



Mary G Maynard launch in 1920 at East Coast Ship Company

## A Window to the Past

Boothbay Region Historical Society

October 2023

Researching and preserving our history

Your stories will not be forgotten

## From Our Archives



This circa 1895 image is the only view of the Gallup & Holmes, later Church Hathaway, pogie factory near the Luke and Miller properties at Linekin. South of the wharf, factory, and most of the subsidiary buildings is Sunset Rock and the pyramid-roofed house I, my husband, and children lived in. The roof was altered after a fire. Courtesy of the Boothbay Region Historical Society.

## The Upper Pogie Factory at Linekin, Part II

By Barbara Rumsey, 2015, Boothbay Region Historical Society

*We thought this two-part article written by Barbara in fall 2015 would be appropriate to re-publish now, especially for those who saw (or smelled) the pogies around Boothbay Harbor this past summer!*

Last time, I wrote that in 1985 my 8th-grade son set out to do a school paper on the pogie factory that had been on our Linekin property. Our house was west just below Thrill Hill and Sunset Rock, now lived in seasonally by Alan Miller and Pam Burke. The adjoining Paul Luke place was part of the factory grounds, too. I explained that pogies were an oily, bony fish used for paint, lamp oil, and fertilizer and bait, and I summarized the factory process. One barrel of oil required 27 barrels of fish; there were 195 pounds of fish in a barrel.

Our factory had multiple buildings, including the brick processing plant which was 75 feet square by 50 feet high, with a 150-foot chimney. Also scattered around the property were buildings that stretched a quarter mile, including offices, the management house, dormitories, the cookhouse, drying sheds, and a barn. Our house was said to have been the management house. The processing plant could produce 4,000 gallons of oil a day. In the 1870s, they turned out up to 135,000 gallons of oil—just that one factory among 19 along Lincoln County's coast, mostly in Boothbay and on the Pemaquid peninsula.

### Factory Owners and the Bust

The complex was built in 1866 by Gallup & Holmes of Connecticut on a five-acre parcel obtained from Benjamin Reed. However the deeds for all or part of it flew around dizzily—there were at least 17 in the next 20 years, many to and from various Gallups and Holmeses. Just as large vessels were often funded with sales of fractions of their tonnage, such as 1/64th of a vessel, large factories were like small, contained traded stocks, promising similar payoffs but always with risk. The factory deeds were for shares sometimes as small as 7/128ths. My husband obtained an exhaustive post-1898 title report by Dave Soule Sr., and Asa Tupper gave me his title chain that his father Cyrus created from the 1850s to the 1890s. Register articles citing the upper factory owners do not always conform to the Soule and Tupper deed chains. I trust the lawyers.

The big threat some had foreseen for the pogie business came in 1878 and 1879 when the pogies did not return, though they could still be found at Cape Cod and below at times. The local vanishing act took away hundreds of jobs and the celebrated local prosperity. Many fishermen, desperate for bait, sailed to other states for it. By August 1880, the Register reported all the coal was sold from the facility and the idle factory complex itself sold in December (no deed) with Gallup kept on as superintendent.

### Struggling to Survive

The intent was to diversify and somehow extract income from the huge investment. The Gallups were finally out of it by its 1884 sale to Richardson, who was processing whales taken by Albert Murray in a fishing steamer. Simeon Van Horn (born 1875) recorded in his Linekin memories that boys often stopped by to look at the whales. He also wrote that as the steamers rounded Ocean Point, they blew their whistles to signal the amount of fish of whatever variety they had aboard, one toot for each 100 barrels. In 1886, the factory was processing mackerel scrap.

Finally the factory shut down for two years. The local wrecking commissioner, Billy Sawyer, bought the factory in 1887, spelling doom for the buildings and tangible assets. But the pogies came back before the demolition started in 1888, and Church & Hathaway of Rhode Island bought the factory. From then on the property was called "the Church factory" or "Church Hathaway," along with "the upper pogie factory" by old timers.

### The Workforce and the End

Prentiss "Pete" Jones was most familiar with this Church period since, as a boy, he and his father Jainus worked there. He said the "oilworks" were manned by Portuguese Cape Verdean Brava Islanders in his time (1910?), as many as 50 brought from Cape Cod by manager Frank Cottrell to supplement the local workforce. They were paid \$30 a month.

