

Yarmouth History Center Newsletter

Fall 2018

118 East Elm Street, Yarmouth, Maine

207-846-6259

Yarmouth Snapshot: Photos from Yarmouth Historical Society

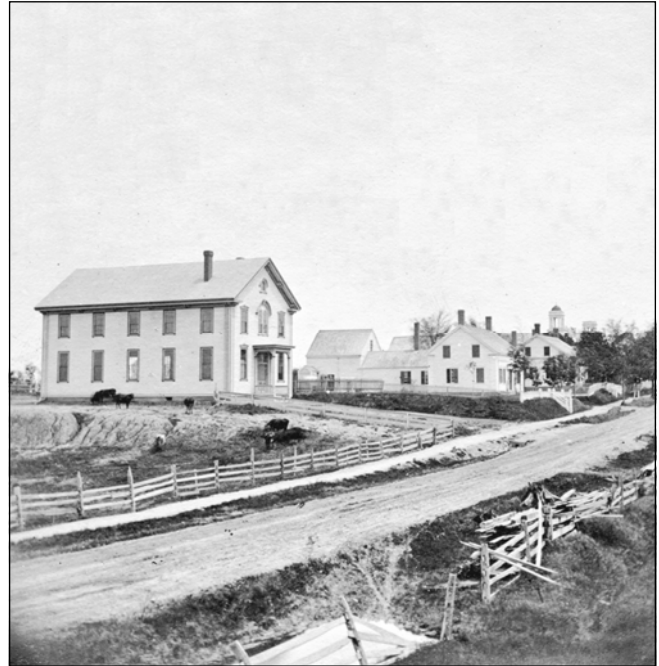
This past summer Yarmouth Historical Society exhibited a collection of historic Yarmouth photographs at Merrill Memorial Library. Not to worry. If you missed seeing this exhibit at the Library, you can now find the photographs on exhibit at Yarmouth History Center's Stonewall Gallery. The exhibit is a selection of reprints of original photos from the Historical Society's collection. The photographs offer glimpses of late 19th-century and early 20th-century life in Yarmouth. They illustrate streetscapes of the village, highlight island life, and illuminate the mill and ship-building industries.

One photograph in the collection is a streetscape featuring the Masonic Hall on Main Street, dated 1874. The Hall is one of Yarmouth's iconic buildings and throughout its history has served as a backdrop for many photographs that have recorded scenes of passing parades, views of flooding in the village, and portraits of community organizations.

The year the streetscape of the Masonic Hall was taken Ulysses S. Grant was president, Congress adopted the 15th Amendment, America's first zoo opened in Philadelphia, and cows grazed along Yarmouth's Main Street. It's hard to imagine a time when there were pastures along Main Street and fences were installed not as decorative landscape features but for the necessity of keeping livestock contained.

Also included in the exhibit is a streetscape showing Portland Street as a dirt road lined with plank sidewalks. Other streets represented in the exhibit are Bayview, Pleasant (the section that is now Marina Road), and Bridge Streets showing scenes that capture a moment in time and allow the viewer to discover that, despite how much has changed here in Yarmouth, there is much that has been preserved.

Equally the exhibit documents how developments over time have altered life in Yarmouth. There is a photograph of the *Nellie G.* waiting at the wharf on Cousins Island. The image harkens back to a time



Above: Photo of Brickyard Hollow with the Masonic Hall, now Gather, in the background.

before the island bridge existed and residents relied on the ferry to get to and from the island. A streetscape view from the harbor to Pleasant Street illustrates how Yarmouth's harbor has evolved over time. The area, once a bustling center of maritime industry, is now a center for seasonal boating activities and commerce beside a major thoroughfare.

It is our hope that by sharing these images of Yarmouth the viewer can get a sense of a period in our town's history. *Yarmouth Snapshot: Photographs from Yarmouth Historical Society* is on view at the Stonewall Gallery through October. The Center is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00am until 5:00pm.

The images in this exhibit are framed and available for purchase.



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From the Chair



Oops! You may have missed it—George Barrett’s presentation about transportation to and from Yarmouth, 1850 to 1950. Mr. Barrett described (and answered our questions about) a rather robust “multimodal” (though he didn’t use the term) system, which included steamboats, railroads, and road conveyances—first horses, carriages, and wagons, then, of course, the automobile.

