



# Boothbay Region Historical Society

Volume 35, Issue 1

Spring 2022

## Boothbay Region Historical Society 55th Annual Meeting

Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

Members of the society and the public are invited to attend the 55th annual meeting of the historical society on Tuesday, May 17 at 4:30 p.m. at 72 Oak St., Boothbay Harbor.

Following a brief business meeting, members attending will vote on the following slate of nominees. Accepting re-nomination to the board are Laurie Simmons, Ann Sutter, and Kathy Tibbetts. Newly nominated for 3-year terms are Wendy Bellows, Merritt Blakeslee, and Lucy Cressey. Nominated for the offices of president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary are Kay Wilder, Dana Wilson, Sarah Giles, and Judy Adamson, respectively.

Guest speaker Carl "Chip" Griffin, III will share stories of the *First Maypole Dance in America*, which took place on Damariscove Island in the spring of 1622, as reported by the crew of the *Sparrow*. The ship landed at the island when no pilot was available to guide it into Plymouth Colony. We'll learn the story of this celebration, along with a general history of this early outpost used by European fishermen.

Chip's longtime passion for Maine history has only grown since his days as a Ford Fellowship recipient at Bowdoin College and is evident in his writings and his many entertaining talks to a variety of organizations.



1920s Maypole at Manley Reed's

We will meet in person and by Zoom. Check our website, Facebook page, and e-news for the latest updates. Doors will open at 4:10. Seating is limited. To sign up to receive a Zoom link, please contact Kathy Goldner at [brhszoom@gmail.com](mailto:brhszoom@gmail.com).

The society's museum at 72 Oak Street is open to the public on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, contact the office at 207-633-0820 or email [brhs@gwi.net](mailto:brhs@gwi.net). Admission is free. Donations are appreciated.

## New Exhibit: Captains and Vessels of the Boothbay Region, 1800 to 1921

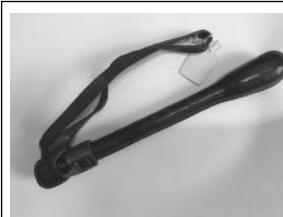
On April 7, the society opened a new exhibit exploring the stories and histories of local captains and vessels built in the Boothbay region during America's golden age of sail. "Captains and Vessels of the Boothbay Region 1800 to 1921" will be open to the public through the end of the year.

The Boothbay region has been famous for boatbuilding for over 200 years. Barbara Rumsey and the exhibit committee have identified over 546 vessels built in the region in the 19th and early 20th centuries. What did they look like? Who built them? Who were their captains? Where did they go? What did they haul? Using videos, diaries, ship logs, paintings, artifacts, blueprints, half-models, photographs of captains and vessels, and exciting stories of their adventures at sea, this new exhibit at the society's museum answers many of these questions.



### Captain John Race (1803-1857)

Capt. John was the first of three generations of sea captains. He fished on pinkies, and the schooner *Meridian*. His last vessel was the brig *Howard*. Sadly, on a voyage to Martinique he died of yellow fever and was buried at sea. His son James (1825-1909) carried on the family tradition. James's son Alfred (1851-1936) was a steamboat captain. He organized the Portland & Boothbay Steamboat Co. and purchased the steamer *Enterprise*, a 184-foot vessel capable of carrying up to 300 passengers. He also worked for the Eastern Steamship Co. and ran the SS *Catherine*.



From our artifact collection: This leather-covered club known as a **blackjack** was carried by Walter Kilton when serving as mate on different vessels. Weighted at one end, blackjacks were used as handy tools to keep sailors in line, especially on long voyages where boredom might lead to unrest or laziness.



Leaving Boothbay Harbor, 1921

### Schooner *Bowdoin*

The 88-foot schooner *Bowdoin* was designed by Naval architect William Hand for Admiral Donald B. MacMillan's Arctic expeditions. She was built by Hodgdon Brothers Shipyard in East Boothbay and launched in April 1921. In her first life, she sailed over 300,000 miles on more than twenty-six scientific and exploratory voyages.

Sold to the US Navy for use in WWII, MacMillan bought her back after the war ended and resumed exploring. In 1988, the *Bowdoin* was named Maine's official state vessel. She was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1989, and currently serves as the flagship sailing vessel at Maine Maritime Academy in Castine.

**Boothbay Region  
Historical Society**

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Jan Reit

Barbara Rumsey

Kay Wilder

**MISSION  
STATEMENT**

The mission of the Boothbay Region Historical Society is to promote interest in the history of the Boothbay region and to preserve the region's history.

BRHS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit org.

**Great Works Internet** (GWI) offers a subsidized service free of charge to non-profit organizations. Thank you to GWI for generously providing BRHS with an email account.

