

---

# BUXTON – HOLLIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

---

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

Incorporated 1970 [www.BuxtonHollisHistorical.org](http://www.BuxtonHollisHistorical.org) (207) 929-1684

---

## ***President's Message: by Nancy Ponzetti***

*Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana. Anthony G. Oettinger*

Time certainly has flown for BHHS with a marvelous array of summer activities and new gift shop merchandise. On August 9<sup>th</sup> we greeted old and new friends to our sale table at the Tory Hill Church Lawn Sale. In September we hosted two events: *Wabanaki Stories and Lunch* and *So You Think You Know Hollis and Buxton*.



Jennifer Pictou had our full attention as she presented *Wabanaki Stories*. Ms. Pictou, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Aroostook Band of Micmacs, and owner of Bar Harbor Ghost Tours, a subsidiary of Dawn Land Tours LLC, entertained those present with stories that included *the Bloody Knife, Squando and the Saco River*, and *the Origins of Autumn Leaf Colors*. Six different varieties of chili with all the *fixins* were served for lunch along with salads, cornbread, and desserts. I would like to thank Sue Schaller for chairing this highly successful event and all of the marvelous chili cooks, salad and dessert makers.

Our September 16 program *So You Think You Know Hollis and Buxton* was an interactive presentation by Brent Hill of Professor James Libby's local postcard collection. It was particularly appealing to life-long residents who had knowledge to add. Professor Libby, author of *Buxton: A Postcard History*, had a scheduling conflict that evening, so I thank Brent for offering the program and those who provided refreshments.

Our merchandise offerings grew with the addition of Hollis and Buxton jigsaw puzzles of J. S. Peterson's town center prints. Only 56 puzzles were ordered retailing for \$25, and they are selling well. Puzzles will be sold at our October 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and at *Santa's Shindig*. Again, I would like to thank Sue Schaller for initiating and creating this fundraiser.

Upcoming fall programs will include a tour of the historical society, registration through Bonny Eagle Adult Education, on October 9 beginning at 5:30 pm.

***At the October 25 event, the historical society will celebrate the best news and gift of the summer: that on Friday, June 20, 2025 BHHS became the official owner of the 1912 Building!*** The former home of Bar Mills Elementary School and Central Office of MSAD #6 is now our permanent home! Established in 1970, BHHS did not have a constant home until 2013. With the Central Office moving into the former Eliza Libby School, the 1912 Building was vacant and in need of repair. The Superintendent and School Board agreed to lease the building to the historical society

(renewable every four years) offering BHHS a place for a museum, library, gift shop, and storage. On February 27, 2024 a Building Acquisition Committee of five BHHS board members was formed to explore the possibility of acquiring ownership of the building. This would allow the society to apply for grants to repair and maintain the building.

After many meetings and consultations with attorneys, the acquisition process began in earnest with a March 2024 meeting of all parties involved: BHHS board members, Superintendent of Schools, and the Buxton Select Board. The MSAD #6 School Board would vote to give the building to the Town of Buxton, and Buxton would give the building to the historical society. At the June 15, 2024 Town Meeting, the voters of Buxton agreed to the plan. The formal vote of the School Board occurred in January 2025. With surveys and legal issues settled, the deed to the 1912 Building was recorded at the Registry of Deeds in Alfred on June 20, 2025, and BHHS took possession of the building with our first major improvement being the installation of a new roof to assure that we stay dry for years to come.

I would like to thank all those involved in making this gift possible: Building Acquisition Committee-BHHS, Superintendent of Schools, Clay Gleason, MSAD #6 School Board, Central Office Staff, Town of Buxton Select Board, Charles A. Bloom Esq., Buxton CEO, Patricia McKenna, Robert (Butch) Yarumian, Maine Boundary Consultants, and the voters of the Town of Buxton.

The Buxton Hollis Historical Society now has a permanent home and looks to a future of expansion, renovation, and community service! Please join us on October 25 for our “housewarming party”.

