

South Bristol Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

South Bristol, Maine 207-350-3247

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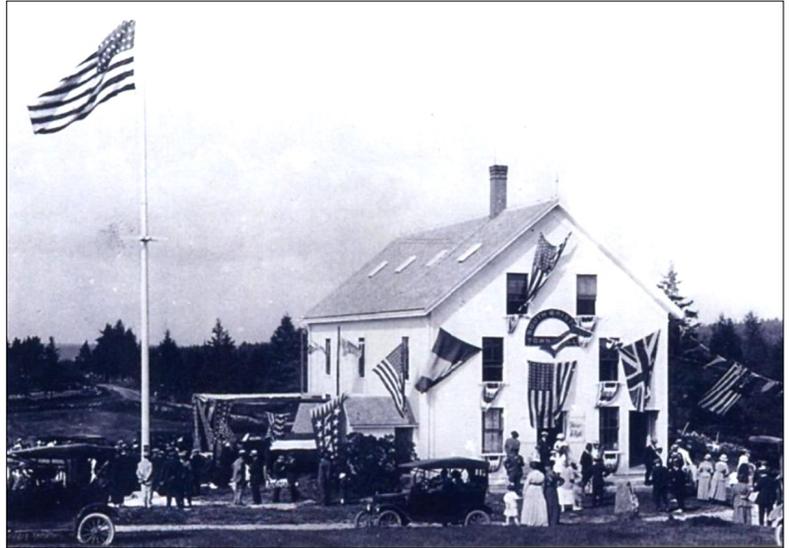
Old Town Hall Preservation Project

Plans are being discussed for one of South Bristol's historically important town buildings. Selectman Adam Rice spoke with Historical Society Board members in February about the future of the nearly 150 year-old Centennial Hall and some of the earliest town records currently stored in the vault of the new town hall. High above Damariscotta River the building stands at the corner of Ridge Road and Clarks Cove Road, once the center of West Bristol.

Built by James Harvey Goudy in 1876, Goudy Hall was a store and hall for public gatherings. In 1877 it served as the first Post Office in "West Bristol" (now Walpole) and JH Goudy continued as postmaster there until his death in 1895.

Goudy Hall became known as Centennial Hall and when South Bristol incorporated in 1915 the building became the meeting place for all town business and storage of town records.

In 1953 the Hall also served as a school on the first floor, and the town offices moved to the second floor. The school was named Sarah Emery School in honor of Sarah Emery's 45 year teaching career at three So. Bristol schools: Rutherford Island School, S Road School, and the West Bristol (Gladstone) School. Students in the Walpole part of town attended school at the Hall until 1961 when the current elementary school opened in the village.



Formerly known as Centennial Hall, the building became the Town Hall for newly independent South Bristol. This image, shows a celebration held on August 30, 1918, complete with a band, speeches and the unfurling of the flag atop a new flag pole.

Today the old Town Hall is used as storage for the equipment of South Bristol's Walpole section of the Fire Department. The outside well-water tap is still frequently used by townspeople and summer residents.

Continued on page 3

Captain James H. Goudy of West Bristol

The following profile is by Mablon Myron Gowdy, "A family history comprising the surnames of (Goudy) and the variant forms from A.D. 800 to A.D. 1919", Lewiston, Me.: Journal Press, 1919

Captain James Harvey Goudy, fifth son of John and Elizabeth (Fitch) Goudy, born in Bristol, Me., Aug. 24, 1827; married Dec. 24, 1857, Sarah-Jane Kenney, a daughter of James and Sarah (Thompson) Kenney, born in Machiasport, Me., Feb. 22, 1841.