**Message from the President**

Dear Friends,

Are you ready for a (hopefully!) normal summer? Our volunteers and staff have been busy with off-season projects and planning this year's activities. The museum has been open to the public this winter, however we've missed seeing many of our regular friends and visitors over the past two years. We invite you to come in and browse.

**New Exhibit:** In honor of the region's maritime heritage, the exhibit committee has prepared a wonderful display, with two slideshows, highlighting vessels built in the Boothbay area between 1800 and 1921, stories of their captains and crews, and maps showing their American and international ports of call.

Our speaker committee has once again put together an amazing series. These programs will be presented in person and by Zoom. We are also planning special events and fundraisers, such as our popular July 4th bake sale and Fall Foliage cheese sale. Please check our website for more details and updates. If you haven't already signed up for our free monthly e-news filled with stories, photos, and society news, please take a moment to do so by contacting the office.

As life begins to open up please consider becoming a volunteer at the museum. We have a variety of options available, such as helping organize collections, writing publicity, acting as a summer greeter, helping with visitor research, transcribing old diaries and letters, and even doing a little gardening! For more information on how you can help, please contact Jane Johnston in the office.

Finally, the Reed House will be undergoing major renovations this spring. We hope to remain open, however please check our website or call the office for news on possible closed dates.

We look forward to welcoming you back this summer!

Sincerely,

Kay Wilder

**Two New Raffles!**

In conjunction with our exhibit "Captains and Vessels of the Boothbay Region 1800 to 1921" we are raffling two magnificent black & white 25"x9" matted and framed photographs of vessels built in the Boothbay region: the *James E. Newsom* and the *Lillian Woodruff*. Tickets for these separate raffles may be purchased in person at the historical society, from any trustee, or by sending a check payable to BRHS: \$2 each, six for \$10. Two winners will be drawn Saturday, August 27th.



Lillian Woodruff 1889

The three-masted schooner *Lillian Woodruff* was built by Hodgdon Brothers in East Boothbay. Her launching took place in June of 1889, soon after this iconic photograph was taken.

The *Pemaquid Messenger* reported that 200 people attended the launching of the schooner to be commanded by Capt. Hodgkins in the fruit trade. The 332-ton *Lillian Woodruff* measured 135 feet by 30 feet.



Launch of the James E. Newsom 1919

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. Spectators in the foreground all appear to be focused on the anticipated moment as the *Newsom* slid down the ways. The 180-foot, 671-ton cargo vessel was sunk by a German submarine on May 1, 1942 on a voyage from the Caribbean to St. John, Newfoundland, possibly carrying a load of salt from the Turks Islands.

For more information, or to purchase raffle tickets, please contact the office. To find out more about these and other region vessels, we invite you to tour the museum and view our collection of historical photographs.

*Thank you to the Windjammer Emporium for these historical photographs for our raffle.*

## 2022 Speakers



**Tuesday, May 17 at 4:30 p.m.**  
***The First Maypole Dance in America***  
**Carl R. "Chip" Griffin, III**

This is the 400th anniversary of the very first maypole dance in America, which took place on Damariscove Island, in the spring of 1622. The seasonal fishing colony on the island often provided food and shelter for other sailors. On May 2, 1622, *Sparrow* crew member Phineas Pratt reported: "The men belong to ye ship, there fishing, had newly set up a maypole and were very merry." Chip will take us beyond the maypole to the different lives of the island fishermen who were in America for profit and the colonists at Plymouth who were attempting to create a permanent home.

This program will be presented at the conclusion of our annual meeting. Inside seating may be limited, and we are unable to offer reserved seating. Zoom access will be available, along with the chance to ask questions. Contact Kathy Goldner at [brhszoom@gmail.com](mailto:brhszoom@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom link.

**Thursday, August 25, 4:30:** Local resident **Jon Dunsford** presents ***The Early Shipyards of Boothbay***.

**Thursday, September 29, 4:30:** Author **Susan Kimball Clark** shares ***Past Images of Ocean Point, Maine***.

Check our website, Facebook page, monthly e-news, and the *Boothbay Register* for updated information on how to enjoy these programs in person or on Zoom.

## 2022 Events

**April 7 to December 31 Exhibit:** *Captains & Vessels of the Boothbay Region, 1800-1920.*

**Tuesday, May 17, 4:30 p.m. Annual Meeting.** Open to all. A recap of society business and voting for new trustees, followed by speaker Chip Griffin.

**Saturday, July 2, 9:00 to sold out! Bake Sale!**



**Saturday, August 27, 1:00 Drawing of raffles winners** at the museum. Buy your tickets now!

**Saturday, October 8, 9:00-3:00 Annual Cheese Sale** at the Boothbay Railway Village; also cheese & bake sale at the museum 9:00-sold out! More details to come.

**Saturday, December 3, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Holiday Open House.** Join us for refreshments, raffles, holiday sale items.

