



OWASCOAG NOTES

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Historian's Report</i>	2
<i>Brightfield School Visit</i>	2
<i>Gift from Scarborough Public Library</i>	2
<i>Meeting Past Challenges</i>	3
<i>Summerfest</i>	3
<i>Educator Lida E. Libby</i>	4
<i>Reaching a Ripe Old Age in the 1800s</i>	5

Meetings/Events

August 18, 2024
5:00 PM–10:00 PM
Scarborough High School
Sports Complex field

SOCIETY RECEIVES GRANT FROM SCARBOROUGH COMMUNITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

KARLENE OSBORNE

We are pleased to announce that the Scarborough Community Chamber of Commerce has awarded Scarborough Historical Society a \$2,500 grant which will be used toward the continuing restoration of the Beech Ridge Schoolhouse at 184 Holmes Road, Scarborough. A presentation ceremony was held July 3rd at Memorial Park in recognition of the Chamber's sponsorship of 25 seasons of Concerts in the Park. Scarborough Historical Society is one of ten local organizations honored by the Chamber for helping to make Scarborough a better place to live.



Dr. Steve Spaulding accepting the check from the Chamber for the Historical Society

Photo: Dave Therrien



Beech Ridge School
Photo: Karlene Osborne

Beech Ridge Schoolhouse is the last 19th-century schoolhouse in Scarborough not razed or repurposed. Once restoration is complete, our intent is to use the schoolhouse for educational programs for children and also have the building available for use by small community groups.

The school renovation budget originally set in 2020 is still the goal. To date \$186,500 has been raised. The Scarborough Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, making donations tax deductible. Please consider sending a donation to the Scarborough Historical Society, PO Box 156, Scarborough, ME 04070 or donating at www.gofundme.com/SHS-Restore-Beech-Ridge-School. Many thanks to those who support this important local historical project. For more information contact us at 207-885-9997, scarboroughhist@gmail.com or visit the Museum at 647 US Route 1. The Museum is open 9:AM to noon every Tuesday and the second Saturday of the month.

New Roof

Thanks to a grant from the Linwood Dyer Endowment, we were able to replace the aging roof on the Museum addition. It looks really great and the shingles match those of nearby Alger Hall.

Photo: Karlene Osborne



HISTORIAN'S REPORT

DON TAYLOR

Thank you to everyone who has kindly given and shared their treasures with the Scarborough Historical Society during April and May, 2024. Items donated included:



Darning egg

Source

Scarborough Public Library
Rodney Laughton
Joan Chase Deering
Linwood Dyer Estate

Donated Items

Photos, video, drawings, flier, card, magazines
Artifact (darning egg)
Photo (class of 1923)
Artifacts and photos

We are open 9 AM to noon Tuesdays and the second Saturday of the month. We are also available by appointment. Please email the Museum (scarboroughhist@gmail.com) or call 207-885-9997 to make an appointment.

BRIGHTFIELD SCHOOL STUDENTS VISIT MUSEUM

Students from the Brightfield School in Bath, Maine, visited the Historical Society and Museum at the end of April. The five students, grades 5-6, were learning about salt marshes and spent the morning at the museum after visiting the Scarborough Marsh. The teacher had found out about our Museum's resources when searching for information for her students. We **all** learned a lot about shellfish when Rodney gave his presentation to the students. We should have videoed it!



Assortment of shells

GIFT RECEIVED FROM SCARBOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Scarborough Historical Society recently received a much appreciated gift of two large periodical display stands and an antique barrister bookcase from Scarborough Public Library. Because of the decline in the popularity of magazines, the display stands became surplus property for the library. We will definitely find a use for these stands, and the antique bookcase will fit well with the books in our collections.



Thank you to Highland Farm Garden Center for their donation of the lovely flowers for the Museum's window boxes and watering trough.

Photo: Karlene Osborne

MEETING PAST CHALLENGES

LINDA SNOW MCLOON

Scarborough's population numbered under 8,000 in 1971, when a newspaper article indicated there was a concern about the way things were going. According to the article, over fifty years ago Pine Point clam diggers were faced with unemployment because pollution had soiled their flats, and Higgins Beach residents were threatened by untreated waste pouring from its community sewer. The folks living in North Scarborough had only been saved from rapid suburban growth by the fact there was no public water—or sewerage—in the town west of the Maine Turnpike.

The article pointed out, however, that Scarborough was redoubling its efforts to address current problems. In the late 1950s, the town had created the position of town manager, and then in 1969, the annual town meeting was replaced by governance by a seven-person Town Council.

Scarborough is credited with providing the first secondary sewerage treatment plant in the Greater Portland area in the 1960s, followed by forming the Scarborough Sanitary District in 1969—the first town in Maine to do it—so the town could borrow for its sewerage plans without adding to the local debt limit. In 1970, the town repealed its 1958 zoning ordinance and put into effect one of the state's most up-to-date land-use plans. These steps forward were reported over a half century ago.



