

South Bristol Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

South Bristol, Maine 207-350-3247

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Spring 2023

South Bristol Co-op Turns 50

The South Bristol Fisherman's Co-op on Thompson Inn Rd. has reached a milestone of fifty years in business. Started in 1972, twelve fishermen decided to pool their resources and work together. The fisheries co-op is designed to increase general buying power for fuel, bait and gear, find wholesale markets for their catch, and benefit from things such as group insurance plans.

"These guys that did it, they put their names on the line. They put their own personal assets up for collateral so that this could happen," said So. Bristol lobsterman and current co-op member Tim Alley during (a LC News) interview with him, Lewis Kelsey, Sonny Leeman, Co-op President Chuck Plummer, and Co-op Manager Laura Hughes in December 2022.

See full story LC News, Jan. 13, 2023



1972 LC News Photo (L to R) Fishermen: Lewis Kelsey, Thurlow "Sonny" Leeman, Lewis Alley, Gordon Humphrey. Far right: John Mathieson of the Marine Extension Service, Dept. of Sea & Shore Fisheries. The first officers elected were: Albert Thorpe, President; Ramon Farrin, Vice President; Lewis Alley, Secretary-Treasurer.



Lobsterman Tim Alley talks to SB School students at the Co-op

Lobster Buoy Project

SB School teacher and Historical Society Director Jason Bigonia is organizing a research project with students about the history of South Bristol fishermen's lobster buoys. The plan is to document the buoy colors of current fishermen and paint mini buoys for each one. The mini buoys will be presented in a display with fishermen names and their years active in lobstering. The project will continue, researching past buoy colors of fishermen hopefully at least back to 1915 when South Bristol became an incorporated town. The display will be moveable so that it can be presented on loan from the school to places such as Rutherford Library, the SB Town Hall, and the Historical Society Museum.

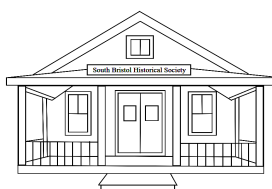
SBHS BOARD MEMBERS

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

2023 Programs & Events

- **June 10, Saturday 10am - 12 noon**—Cemetery walk at Rutherford Island Cemetery. Located on Route 129, before the Union Church, on the left going up the hill. Parking on the roadside or at the church.
- **July 12, Wednesday 6:30pm**—Historical Society Annual General Meeting, followed by a discussion about the fishing industry and Q&A with lobsterman Tim Alley and others. At Union Church Parish Hall.
- **August 16, Wednesday 3:00pm**—Meetinghouses of Maine, an afternoon presentation by State Historian Earle Shettleworth, Jr. At the South Bristol Union Church, in the upstairs sanctuary.
- **September 16, Saturday 3:00pm**—Genealogy Workshop - Tools for building Your Family Tree, At Union Church Parish Hall.
- **October 18, Wednesday 7:00pm**—David Andrews will speak about pre-1700 South Bristol history. At Union Church Parish Hall.

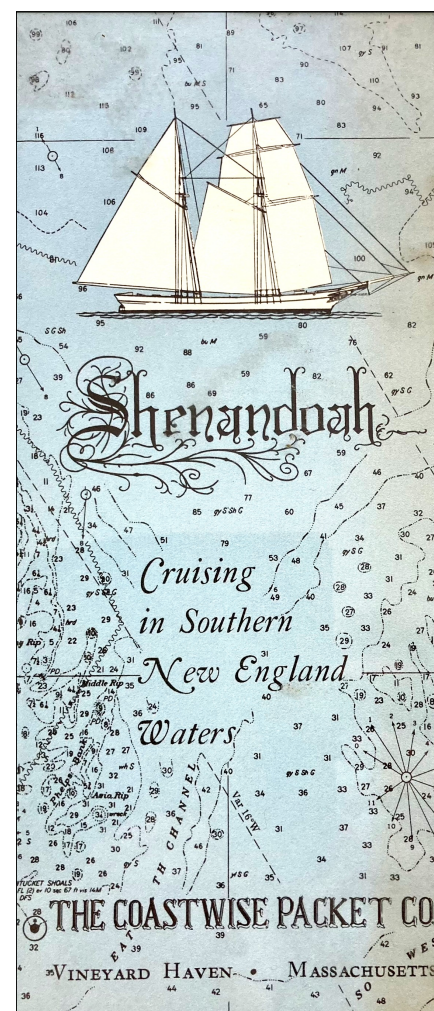
July & August hours for three local historic sites -Saturdays 1pm-4pm
S Road School, Historical Society Museum, Old Walpole Meetinghouse