## 2022-2023 New Trustee Nominees

## Wendy Korjeff Bellows



After 40 years, Wendy recently retired from Bigelow Laboratory as a research associate and safety officer. In addition to renovating their farmhouse with her husband Alan, she has volunteered with community projects from the Opera House and Great Explorations to town committees and the resurrection of an antique loom at the Railway Village. She enjoys painting, fiber arts, and especially her beloved horses. We look forward to tapping Wendy's energy.

## Merritt Blakeslee



After visiting Boothbay Harbor since 1991, Merritt and his wife Martha moved here in 2016. Formerly an academic, he is also an amateur historian who has published on topics including 12th century French literature, the Civil War in Appalachian Tennessee, the Texas Revolution, and mapping the Rocky Mountain West. Merritt is currently doing research on local events and locations. We welcome his research skills as we investigate modernizing our systems and databases.

## Lucy Cressey



You may recognize Lucy from her many years working at the Boothbay Animal Hospital. Years ago, while vacationing in East Boothbay with her mother, Lucy met her future husband Butch Cressey and stayed. She credits her father for instilling in her a love of history and genealogy as a young child. Lucy has applied these lessons while researching Butch's family over the past several years. The Cressey family history is an important part of our collection. Welcome, Lucy.

### Membership Renewal

For Fiscal Year May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023

As we reach the end of our fiscal year, we once again say a special thank you to our members. You are truly the backbone of the organization. Your 2022-2023 membership renewal materials are included with this newsletter. Please help us get the new year off to a strong start by responding at your earliest convenience.

Your spring dues and donations to our fall annual fund appeal, and small fundraising events account for nearly 68% of our operating budget. The remainder comes from grants, special donations, and sales of books, maps, photographs, and more. For questions about your membership, please contact Jane Johnston in the office.

### 2022 Scholarship Fund Success!

Thank you to everyone who donated to our inaugural Boothbay Region Historical Society Scholarship Fund! This spring, we will be awarding a \$1000 scholarship to a graduating senior from Boothbay Region High School. We are working with members of the school staff to select a candidate. The recipient of the scholarship will be announced later this year.

With the continued help of individuals and businesses committed to continuing education for local students, we look forward to supporting future graduates.

For more information, please contact the office

### Community Survey

Earlier this year, we shared a community survey as phase one of an effort to update our long-range plan. Community input is vital as we plan for the future. Who do we serve? How do people use the museum? What can we do better?

Community participation helps us identify goals and projects to more readily meet the needs and expectations of our communities. This information is also helpful when applying for funding for larger projects.

In phase two, the board will refine where we hope to be in 3, 5, and 10 years. In phase three, we will put these goals into an action plan for now and the future.

*Thank you for your suggestions!*

### Collections

The majority of Boothbay region artifacts, documents, photographs, books, family histories, and more in our collections were donated to the society. Thank you to all who see the museum as a suitable repository for found or inherited items. Due to space limits, we are only able to consider items related to the Boothbay region.

Over the past two years volunteers have been unable to keep up with cataloging items due to Covid restrictions. We hope to acknowledge each gift in our fall newsletter. If you have questions about an item you would like to donate, please call or email us with a description to see if it will fit in one of our collections. Thank you for thinking of us.

### Volunteer Projects

Our thanks to Tom Knobloch for his work on our postcard book to be printed in coordination with Arcadia Publishing. Look for more on this project later this year.

Jon Dunsford and Merritt & Martha Blakeslee are researching how we might begin digitizing our collections. As this would be a massive project, taking several years and outside funding, we want to be sure we have the best information on how feasible this process might be.

We're also glad to have Margaret Tew back as a volunteer. Margaret worked as assistant to Barbara Rumsey for several years and is familiar with all of the collections.

And thank you to high school senior Grace Campbell for her help on Saturdays! Grace came to the museum for a class project and decided to help out.

#### Join our Volunteers!

We have a variety of volunteer opportunities including cataloging collections, working on exhibits and special projects, greeting summer visitors, helping in the office, and researching questions submitted by those interested in their family history, local buildings, or general area history. If you have time every week, once a month, or as needed, please contact Jane Johnston in the office for more information. We're also looking for bakers and gardeners!

### Education Activities

We have been working with two high school teachers involved with the STEAM program focusing on Science, Technology, Electronics, Arts and Math. Activities included a scavenger hunt at the museum that was described as "fantastic" and a panel discussion on ways students might use the resources at the museum for researching a variety of subjects. One student has now become a museum volunteer.

The Education Programming Director for Lincoln County Historical Society will be bringing a group of YMCA children to our museum this summer.

We look forward to getting back into local third-grade classrooms next fall and hosting student field trips to the museum.

Do you know a scout or church group, or perhaps a family unit looking for something different? The society welcomes small groups of all ages to browse the museum. Guided tours may be available upon request.

Please contact Kathy Goldner for more information:  
boothbayhistoric@gmail.com