

BRHS News December 2018

Researching and preserving our history

From Our Archives



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*Looking east from Hodgdon's Island over the Day and Knickerbocker bridges in December 1929.
Courtesy of Maine Department of Transportation thanks to Kirk Mohnney of Maine Historic
Preservation Commission.*

December 1929

by Barbara Rumsey

Anyone who's lived on the coast in the winter knows this view, the aftermath of a typical coastal snowfall. It comes down hard for a few hours, scattering about eight inches or more of snow. Then the temperature rises above 32 degrees, melting much of the snow and making a slushy white mess mixed with the brown of unpaved roads or the sand spread by the town on paved roads.

The Knickerbocker and Day Bridges

This view of Boothbay's Knickerbocker bridge was photographed by the state in December 1929 in conjunction with their policy of taking over or aiding towns with their bridges and some roads. The vantage is from Hodgdon's Island looking east downhill to the bridge. The bridge section from Hodgdon's Island to Knickerbocker was known as the Day bridge, for Merrill Day in that era. The Knickerbocker bridge ran from Knickerbocker to the mainland. High up the hill on the mainland is the prominent white Reed house, owned by John Reed for most of the late 19th century. I believe the Joses live there now.

The view takes you back to an earlier time, predating paved region roads. The first paving project, from Route 1 to Boothbay Harbor, was funded by the state in 1925 and that took years to complete. Town-funded projects were much shorter stretches and took even longer to approve. I'd take a wild guess that 90% of the town roads were tarred by the 1970s.

Plowing, Salting, and Sanding

The view also predates the incessant plowing and salting and sanding the towns now do. Even in 1950s East Boothbay, the Soler boys and I could start our sleds or toboggans on Route 96 by the turn to Paradise Point on Priest's Hill, glide north nearly to Doug and Stella Hodgdon's corner store, pull the sleds just 100 feet or so to the top of the next rise by the store, then slide down all the way past the shipyards. In the mid-1950s, there just weren't enough cars on the main roads to make it risky. However, I'm sure we didn't tell our parents about our half-mile ride through the village. Plentiful cars and immediate attention to clearing the roads ended those escapades long ago.

In 1929 Boothbay voters approved money to rebuild the Barters Island, the Day, and the Knickerbocker bridges, with cash infusions from the state and county.

The following year the town voted more money, requested by the state, which provided the plans and specs for the job. In July 1930 the future bridge was described by the War Department and the State Highway Commission as being straightened and north of the old one (just as 2011's is south of 1931's). The Day bridge section was

packed solid with 1,860 cubic yards of fill, becoming a causeway. The new Knickerbocker bridge was dedicated a year and a half after the December 1929 shot was taken.

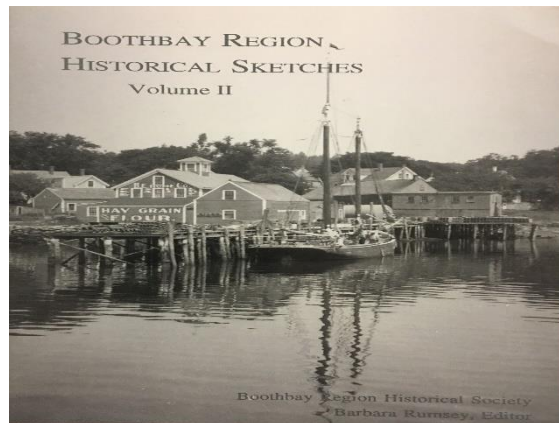
Getting Around

Getting back to that shot, it shows a then-daily scene. In the time before cars ruled the roadways in town, people walked, if they couldn't go by water. Children walked up to two miles to school; everyone walked to the store and to work, if work was outside the homestead as it was for many men at least part of the year. Wherever you went over land, you walked, and if you had a hefty load to haul, you took a wheelbarrow. If you had a big load, you took a critter, such as a male or female ox, to haul it, since few owned horses.

Just as each region locality had a schoolhouse, more than 20 at one time, almost every one also had a store. Normally the schools and stores were about two miles or so apart. I think the two women are doing what men and women did for more than 100 years since 1850, walking east home to the mainland from the S. G. Hodgdon store on Hodgdon's Island.

For more articles by Barbara Rumsey check our website
www.boothbayhistorical.org/out-of-our-past

From Our Museum Shop



Boothbay Region Historical Sketches, Vol II
Edited by Barbara Rumsey
\$15.00

Have you read this marvelous book? This second volume of Sketches includes 56 more articles from the column. The subject matter ranges from: the creation of Boothbay and

Boothbay Harbor, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the region
brickyards, vanished features, Linekin Neck, the region in
the 1840s and in the 1910s, profiles of some of our residents,
and more.

Barbara Rumsey wrote most of the articles, while Asa
Tupper Sr., Jim Stevens, and Alden Stickney provided four
of them. The book is softcover, 288 pages, with 55
illustrations: 13 maps, 36 photos, and six drawings or
documents. Trustee emeritus Alden P. Stickney drew many
small sketches specifically for the book in order to enliven the text.

To buy your own copy, call us at 207-633-0820 or email us at brhs@zwi.net,
Wednesday through Saturday, 10am to 2pm.

On Exhibit at BRHS



Former Boothbay Region Band member and
bass drum player, Harry Pinkham, wore this
uniform for many years.

Harry played in both school and town bands
until he graduated from high school in 1946.

Visit Boothbay Region Historical Society to read the rest of Harry's story, and see other fascinating uniforms in this exhibit.



Let's welcome our new members!

Jen and Jeff Dowdy, Edgecomb, Maine
John Bauman, Southport, Maine

Your membership helps us preserve the region's fascinating history, your cultural heritage.

Not a member of BRHS yet? Did you know that memberships start at \$15? [Click here](#) to join, or call us Wednesday through Saturday at 207-633-0820.

We now accept credit cards.



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

Best wishes for the holidays!