Museum Accessions

New at the museum since summer 2022

- Daughters of Pocahontas pin in leather case, gift of Cecil Burnham
- Fragmentary correspondence course papers and worksheet art belonging to Everett Poole, including instruction pages, homework exercises, random calligraphy practice, gift of Poole-Norwood family.
- Four items gifted from Donna Farrin Plummer:
 - 1932 South Bristol High School Diploma of Frank E. Farrin
 - 1942 Masonic certificate of Frank E. Farrin, Master Mason of Anchor Lodge.
 - 1946 Farrin's Store Ledger book, with names of individuals and businesses who patronized the store that year, and lists of purchases on credit.
 - Shenandoah Schooner brochure circa 1964 (built by Gamage Shipyard)



Shenandoah Brochure
Gift of Donna Farrin Plummer

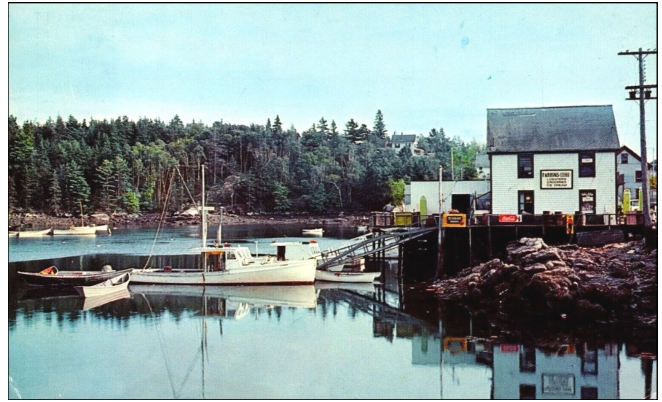
Topsail Clipper Schooner "SHENANDOAH" launched February 1964
Gamage Shipyard, South Bristol, Maine, is the only topsail schooner in the world without an engine for propulsion. LOA 152', LWL 101' Beam 23' Draft 10.5' Rig Height 94'

Robert Douglas, who had worked on the Gamage-built windjammer Mary Day, designed and commissioned Shenandoah for the passenger vessel trade out of Vineyard Haven, MA. Today Shenandoah is in her 58th season. Under management of FUELPROGRAM.ORG their mission is "To embolden youth to improve the world through guided sailing experiences that become a part of who they are."

Farrin's Store and Lobster Pound



Frank and Marjorie Farrin
Photo by Ann Hillis, late 1970s



Farrin's Store on the Gut 1960s

Shrimping Update - LC News Feb. 11, 1971

Frank Farrin owner of Farrin's Lobster Pound at South Bristol said the way things are beginning to look offshore this shrimping season "Doesn't look as good as last year." He said that the whole catch along the coast is down an estimated 50 per cent.

"If I buy 75 per cent of the number of the shrimp I bought last year, I will be doing well," Farrin said. He has a total of 12 boats fishing for him compared to about 8 last year.

Farrin's major market is Robinson's Wharf at Southport which processes whole shrimp for Scandinavian markets. He has two boats cooking their catches. These are the 45 foot Alice M owned by Henry Jones of South Bristol and the 45 foot Joyce and Evelyn owned by Ronald House of South Bristol.

The fisherman's price for cooked shrimp is 27 cents, raw fish bring 20 a pound.

Among equipment needed are a net, which Farrin said would cost nearly \$1000; net doors, 150 - 200 fathom of galvanized wire cable, heavy metal frames, winch, blocks and tackles.

Farrin estimated that about 2-3 of the boats are carrying two men. In good weather fishermen start out from 5-7 a.m. and return from 4-5 p.m. depending on the weather developments.

