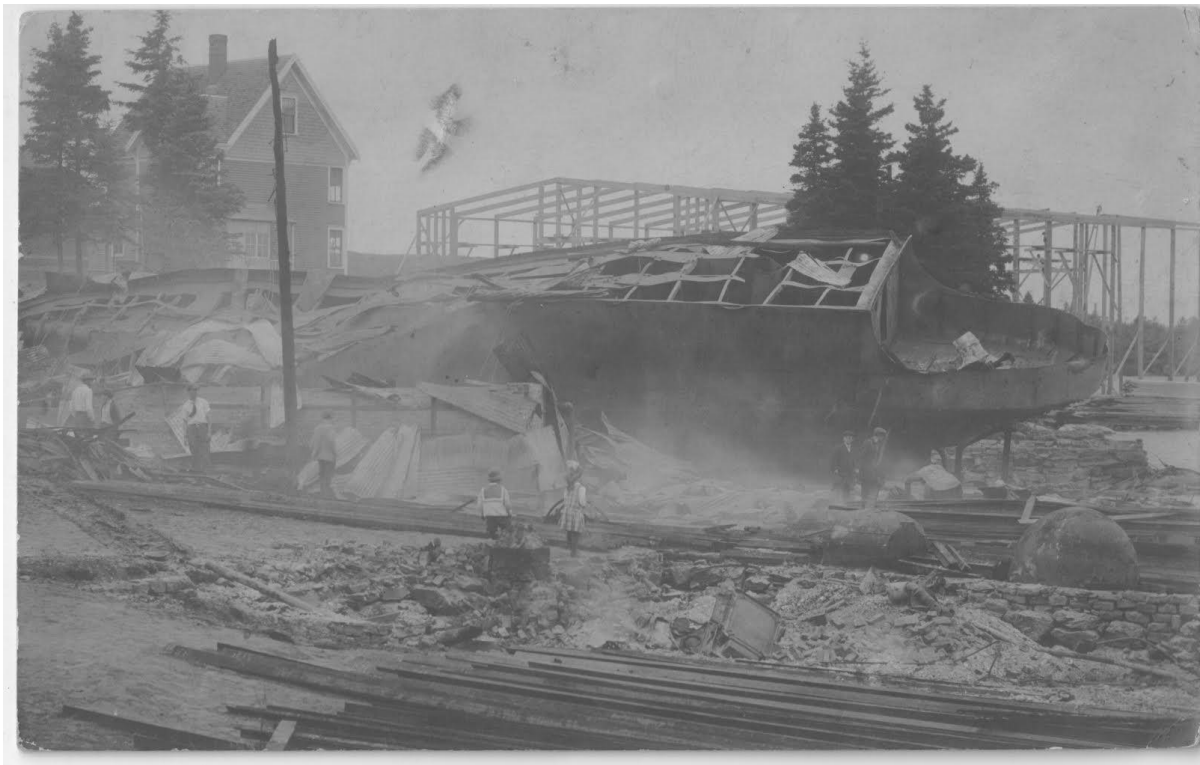


## **BRHS News September 2018**

*Researching and preserving our history*

### **From Our Collections**



*1917 fire at Rice Bros. shipyard, now Washburn & Doughty*

## **July 2008 Fire at Washburn & Doughty**

By Barbara Rumsey

The devastating fire in July 2008 at Washburn & Doughty shocked East Boothbay and a much larger area. The strange sight of a constant stream of fire trucks imprinted with the names of towns far from the region testifies to how rare big trouble is here, and is a reminder that we lead marvelously safe and hum-drum lives here in the village most of the time.

Of the three shipyard fires in the village in the 1900s, two were at mid-century. I saw the Hodgdon Brothers (now Ocean Point Marina) fire of January 1954 which levelled that yard. And before my time Goudy & Stevens (now Hodgdon Yachts) almost totally burned in January 1944. Earlier was the Rice yard fire of 1917.

Rice Brothers shipyard was formed in the 1890s on the site of Boothbay Marine at the end of School Street, just yards from Washburn & Doughty and recently bought by them. Rice's was the largest and the most truly modern yard in the village in the early 1900s—modern in the sense of having a sizeable plant. Local yards of the 1800s usually built outside and had a couple smallish buildings for shop work, such as spinning oakum (a highly flammable operation), blacksmithing (a flaming operation), or bench work. Rice Brothers had a meteoric rise from the 1890s, building not only government boats, but yachts, one designs, power boats, steel boats (novel for Boothbay), and even engines right on their own property. Their plant expanded enormously and quickly—by 1916 they had three two-story buildings, one 135x40, one 50x40, and the last 60x30 feet, as well as three one-story buildings. Though mostly on the Boothbay Marine site, in 1917 Rice's started to expand around the point to the current Washburn & Doughty site.

Just 91 years and a day before the July 11, 2008 Washburn & Doughty fire, Rice Brothers was destroyed by fire on July 10, 1917, and its 100 men were idled. The accompanying July 1917 photo shows the hulk of the 110-foot lightship they had underway in their big building. The girl in the foreground is my old village teacher Hope Hodgdon Updegraff; Richard Rice is in the necktie. In the background is the frame of their 200-foot-long new building project on the site that burned a few days ago.

