



Log cabin, ex-gas station, corner Rt 96 and Little River

A Window to the Past

Boothbay Region Historical Society News

May 2022

Researching and preserving our history

Your stories will not be forgotten

From Our Archives



Central Garage at the Center after Ernest Blake and Dewey Spofford acquired Sayward's Garage.



A view of Fred Walsh's Gas Station at the Center, taken Armistice Day 1939. That day was renamed Veterans Day in 1954

Gas Stations at Boothbay Center

By Barbara Rumsey, 2019

In recent decades the number of gas stations have fallen in the region to a very low number. Boothbay Harbor has two: Good 'N You with full and self service on Townsend Avenue and self-service Irving on the meadow. North Boothbay has one self-service station at T&D Variety near the Railway Village. If that is the norm by today's standard, then there was a surprising number of gas stations dotting the region from the late 1920s to the 1950s, and they were in far flung locations. For instance, there was one on Barters Island, three (maybe more) in East Boothbay, three at Linekin and Ocean Point, a few in North Boothbay near the Railway Village, any number in

Red Giles's Help

Boothbay Center's gas stations are my focus in this article. Red Giles (1912-1996), who had a terrific memory, rode with me in my car in the mid-1990s and told me what he knew about pre-World War II Boothbay buildings in many sections of the towns. When he'd give the word I'd pull to the shoulder as I eyed traffic, while busily taking notes and snapping photos. He knew a lot, having worked with his father and brothers moving houses and doing foundation work. Included were long-gone gas stations. Many of the dates when they existed are approximate or missing. I found that to stop someone talking to try to pinpoint dates for each minute change was usually futile. An example is below.

East across from the Boothbay fire station on Route 27 is the site of a house which was moved back hundreds of feet within the last five or ten years. Red said it had been a rental for some decades with various local families in it. He thought John P. Kelly built it and occupants were serially Ben Campbell, Norman Reed, Willis Priest, the Phinnemores, and Frank Lewis. I figured Red would jump out of the car and walk home if I stopped him at each name to come up with dates. I guess he was talking about the late 1920s, early 1930s.

That property was also where Cleve Sayward built a gas station about 1925 to 1930. We have no photo of it. Later after Sayward left that location and the property had been lost to the town for taxes, Red's brother Paul and his brothers, the Giles Boys, moved that station up to the base of Giles Hill Road as the first section of Paul's house, later brother Lincoln's, then brother Roy's. One down.

On the corner rounding into Boothbay Center from Wiscasset is Subway. The site had pumps from at least about 1961 when Sewall's of Bath bought it to just a few years ago. I'd always wake up on that corner when young after a long trip in the car, such as skiing or a visit to faraway relatives. The tar was always bumpy and rough there. I thought there was a station there before Sewall's in 1961. Does anyone remember?

Welsh's Store Station

Next, many are aware that Welsh's store was a fixture for many decades on the north corner of Common Drive, as it is now called (formerly Pearl Street or unnamed), running along the east and south side of the Common. John H. Welsh bought the store in 1891 and it lasted under that name after Alfred Lewis ran it from the 1950s into the 1990s. Most houses have disappeared from the road, I guess to make the golf course look more upscale. However Welsh's building is still there, now called Merrill Family Chiropractic. In the early 1920s when Red was in school at the Center, Fred Welsh had

Leavitt's Garage

The site of the town office has had many incarnations, including as a large garage. Joe Giles bought the two-story school building there perhaps in the 1920s, and renovated it into a garage and repair shop. Joe was the road patrolman whose job was to maintain the road by dragging, etc. He built a gas station on the south side of the old school, but sold out before the war. After World War II, Guy Leavitt had the old school cut down and merged Joe's garage with it. Leavitt had pumps too.

South on Route 27 a few hundred feet was a business strip which included the first Center fire house on the east side of the road. It is still there but little else, again I guess to give the golf course a certain look. Next north of it had been Cleve Sayward's house. Steve Alley has a photo of the house showing the first floor called "Sayward's Garage" to which a garage was later added, built by Ernest Blake and Dewey Spofford. They called the structure Central Garage.

