

# OWASCOAG NOTES

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## COMING UP—PAUPER GRAVES IN THE 1800S: SCARBOROUGH’S POOR FARM CEMETERY

At the Scarborough Historical Society’s monthly meeting, **Sunday, October 6th at 2 PM**, local historian and author Ron Romano will present a talk about Scarborough’s Poor Farm Cemetery. In 1867 Scarborough purchased a family farm near Dunstan Corner to provide housing and food for townspeople who found themselves in dire circumstances. Locally the Farm was called the Poor Farm, the Town Farm and the Alms House. Its residents and overseers produced crops and goods to sell in an effort to be self-sustaining. A patch of land was set aside on the property to receive the remains of those who died while living at the Farm, but none of the graves were marked with stones. This program will provide the history of the Town Farm, its cemetery, and stories of some of the town’s forgotten poor whose lives came to an end while living at the farm.



Ron Romano  
Courtesy photo

Saturday October 5th prior to his presentation Sunday the 6th Ron will be leading two cemetery tours: Black Point Cemetery at noon, then Dunstan Cemetery at 3 PM. Both tours will last about an hour. Tickets and more information can be found at the Scarborough Adult Education website, <https://scarborough.maineadulted.org/>.

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF MEETING LOCATION:** This year Scarborough Historical Society’s monthly meetings, sponsored by the Prouts Neck Historical Society, will be held at the Black Point Congregational Church Parish Hall. Advance reservations are not necessary.

## Meetings/Events

**October 6, 2024**  
2:00 PM  
Parish Hall  
Black Point Congregational Church  
*Pauper Graves in the 1800s: Scarborough’s Poor Farm Cemetery*

## THE BOOK THAT CAPTURED SCARBOROUGH’S HISTORY NOW AVAILABLE AGAIN

In 2007 the Friends of Scarborough 350th published *Scarborough at 350: Linking the Past to the Present*. The book quickly sold out of the original 2,000 copies and no new copies have been available until now. Since the Friends of Scarborough 350th disbanded after the town’s birthday celebration in 2008, the Scarborough Historical Society agreed to publish the reprint of 1,000 copies. The reprint contains a few changes to correct errors of fact and to remedy omissions. Our deep gratitude goes to the Prouts Neck Historical Society, a major sponsor of the reprint. We are also grateful to all who helped with corrections to the original book. Copies can be purchased through the Scarborough Historical Society or at Len Libby’s Candies, 419 Route One, Scarborough. All profits will benefit the ongoing work of the Scarborough Historical Society.



## BEECH RIDGE SCHOOL UPDATE

### KARLENE OSBORNE

Restoration is proceeding at the 1860s one-room schoolhouse at 184 Holmes Road in Scarborough. The plumber is working in the accessible restroom and kitchen area. An electrician has installed a new service panel and is working on wiring. At this time, we need funds for insulation, sheet rock, heat pumps and other plumbing and electrical details. We hope to restore the original wood



Work in progress

floor. To date we have raised \$188,000 toward our goal of \$280,000. The Scarborough Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Please consider sending a tax-free donation to Scarborough Historical Society, P.O. Box 156, Scarborough, ME 04070-0156; [www.gofundme.com/SHS-Restore-Beech-Ridge-School](http://www.gofundme.com/SHS-Restore-Beech-Ridge-School); or stop by the museum at 647 Route 1 on any Tuesday morning; call 207-885-9997 or email us at [scarboroughhist@gmail.com](mailto:scarboroughhist@gmail.com). Thanks to everyone who has worked so hard to preserve this special site in Scarborough.



Beech Ridge School

Photos, Karlene Osborne



18th c. wine glass  
Photo, Don Taylor

## RECENT DONATIONS

### DON TAYLOR, HISTORIAN

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

#### Donated Items

Artifacts: 3 lamps, two pins, an 8-track player

Donald B. Mitchell's garrison cap, window banner

18th century wine glass

Beech Ridge Speedway sign

350th mugs

Archives: Donald B. Mitchell documents

Civil War letters, deeds & autograph book

Lion's Club program (1961)

Oak Hill Players Program for "Pippin" (1997)

Library: Soldier's Handbook

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](mailto:scarboroughhist@gmail.com)) or call 207-885-9997 to make an appointment.

