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YARMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Yarmouth History Center
Newsletter

Fall 2014

118 East Elm Street, Yarmouth, Maine

207-846-6259

Lawrence Parisi's World War II Collection

The Yarmouth History Center would like to thank Mr. Hunt Blatchford for convincing his friend Mr. Lawrence Parisi to bring his World War II memorabilia to the Yarmouth History Center for us to view.

What emerged from that meeting was an opportunity to record an oral history of Mr. Parisi's account of his tour of duty as a sailor aboard the *USS Texas*. Accompanying that oral history is the addition of a new 21st century exhibit of items on loan from Mr. Parisi's collection. We are proud to be able share these pieces of history with the community.

During WW II, approximately 304 Yarmouth citizens enlisted in the war effort. Some of the enlisted left to fight far from Yarmouth while others stayed close to home to tend the submarine nets in Casco Bay. Mr. Parisi was a high school student at North Yarmouth Academy when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Parisi served aboard the *USS Texas*, a battleship that was launched on May 18, 1912 and commissioned on March 12, 1913.

In the early years of WWII, the *Texas* was tasked with the mission of escorting convoys across the Atlantic and protecting those convoys from German attack. As the war progressed, the *Texas* was called upon for many missions, notably the Normandy Beach operations where at one point during the invasion the *Texas* got as close as 3,000 yards from shore to provide fire support for the Normandy landings. Nine months later, the *Texas* participated in another pivotal battle of the War providing support for the landing at Iwo Jima.



Lawrence Parisi and the Yarmouth Historical Society's Chairman John Hodgkins viewing the new exhibit.

The Yarmouth Historical Society would like to thank Mr. Parisi for his generosity; sharing his memories of his time aboard the *USS Texas*; and for loaning these historically significant items from his personal collection.

Clam Festival Photos and Stories

The Yarmouth Historical Society is searching for information on the early days of the Yarmouth Clam Festival. If you have photos, stories, or any other information pertaining to the early days of the festival please contact Amy Aldredge at the Yarmouth History Center, 207-846-6259.



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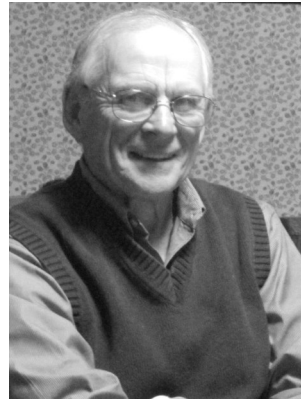
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Yarmouth, ME 04096

207-846-6259

From the Chair

How are you connected to Yarmouth’s history? Is it your genealogy? Many of you may be descended from ancestors here. Or is it a memory you have, a memory of when you rode to school in a horse and buggy, or caught a train at Yarmouth Station for a day in Augusta, or packed sardines before daylight at the cannery? Perhaps, you have an ancient artifact or photograph in the attic from Yarmouth’s industrial years, or an heirloom or relic from a past generation. Some of you may be and have all of the above. I am none.



Thirty-five years ago, my wife Beth and I bought an old hill farm in Temple, Maine. This hill farm is how I’m connected to Yarmouth’s history. Soon after I became the owner of this antiquity, I discovered it was built by John Oakes. Oakes had migrated to Temple in 1799 from North Yarmouth with wife Patience and eight young children, acquired a quarter-section of land under the Homestead Act, and built the old settler farmhouse that Beth and I now own. In North Yarmouth he had been parishioner #685 at First Parish Church and attended regularly “the old meeting house under the ledge” on Gilman Road. Said to have been a builder in private life (and his house in Temple would indicate so), Oakes served in Colonel Jonathan Mitchell’s regiment (Captain Gray’s company), and in 1779 fought in the Revolutionary War’s Penobscot Expedition, a hapless attempt to wrest the naval post at Castine away from the British. The battle is said by historians to have been the worst defeat in U.S. Naval history until Pearl Harbor.

