

NEWSLETTER

of the

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

No. 1

January 15, 1982

Herewith we present the first publication of the St. George Historical Society. The officers of the Society feel that the publication of a newsletter is the best way to maintain interest in the society, keep in touch with members who live at a distance, and to get information pertaining to the history of St. George into print quickly.

If we were to wait until the newsletter is as close to perfect as humanly possible, it is likely that it would never be sent out. We have chosen to photocopy the articles they were written and not to edit them; thus individual writing styles are plainly identifiable

This first newsletter includes a genealogical section which provides an opportunity for people to ask questions, share information, and contact others interested in the same family lines. Steve Sullivan of Camden is in charge of that department. Steve became interested in genealogy when he was too young to be considered a rival by other St. George history buffs; thus he was able to copy work already done by Commander Smalley, Bernard Rackliff, and others. To this work he added church records, town records, newspaper notices, and a complete listing of gravestone inscriptions in the Town of St. George. He has compiled a huge file, his "Magnum Opus", of everyone who lived in St. George previous to 1900. Although Steve is an undergraduate at the University of Maine, even Commander Smalley calls on him for help in sorting out difficult lineage problems.

Bradley Beckett, our Clerk-Treasurer, contributed the article describing the formation of the society and its activities thus far. Brad lives in Cushing and teaches at the Thomaston Grammar School. His field of interest is vast for a local antiquarian, encompassing both Cushing and St. George! He is connected with several old St. George families, including the Gilchrests, Joneses, and Hathorns.

Irene Rizkalla very kindly agreed to our request that she write a history of the house she and her husband George restored. This is the first of the histories of buildings in St. George which will be regularly included in the newsletter. We hope to increase the general awareness of the historical significance of the homes, public buildings, and places of business in St. George, as the late F.L.S. Morse did for Thomaston in his "Thomaston Scrapbook". If you can contribute to this column, please do so. The building in which you are interested need not be particularly old nor architecturally unique: it is important that the history of that place be recorded.

Our next issue will begin a fine article on the Long Cove Quarry in the early 1920s by Edward Hilt. This is the most interesting kind of history - a first-person account written by an individual with remarkable perception and an excellent memory.

Please use this newsletter. Respond to the questions in the genealogy section and in "CAN ANYONE PLEASE TELL ME?". Ask questions about our town: there may be but one person with the answer to your question, and if you don't ask the question now, the answer will soon be gone forever.

Remember that photocopying makes the reproduction of old documents and even some pictures possible. If you have access to something that would be of general interest to the society, have it included in the newsletter.

It is the hope of the society that through this newsletter, information on St. George will be collected, printed, and preserved. So please don't throw this newsletter away. If you have no storage area, tuck it under the linoleum in the shed or drop it down a crack in the kitchen wainscot. Then at least a few of the sixty copies of this issue will survive and give pleasure to their discoverers in the year 2,082.

James Skoglund, (whose brother Robert has kindly given the use of his copying machine to make this publication possible.)

CAN ANYONE PLEASE TELL ME?

Within the past year I asked a woman nearly ninety years old a question about something that had occurred just before she was born. "I can't remember, Jimmy," she replied, "and the old folks who would have remembered are all gone."

It seems that it is always just a little too late; much has been lost or forgotten. But a vast amount of information remains, much of it in the minds of our residents. "Can Anyone Please Tell Me?" will be a regular feature of the newsletter. Just for starters-

1. On the Cushing side of the river there are huge boulders pulled into line near the shore. These were used by the Militia during the War of 1812 as protection from possible British firing. Are there such fortifications on the Otis Point or below?
2. Where are the "fortifications" on Hart's Neck thrown up in the War of 1812?
3. Where, when, and by whom was soccer played in St. George previous to the present soccer fad?

St. George Revolutionary War Soldiers and Sailors

The following list of St. George Revolutionary War Soldiers and Sailors has been compiled from various sources. Although it is believed to be relatively correct and complete, we would appreciate any information that would make it more so.