Ralph P. Lorfano, Oscar F. Teravainen, Raymond E. Wiley, H. Davison Osgood, Harry R. Knight, Marshall L. Goodwin, Norman L. Bushey

Members elected to serve on Scarborough's first Town Council

Photo: SHS archives

SUMMERFEST

Don't forget to attend Summerfest at the Scarborough High School Sports Complex field, Friday, August 18, 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM. The Scarborough Historical Society and Museum will have a tent there with volunteers selling books, tee-shirts, etc. There will also be a 50/50 raffle. This is a great fund raiser and an opportunity to answer lots of questions about Scarborough history and our many Society projects. Food trucks, kids' Bounce Zone, live music, too. Fireworks at 9:15 PM. See you there!

Members, if you'd like to volunteer for a shift to help with this fun activity, email the Society at scarboroughhist@gmail.com or call 207-885-9997 and leave a message. Karlene needs help beginning at 3:00 for set-up. This is a great opportunity for outreach.



Karlene Osborne at a previous Summerfest

*Steps forward on
environmental concerns
began over a half
century ago.*

Educator Lida E. Libby

Linda Snow McLoon

Lida E. Libby was a woman who devoted her life as an educator to serving the town of Scarborough as both a teacher and a school superintendent. A daughter of Samuel Manson Libby and Hannah J. Fogg Libby, Lida was born in 1867 in her family's home on Libby Road in Scarborough. She never married, but rather became a teacher in the district school system, serving in a number of the dozen or more one-room schools that provided an elementary education for the town's children. In a time before school buses, various small schools were needed throughout the town so that all children could walk to school. Lida Libby began teaching in those schools in 1889 and she continued to teach until 1926.

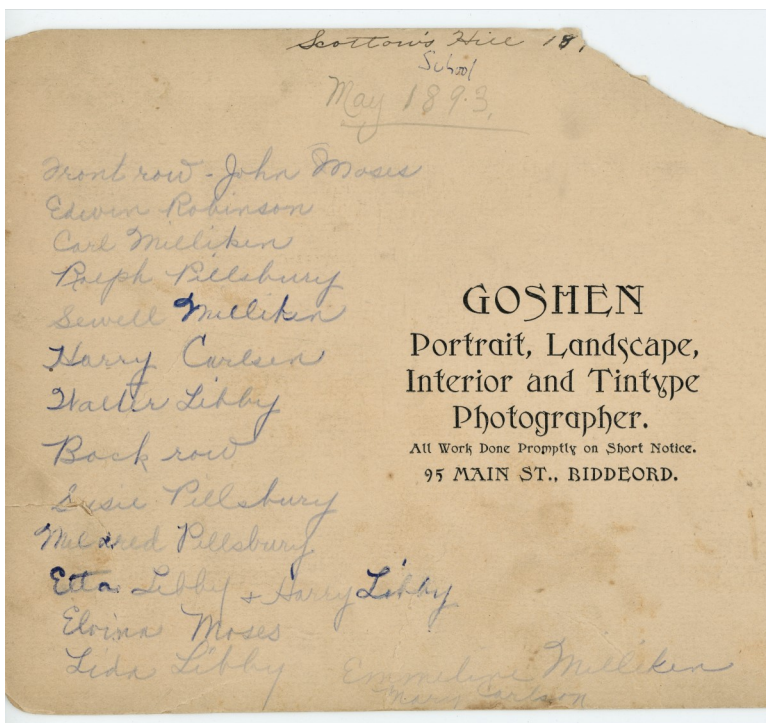
Our digital collection index shows us the way to an 1893 picture of Lida with her class of young scholars at the Scottow's Hill school when she was 24 years old. Another school picture, taken 21 years later, finds her teaching at the Oak Hill district school.

In 1901, Lida Libby's career expanded when in addition to teaching, she took over the job as Scarborough's School Superintendent. Dorothy Louise Miller's 1904 high school diploma includes Supt. Lida Libby's signature. Further demonstrating this woman's tremendous energy, from 1905 to 1951 she served as Scarborough's local correspondent to the Portland Press Herald, in addition to her teaching duties. She was also an active member of the Oak Hill Grange, in 1954 earning the Golden Sheaf award for a 50-year membership. She was also chosen to be secretary of the John Libby Association in 1932.

Lida E. Libby lived to the ripe old age of 93. At age 88, she was quoted as saying, "Teaching school must keep you young." Her memory remained sharp when even at the age of 93 in 1959 it was said she could remember the birthday of nearly every child she had ever taught.