Oakes was forty years old when he and his family left North Yarmouth for Temple. Patience died soon after their arrival. In 1800 he married Susannah Staples, who may have earlier migrated from Freeport and been known to him, and by 1825 the newlyweds had produced sixteen more children. Oakes would become one of seven charter members of the Temple Congregational Church, a Deacon for many years, and serve on the town’s first Board of Selectmen and first School Committee. He is remembered in Temple now as “the man with twenty-four kids.”

Oakes built a mill on the stream bordering his quarter-section of land. He produced the timbers there that went into his house and barn, and lumber products for folks in town as well. His granddaughter Henrietta’s husband, Orville Gleason, operated the mill in later years, and what is listed in early town records as Oakes’ Mill is now remembered as Gleason’s Mill. The canal and raceway are still visible on the property adjacent to the stream but there is no trace of the mill. I have a framed photo of a painting of it by Temple artist Myrna Scales hanging in the house. It’s likely the last bit of evidence of what the mill and waterwheel looked like.

Continued . . .

From the Collection Contributed By Volunteer Nancy Ward

During my past three years volunteering at the Yarmouth History Center I have catalogued numerous collections, but my personal favorites are those pertaining to the seafaring history of Yarmouth—the ships and captains. We are fortunate that so much of this history has been preserved in the collection of the Yarmouth Historical Society.

I am in the midst of completing Collection 338: The E. D. Lane and Irving True Papers, a collection that will add to the Society’s existing rich and colorful history of the shipping industry in the 19th century. Captain Lane joins the Blanchard, Drinkwater, Sturdivant, Humphrey, and Sweetser families – to name a few – that were at the heart of Yarmouth’s seafaring and the shipping commerce for nearly 200 years.

There are more than 50 descriptive, handwritten letters in this collection that take the reader aboard the ships for voyages to Callao (west of Lima, Peru), Huanillos (Chile), Rio de Janiero, Bombay, Gibraltar, Glasgow, and Panama.

These letters inform us how some captains were permitted to have their families accompany them on voyages, while other ship owners prohibited family travel. Through the words of the ship captains who frequently corresponded with Captain Lane, I have experienced the weather conditions

and their problems with their crews. Through these correspondences the reader is able to visualize standing on deck looking at the myriad fleets of ships in each port as they compete for business.

These descriptive letters invite your imagination to watch the stevedores unload the cargo, hear the captain negotiate prices for the goods brought to port (or to purchase goods to take to the next port) and accompany the captain to arrange for repairs to the mizzen mast and rigging that was damaged as the ship sailed around Cape Horn in a storm.

In addition to the correspondence, the collection includes copies of insurance policies, bills of sale for shares of the various ships, letters from shipbrokers and commission agents, accounts of expenses and disbursements, charter contracts, and bank drafts.

What emerges from this collection is a broad view of Yarmouth’s shipping and commerce industry from 1840 through 1880, as the days of sail were coming to a close. As the reader of these correspondences I am left with an understanding of the vibrant trade and commerce that moved our nation, from gaining our initial independence to the economic power it is today. I now have a greater appreciation and pride for Yarmouth’s place in that history.

Local Genealogist Lends a Hand

Victoria Thomas is a professional genealogist and volunteer at the Yarmouth History Center. When she is not researching for her clients, Vicky is at the Center updating the cemetery records. A professional genealogist with 25 years of experience in the field of family and forensic genealogy and a specialty in New England and Canadian Atlantic Provinces Family History, Vicky’s expertise is a great match to the project she had taken on for the History Center. Wondering where to start your family history research or stuck on a family connection . . . Visit Vicky at the History Center on Wednesdays between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 a.m. noon through November (she will be back in the spring) to ask your question. For more extensive research your can email her at vickytho@vptg.org .

Interested in volunteering?

The Yarmouth History Center is looking for a volunteer with MS Word and Excel experience for a short-term assignment. For more information, please contact Amy Aldredge at aaldredge@yarmouthmehistory.org, or call 846-6259.