From early days he was fond of the seaman's life and

began sailing on coasting vessels when sixteen years of age. He rose from station to station as he acquired efficiency and seamanship till he became master mariner and commanded ships sailing from Boston and New York to the Gold Coast in Africa. During a part of this time he was acting as confidential agent for the firm of Brooks and Bartlett of Boston, Mass. Captain Goudy was sometimes absent from his home for a whole year, while attending to the loading and shipping of merchandise, the cargoes consisting largely

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SBHS BOARD MEMBERS

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Secretary – Liz Lombardo Treasurer – Jack Speranza

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2025 Programs & Events

- **June 21, Saturday, 10am-3pm** — The Historical Society will co-sponsor the “Gardens of Lincoln County” with a focus this year on South Bristol. The event is a self-guided tour showcasing the beautiful gardens and historic sites of our town. The following sites will be open for visitors: Walpole Meetinghouse, Walpole Union Chapel, S Road Schoolhouse, Thompson Ice House and the Historical Society Museum.
- **July 8, Tuesday, 6:30pm** — SBHS Annual Membership Meeting. Following a short business meeting will be a presentation by Dr. Neil DePaoli, “Coastal summer visits of Maine Indigenous Peoples during the late 19th and early 20th centuries”. Dr. DePaoli is the Historic Site Manager at Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site in Bristol. At the Union Church Parish Hall.
- **Aug. 6, Wednesday, 7pm** — A presentation by Captain Jonathan Bacon (JB) Smith who will talk about his seagoing career aboard sail training vessels such as *Bill of Rights* and *Harvey Gamage*, both built at Gamage Shipyard in So. Bristol. Smith helped design and implement a program of education at sea, the mission of Ocean Classroom Foundation. He was the OCF captain and Maine superintendent. At the Union Church Parish Hall.
- **Sept. 21, Sunday, 4pm** — A co-sponsored event with Old Bristol Historical Society: Presenter David Hall, “Being Religious in Coastal Maine, c. 1700-1950”. At the Bristol Congregational Church in Bristol Mills.
- **Oct. 19, Sunday, 4pm** — A co-sponsored event with Old Bristol Historical Society: Presenter David Andrews, “When Lincoln County Froze: Its History Of Ice Harvesting” At the Bristol Congregational Church in Bristol Mills.



Museum Accessions Winter 2025

- ◆ **Postcard Collection** of William A. Kelsey. Twelve albums of local postcards, six specifically of South Bristol. Others are Lincoln County and other Maine locations. Gift of the W.A. Kelsey family.
- ◆ **Metal Printing Plate** (shown at right) embossed with an Everett Poole design, used multiple years for the Annual South Bristol Town Report starting in 1937. Gift of Todd Lincoln. Found in an outside waste pile near Herbert Thompson’s old house!



Metal printing plate (right) used to print the cover of annual town reports, shown next to the 1937 report. Note that the plate omits the date so that it can be used for multiple years. SBHS is investigating methods to clean the plate.

First Town Meeting at Centennial Hall 1916

The Sheepscot Echo newspaper printed the report of South Bristol's first Annual Town Meeting of March 13th, 1916. Thirty-four articles were discussed and voted on. A portion of the report is shown below. Source: LC News Archives

Bristol

SOUTH BRISTOL TOWN MEETING

The first annual town meeting of the town of South Bristol was held at Centennial Hall on Monday, the thirteenth. Notwithstanding it was a tough snow storm all day, nearly one hundred voters assembled. The Steamer "Tourist" brought a large number from the Island. It was a very quiet meeting. On motion of V. D. Kelsey, Everett W. Gamage was nominated and elected Moderator.

On motion of Leonard Tibbetts a committee of five was appointed to nominate a list of town officers. The committee appointed was E. W. Haley, M. D. Sproul, A. C. Thorpe and E. P. Gamage with the following result: All were elected as nominated. Clerk, Everett A. Poole; Selectmen, Assessors and Overseers of the Poor, Wilbur F. Bearce, Chairman, Frank B. Wells, 2nd, R. H. Woodward, 3d; Collector and Treasurer, Everett W. Gamage; Auditor, Elliott P. Brewer; School Board, E. A. Poole, Drummond Farrin, A. P. Hatch; Surveyors of Wood, Lumber and Bark, W. F. Bearce, O. T. Gamage, A. P. Hatch; Fire Ward, Gilbert B. Curtis; Constable, William B. Alley; Fence Viewers, M. D. Sproul, Frank S. Emery, M. A. Thompson; Truant Officer, Nelson W. Gamage; Public Weigher, Edward W. Gamage; Auctioneer, M. E. Thompson; Board of Health, V. D. Kelsey, Albert W. Poole, Eliphalet McFarland.

