

South Bristol Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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South Bristol's New Elementary School 1961



1961 - Teacher Mrs. Rita Turner with Grades 1&2
Photo from the John & Sally Gay Collection

building and was cheaper to construct. The Elementary School included four pentagonal-shaped classrooms with directional glass blocks on at least two sides, a kitchen, two offices, and a 45' x 65' all purpose room which served as a gym.

Serving on the Building Committee were Murray Peterson, Brooks McFarland, Herbert Thompson, John Gay, Corliss Farrin, Norman Kelsey, Edward Clark, Charles Frey, and Donald Carrigan.

In February 1961 the town held a dedication ceremony and open house, with Invocation by the Rev. Raymond Barstow. The school chorus sang "On Top of Old Smokie" which was followed by remarks from Dr. Howard Bowen of the State Dept. of Education, and Alfred Bracy, Superintendent of Schools. Brooks McFarland, Chairman of the School Committee presented the keys of the new school to Principal Gwendolyn Thompson. The ceremony ended with a Benediction by Rev. Barstow. Afterwards the whole school was open for inspection with refreshments served by the Parent Teachers Assoc. (LCNews, Feb. 1961)

In January 1961, just after the holiday break, grade-school children of South Bristol entered their new elementary school at the top of the hill, north of the village. The new school consolidated the Sarah Emery School in Walpole and the Island (Village) School on Rutherford Island. The South Bristol High School, which was on the second floor of the Village School, continued for another year but in June 1962 the town voted to close it in favor of sending students to Bristol High School or Lincoln Academy.

The new South Bristol Elementary School was the result of years of hard work and planning. The cost of building a new single elementary school was a controversial subject, such that the town vote in March 1959 was by secret ballot. The 225 voter turnout approved all three articles by a slim margin.

Three years earlier, the So. Bristol Parent Club hosted a presentation by an educational consultant for Maximlite Schools. In Maximlite schools, walls made partially of glass blocks allowed natural light into the

ART. 3 To see if the Town will vote to purchase 3 parcels of land now owned by Mrs. Charles Van Loan, Sherman Hayden, and Mrs. Annie Farrin, respectively, for use as a site for an elementary school and to authorize the Selectmen to transfer the sum of \$2,000.00 from the Reserve Fund for the New Construction of Village Elementary School for this purpose.

ART. 4 To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to borrow up to \$54,000.00 to be used with the Reserve Fund for the New Construction of a Village Elementary School, to construct the above named school and to enter into any contract or contracts necessary for the above named purpose.

ART. 5 To see if the Town will authorize the Selectmen and the School Board to act as building committee for construction of a new elementary school and to authorize them to select 3 other members from the town to serve on this committee.

The three "New School" Articles put to the voters of So. Bristol in March 1959

SBHS BOARD MEMBERS

Co-Presidents – Larry Kelsey & Nancy Adams; *Vice President* – Wayne Eugley; *Historian* – Scott Farrin;
Secretary – Deb Storch; *Treasurer* – Jack Speranza ;
Trustees – Dave Andrews, Mary Avantaggio, Jason Bigonia, Betsy Graves
Liz Lombardo, Carolyn McKeon, Renee Seiders, Warren Storch

Welcome New Board Members



Liz Lombardo and Renee Seiders
New SBHS Board members

Renee Seiders and Liz Lombardo were elected to the Historical Society Board of Directors at the annual meeting in July.

Renee Seiders grew up in So. Bristol. She loved listening to her grandparents stories of their family and when she was twelve she began her Seiders family research using notes from her parents and other relatives. She worked on her ancestry projects in grade school and high school, and continues to grow her tree today, over 40 years later. Renee is related to Knights, McFarlands, Thompsons, Gamages, and Jordans to name just a few.

Renee says “I was always willing to listen to stories that the family would share about those that came before me. Their stories made these people come alive. As I have gotten older, I find that I want to help others research and find their family connections. One way to do that is by supporting groups like the South Bristol Historical Society and help them include everyone who made So. Bristol town history.”

Liz Lombardo is originally from Lewiston but says she is blessed to have been led here to put down roots of her own. In 2010, she was hired to teach 5-8th grade social studies and language arts at South Bristol School, where she remained in several positions until 2020. Liz says the local community has always made South Bristol feel like home. She bought a house in town and has worked for Deb and Warren Storch at the Walpole Barn since 2019. And now Liz and her husband have started their own small business.

