

BUXTON – HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

100 Main Street, Route 4A , P. O. Box 34, Buxton, Maine 04093 Feb 2025

Incorporated 1970 www.BuxtonHollisHistorical.org (207) 929-1684

President's Message: 2025 Happy 55th Anniversary BHHS

Fifty-five years ago our historical society was created by a group of volunteers dedicated to collecting, preserving, interpreting, and promoting the history of Hollis and Buxton. After having had several locations throughout the years, the society obtained a lease for the 1912 building that is our current home. Did those 1970 volunteers imagine that BHHS would continue to exist fifty-five years into a new century?

That existence depends on the hours of service compiled by our volunteers. At the annual meeting in November, volunteers were honored, and several received special recognition: Rita Bradbury, Maureen Burns, Doris Hicks, Kathy Larry, Beth Plummer, Ron Weeman, and Robert (Butch) Yarumian.

However, some volunteers could not attend the November meeting. I would like to publicly thank Chad Poitras for his sponsorship of the Newsletter, and John Myers and Angela Michie, at Buxton Town Hall for printing and collating the newsletters. These newsletters are not possible without our dedicated editor, Sue Schaller, a volunteer board member who has also devoted countless hours to accessioning material donations to BHHS.

During the course of 2025, our newsletters will inform you of our public hours, various educational programs (six in the planning stages for April through November), and fundraising events-the Second Annual *Santa's Shindig*. Membership renewal forms are on the back page of each newsletter, and once again, **it's membership renewal time.**

On behalf of the board, I wish you a prosperous and peace-filled 2025, the fifty-fifth anniversary

year of BHHS, and thank you for your continued support of our historical society!

Nancy Ponzetti



BHHS thanks Doris Hicks, for volunteering at the N.C. Watson School. Above: Doris with Nancy Ponzetti

Thank you to everyone who came to our first Santa's Shindig! It was a great success ~ Below: Vicki Walker, Janice Hill, Betsy Clay, Beth and Barry Plummer.



2025 Programs and Events

Thursday, March 13th 5:30-7:30pm
Bonny Eagle Adult Education Tour of BHHS

Thursday, April 3rd 4 to 8 pm
 ❖ **Opening Public Hours for 2025**

Tuesday, April 15th 7pm
Salmon Falls West and East: National Historic Districts with Nancy Ponzetti

Hollis and Buxton are unique because both towns contain National Historic Districts along the Saco River. Join us for a discussion of Salmon Falls West (Hollis) and Salmon Falls East (Buxton). What comprises a National Historic District? What buildings are included? Who were the people that created these districts?

Saturday, May 17th 1-4 pm
Genealogy Workshop

The historical society will offer a genealogy workshop for people wanting to research their families. It is open to the public. It will emphasize local resources including cemetery records plus Maine and internet resources. Methods, software and online services such as Ancestry and Family Search will be explained. Basic family worksheets and charts will be provided. The recent books, *Early Families of Buxton* and *Early Families of Hollis and Dayton* will be available. Please let us know if you are coming via email to bhhs@buxtonhollishistorical or by phone at 207-929-1684. Walk-ins will also be welcome. There is no charge, but donations are welcome.

Tuesday, May 20th 7pm
Local Railroading with Jonathan Wells

Boston and Maine Railroad retiree, Jonathan Wells will present the fascinating history of the local railroads which completely transformed our economy and lifestyle. Local images and stories of the railroad era will be included.



Tuesday, June 17th 7pm

***Alias Agnes: The Notorious Tale of a Gilded Age Spy* with Professor Elizabeth DeWolfe UNE**

Alias Agnes details the story of Jane Tucker, who took a job as an undercover detective with a ten-week mission. Her target: Madeleine Pollard, former mistress of Congressman William C. P. Breckinridge, whom she had sued for breach of promise when he failed to marry her. Exploring the intricacies of this trial and a scandal that captivated the nation, author Elizabeth A. DeWolfe demonstrates that a shared lack of power did not always lead to alliances among women.

***Alias Agnes* is due for release in April~ Professor DeWolfe will have copies of her book available for sale and to be signed.**

August-Buxton & Hollis Community Days

September 16th 7pm

***So You Think You Know Hollis and Buxton?* with Maine State Senator James D. Libby**

Join us for an interactive program based upon these towns of the Saco River.