Scottow's Hill School
May 1893



Photos: SHS digital collection

Reaching a Ripe Old Age in the 1800s

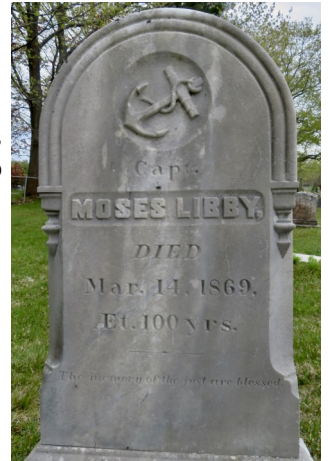
Ron Romano

People in the 1700s generally lived much shorter lives than we do now. Estimates abound on the internet, with frequent suggestions that the average life expectancy during the colonial period was under fifty! A very high infant mortality rate at the time is partly responsible for such a low average. Even so, those who made it through childhood faced deadly bacterial illnesses that we don't worry too much about today, thanks to antibiotics. Deaths from consumption (tuberculosis), typhoid, scarlet fever, and cholera are readily found in old death records, but viral illnesses wreaked havoc as well. When smallpox or influenza arrived in a community, the result was often a devastating loss of life.

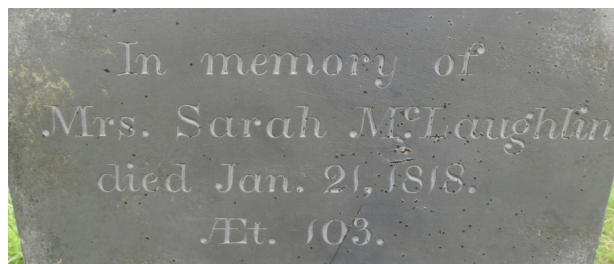
Despite it all, there were survivors. It's quite easy to find gravestones at Black Point and Dunstan Cemeteries for people who were born in the 1700s and lived into their seventies and eighties. But it's not very often that we find gravestones from the 1800s inscribed with ages of 100 or more. Both Black Point and Dunstan have them!

When reading the inscription on an early gravestone, look for the letters "AE" or "AET" just before the age. Those are Latin abbreviations which mean "at the age of..."

About five rows behind the granite Receiving Tomb at Black Point Cemetery there's a white marble marker for Capt. Moses Libby. He was born on March 27, 1769. He married in 1791 and his wife delivered at least six children. He was a mariner for twenty-five years, a fact reflected on his gravestone which features a ship's anchor. Once back on dry land, he turned to farming. He also served the town as Selectman and Assessor. Elizabeth died in 1844 at age 72; Moses continued farming well into his nineties. He died on March 14, 1869, thirteen days before his 100th birthday. His survivors decided to round up his age a bit, settling on "100" for his gravestone. Although he technically had not reached the century mark, he certainly died at a "ripe old age."



At Dunstan Cemetery, in a center rear section far from the gates, there is a line of five old slate gravestones for three generations of the McLaughlin family. These folks—all of whom died well before Dunstan was established in 1878—were relocated with their stones from their original burial plots on the family farm. The stone for Sarah McLaughlin is a small, gray slate that's quite plain. Though it was hand-lettered by our area's first stonecutter, Bartlett Adams (1800-1828), it has no decoration. Still, the remarkable thing about the stone is her age; Sarah was 103 when she died in 1818...truly a ripe old age! Beside is the stone for her husband William. She'd outlived him by nearly three decades.



Today it's common for people to reach age 100. But that was unexpected for those born in the 1700s, and finding gravestones with such advanced ages in Scarborough cemeteries is a treat.

Photos courtesy of Ron Romano

Ron Romano is a local cemetery historian and author of four gravestone- and cemetery-themed books. He designs tours of historic cemeteries in Maine (including Black Point and Dunstan) and is a frequent lecturer on the subjects of Maine's old cemeteries, historic markers, and gravestone carvers.

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Tuesdays & 2nd Saturday each month
Other days by appointment

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Reminder: Our membership year is April 1 through March 31. If you have not yet done so, it's time to renew your membership. If you have been receiving this newsletter and are not yet a member of Scarborough Historical Society, please consider becoming one. Your membership supports the society's mission to collect, preserve and exhibit items of historical significance to Scarborough.

SCARBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your contributions are tax deductible. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit.
Membership year: April 1-March 31

207-885-9997

<https://ScarboroughHistoricalSociety.org>
scarboroughhist@gmail.com

Individual \$15 (65+...\$10)

Family* \$25

Student \$5

Life \$100 (Family...\$150)

Business \$50

Corporate/Benefactor (Annual)

Level I Cammock \$100-250

Level II Jocelyn \$251-500

Level III Scottow \$501-1,000

Level IV Owascoag Society \$1,000+

Gifts are tax deductible \$ _____

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New Member Renewal

Email _____

*Family: 2 adults and children to 18

Make checks payable to
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P.O. Box 156, Scarborough, ME 04070-0156