Liz says “Even though I’m not teaching right now, my students still acknowledge me everywhere I go, and as I see them make their own way in our community, I feel so proud to have played even a small part in who they’ve become. South Bristol is my home, and I’m so grateful for the opportunity to learn more about it and to give back to it by being a part of the Historical Society.”

We are very happy to welcome these two women to our Board of Directors.



Gamage Shipyard 1950
Looking west from Gray Lodge
John & Sally Gay Collection

Museum—Accessions

Last July the Historical Society received a donation of 75 photographic 35mm slides from the John & Sally Gay family. The images, all from the 1950s-1960s, include Thompson Ice House harvests, Gamage Shipyard interior and exterior views, and various other people and places.

Some of the photos have been shared on our Facebook page and this winter we plan to add many of them to our website Collections page. We will email the membership when they are available to view online.

If you have items you’d be willing to donate, please contact us. Our mission is to collect and preserve historical memorabilia and important records relating to the area and the Town of South Bristol, so that we may share and preserve them for generations to come!

Historical Society Scholarship Award 2022

Each year the South Bristol Historical Society gives a \$500 scholarship to a South Bristol resident graduating from Lincoln Academy, based on the recommendation of the LA Guidance Department.

The 2022 scholarship was awarded to Savhana Hood, granddaughter of Elizabeth Hood of Walpole. While at Lincoln Academy Savhana played lacrosse and field hockey. She was also a member of the chorus, the Civil Rights Team and the Yearbook Committee.

Savhana attends Caldwell University in New Jersey where she plans to pursue a degree in Art Therapy.

Congratulations Savhana!



Savhana Hood, Scholarship Recipient

Adventures in Genealogy

Tracing One's Family Can Become an Addiction—By Renee Seiders



Nathalie Seiders
About 4 years old in 1912

I don't remember a time when I wasn't immersed in my family's history. I grew up with my grandmother Nathalie (Seiders) Knight living near us or with us. She was always talking about people in town (So. Bristol) and how she was related to them or how she remembered them from when she was a little girl. I also was fortunate to have my father's parents, Daniel C. Seiders, Jr. and Helen (Atkinson) Seiders, living close by and able to share their stories with me. I vaguely remember meeting my great grandfather, Daniel C. Seiders when he was living with Aunt Ferne Seiders. We are lucky enough to have a four-generation photo of the 4 Daniels. My great-grandfather on my dad's side was also my grandmother Nathalie's uncle, on my mom's side, which helped narrow some of my research.

My grandmother had saved photos and papers from her parents' house that showed the family starting to trace the Seiders family back in the early 1900's. My parents, Daniel Caridon Seiders, III and Marilyn Estelle (Knight) Seiders had written a paper on the Seiders' family for school back in the 1950's of which I still have a copy. I added to their research and did a display for 8th grade at So. Bristol Elementary. Then, after more research, I worked on the family genealogy for an independent study as a senior at Lincoln Academy. The bug had now gotten a powerful grip on me and fueled my passion over the next 43 years.



Nathalie and Clyde Knight
After their marriage in 1925

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Historic House Highlights—Thompson Inn Road



Nathaniel Gamage House built 1813
Later owned by Afton & Annie May Farrin
Annie May & one of her children (pictured)

In 1813 Nathaniel Gamage bought 100 acres of land, on the mainland side of the Eastern Gut in South Bristol. He built the first house on the Thompson Inn Road, a cape style dwelling (now owned by E. Thompson) and lived there until his death in 1840. He was a prosperous farmer and fisherman and was said to be the wealthiest man in this part of Bristol. Just before his death, Gamage sold his house to John Pierce whose (wife) Mary lived in the house until her death in 1901.

Mary's nephew Robert Pierce and his wife Alice had moved to South Bristol to help care for Mary and in 1905 built a large gabled house with a decorative covered porch, uphill behind Mary's cape (now owned by Decamp). Alice lived there until she died in 1934.



Afton & Annie May Farrin circa 1910s
Afton would row across Johns Bay from Pemaquid Harbor to court Annie May Gamage

Alice's niece Annie May (Gamage) Farrin and her husband Afton rented Mary's cape when they married in 1911 and inherited both houses when Alice died.

