

Thomaston Historical Society

Spring Newsletter No. 50 – May 2019



The museum will be open again all summer on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The major restoration work on our Knox Farmhouse Museum is done, though we are still moving things around to finish our new Archival Gallery and Library room. Having a temperature and humidity control unit now on the second floor back room and the now dry basement with a concrete floor, has allowed us to move much of our archival storage to the second floor back room and shift non archival and some book storage to the basement safely. Thanks for your patience with all the disruption last summer.

We hope to have a reception to open the new Gallery/Library mid-summer. Also by then, we hope to have a new exhibit telling the story and displaying artifacts from the Thatcher Street Archaeological Dig that we sponsored during the last two summers, thanks to the Lyman family who own that property.

Because of a dedicated board, strong Town support, and partnering with other organizations, we continue to offer or co-sponsor many events that celebrate Thomaston. You can learn more about these and other projects in this newsletter. Also visit our website and Facebook page!

Susan Devlin

President, Thomaston Historical Society

Join Us for our 6th Summer House Tour June 15th

This year we will showcase the John T. Beverage Homestead on Saturday, June 15 from 1-4 PM. Located at 33 Hyler Street. The house was built in the very popular Victorian Italianate style by joiner, selectman and fire chief John T. Beverage.

Visitors will be able to self-tour where they meet docents in various rooms who will point out specific architectural details of interest, both inside and outside the house. Visitors will also receive a card with a brief history as well as photos featuring specific details of the structure of the house. Light refreshments will be available as well as raffle items.



Our thanks go out to Rob and Jeanne Short, the current owners of the house, and to Peggy McCrea who provided the history and photos for this special house tour.

Tickets will be available at the door: \$8 for THS members/\$10 for non-members. Children 12 and under are free. For more information, contact Mimi Zwick, 354-7029.

Mimi Zwick, Chair of House Tours

Have You Heard of the Wednesday Coffee Group?

Approximately 60 years ago, a group of young ladies from Thomaston High School, including one or two from nearby towns, started informally meeting on Wednesday mornings as a coffee breakfast group. Without fail they met and supported each other through good times and bad - marriages, divorces, deaths, health problems, baby showers, kid problems, retirements, birthday celebrations, etc. Some attendees have come and gone over the years, but always averaging a dozen or so. Most are now senior citizens and maybe half are widows. Yet, for Christmas 2018 there were 11 available for the photo shown here.



Initially, they usually met at the now gone Dave's Restaurant, which sat across from Dorman's. Over time it evolved to having a different member pick the weekly breakfast spot. These have included the following – The Thomaston Café, The Hartstone Inn, The Rockport Diner, The Brass Compass, The Samoset, The Salty Owl, the Offshore Restaurant, the Midcoast School of Technology and some others no longer in business.

Think of the history and stories these ladies could tell about Thomaston's past half century and the surrounding area! We need to bring their stories and accumulated knowledge into our Thomaston Historical

Society. We need active participating volunteers and Board Members. I challenge all that receive this Newsletter to volunteer time and your services to keep this Society active. And if you know of groups like the above, or stories that we could bring to the members, let us know so that we may write about them.

Bill Gay, Vice President

Brooks Trap Mill – Maine State Prison Archival Gallery and Library

Thanks to bookcases being built by Maine State Prison and gallery hanging wire from Brooks Trap Mill, one of our gold business members, we hope to have finished converting the first floor room in the ell to a public gallery/library, ready for a grand opening in July. Also key to this effort is the work by Kyle Barter to catalog all the publications that we are finding in our collections and Sandy Hoekstra in help preserving and cataloging our maps and atlases.

The cases will be about waist high around the room to house and provide easy access to all our books, journals and maps— many are coming to light as we have been cleaning up the old archival space and cataloging our collection. Did you know we have a copy of a book by Captain Cook describing his voyage and nearly complete sets of Thomaston Town Reports and Thomaston High School's The Sea Breezes?

We just rediscovered we have Knox Barracks Certificate listing Thomaston World War I and framed pictures of the Washburn brothers. Now you will be able to see other gems that have been hidden in stacks before the Fire Chief approved our opening this back room to the public.

