



Boothbay Region Historical Society

Volume 34, Issue 2

Fall 2023

ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, December 2, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

72 Oak Street, Boothbay Harbor, ME

Please join us as we celebrate the holidays with vintage decorations, festive foods, an art raffle and more. Check out our holiday sale on books, maps, photographs, and other popular gift items. Catch up on society happenings and share your stories of life on the peninsula.

Special Event! Beginning at 10:30 a.m., Richard Plunkett, well-known antiques appraiser and owner of The Wizard of Odds and Ends in Alna, will present a short program on the current world of collecting. From 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. guests may present up to three items for appraisal for a donation to the society of \$5.00 for one item or \$10.00 for three. Thank you, Richard, for thinking of us.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!

WE'RE CELEBRATING 150 YEARS!

2024 will be the 150th anniversary of the Reed House, which we have been privileged to call home since 1984. The Fullerton family arrived in the region in 1730 as one of the first Scotch-Irish families in the earliest permanent settlement. They were the second largest landowners with holdings stretching from Boothbay Center to the water's edge in what is now Boothbay Harbor. The land was eventually divided among family members. The Reed house was built in 1874 on land belonging to the Fullerton family,



Young Bess Reed

Descendant Elizabeth (Lizzie) Fullerton and her husband, Captain Freeman Reed, built their family home on this small lot. Sadly, Lizzie died in childbirth with her third child, Elizabeth, called Bess. When their

were all too familiar to families in this small coastal town.

Later, Freeman's daughter Kate lived in the house, son Fullerton moved out west, and Bess stayed here when not teaching in Boston or New York City; none of them married. Kate died in 1927, leaving the house vacant except for Bess's summer visits. When Bess retired about 1940, the house was fully occupied again. Her death in 1953 ended 226 years of family ownership and left the house vacant again.

When the property was given to the town, the society was invited to move in. Many of the domestic and furniture items in the museum are original to the house. Bess Reed was deeply interested in local history and left many documents and stories that tell the region's story.

We can't help but think Elizabeth Freeman Reed would be pleased with how her home is being cared for by the historical society.

~

Watch for more details on a new exhibit and events in 2024 highlighting the Fullerton and Reed families and the times in which they lived.



For more information on the open house, please contact us at brhs@gwi.net; 207-633-0820.

Also check our website and follow us on Facebook.



The Reed House and Fullerton Park

The Reed House is a small scale "Italianate" structure, a design that was popular after the Civil War. The entrance has paired doors, the windows have protective molded heads and the doorways have corbel-supported canopies. The original roof was metal, almost flat, with a sizeable center cupola. At some point, when the level roof proved to be impractical in our weather conditions, a sloping, hipped roof was built over the existing roof and the cupola was removed. Remnants of the metal roof are still visible in the attic. Many original interior features remain. At Bess's request the yard adjacent to the house was named Fullerton Park in honor of her family.

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Historical Society***President*
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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 PRESIDENT DANA WILSON

Dear Friends,

This is an exciting time for the Society and we're glad to have you as a partner! We are in the midst of a search for a new Executive Director to work closely with the board and serve as the face of the Society within the community. Since spring, we have been relying on dedicated volunteer trustees, community members, and one very patient part-time staff member. I can't thank you all enough for sharing your time, talent, and treasure.

Our popular exhibit, "Captains and Vessels of the Boothbay Region, 1800-1821" has ended. We look forward to celebrating the anniversary of our wonderful Elizabeth F. Reed home in 2024 with a new exhibit. Stay tuned for more on this and other events to come.

We are currently undertaking a thorough assessment of our building and collections, so we can begin strategic planning, prioritize improvements, share our newly digitized collections, and broaden our audience to shore up the society for the future. Visit us during our annual open house on December 2 for an update.

A great deal of work lies ahead, but we have a determined group and are prepared for the challenge. If you are interested in volunteering, I strongly urge you to contact me at the Society. We need you! Your support during this exciting transition time will enable us to preserve and promote Boothbay region history, celebrate our communities, and inspire the next generation of researchers.

On behalf of the board of trustees, I wish you a happy, healthy, and historically great 2024.

2023 IN REVIEW

Our year began at the annual meeting in May with the election of new trustees Lucian Laurie, Julia O'Brien Merrill, and Skye Wood with trustees Sarah Giles and John Morris returning for new three-year terms. Elected as officers were President Dana Wilson, Vice-President Merritt Blakeslee, Secretary Wendy Bellows, and Treasurer Sarah Giles. Local model builder Jon Dunsford presented an illustrated program on the types of vessels built in the region in the 1800s. Jon also previewed a new exhibit "Celebrating the Schooner Bowdoin" built in East Boothbay in 1921. This exhibit and our popular "Captains and Vessels, 1800-1921" have now ended, however the historical information is available in our files.



Our 2023 speaker program also included Hamilton Meserve on the history of the Harbor Theater, Dwight and Duane Lewis (twice!) sharing family stories of bridge-tending in the region, and Dottie Yunker with highlights of new programs and exhibits at the Maine State Aquarium in West Boothbay Harbor. Videos of these programs are available on our website.