2014 Fall Lecture Series



October 18
Walking into the Past:
A Narrated Talk Exploring
the Gravesites at Old Ledge Cemetery

Walk the Old Ledge Cemetery with local Genealogist Victoria Thomas and Yarmouth Historical Society's Executive Director

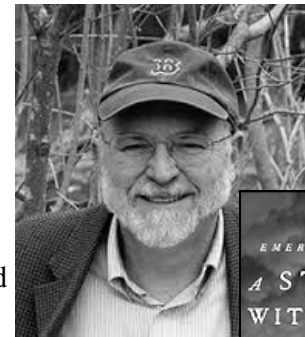
and Curator Amy Aldredge. Learn about the area's early residents and the evolution of the headstones, investigating some of the popular motifs and the meaning behind them.

Free to members, \$5 non-members

LOCATION: Old Ledge Cemetery, Gilman Road, Yarmouth

TIME: 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Rain Date October 19



October 20
Emerson "Tad" Baker
A Storm of Witchcraft:

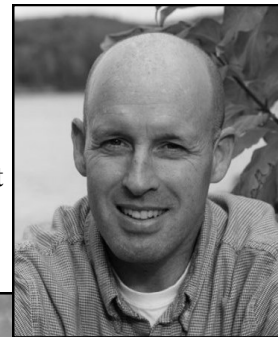
The Salem Trials and the American Experience

Focusing on the key players in the Salem witchcraft crisis—the accused witches and the people they allegedly bewitched, as well as the judges and government officials who prosecuted them—Emerson Baker illuminates why the tragedy unfolded as it did. He shows how the Puritan government's attempts to suppress what had taken place only fueled the popular imagination, and established the trials as a turning point from Puritan communalism to Yankee independence.

LOCATION: Town Hall Community Room, Yarmouth Maine

TIME: 7:00 p.m. There will be a short business meeting before this talk.

Free to members, \$5 non-members



November 11
Darron Collins — Renovating The Turrets

This talk will focus on the major renovation of The Turrets, a summer "cottage" built in 1895 and used by College of the Atlantic as the centerpiece of its campus. The 3.9 million project preserved the outer envelope of the building while replacing the roofing and reconstructing 2 ocean side turrets and 7 granite chimneys.

This project included replacing 99 windows and more than 20 doors using energy saving and historically accurate materials.

LOCATION: Yarmouth History Center Hamill Room

TIME: 6:30 Wine and Cheese reception /7:00 p.m. Lecture

Free to members, \$5 non-members

This lecture series is sponsored by Leon and Lisa Gorman.



Check our twitter, website and Facebook page for programming updates and additional events. To receive our monthly e-newsletter, e-mail info@yarmouthmehistory.org

From the Chair continued . . .

Oakes died in 1845. Neither I nor Leslie Oakes, his most ardent researcher and wife of a direct descendant, has located his burial place. There's a small stone in Phillips' Riverside Cemetery that bears his name, but it's generally believed he is not there. His survivors, according to Mrs. Oakes, included one hundred fifty-three grandchildren. Yes, one hundred fifty-three.

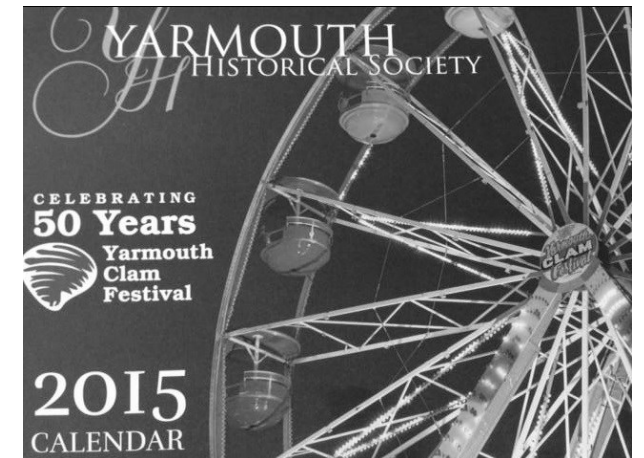
Though John Oakes is not an ancestor of mine, when I'm working in the fields and barnyard of the old hill farm splitting wood, pruning trees, mowing, or any one of the myriad of other things I do there, I feel a kinship to him. And I would like to talk with him for a few minutes. He is my connection to Yarmouth's past, my story.

