

The Dash

Published by Freeport Historical Society | *Keeping the past present since 1969.*



Collections Corner

Historic Characters to Live at Harrington House.

SEE PAGE 8



John Mann

Surveying Freeport's present and past.

SEE PAGE 9

WINTER 2019-20



Fall events recap

SEE PAGE 10

Babikian Family Brings the Stone House New Life on Wolfe's Neck



The Classical Revival Stone House overlooking the Harraseeket River on Wolfe's Neck is built of stone hewn from the ledge on which it stands, constructed in part by stone masons from Italy.

BY KATHY SMITH

THE GRAND, John Calvin Stevens-designed, Classical Revival home at the heart of Wolfe's Neck, known today as the Stone House, was the focus of the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Freeport Historical Society. The meeting celebrated the commitment to its preservation by its new owners, Dr. George and Dr. Mary Owen Babikian, presenting them with the FHS annual Preservation Award. Mary took the lead in giving the house a new lease on life with an extensive and caring

restoration, with George's enthusiastic support. George is a noted Maine orthopedic surgeon. Mary is a pediatrician who studied architecture at the University of Maine and has worked on a number of design projects. This is her first historic preservation project. She is currently raising long-haired Scottish Highland cattle, grazing the fields west of the house along the Harraseeket River. The Babikians have been Freeport residents since 2015, most recently residing just across the river on Bartol Island Road.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

WINTER 2019

The Dash is published four times annually by Freeport Historical Society for its members.

Freeport Historical Society
Harrington House
45 Main Street
Freeport, ME 04032
(207) 865-3170

www.freeporthistoricalsociety.org

OFFICE & EXHIBIT HOURS

Tuesday to Friday
10 am – 5 pm

Appointments may also be made for a weekend visit.

We encourage a phone call prior to any visit, to verify that the office is open.

Research and visits involving the collections require an appointment in advance. Call 207-865-3170 to speak with Holly Hurd or email library@freeporthistoricalsociety.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Eric C. Smith, *President*
Jan Gerry, *Vice-President*
Rebecca Hotelling, *Secretary*

Guy Blanchard
Polly Brann
Scott Burrill
David Coffin
Jim DeGrandpre
Dennis Landis
Jane Grant
Vicki Lowe
Brad Snow
Alan Tracy
Lonny Winrich

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jim Cram

CURATOR/COLLECTIONS MANAGER

Holly Hurd

PROGRAMS & ADMIN MANAGER

Jesse Esmé Dritz

Our 50th anniversary was a great year in so many ways!



BEGINNING WITH A CHAMPAGNE toast on January 25th, the date of our incorporation 50 years ago, we began a series of 27 public events to celebrate local history and make our history relevant to all ages. We committed to build on the pillars of **Preservation, Education, and Community.**

- *Down East* magazine published an article proclaiming Pettengill Farm as the “best family walk” in Maine.
- The 1757 Dennison’s Mill site at Mast Landing received restoration treatment, and we dedicated a new historic marker there in cooperation with Maine Audubon.
- We set new records for attendance at our events, attracting between 70 and 100 guests at most events. Over 150 attendees joined us for David Coffin’s lecture about The Mast Landing.
- Pettengill Farm Day drew over 500 visitors.
- Students from the third grade through high school engaged in various projects, scavenger hunts, and exhibit tours.
- Our collections have grown with beautiful historic portraits of famous Freeport residents, historic documents, terrific old photographs and cherished family records.
- Membership has grown by at least 65 this year to a total of about 400 households.

Despite these successes in 2019, challenges do remain on our horizon. The recent downturn in retail activity and changes to town parking rules have affected our previously reliable annual income: for nearly 30 years, our Harrington House, barn, and parking lot on Main Street have been sources of revenue to support our operations. As much as 40% of our budget may be lost, which has our Board of Trustees



looking for cost-savings measures and making difficult decisions on what must be downsized or eliminated. At the same time, our historic buildings need major upgrades to safely protect our collections; at Harrington House in particular, creating a user-friendly and accessible space for all Freeport residents is a priority. These are complex and expensive items. We will be sharing more about these needs in the future.

