

NEWSLETTER

of the

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

No.2

January 1983

THE YEAR 1982

Much has transpired since the last Newsletter was issued. In this article we will try to review the events of 1982, a year of growth for the Society. The highlights of the year were the very successful old house tour and the establishment of the Executive Committee.

The JANUARY 1982 meeting was postponed due to icy roads. In FEBRUARY, about 28 members gathered at the Grange Hall to hear Adrea Thorbjornson and Ina Grant, two long-time and well-known schoolteachers in St. George, recount their experiences in some of the local schools. In APRIL, the late Commander Albert J. Smalley gave a talk, with slides, on 19th and early 20th century schools in St. George, and related some of his experiences as a local schoolboy in the early 1900s. The MAY meeting was held at Gertrude Hupper's Martinsville home, where several speakers talked interestingly on the subject "Entertainment of Long Ago." The talks were followed by several lively and well-done accordion pieces by John Van Sorosin, which everyone enjoyed.

In JUNE, the membership had an informal discussion on genealogy and family history, with everyone present relating some interesting story or anecdote of an ancestor or family member. In JULY, Irene Rizkalla (with the help of her family and Hilda Wiley) engineered a very successful tour of old houses in the town. A great deal of careful planning and organizing went into this venture, which everyone enjoyed immensely. At the AUGUST 12th meeting, Acting President Skoglund, Malcolm Wiley, Ralph Cline Jr., and others talked on the subject of shipbuilding and noted that there had been at least 12 shipyards in St. George. On AUGUST 26th, about 35 members gathered at the St. George Grange Hall for a talk and slide show on "Genealogy in St. George," followed by the Society's first annual business meeting. Steven Sullivan presented the program and fielded questions from the audience. Following the presentation, Acting President Skoglund presided over the election of officers and the establishment of the Executive Committee. Elected to one-year terms of office were: James G. Skoglund, President; Irene Rizkalla, Vice-President; Gail Petereit, Treasurer; Bradley Beckett, Secretary. Irene Rizkalla was also elected Archivist, Robert Faustini was chosen Membership Chairman, and Ruth Hazelton and John Van Sorosin were elected Membership Representatives. Together with Trustees Bernard Rackliff, Ed Hilt, Steve Sullivan and Ralph Cline Jr., the elected officers form the Society's Executive Committee. This committee of twelve will meet monthly to plan the functions and programs of the Society.

In SEPTEMBER, Ed Hilt presented a program on "Memories of Port Clyde, 1914-18." In OCTOBER, Trustee and Secretary, Bradley Beckett, gave a very interesting slide presentation on old houses in Cushing, 1730 - 1930. In NOVEMBER, Steve Brooke of the Maine State Museum gave a talk and slide show on archaeological and under water work on the ship DEFENSE that was sunk off Sears Island in 1779 in the unsuccessful colonial assault against the British at Majabigwaduce (Castine). The DECEMBER meeting featured a very interesting and informative talk by Malcolm P. Jackson, President of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society, on his detailed map of the first settlers' lots in South Thomaston. Mr. Jackson's map is similar to and complements Commander Smalley's map of St. George.

THE YEAR 1982 (cont'd)

The Society wishes to thank those who have given so freely of their time, energy, and resources to make all of these programs successful. While we can look back on 1982 and be pleased with what has been accomplished, much remains to be done. One of the most important and difficult problems that will be addressed in 1983 is the desirability of having a building suitable for housing items of historic interest.

One of the greatest needs of the Society is contributions. I'm not referring to monetary contributions (although we need those, too) but particularly we need you and your support. We need your advice and suggestions. Please let one of the Society's officers know your thoughts. If you are willing to serve on a committee or have a special interest or skill and/or some time and energy to donate to a worthwhile cause, let us know. We welcome it. The St. George Historical Society will be only as successful as we make it. Are you willing to help make 1983 a productive and successful year for the St. George Historical Society?

Steve Sullivan
Trustee

Cemetery Inscriptions

POOLEY FIELD. Located in Wallston, St. George, near a stone wall separating Mr. Brad Wiley's northern line from the next lot south are two stones inscribed as follows:

John Pooley b. May 27, 1789; d. March 17, 1865

Martha, his wife b. 1822; d. May 11, 1893, aged 73-3-20

GENEALOGICAL QUERIES

No.7 Am looking for the parents of Edward Robinson (1821-1861) who m. Margaret Seavey in 1843.

