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Total membership:

411 on April 17

Life members: 163



From left, Kennebec Historical Society Development Committee Chairman Roger Pomerleau, fellow committee member Glenn Adams, costume designer Diane Meservier, and committee member Joseph Owen use some props April 14 at Drapeau's Costume Shop in Lisbon Falls to get in the mood for a June 5 KHS event commemorating the 50th anniversary of the release of The Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" album.

Hallowell Pub's "Sgt. Pepper" Night to Benefit KHS

On June 5, the Kennebec Historical Society hopes to "get by with a little help from my friends." The Quarry Tap Room in Hallowell will host a fundraiser for KHS that Monday night, roughly 50 years after The Beatles' landmark "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" album was released.

The 6-to-9 p.m. event will feature a Beatles look-alike contest, and entries can reflect any period in any of The Beatles' lives. A 50th-anniversary souvenir package containing a remixed version of the album, a book about "Sgt. Pepper" and a restored copy of a video about the making of the album will be given away to one of the participants who signs up for a KHS membership (or who makes an equivalent donation) that night. The Quarry Tap Room will donate to KHS \$1 for every beer it sells that night.

Members are welcome to suggest other ideas that might enhance the night's success, as a fundraiser or otherwise, by calling KHS headquarters at 622-7718.

President's Message

My last column was about winter and snow. Winter now appears to be done, and spring is finally here.

The Development Committee has set up a subcommittee to increase membership in the society. Glenn Adams has volunteered to head it and I wish to thank him for doing that. If you have an interest in that topic, please contact him.

With City Center still out of commission Emily Schroeder and Anne Cough have been very creative in finding locations for our monthly programs— a good thing too, since the last two or three have attracted an audience that would have overwhelmed City Center. A thank-you to both of them and keep up the good work.

The long-range planning committee is wrapping up its work and should have a report soon.

The society is moving forward and hopefully in the next few years can create a money reserve that can be used for salaries for full-time employees.

Please tell everyone about the programs and the society.

— *Kent London*

“Good Stories”

Recently while cataloging a collection, I came across two copies of “Good Stories,” a publication of Vickery & Hill in Augusta; one was from October 1902 (ItemID: 2012.0076.0329), the other from August 1908. The first thing that caught my eye was a short story by Holman Day (1865-1935) in the August 1908 issue called “The Advent of Aaron.” You can find a transcription by requesting ItemID 2012.0076.0328 at the society's headquarters if you're interested.

But I was most interested in the October 1902 issue. Under the title “Gleanings from the Scientific and Industrial Field” we find:

- Woods Hole (Massachusetts) to be the leading Marine Laboratory of the World
- The Children's Museum in Brooklyn
- America's versus England's Workmen
- The Electrical Equipment of the Panama Canal
- The Electrical Railway up the Alps
- German Engineers compete in Designing Rapid Transit Trains
- An American Investor and His Train

We also find a page titled “Home Gardening,” which announces: “We shall be glad to receive from our readers hints on the care of plants, suggestions concerning the best varieties for indoor or outdoor culture, and any personal experiences or observations which may be of interest to our readers and tend to success in the garden. Space for that department is allowed because requested by many; should sufficient interest be evinced, we shall continue it.”

I would think that this section would be of interest to modern gardeners as well as those interested in late 19th-century and early 20th-century gardens.

A separate two-page section titled “Needlework” covers crocheting, knitting, and quilting techniques and patterns.

The society has nearly 200 issues of “Good Stories” and, in addition, other 19th-century magazines that could be of considerable interest to researchers of that period. Although we have many issues of these magazines, our collections are not complete. We would like to expand our collections and would appreciate donations of these Augusta magazines.

— *Ernie Plummer*

May Program

“Oxford County Gem-bearing Litha Pegmatites”

Oxford County is world-famous for its pegmatites and the spectacular minerals they produce. Granite pegmatites are coarse-grained, igneous rocks that contain exceptionally large crystals of feldspar, mica, quartz, and sometimes a suite of rare-earth elements and gem-quality minerals. The most spectacular crystals are found in “pockets,” or open cavities in the rock that allow minerals to grow unimpeded. Minerals there tend to have few flaws.