John Allen (of St. Geo. Isles)	William Kelloch
John Allen (of Mussel Ridge Isles)	John Madden
John Barter	Benjamin Marshall
Peletiah Barter	Samuel Marshall Jr.
Thomas Clark	Richard Martin
William Clark	James McCobb
Joseph Coombs	Stephen Norton
Timothy Crocker	Edward Rawley
John Davis	Azor Roundy
Ellis Dolph	George Sayward
Anthony Dyer	Joseph Seavey
Andrew Elwell	Joseph Simmons
Nathan Foster	John Snowdeal
Daniel Gardner	Joshua Smalley
George Gilchrest	Josiah Sterling
Samuel Gilchrest	Isaac Snow
Pierce Graffam	John Stone
Isaac Hall	Christopher Stover
Isaac Hall Jr.	Joshua Tenant
John Handley Jr.	Ebenezer Thompson
John Hart	Ebenezer Thorndike
Thomas Hart	Joshua Thorndike
Robert Hawes	Robert Thornkike
Alexander Hathorn	Nathaniel Vickery
Samuel Hinds	Samuel Watts
Joshua Howard	Phineas Wells
Jehiel Isham	John Wells
Ebenezer Jameson	Ephraim Wiley
David Kelloch	Isaac Wiley
James Kelloch	Thomas Willis
John Kelloch	William Wilson
John Kelloch 2nd	Alexander Young
Mathew Kelloch	

Contributed by S. Sullivan

According to the Maine Bicentennial Atlas there were five Maine locations with more than 100 people per square mile in 1820: York, Portland, Bath, Castine, and yes, St. George!

1981: The Year of the St. George Historical Society Foundation

Early one Monday morning in April, Jim Skoglund approached me at work and said, "I've been thinking it out, and it's high time for St. George to have a historical society. Can you meet with us Thursday to get things going?"

Three days later, April 9th, 1981, at the home of Commander and Mrs. Albert Smalley five people met: Commander Smalley, Ed Hilt, Bernard Rackliff, Jim Skoglund, and Bradley Beckett. That evening the St. George Antiquarian Society was formed.*

Together the five formed the Board of Trustees. Commander Smalley was elected President, Jim Vice-President, and Brad Beckett Clerk-Treasurer.

Next, the purposes of the Society were agreed upon and formally written as follows: "to collect and preserve information, documents, and artifacts related to the history of St. George; to encourage the publication of historical information; and to encourage the preservation of significant landmarks." The members' signatures were set beneath them, and thus the Society was born.

On May 14th, the first public meeting was held at St. George Grange. Commander Smalley welcomed an enthusiastic crowd of forty persons and then publically introduced the purposes of the Society.

Jim handed out questionnaires that night to survey each individual's area of interests in St. George history. Over 50% of the people showed a strong interest in the town's former granite quarry industry. Others wanted to focus on the history behind old houses, the Finnish culture, the St. George islands, the fishing industry, shipbuilding, and local genealogies. Different people had different interests, but any and all of the facets are highly important to the overall collective history of St. George.

Throughout the successive public meetings, the Society had asked several local folks to come and discuss their particular areas of expertise. Don Wood, for one, spoke at our Tenants Harbor meeting in June on the early Indians of Maine. In addition, he brought along his personal collection of arrowheads and artifacts he had collected from local clamshell heaps.

At the Port Clyde meeting in August, Everett Watts and Frank Rackliff, longtime fishermen of the area, gave an entertaining yarnspinning session on "Lobstering: Past and Present." Everett Baum captivated his audience in October when he gave his actual demonstration of cutting a paving block before the audience's eyes. Ed Hilt has shown several of his homemade films on lobster smacking out of Tenants Harbor and local granite quarrying of some 35 or 40 years ago.

St. George has a rich repertory of local expertise and knowledge. The town is indeed fortunate.

As for the more formal events of the St. George Historical Society, Ralph Cline, Jr. joined the Board of Trustees in the fall. Then in October, President Smalley officially resigned. Commander Smalley turned 82 the month earlier. His announcement was taken with regret, but the Society is deeply appreciative of all that he has done in helping "get the ball rolling" with this historical organization.

*The name was later changed in August to become the St. George Historical Society.

Jim Skoglund is now Acting President and will remain so until the Nominating Committee makes recommendations for another to fill this post.

A big accomplishment these past nine months has been in the writing of the Articles of Incorporation. Board member Steven Sullivan spent several weeks drafting and revising this document. But in December, the Articles were finally ready, and on the 21st, the State accepted and passed them.

This last mentioned event concludes the account of the evolution of the St. G. H. S. for the year 1981. As for 1982, it is sincerely wished that this historical organization expand outward from its base and thus meet its potential in fulfilling its purposes and ideals. Your support will be welcomed and most appreciated in the coming year.

