings" (A reprint of the 1875 "Annals of Calais" by Rev. Knowlton) - \$16**  
**"Pork, Molasses, & Timber" by Eaton - \$14**  
**Around Town by Rail - \$11**  
**Nellie's Diary - \$29**  
**The Way We Were 1908 - \$19**  
**Keene on Red Beach - \$29**  
**Calais Fair 1914 - \$14**  
**Ned's Valley - \$29**  
**The Valley Cookbook - \$14**  
**Charlie's Civil War - \$24**

**Calais Centennial - \$14**

**Picture Books:**

- “Calais 1896”- 52 views - \$8
- “St. Andrews 1896”- 30 views - \$8
- “Old Friends”- 49 old area photos - \$6
- “Scenes of St. Stephen, 1895 - \$9
- “Scenes of Campobello, Eastport, & Lubec, 1895 - \$10

**Maps:**

- Red Beach Birdseye view map, 11x17, laminated - \$15
- Calais, St. Stephen, & Milltown Birdseye view map 1879, 11x17, laminated - \$15
- Wharfs of Calais & St. Stephen map 1856, 11x17, laminated - \$15

**DVD:**

- Calais First Town Meeting Reenactment - \$19

**Order at St. Croix Historical Society, P. O. Box 242, Calais, ME 04619**

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

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**If a gift membership, please include name and address to whom the gift membership goes.**

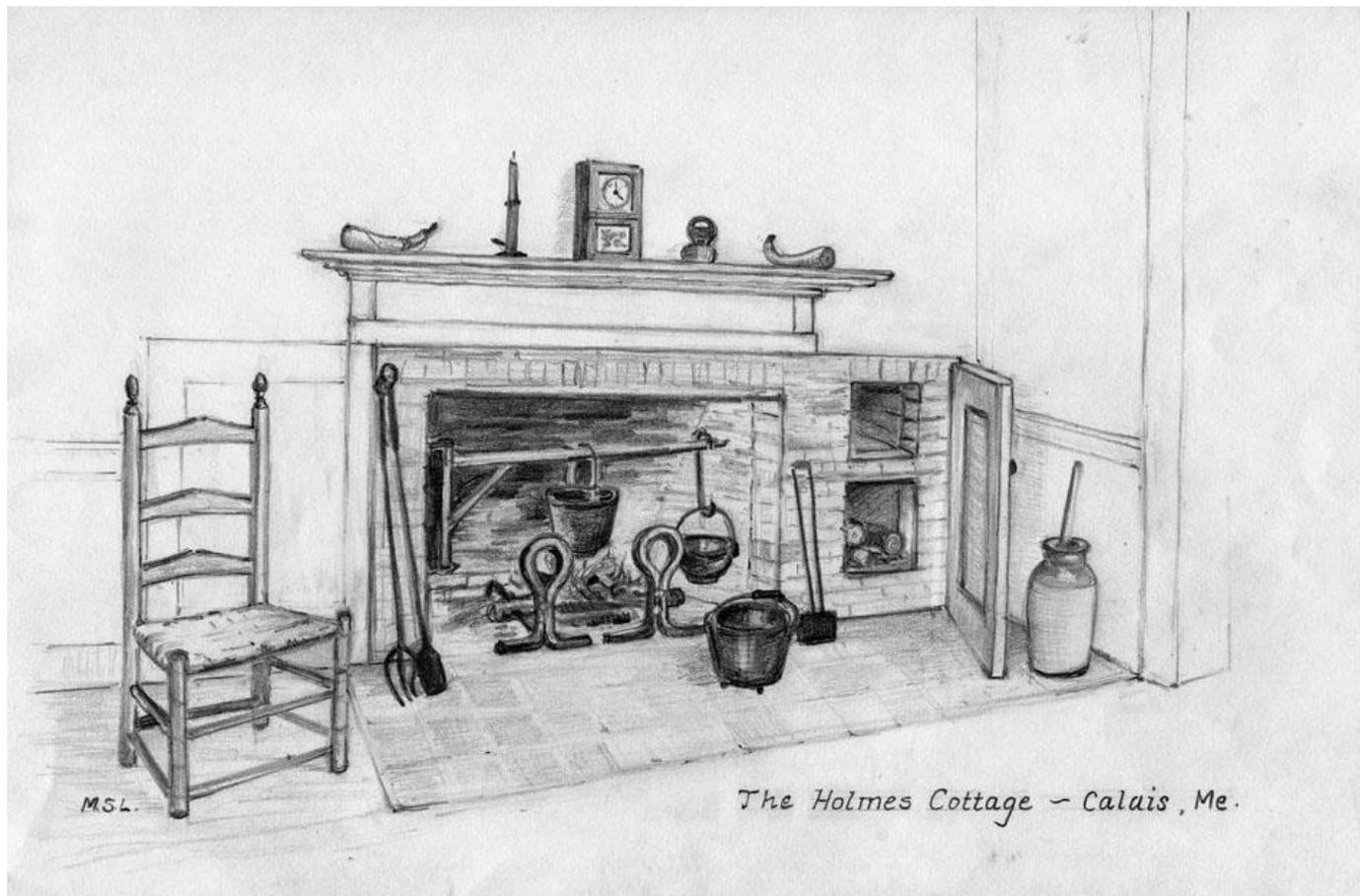
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**Please apply to: Regular**\_\_\_\_\_ **Gift Membership**\_\_\_\_\_

- Historian**     **\$15**
- Family**       **\$25**
- Supporting**   **\$35**
- Corp/Bus**     **\$60**
- Patron**       **\$150 (includes one free 3 hour rental of Holmstead meeting room)**
- Life**          **\$500**

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