We have a new large work table for the room, thanks to St. John the Baptist Church. Peggy McCrae is planning an artistic map to cover the top – showing old and new Thomaston, for easy reference.

WE NEED HELP to paint the room, hanging the wire, sorting/installing our books in the new book cases and carting more stuff upstairs and to the basement. Let us know if and when you might be able to help with any one of these chores.

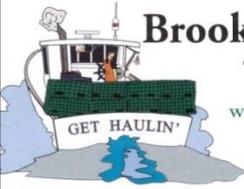
Susan Devlin – Curator

New Historic Group in Town

The Historic Thomaston Resources Group (HTRG) is a town committee charged with promoting and maintaining the heritage and diversity of Thomaston's historic architecture. The current focus is on the National Historic District that was placed on the National Register of Historic Places 43 years ago.

The original village located at Mill Creek has completely vanished. At least a dozen historic buildings have been lost in the past decade alone. The Rufus Counce House at 8 Main Street (pictured here) is the most recent loss, leveled in 2016 due to disrepair. Currently several others could be considered endangered.

Through education and programing, HTRG hopes to help people recognize the significance of our historic buildings and to demonstrate how preservation of our town's architectural heritage can help it thrive



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economically and aesthetically. The group offers free programs of interest to owners of older homes. It is presently reviewing what other towns are doing to preserve their historic architecture.

HTRG fully understands the pitfalls of owning an historic house and realizes that family members who inherited their family home - oftentimes senior citizens - may no longer have the means or ability to maintain them. HTRG is collaborating with Midcoast Habitat for Humanity to provide help to qualify through a pilot project called *Habitat on Main*. The focus of the project is to help revitalize eligible houses in the Main Street Historic District through roadside landscaping and improvement of street façade appearance -- working with low to moderate income homeowners based on need and scope of work. HTRG and Midcoast Habitat are working together to raise funds and to procure sponsors and volunteers to make this exciting and innovative community event happen. If you are interested in helping, please contact Peggy McCrea (207-354-2314).

Watch for results as soon as this summer. The plan is to select one Main Street home a month from July to September and perhaps October, if requests, weather, and funds permit.

Peggy McCrea, HTRG Chair

Cemetery Lean and Clean Work Days Planned

During the cemetery workshop last summer several of us learned the DOs and DON'Ts of simple repairs and cleaning of cemetery stones and we were able to clean and repair 27 stones. Let's keep this momentum going. We can build on the skills some of us learned and teach others during the work days that we plan to hold starting this fall. Skills needed are diverse, we have forms to fill out to record the stones and work done, cleaning of stones, resetting simple stones that are leaning, and just watching and encouraging.



Also, you could adopt a stone by making a donation to cover some of the materials needed. Contact Susan Devlin (info@ThomastonHistoricalSociety.com) for more information.

Retired History – Our Outside Exhibits Are Growing

We have a growing group of artifacts outside which currently includes a piece of the marquee from the original Watts Hall, footings from the original Henry Knox cemetery fence, the wind indicator from an earlier town flagstaff and a piece of the old Wadsworth Street bridge. Soon the huge header from the former Thomaston Maine State Prison main building should arrive from the Prison Farm. Our grounds chair, Brooks Stevens, is planning placement. Peggy McCrea and I will work on signage.



Susan Devlin, Curator

Thomaston Planning for Maine 200 Celebrations

In March 1820, Maine became a state, splitting off from Massachusetts. We have initiated a cross-organizational committee to plan activities to celebrate the 200th anniversary next year in Thomaston and to focus on Thomaston's role and accomplishments over the last 200 years

In addition to the Thomaston Historical Society, we will have representation committed so far from the General Henry Knox Museum, Lady Knox DAR Chapter, Mason Lodge, Thomaston Churches, and Historic Thomaston Research Group. Some of the ideas being tossed around are a traveling display of 200 years of architecture in Thomaston, display of boats built in Thomaston over the last 200 years, having Maine 200 the theme of the July 4th parade, a party to celebrate in March (the anniversary) and more.

Let us know if you have ideas and want to help.