At the noon hour all repaired to the dining hall below, where a bounteous dinner was waiting, prepared by the Ladies' Aid and kindly assisted by a number of ladies of the place, some of the younger girls waiting on the tables.

On the whole the first town meeting was a successful affair. The amount raised is \$11,000.00. After the town gets on its feet, it will be one of the best towns in the state.

Old Town Hall ...continued from page 1

Numerous original hand-written town records and ledger books are stored in the new Town Hall vault. The town selectmen and Historical Society are interested in preserving these records at some time in the future, perhaps digitizing them for research and archival purposes. Many volumes were written by Town Clerk Everett Poole, whose beautiful pen work was of the highest quality.



Selectman Adams Rice explained the need to first get a building inspection for estimates on the most pressing repairs. Selectmen met with Walpole Chapel's board for funding advice. Funds will be needed to repair plaster walls, window panes, and painted surfaces. The stairs to the second floor are extremely steep which makes it difficult for public access permits. In addition, the Historical Society has offered to help with the placement of Centennial Hall on the

National Register of Historic Places, a process that requires many details about the building history and importance to the community. An architectural survey will be required. Maine Historic Preservation Commission offers guidelines and forms for the public interested in getting a property on the Register. Their website explains "The information collected during an architectural survey forms the basis for determining the eligibility of resources for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Surveys provide visual, structural, and historical information that can be evaluated against the National Register criteria; they help to identify trends in style and design; chart neighborhood evolution; and illuminate buildings, sites, objects, structures or districts of historical importance." Centennial Hall most certainly has the potential to make "The List"!

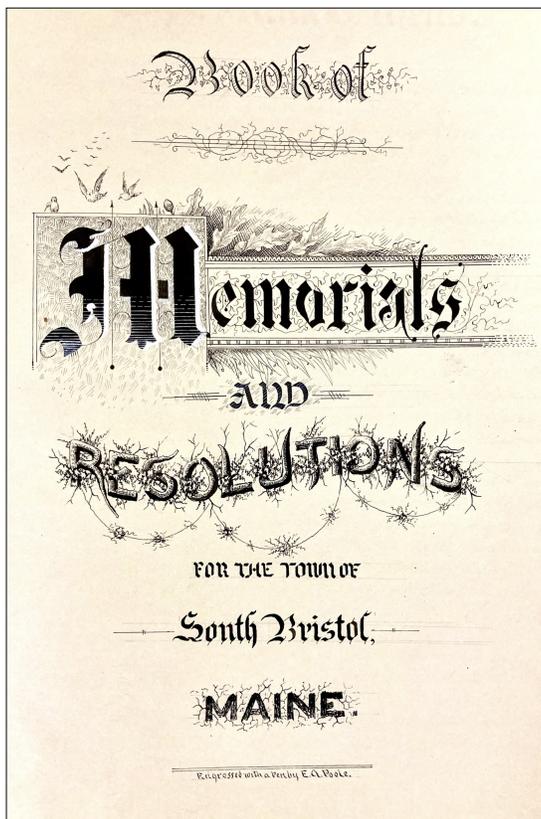


Book of Memorials and Resolutions

One of the bound volumes in the Town Hall vault is called "Book of Memorials and Resolutions for the Town of South Bristol Maine". The single volume contains just two memorials from the early 1920s of South Bristol residents Captain Frank Wells and Captain Elliott P. Gamage, both in beautiful script "Engrossed by E. A. Poole". Elliott Gamage's memorial text is transcribed here—

Captain Elliott P Gamage, born in Bristol, October 29th, 1858 the son of Menzies R. and Clarinda Gamage. He received his education in the town schools and Grays Portland Business College at Portland Maine. He was intended in marriage with Miss Annette Gamage of South Bristol March 6, 1879.