Three generations of the Perham family have mined the pegmatites of Oxford County from a number of different quarries according to “The Perham Family Quarries,” an article by Sydney D. Eckert in the July 2014 issue of the Maine Geological Survey. In the early 1920s, the nearest feldspar processing mill was in Auburn. It was not economical to transport the feldspar that far. Alfred Perham, with the help of some local investors, constructed the Oxford Mining and Milling Company plant in 1924 to process the feldspar mined in the area by the Perhams and others, Eckert wrote. The mill operated into the late 1960s. Alfred’s son, Stanley, opened his store in West Paris in 1919. It received visitors from every state in the nation and from countries all over the world.

Stanley passed on his love of minerals and business sense to his children, Frank and Jane. Frank Perham, our speaker, was lucky to come from a line of Maine miners, but he relied on more than just his luck to make a name for himself in the mineral community. He trained as a geologist at Bates College, as his father did. Mr. Perham has spent a lifetime in the mines and has his own mineral museum, The Mineral Pocket. He has a vast amount of knowledge and the respect from geologists and enthusiasts alike to show for it. Frank is presently 83 years old and still does some summer weekend mining.

The Kennebec Historical Society’s May presentation is free to the public (donations are gladly accepted) and will take place on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 6:30 p.m. at the Maine State Library, located at 230 State Street in Augusta.



Frank Perham

Two Book Sales This Spring

Over the winter we received a number of very generous book donations. As a result, we will have two book sales this spring. The first will be held May 13; the second, June 3. Both will start at 9 a.m. and end at 2 p.m. Hardbacks will cost \$1; paperbacks, 50 cents; children’s books, 50 cents; and DVDs, \$3. At 1 p.m. the prices for all books will drop to \$1 a bag. In addition to the usual fiction and nonfiction, there are hundreds of children’s books and DVDs.

The second sale, on June 3, will offer all new stock (there are a lot of books) at the same prices. Please hold your spring cleaning book donations until after the second sale.

The Kennebec Historical Society Welcomes the Following New Members

John DenBleyker – Waterville
Barry E. Tracy – Temple
The Rev. Frank Morin – Augusta

and continues to recognize our

Sustaining Business Member
Kennebec Savings Bank, Augusta

and our

Sponsoring Business Member
Pine State Trading Company, Gardiner

In Memoriam



Robert Crockett, 79, Kennebec Historical Society president from 1995 to 1997, a 14-year member of the Augusta City Council, and a former Kennebec County treasurer, died March 9 at the Maine Veterans' Home in Augusta after a long illness. Mr. Crockett, a KHS life member, was an active participant in reviving the society in the early 1990s after it had endured a long period of dormancy. In those days, according to Mr. Crockett's wife, Patsy, the society's Executive Committee, having no permanent headquarters, met at the Hallowell home of the late KHS Librarian Ruth Briggs. During Mr. Crockett's presidency, KHS' fortunes had improved, as it was lodged in the special collections room in the University of Maine at Augusta's library. The society has moved twice since then to expand its capabilities, and Mr. Crockett was a steadfast supporter throughout both moves. As KHS president, he also was an advocate for the preservation of Augusta's old City Hall, which was saved and became the current Inn at City Hall, a residential complex for the elderly. Mr. Crockett, an Augusta native, was a Cony High School graduate, a U.S. Air Force veteran, an award-winning 37-year employee of the U.S. Postal Service, a postmaster and sergeant-at-arms of the Maine Senate, a prominent booster of Augusta youth sports, a longtime active member of and volunteer in the Democratic Party, and a member of Green Street Methodist Church. His survivors include his wife, son James, three grandchildren, a brother, and a sister.

Catherine "Cay" Gallant, 92, of Augusta, radio broadcaster, newspaper columnist, arts patron, and life member of the Kennebec Historical Society, died April 8 after a long illness. Mrs. Gallant graduated from Cony High School in Augusta in 1943, then from Emerson College in Boston, where she studied speech and drama. In 1947, she went to work at Augusta radio station WFAU and became the station's director of women's programs. In 1949, she married a fellow WFAU radio broadcaster, the late Norman G. Gallant, and they became well-known in Maine broadcasting, writing and producing many local programs. Mrs. Gallant was an avid supporter of music and the dramatic arts, and she was in great demand as a public speaker on local history and entertainers. From 1995 to 2005, she wrote a weekly column for the Kennebec Journal and Morning Sentinel newspapers, "Days Gone By," which often included stories about local history. Many of her columns were published in an anthology along with selections from her husband's column, "Golden Notes," in 2006. KHS has a copy of that volume in its library.



