



BRHS News April 2019
Researching and preserving our history
From Our Archives



Milkman Isaac Giles

By Barbara Rumsey
(written in 2011)

Mikell Perry let the historical society borrow this great circa 1915 image of milkman Isaac Giles on Boothbay Harbor's east side, with a vista behind of the west side business district. Immediately behind him is Pierce & Hartung's with "lumber" written on one of its roofs; the boatyard with the stored vessels is probably Irving Reed's shipyard. Directly over the horse's shoulder is McKown Hill across the harbor, and below is Sherman's Livery stable. Mikell's greatgrandfather, Will Giles, had the Fairview Farm Dairy back in the early 1900s. It was located on Route 27 near the turn of the River Road on the site of the food market, "Rivers End," formerly the Basket Barn. Since Isaac is holding a milk can and a measuring dipper, evidently glass milk bottles had not yet come into use here. About 12 years ago, I wrote a little about Lester Barter's memories of the dairy and Isaac Giles in an article that was included in the society's book, "Sketches II." Isaac was the son of Will Giles and is standing in this photo. But back then we didn't know the name of the dairy nor did we have a photo related to the dairy - progress!

In mid-March I visited Virginia Gamage in her Boothbay Harbor home on Pear Street. She grew up in the 1910s and the 1920s on the east side in the Wayne Closson house on Campbell Street. Virginia told me how much she enjoyed thinking back on Isaac "Ikey" Giles when I wrote about his post-World War I military funeral a month earlier. He'd delivered milk to her house by the horse and buggy in the photo when she was little. Virginia's lawn had an incline to the road that was just right for sliding. One winter before Ikey's 1918 death in France, Virginia's sled glided over the lawn and kept going out into the road, between the horse's legs, right under its belly. Ikey and her mother were shaken up by the possible injury to Virginia, but I think Virginia found the incident rather thrilling.

She also remembered that at times Ikey would give her mother a lift in the dairy's buggy to her grandmother's house in Edgecomb. Her grandmother, Emeline Tarbox Reed Burnham, lived near the McKay Road on the road to Wiscasset in a tiny two-room house (now abandoned) with an open chamber upstairs. We marveled at the change in standards, that such a house 100 years ago held a contented family of two parents and eight children, with water hauled by hand from a distant well and an outhouse at a similar distance. Now a spacious 2,000-square-foot house with the basic utilities is seen as barely sufficient for one person or a couple.

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

Coming soon!



(photo courtesy of Peter Southwick)

**Life at the East Boothbay Store: Then and Now
Talk with Liz Evans, owner, East Boothbay General Store
AND
Our Annual Meeting, which is open to all!
Tuesday, May 21, 4:30 pm**

Come to our meeting, and after a short business meeting, hear Elizabeth “Liz” Evans talk about owning and operating the landmark East Boothbay General Store for the past eleven years. Liz “grew up all over the place” but spent her summers in the Boothbay region. After a number of years as a chef on several different luxury yachts, including Jimmy Buffett’s, she bought the East Boothbay General Store the day before it was to go up for auction in 2008. With Liz’s outgoing personality and culinary skills, the store is a favorite gathering place for summer people and year-rounders alike, proof positive of the message on the entrance sign that says, “In the heart of East Boothbay since 1898”.

For a complete listing of all BRHS events, please check our website events page:
<https://boothbayhistorical.org/events-page>

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*Come visit! We're open year-round,
Thursday through Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm.*

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