October Fundraiser – Stay tuned!

Saturday, November 1st 5:30pm

Annual Meeting and Potluck followed by: *The Gunpowder Mills of Gorham & Windham, Maine*

Saturday, December 6th 10am to 2pm
Second Annual *Santa's Shindig*

Join us for Crafts, Books, Food and Fancies

Recruitment of Civil War Soldiers in Maine

By Linda Towle

Maine contributed a higher proportion of its citizens to the Union armies than any other state of the Union, as well as sending money, equipment and supplies. Eighty thousand Maine men served as Union soldiers and sailors. Additionally, hundreds of Maine civilians served as nurses, doctors, relief workers, and agents, both at home and on the battlefield.

When war broke out in 1861, Maine citizens joined the abolitionist cause, producing 14 regiments and 1 cavalry unit in the first round of calls for volunteers to serve. As time passed and the number of volunteers declined, the Union began compulsory drafts. Towns vied with one another to meet their quotas for recruits and established financial incentives, or bounties, to be paid to volunteers who enlisted. The nationwide Enrollment Act of March 3, 1863, required all male citizens and applicants for citizenship, ages 20-45, to register for the military draft. The unpopular law favored wealthier men by allowing them to pay another to be conscripted or drafted in his place. A "commutation fee" of \$300 (equivalent to \$5000 in 2018) enabled a man to pay for a substitute for a current draft year, while hiring a man allowed for a permanent exemption. Veterans were generally exempt from the draft but there were exceptions when the need was great. The initial term of service for enlisted and drafted men was three years until an amendment to the 1863 draft law shortened the term of service to one year. Enlisted men's pay was not adequate to support their families, so the towns' poor rolls grew and many families were not able to receive sufficient funds for food. In later years, still further measures were taken to increase the number of troops.

An interesting series of four documents in the Elwell collection called for the re-enlistment of veteran volunteers, as many had already served the three year commitment. The first document resulted



from a similar order to the states from Washington D.C., General Order No. 10. It was issued from the Adjutant General's Office, State of Maine Headquarters, on July 14, 1863, and authorized the recruitment of veterans to serve again to increase the number of troops. The order sought to raise three regiments (2,400 men) of Veteran Volunteer Infantry and one battery (a cavalry unit) of Veteran Volunteer Artillery to serve three years, or for the duration of the war. A bounty (or incentive payment) of \$402 was approved, to be distributed in installments beginning with \$40 at the time of enlistment, and \$50 each 6 months through the time of service with the last \$75 given at the end of three years. Able bodied men ages 18-45 who had been honorably discharged and had served at least 9 months, and passed a

physical exam, could be recruited. The document specified drunks would not be accepted, nor were minors unless permission was granted by their parents.

Subsequent documents provide further instructions for recruitment including details of documentation (in triplicate) and orders to send recruits weekly. The second document describes payment of room and board to recruits not living at home (not to exceed 40 cents per day), and payment of travel expenses and the medical exam.

A third document dated December 4, 1863 appeared to chastise towns for offering higher bounties for enlistments than were authorized, in order to boost their quota of recruits. The document emphasized the need for the men to be recruited in their own communities so they would be recognized by their communities and increase the likelihood of their families receiving some local financial assistance while they were away. Any recruiters or officers who tampered with enlistment papers would forfeit their premium payments and be liable for trial by court martial. This document also stated: "the war is nearing an end as the rebel army is disheartened by the 'unjustifiable' rebellion, their families are suffering, and many have deserted. The current recruits will not likely see battle and their names will live in history as gallant and patriotic men willing to risk their lives for their country." However, the rebels were more determined than estimated and the war did not end until 1865.

The final document in this set illustrates the difficulties of ensuring that payment to soldiers is given without duplication. Some were given at least a portion of their bounty through the towns, and the balance was still owed by the State. Forms were provided (to be filled out in triplicate) and signatures from the veteran, town selectmen, agent, and witnesses certified what was paid and what was still owed.

In the publication of the *150th Anniversary of the Town of Buxton*, 166 soldiers accredited to the Town of Buxton are listed in the enrollments from 1861-

1865. Twenty-five of the soldiers have the notation "sub." by their names. The *Hollis Bicentennial* book lists 92 men who served in the Civil War. These tallies represent the men that were credited to the towns. There were potentially many others not listed because they signed up in a different community.