Mrs. Gallant's active participation in KHS included twice wearing an antique dress – in 2001 and 2002 – while hosting visitors at the society's annual Victorian tea during the years when KHS headquarters was in the Johnson-Baker-Shelton House, at 61 Winthrop Street in Augusta. She portrayed Frances Baker, the woman who had lived in that house in the mid- to late 19th century. Also, she was instrumental in arranging for the Cecelia Club's files to be donated to KHS when the club, a music appreciation group, dissolved in 2007.

Mrs. Gallant was a lifelong member of Penney Memorial United Baptist Church and a longtime member of numerous local clubs and organizations. She is survived by her daughter, Cathy, and her husband, Thomas Morello, of Flagstaff, Ariz.

Ann Ingraham, 83, of Granite Hill Estates in Hallowell, and formerly of Manchester and Dover-Foxcroft, died April 6 in Augusta after a brief illness. She was a Kennebec Historical Society member for at least 15 years. Mrs. Ingraham, a Lowell, Massachusetts, native, was a 1955 graduate of Colby College in Waterville. She was a regular donor to KHS fundraising campaigns and a patron who used the society's library and archive frequently. She is survived by three children, four grandchildren, a brother, and a sister.

Popham Colony, Ship Virginia to Be Topic of June Presentation

University of Maine at Farmington history professor Allison Hepler and her husband, shipwright Rob Stevens, both of Woolwich, are the scheduled speakers at the Kennebec Historical Society's June presentation.

Hepler and Stevens' topic is "The History of the Popham Colony and Pinnacle Virginia." The short-lived Popham Colony, established in 1607 in what is now the coastal town of Phippsburg, was the first English settlement in New England. The colony lasted only a year, but that was enough time for the colonists to build a pinnacle, the Virginia of Sagadahoc (or Sagadahock), a small sailing vessel, which took them back to England in 1608. The Virginia also made an Atlantic crossing in 1609, as part of a fleet. Stevens is in the midst of building a replica of the Virginia in Bath.

The free presentation is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 21, at South Parish Congregational Church, at 9 Church Street in Augusta. The public is invited.



This 1957 U.S. postage stamp commemorates the construction in Maine of the pinnacle Virginia, the first ship built in the New World by English colonists.

The Collections Box

So far this year we have acquired through donation and purchase a number of interesting additions to our collection.

Among the manuscript items are two letters from D.V.B. Ormsly, of Augusta, to the Samson Company, of Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, inquiring about the sale of rifles, augers, and thermometers. Edna, who lived at 74 Green Street in Augusta in 1901, wrote to her fiancé, Claude Mille, in West Boothbay about wedding plans. Alice Moody, in Richmond, related family matters to her husband, A.B. Moody, in East Pittston, on September 19, 1897. On June 17, 1836, John Gorham, of Barnstable, Massachusetts, wrote to lumber merchant Thomas W. Smith about a lumber order. James Redington, in Waterville, wrote to Randall L. Whitman, in Bath, on February 1, 1845, requesting the status of a bankruptcy settlement.

The three-dimensional objects added to our collection include a small (8-1/4" by 10-3/4") brass plaque that hung in St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Augusta. The plaque says that it was placed in memory of Melville Weston Fuller (1833-1910), who was born in Augusta, died in the Hancock County town of Sorrento, and spent the last 22 years of his life as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. It hung on the ring entrance pillar to the West Chapel of the church. Also, we received a monogrammed boxed set of straight razors belonging to Charles P. Kling, which had been acquired by William Treby Johnson, executor of Kling's estate.