But, not to worry. If you missed Barrett’s presentation, you can still join us at the History Center for an October 15th presentation about John Brown Russwurm and a November 13th film viewing and question and answer session with documentary filmmakers Tanya and Ray Shevenell featuring their film *The Home Road*.

Russwurm’s story, presented by historian John Cross, addresses so many issues—personal, social, economic, and political—that influenced Maine in the early 19th century. Born in Jamaica, Russwurm was the first African-American to graduate from Bowdoin College and the third African-American to graduate from an American college. He became active as an abolitionist and as a New York newspaper publisher (contemporaneous with David Lloyd Garrison, publisher of *The Liberator*). Active with the movement to encourage free Black Americans to return voluntarily to Africa, Russwurm himself moved to what became Liberia. He served over the last 28 years of his life as a publisher, educator, governor, and later as secretary of the American Colonization Society.

Immigration is at the root of the Shevenells’ story. The film traces 74-year-old Ray Shevenell’s walking of the same route from French Canada to employment in Maine’s mills and his family’s sinking roots here.

Don’t miss *The Eagle Huntress*, scheduled for October 18th. Filmed in the (very, very) wide open spaces of Mongolia, this film shows a girl learning from her father the skills of capturing and raising an eagle, training it to hunt in combination with the girl, and winning a national eagle-hunting competition, to the chagrin of Mongolian elders who said a girl couldn’t do it. A favorite of audiences on the film-festival circuit, the movie shows family life in a yurt—and in Mongolian society more broadly. I enjoyed this film very much and look forward to seeing it again.

We follow *The Eagle Huntress* with *The Barkley Marathons* on November 15th. These are just a few of history’s many facets, and you can see them here at the History Center because “History Lives Here.”

Bill Nugent

In Memoriam: Nancy Hill Ward

This summer the History Center lost devoted volunteer Nancy Hill Ward. Professionally Nancy was a writer, editor, researcher, and grant writer whose talents and expertise were employed at such places as the Smithsonian Institution, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. For eight years Nancy volunteered at the Historical Society archiving and inventorying the collection. Because of her ancestral connection to both the Native American and European communities of the area Nancy had a great interest in the work she did at the History Center and generously shared her knowledge acquired from her personal, genealogical research.

From the Collection and Into the Community

History Inspires Young Authors

The History Center once again hosted the Southern Maine Writing Project's Young Authors' Camp this past June. The group used the History Center as their headquarters as they explored the collection and sites around town to inspire their writing. The following are a sample of this year's works created during the camp.

Harper from Yarmouth was inspired by the huge painting of the P.N. Blanchard and wrote:

I imagine standing on that towering ship, feeling the breeze and how the water sprays up in my face. The ship rocking back and forth. The billowing white sails pushing me and the Blanchard across the blue ocean. I can imagine the people on that ship, maybe spending days or week on the seas. I can imagine looking down at the water, the tips white as snow, and the body unusually teal. I stand at the bow looking out over the open ocean. I can imagine, just being there, in that moment of time. I can imagine the sky above me, hanging like a chandelier of pink and blue. But then I remember that I am in the History Center in Yarmouth, Maine and how it isn't 1887. I smile again, for any painting or piece of writing that's creative enough can take you places or even different periods of time. Any piece that's creative enough can take you places, but it's special if it touches your soul.

Mira from Yarmouth:

A screaming man
Another one ran
An amputation set in the cabinet
Is pulled forward like a magnet
A doctor runs in
The other one spins
Chop - there goes his limb

History Time
Get ready, set, go!
History is a never ending story
It's the best story, the saddest story
The funniest story, the lost story
The happiest story, the questionable story,
The learning one, the "Um, what?" one
It's History Time!



Above: Young Authors explore Yarmouth's Meeting House and Baptist Cemetery.

Molly from Cape Elizabeth wrote a fictional story inspired by the Center's collection:

The Hard Worker

My name is Alisa and my parents, my brother, and my cousin are hard workers for our town.

My mother is one of the town sewers. She makes the finest dresses for day-to-day activity or for the best wedding. She works eight non-stop hours a day, every day of the week. I love my mother because she is a hard worker for others.