The Historical Society is grateful for Donna Farrin Plummer's gifted items from the personal collection of her father, Frank Farrin (see *Accessions* page 2). Frank owned and operated Farrin's Store and Lobster Pound for over 30 years until his death in 1979 at age 65. His father, Afton Farrin, Sr. had started the business. The store accounts book from 1946 is particularly interesting with lists of customer's goods purchased on credit as well as an accounting of lobsters bought and sold. The Historical Society's website has a group of late 1970s photos of South Bristol people at Farrin's Store and working on the wharf. To view the photos go to southbristolhistoricalsociety.org/ann-hillis-photographs.

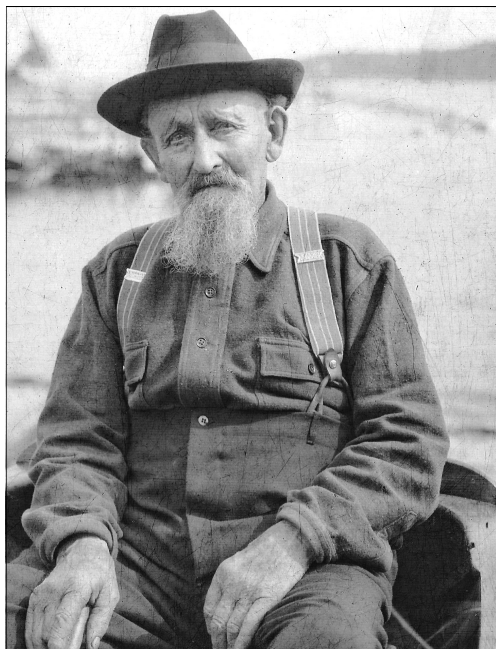
Below: Pages from Farrin's Store 1946 Accounts Ledger Book

1946		Lawrence Poole
July	Forward	29 82
22	24 cans milk	3 12
	4 beans 6 ¹ 1 coffee 4 ⁰	1 04
	butter 85 1,20 ² sk whd ²⁴	1 09
	molasses 40 ¹³ bread	1 33
	4 aspirin 40 ¹⁴⁰ 2 dog eggs 25	1 80
	2 corn 5 ¹ w. penne 25	7 9
	apric 7 ¹ 2 ¹ 2 ¹	2 1
	4 cans d. meat	7 6
29	24 cans milk	3 12
	2 oats 28 ² 2 bread 26	5 4
	4 cans meat	1 80
	2 p. butter	7 8
	2 dog. eggs	1 20
	1 lb. butter	8 5
	1 pk. potatoes	8 0
	6 cans soup	1 02
	5 lux soap	5 3
	2 soap powder	5 0
	mackerel	3 5
31	4 aspirin	4 0
	2 bread	2 6

LOBSTERS				177
Bought		Sold		
1946	Mar 29	6384 ^{1/2} lb	42	3342 19
	29	5 ¹ N.	10	2 10
	29	8 ¹ / ₄ E.F.	42	3 47
		7 ¹ / ₂ C.F.	42	3 15
	31	13	42	5 46
Apr.	1	41 E.F.	37	15 17
	4	6 A.F.	37	2 12
	4	57 U.F.	40	22 80
	6	18 A.F.	40	7 20
		60 E.F.	40	24 00
		25 F.A.G.	40	10 00
	8	20 A.F.	40	8 00
		55	40	22 00
		32	40	12 80
		49	40	19 60
	10	30	40	12 00
		41	40	16 40
	12	45 A.F.	45	20 25
		67 J.F.	45	30 15
		52 E.F.	45	23 40
	13	12 G.H.	45	5 40
	14	42 W.P.	45	18 90
		55 E.F.	45	24 75
		26 J.W.	45	11 70
	16		45	2 25
	Mar 29	6258 ^{1/2} lb	50	4038 43
	31	10	50	4 90
Apr.	1	7 ¹ / ₂	50	3 75
		6	50	3 00
	5	11 ³ / ₄	45	5 30
		204	45	91 80
	6		45	1 45
	6	14	50	7 00
	7	16	50	8 10
		14 ¹ / ₂	50	7 25
		6542 ¹ / ₄	50	417 18
	8	3	50	1 50
		21	50	10 50
	12	296	45	133 20
		15	45	7 50
	13	13	55	7 15
	14	7	55	3 85
	15	10 ³ / ₄	55	5 92
	16	40	55	5 42
		25	50	12 50
			50	168 50

(Left) List of items on Lawrence Poole's store credit. (Right) Lobsters bought and sold, 40 to 55 cents per pound.