We also received several photographic images. A carte de visite of Thomas B. Ballard, owner of the Cushnoc House, on the northwest corner of State and Winthrop streets, present site of Lithgow Public Library. Four cyanotype images printed on cloth of St. Catherine's (later Augusta General) Hospital, possibly the Bond Brook Bridge, St. Mark's Home, and a two-masted sailing ship moored on the west side of the Kennebec. A reminder of 19th-century funeral practices was a cabinet card by J.D. Neal, of Augusta, of a large floral arrangement for the death of an unidentified child which included the child's portrait.

Unusual items included: a box of Maine Central Railroad documents numbering well over 100; the "Report of the Second Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Church Association of Maine," about a meeting held in Augusta in September 1854; a projectionist license issued by the city of Augusta in 1929 to Lynn Fitzsimmons; the 1907 schedule and rate card for passage on the steamer Gardiner from Augusta to Boothbay; and the blueprint architectural plan for the Dining and Student Center at Thomas College in Waterville.

Nineteenth-century Augusta publications, donated and purchased, were the *Maine Farmer* for June 10, 1852, and 10 copies of the rare *Farm and Hearth* from 1887, published by Vickery.

For the Collections Committee
— Bruce Kirkham

Continuing Our Success

The Kennebec Historical Society has been successful in the decade after moving to our new headquarters; our measurement of success is the number of people involved in our programs which include not only our lecture series but also the researchers who visit us over the year and contact us by email, often from significant distances. We have been able to do this because of the work of our volunteers – people like Anne Cough and Emily Schroeder, who organize the programs; John Bridge, Roger Pomerleau, Glenn Adams, Tom Johnson, Joe Owen, Kim Michaud, and Nelson Leavitt, who annually solicit the dollars that keep us going; the people who run the archive and reading room, such as Phyllis vonHerrlich, Bruce Kirkham, and Ernie Plummer; our treasurer, Kathy Kirkham, who weekly has kept the books straight; and our membership recorder, Joan Plummer, who, with the help of Scott Wood, keeps our membership records straight.

Yet there are many volunteer positions that need to be filled to assure our success in the future. With some trepidation, I now write that we need you, the membership, to help us find people to fill key volunteer positions. I am not necessarily asking you to volunteer, but rather to help us identify people who, although they might not now be members, would be great candidates for key positions. (However, if these positions do fit your interest, don't hesitate to include yourself.) Here are some examples:

Personnel Committee chairperson: This is the essential human relations position that deals with recruiting, motivating, and rewarding volunteers and salaried people. A person who has or is working as a human relations specialist would be a great choice.

Board members: We need people who are interested in taking an active role in the governance and financial management of the society. Board members should also be considering being standing committee leaders.

President or vice president of the society: We need to find people interested in leading the society's board.

So please look around you, talk to your friends, and see if anyone would be interested. You never know who might respond. When you find someone, let us know at 622-7718; call me, Ernie Plummer, at 458-3195; or contact any board member.

A Photograph in the Mail Sparks Interest

We recently received a photo from a donor in Tucson, AZ. On the back was written "T. B. Ballard, Cushnoc House, Augusta, Maine."



Bruce Kirkham sent the donor our usual thank-you note; but along with some reference material, he asked if she had more background on the picture.

She graciously replied that the source of the photograph was her third-great-grandfather George Rogers Tarbox (1818-1895), who traveled regularly between Farmington and Calais possibly stopping in Augusta, where he might have acquired this carte de visite as a calling card.

Indeed, during the last years the Cushnoc House was open, it was owned by Thomas Benton Ballard (1838-1881) and his younger brother Jabez Sawin Ballard (1839-1921). The brothers were the sons of Ephraim Ballard III (1797-1868) and Phebe S. Brown (1799-1888). Ephraim was the son of Jonathan Ballard (1763-1886) and Sarah Pierce (1768-1858). Jonathan was the son of surveyor Ephraim Ballard (1725-1821) and famed diarist Martha Moore Ballard (1735-1812), whose recording of daily life in central Maine was the inspiration for Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's 1990 book *A Midwife's Tale*. This photo thus is a great link to the Ballard family and a hotel significant in Augusta's past.