# SIGNAGE AT KING BURIAL SITE

LINDA SNOW MCLOON

The Scarborough Historical Society's Board has added new signage to the King Burial Ground located on Susan Avenue off Broadturn Road in Dunstan. The new sign celebrates Scarborough's native sons Rufus and William King. An unveiling ceremony was held on July 15th at the site with the Board in attendance. Following remarks by Board member Linda Snow McLoon, President Rodney Laughton unveiled the new signage.

Scarborough residents can be proud of the accomplishments of these two noteworthy sons of Richard King who were born at Dunstan Landing when Maine was still part of Massachusetts. Rufus King left his studies at Harvard to join a military unit fighting in the Revolutionary War. While practicing law in Newburyport, he was elected to the state legislature and later was chosen to serve in the Continental Congress. In 1787, he was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia and quickly joined James Madison in leading the fight for the national union. His brilliant oratory helped win over wavering delegates to favor increased powers for the federal government.

After moving to Long Island, New York, Rufus King was elected Senator in the very first gathering of the United States Senate. Although it's documented that Rufus King's father had owned slaves, something not uncommon for people of means at that time, Rufus King was an early strong opponent of slavery. He declined President George Washington's offer of a Cabinet post but agreed in 1796 to represent the President as ambassador to Great Britain. In 1816 Rufus was the Federalist nominee for President of the United States, an election he lost to James Monroe.

In 1813 Rufus King's younger brother, William King began a seven-year effort for Maine to achieve independent statehood by initiating a petition for separation from Massachusetts. Under the Missouri Compromise in 1820, both Maine and Missouri were recognized as states. Soon afterward William King was elected Maine's first governor. He strongly opposed the prevalent policy of supporting churches by taxation and sponsored a law to protect the holdings of squatter settlers called the King Betterment Law.

At the unveiling of the new signage on the site, Scarborough Historical Society President Rodney Laughton said, *"The people of Scarborough and Maine can take pride in their native sons. Unfortunately, over time the memory of the historically significant King family has for the most part faded. Today few people are aware of this burial ground and the accomplishments of the family. We hope this new signage will encourage visitation and expand visitors' knowledge of the lives of Rufus and William King."*



New historic marker, King burial site  
Photo: Dave Therrien

# SUMMERFEST

Many thanks to Linda McLoon and her son Rick, Sylvia Most, Dave Therrien, Bruce Larabee, Ernie Broadwater, Karlene and Tom Osborne for representing Scarborough Historical Society at the town's annual Summerfest on August 16th. Karlene reported that the Society had a perfect corner spot near the goal posts and they were all very busy selling items from the museum store and the newly released reprint of the 350th book.

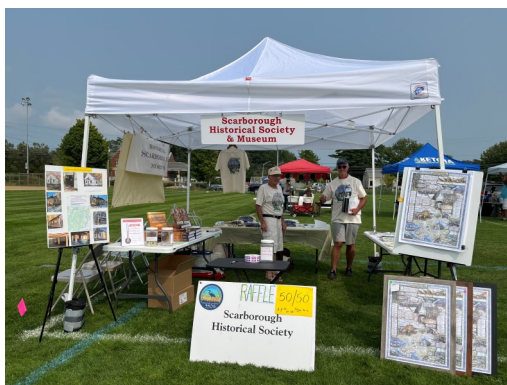


Photo: Karlene Osborne

# A Mormon Influence in Scarborough

## Linda Snow McLoon

Scarborough's early churches-- the First Parish in Black Point and the Second Parish in Dunstan-- were Congregational, although at some point Methodist and Universalist doctrines were introduced into the community. Information regarding a mystery photograph in the Historical Society's collections revealed that in the 1800s an itinerant evangelist from the Church of the Latter-Day Saints visited the area and had converted some Scarborough residents.