No.8 Also, who were the parents of Lydia Wheeler, who married Capt. Abraham Hart? (Mrs. R.B. Taylor, Brooklyn Heights, Thomaston, Me. 04861).

No.9 Need name of spouse of Melvina Watts, b. Apr. 26, 1845, daughter of Archibald Watts, b. Apr. 10, 1812, and Mary Jane French or Welch, b. Sept. 21, 1819. Melvina had one child, Etta Mary Watts, b. March 31, 1865, who m. Clarence Irving Watts. (Christine Watts Winchenbach Box 63, St. George, Me. 04857).

No.10 Need birth and death records of Mary Bradford Johnston, b. 1802, daughter of Josephus and Hannah (Morton) Bradford, wife of William Johnston. She was living in 1896 at the age of 94. She had a daughter Arvilla. (George N. Nichols, 406 West Cambourne, Ferndale, MI 48220).

(Watch for answers - coming in next issue of the Newsletter.)

ALBERT J. SMALLEY

1899-1982

It is with deep regret and sadness that we note here the passing of Commander Albert J. Smalley, USCG (Ret.), on November 25, 1982, in Rockport, at the age of 83 years.

Albert John Smalley was born in St. George, Maine, on the 25th of September, 1899, a son of Shepherd and Mary (Taylor) Smalley, grandson of Archelaus and Hannah (Elwell) Smalley, and was the last surviving great-grandchild of Revolutionary War veteran and early St. George settler, Joshua Smalley. He was married first to Winnifred Mead, who died in 1967. His second wife, Ruth Smalley, predeceased him by three months. He is survived by a daughter, a granddaughter and a great-grandson.

Commander Smalley was probably best known as St. George's senior historian, having accomplished three major works: a history, St. George, Maine (a ramble through the town, as he called it); a genealogy, Mayflower Descendants of St. George, Maine (descendants of Joshua and Keturah (Hopkins) Smalley); and a remarkably detailed map of the first settlers' lots in the entire town of St. George. Commander Smalley was also the first president of the St. George Historical Society and the chairman of its Board of Trustees. He was one of the founders of the Society, and at all times was an inspirational leader and advisor.

His affection for and interest in genealogy and history reflected the love and pride he had for and in his family, his community, and his country - all of which he served long and well. He was a very wise and witty gentleman who was well-liked and respected by those of all ages whose privilege it was to have made his acquaintance. He was a dear friend and is sadly missed.

Book Notes.

The Kennebec River Press of Woolwich has recently published Islands of the Mid-Maine Coast, by Dr. Charles B. McLain. This new work, covering the some 270 islands of Penobscot Bay, is a significant new resource for those interested in local island history and genealogy. This work contains the results of extensive research in archives and courthouses, and blends it well with oral history, local legend, and commentary of local historians. The late Commander Smalley, and other St. Georgers such as the late Ralph Cline Sr., Bernard Rackliff, Herbert Elwell, and others are mentioned. As far as St. George is concerned, only the islands east of the town are treated, but the sections on the Muscle Ridges and the Whitehead group are especially good. Dr. McLain has made a fine contribution to local coastal and island history.

The following are some interesting excerpts from our guest speakers' presentation at the February, 1982, meeting. Adrea Thorbjornson and Ina Grant, long-time and well-known teachers of St. George, recounted some of their experiences:

ADREA: Well, I was at Clark Island in the fall of 1928. I had graduated from Normal School at Gorham that spring. It was on a Saturday when I arrived at Clark Island. Not knowing where I was going to, I had to have a chaperone. My parents didn't let me go alone. So my cousin came with me. When we landed in Rockland - there was a boat coming from Stonington across Penobscot Bay that landed in Rockland at that time - we had to hire a taxi from there. So we arrived in Clark Island, and I had no idea where we were staying. Finally, I knocked on a door and asked a lady if she knew where I was going to board. She said, "Yes, you're going to board right here!"