My father works with the train company going place to place to hold up the lights at nighttime so people can see. He sometimes works on the train calling out stops. I love my father because he never complains about what he does and always keeps a good attitude.

My seventeen year old brother is a butter churner. He always does it right, doesn't rush, and comes home from the factory cheerful. He helps the town a lot by making good food to eat. I love my brother because even if something goes wrong, he always tries to fix it.

And last, my fifteen year old cousin, who is a girl, makes beautiful pots and plates. She shapes them, glazes them, and has only ever broken three. She's careful and gentle. I love my cousin because she's so careful with what she does and takes her time which pays off.

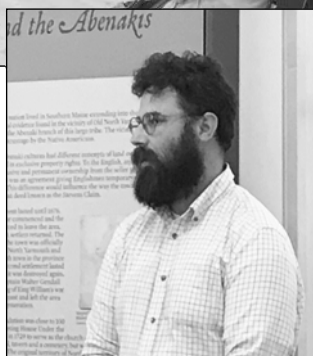
While this is a made up story, everything mentioned (the sewing machine, railroad lights, butter churner and plates) can be seen in the Yarmouth History Center. The Center is a great place!

In and Around the Yarmouth History Center



Above: Guest speaker Arthur Anderson answers questions for Yarmouth Historical Society members and guests.

Right: Arthur Anderson



Afternoon Archaeology Lecture

On the afternoon of Tuesday, July 24 Archaeologist Arthur Anderson spoke at Yarmouth History Center, presenting an informal, informative gallery talk that offered an introduction to the prehistoric archaeology of Southern Maine. The presentation focused on artifacts in the collection of Yarmouth Historical Society. Anderson, a Visiting Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Society, Culture, and Languages at the University of New England in Biddeford, was impressed with the variety of artifacts in our collections and the span of pre-history the artifacts represent. The most interesting points Anderson presented to the group highlighted the distant places from which these artifacts originated, what the finding of these artifacts in our region indicates about the culture of the inhabitants that made and used them, and how these artifacts came to be in Southern Maine.

Drop in and Dance

English Country Dancing is energizing, mesmerizing, social, and just plain fun! You're invited to come try it out on Wednesdays from 6:00-8:00 pm at Yarmouth History Center. Beginners are welcome, partners and costumes are not necessary, and the music is live thanks to musicians from 317 Main Community Music Center. Fee is \$12.00 for a drop in session. Join us!



Above, right to left: Placing *Night* in its new home are town planner Alex Jaegerman, sculptor Roy Patterson, Jesse Salisbury, and Jesse's son Ren.

Night Moves

The sculpture *Night*, a piece of art gifted to the town of Yarmouth by the late William Hamill, stood in the front garden of the former Firehouse Arts building on Center Street for over five years. When the building sold and the sculpture needed to be moved a new home was easy to find. When Mr. Hamill made the gift of the sculpture *Night* he made his wishes known that if the sculpture ever had to be moved it should be relocated to Yarmouth History Center.

On moving day the sculpture's creator Roy Patterson was on hand to supervise and assist in the placement of *Night* on its base. Patterson was joined by his friend and fellow sculptor Jesse Salisbury, Salisbury's son Ren, and Alex Jaegerman, Yarmouth's Director of Planning and Development. *Night* can now be viewed from outside the History Center and inside from the entry of the William D. Hamill Room, which bears the *Night* donor's name, and the Stonewall Gallery.

In and Around the Yarmouth History Center



From Left to Right: Shelby Bryant, Maura Goessling, Donna Damon, Katie Worthing, Toby Webb, Karen Asherman, Sky Grant, Blythe Guecia, Linda Grant. Photo by Chebeague Historical Society's Martha Vernon.

Far Left: Chebeague Island Schoolhouse Sign.



Visiting our Island Neighbors

On a foggy Monday morning in August the staff of Yarmouth History Center boarded the *Islander* ferry to visit our neighbors at the Chebeague Island Historical Society. The staff met with Donna Damon who gave a tour of the Society's workroom and archives, and with Martha Vernon, the Society's shop manager, to talk about the museum's gift shop. The visit allowed the staff members to exchange experiences and discuss the challenges we share in collecting and preserving the histories of our communities.

