

Hancock Historical Society Newsletter

Holiday 2020



Postcard postmarked 1911 mailed from Providence, RI

President's Report

Mac Smith from Stockton Springs, and a former reporter for the BAR HARBOR TIMES, is working on a new book about Hancock which tells about the deadly disaster at Mount Desert Ferry in 1899 in which twenty people lost their lives and several hundred were hurt in the collapse of the slip which led from the dock to the SAPPHO boat, which was scheduled to take sightseers to Bar Harbor to see the American fleet of warships of the North Atlantic Squadron from the Spanish-American War. Most of the people involved had arrived by train from Bangor, Brewer, Orono, Ellsworth, and other Maine towns. The headline in the Bar Harbor newspaper was HORROR AT HANCOCK POINT. The bodies of the dead were laid out in the lobby of the Bluffs Hotel at the Ferry. He has used materials from our files at the museum and I have taken him on a tour of the town to see where the disaster occurred. Mr. Smith has written two other books, "Peyton Place Comes to Maine" and "Mainers on the Titanic."

Curator's Report

Last year we knew the 2020 season would be different. We had no idea how different. We had plans for a new museum building, and, at last after months of searching, a site. Right after Christmas, Jill and Gary and their amazing crew and some dedicated volunteers began working on the actual construction. By April we had a beautiful building, and we were in lock down due to COVID-19. It became apparent that the 2020 season and the plans we had for a grand opening were not to be. So we packed and moved boxes, signs, art

work, and larger pieces of our collection to the new building. Some of it has been unpacked, most of it hasn't. It will get done this winter and we HOPE to be open in some form come June of 2021. It may be by appointment only, it will probably still be masked and social distanced but we will be open. In March the Board will meet to plan programs for the upcoming year, and what form they will take. It is a small blip in our plans, but we will get past this and move on into the future. I want to thank the Board, the members and the community at large for their support in this project. You have an historical society museum to be proud of and one that will be there preserving our town's history for generations to come. Have a safe and happy holiday season and New Year.



Hancock Memories

by Roberta Gallison Cunningham, at Sam Ball Farm where Henry was born. Memorial Day, May 26, 2014
(With thanks to Rich Cunningham for sharing this with us)

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT MY PARENTS, HENRY BALL GALLISON & VIRGINIA GRACE DOYLE

Henry Ball Gallison (1908-1975) was born in Hancock, a small town on the coast of Maine. There he went to the one-room school on Point Road next to the home of his grandparents Henry Asa and Mary (Patrequin) Ball. He had been born in their house. The land for the school and meeting house had been given to the town in 1789 by my 4th great grandfather, Samuel Ball I and his neighbor, Steven Young. Dad's sister told me they use to go to their grandparents' house for milk and cookies before the mile walk to their home on the corner of Point and Eastside roads. In the winter, when their father was an engineer for the Canadian Pacific Rail Road, they lived and went to school in Brownville, Jct., Maine where the scholars were always ahead in their studies. Dad said the Gallison children worked like beavers to catch up and, when they went back to Hancock in the spring, they were often promoted to the next grade. Of course that made it doubly difficult for them in Brownville, Jct. the next winter. Aunt Ruth was graduated from high school when she was 15 and went on to Gorham Normal School for a teaching degree. She would later find an Episcopal grad school in Coronado, California. Dad once remarked he would never allow his children to skip a grade.

He was a 1927 graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, but unlike Ruth, he was 19 when he finished there. He attended Yale University from the fall of 1927 until 1931 when his bank closed and left him without funds to return. Because he had switched his major from chemical engineering to civil engineering, he needed to go a 5th year. So he returned to Hancock, got his teaching certificate, and was principal of Hancock High School, teaching the upper grades. At that time Hancock only had a high school if there were enough pupils and a teacher to instruct them. His father, William Gallison, had little formal education himself, and was insistent that all his children have good ones. Since usually there were no

classes beyond eighth grade in Hancock, all the Gallison children were sent away to school. Henry also became the Hancock tax collector, saving his money to return to college. About 1931 he met Virginia Doyle of East Sullivan, Maine. Eventually they became engaged. When Dad went back to school, it was the University of Maine. I don't know whether Maine was chosen because it was less expensive, or because Orono was closer to East Sullivan than New Haven, Connecticut. He was graduated from the University of Maine in 1935 and was offered a fellowship, but felt he needed to go to work. I've often wondered, was he anxious to marry, or was four years all Virginia was willing to wait? On September 17, 1935, he went to Eastport, Maine to work as under-computer in the Camp & Land Division of the Quoddy Tidal Power Project, Army Corp. of Engineers, earning \$105 per month. He and Virginia were married Christmas afternoon 1935.

