



Mary G Maynard launch in 1920 at East Coast Ship Company yard

A Window to the Past

Boothbay Region Historical Society

November 2022

Researching and preserving our history

Your stories will not be forgotten

From Our Archives



Dexter Rumsey's slide looking southeast as hurricane Carol roils Grimes Cove at Ocean Point in 1954. Courtesy of Barbara Rumsey

Hurricane Carol 1954

By Barbara Rumsey, 2017

In this year of notable hurricanes [2017], those that struck here in late summer 1954 come to mind. The Aug. 31, 2017 Boston Globe recorded, "The last major Category 3 storm to strike [New England] was Carol on Sept. 1, 1954. The winds in that storm, 63 years ago, were actually stronger than those experienced in Texas when Harvey made its first landfall. The hurricane killed 72 people, 36 in New England, and caused an estimated \$462 million in damages from the Bahamas up the East Coast." According to Matthew Belk, a National Weather Service meteorologist, "The track Carol took was a worst-case scenario for New England. Carol's winds, which reached 135 miles per hour, also caused widespread damage and left New Englanders without power. The steeple of the Old North Church was toppled by the storm."

My Memories

I was eight years old when hurricanes Carol and Edna hit Boothbay in early September. I and my friends, energized by the weather once the rain stopped, innocently enjoyed it by leaning back to let the wind take the load of keeping us upright. In the course of hurricane Carol, the power went out during the showing of "Gone With The Wind," which my family attended at the Strand Theatre in Boothbay Harbor (next to the Opera House). I made up a joke for my friends, "Gone With the Wind was gone with the wind!" Just to be sure I remembered rightly, I recently checked the late August 1954 Boothbay Register, and the movie was playing Aug. 31 and Sept. 1, 1954

the projector, with a threat to not restart his old carbon arc projectors until the unruly kids quieted down. This time he walked down to say the movie would be continued the next night. Since the movie was so long, I believe it was planned to be shown in two nights; the outage made it three.

The Havoc

The Sept. 3 Register detailed the havoc: uprooted trees, downed power lines, torn away floats and runways, sunk vessels, swamped vessels, and those with their moorings dragged ashore or their lines parted. However there were no injuries or deaths in the region, though Mt. Pisgah summer resident, Bancroft Beatley Jr., was drowned, washed overboard from his yawl at Tenants Harbor and found 20 days later. His dazed wife was found on the island where the boat was wrecked.

The Damariscove Coast Guard station was inundated with more than 60 calls in a matter of a few hours, so many they couldn't log them all. The station sent its boat into the Harbor before the storm hit, to stand by if needed. It eventually towed 25 vessels to safety. And, "By good luck, the Coast Guard work boat 80,000-4D was also docked here when the storm broke. With the help of her Higgins boat [landing craft], she rescued some 15 vessels."

The paper detailed the many sizeable yachts that suffered damage and identified their owners. The welfare of fleets of boats, like those at Linekin Bay Camp or the yacht club, were described as an entire group. It sounded like the majority of floats were destroyed or badly damaged. The Register writer enjoyed writing up the hurricane. One example: "*Surf Rider*, a 26-footer owned by Robinson Whitten, dragged its mooring from its berth in Juniper Point Cove, scudded across the one low spot in the reef, and started up the winding channel of Townsend Gut as cleverly as if an expert were at the helm. David Carmolli rowed out in a small pram, scrambled aboard, started the engine and took the boat into Maynard Robinson's wharf at Southport." It was estimated that 1,000 lobster traps were destroyed.

Damage Ashore

Ashore, many giant elms and oaks came crashing down in the Harbor; the Ocean Point road was shut after 14 trees fell across it; and some of the region's countless uprooted trees simultaneously unearthed water lines, snapping them. The underwater water line to Squirrel Island broke in the Harbor waters. Legendary waterfront contractor Mace Carter donned his hardhat diving suit to go down, investigate, and repair the break. The ever-popular seal pen at Sea and Shore Fisheries (now D.M.R.) lost a few slats, but the seals stayed put, perhaps preferring their life of ease — being fed to entertain summer visitors until the practice was outlawed. However, the aquarium lost many specimens because of the lack of circulating saltwater.

When the power failed, the Harbor's water system went to back-up generators to run the pumps.

(now Good N You) to power the gas pumps; before they could disconnect the generator which they needed to take back to pump water, "gas hungry citizens descended on the station." A double line had formed to fill up, but police persuaded the townspeople to let the water system men depart with their generator.

Hurricane Carol passed out of the region after Sept. 1, but just 10 days later hurricane Edna came howling into the area.

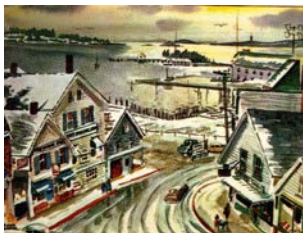
For more articles by Barbara Rumsey about the Boothbay region check our website www.boothbayhistorical.org/out-of-our-past

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE IS BACK!

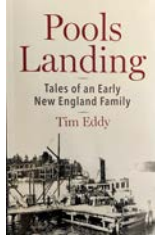
Come celebrate with us on Saturday, December 3, 10 am to 2 pm
at Boothbay Region Historical Society



We will be serving delicious home-made holiday cookies and treats.
The museum will be festively decorated with our special antique decorations.
Our popular Holiday Gift Baskets will be raffled away.
We look forward to seeing you there!



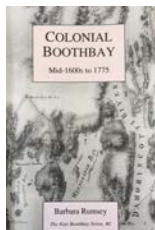
Museum trustees will be on hand to say hello,
so enjoy the annual [Harbor Lights](#) festivities,
and stop by the museum to get warm, chat, and see our exhibit
[*Captains and Vessels of the Boothbay Region 1800 to 1921.*](#)



Pools Landing: Tales of an Early New England Family

Written by L.B. Eddy, \$12.95

A beautifully researched history, this story begins in England, and continues to Maine with detailed descriptions of how people were living, how land was passed down, and the road the author took to uncover this story.



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Boothbay was a "howling wilderness." Find out why, and discover who the very first settlers were and how they survived and thrived.



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Our goal is to promote our history and serve our community

Boothbay Region Historical Society

Runs a museum open free of charge, year-round

Manages a research archive, with thousands of photographs, account books, diaries and much more

Free speaker series

Free yearly special exhibits

Free third grade history program

We assist researchers and historians





We work on special projects: we are currently digitizing our collections and writing an exhibition catalog

We maintain the 1874 historic house which is our museum and offices

We do it with three part-time staff and our dedicated trustees and volunteers



Thank you for your support!

Let's celebrate our cultural heritage together

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

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