Board member and volunteer curator Toby Webb provided a tour of the current exhibit on display, *Chebeague & Maritime Enterprise*. Toby was instrumental in compiling the artifacts and information for the exhibit. It was a fascinating look at how the islanders have earned their living from the sea.

The staff was treated to a driving tour of the island and lunch hosted by Linda and Sky Grant. The group also toured the Island's beautiful public library. It was a great trip! For those who have not ventured out to Chebeague, it's truly worth the trip across the water for a visit to the Chebeague Island Historical Society. The Museum and Gift Shop maintains seasonal hours and will be open weekends only through Columbus Day weekend.

Summer Intern

Yarmouth High School senior Blythe Guecia interned this past summer at the History Center. Each year the Center receives a grant to provide an opportunity to a rising senior who has an interest in history or is planning to study history in college.

Through her work at the Center Blythe was able to gain experience in collections care, artifact documentation, exhibit installation, and historical research. Blythe also assisted with a grant project surveying the historic structures in Yarmouth.

After completing her senior year Blythe will enter college concentrating her studies on contemporary policy issues concerning gender and sexuality. See page 7 for Blythe's story on women's healthcare in Yarmouth. The History Center's Summer Internship is made possible by a grant from William Harwood and Ellen Alderman.



Above: Yarmouth High School senior Blythe Guecia.

Welcome Shelby Bryant

Hi, my name is Shelby Bryant and I am thrilled to be working at Yarmouth Historical Society as the Museum Assistant!

I grew up in Livermore, Maine and recently graduated from Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pennsylvania with a History degree.

While at Ursinus I also minored in Museum studies, Media and Communications studies, and Gender and Women's studies. I am so excited to be back in Maine and involved in such a wonderful community. I look forward to learning more about Yarmouth and I hope to see you at the History Center soon!



Above: Yarmouth Historical Society's Museum Assistant, Shelby Bryant.

Upcoming Events and Programs

SEPTEMBER



Tuesday, September 18, 7:00 pm

Lecture: *Transportation to and from Yarmouth, 1850-1950*

Historian George Barrett will detail the far-reaching changes in regional transport in the dynamic century between 1850 and 1950, as train networks expanded, trolley lines appeared, and automobile use increased.

The lecture is FREE for members and \$5.00 for all others.



Thursday, September 20, 7:00 pm

Film: *Dirtbag, The Legend of Fred Beckey*

This new documentary charts the life and influence of Fred Beckey (1923-2017), hailed as one of the most influential mountaineers of all time. Beckey became a cult hero in the climbing community for his numerous first ascents and freewheeling lifestyle.

The film series is co-hosted with the Royal River Conservation Trust. **FREE**



OCTOBER

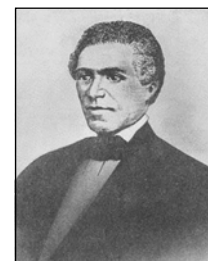


Monday, October 15, 7:00 pm

Lecture: *John Brown Russwurm (1799-1851)*

Historian John Cross will present a lecture about the former Yarmouth resident. Russwurm was an abolitionist, newspaper publisher, and Governor of Liberia.

The lecture is FREE for members and \$5.00 for all others.



Thursday, October 18, 7:00 pm

Film: *The Eagle Huntress*

This spellbinding documentary follows a 13-year-old nomadic Mongolian girl who is fighting to become the first female eagle hunter in twelve generations of her Kazakh family. Through breathtaking aerial cinematography and intimate footage, the film captures her personal journey and addresses the universal themes of female empowerment, the natural world, coming of age, and the onset of modernity.

The film series is co-hosted with the Royal River Conservation Trust. **FREE**



NOVEMBER



Tuesday, November 13, 7:00 pm

Lecture: *The Home Road*

Filmmaker Tonya Shevenell and film subject Ray Shevenell will present their documentary film about 74-year-old Ray Shevenell's retracing of the journey of his pioneering 19-year-old great-great-grandfather, who left his home in Canada in 1845. Film viewing and question and answer session after the film.

The lecture is FREE for members and \$5.00 for all others.