Susan Devlin and Sandy Moore –
Committee founders



Meet Our Chair of Veterans Projects – Sandra Moore

Sandy is proud of her roots here in Thomaston. Her family has been in Midcoast Maine, particularly Thomaston, for over two centuries. Her Thomaston ancestors include a Select Board member, policeman, constable and truant officer. They worked in Thomaston as boat builders, farmers, fishermen, carpenters and electricians. Her grandmother lived on Erin Street. Richard Moore, Sandy's father, was raised in Thomaston.

Richard Moore was career Air Force. The family moved a lot, including Long Island, NY, where Sandy was born, Thomaston, Massachusetts, Germany and later Virginia. As part of a small Military Agency Group that reported directly to the President, he flew on Air Force One and played a part in the NASA launches. Not many people can say they talked to the astronauts while they were circling the earth, but Sandy can as she was patched in to a Gemini launch.

After her father died when she was 12, Sandy's mother stayed in Virginia. Sandy obtained a degree in Business at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, VA. She spent most of her career at BJ's Wholesale Club, starting as a field sales representative, quickly advancing to Regional Sales Manager. Her further advancements gave her diverse experiences in direct sales, project management, event planning, fundraising, auditing, and credit. She advanced as a data-driven decision maker and exceptional communicator with ability to balance tact and diplomacy with integrity and responsibility. During this time she also raised two sons.

Even though she lived in Virginia, she bought a house in Thomaston in 2007 to spend a good amount of time back in Maine. Retiring in 2017, Sandy moved back here permanently to her house on Green Street. She is active in the Kiwanis, being awarded one of two leadership awards her 1st year there, a Council member at the Federated Church, and a Board member of the Thomaston Historical Society, concentrating on Veterans. Last year she organized our first Thomaston Salute to Veteran's event. Sandy is now running for the Select Board in Thomaston.



Help Needed -- New H4H Chair and Media Chair!!

The Home for the Holidays Gala and Summer House Tour are increasingly popular and provides a key financial resource to the success of Thomaston Historical Society.

Mimi Zwick has chaired the House Tours for many years – including starting the Summer House Tour. She needs a breather so we are looking for a new chair to shadow Mimi for H4H this year and take the lead next year. We already have plans in the works to split the work load. If you are interesting in chairing the committee or taking on a component of one of these events, please approach me to explore ways to help.

I have been our temporary Media Chair, creating news releases, posters and newsletters for three years. I took this on when Eve Anderson had to step down for health reasons. We are looking for someone or a couple of people to work together who enjoy writing and/or graphic art to help in this way. The scope includes news releases/posters for about 7 events and two newsletters each year – with many contributors to the content.

Susan Devlin, President



2019 Schedule of Events

Tues. May 14th – East Main Street Touchstones. Historian Margaret McCrea will guide us on a virtual tour of East Main Street and talk about the houses, architecture, and people who lived in them.

Sat. June 15th – Summer House Tour 1-4 PM. Fee event at Rob and Jeanne Short's house--33 Hylar St. (Fee event)

Tues. June 18th – Three Mid-Coast Writers and a Bookseller and Annual Membership Meeting. For over five years, South Thomaston resident Judith Tydings, PhD., interviewed Thomaston memoirist and centenarian Luther Dawson, Cushing writer Elisabeth Ogilvie, Maine poet laureate and Appleton resident Kate Barnes, daughter of Henry Beston of “The Outermost House”, and Vivian York, owner of Lobster Lane Bookshop in Spruce Head. Dr. Tydings will bring these people dedicated to writing and books to life.

Sat. July 27th - General Henry Knox Annual Memorial Service. This 10:30 AM service honors Revolutionary War General Henry Knox, who was also the first Secretary of War. It takes place at the gravesite in the Thomaston Town Cemetery off Erin Street. A reception follows on the Knox Museum grounds.

Tues. Aug. 13th – Thomaston Baptist Church: The First 200 Years. Jolene and Morris Berry, long-time educators in the St. George, Thomaston, and Rockland areas, will present stories they learned while collecting research for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Thomaston Baptist Church.

Tues. Aug. 15th – Tour of Thomaston Place Auction Gallery. Get a behind-the-scenes insight into the working of this Thomaston institution, one of our gold business members and see some of the gems stored. (Fee event)

Tues. Sept. 10th – Genealogy Research: Beyond Ancestry.com. Certified Genealogist Helen Shaw, board member and former president of the Maine Genealogical Society, will talk about ways of tracing and documenting your family.