Among the converts were members of the Ezra and Sarah Fabyan Carter family. (Ezra, known as a very religious man, read the Bible through three times a year.) The Carters raised eleven children to maturity, six sons and five daughters. The family's second child, Sarah Brackett Carter, was born in 1800 and in 1823 married Calvin Ira Foss, who had been raised in the family's home in Scarborough. Calvin and Sarah lived on a farm in Saco, where they had seven children before Calvin died at age 37 of a bacterial infection following a sawmill accident in 1835.

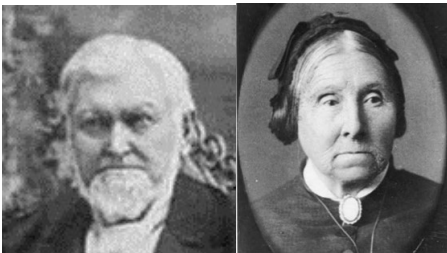
It was during this time that Elder John F. Boynton of the Church of Latter-Day Saints came to preach in Saco. In an 1834 letter he reported that he had baptized about 40 in that area. Later, Elder Even Greene traveled with him and together they baptized about 130 people. Through their preaching, Boynton and Greene converted Ezra Carter, his wife and most of their children to the Mormon faith. Sarah Carter Foss's sister, Phoebe Whittemore Carter, was among those baptized. She eventually traveled to Ohio where she married Mormon Elder Wilford Woodruff in 1837.



Calvin & Sarah Brackett Foss with four of their daughters: Sarah, Rhoda, Phebe & Olive

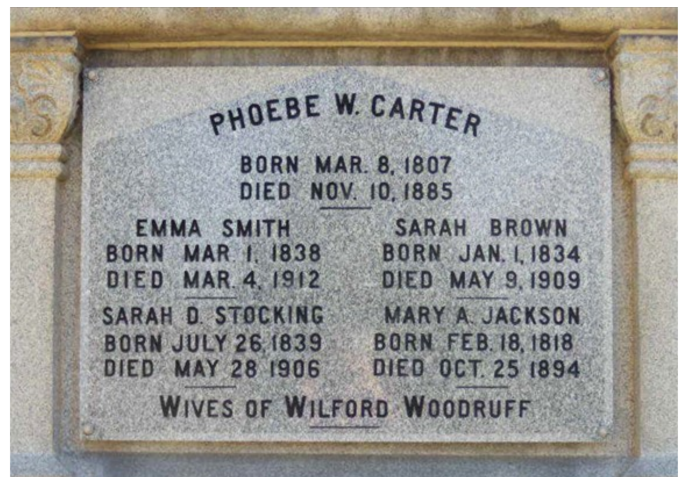
Many Maine converts joined the hordes of other believers from around the country who migrated to the Mormon colony near the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Sarah Foss's oldest son, Ira Carter Foss, did not accept that gospel. He remained in Maine and his son, Ira Calvin Foss, later became proprietor of the Checkley House at Prouts Neck.

Phoebe Carter Woodruff's husband, now an Apostle, was a leader of the saints making the trek from Ohio to Utah. His journal provides a vivid description of the suffering endured and many lives lost, often to cholera. A journal entry of June 30, 1850, reads, "*Capt. Joseph Hall drank free of slew water & in an hour was taken with Cholera & died after 12 hours of sickness. We all felt his loss. He was very useful to the camp.*"



Elder Wilford Woodruff and his first wife, Phebe Carter Woodruff

With polygamy sanctioned by the Mormon Church, Phoebe Carter Woodruff's husband, Elder Wilford Woodruff, married four additional wives after arriving in Salt Lake City. He married three of them on March 13, 1853. In addition to the nine children he fathered with Phoebe, he had ten children with Emma Smoot Smith, seven children with Sarah Delight Stocking, and nine children with Sarah Brown. There are 2,254 family trees on Ancestry.com that include Wilford Woodruff.



Sarah Brackett Carter Foss never remarried, and she and her daughters became deeply involved in the new society in Utah. When a Relief Society was organized, President Brigham Young read the name of Sarah Brackett Foss as Secretary. At her death in 1894, she was remembered by her grandson, Matthias F. Cowley, as a devoted Latter-Day Saint. He said she had the courage, willpower and faith to refrain from tea and coffee, to pay her tithing, and to do her full duty. She was always anxious that neither her sons nor grandsons should use liquor and she did not believe in card playing. She wanted to obey the entire counsel of the authorities of the church.