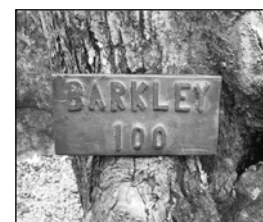
Thursday, November 15, 7:00 pm

Film: *The Barkley Marathons*

In the hills of eastern Tennessee each year, 40 chosen runners from around the world participate in a crazy endurance race called the Barkley Marathons, which in its first 25 years saw only 10 contestants finish the 130 mile course of mostly unmarked, briar strewn loops.

The film series is co-hosted with the Royal River Conservation Trust. **FREE**

Yarmouth History Center & Stonewall Gallery, 118 East Elm Street



The lecture series is sponsored by the
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PRIVATE WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Women's Healthcare in Yarmouth:

Mrs. Gilbert's Hospital and the Women to Women Clinic

By Blythe Guecia, YHS class of 2019

For the past eight weeks, I have worked as the summer intern at the Yarmouth Historical Society. I have spent days on end flipping through Yarmouth's history, archiving collections, and helping to set up exhibits. While completing these tasks, I have learned there is much more to Yarmouth than mills and shipbuilding. Beginning in the early 1900s, Yarmouth has played a prominent role in women's health. As a student at Yarmouth High School I spent much of my junior year researching women's reproductive and sexual health in the legal realm as well as planning future policies. While working at the Yarmouth Historical Society, I was surprised to learn that Yarmouth has a history in women's health, too.

In the 1930s, the home one door down from the Historical Society served as a maternity hospital. Ninety-six East Elm Street was originally known as the James Hill House. Before being operated as a hospital, the James Hill House was used as a boarding house for the Yarmouth mill workers.

The house was then owned by Eunice Dole. In the early 1930s the house was turned over to Mrs. Lida F. Gilbert, a Cumberland resident, who began renting the house and using it as a maternity hospital. The house became known as Mrs. Gilbert's Hospital. Mrs. Gilbert, born in 1883, operated the hospital, with assistance, and helped care for many Yarmouth and non-Yarmouth women during their pregnancies and births. The hospital was operated and eventually owned by Mrs. Gilbert until the mid-1940s. The facility was later moved to Main Street and over time developed into what is now known as Coastal Manor, an assisted living facility.

Approximately forty years after Mrs. Gilbert's hospital was closed, Women to Women opened on Marina Road. The blue, Victorian house where Women to Women was located was originally the Peter L. Allen House. Mr. Allen built the house in 1881 and it remained in his family until 1951.



Above: Mrs. Gilbert's Hospital on West Main Street.



Right: Mrs. Lida Gilbert

Women to Women was opened by Christiane Northrup, an alumna of Dartmouth Medical School, along with her partner, Marcelle Pick. After twenty years of working at Maine Medical Center as an OB/GYN, Northrup was ready to pursue her true passion: women's health and wellness in relation to our bodies, psychology, and spirits. Northrup, tired of medicine being used as the only reasonable or successful method to cure pain, launched Women to Women in the early 1980s with hopes that it would serve as a facility to help women not only with a medical outlook, but through counseling, the consideration of all methods of healing, and the "unity of mind, body, emotions, and spirit." Northrup believes in self-trust and the connection between your mind and physical health. With Northrup's medical practice, Women to Women, she once again allowed Yarmouth to partake in the care of women and their reproductive and sexual health. After more than ten years of operating Women to Women, Christiane Northrup decided to leave her practice to her partner in 1997 and venture out of Yarmouth in order to reach women on a larger scale. Northrup will now go on to touring the country and speaking at lectures and seminars about not only her medical practice, but her many bestselling books on women's health.

Over the past year, women's health has become a passion in my life. From my time at the Yarmouth Historical Society I was fascinated and pleased to learn that my town has played such a supportive and advanced role in women's health both historically and today.

Calling Crafters

The Center is hosting a holiday craft fair on Saturday, December 1st in conjunction with Yarmouth's town-wide craft show. We are currently looking for crafters or artists who are interested in selling wares at the History Center. Each space costs \$60, and includes a table and two chairs. To reserve your spot visit our website for the application, or call the History Center. Space is limited and will be allotted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact Katie Worthing at kworthing@yarmouthmehistory.org or call 846-6259.



Please join us for
Yarmouth Historical Society's
ANNUAL MEETING
Monday, October 15, 2018
at 7:00 pm
at Yarmouth History Center



For the joy of gardening!
Estabrook's



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