The field conditions many soldiers encountered were often horrific. One soldier, George Herbert Allan Getchell, wrote letters to his wife, Sarah "Seddie" Elizabeth Cole Getchell during his service from 1863-1865 which were later published. He was a farmer conscripted at age 34 to serve in the place of a wealthier citizen. He did not see battle, but was frequently ill with chronic dysentery, pain in his legs, and other ailments. All his letters conveyed his loneliness and desire to go home to his family. He attempted to get leave, but was denied, even when one of his sons died. His wife and children were initially given some town assistance. They were later denied it based on their inability to pay taxes on their farm, to buy food, or to sustain themselves adequately. Getchell appears to have been assigned guard duty at a prison camp, and later a hospital. He writes that the rebel soldiers were being guarded by a regiment of negroes for a time. He says, "now it is to see who Shall Be the master." However, he had lost his enthusiasm for their cause.

A soldier from Hollis, James Ford Bradbury, 17 year old son of Samuel and Mehitabel Bradbury, enlisted in 1862. He was a member of General Nathaniel Banks division in the Battle of Pleasant Hill in Texas. During the battle, Bradbury was captured by the Confederates and confined for 6 months in Tyler Prison in Texas. He reported being confined in suffocating buildings without windows, or outside without shelter. Prisoners were forced to lie on floors covered with human filth, not to mention they lived in fear of being shot or tortured at the whim of confederate soldiers. When released, Bradbury was a mere skeleton in rags. He managed to get to New Orleans, where he met Collins Hanson of Hollis who purchased him a new uniform. Bradbury returned home on foot and took up his family trade as a stone mason, but never fully regained his health.

Another Hollis man, Eben S. Kendrick initially served 9 months with the 27th Maine Regiment Company G from September 30, 1862 to July 17, 1863. However, on September 24th, 1864, Kendrick received a draft notice that he must report for duty on or before October 1 at a rendezvous place in Portland. On September 25th, he enlisted in the 8th Infantry Co. G for one year. Kendrick was captured in the battle of Fair Oaks, North Carolina. The treatment of prisoners was so inhumane that 70% of the captives died in the first 150 days. Similarly, Eben Kendrick died on February 5, 1865, at the age of 22 and was buried on the prison grounds. His sister Abbie and her husband Josiah Hanson honored him by naming their son after him (Eben K. Hanson).

It is amazing that so many Maine men responded to the call to serve in the civil war. Their absence created hardships for the families left at home, as well as sacrifices made by those in battle. Few of the troops had military training or experience and were

not adequately prepared for battle. Maine's cities, towns, and plantations paid \$9.7 million in bounties while the state paid \$4.6 million. Some, but not all families were helped by the money raised.

Sourced from documents in the Theodore Elwell Collection, donated by John Havu, in 2021, and the book *Letters to Settie* (privately published by his descendents) from George Getchell's letters home.

Linda Towle

Editor's Note: How many soldiers was that? Online www.battlefields.org tells us that during the Civil War:

- ❖ *A Regiment was a colonel + 800 soldiers;*
- ❖ *A Brigade was a Brigadier General and 2-5 regiments; (up to 2,600 soldiers)*
- ❖ *A Division was a Major General and 2-4 Brigades (up to 2,600 soldiers)*
- ❖ *A Corps was a Major General and 2-3 Divisions (up to 26,000 soldiers).*
- ❖ *The Army was a Major General and 3 Corps (80,000 soldiers)*

WWII Trench Art
 A composite image of the artillery shell trench art that was donated. It is hand stamped and hammered with a rose in bloom, the date 1918, ARGONNE, and crossed flags of France and the United States.
Note: As of 2023, Military souvenirs are expressly prohibited on the trains entering England.



MAM Member Spotlight: Buxton - Hollis Historical Society

An Interview with Nancy Ponzetti, President, Buxton - Hollis Historical Society

Maine Archives and Museums featured BHHS in their November 2024 quarterly Newsletter; reprinted below.

What is your background, and how did you come to be at your organization? Teaching was my vocation for four decades. I taught both middle and high school grades in Language Arts, English Literature, and Social Studies. For twenty-two years, I was a member of the faculty at Catherine McAuley High School in Portland, ME. There I chaired the Social Studies and Religious Studies departments, retiring in 2014. After retiring, I was invited to join the board of the historical society in the Fall of 2016 by its President, Jan Hill. After one year, I was elected Vice President of the Board for the Town of Hollis. In 2022 I was elected President of the board.