Historic Houses of the McFarland Family

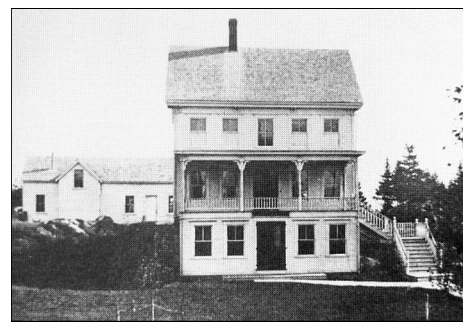


William A. McFarland at McFarlands Cove
Photo by S. Manchester

William Addison McFarland (1840-1929) married Annie M. Young (1844-1947) of Matinicus Island in 1864. Will was a prolific boatbuilder and settled his family at their ancestral home in McFarlands Cove. At the end of the 1890s Will moved with two sons, William P. and Frank Y., to the east side of Christmas Cove, first for the summer only, then as his permanent residence. They bought land from Sands French and contracted with Andrew Wilson to erect three houses. Two were on the east side of Route 129 (father Will's which has been torn down, and son Frank Y's, later occupied by his eldest son Winthrop "Wink" McFarland). The third house erected (William P's) was on the west side of Route 129, later owned by his nephew W. Addison McFarland.

Frank Y. was a boat builder and captain. William P. built rowboats for sale or hire and serviced power boats at his dock.

By the turn of the century the McFarlands and Frenches were taking in summer borders. As their numbers increased, Will McFarland expanded a shed into a dining room and kitchen at the waterfront. He moved the boat shop from the waterfront to the side of the Damariscotta Road and his nephew W. Addison McFarland, a prominent house contractor later refitted it as a house.



Left- McFarland House at McFarlands Cove; Center- William P. McFarland's "Rock Ridge"; Right- Frank Y. McFarland's "Salana"

It was said that the two brothers William P. and Frank Y. did not get along for years even though their houses were across the road from each other in Christmas Cove. Their mother Annie lived at the McFarlands Cove house until she died in 1947 at the age of 102. The brothers visited their mother but never at the same time.

Many folks today remember Frank Young McFarland Sr.'s three sons: Wink, Addison, and Pete. As young men they ran a coal business together. Winthrop "Wink" captained excursion vessels for 30 years, and was a boat builder/restorer. Addison was a fisherman and house carpenter. Frank Jr. "Pete" worked with his father and later with Harvey Gamage as a boatbuilder, and in 1960 opened his own boat shop in Christmas Cove. Today, Pete's family still own the house and shop and have allowed a landing there for Heron Island summer residents.



Addison, Pete, & Winthrop McFarland in Christmas Cove.
(Eldon Westhaver, 2nd from right)
Ann Hillis photo 1970s

Sources E. Vincent 2003, H.L. Warner 2006, LC News Archives

A History of *A Short History of South Bristol* By David Andrews

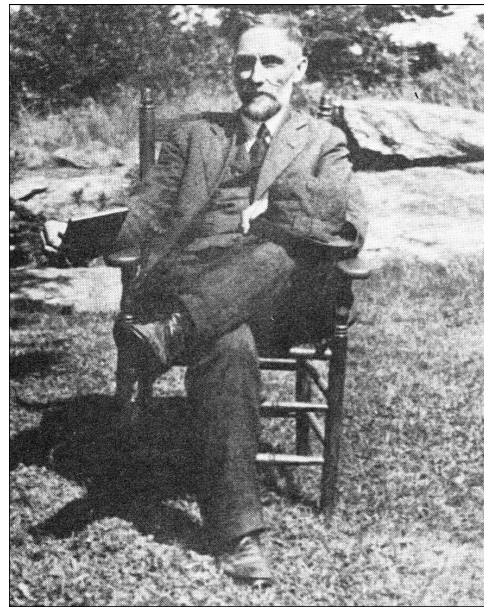
Nelson W. Gamage (b. 1843–d. 1928) was a member of one of the leading South Bristol families. He was the owner of the Summit House hotel, an acknowledged local historian and author of *A Short History of South Bristol*. With the Historical Society planning a re-issue of this rather unusually written booklet, I thought researching the history of *A Short History of South Bristol* was in order.