Meanwhile, please know that we are engaging with the many groups that are working creatively to bring about Freeport’s next renaissance. This includes ACAF, the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Freeport, who are executing a plan to partner with the First Parish Church to create Meeting House Arts. This organization will feature vocal and theatre performances as well as lectures in the beautiful building just across the street from the Harrington House. We also want to support local businesses who are committed to our community, such as SKORDO, who we have featured in this issue. We are excited to see the community united in the common goal of making Freeport’s next chapter the best it can be.

— JIM CRAM, Executive Director

Spooktacular Ghosts Tours

BY HOLLY HURD

THE CEMETERY at Upper Mast Landing was the setting for an all-new *Ghosts of Freeport's Past*, our annual Halloween event when Freeport Players become characters from the past and tell their stories. Designed to complement our current exhibit "The Mast Landing: Industry, Commerce, and Its People, 1720s-1920" (on view now through Dec 20!), attendees heard about the lives of Capt. Abner Dennison (played by Eric Smith), Faitha Townsend (Janie Downey Maxwell), Capt. John Griffin (Mike Powers), Thomas Means Jr. (Scott Miller), Bethia Josselyn (Kathleen Leopold), Keziah Furbish (Hali Fortin), David S. Cushing (Andrew Mass), Capt. Joseph Lufkin (Paul Menezes), and Susan Kelsey (Martha White). Scripts for these roles were based on historical information about each person, and the performances were designed for more character interaction since the cemetery residents were related and/or knew each other.

If you missed this popular event, co-hosted by Freeport Historical Society and Freeport Players and attended by 122 community members, here are some comments overheard:

"That was great. We'll definitely be coming back to do this again"

"This was wonderful."

"This was great, much better than I expected. I really enjoyed it."

"It was really great to watch everyone in action."

"Can you do this for the schools? A great way to learn history!"

Some of the event's wonderful success can be attributed to Ghost Hostess and all-around cemetery enthusiast, Suzi Spector (yes this is her real name)! Suzi



Upper Mast Landing Cemetery ready for Ghost Tours.

and her husband Carl von Saltza live across the road from the cemetery and they opened their field for parking and a guest receiving area. Suzi and Carl lined up carved pumpkins (left over from LL Bean's Pumpkin Festival) along the stone wall, marked stone tripping hazards with votive candles, and created a lit pathway leading to a cozy campfire with surrounding haybales. All this Halloween ambience was topped off with cookies and hot cider (compliments of Suzi) and chocolate ghosts provided by Wilburs of Maine. Suzi also gathered the neighborhood of Upper Mast Landing, many of whom attended and contributed to the festivities. She enjoyed helping and loved the event:

"Our absolute pleasure to help with the ghost tours this year. Community interaction is so important for everyone's spirit." [Suzi Spector]

Thanks so much to Suzi and Carl, and also to Linda Duarte, the Players new Director, who added her theatrical expertise to the performances. And, of course, a bone-chilling shout-out to the fantastic community actors who made their ghostly characters come alive! FHS



Suzi Spector (left) and Carl von Saltza (center) serving up cider to guest David Hotelling.



The visiting ghosts (left to right) Faitha Townsend, Bethia Josselyn, Joseph Lufkin, Abner Dennison, David Cushing, Thomas Means Jr., John Griffin, (not pictured Susan Kelsey).



The Ghosts in Action



L. M. C. and Eleanor Houston Smith, who purchased the house in 1946, relax on the front lawn in the early 1970s. They were the third in a series of three owners to preserve the rural character of Wolfe's Neck. Photo by Kathy Smith.



An international businessman who loved traveling the world with his family, Stanley Wood chose the acclaimed architect John Calvin Stevens to design his grand retirement home on Casco Bay.



Theodora (Teddy) and Morton (Woody) Wood, children of Stanley Wood's second marriage, spent their summertime childhoods in the 1920s on the gentleman's farm of their father, already retired in his early 50s. The beloved dog is Pooley. (A video of the two reminiscing on a return visit to the house in the 1990s is in the FHS archives.)