The next day was a Sunday, so I had to go across the road to a one-room schoolhouse. When I went in, the stove was turned upside down. The floor was covered in ashes. I spent all day Sunday and all day Monday cleaning the schoolhouse in time to have it ready for Tuesday.

. . . I knew I was going to have from the kindergarten up to the eighth grade. We had to carry the water. We had to take all the wood and pile it. I had to build a fire. The oldest boy would keep the stove going; put in a log now and then. We had no lights whatsoever . . .

We had reading every day; geography probably every other day . . .

You were your own boss. You were the doctor, lawyer, mother, and everything else. Anything happened, it was on your shoulders.

I stayed there three years. My salary was \$18 a week, and I paid \$10 a week for board . . .

Up to that point, I had 25 to 30 kids. Then I was transferred up to Wiley's Corner here. I think I had about 38 then.

At Clark Island, I wasn't paid for janitoring even though I did it. But when I moved into Wiley's Corner, they used to give me 50¢ a week for doing janitor's work.

INA: Of course we took a 10% cut during the Depression. They cut your salary back from \$18 to \$15.30, and besides that we gave up two weeks' pay to help the town!

. . . When you had eight grades and kindergarten, your classes were ten minutes. Older ones helped younger ones.

. . . The family that I first boarded with: they were lighthouse keepers at the lighthouse. You'd board with them nine weeks, then you'd board with another family for nine weeks, and so on. One time I had five of the children of the family I boarded with. So I had them DAY AND NIGHT!

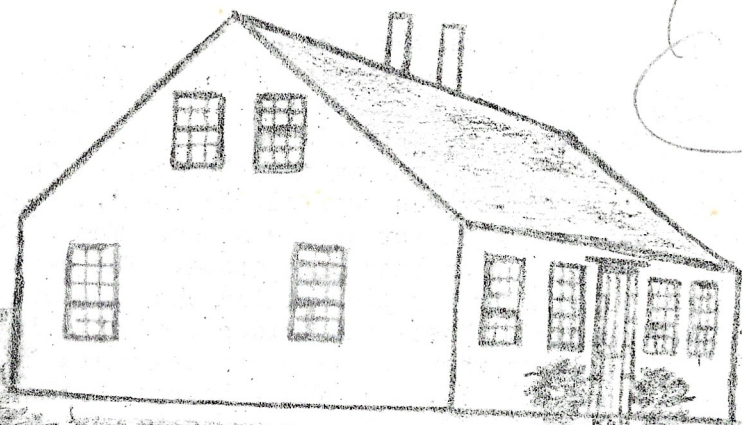
. . . Yes, Mr. Morse was our superintendent. The kids told me, "When Mr. Morse comes, he tells us stories." That was always my break. They couldn't wait until Mr. Morse came and told them his stories.

ADREA: I think it was in '39, '40, or '41 when I came down with a strep throat. Of course, it was contagious and the doctor said I couldn't go to school. So I was out three weeks, and the children were out three weeks; no substitute. Every week Mr. Morse would come down to see how I was feeling. But the doctor said no. So at the end of the three weeks when I went back to school, I taught six days a week - until that time was made up!

In concluding the evening's discussion, President Jim Skoglund posed this question: If you had to do it again, Ina and Adrea, would you rather start out teaching the way you first did, or would you rather start out the way it is now?

INA: I wouldn't go back to school to teach the way it is now. Not that I'm against change, but a teacher today doesn't have a soul to call his own. Your hands are tied.

One present-day teacher in the audience agreed, commenting: A-men, Amen.



THE ANDREW ROBINSON HOUSE

Andrew Robinson, born in 1779, probably lived his entire life in what is now the Wiley's Corner section of St. George. He was the oldest son of Joseph Robinson, 3d, and great-grandson of Dr. Moses Robinson, who came to this area from near Londonderry, Ireland, in the early part of the 18th century. Joseph, Andrew's father, was born in what is now Cushing, but in manhood settled on the eastern side of the Georges River.

Andrew seems to have been the first of his line to follow the sea. One incident relating to his seafaring life is recorded in Hezekiah Prince's Remarks of My Life. His entry for June 22, 1814, is as follows: "The British came up the river, destroyed the battery and burnt A. Robinson's vessel." The battery was the fort on the point below the present St. George Grange Hall. The vessel is identified as the sloop Fair Trader, built in 1810 in Warren.