What is your role at your organization? Currently, I serve as the President of Buxton Hollis Historical Society, chairing meetings, preparing budgets, and occasionally presenting historical programs on Native American and Women's History.

What are you currently working on that is exciting to you? Since 2013 the Society has leased its headquarters from MSAD #6 Bonny Eagle. Our board is negotiating with the school district and the Town of Buxton to obtain ownership of the building. Once ownership is achieved, the board may move forward with renovations and imagining new spaces.

When was your organization established (super brief history)? BHHS was established in 1970, fifty-four years ago. After moving our offices from Buxton Center, the Society has been housed in the former 1912 Bar Mills Elementary School, Bar Mills, ME.

What is the focus of your collection? The focus of our collection is the local history and genealogy of the towns of Hollis and Buxton. Both towns are rich with historical figures: Kate Douglas Wiggin, author of *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, Rebecca Usher, Civil

War nurse, and painters Gibeon Bradbury and John Brewster.

What is the program or event you most look forward to? Our Volunteer Recognition brunches or potluck suppers are the events I most enjoy, for without volunteers, we would not be able to continue our work.

What is your favorite object in the collection? My favorite object in our collection is a piece of trench art from World War I. Trench art was made by soldiers waiting behind the lines, wounded soldiers, prisoners of war, and civilians from shell casings, bullets, fuse caps, and uniform buttons. This piece dates from 1918's Battle of Argonne Forest. That forty-seven day battle was part of the final Allied offensive of World War I. Over 26,000 Americans lost their lives in Argonne with a total of 350,000 casualties. It is truly a beauty from the battlefield.

Composite image opposite page; date detail and flags detail below. Donated by Marguerite Gardner



Joy Valley Road

by Brenton Hill

Buxton has a Joy Valley Road (Route 117 between Rt. 202 and Rt. 112). That is an unusual name that prompts the question of its origin. For many of us in the historical society who grew up here in the 1950s and 1960s, the answer was obvious. At the time, there was a liquor store just over the town line in Saco. Prohibition was over in December 1933, but remnants of the earlier 1851 Maine Law for state prohibition still existed as Blue Laws. Towns could not prevent consumption of alcohol, but some towns did prohibit its sale. Buxton and Hollis had Blue Law ordinances to that effect, but the City of Saco did not. The liquor store was in Saco as close to the Buxton line as possible and very handy. It was located in a little valley at the intersection of Routes 117, 112, and Grant Road in Saco. The store must have been the inspiration for the local name, Joy Valley. I do remember trips there to pick up a little beer for the adults in the family.

But, just when you think you are certain about history, everything can change. During our open hours last year a young man came in for some research. In conversation, he mentioned seeing older

newspaper references to Joy Valley. After a search of the Portland Press Herald archives we quickly discovered the name was in common use during Prohibition.

The newspaper articles we found included several sensational trials from 1929 and 1932 for the owners allowing wild dancing, drinking hard cider and other spirits at Clough's dance hall in Joy Valley. The accusation was allowing "dancing (with) demonstration of exotic modern dances ... as well as ... cheers in tribute to King Alky". The Cloughs, father and son, protested their innocence, but they were convicted and sentenced to three months in jail in 1932. The elder Clough however predicted "it won't be long until we get rid of the deputies (monitoring the dance hall) and then we can do what we please". Prohibition did end in 1933 and there were no more trials, but two historical members can quote their mothers as saying no respectable girl would go there. The last report of trouble there was a locked car robbery during a 1943 dance. Couples from Biddeford and Saco lost \$68 in cash and also rationing books which were valuable.



Above: The former liquor store at the intersection of Joy Valley Road, Route 112 and Grant Road. The dance Hall was moved to Buxton to avoid the expense of adding electric light. We have not yet found a photo of the dance hall.