Sat. Sept. 28th – 2nd Salute To Veterans Reception and Barbeque. Encourage any veteran to join us and come thank them for their service – and have fun.

Tues. Oct. 8th – Finding your Digs. Archaeologist Harbour Mitchell, will again offer an informative talk on the digs he has been working on and he invites people to bring their finds from old “dumps” around their houses for identification.

September Date TBS – Cemetery Cleaning Work Day. We plan to start Lean and Clean work days. Some of us who took the training workshop in the heat of August last fall will help newcomers learn the do’s and don’ts and help us all have fun. If you can’t work you could make a donation towards the needed supplies.

Fri. & Sat. Dec. 6th-7th – 13th Home for the Holidays at the Capt. Wm Henderson House. The 1847 house featured will have a Friday reception from 5 to 7 PM with wine and hors d'oeuvres, live music, and a small live auction. The tour and silent auction continues on Saturday between 10 AM and 3 PM. Reservations are needed for the Friday night event and tickets may be purchased at the door on Saturday. (Fee event)

Aleta Kilborn, Program Chair

Don't Miss Our Annual Membership Meeting

There will be a brief membership meeting prior to the talk on June 18th at Watts Hall. At that time, we elect our 2018-2019 officers and board. Below is the proposed slate of candidates and the roles they would serve:

Officers:

Susan Devlin – President & Curator
William Gay - Vice President
Aleta Kilborn – Secretary
Ron Gamage – Treasurer

Board Members:

Brooks Stevens – Finance Chair and Grounds Chair
Mimi Zwick – H4H Chair
Sally Ploski- Facebook Editor
William Eberle - Website Editor and Farm House Restoration
Kathleen Daley - Nomination Chair
Sandy Moore - Veterans Projects
Rod Grindell – IT and Membership Co-Chair

Kathleen Daley, Nominations Chair

Membership Renewal Time

Last spring we revamped our membership and added some new categories, including a new Gold Business membership (advertised in this newsletter) and a Legacy Lifetime Membership for Seniors.

Attached is a membership form for new or renewing members –the new membership year starts July 1st. Please renew soon to help us continue to have the funds to support the kind of activities described above. You can fill the form out and send a check to Thomaston Historical Society, P. O. Box 384, Thomaston, Maine 04861. Or you can register online.



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THOMASTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL (7/2019 – 6/2020)

Membership in the Thomaston Historical Society helps us preserve the rich history of our community, continue to expand our programs, and maintain our museum. Members receive discounts on all goods and special events. Your membership and any donation is tax deductible. For more information, visit our website at www.thomastonhistoricalsociety.com.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership (\$20) | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership (\$30) | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legacy Lifetime Member (over age 75) (\$250) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Business Member (\$50) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gold Business Member (\$100) | |

Please complete and send this form with payment: Attention Membership, Thomaston Historical Society, PO Box 384, Thomaston, ME 04861. A check should be made out to Thomaston Historical Society.

Mr. Mrs. Ms M/M First Name(s) _____ Last Name _____

Company/Organization (if applicable) _____ Phone _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Sending our newsletters electronically significantly reduces costs. ***Please provide your email address.***

E-mail address: _____

The Thomaston Historical Society is an entirely volunteer organization, and thus depends on members and the community to help maintain our museum and provide the programs that we offer. Volunteers can help fill a one-time need, give occasional support for special events, or make a continuing commitment. Please let us know if you are willing to be contacted when help is needed:

Yes, you can contact me

Please check off any of the sample areas of support listed below that may be of interest to you:

- Sit as host at the farmhouse museum during the hours we are open (either occasionally or regularly)
- Provide refreshments for one of our programs
- March in the July 4th parade or help plan our parade entry
- Set up new museum or library exhibits
- Help explore and catalog the museum artifacts
- Help with our Summer House Tour or our *Home for the Holidays* fundraisers
- Help plan and implement new projects
- Other

Summary of Payment Enclosed:

Membership Dues _____

Donation _____

Total _____