MEMBERSHIP LIST
(as of January 1, 1982)

Winston Lewis
Morris Berry
Carl Smith
Edward D. Hilt
Priscilla Adams
Stephen W. Wallace
Michael Smith
Pat Smith
David Walker
Zella Walker
Ellen Bates
John Bates
Anne Cogger
Gerry Bertsch
Leola Robinson
Ruth A. Hazelton
Archie McLaughlin
Newton Merrill
Polly Merrill
Irene Rizkalla
Mr. Richard P. Axten
Everett Watts
Donald Wood
Warner Vaughan
Susan Vaughan
Vera McDowell
Robert Skoglund

Julian Rubenstein
James Skoglund
Norman Tate
Janice Tate
Albert Smalley
Sally Cartwright
Robert J. Faustini
Jean B. Faustini
Ralph E. Cline, Jr.
Joan S. Cline
Frank Rackliff
Wallace Gage
Evelyn Archer
Ina Grant
Valeria Schurman
Adrea Thorbjornson
Malcolm Wiley
Hilda Wiley
Everett Baum
Steven E. Sullivan
Bradley Beckett
Bernard Rackliff
True Hall
David Nichols
Suzanna Mitchell

GENEALOGICAL QUERIES

It is hoped that this column will become a popular and regular feature of this publication. The rules are simple. Queries must be St. George related and will be published in the order they are received. Use query numbers when replying. There is no fee. Address your replies and/or queries to: the St. George Historical Society; Newsletter; St. George, ME 04857.

Q-1. WILEY. Would like information on the family of JAMES WILEY who was born 25 October 1794; m. 1817 to SUSAN HENDERSON. Would like names of children and birthdates.

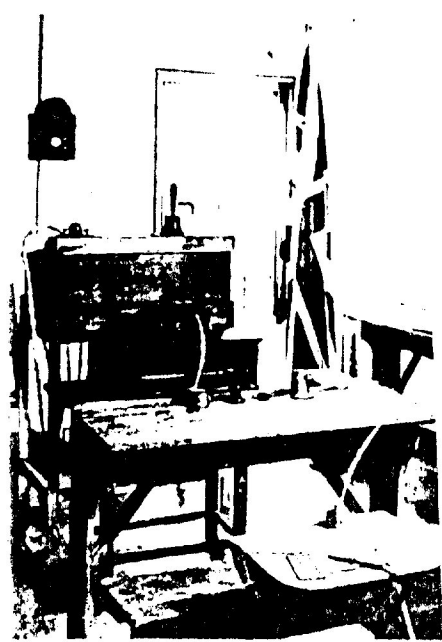
Q-2. DAVIS. JAMES DAVIS died at St. George in 1917 aged 90 years. His parents were JOHN DAVIS and NANCY RACKLIFF, both supposed to be born at St. George. Does anyone know if he had any family, wife, brothers or sisters? Any information would be helpful.

Q-3. MARSHALL. BENJAMIN MARSHALL 3rd m. HANNAH WILLIAMSON of Bremen 14 March 1819. They resided at Bremen, Monhegan, and Cushing. Was he a son of Benjamin and Phoebe (Young) Marshall who married in 1793? Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Q-4. ALLEN-HARRINGTON-WILEY. JOHN HARRINGTON Jr. (1800-1881) married in 1836 to BETSY ALLEN b. 6 August 1810; d. 1863 at St. George. Was she a sister to NANCY ALLEN b. 1812, who married SAMUEL WILEY, son of EPHRAIM WILEY in 1828? Any information on these families is wanting. Parentage of BETSY ALLEN HARRINGTON, NANCY ALLEN WILEY, and DANIEL and ANDREW ALLEN is desired.

Q-5. WALL. DAVID WALL was born about 1785/6 and married, perhaps secondly, to LUCY SIMMONS, who was born 2 April 1782, a daughter of Aaron and Martha Simmons. Interested in names of children of David Wall with dates of birth, if known, etc.

Q-6. SHIRREFFS. According to his gravestone, JOHN SHIRREFFS was born in the parish of Monymusk, Arberdeenshire, Scotland 1 February 1843. He d. at St. George before 2 November 1887. It is believed he was somehow connected with the Long Cove quarry. Any other information wanting.