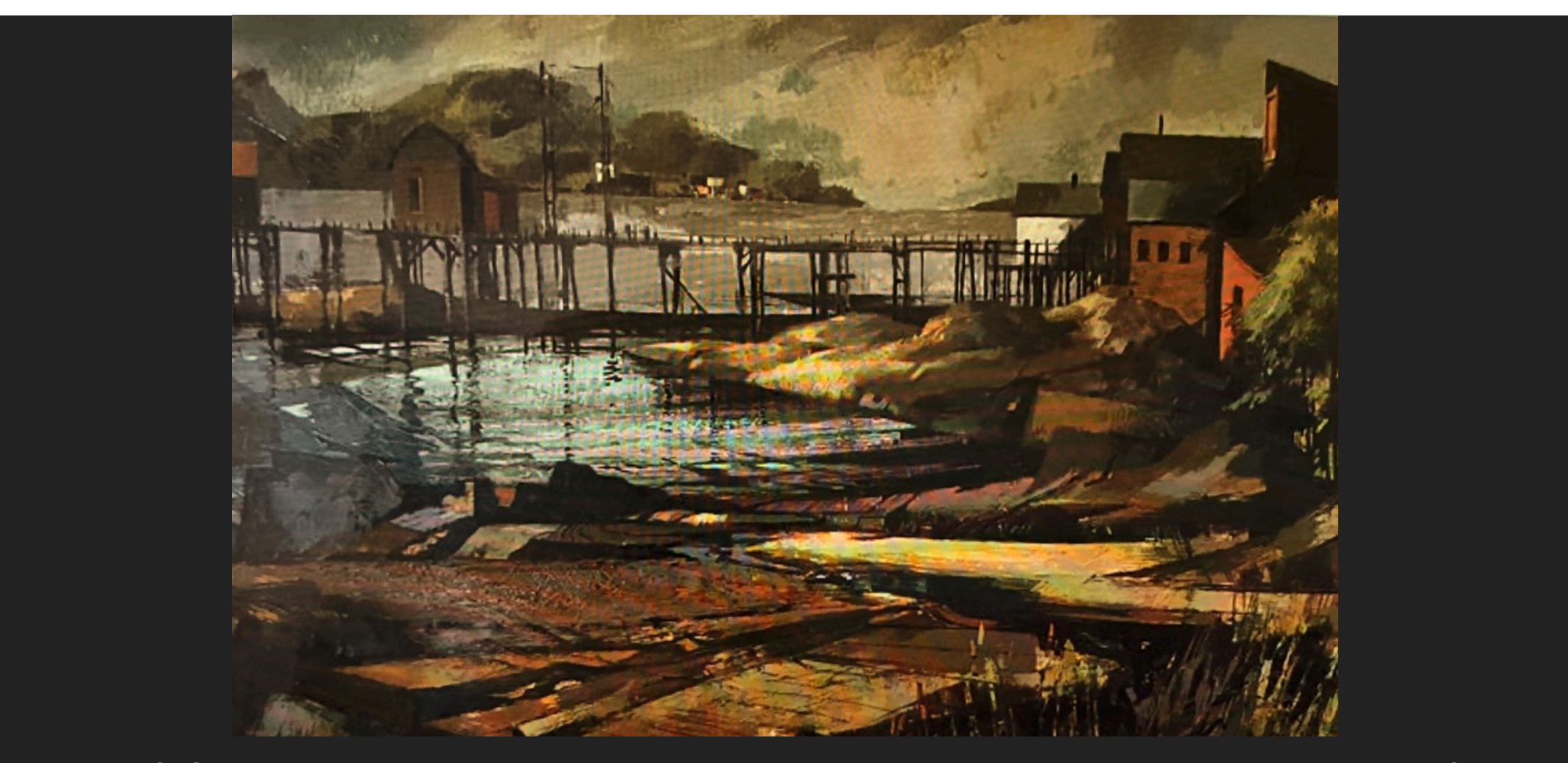
Local men were employed there in various capacities such as cooks and administrators, and perhaps as factory hands. Osgood Vannah was the manager for years, Jainus Jones was bookkeeper, Sylvester Boyd and Martin Dodge were cooks, and Simeon Van Horn wrote that his Uncle Charles worked and lived right at the factory.

In one 1889 month, Church Hathaway produced 80,000 gallons of pogie oil, while the 1890s were tenuous, with the middle of the decade best. Things dwindled along, but finally on January 1, 1910 the Register reported Church Hathaway was sold and being torn down. On March 12, 1910 the Register news was that a schooner was loading its machinery for Long Island. The factory, an old landmark for more than 40 years "will be missed." In 1928 it was described as "a big square hole filled with water."

What of the pogie today? They're still overfished for bait and now pet food. Pogie help control algae growth in coastal waters, being filter feeders of phytoplankton, but with their numbers so low, some coastal areas are dead zones with algae overgrowth exacerbated by fertilizer runoff. Maybe the massive pogie deaths in the 1800s that made Boothbay and other places temporarily rich also brought red or brown tides. There seems always to be a price when populations are forced out of kilter.

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)



ART + HISTORY: This beautiful 12"x18" watercolor, titled "*Footbridge Boothbay*," by renowned local artist **Lonnie Sisson** is for sale through [Maine Art Collectors](http://MaineArtCollectors.com), with 50% of proceeds to directly benefit the Boothbay Region Historical Society. Purchase this locally significant painted interpretation of our beloved footbridge circa 1950 and contribute to preserving and celebrating our community's shared history. Check out the artwork at [maineartcollectors.com/laurencessisson](http://maineartcollectors.com/laurencessisson)!



## 2023 SUMMER SPEAKER SERIES: Recordings now available!

The wait is finally over for those of you who couldn't attend our 2023 speaker series in person or want to relive the moment and view the recordings. Visit our new YouTube channel and watch them all at:

<https://www.youtube.com/@BoothbayHistorical>

## SCANNING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Historical Society's Digitization Project, which aims to eventually digitize all the collections of the society, has progressed with such amazing rapidity that we have now scanned over 10,000 photographs and nearly completed scanning the voluminous History Files. When the latter are completed, we will begin scanning the Family History files in order to make this popular set of records more accessible to those doing genealogy research. This summer, we filled 13 of the 14 available volunteer scanning slots. Many of these, however, were filled by seasonal visitors. With their departure for points south, we are in need of a new crop of volunteers to scan both documents and photographs.

If you are interested, or think you *might* be interested, in becoming a scanning volunteer, please contact trustee Merritt Blakeslee at [mrb@blakeslee-law.com](mailto:mrb@blakeslee-law.com).

## What can we do for you?



Boothbay Region Historical Society is a [museum open free of charge](#), year-round. We are an [archive](#) serving researchers worldwide.

We provide a free [third grade history](#) program (when fully staffed), a free [speaker series](#), and present [special exhibits](#).

We work on special projects: funding a college scholarship for a Boothbay Region High School student, digitizing our collections, writing an exhibition catalog, and more.



We maintain the 1874 [historic house](#) which is our museum and offices, and a [museum store](#). We do it with three part-time staff and our dedicated trustees and volunteers.

Let us know what more we can do!

Volunteers welcome!



## 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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