Stone House

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Mary worked with Zachau Construction Company to do the restoration, which was completed in 2018. "The goal in renovating the property was to bring the house comfortably into the 21st century, while maintaining its 100-year-old charm and integrity," Mary explains, "the default, whenever possible, to let John Calvin Stevens original design and materials shine through."

In the minds of many Freeport residents, the Stone House is associated with the Philadelphia-based family of L.M.C. and Eleanor Houston Smith, the creators of Wolfe's Neck Farm, now the Center for Agriculture and the Environment, and the donors of Wolfe's Neck Woods State Park. The Smith family owned the property from 1946 to Mrs. Smith's passing in 1987, during which time it was a cherished summer home for their large family and circle of friends. As this story will describe, they were the third and final owners to save the neck from overdevelopment. Their gifts of the state park, and the farm backed up with permanent protection by American Farmland Trust, ensure more than 850 acres of land will always be rural and open to the public.

While the history of the Smith family at the house is more familiar, and awaits a telling in more detail, the preservation award provides an opportunity to explore the little-known history of the person whose dreams created this grand home—international businessman Stanley Wood. Wood began life in 1869 in Dexter, Maine, where his father was the town postmaster. Bored with school, he left high school without a diploma at age 16 and took a simple office job in the business of his brother-in-law, the American Manufacturing Company in St. Paul, Minnesota, soon to become American Hoist and Derrick Co. He rose quickly in the company, his natural salesmanship skills taking him around the world selling its mining and other machinery. His signature contribution was the idea for hydraulic lift equipment

to replace manual labor in the handling of sugar cane.

His world travels for the company's business were challenged by the United States entry into World War I in 1917. By that time he had made a fortune and could afford to retire at age 48. He was living in Alhambra, California, where he had moved from St. Paul in 1906, in the palatial home once owned by a member of the Borden Milk Company. His first wife had died of cancer, his two girls were married, and he was alone with his 8-year-old son, Roger. He needed a change.

He went to Washington, D.C., to see if his friend Senator Frank Kellogg could help him earn a wartime position in the Navy. Turned down due to his age, he decided to pursue his dream of a country estate in New England where he could develop a high-class stock farm. While in the capital he spent an evening at the Powhatan Hotel with some business friends, among them Moses J. Look, known as Jerry. Look told him he just happened to have the perfect place—almost three hundred acres on a peninsula in Maine.

The Wolf Neck Development company, of which Look was president among four partners, in 1914 had divided the land into almost 350 parcels for summer cottages. The plans at the Cumberland County Recorder of Deeds show lots as small as 50 feet wide and sometimes three-deep along the shoreline, extending from the tip of the neck through today's state park. Sales would have turned the neck into hundreds of tightly packed summer cottages on tiny lots. Wood decided to buy all of it!

Stanley Wood would be one in a series of people to keep the rural landscape of the end of the neck in one piece and undeveloped. Before his purchase, Freeport entrepreneur E.B. Mallet had put together 291 of about these same acres for his modern, commercial hay farm. Wood's 300 acres would in turn be purchased by the Smiths in 1946.

Wood went immediately to work on his retirement retreat. To design his home, Wood hired the prominent architect John

Calvin Stevens with offices in Portland and Boston, a nationally known choice of affluent families seeking large country houses in beautiful settings along the coast and inland. The grand home, “built of native stone hewn from the ledge on which it stands,” according to the 1946 sales brochure sent to the Smiths, was constructed partly by stone masons brought from Italy. It was built in two phases and completed in 1922. The house announces itself to the visitor with a 100-foot red-tiled veranda, its roof supported by four, two-story ionic columns. Entering the large entrance hall, one is greeted by a pastoral stained-glass window over the landing of a broad staircase to the second floor. The pipes of a grand, mechanical organ once embraced the landing on either side. A few stairs at the far end of the hall lead to sunken dining room paneled in rich, dark wood, lit by a 120-piece crystal chandelier from Austria, and overhung at one end by a musician’s balcony. A picture window affords views of the Harraseeket River and the stone tower of the one-time Casco Castle. In Wood’s day, the house was richly carpeted and furnished with treasures from the family’s world travels.