So much for a little bit of background for the man who built the homestead where his son James continued to live after Andrew's death and then his great-grandsons, Chester and Winslow Robinson. It is now owned and occupied by his great-great-granddaughter, the writer of this article.

The exact date when the house was built has not been determined, but most certainly it must have been in the first decade of the 19th century. It is interesting to note that two features which were used in estimating the age of the Enoch Ripley house (Newsletter of the St. George Historical Society, No.1) are also present in this house. These are the bark-covered beams in the cellar and a chimney that started at the first floor level and was supported by rocks (with the installation of a furnace in 1970 the chimney was extended to the cellar). The door frames in the kitchen have been identified as being made in a style used before 1810. In addition to these structural features, the age of the house perhaps can be related to Andrew's personal history. He married his second wife, Polly Fuller, in 1811, at the age of thirty-two. It is reasonable to suppose that he built his homestead

at the time of his marriage to his first wife, Nancy Burton, by whom he had four children.

The only major structural change seems to have been the removal of the central chimney and the three fireplaces. This was probably done in the mid-19th century when stoves came into common use and fireplaces were no longer needed for cooking and heating the house. Ardelle Robinson Hazelton, the writer's mother, was told that originally the stairway to the second floor went up from the kitchen, at one end of the large kitchen fireplace. When the chimney was removed, the stairway was changed and now goes up from a small hallway in the center of the house. There is a large, square closet on the first floor where the chimney once stood. The west bedroom on the second floor was increased in size by about one-third when the central chimney was removed and the stairway changed. There was evidence of this in the floor boards in this room, which came to light when the room was renovated in 1974. The area of the original room still had the old, wide floor boards, while the floor in the added section had rough, narrow boards laid the opposite way and covered with linoleum. It was necessary to replace these boards, but the old wide boards are still there. In the downstairs bedroom the location of the fireplace was easily determined by a section of short boards, laid when the hearth was removed. In the living room the location of the fireplace was plainly visible when eleven layers of wallpaper were removed in 1973. A hump under the carpet marks the place occupied by the hearth! The removal of the wallpaper in the living room also revealed evidence of a chair rail and a change in the location of a door. The date of the earliest layer of wallpaper has been estimated to be 1840-50 by the Curator of Collections of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Traces of an earlier wallpaper are visible on the back of the sample. This leads me to believe that it was about 1850 that the central chimney and fireplaces were removed and these minor changes made in the living room.

A minor structural change was made in the 1940s, when part of a room adjoining the kitchen, which had been used as a pantry, was made into a bathroom. The rest of the room was added to the kitchen.

Also in the mid-1940s an ell was constructed on the east end of the house, replacing an old shed. At the same time a garage was built, serving to connect the house and barn.

During the period 1970-75 the present owner did considerable work on the house, primarily redecorating. However, certain changes were made in an effort to make the house look its age. Linoleum and coats of paint were removed from original floor boards and throughout the house a traditional style of wallpaper, curtains, and rugs have been used. The original Christian doors add to the traditional appearance. Since the present owner believes that an old house should reflect the different periods of its existence, it does not bother her to have a Victorian style living room (or I should say parlor) in an early 19th century house.

On the exterior, asbestos shingles and old clapboards were replaced with cedar shingles stained a silver gray and nine over six windows were installed. Old nine over six frames were found in the attic and in the barn, so most certainly this is what was used originally.

The house that Andrew built has survived its approximately 175 years in remarkably sound condition and has retained the appearance of an early 19 century farmhouse in spite of inevitable changes.

Ruth A. Hazelton

BOOTH BROS. & HURRICANE ISLAND GRANITE COMPANY

Long Cove, Maine

As I Remember - By Edward D. Hilt

1922 - Year of the big strike or lockout.

William Grant, plant superintendent, sold the idea to the quarry owners that he could break the union. Men were imported from the streets of New York City and Boston to work in the quarry. This was a flop from the start, as these men lacked any experience in this type of work. So the union remained.

Many changes took place within the next couple of years. During 1922 electric power came to the town of St. George. A 6600 volt line was run from Thomaston, first to the quarries, later covering the entire town.