Our Annual Meeting with Pot Luck Dinner is scheduled for Saturday, October 25. Please bring your dishes and join us for a social hour at 5:00 pm. We will have some awards at 5:45 followed by dinner at 6:00 pm, and the short historic

documentary on the *Gunpowder Mills of Gorham & Windham, Maine*.

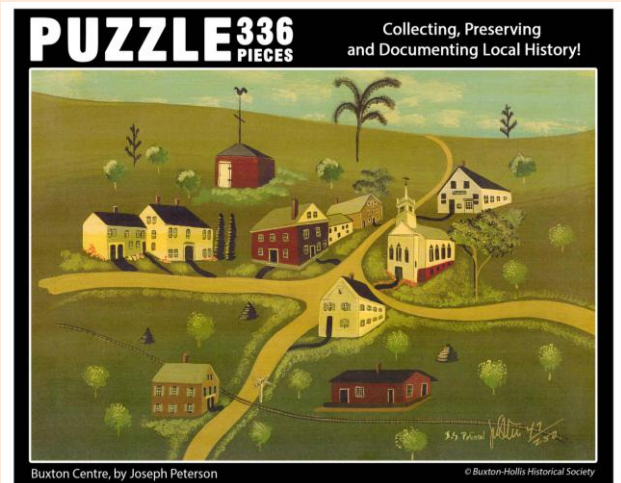
Lastly, *Save the Date*, December 6, for our *Second Annual Santa’s Shindig*. Crafts, merchandise, baked goods, and music will add to your enjoyment of the holidays!

### **Puzzles!**

Here they are! Our new puzzles based on artwork of Buxton Center (above) and Hollis Center (below), both by artist J. S. Peterson.

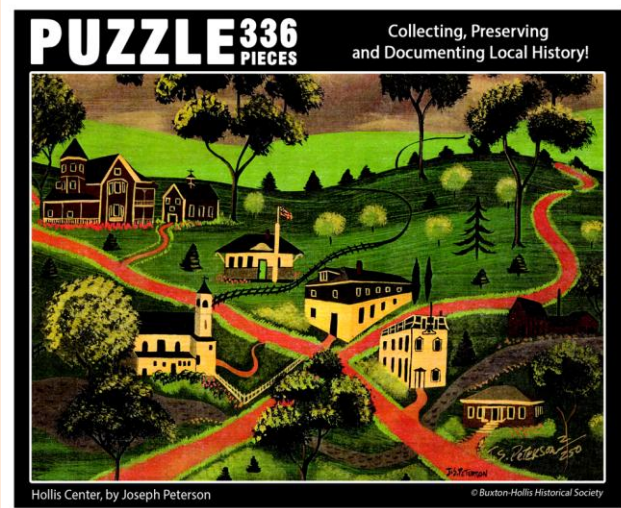
A number of the historic buildings shown on the puzzles no longer exist.

We think you can tell which is Hollis and which is Buxton without a note to guide you.



Buxton Centre, by Joseph Peterson

© Buxton-Hollis Historical Society



Hollis Center, by Joseph Peterson

© Buxton-Hollis Historical Society

## *So You Think You Know Hollis and Buxton: A History Through Postcards*

*By Brenton Hill*

On September 16<sup>th</sup> Brenton Hill presented a program featuring Professor Jim Libby's local postcards from the 1880s to the 1930s. These were images not in Libby's book, *Buxton: A Postcard History*, and Hill added some of the society's related images.

The picture postcards gave us some interesting insights to our history. For example, we have many postcards of Kate Douglas Wiggin and her home Quillcote in Hollis. This was not surprising as she was a major celebrity for her time. Professor Libby's research explained the many different postcards and the reason for them being very common to find today. The Dorcas Society, founded by Kate and her sister Nora Archibald Smith, used post cards as a fundraiser selling one card for 10 cents each or three cards for 25 cents. A few cents went a long way around 1910!