We held four successful fundraising events this year. In addition to our annual July bake sale and October cheese sale, we are grateful to the Harbor Theater for partnering with us to present a very entertaining program featuring well-known Maine photographers Bob Krist and Ben Williamson. And a special shout-out to a society friend for creating a \$500 matching gift challenge to help fund the purchase of new exhibit equipment and archival storage materials. Thanks to our generous donors, the exhibit fund actually gained \$2,000! We'd also like to thank Mark and Diane Gimbel for donating a variety of photographs and artifacts from the Windjammer Emporium Maritime Museum.

As always, thank you for your donations to our annual fund. Your gifts help enable the society to remain open all year, improve our exhibits and outreach programs, and maintain the Elizabeth Reed House as the central hub for local research.

A big thank you to our volunteers for their diligent work on collections, exhibits, programs, building & grounds, and all facets of life in a small organization.

FOUNDATION FOR ADVANCEMENT IN CONSERVATION

In April, we were awarded an \$8,000 Collections Assessment Program (CAP) grant to fund a thorough evaluation of our building and collections. For two days in October, the society's CAP team met with professional assessors Margaret Gaertner (buildings) and Barbara Moore (collections) to review different areas within the building. In many cases this team was pleased with our current policies and procedures, and our efforts to maintain the Reed House. They acknowledged lack of space is our number one obstacle at this time. By year-end, they will produce a comprehensive, and we expect thought-provoking, report designed to help the society develop a strategic plan for long and short-term goals, including specific suggestions for, among other things:

- *caring for and storing documents, photographs, and objects
- *reorganizing the use of museum spaces for storage, exhibitions, meetings, office, and work spaces
- *renovating or expanding the building
- *applying for admission to the National Register of Historic Places
- *addressing life safety and Americans with Disabilities issues.

Barbara Moore closed the visit with a public lecture on applying preventive conservation methods to museum artifacts, such as these leather and metal Civil War artifacts, and to your own family treasures at home. For more helpful tips, see this article in the Register by Fritz Freudenberger: www.boothbayregister.com/article/safeguarding-history/179713



BUILDING & GROUNDS

Have you noticed? Our stately old home has had a facelift! Thanks to a grant from the Mildred H. McEvoy Foundation, the exterior of the Reed House has been fully painted by Doug Dickinson and crew. Covid threw us behind schedule, but we're happy to be back on track. We're currently planning some updates to our kitchen and storage space. And thank you to the crew at Rebuilding Together for helping us with a variety of repairs.

We will soon begin considering updates to the garden areas around the house and in Fullerton Park adjacent to the house. If you enjoy gardening, please consider joining this effort. Our decorating crew is getting ready for the holidays with lights, decorations, and holiday spirit.



Happy Holidays!

**We hope you'll stop
by to say hello.**

HOLIDAY ART RAFFLE



Season's End—Damariscove
By Douglas Remley
32" x 26" signed 144/350

Born in Indiana, Doug Remley settled in East Boothbay in 1984, where he experimented with different media, capturing iconic coastal images, often in almost photographic detail. His art hangs in a number of public museums and private collections. This print may be viewed at the historical society. The winner will be drawn at our open house on December 2.

Tickets are \$5.00, or 3 for \$10.00
For more information:
brhs@gwi.net or 207-633-0820

Have You Heard?

The historical society is now on YouTube!

Videos of our 2023 speakers are now available on YouTube.
Subscribe free to our channel at: www.YouTube.com/@boothbayhistorical
Follow us on Facebook for updates, stories, and museum mysteries.



BOOTHBAY REGION HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 272, 72 Oak Street
Boothbay Harbor, ME 04538-0272

Open Year Round

Thursday through Saturday
 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Local historian

Barbara Rumsey is available for
 research questions by appointment.

Contact:

Phone: (207) 633-0820

Email: brhs@gwi.net

www.boothbayhistorical.org

Follow us on Facebook

Boothbay Region Historical Society
is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Please advise us of any address, phone number, or email changes.

Digitizing Volunteers

Our scanning project, which aims to digitally preserve images of the majority of the society's holdings, has made amazing progress scanning over 10,000 photos and the contents of hundreds of History and Family Files.

Beyond preservation, the goal of this project is to make these records accessible to the public through a dedicated in-house public computer and eventually on our website.

This summer we filled thirteen weekly time slots with dedicated volunteers, who diligently reviewed and scanned photos and documents. However, a number of these folks have headed elsewhere for the winter.

With their departure, we are hoping to recruit a new volunteers to scan both photos and documents. Not only do volunteers help fill a great need, but most have told us how interesting it is to learn so many details about the people, places, and general history of the region. To volunteer, please contact Merritt Blakeslee: at mrbl@blakeslee-law.com. Thank you!

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

Reminder: 10% discount for current members.
 Call to order or stop by the museum.

Maps:

1856 Boothbay region with house sites.....\$1.00
 1885 Boothbay Harbor.....\$5.00
 1948 Boothbay region with house sites.....\$22.00

Our most popular books:

Boothbay Region Historical Sketches II; Rumsey....\$15.00
Boothbay Region Historical Sketches III; Rumsey...\$16.00
Colonial Boothbay, mid-1600s-1775; Rumsey.....\$16.00
Hodgdon Shipbuilding and Mills; Rumsey.....\$15.00
History of BB, BBH, Southport; Greene.....\$60.00
Family History of the Boothbay Region; Greene.....\$25.00

New this year! Solid acrylic photo paperweights. \$30.00 each



Limited supply