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## Boothbay Region Historical Society News

**October 2020**

*Researching and preserving our history*

*It will not be forgotten*

*Photograph: Barters Island class in the 1950s*

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## From Our Archives

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*The steamer Damarin underway.  
Burnt Island lighthouse in Boothbay Harbor is in the background.*

## Fall 1916, Part I

By Barbara Rumsey

One enduring theme of the later 1910s was the attempt to get good roads, prompted by the growing use of cars. The September 8 paper reported a Good Roads League meeting was held, the main speakers being Eben Lewis of Boothbay Harbor, and Mill Blake, Tyler Hodgdon, and Frank Rice of East Boothbay. Schools were to open September 18, but there was much overcrowding, with 87 high school students in a building designed for 70. There was no room for the eighth grade in the Harbor school, so the grade was to be located downtown in a room above Simpson, Perkins, & Co. on Commercial Street. Bob DeWolfe, the Harbor road commissioner, made a new road—Fullerton Street, which circled Moore's Rock above West Street. Work started on a new Southport bridge, wooden instead of a steel one which proved too expensive.

### Deaths of a Steamer, a Girl, and Birds

September 15, a headline read, "Mischievous Boys Have Made Wanton Slaughter the Past Summer." Evidently Harbor boys had shot dozens of songbirds. Lester Barter mentioned that Solomon David hired boys to shoot

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Americans came from Old Town to sell baskets and gift items from their tent at the east end of the footbridge.

The town had known well the Indian girl, Marian Gabriel, who had accompanied the Indians for 16 year. Her obituary appeared, explaining that she died of appendicitis. The old steamer *Damarin*, sold by Mr. Carlton to Billy Sawyer, the wrecking commissioner, sank at Billy's dock on Commercial Street (present site of Tugboat Inn) while awaiting wrecking for salvage. She had been lying on the bottom at low tide, toppled over, and filled with water. Billy was to raise and wreck her.

Richard David was a hero, having saved young Willis Godfrey, son of Captain Godfrey of the Damariscove Lifesaving Station, from drowning. Willis had lost his jack knife through the wharf flooring while playing near Sherb Dolloff's bowling alley (now site of Smiling Cow) and had fallen in trying to retrieve it. Martin Gerry of Mill Cove, at the Eastern Steamship wharf, called for help, and David came to the rescue. David had also saved Roger Rice from drowning some years before.

#### Great Mackerel Killers

September 22, mackerel catches, the biggest ever, were front page news, as were the number of mackerel vessels in the Harbor. Captain George Rice's *Grayling* had the record for the biggest shares ever known for a catch, each man getting \$328. The Bayville Inn closed for the season, and Selard Pennington's obituary was printed, with a summary of his life at sea and time spent ashore housebuilding.

September 29, Captain John Seavey, "a mighty fisherman" and the great mackerel killer, was profiled. 1916 was his 41st year chasing mackerel and he had been absent from the chase only one year, when he captained J. P. Morgan's yacht *Waturus*. Captain John was usually high line among the fishermen, catching more than the others, and he was sure to do well with his new 100' oil-burning fisherman *Lucia*, built in Gloucester. Bad weather brought 39 mackerel vessels in and the paper computed the economic boost to local stores. Sharing space on the front page with the mackerel business was a description of the marriage of Lulu Foster and Chandler Reed, who were to run the Oake Grove Hotel.

#### Polio, the Movies, Randall McLellan

October 6, a front-page article on the polio epidemic ran, noting that some summer residents were staying in Boothbay with their children, rather than returning home. People were urged to control the disease: "pick up filth, see the banks of your town,- tin cans, paper, garbage dumped all over the place." The Meadow road between the Harbor and the Center, a continual problem because of water, was improved. The top of Emerson's Hill (the Emerson house was torn down to build Seagate Motel) was blasted off, and the fill created was used to build up the foot of the hill near the present stoplight. The high school students had their annual hares and hounds race following trails to Appalachee, the boys by way of the East Boothbay road, and the girls by way of Mt. Pisgah. After arriving at their destination, they had "a big feed" of beans at Camp Appalachee.