In January, 1917, the Lewiston Journal Illustrated magazine ran a page length article about South Bristol titled “A New Town That is Rich in Historic Lore”. It featured local historian Nelson Gamage and included a number of historic facts and anecdotes which could only have come from Gamage. While some of these facts and anecdotes are included in Gamage’s *A Short History of South Bristol* there is little similarity between the texts of the two documents. I think it’s possible the article may have inspired Nelson to write his history.

Nelson Gamage finished writing “*A Short History...*” no earlier than 1922 as that is the latest date mentioned in his text. The sources Gamage used included John Johnston’s *A History of the Towns of Bristol and Bremen* published in 1873, Lowell Sidelinger’s 1905 list of boats built in the Pemaquid area, local oral history, Gamage’s own memory and documents in his “notebook” that was referred to in the newspaper article. The original of the text is probably not extant. Whether the original was handwritten or typed is unknown.

Excerpts from a student paper written by Laura Bridges (b.1907-d. 1958) of So. Bristol were published in the 1923 Spring edition of “Sprague’s Journal of Maine History”. Laura’s paper was hand written and was between 30 and 40 pages long. The latest that Miss Bridges’ paper could have been written would have been fall or winter 1922/1923. To the best of my knowledge, a copy of Laura’s paper doesn’t exist. I have compared Laura’s text to Nelson’s and found she must have relied heavily on that document as her text is quite similar and includes many sentences that are identical in both.

In 1997, I was given a copy of a typed version of “*A Short History...*” by Virginia Goudy McFarland (1920-2017). The copy has the same text as the existing locally printed version and includes the famous “*** page



Nelson W. Gamage

missing***” statement on Nelson’s page 46. Virginia’s copy, however, was not the typed version used for circa 1950 booklet of “*A Short History...*” produced by Rev. Harold Woodbury. There were no typos or spelling errors in Virginia’s while the Woodbury booklet is full of both.

The “missing page” was clearly about William McClintock as he is mentioned just before and just after the gap in the text. Miss Bridges has an extended section on McClintock in her paper which, undoubtedly, she got from “*A Short History...*”. For the Historical Society’s upcoming reprinting of “*A Short History...*”, it seems fitting to me to include Laura’s text about Captain McClintock and the English brig *Debbie* in place of the missing page in Gamage’s text.

boro. I also find that he was seven times commissioned by the Governor, a Justice of the Peace, covering a period of forty-nine years. He also served the town in different capacities, such as selectman. Capt. David Plummer was next appointed deputy collector; he also served the town in different capacities. Capt. Wm. McClintock was the last man in this part of the town to receive the appointment, as this office was at the time discontinued.

Hon. Wm. McClintock was born September 29, 1778. His father was a native of Ireland. He was formerly much employed as surveyor of land and

***** Page missing *****

into John's Bay and reappeared. She was sold at auction and brought by McClintock and Damariscotta parties. The bridge at South Bristol, being a wooden bridge, was taken away to let the “Debbie” pass through. This was the only square rig vessel that ever passed through the channel between Rutherford's Island and the main land. Capt. McClintock loaded his brig at Damariscotta with white oak for Dublin, Ireland, where he made a successful trip.

Thomas McClure came from Boston several years before the close of the seventeenth century and settled near the Walpole Meeting House. He was chosen treasurer of the town and twice as representative of the general court. He was the first Postmaster in Bristol, now South Bristol, being appointed in 1800. He also kept a store there. He held the office of post-

Page 46

102 SPRAGUE'S JOURNAL OF MAINE HISTORY

Corvette Ledges

During the French and Indian War in 1744, a British sloop was pursued by a French corvette which was a more powerful craft. When in the vicinity of Pemaquid the British captain estimated the draft of each craft and knew that his own would not draw as much water as the French boat. He also knew all about the waters in which they were sailing.