And what is your connection to Yarmouth's past? What is your story? Write it down and send it to Amy or Maura at the Yarmouth History Center. Tell us about your—or your family's—early days here. Or describe an ancestor, a remembrance, an experience, a relic out of the past. We'd love to read it and share it here in the Yarmouth Historical Society's newsletter.

John Hodgkins, Chair

Stonewall Gallery

Jane Banquer's Prints and Oil Paintings will be on exhibit in the Stonewall Gallery and also in the Hamill Room through October.



2015 Calendars
Now Available
At the History Center

Volunteer Spotlight: We want to thank our volunteers Lizzie and Gaia for the hours they put in at the History Center this summer. It did not matter what the task . . . shelving books, filing photographs, assisting in research, building and labeling exhibits, proofreading . . . these volunteers did it all. Thank you Lizzie and Gaia for your service and best of luck with your studies this year.

Host An Event At the Yarmouth History Center

Host your next meeting or event at the Yarmouth History Center. Your guests will enjoy a modern, spacious facility in a picturesque setting adjacent to Royal River The Center is handicap accessible and has parking at the center with additional parking at the Royal River Park. The Yarmouth History Center's Community Room offers several options to accommodate your event needs. Contact the History Center for details.



Notice to Members:

Yarmouth Historical Society's Annual Meeting

Where: Yarmouth Town Hall Community Room **When:** October 20, 2014 **Time:** 7:00 p.m.

A short meeting will take place before the talk. Speaker Emerson Baker will present :
A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience

Researching a Branch of The Groves Family

This summer the History Center hired student Julianna Harwood to help update a few of our local programs. We quickly discovered that Ms. Harwood was an excellent researcher. The following is an excerpt of her research for a family looking into a branch of the Groves family of Cousins Island.

Samuel Groves Sr. (1806-1892) was the first of the Groves family to be recorded on Cousins Island. He and his wife, Hannah Hill, had eleven children (Lavina, Samuel, Olive, Jacob, Henry, Alvin, Phebe, Homer, Octavius, Alice, and Jenny). Two of these children, Henry (born 1846) and Alvin (born 1848), are relevant to your inquiries. Henry Groves married Addie Hill and had three children, one of which was Seth Groves. Seth Groves, with his wife, Agnes Karlson, had six children, including Franklin Groves, born 1923. If you are interested in life on Cousins Island around this time, particularly for the Groves family, there is, here at the History Center, a transcript of an interview with Franklin Groves about his early life on the Island. Henry Groves, and then Seth Groves, ran the well-known Groves farm, and so, most of our information in our archives, if not all, is regarding this nuclear family.

However, the names listed for this research stem from Alvin Groves, another son of Samuel Groves. Alvin married Serena Sawyer, who died while giving birth to a daughter, Anne, who died at the age of three. Alvin then remarried Ella (1855-1928), whose maiden name is unknown (one document states that she was adopted by a Sawyer, so it is possible her maiden name was Sawyer).

Alvin and Ella had five children, Annie, Bertha, Arlene, a son who died young, and Freeman (it is unclear why Freeman took the last name Sawyer, as you stated, instead of Groves). The information supplied to us that Freeman married Dora Goldrup was confirmed in our findings. What is unclear is which of Alvin and Ella's children was Richard Freeman's parent. The research indicates that one of the women may have married a man with the Freeman surname; making the research a bit more confusing. Regardless of which child is Richard Freeman's parent, he or she was the cousin of Seth Groves.

What is clear is that Alvin left Cousin's Island between the age of thirty and forty, before he had any children with Ella. This suggests that Richard Freeman was not born on Cousin's Island. There is not much information on his life or family in our records.