His first position was in his uncle Nelson W Gamage's store, soon to become a traveling salesman for a Portland concern, continuing in this line until 1901. At this time, starting with a small steamer the Anodyne, Captain Gamage organized the Newcastle Damariscotta Steamship lines. He watched the business grow until it consisted of three steamers, the Bristol, Newcastle and Tourist. Closing this out in 1915, returning from active



business he became interested in the management of the town.

Being elected as Selectman in 1918 and serving until 1922 as Chairman the last two years during his administration he fathered the entering of the town into the Three Town Act on highway improvements and succeeded in getting a special resolve through Legislature which made the Town eligible to the benefits of the act which citizens agree is the most helpful from all angles.

In 1922 he was elected to the Legislature from the class towns Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Southport, Monhegan, Bristol and South Bristol. The vote in his town showed the esteem in which he was held being nearly unanimous. Captain Gamage was a member of the Masonic Lodge of South Bristol, the Chapter of Damariscotta, also the Order of Red Men.

He was a member of the Union Church of South Bristol. In his passing which occurred March 15, 1926 the town lost one of its most honored and respected citizens always giving the best that was in him for the welfare of the town as a whole.

James H. Goudy *Continued from page 1*

of palm oil. His homecoming was sometimes on steamships by way of England and sometimes on one of his own ships. At one time during his term of navigation strong inducements were held out to him to engage in the slave trade, but he positively refused to accept the financial reward for such business transaction and thereby forfeited large sums of money for principle.

When in the prime of life, unwilling longer to be absent from his family and home interests he retired from the sea, and having enlarged his farmstead and put his house in thorough repair, he erected a large block at the road-corners near his home to be used as a store and hall for public entertainments. This hall and store were erected in 1876 where he established the first Post Office at West Bristol, Me., in 1877 and where he continued as postmaster until his death; then the office was removed down to the valley and the name changed to Walpole.

The hall is now owned by the town of South Bristol and here the business meetings are held. Here he engaged in

merchandising and carried such good as were common in a general store. This rural center for the assembling of the towns people became widely known as "Goudy Hall".

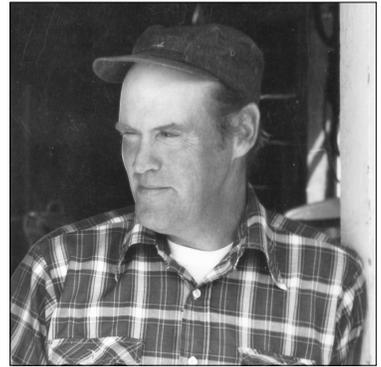
Captain Goudy was an ardent Republican in politics and a Congregationalist in his church affiliation. He served at one time as Master of the local Grange. He was a man of progressive ideas and great energy; of settled conviction and uncompromising determination; but he was self-controlled and exceedingly kind and indulgent to his family, and his children delighted to do him honor. He had broad views of farming and applied the modern methods in all of his agricultural enterprises. Like all of the Goudy name he was fond of good horses and usually had his stalls filled with the best roadsters in the town.

Captain Goudy was quite tall and stately of bearing; was of fair complexion and had blue eyes. He was widely known and highly esteemed by a numerous fraternity of warm friends. He died July 10, 1895. His widow died in Portland, Me., Feb. 27, 1910.

(Note: Research by SBHS Board Member Renee Seiders)

William A. Kelsey Postcard Collection

Local lobsterman Billy Kelsey, as his family wrote when he passed in 2022, “was as deeply rooted in South Bristol as anyone could possibly be to a place on this earth.” Billy collected postcards for decades eventually amassing twelve volumes containing images of the bygone days of 19th & 20th century Maine. Six volumes are explicitly South Bristol, the rest are other locations around Lincoln County and beyond. The Historical Society is honored to accept the collection from Billy’s daughter, Shelley Kelsey Brackett and family. Three of the postcards are below.