While building the house, Wood married a second time to Constance Caldwell with whom he had two children, Morton, known as Woody, and Theodora, known



The dining room, wood-paneled with a crystal chandelier from Austria and musician’s balcony, was furnished with treasures from the family’s travels.

as Teddy. He decided against breeding cattle, not wanting to inhibit the world travels he intended in his retirement. The family would be in residence from May to October or November during which time he assumed the role of gentleman farmer, intent only on being as self-sufficient on the land as possible. He hired couples from Europe to tend the vegetable gardens and farm animals and cook and care for the house, paying their passage in partial return for their work.

During the winter the family traveled the world by ocean liner, often settling for a time in France where the family would rent a villa and Teddy and Woody would go to school. In 1930 the Wood family took the long way home on a cruise around the world by way of the Pacific Ocean. Described by Woody as not concerned with practical matters, his father loved the fascinating people he met on his travels. While at home on Wolfe’s Neck, he enjoyed reading to his children from his library of classic literature, a largely self-educated man of the world.



The 1914 plans of the Wolf Neck Development Corporation divided the neck into more than 350 small house lots, some only 50 feet wide. Shown here is only one of five sections, extending from the tip of the neck through today’s state park. Stanley Wood bought it all!

According to local lore, the Woods hosted elegant events in their grand home, such as a 1924 benefit for a children’s welfare organization described in the local newspaper. Stories about the family’s association with the early film industry survive. While rumors that Mrs. Wood was a silent film star are untrue, and that Rudolph Valentino took a shower in the second floor bathroom (and the shower never worked again) remain unsubstantiated, it is a fact that Wood’s eldest daughter Margaret by his first marriage was the wife of film star Jack Holt. A ruggedly handsome leading man from silent to talkie films for decades, his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



The living room as restored by the Babikians.



Mary and George Babikian display the FHS Preservation Award, in the shape of a shoelast in recognition of the town's shoemaking history, posing on the staircase in the grand entrance hall. The stained-glass window over the landing was designed by Connie Wood, Stanley's second wife and mother of Teddy and Woody.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

square jaw was the visual inspiration for the fictional character Dick Tracy. Teddy Wood remembers Holt and his family visiting the Stone House, once inspiring laughter as he took his Western film star stance at the reigns of the family's workhorses pulling the farm sled on a moonlit hayride.

Stanley Wood tragically began to lose his fortune in the Stock Market crash of 1929, afterward totally lost in a 1933 aftershock. Life became difficult for the family in the big house with no help, and his wife, known as Connie, left for Newton, Massachusetts, for comfort and better schooling for the children. They eventually divorced. Stanley Wood died of a heart attack in 1944 while living in town, on doctor's orders, at the hotel at

the corner of Main and Bow Streets.

In 1946 the house went on the market, and a relative of the Smiths sent them the sales brochure, according to family lore thinking it humorous that it described the house as perfect for an institution. The Smiths had five children at the time, extended family, and a wide circle of friends. Instead of thinking it funny, the couple quickly got on the train to Freeport and bought the house and accompanying 300 acres. Mr. Smith was a lawyer who had served in prominent positions in the Roosevelt Administration, including New Deal appointments and World War II assignments. At war's end, the family was seeking a summer retreat. They knew Maine and this area because Mrs. Smith had spent her summertime childhood on her family's Clapboard Island in Falmouth.

In 1947 the family moved from Washington back to their native Philadelphia. Mr. Smith became a business entrepreneur and civic leader, among other ventures creating the city's first classical music station, WFLN. Mrs. Smith pursued her interest in nature and the environment and served on the first board of the Nature Conservancy. In Maine, working together, they became pioneers in organic agriculture, land conservation, and historic preservation. Wolfe's Neck Farm began practicing organic methods in the 1950s, well before

Rachael Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 rang the alarm bell about what chemicals were doing to the environment. Mr. Smith's winning 1960 suit against the Maine Central Power Company, which allowed individuals to refuse chemical sprays under powerlines, remains a landmark conservation victory.