Thursday evening, Jan. 28,
Mrs. Thorbjornson and Mrs.
Ana Grant will present a
program on Teaching in St.
George's District Schools.
We will meet at St. George
Grange Hall at 7:30.

Please bring school
photos and mementoes for display.

Olson's Dairy Becomes The Enoch Ripley Homestead-Again

In 1972 when our family moved into my aunt and uncle's farm house it mean't that we had a big enough house and yard for our family at a price we could afford. That's all it mean't to us at the time. From the very first day we began living here it started changing us and our way of thinking. We started noticing little things that in all my years of summering in the house I had never noticed before. Under many coats of paint we noticed little key hole covers. We cleaned them off and found that they were brass. Then of course the doors had to be stripped too. One by one as there was about thirty. We decided to do one room at a time so as to make as few errors as possible.

We made no structure changes. Something kept holding us back from all the suggestions of the now generation with their sliding glass doors and screened porches. How glad I am now, ten years later.

Little by little, scraping and fixing, there emerged a very definite type of house. Old! How old? I decided to try to find out. I took my deed and went to the court house in Rockland. Searching became very exciting for me when I realized just how old it might be.

Enoch Ripley appeared to be the first owner as I found and had copied his will which was dated in the year 1815. It mentioned "my beloved homestead"

I then contacted Mr. Albert Smalley and we discussed different characteristics of the house and it's first owner. The bark covered beams in the cellar, the chimney that starts at the first floor level and is supported by rocks and mortar and old maps helped us come to the conclusion that 1790 was about right.

My next call was to Mrs. Ruth Aiken in Cushing. She was very helpful to me also. Mrs. Aiken told Enoch was born in 1759.

He was a Surveyor of Highways and a Town Officer before 1790. Before the end of the Eighteenth century he had been a Jurymen, a Field Driver, a fence viewer and a Hog Reeve.

He was one of the early settlers to receive land grants from General Henry Knox. He paid \$80.67 for 100 acres on the west side of Tenants Harbor. This was where he chose to build his Homestead. The creek was called Ripley's Creek and the corner Near the Baptist Church, Ripleys' Corner.

In 1795 he raised 30 pounds of British Currency for a road from his home to Long Cove. In 1800 he owned 282 acres of land on this peninsula.

Shortly after, I read somewhere that the original Montpelier was built around the same time. I decided to visit the replica. The kitchen fascinated me with the bake ovens and huge hearth. After coming back home I couldn't stop thinking about it. I realized that although this house was nowhere near as big they still had to cook the same way.

I knew that there was a fireplace opening behind the plastered wall in our living room because there was a small hole to accomodate the metal chimney pipe from an old oil stove. I believed that a man of some means in his early thirties would want the best available cooking facilities. He would want to have bake ovens for his wife. The most logical place for these bake ovens would be about three feet from the chimney hole. With a small ice pick and hammer so as not to mar the wall too much, if I was wrong, I tapped a small hole. I heard the sound of metal touching metal..The only metal that could be in there had to be bake oven doors. I poked another hole. A different sound this time. I thought it sounded like brick.

Our excitement by this time was so contagious that we had about

twenty friends, neighbors, and family watching. It was better to us than a gold strike. We took the wall down with pry bars, hammers and just about anything else we could find. We found a beautiful large fireplace with cast iron doors on the domed bake oven and the warming oven below. There were parsons cupboard shelves above. We decided then that we must restore this keeping room to it's original beauty and charm.

We began researching many volumes of Architectural books and books and periodicals on old homes around New England. We subscribed to all the old house magazines. Eventually our plans were made.

Michael Collins, a fine local carpenter, brought us some beautiful wide white heart pine boards. They were over fifty years old and never used. We decided on a feather edge ship lap for the fireplace wall. Paneled cupboard doors and hand planing helped to keep our look as authentic as possible.

We stenciled the original plaster and restored the feather painted wainscotting. The removal of five layers of ceiling materials was a dirty job but the the lovely beams we exposed were worth it.

Our project continues all the time but we have learned so much and grown to love the Ripley Homestead. Our home has given us glimpses of the past and a great new interest in our heritage.

Irene Rizkalla

Please tear off this slip and mail it to the St. George Historical Society, St. George, Maine, 04857.

Enclosed is the \$3.00 membership fee for _____
whose address is _____
and whose telephone number is _____