KHS Receives a Grant from the Maine State Archives

Until the late 1990s, all of our archive items were catalogued using handwritten, paper documents. These were stored in binders and folders and searched by hand. Then volunteer Zachary Violette wrote a database so that the items could be catalogued using a digital, machine-readable format that could be searched using a computer. “Key fields” were used to search but were not standardized or checked to avoid spelling errors. A paper copy of each record was printed and stored in notebooks as a form of backup. In 2007, that database was rewritten to standardize key fields and prevent misspellings and a surname database was added to index all names mentioned in items leading to our often-used Kennebec Surname List, which is available on the internet. All this has added value to our records and has made them easier to locate and use.

But as Nobel Prize laureate Bob Dylan wrote, “The Times They Are A-Changin.” The contemporary historic researcher more and more seeks information not at archives using traditional finding aids such as card catalogs and text databases but rather goes to the internet and Google to search. Interestingly, younger researchers come to the society and expect our databases to work like Google. To stay current, and to be useful to our clients, we believe that the next step we must prepare for is moving our database to the internet and offering not just indexes but also complete documents, transcriptions of handwritten documents, and images of photographs and objects.

Although it will take some time and financial resources to get to that point, the Collections Committee believes it is time to take steps in preparation. This means that as well as indexing documents using key words denoting subjects, locations, organizations, events, types of items and names (some call this metadata) we need to start “digitizing” our items – that is, scanning photographs, using optical character recognition to convert printed items to text documents, and transcribing handwritten documents. If we start doing this now, we won’t have to go back and do it later when we are ready to move to the internet. But this adds significant time to the act of cataloging items. What we have found is that we are building up a backlog of uncatalogued materials as we purchase items and receive them as donations.

In February, we applied for a grant from the Maine State Archives to hire interns to help us in our cataloging for the internet effort and, in so doing, reduce or eliminate our backlog. In March, we received notification that our request for \$3,628 had been approved in full. Our request will cover hiring an intern for the spring and fall and will also cover purchase of supplies and computer hardware to support the digitization effort. Combining this with donations we receive to support summer interns should move us well on our way to elimination of our immediate backlog.

Current researchers at the society will immediately see the results of this effort, as records of newly cataloged items will contain full text transcriptions that can be read and/or printed at the society. Photographs also will be available for printing as will scans of documents.

We are most grateful to the Maine State Archives for its support.

— *Ernie Plummer*

KHS Officials’ Duties Change

The Kennebec Historical Society thanks longtime member Kathy Kirkham for her more than four years of service as the society’s volunteer treasurer, one of the society’s key jobs. Mrs. Kirkham took over the post in January 2013 and held it until stepping down at the April 12 board meeting. She also has resigned as a board member. She assumed the treasurer’s duties at a time when KHS was struggling to find someone to perform those duties, and the society is grateful for her service.

Also, Ernie Plummer has resigned as volunteer executive director in order to become treasurer. A two-time former KHS president, he had been treasurer until Mrs. Kirkham took over that post in 2013.

Mr. Plummer will retain his other KHS post, that of the society’s volunteer archivist. To fill the gap created by his departure from the executive director’s job, the Board of Directors has expanded the weekly paid work schedule of administration and property manager Scott Wood from 10 hours to 15.

Kennebec Historical Society, Inc.
PO Box 5582
Augusta, ME 04332-5582
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KENNEBEC HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. – Application for Membership

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Town/City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Telephone number: Home _____ Business _____

E-mail address: _____

Type: New _____ Renewal _____

Category: Individual (annual) – \$20 _____

Family (annual) – \$30 _____

Senior (60+) (annual) – \$15 _____ Senior Family (annual) – \$25 _____

Student (full-time) (annual) – \$15 _____

Life (1 person) – \$200 _____ Life (Family) – \$300 _____

Business (annual, fewer than 25 employees) – \$75 _____

Corporate (annual, 25 employees or more) – \$125 _____

Nonprofit group (annual) – \$35 _____

Donation (optional): \$ _____

This is a gift membership, given by: _____

(Please send to Kennebec Historical Society, P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04332-5582.)

This line and below for society use only: Date received: _____

Cash _____ Check #: _____

file 2.8.2

Reading Room hours: Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; other times by appointment

Mailing address: P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04332-5582

Telephone: (207) 622-7718

E-mail address: kennhis1891@gmail.com

Web site: www.kennebechistorical.org