I often heard Mother say that Christmas was the only day they both had off from work, and it was back to Dad's apartment and jobs the next day. Mother was a graduate of Eastern Academy of Hairdressing in Bangor and found employment at "My Lady Beauty Shop" in Eastport. They were soon assigned Apt. K-A-23 in Quoddy Village, an extensive complex of homes and apartments which had been established for the workers. However no furniture arrived for a couple of weeks. They had purchased what they needed from Austin's Furniture in Ellsworth, (in business until 2010). In those days the furniture dealer was often the local undertaker also and there had been a lot of funerals around the holidays.

Mother said the first week of their marriage she and Dad lived on peanut butter sandwiches until payday. They celebrated their paychecks with a big, juicy steak. Until the furniture and the rest of their housekeeping equipment arrived, they slept on Indian blankets. A neighbor loaned them two plates, two cups and saucers, two knives, forks and spoons. When people came to visit, they sat on the floor and ate two at a time. Mother looked back on this as a "fun time".

She told the story of how the bathroom water faucets were mixed: the one saying "cold" was actually hot and vice versa. Dad and another man puzzled about how to correct the problem. Mom went in, unscrewed the metal ring holding the porcelain indicators, and switched them. Now the "hot" was hot and the "cold" was cold. She said Dad was not amused.

There are several stories she told about working in the beauty parlor. It was often after dark when she finished work and returned to Quoddy Village. The bus driver always made certain that she was inside the building before driving on. The wife of a Quoddy official came in for a haircut one day when her usual operator was absent. Mom said, "I do great permanents, but not haircuts." "You'll do alright, dear" was the reply. When Mom finished, the woman good naturedly said, "Well you did tell me!"

My father was a handsome man. One day, as he approached the beauty shop to meet Mother, the young woman in her chair went on and on about him. When he came in Mom introduced her customer to "my husband". Mom said she never saw the woman in the shop again.

When Congress did not refund the Quoddy Project, it closed. Dad had only eleven months of Civil Service employment. Had he had twelve, he would have been transferred. As it was, he was out of a job. Mother was pregnant with my brother Henry Robert, who was born October 16, 1936. The young couple returned to East Sullivan where they lived with her parents. Dad did odd jobs until March, 1937, when he answered an ad in the "Bangor Daily News" placed there by General Electric Company in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on the New York border. He went to Pittsfield by train, had his interview and physical and was hired as a draftsman. They told him if he had brought his instruments, he could start immediately. He had brought them. Gathering some of their belongings, Virginia drove the 400 miles with her mother, Rebecca Lufkin Doyle, and five month old Robert. Robert sat on Grammie Becky's lap and they were wrapped in a buffalo robe as there was no heat in Dad's Ford coupe. Dad became a Class A designer for the Naval Ordnance Dept. at G.E., working on the guidance system for the Polaris missile. He retired in May of 1972, and they returned to Maine, where they lived in the house where Dad was born. Though they lived in Pittsfield 35 years, they never called it "home".

Was Dad happy at General Electric? I'm certain he would have preferred to have been building roads, dams, and bridges, but in the uncertain employment climate of the 1930's and the war years that followed, he found security in the pay and benefits of G.E. It however must have been a source of bitter disappointment.



Postcard postmarked 1916, mailed from Southbridge, MA

HANCOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL MEETING

10:00 AM OCTOBER 17, 2020

HANCOCK POINT SCHOOL AND ZOOM

ATTENDING IN PERSON: Sandy Phippen, Myrna Coffin, Don Parker, Charlotte Stetson, Pat Moll, Alan Gray, Anne Pomroy, Joan Hildreth, Eleanor Fairbanks, David Johnston. ATTENDING VIA ZOOM/PHONE: Charlene Fox Clemons, Heather Parker, Jean Foss, Bob Foss

ACCEPT MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING – It was moved and seconded that we accept the minutes from our last meeting on October 11, 2019. All were in favor.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Sandy Phippen expressed appreciation for Don Parker and Pat Moll arranging this meeting and the use of the old schoolhouse. He also gave a little history of the building being used as a scout hall.

CURATOR'S REPORT – Sandy Phippen read Charlene's Curator's Report and we all applauded.

TREASURER'S REPORT--Don Parker reviewed the financial reports and summarized by saying, "We have plenty of money right now."

Don presented and moved that we accept a proposed budget for next year. Bob Foss seconded.

Questions:

Eleanor Fairbanks asked why our insurance expense would go down? Don explained that he paid for 1½ insurances this past year, so in effect, we are paying for only a half-year this year.