Annie May and Afton raised twelve children in the cape house. The children, in order of birth were Kenneth, Charlotte, Frank, Afton Jr., Robert, Margaret, Alva, Annie May, Ruth, Ramon, David, and Paul. Afton Sr. and Annie May acquired property going up the hill on the east side of Route 129 and many of their offspring built dwellings there. Both Kenneth and David raised families in the large gabled Pierce house.

Afton Sr. attended Bowdoin College, was a school teacher, storekeeper and postmaster. After Afton died in 1949 Farrin's Lobster Pound and store (now Osier's) was taken over by Afton's son Frank who ran it until his death in 1979. Annie May Farrin died in 1989 at age 97. She had been active in the Order of the Eastern Star for 72 years and was a parishioner of the Union Church for 80 years. Perhaps more than any other life-long resident, Annie May witnessed amazing changes during her near century in South Bristol. Her descendants today, who are many and living locally, could surely tell you some stories!

Sources:

Donna Farrin Plummer, granddaughter of Afton and Annie May Farrin (photos and stories)

"A History of the Families and Their Houses: South Bristol, Maine", H. Landon Warner

"Down on the Island, Up on the Main", Ellen Vincent



Frank Farrin and his mother Annie May 1940s
Robert & Alice Pierce House built 1905 in background

Adventures in Genealogy -By Renee Seiders

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I began my research by filling in a basic five-generation worksheet that was available from the Latter-Day Saints (LDS) library. I was able to start from myself as being person one. Then my father became person #2 and my mother person #3. I could also fill in the information for my grandparents and great-grandparents completing 4 generations. My grandparents on both sides were able to fill in names to finish the 5th generation, which completed one sheet. Each name at the end of the sheet then became the #1 person on a new sheet. Based on the sheet, males were even numbers, and the female ancestors became the odd numbers. I still use this method when starting a new line or when researching for someone else.

I was constantly writing information down or photocopying it and adding it behind the appropriate chart. Over the years I filled in enough sheets and documentation to fill 5 three-ring binders. I visited cemeteries and libraries, I searched county courthouse records, past copies of Lincoln County News, and often referred to the Old Bristol & Nobleboro Vital Records compiled by Christine Dodge to find out more information. Over time, members of my extended family shared more information and photos to fill out the picture that the names and dates were painting.

I began transferring my genealogy to a computer using Family Tree Maker software back in 1999. I have updated the program over the years but will soon need to find a new program that can handle the sheer volume of people in my program that are related to me through blood or marriage. The program can also tell you how you are related to someone – last time I checked I was related to my parents in more than 30 different ways beyond their being my parents. Currently my database has over 419,000 names in it. I wasn't as careful in the beginning to record sources for the information, but I have been changing that. Always write down where you get your information for births, deaths, and marriages. My recent look at the Seiders Family Genealogy now fills about 909 pages based on the information I have, so far.

I currently use Ancestry.com and Familysearch.org for research. Ancestry charges a fee but Family Search is a Latter-Day Saints website and is free to use. I have found that some records can only be found on Family Search, so I constantly go back and forth between them. I like Ancestry because subscribers supply photos of the people in their family and most allow you to save a copy of their photos. I've been trying to find photos for family as far back as I can. Some relatives born in the early 1800's lived long enough to have had photographs taken, so I now know what they look like. Never throw old photos away, even if you are unsure of who they are! Donate them to an organization or to a family member who will research to try to identify the people then share them with extended family.

Another way to connect with family is through DNA. I currently have over 40,000 people who are related to me, either within 4 generations or within 5 – 8 generations. I've learned that we are more connected to each other than people want to believe. Ancestry.com is constantly updating and refining its DNA program and it can now divide your matches into either identifying with parent #1 or parent #2. It can't tell you which parent is which, but you can tell by your matches.

I'm always looking for new connections and ways to help others with their journey into the past. Many people want to know if they are related to anyone famous. I know that I am descended from at least eight of the Mayflower pilgrims and that I am related to Ralph Waite of *The Waltons* and *NCIS* fame.

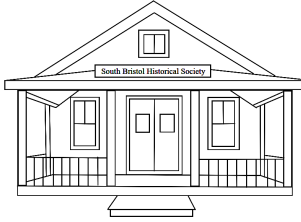
So, who do you think you are?



Daniel, Jr. and Helen Seiders
circa 1950s



The Four Daniels 1968 (right to left)
Daniel Sr., Daniel Jr., Daniel III, and Daniel IV



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Photo: 1960 Thompson Ice House
from the John & Sally Gay Collection