L.M.C. Smith died in 1975. Eleanor Houston Smith continued the stewardship of the farm until she passed away in 1987. Before her death, she gave the house, known to the family simply as the Big House, to the University of Southern Maine, for use exclusively as a conference center. She and the Smith's six children gave the farm to USM. Both gifts were activated by her will. The house hosted conferences for many years, most regularly and notably those of the USM's Stone-coast MFA program in Creative Writing. After USM opened new conference facilities on its Portland campus the house was used infrequently, and it returned to the Wolfe's Neck Farm Foundation. The farm had reverted to the nonprofit, board-run Wolfe's Neck Farm Foundation earlier in 1997. The Foundation conducted a professional assessment as to whether it was wise to keep the house for institutional uses and concluded it would be best used and preserved as a residence. The Babikians took ownership in 2017. They have embraced the house and its history with love and care. **FHS**

SKORDO: A Local Business Spices up Freeport's Main Street

FITTINGLY, THE IDEA FOR SKORDO BEGAN FOR the Karonis family in the kitchen. Passionate about hard work, family, and building something together, they asked themselves, "How can we work together while pursuing our passion for cooking?"

SKORDO (which means garlic in Greek) is a family business that opened its first location in Freeport in the spring of 2017. A spice retailer and lifestyle shop, SKORDO quickly grew a loyal following, opening its second location in Portland just months after its first, and a third location at the Maine Mall this past September.

Much of SKORDO's success can be attributed to its sourcing, which includes



This August, SKORDO sponsored FHS's Summer Garden Party. We ate good food, welcomed new members, and enjoyed the garden in full bloom!

spices from around the world, such as paprika from Hungary and vanilla from Madagascar, as well as local products, flavors, and cookbooks, sourced from and inspired by Maine itself.

The family business is run by Cari and John Karonis and John's daughters Anne and Erin, and the influence of family is apparent upon entering the Freeport shop. Cari warmly describes their ambition that customers might feel like they are entering the family's home as they walk across the store's threshold.

Because Freeport was the site of SKORDO's first shop, it was important for the family to feel like they could build a home for their business within the community. The presence of small local businesses like SKORDO is overwhelmingly positive for Freeport as the town navigates a transitioning retail landscape. Local shops like SKORDO are important in that they appeal not just to tourists, but to Freeport residents as well. Anne explains, "SKORDO, along with several other local businesses in Freeport, like Rustic Arrow and Bella Boutique, are creating a downtown Freeport experience

that locals and visitors alike will want to spend their Saturday exploring."

SKORDO's commitment to supporting its community shines through in the cookbooks, tools, and ingredients they carry that are inspired by Maine. Cookbooks featuring local chefs and recipes, such as Margaret Hathaway's *The New Portland Maine Chef's Table* and Erin French's *The Lost Kitchen: Recipes and a Good Life Found in Freedom, Maine*, highlight Maine's growing reputation as a food-lover's destination. Spice blends such as SKORDO's Maple Salmon Rub and Maine Blueberry Pork Rub show that SKORDO's mission of empowering the home cook encourages customers not only to broaden their culinary horizons but to look a little closer and see new possibilities in Maine flavors.

SKORDO also supports Freeport through community partnership. This summer, SKORDO donated to the Freeport Historical Society's Annual Gala and sponsored our Garden Party. We are so grateful for SKORDO's support and we look forward to continuing this exciting partnership! FHS



Evelyn Smith & SKORDO Co-Founder
Anne Karonis

COLLECTIONS CORNER BY HOLLY HURD

Historic Characters to Live at Harrington House

IN RECENT YEARS the historical society has received several portraits of people who once lived and worked in Freeport. We were thrilled to add Strout's Point shipyard mogul Henchman Soule and his wife Lydia to our collections and, last year, portraits of his cousin—Porter's Landing shipbuilder Rufus Soule—and wife Susan were purchased at auction. **Wallace Soule of Bakersfield, California contacted us recently and wondered whether we would like to have his family painting of Clement Soule—Henchman's brother—and a half-hull model of the *Tam O'Shanter*.** An instant reply of "YES INDEED" sent Wally to the post office with his generous contribution carefully wrapped in wooden crates. He also kindly offered to forward a photograph of Clement's portrait, and it was immediately obvious that the sea captain looked strikingly like his elder sibling! The *Tam O'Shanter* model is also an excellent addition to our collections since it nicely complements a painting of the *Tam* purchased by FHS in 2008, and we have many other records related to this vessel.