Joy Valley Road ~ continued from page 7

Also, the story takes a twist. Before 1929 the dance hall was in Saco. However, Saco changed their ordinances to require electric lights in dance halls. Electric lights were safer in a crowded hall than kerosene lanterns, but relatively expensive to install. Also, the dim kerosene lamps allowed patrons more privacy for surreptitious drinking or, even worse according to the trial reports, holding hands! "Holding hands" may have been code for other bad behavior. The answer was to move the building, which could hold 200 people, to Buxton. The newspaper says several men and just two horses moved the building in January 1929, presumably over snow. With only two horses for the job, the building had to be on a flat section of Joy Valley Road

(Route 117) near the town line. The hill on Beach Plains Road (Route 112) was too steep. Interestingly, some advertisements for the dances say the hall was on Route 112. I think Joy Valley Road was Rd. 112 at the time and the route 112 designation must have shifted at some time.

I do not remember seeing the dance hall as a child, but we have found advertisements for dances saying it was operating as late as May 1946. If anyone remembers the hall, has a photograph of it or knows when it was taken down or moved again, please let the historical society know so we can preserve the origins of Joy Valley and that part of a good story.



More photos from Santa's Shindig: Dorothy Bell with her collages.



Below: Linda Towle and Rita Bradbury with the books and art prints BHHS has for sale.



The BHHS Newsletter
Is sponsored by

**Chad E. Poitras
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Buxton, Maine 04093
207 929-3723

Chad Poitras, BHHS Member
and local resident,
Serving the community
with dignity
and respect.

Please CLYNK for NC Watson One Room School House

by Vicki Walker

It is with mixed emotions that I draw your attention to the School House that was lovingly relocated from Chicopee, and moved to a lot in Buxton Center in the early 2000s. This was under the leadership of Lou Emery, a past president of BHHS, which was then entrusted with maintenance and upkeep of the building. Both Hollis and Buxton Elementary Schools have been able to visit the School House to experience school in the “olden days”, thanks to the talents of retired 3rd grade teacher, Doris Hicks acting as schoolmarm.

This spring we are looking for a small but indomitable group of friends or accomplices, looking for some exercise on a few sunny weekends to scrape, and paint this not-too-large building. We have had some help over the past few years by the Boy Scouts and last year by students at the SAD6 Learning Center. However, the major need (as can be seen on a casual drive-by) is an update of the exterior..... scraping and painting are overdue! Because lead paint is present, Scouts and students cannot help us with this. However, if we could get the building scraped, it would be easier to recruit potential volunteers to paint.

Where does Clynk come in? To help us generate some money to purchase the necessary materials,

BHHS has become a Clynk member. We have bags and tags available for this modern-day bottle drive. (Not like the old days when you went house to house on a designated Saturday, door knocking for Scouts!)

Please consider whether you and a few friends would like to spend a few afternoons – we could likely borrow scaffolding to make the job go faster. Baked goods and refreshments promised. If you have considered this in the past, this could be the year to make it happen!

Please contact us at 207-929-1684 our headquarters phone number, leave a message and someone will reach out to you. Thank you for your continued support.

Vicki Walker

BHHS OFFICERS

Nancy Ponzetti - President
 Dorothy Bell, Vice President – Buxton
 Steve Roberts, Vice President – Hollis
 Vicki Walker, Secretary
 Linda Towle & Steve Roberts, Co-Treasurers

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Membership Year 2025 (by Calendar Year)

Today's Date _____

Name(s) _____

Street Address _____

Mailing Address _____

Email _____

Phone - mobile _____

Home _____

Send my Newsletter to my email
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Annual Dues Levels

Student \$5 Individual \$10

Family \$20 Patron \$50

Sustaining \$100

Lifetime Individual \$450

Couple \$500

Please make checks to:

Buxton-Hollis Historical Society

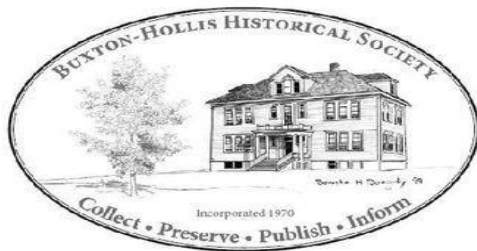
Send to: Buxton-Hollis Historical Society

Attn: Membership Chair

P O Box 34

Buxton, ME 04093

Thank you for your support!



BUXTON - HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 34

BUXTON, ME 04093

April 3rd 4-8pm Open Hours Thursdays

April 15th, Tuesday, 7 pm

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May 17th (Sat) Genealogy Workshop

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Historic Railroads with Jonathan Wells

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