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Saturdays. Showing the week of October 6 were *Peg o' The King*, *Basic Snowflake*, *Old Homestead*, and *The World's Great Snare*, all rather innocuous-sounding films. That week, help wanted ads included those of: the Texas Steamship Company and Hyde Windlass for iron moulders and machinists in Bath; shoe factory jobs in Auburn; in Boothbay, a boy for Marson's Bakery, and house work for a summer resident, both in Boothbay and New York. Under the "help wanted" category, Flossie Dow of Dover Road "wanted sewing," Mrs. Preston Lewis wanted to wash laundry, and F. H. McDougall wanted to do paperhanging either "by the day or roll." McDougall perhaps found he couldn't make a living as a photographer and was augmenting his income as a paperhanger. Under the "for sale" category was an island, butter wrappers, and a car: the whole of Mouse Island, since the hotel had burnt; the *Register* sold butter wrappers, either half and whole pound, by the thousand; and John Thompson was selling his 1914 Ford since the Southport bridge was shut and he couldn't use it.

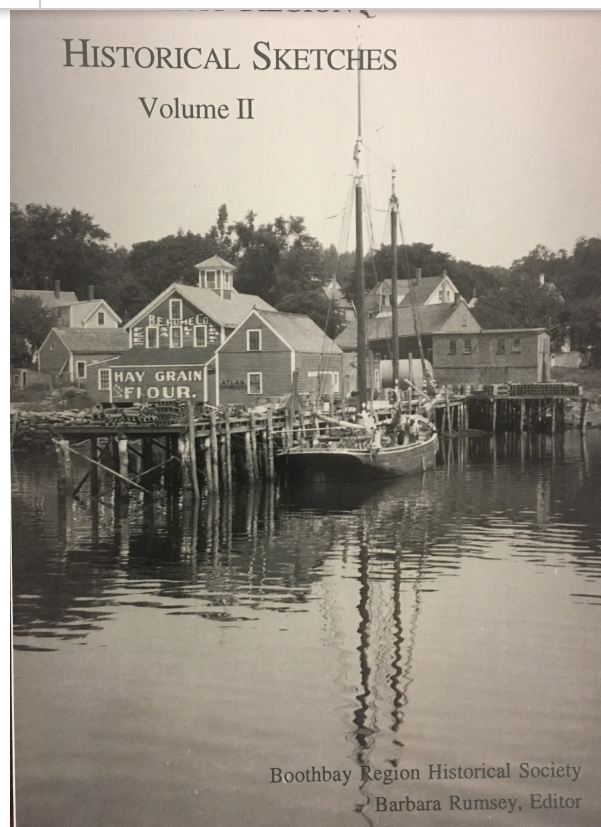
October 13, Randall McLellan's exploits were detailed. Though only 17, he had just completed a 50,000-mile trip as a quartermaster on the American-Hawaiian Line. He had first gone with his uncle Lou Carlisle on the 480' steamship *Texan*, then joined the 417' steamship *Georgian*, traveling through the Straits of Magellan to California and Japan and Hawaii. The Irving Reed yard on the east side of the Harbor (now near Chip Griffin's office) was building a 122' passenger steamer for Long Island Sound. Ben Rand and George Dunton were doing the "draughting of the frames."

For more articles by Barbara Rumsey about the Boothbay region check our website  
[www.boothbayhistorical.org/out-of-our-past](http://www.boothbayhistorical.org/out-of-our-past)

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## Museum Store



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## Boothbay Region Historical Sketches, Volume II

Barbara Rumsey, Editor

Published in 1999, \$15

The subject matter in this fascinating and informative second volume of Barbara Rumsey's Sketches includes 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 long, 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.