In years gone by steam was the only source of power for producing compressed air and operating hoisting equipment. In 1922 a new all granite compressor house was completed. This building housed the new Ingersoll Rand 2800 c.f.m. compressor, powered with 400 h.p. G.E. motor, 4400 volts.

Much other new or near new equipment was purchased at this time, which had been part of the United States Emergency Fleet Corp. equipment, consisting of the following:

✓The Hoist - National Hoisting Engine Co. 75 HP 440 V
American Hoist 50 HP 440 V
25 ton Browning steam crane (Railroad type)

By the end of 1924 two new derricks had been erected, one of which was a replacement. The mast of each was slightly over one hundred feet high.

About 1926 a replacement locomotive was placed into service.

An additional blondin was installed near the top of the hill over a section of the old quarry. This cableway operated in an east to west direction. Each A-frame tower was eighty-five feet tall. The main cable was $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Towers were 1400 feet apart. Not sure of the year this was installed, but I believe it was about 1929.

At the end of 1922 Harry Booth replaced William Grant as plant superintendent. This position he held until the quarry ceased to operate. Superintendent Booth's brother, Frank, was stationed at Long Cove for a time. No one ever knew what his position was with the company. His movement about was very slow, never talked; however, he did let out an occasional grunt.

The Booth Bros. quarry buildings compound consisted of the following:

Supt. home	Two blacksmith shops
Quarry foremen's home	Carpenter shop
Two boarding houses	Compressor house
Barn	Eight rental homes
General store and plant office	Seven buildings housing hoisting equipment
Stone shed	

The company products (paving blocks and curbing) were shipped to the market by barge and sailing vessels. From 1922 on, Booth Bros. owned the following sailing ships: Annie B. Mitchell, William Booth, George Klink, and Charles Klink.

Plant staff:

Office - Alfred Hocking, Ruth Hocking and Almond Hall

Store - Wallace (Polly) McLaughlin and Harold Watts

Quarry	-	Fred Chilles	General Foreman
		Jerome Jones	Assistant Foreman
		Richard Anderson	Assistant Foreman
		Emil Ruuski	Assistant Foreman

Carpenters - Edward Hall
Lewis Taylor
David Sivewright

Blacksmiths	-	Alex Smith	Foreman	Henry Caddy
		Joseph Bend		Robert McGee
		Rodney Wakefield		Oscar Honkonen
		William Long		Reddington Sprague
		James Soutar		

Compressor Operators - Fred Watts
Omer Conway

Curbing Yard - John Wood, Foreman

R.R. Track builder - Raymond Robishaw

Paving Inspector - John Davis, Foreman

Hoist Engineers, etc.	-	John Polky	derrick
		Gene Cortiga	derrick
		Edward Hilt	derrick and blondin
		Fred Seavey	derrick
		Harry Day	brown hoist
		Merritt Clark	locomotive
		Harry Robishaw	locomotive
		William Edwards	car hoist
		Theodore Conway	blondin
		John Johnson	blondin
		Henry Lowell	grout car hoist

Cable car operators	-	Roland Thompson	paving stock
		John Leppanen	paving stock
		Alvah Chadwick	grout car
		Henry Lowell	grout car

Locomotive tenders - Vernard Watts
Edwin Watts

BOOTH BROS. & HURRICANE ISLAND GRANITE COMPANY (cont'd)

Supply of stone to the paving cutters' motions was done by cable car. As these motions were at a much lower level than the hoist which removed the granite from the quarry, the gravity operated cable car was a cheap method of operating. The cable car hoist was located at the very top of the hill about one mile from the end cutter's motion being supplied with stock. Operating the car was a very dangerous job as speeds on the downgrade loaded might reach forty or fifty miles per hour, toting loads from six to ten tons.

From the lower derrick at the bottom of the quarry stock was hauled by locomotive, a less dangerous method.

However, nearly all quarry workers were exposed to much danger. In those days the word safety was never mentioned. Workers did take cover during blasting. Nearly all blasting charges were heavy, necessary because the layers were bound by one another with seldom a level bed seam. Little or no channeling was done in the quarry. Had more channeling been done in some areas, more money and less waste would have resulted.