Clement Soule was the youngest brother of the Soule Brothers trio who built and owned ships out of South Freeport. Enos, Henchman, and Clement built 29 ships at Strout's Point from 1839-1879. While their roles changed over the years, for the most part Enos ran the shipyard while Henchman oversaw the business from New Haven, CT and Clement captained their vessels. Henchman and Enos sold their share of the waterfront property to Clement in 1851, who expanded the family holdings over the next decade. Clement moved to New Jersey later in life and his descendants headed west. Wallace Soule's father settled in California, so these items have traveled far from their original home in South Freeport. Interestingly, the western families pronounce their surname "Sewall" instead of "Soul," the version used by Freeport and Yarmouth descendants.



Holly Hurd holding portrait of Clement Soule.

It is a particularly poignant experience to have the opportunity to look into the countenance of a person who is otherwise only visible through historical information. Records tell us quite a lot about some people of the past, but being able to observe their face, hair, eyes, clothing, and expression adds a dimension of familiarity that feels more like having met them. We have photographs of many of Freeport's historical figures, but images of those who lived before photography (typically before the 1860s locally) are rare. Most of our earliest residents are known only by the records left behind. Generally, only people of means were able to have their portraits painted—even so, many of the wealthy left no trace of their appearance. We have no images of the original Dennisons of Mast Landing—Capt. Abner and David or any of their children, though they were a well-to-do family. (A far-flung relative can always turn up!) Waiting for the remaining shipyard brother Enos Soule. He must be out there somewhere...

Just a few weeks ago another Freeport resident of the past emerged. **Curtis Scribner of Cumberland and his brother Charlie donated a portrait of their great, great, great-grandfather Col. Theodore**

Curtis. Although born in Harpswell in 1790, Theodore was a lifelong resident of Freeport, where he married Susanna Townsend in 1813. He and his wife are buried in the Lane Cemetery. Their grandson, Oakley Curtis, was the 50th Governor of Maine from 1915-1917. Curt was bequeathed the family surname and the painting, which he says has been in his family since he can remember though no one in recent memory has been quite sure of the gentleman's identity. Curt researched the signature on the portrait and learned that the artist was a well-known portraitist from Belgium—Eugene Charles Le Gendre (1827-1900). Curt and his wife Nina had the painting cleaned and restored by Fogg Art In Wiscasset before donating it to FHS.

The portrait is magnificent and historically interesting, in part because Theodore's account books from the 1810s through the 1840s show that he was a laborer and the portrait depicts a gentleman (a man of property and means). During that period, Theodore engaged in a variety of day jobs including shipbuilding and hauling. Later he had a store at his home on Pleasant Hill, which may have been successful enough for him to gain "gentleman" status by the time the portrait was painted overseas in 1855. Theodore's son Ambrose was a prominent shipbuilder in South Freeport who visited California during the gold rush, and that worldly experience may have helped connect his father to international travel.

Like the painting of Clement Soule, the portrait of Theodore Curtis is particularly important because FHS has a number of historical records related to him. These family portraits have grazed the walls of descendants for generations and will now be enjoyed by history enthusiasts at Harrington House for many more generations. Thanks so much to Wallace Soule and Curtis Scribner for sharing their ancestors with FHS and the public. FHS

JOHN MANN Surveying Freeport's present and past

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW more about Freeport's present and past, you can't do better than talk with John T. Mann, a surveyor, historian, author and descendant of a family that has been here for three hundred years.