# Epitaphs at Black Point and Dunstan Cemeteries

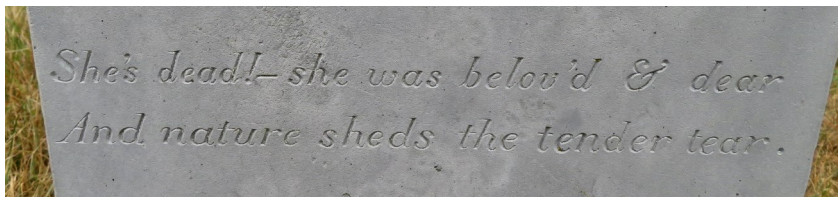
## Ron Romano

With this, my seventh column for *Owascoag Notes*, readers should by now know that I spend a good deal of time in historic cemeteries. In earlier columns I've highlighted gravestone *symbols*, such as fingers pointing heavenward, and *inscriptions*, the carved words that identify the person buried below.

Some grave markers—especially those created in the 1800s—include *epitaphs*. When leading cemetery tours, I suggest that we can think of epitaphs as additional words that honor the person but don't necessarily identify them in the way an inscription does. Epitaphs can be easy to miss, as the lettering is smaller, at 1/3 to 1/2 the size of the inscription's letters, and close to the ground. Epitaphs can sink out of view as stones settle into the earth, be hidden by grass or lichen, or—in the case of marble stones—erode away. Nineteenth-century stonecutters charged for each letter carved, so many customers chose not to add epitaphs to their stones. But for those who did, we are rewarded today.

Epitaphs can be rhyming verse. At Black Point, Eunice Libby's 1776 stone reads "*Adieu my spouse, my children dear, I left this world of pain. Let virtue be your practice here, till we do meet again.*" The reference to leaving the world of pain suggests that death came neither quickly nor easily. At Dunstan is Martha Haines's 1802 epitaph "*Completely shone through every scene of life, the tender parent and the virtuous wife.*" Here, a surviving husband paid tribute to a beloved spouse. Hannah Libby's 1791 stone at Black Point reads "*Death is a debt to nature due, which I have paid and so must you.*" It's one of many similar verses found on old gravestones that reminded passersby of the brevity of life on earth.

Epitaphs can be scripture or reflect the deceased's religious beliefs. At Dunstan on Sarah Milliken's 1810 stone we find "*Heaven gives us friends to bless the present scene; resumes them to prepare us for the next*" and on Eunice Milliken's 1837 stone is *Thus she has gone down to the grave, the place appointed for all the living.*"



Contrasting epitaphs are found on Martha Milliken's 1808 stone at Dunstan and Mary Tompson's 1854 stone at Black Point. Martha's reads *She's dead! She was beloved and dear, and nature sheds the tender tear*" while Mary's reads *"Not dead, but gone before."*

Simple one-line epitaphs exist such as this one for Ervin Libby at Black Point "*The rising blooming flower was cut and withered in an hour.*" Ervin was just 14 when he died in 1819, so "rising blooming flower" feels appropriate, even for a boy.

This column ends with a heart-wrenching epitaph at Dunstan for Althea Chase, who died on May 14, 1854, at age 21. At the bottom of her marble gravestone we find "*This monument was erected by Daniel H. Seavey, to whom she was to have been married the day on which she died.*" Following Althea's death, Daniel headed west to New York and then to California in search of gold. He later settled in Chicago with his wife and children, where he owned a hardware store with his brother. He died there in 1898.

Right: Marker For Althea Chase, who died on her wedding day in 1854.



*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.*

Photos courtesy of Ron Romano

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Hours: 9:00 AM–Noon  
Tuesdays & 2nd Saturday each month  
Other days by appointment

Editor: Mary B. Pickard



**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](mailto:scarboroughhist@gmail.com)

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New Member  Renewal

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\*Family: 2 adults and children to 18)