Destroyed inside Rice's buildings by the 1917 fire were many unfinished vessels: the lightship, a beam trawler, a 100-foot government lighter, and six power launches. Will Rice only had time to save some plans, while Phil Seavey retrieved his and Joe Luke's tools before the gasoline explosions. The George Rice house was burned to the ground as well as six yachts stored nearby. East Boothbay's horse-drawn hand-powered pumper saved the Frank Rice house—now owned by Washburn & Doughty, and saved again this time.

Rice Brothers's loss was put at \$130,000 which would translate into millions today. Within three weeks, Rice's crew was back at work on two 150-foot steel beam trawlers in their skeletal new building. Articles such as these couldn't be written without the painstaking documentation of yesterday's events, compiled in this case by Robert Rice.

[For more articles by Barbara Rumsey check our website](#)



## History of Quilting Trunk Show!

Thursday, September 6, 4:30 pm

[Wendy Caton Reed](#) will present fifty of her quilts and discuss the history of quilting in this popular Trunk Show. Wendy's quilts have won awards and been exhibited across the country, and she is the co-coordinator of [Maine Quilt Heritage](#) which documents the quilts and quiltmakers of Maine. Wendy was taught to quilt by her neighbor Arzetta Poole in Edgecomb, Maine when she was nine years old.

Admission is free. Door opens 4:10. Seating is limited, no reservations. Boothbay Region Historical Society, 72 Oak Street, Boothbay Harbor.

For more information go to [www.boothbayhistorical.org](http://www.boothbayhistorical.org).





## **BRHS Tea!**

Yes, we now have two of our very own tea blends, developed for us by the good people at [Merry Auld Market & Tea Co.](#) in Boothbay. Heritage Tea combines black tea with a hint of clove and orange. Herbal Heritage Tea is a blend of organic chamomile, peppermint, and lavender. The tea is \$6 a 1.5 oz. package (which will make about 15 to 20 cups). You can buy the tea in our museum shop or over the phone Wednesdays through Fridays. We now take credit cards.

## **Fabulous Cheddar Cheese!**

**Saturday, October 6**

The historical society will once again be selling two-year-aged Grafton Village cheddar cheese during the Fall Foliage Festival at the [Boothbay Railway Village](#) and at the society's museum at 72 Oak Street in Boothbay Harbor. The society's table inside the Town Hall at the Railway Village will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or until sold out. At the museum, cheese and baked goods will be on sale from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., or while supplies last.



*Grafton's flagship cheddar, made with raw cow's milk and aged for two full years to achieve a mature flavor and dense, firm-yet-creamy texture. This cheese bears the classical profile for New England cheddar: buttery notes with a bold, sharp tang and a long, nutty finish. The aroma is lactic and bright, with flavors of sweet cream, freshly mown hay, and tangy, cultured milk. Melts with an even body and full flavor.*

**This classic cheddar cheese will be sold at \$14.00 a pound.**

**The tea is \$6 a package.**

**Two delicious ways to support BRHS!**



## **Did you miss the Cake and Culture Tour?**

**Thursday, September 27, 11 am to 1 pm.**

**We're doing it again!**

*A History of the Boothbay Region in Ten Objects* is the theme of this tour. The emphasis will be on how the lives of the people of this region changed over time. At the end of the tour participants are invited to share their own memories of Boothbay over a slice of Victorian seed cake. The tour is hosted by Kathy Goldner, Outreach Manager at Boothbay Region Historical Society and admission is free to all.

**For information on BRHS EVENTS please check our [Events Page](http://www.boothbayhistorical.org).**  
[www.boothbayhistorical.org](http://www.boothbayhistorical.org)



## **BRHS Education News**

We will be back in the third grade classrooms of BRES this year presenting our history of Boothbay program to the students. We have been asked to present to programs for Boothbay Harbor Adult Education. *Details to follow!*

## **Members' Corner**

**Welcome to our new BRHS members:**

**Steven Aucella and Jody Regan, Marshfield, Massachusetts**

**Kellie Bigos, Boothbay Harbor, Maine**

**Phil Billard, Lansing, Kansas**

**Nancy Gault, Waldoboro, Maine**

**Rear Admiral Wes Jordan, Alexandria, Virginia**

**Linda Witt, Boothbay Harbor, Maine**

**Thank you!**

*Your membership helps us in our mission to promote interest in the history of the Boothbay region and to preserve the region's history.*

Not a member yet? [Click here](#) to join. We now accept credit cards.



*Who knew the image on this teacup from our collection could be so lovely?*



**Come visit!**

**Boothbay Region Historical Society is open all year,  
Thursday through Saturday, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.**

**By the way did you miss one of our speakers?**

Many of them have been taped by the good folks at [BRTV](#) (thank you!)

and can be viewed on their website [here](#).  
They are listed under "Historical Speaker Series".

## ***Celebrate our cultural heritage***

[Follow us on Facebook](#)  
[or click here for our website.](#)

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