Damariscotta Steamboat Company

This color postcard shows the fleet of ferry boats of the Damariscotta Steamboat Company. From left to right: *Newcastle*, *Bristol* and *Anodyne* sit at the wharf in South Bristol. The Steamboat Company was organized and operated by local South Bristol businessman Capt. Elliott Gamage. The boats served communities up and down the River, bringing people and goods back and forth from Damariscotta to Christmas Cove, Pemaquid Harbor, and Heron Island. The photograph was taken June 2, 1902 and later colored for the postcard trade.

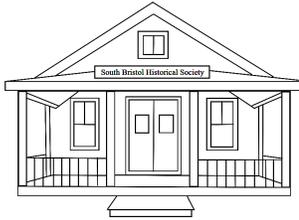
1st Green Wawenock Country Club

The Wawenock Golf Club in Walpole opened in the summer of 1926 with nine greens professionally designed by Boston Golf Architects. Automobiles and locally improved roads opened the door for the development of this leisure recreation. President Murray Shipley addressed a crowd of 400 on opening day August 11, 1926. The Club House was still in the remodeling stage but the greens were ready for play and an outdoor party continued through the afternoon. Wawenock will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year.



Brown's Service Station

This station was located in Walpole on the west side of Route 129, near the entrance of where Mook Sea Farms is today. SBHS President Larry Kelsey remembers buying soda here as a boy on trips to Damariscotta with his parents. Proprietor Ralph Brown and his wife Lena had four daughters: Eleanor, Dorothy, Arlene, and Virginia. Perhaps a few of them are sitting by the door! Ralph died in 1960, aged 72.



South Bristol Historical Society

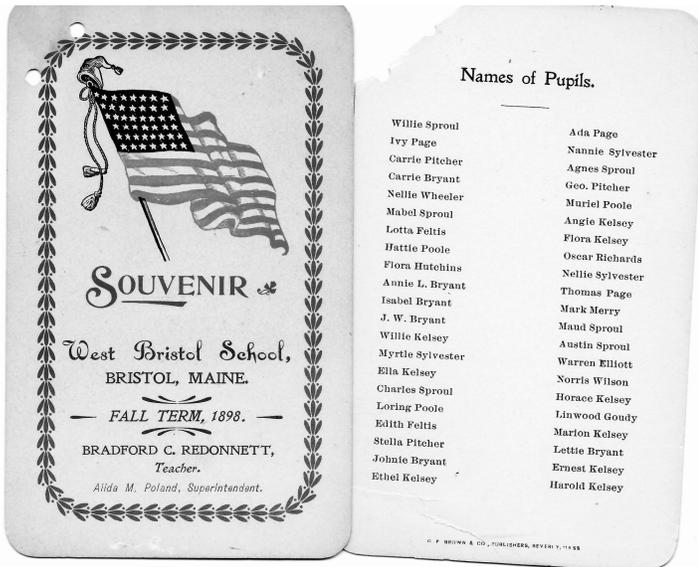
2124 State Route 129
 PO Box 229
 South Bristol, ME 04568

Summer 2025
 Visit SB Historic Sites

S Road School
 Historical Society Museum
 Old Walpole Meetinghouse
 Walpole Union Chapel

July & August
 Saturdays 1pm-4pm

WEST BRISTOL (GLADSTONE) SCHOOL



West Bristol School Souvenir 1898

From the William A. Kelsey Collection

Many South Bristol people today will recognize the names of the pupils. Keepsakes like this are rare and we are grateful for the wonderful collection donated by Billy Kelsey's family.



West Bristol School, District #3 abt. 1900

The original school burned in 1815 and was rebuilt in 1849, serving 45 students by 1860. It was said that this school closed during the Civil War as the teacher and older boys enlisted to fight. Later attendance averaged 25 students and the school was active until consolidation in 1953. Walpole students then attended Sarah Emery School in the old Town Hall.

From: Schoolhouses of Bristol, Maine
 Philip Averill, 2001