Mann was raised just up Wolfe's Neck Road from where his great grandfather had started a farm, and got his early education at the Grove Street School, where the town hall is now, and then Freeport High School. As the son and grandson of farmers, he was learning plenty on the side as well. When he was 17, his father, James Mann, gave him some land and advised him to build a house there, pointing out that "it takes a cage to catch a canary." Mann followed his father's advice and built a typical Cape Cod home where he would later live with his wife, Val, who also had historical roots including a great grandfather, Evans Cole Banks, who lived in the 18th century Pote House further down the Wolfe's Neck Road.

Mann studied surveying at the Central Maine Vocational Technical Institute and eventually got a professional license after taking two eight hour exams. Aside from his professional skills, Mann developed the ability to uncover former uses of land that most would miss, which has proved invaluable in his work as a historian—discovering not just where the early settlers came but how they actually lived.

A historian who accompanied Mann in examining one field was struck how he read the landscape. She described Mann describing what he saw: "That's where the barn was.... This was pasture. . . This is where the house was. . . This is probably where the well was." And then moving on to find remains of a possible road in the woods. Mann became particularly interested in the story of the Ulster Scots, aka the Scots



John Mann in grade school.



The cover of *1718-2018 Reflections on 300 years of the Scots Irish in Maine*



John at an archaeological dig.

Irish, who played a major role in these parts, including bringing the Manns to America in the early 18th century.

The Puritan minister in Massachusetts, Cotton Mather, had become concerned by French advances and Indian attacks in Maine and had written to clergy in Scotland and Ireland for help seeking to secure things down east. He didn't want Catholics because they might be tied to the French, but the Scots Irish had a reputation of being tough fighters up to the task and so, despite the fact that Puritans and Ulster Scots didn't share religious views, and given that the latter were anxious to escape the subjugation of absentee landlords, people like Gideon Mann made it to the Maine shores.

John Mann tells the Freeport part of the story extremely well in *Ulster-Scots on the Coast of Maine, Volume 1* in which he describes the Means Massacre, an Indian attack near what is now Flying Point Road in which two members of the Means family were killed and one taken captive, and which was the last of such assaults in the region. Mann also contributed to another book, *1718-2018: Reflections on 300 years of the Scots Irish*

in Maine. Both books are available at the Freeport Historical Society. Mann served as president of the Ulster-Scots Project. His own family records fill seven file cabinets and a computer base storage system. As Mann notes, "The story of the Ulster-Scots, and especially their migration into, and influence on, the District of Maine, has been much overlooked and under reported."

Lest you think of Mann as only scholarly, it is worth noting that he is also a wonderful story teller, a Maine habit that has contributed to the retention of its history. We found ourselves talking about the state's culture such as the fact that Mainers are careful not to stick their nose into their neighbor's business. Mann quoted his father as having told him, "You want to look after your neighbors because they're like money in the bank. You never know when you're going to need it." And, he noted, "If you don't have a sense of humor, you're going to have trouble."

In 1979, as Freeport got more expensive, the Manns moved to inland to Bowdoin. But John Mann remains one of the most perceptive and enjoyable voices you can hear talk about this town. **FHS**

RECENT EVENTS RECAP



One corner of this 92-acre sanctuary is home to a historic dam and mill site that has been the subject of extensive research by David Coffin of the Freeport Historical Society. David grew up playing amongst this c. 1757 mill site known as Dennison's Falls and wanted to share its history with the community. Sixteen months ago, the 150-foot long, 8' thick and 12' high granite structure was pretty much hidden in the underbrush. Thanks to an Eagle Scout project led by Thomas Mosier of Freeport the dam is now in full sight and invites exploration. On Oct. 19th, a permanent informational kiosk was dedicated by the partners in this project, Maine Audubon, Freeport Historical Society and BSA Troop 45.



This fall, the Freeport community came together once again in appreciation of Freeport's unique town treasure, Pettengill Farm. This Pettengill Farm Day featured demonstrations of spinning wool into yarn and cooking dessert in a cast iron Dutch oven over an open fire, as well as activities like writing with quill pens and making beeswax candles and cornhusk dolls. Of course, we included PFD favorites like hay wagon rides, small animals for petting, local food, cider pressing and, of course, tours of the house. Thank you to FHS Trustee Dennis Landis for photographing the event!