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

SPEAKER SERIES



Tuesday, May 17, 5:00 pm

Our public Annual Meeting is 4:30 – 5:00 pm

Chip Griffin

“First Maypole Dance in America: Damariscove in the 1600s”

Damariscove's incredible history provides a peek at the deeply ingrained Midcoast-Maine culture of equality and liberty that continues to permeate, shape, and distinguish us today. This is the 400th anniversary of the first maypole dance in America, which took place on Damariscove Island in the spring of 1622. To request a Zoom link please email us at brhszoom@gmail.com.



Thursday, June 2, 4:30 pm

Jon Johansen

"Boatbuilding in Maine and Boothbay from 1980 to the Present"

Boatbuilding in the State of Maine has an incredible history.

Jon will look at some of the more interesting boats built on the coast of Maine over the last 40 years, whether sail or power, large or small, for pleasure or for work. Jon Johansen publishes the monthly newspaper Maine Coastal News. To



Thursday, July 21, 4:30 pm

Alan Fisher

“Sprucewold: The Early Years”

Focusing on the period up to the end of World War II, this talk will examine the fascinating story of who created Sprucewold, and why and how it was created. Alan Fisher taught Russian and Ottoman history at Michigan State University and he and his wife Carol have been summering in Sprucewold since 1971. To request a Zoom link please email us closer to the date at brhszoom@gmail.com.



Thursday, August 25, 4:30 pm

Jon Dunsford

“Early Shipyards of Boothbay”

This talk will cover the first one hundred years of shipbuilding in the Boothbay region, what was built, by whom, and where, and will include many images from the Boothbay Region Historical Society archives. Jon Dunsford is a retired engineer who has been studying the vessels of Boothbay for ten years. To request a Zoom link please email us closer to the date at brhszoom@gmail.com.



Thursday, September 29, 4:30 pm

Susan Kimball Clark

“Past Images of Ocean Point, Maine”

Susan Kimball Clark grew up on Ocean Point. When she saw how much the area was changing, Clark began collecting photographs, stories, old maps, whatever information and illustrations she could find about this lost world, and in 2016 produced a book, “Past Images of Ocean Point, Maine.” To request a Zoom link please email us closer to the date at brhszoom@gmail.com.

Admission is free.

Currently all talks will be offered both in-person and on Zoom. In-house seating is limited and if offered will be on a first-come, first seated basis. If Covid changes, this may change. Call us at 207-633-0820, email brhs@gwi.net, or check our website for the latest information.

TRUSTEE NEWS

Our dedicated trustees contribute much time and effort to the historical society,

and are now stepping down from the board.

Jim Botti
Debbe Cotter
Susan Lloyd
Jan Reit

We are grateful to you for your years of service, thank you!

EXHIBIT NEWS

Captains and Vessels of the Boothbay Region 1800 to 1921



Who is he? Where did he sail?

Come to the Boothbay Region Historical Society and find out!

This wonderful exhibit runs April 7 through December 31, 2022

Boothbay Region Historical Society
is open Thursday through Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm.

See you soon!

Two beautiful photographs are being raffled

In conjunction with our exhibit “Captains and Vessels of the Boothbay Region 1800 to 1921” we are raffling two magnificent matted and framed photographs, 9" x 25", of vessels built in the Boothbay region, the *James E. Newsom* and the *Lillian Woodruff*. We thank the [Windjammer Emporium](#) for donating these photographs to us.



The three-masted schooner *Lillian Woodruff* was built by Hodgdon Brothers in East Boothbay. Her launching took place in June of 1889. *Pemaquid Messenger* reported that 200 people attended the launching, and that the schooner would be commanded by Capt. Hodgkins in the fruit trade.



The 23 year career of the four-masted schooner *James E. Newsom* began at her launch on August 23, 1919 at the East Coast shipyard in Boothbay Harbor. The spectators in the foreground, men and women, adults and children, all appear to be focused on the anticipated moment as the *Newsom* slid down the ways. The smoke in the photo is from insufficient grease on the rails for launching.

Tickets for each or both photographs may be purchased in person
at the historical society or from any trustee.

You may also send us a check, made out to [Boothbay Region Historical Society](#), with a note indicating which photograph the tickets are for.

The tickets are \$2 each or six for \$10

and the winning names will be drawn on Saturday, August 27th.

The winner must either pick up the photograph in person or arrange for shipping.

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As always, we thank you for your support!

Let's celebrate our cultural heritage together

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72 Oak Street

Post Office Box 272

Boothbay Harbor, Maine 04538

207.633.0820

*We're open year-round,
weather permitting
Thursday through Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm.*

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