The Groves farm was sold in 1955 and a steam power generating plant was built on the land, which later came to be known as Central Maine Power. This construction prompted the building of the bridge between the mainland and Cousins Island, changing life for its inhabitants drastically. There is a lot of information on Groves Farm and the branch of the Groves family that stayed on the island because of their prominence and wealth. Unfortunately, the children of Samuel Groves that left the island fell into anonymity.

I also researched the Goldrup, Freeman, and Sawyer families. I was unable to find information in our records here at the History Center on the Goldrup family (perhaps because Freeman Sawyer was not born on Cousins Island). There are documents on the Sawyer family, but they all seem to stop at the generation of Alvin Groves' first wife, Serena. Likewise, all information on the Freeman family doesn't seem to have a tie to Richard Freeman.

NOTE: We have continued to research related information for this family's inquiry and have recently found the Goldrup connection and continue to research . . .

Amy Aldredge Named Executive Director of The Yarmouth Historical Society

The Yarmouth Historical Society has named Amy Aldredge as the new Executive Director. She has been serving as Interim Executive Director since April of 2014. Ms. Aldredge has lived and worked in Yarmouth for over two decades and is currently serving on the Town of Yarmouth's Planning Board and as a volunteer at the Compass Project.

Amy began working for the Society as a volunteer and from there went on to serve on the Society's Board of Trustees. After receiving her M.A. in American and New England Studies, she joined the staff of the Yarmouth Historical Society in 2011 as Program Director. In 2012, Ms. Aldredge was named Program Director/Curator. Ms. Aldredge worked on helping the Society move from its old exhibit space to the new facility on East Elm Street. During this time, Aldredge consulted on the design and curated the exhibit gallery space at the new Yarmouth History Center, and contributed to the grant writing efforts that helped award the Historical Society a Maine Humanities Council Infrastructure Grant and a Davis Foundation Education Grant.

When asked about her work at the Yarmouth History Center Aldredge spoke about the History Center's connection to the community. "One of the most rewarding parts of my job is working with those who come to the Center to research a subject or an artifact they have found."



Executive Director Amy Aldredge

On the future of the Yarmouth Historical Society Aldredge is optimistic . . . "I look forward to growing our membership as well as continuing to expand our educational programming. This year the History Center collaborated with the Yarmouth Schools, Yarmouth Community Services, North Yarmouth Academy, and the Village Improvement Society to produce programs and events open to all community members in an effort to build awareness of this History Center and show the community what we have to offer. I want the members of the community to know that the History Center is here for them."

History Center Visitors Give and Receive

Research visitors come to the Yarmouth History Center for many different reasons but the thrill of helping them make discoveries reaffirms the reason the History Center is here. A local history enthusiast and student recently reported to us about his find of a musket ball. Earlier this summer this same student visited the Center to deliver a wooden cartwheel that he found on the shore of one of the town's island. The center recently hosted Mrs. Susan Fuss from Savannah, Georgia. Mrs. Fuss is a descendant of one of the region's original settlers and came to Yarmouth to do research for a book she is writing for her family. She also wanted to visit the gravesites of the family members she is researching. We were able to help her locate some of those gravesites. Mrs. Fuss' visit was beneficial to the Center as well. She gifted to the Historical Society a copy of the Lane Family research she has compiled for the book. Her work is a great addition to our research material and we thank her for it and for correcting a few inaccuracies in our Lane Family files.

We are always excited to get a phone call or email from community members asking for information. One resident recently called and emailed us photographs of four iron posts he happened upon while walking on the West Side Trail. His find was the remnants of the old iron support posts that once secured the Flaming Arrow Weather Vane. The Vane, originally placed atop the Old Ledge Meeting House, was taken by Mr. Solomon Winslow as a relic when the Old Meeting House was destroyed. After a group of Yarmouth citizens purchased the Vane from Mr. Winslow it was then erected on the summit of the Ledge in 1838. The Vane is now part of the History Center's permanent collection. This is what the Yarmouth History Center is all about, giving and receiving; it is how we can all be a part of preserving Yarmouth's history.