Four classes of third grade students from the Mast Landing School came to the Freeport Historical Society to see this year's exhibit about Freeport's earliest settlement at Mast Landing. Teacher Tom McKibben, along with several parents, walked each group to a tour and explanation of the exhibit which features a full-scale model built by local historian David Coffin.



For the second year in a row, Jim & Jesse from the Historical Society and Matt DeGrandpre from Wolfe's Neck CA&E conspired to erect this 12 foot high sculpture on the marsh at Mast Landing. He was a very friendly reminder of the fall events at Pettengill Farm and at Wolfe's Neck.



This September, the FHS Collections Committee hosted its 2nd Annual Evening with the Collections. Collections Committee Members and Friends of the Collections presented and discussed newly-acquired collections items and enjoyed an evening celebrating the work that the committee has accomplished this past year. At left, Elinor Hudson presents F.E. Merrill papers.



Thank you to FHS's wonderful garden committee for all the work they have done this season!

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Anne Cram | Jan Peterson |
| Jane Danielson | Connie Coffin |
| Jane Grant | Polly Brann |
| Brad Snow | Bob Fusselman |
| Betty Furtney | Strandy Quesada |
| Bridget Healy | Beverly Curry |
| Greta Waterman | Rebecca Hotelling |

Corporate Sponsors

The Freeport Historical Society relies on the generous support of these local businesses. Please support them whenever possible.

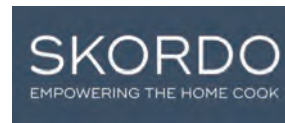
GOLD AND SILVER MEMBERS

George & Joyce
DENNEY

L.L.Bean



SUPPORTING AND LEADERSHIP MEMBERS



VESSEL SERVICES INC.



HM Payson



BEDROCK MEMBERS

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| AZURE Café | Maine Idyll Motor Court |
| Bow Street Market | Norway Savings Bank |
| Curtis Lawn and Yard Care | Orchard Hill Investment Group |
| Freeport Hardware | Peter B. Rice & Co. |
| Harrison Earth Works | Seaview Accounting |
| Jay Enterprises Inc. | |
| Keller Williams Realty | |
| Love Point Oysters | |

BUSINESS MEMBERS

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| AEC Engineering | Freeport Rotary | Nicholson Inn |
| Alta Dental of Maine | James McConnell Builders | Portland Schooner Co. |
| Brett Davis Real Estate | Kendall Tavern | Schaeffer Douglas Title |
| Casco Bay Ford | Lindquist Funeral Home | Shady Glen Nursery |
| Coastal Freeport Living | The Lobster Cooker | Steve Brann Building |
| Criterium Engineers | Maine Idyll Motor Court | Tidebrook Conservation Trust |
| Coffee By Design | Mark Dorsey, Inc. | Wilbur's of Maine |
| Desert of Maine | Mike Rollins Plumbing & Heating | |
| Estabrook's Garden Ctr. | | |

The Dash

Freeport Historical Society
Harrington House
45 Main Street
Freeport, ME 04032

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #47
Freeport, Maine

RESEARCH NEWS



Rob Hopper absorbed in the *Six Town Times*.

THIS SUMMER ROB HOPPER of Dewey, Arizona, joined by his mother and sister, made a return visit to FHS where they spent many hours in the archive pouring over large bound volumes of a century-old newspaper, the *Six Town Times*. Though some years are digitized and available online, FHS has several originals that are easily accessible for patron viewing. (A selection of issues are even indexed!) Rob and family have been researching their ancestors' history in Freeport from 1912-1915 and found several interesting tidbits to round out their family stories. Our archive has many amazing records for the stalwart history digger!

COLLECTIONS CORNER

Curtis Scribner of Cumberland and his brother Charlie donated a portrait of their great, great, great-grandfather Col. Theodore Curtis. The portrait is magnificent and historically interesting.

See the full story on page 8



Curtis Scribner (right) and brother Charlie with ancestor Theodore Curtis.

For more information: www.freeporthistoricalsociety.org or 207-865-3170