With his knowledge of the depth of the water east of Davis, or Witch Island, as it is sometimes called, and the amount of water the French boat would draw, the British captain decoyed the corvette toward the ledges that are in that vicinity. The British captain sailed over the ledges and escaped. The corvette followed the English boat and became stuck in the mud. To lighten the craft the brass cannon had to be thrown overboard.

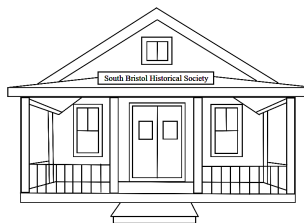
Divers have twice tried to get the cannon but they are so deep in the mud that no trace can be found. This reef has ever since been called “Corvette Ledges.”

The First Square-Rigged Vessel that Came to South Bristol

The first square-rigged vessel that came to South Bristol was the English brig, *Debbie*. The *Debbie* sailed from England in the year 1807. The voyage was successful until she reached Johns Bay where she was wrecked by a storm. As there were no tugs at that time to bring disabled ships to port her crew had to bring her in as best they could with the few sails that were left.

Three ship owners at Damariscotta and Captain McClintock of South Bristol, who at that time lived on the farm where Charles Sprovel lives now, bought “*The Debbie*” at an auction sale and repaired her. Captain McClintock and the ship owners at Damariscotta, knowing that England was at war and needed lumber for her navy, decided to take a cargo of white oak from Damariscotta to the British Isles.

The *Debbie* lay at anchor in Johns Bay waiting for her captain to sail to Damariscotta. Ordinarily, to go up the Damariscotta River from Johns Bay, one would have to sail into rough water around Rutherford Island. Captain McClintock did not want to take this route, as so much time would



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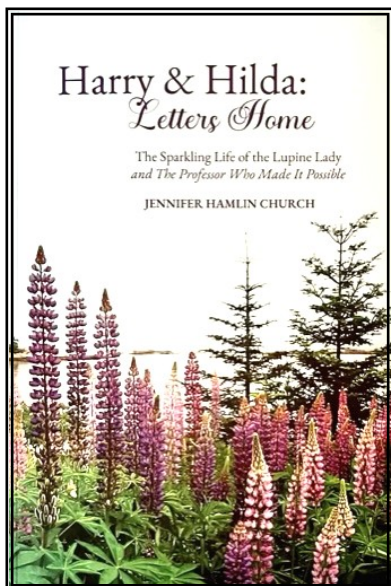
South Bristol Historical Society—Spring 2023 New Books Available

Harry & Hilda: Letters Home

by Jennifer Hamlin Church

Readers young and old have embraced Barbara Cooney's Miss Rumphius, about the lupine lady who made the world more beautiful, since its publication four decades ago. *Harry & Hilda: Letters Home* is the story of the "real" Miss Rumphius, a headstrong English girl who comes to America to live with her

stern and brilliant uncle, Smith College philosophy professor H.N. Gardiner. Set primarily in Bristol, England, South Bristol, ME, and Northampton, MA, the book chronicles more than a century of life on both sides of the Atlantic - from two world wars and Hemingway's Paris to the start of the space age. Based on the wealth of written words they left behind, *Harry & Hilda: Letters Home* brings to light the remarkable lives and times of two unforgettable immigrant Americans.



Shipyard Road

by Hank Haskell

Shipyard Road is clearly a labor of love that Hank Haskell shares with his readers. In his book, Hank weaves together the words and writings of others, along with fascinating historical accounts about the Gamage Shipyard in South Bristol and many of the homes along the road, while adding his own experiences

and associations as an added spice in the mix. We listen in on his many conversations with residents, old and new, who make up this special community." (Quote from the book's Forward by Julie Sgarzi.)

Haskell's book includes artwork, historical images and postcards, as well as modern photographs of the homes and their owners. A fun read for both locals and folks "from away"!