**You will want to own this, or to give it to the history-loving people on your holiday list!**

**To order your copy, call us at 207-633-0820 Thursday or Friday, 10am to 2pm.**

**The holidays are coming!**

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## Genealogical Research, Historical Research

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photographs. The society maintains collections of primary and secondary reference materials to help visitors research their fields of interest. Whether you wish to casually browse our files or would like to request research assistance, we are here to help.

**Call us at (207) 633-0820 or email us at [brhs@gwi.net](mailto:brhs@gwi.net) on Thursday or Friday from 10am to 2pm to make an appointment!**

The towns of Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, and Southport are the principal areas represented in the BRHS collections.

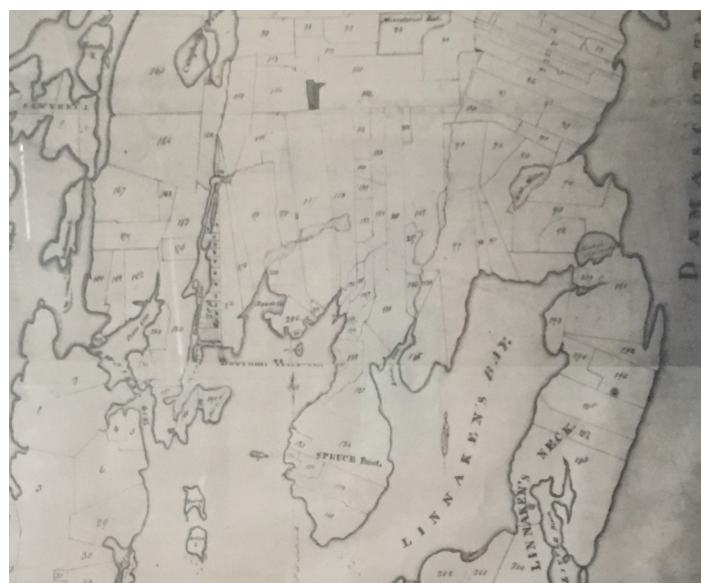


*Boothbay Grammar School baseball team, 1957*

- **Photographs:** More than 15,000 images, including negatives, prints, scans, glass plates, and photographic postcards. Many of these images are available for sale as reprints.
- **Newspapers:** Thirteen feet of local newspapers dating from 1876 to the present.
- **[History files:](#)** More than 4,500 items arranged by more than 200 topics.
- **[Family files:](#)** Obituaries, genealogies, correspondence, news clippings pertaining to numerous local families.
- **[Special collections:](#)** Account books, day books, logs, ledgers, diaries, and family albums dating from the 1750s to the mid-1900s.
- **Document boxes:** Discrete, fairly large collections of information on families, businesses, schools, cultural organizations, and similar.
- **Oral history:** Video and audio interviews with area residents.
- **Maps, surveys, nautical charts, vessel plans.**
- **Boothbay and Boothbay Harbor:** Town reports, vital records, and valuation records.
- **Books and periodicals:** Generally secondary sources of historical information related to the region.
- **Yearbooks:** Boothbay region high schools, 1934-1992.

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*Boothbay Region Elementary School student studying our Fresnel lens*



*1815 map by Daniel Rose*

## Museum Reminder

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we are open by appointment only, Thursdays through Saturdays. Anyone wishing to do research at the museum should first contact office manager Claire Rittershaus to schedule a time to work alone or with local historian Barbara Rumsey.

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207.633.0820. Please check our website or Facebook page for updated information.

**In these difficult times we thank ALL of you for your support, be it comments and likes on Facebook, subscribing to enews, shopping at our museum store, or memberships and donations.**

**Thank you!**



*Barters Island School c. 1898 (detail)*

***Let's celebrate our cultural heritage together***

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*Boothbay Region Historical Society*

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*Post Office Box 272*

*Boothbay Harbor, Maine 04538*

*207.633.0820*

*We're (normally) open year-round,  
Thursday through Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm.*

***Please check our website for COVID-19 restrictions.***

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