Anne Pomroy asked about electricity costs. The amount budgeted is a projection, but since the building is so

new, we don't know exactly what to expect. Don asked Charlene to research what humidity level is appropriate so we'll know how much to use the dehumidifier. Charlene agreed to do that.

The proposed 2020-2021 budget was accepted unanimously.

Don proposed establishing a CLYNK account so that we can benefit from people's returnable containers. (could be a few hundred dollars a year) We all agreed it was a good idea.

Don proposed putting \$25,000.00 in an investment account directed by his investment advisor. We'd take 3% (\$750) a year. It was moved and seconded. All were in favor.

We'll have to gather petitions again to get on the warrant for receiving a contribution from the Town of Hancock. Eleanor Fairbanks suggested gathering signatures outdoors on voting day, November 3rd. Don will pick up petition sheets at the Town Hall and send out an email about signing-up for slot on that day.

Don asked if anyone would agree to review the books. Alan agreed.

Anne Pomroy offered a segue: In the process of packing up the old museum, she found an old poster from 1895, advertising a dance and supper to be held on the second floor of the Town Hall, the same space the Historical Society has occupied for about 40 years. Anne suggested getting it archivally framed, putting a plaque on the frame, and giving it to the town as a gift. Everyone thought it was a great idea. Charlotte will find out if Ralph Fahringer does archival framing.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT AND ELECTIONS

Myrna reported that the existing officers and curator will all stay on.

Current Board members include the following:

Class of 2021: Edith Louder, Pat Moll, David Johnston

Class of 2022: Jean Foss, Bob Foss, Herb Hodgkins, Rick Merchant

Class of 2023: Myrna Coffin, Charlene Fox Clemons, Eleanor Fairbanks, Don Parker, Charlotte Stetson, Sandy Phippen, Heather Parker, Joan Hildreth, Anne Pomroy, Alan Gray

Emeritus members: Eunice Phillips, Liz Singletary, Jim Singletary

Possible new members: Eric Gatcomb (Myrna will ask?), Ryan or Ellen Sprague. (Sandy will ask), Savannah Hudson Havey (Pat will ask), MaryBeth Demarco (Myrna will ask)

It was moved and seconded to accept curator, officers and all re-upping board members. All were in favor.

BUILDING UPDATE

Alan gave a summary of the process up to this point, highlighting all that has transpired over the past year.

Don mentioned that all the grading is done and seeded with grass.

Eaton Paving will start tomorrow. Via email, we had agreed to pave the entire length of the HHS driveway, but Don found enough donors to pave the first bit of Captain Bill Road up to the Women's Club parking lot.

It was moved and seconded to do the extra paving. All were in favor.

BUILDING TO-DO LIST

whiskey barrel planters at entrance

split-rail fencing along ditch next to driveway

signage – right-hand sign of Tamarack Place sign and one for the building itself and inside signs (named spaces and bathroom)

flag poles? Bob feels strongly about having a flag pole close to main entrance. Charlene suggests American flag on top and Maine flag below. Joan will do research about flag poles.

Underground phone and internet wires will happen this coming week. Don will get prices for cable, DSL, or cellular phone hotspot. He'll send an email about those costs so a decision can be made.

Alan's working on mini ramps and rubber mats at the doors.

We need a bathroom storage cupboard of some sort.

Anne asks about ongoing maintenance/cleaning expense. That still needs to be figured out.

kitchen needs to be equipped

still need a map case, 2 more printers

probably some shelving is still needed
library and AV room counters need to be lowered
drain valve in mechanical room
large flat-screen TV
lightweight folding tables
LCD projector and screen
maybe moveable walls in museum maybe not such a good idea – Charlene and Don will discuss alternatives
moving rest of stuff from town hall to new building – should happen this coming week

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Grand Opening – hold off until March to schedule

Programs – March meeting

Newsletter – early December, sent by mail – Anne suggests having something to raffle – Alan will ask Jerry Monteux to donate a photo

OTHER

Pat – maybe a craft/art show in the schoolhouse next summer?

Don – thank-you gifts for Phil Devinish (\$50 to Chippers); Jill/Gary? (\$100 gift certificate to Siam Sky) also certificates

Charlotte – What does emeritus mean? Emeritus members receive all notices and can attend meetings, but they do not vote.

ANNE asks if anyone has any programming ideas. Eleanor suggested farming and hidden cemeteries.

Charlotte suggested Native American presence in Hancock. It was suggested Burying Island history.

11:40 – ADJOURN



No date on this postcard but circa 1916

Postcards were sent then as we send emails now, just a quick note to let the recipient know they were being thought of, that a package had arrived or to confirm an upcoming visit. The ones from this time period carried a one-cent postage stamp. All postcards featured here from the Curator's private collection handed down through three generations.