Powder and dynamite would have been saved, also much work for the powder man, Robert Polky. Robert was all over the quarry, loading powder and dynamite charges. Bob was a great user of snuff; don't know if he ever loaded up for a blast with snuff by mistake. When his mouth wasn't loaded with snuff, it was filled with blasting caps. It was a common practice for the powder men to place caps in their mouths before using them. It was a very dangerous job. I recall one heavy quarry blast when the air was full of flying granite. One sizable piece traveled several hundred feet, finding the roof of John Hendrickson's home. It stopped in the upper chamber. This weighed about one or two hundred pounds. Luckily, no one was hurt.

Due to the fact I did not know all of the quarry workers or the paving cutters, I will not mention those that I did know at this time. My first job at the quarry was lugging tools and working in the blacksmith shop. While on this job, I was hounding Mr. Booth at every chance to let me train for an all-around engineer's job. This went on for some time, his answer was always the same. This company has never done this sort of thing, and if we did give a man this training, when completed he would go elsewhere for a job. Finally, Mr. Booth broke down. I was given the chance to serve time on all the machinery at the plant. When this training was completed, I did not leave the company, but remained in its employ until the end.

Men working around the quarries never worked year around. During the cold winter months there was always a layoff of about three or four months. The worker, when he returned to work, would owe huge bills at the local stores. It would take all summer to pay up those bills.

My feeling was that Harry Booth was always more interested in his personal business than that of the company. I recall one time a short circuit had developed in his new Buick. At that time I was operating engineer of the big derrick on the hill. Mr. Booth sent for me to come down and hunt for the short. This meant closing down the derrick. By the time I returned to the hill, many of the workmen were standing around waiting to be serviced by the derrick. There were about 30 men working under that derrick.

Quarry foreman Fred Chilles was a fine man, but a leader of men he was not. I recall many times that he would pick 6 or 8 men to do a small job. Arriving at the job site, you would find him doing the entire job by himself.

Pay was always small. The highest pay I ever received at Booth Brothers as an Engineer was \$4.96 per day. For a while we worked eight-hour days, six days a week. This later was cut to five days. Payday was at the end of the week. To get your pay, one had to walk to the main office, for some workers this was almost a mile walk, and there you would wait for your name to be called.

Booth Brothers' decline in business was the result of many factors: new methods of building streets from cheaper substitutes for paving blocks; poor company management at the quarries; the gradual loss of Tammany Hall's power in New York, which controlled the political power. Also, losses by fire and new construction around the quarries, which never paid off. I believe the last year the quarries operated was about 1932 or 1933.

The following excerpts from the section on quarries in St. George, Maine, by Albert J. Smalley, describe activities at the Booth Bros. quarry at earlier periods:

One of the most impressive jobs of the Booth Bros. at Long Cove was the filling of the Betts contract in 1891. This was to furnish stone for the five-story office building on the corner of Broad and Market Streets in Philadelphia. It was estimated at the time that it would require 1,500 men working steadily for one year to complete the cutting alone. To accommodate the necessarily enlarged crew, the stone shed was extended back some 50 feet, making an over-all building of about 50 x 180 feet. In addition to enlarging the stone shed, a railroad track was built from inside the building to the quarry. A new locomotive was bought to haul the granite cars.

Fort Williams was an off and on affair, with work done by fits and starts . . . The Spanish-American War created some frenzied planning and building which continued to around 1910. . .

It is definitely known that the Booths did supply some of the granite to Fort Williams and it is also known that quantities of stone were shipped to New York for work on the harbor defenses on Long Island and Staten Island. But how much is not known. Pier stone was shipped in great quantities to the Docks and Bridges Dept. of New York City, and a great quantity was shipped to Baltimore, Philadelphia, Newark and throughout the whole country.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the St. George Historical Society will be at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 24th, at the St. George Grange Hall. The topic will be "Old Stores in St. George."

The March meeting will also be held at the St. George Grange Hall, on Thursday the 31st, at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to bring an artifact or some article of historical interest to give a brief "show and tell" - type presentation.

The St. George Historical Society is interested in soliciting articles for future issues of the Newsletter. If you have an article that you think might be of interest, or can produce one, mail it to:

The Editor
St. George Historical Society Newsletter
St. George, Maine 04857

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ST. GEORGE, MAINE 04857

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