On the other end of the spectrum, Professor Libby found a well-composed and rare postcard that we had never seen before- the Bar Mills

covered bridge that burned on March 4, 1880. Amazingly, the Buxton side stone piers for the bridge are still in the river.

Another rare postcard was of the temporary pedestrian suspension bridge at West Buxton after the flood of 1895. The steel Buxton side bridge survived the flood, and the large brick building on the opposite shore was the Hollis woolen mill. The view is from upstream at West Buxton. Fires, floods and recessions plagued our local river villages, but they found ways to endure.

Other interesting images showed a covered bridge that extended from the Hollis shore, complete with pedestrian sidewalk. That portion was met mid-river with an uncovered bridge, without the sidewalk amenity, from the Buxton side.

If you would like to view this program, it will be shown on local cable TV and the Internet at this link; <https://youtu.be/HwMdp2t4Eyo>



**Below: The covered bridge at Bar Mills that burned March 4, 1880**

Jim Libby found this image on a stereopticon card, as can be seen by the curved top corners. When viewed with the handheld viewers, the image would appear three-dimensional. BHHS has a number of cards and several viewers in our collection.

**2025 Programs and Events as we wrap up a successful season! ...****Annual Meeting and Potluck**

followed by: *The Gunpowder Mills  
of Gorham & Windham, Maine*

Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup> Social at 5:00 pm  
Potluck dishes at 5:00 pm, Awards at 5:45,  
Dinner starts at 6:00 pm. Short film at 7pm.

**Second Annual Santa's Shindig**

Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> 10am to 2pm

*Join us for Crafts, Books, Food and Fancies*

**BHHS is open Thursdays, 4 to 8 pm, through  
October and thereafter by appointment.**

## ***Miracles... By Nancy Pierce***

Imagine the thrill of learning that you have descended from a passenger who arrived in this country on the Mayflower. As approximately half of the Mayflower passengers did not survive that first winter of 1620/21, that would be Miracle Number One. Unless, of course, you went in chronological order and discovered that your many-times great-grandfather, John Howland, had actually fallen overboard during a tumultuous storm and was able to save himself by grabbing hold of a topsail halyard that was dragging in the water. Then, that would be Miracle Number One...

For those of us who have descended from the union of John Howland (yes, the one who went overboard) and Elizabeth Tilley (also a Mayflower passenger), we have much to be grateful for. John Howland came over on the Mayflower as an indentured servant to John Carver. Elizabeth Tilley was a young girl who made the trip with her parents, both of whom succumbed that first winter, leaving Elizabeth an orphan, at which point she became a ward of the Carvers.

John Carver passed in the heat of an April day in 1621, and his wife died not long after. After the Carvers' deaths, John Howland was released from his servitude, and it is widely believed that he inherited the Carvers' estate, to include the care of the three wards of whom they had taken charge. In a few years, John Howland and Elizabeth Tilley would marry and go on to have ten children of their own. John had also signed the Mayflower Compact and become quite instrumental in the Pilgrims' story.

I had not heard of a topsail halyard before learning this tale, but I am certainly thankful there was one trailing in the water behind the *Mayflower*! Miracles...!

Sources: *Mayflower*, by Nathaniel Philbrick; Wikipedia, and William Bradford's Journal. (The topsail halyard is the rope that reaches up the mast to raise the sail. With the top sail raised, the line was tied off on a cleat... and the extra line had fallen over, or was quickly thrown. Wow!)

## ***Upcoming at the Saco River Theater***

The Originals will be presenting *The Thirty-Nine Steps* on October 17, 18, 23, 24, and 25 at 7:30 pm with matinees on October 19 and 26 at 2:30 pm. A special groups' performance will be held on Wednesday, October 22 at 3:00 pm. Tickets are pay-what-you-can with a suggested price of \$25 per ticket. For an afternoon or evening of great local theater, head to the Saco River Theater during October

And please consider supporting our friends at the Saco River Theater with their *Second Annual Holiday Raffle* and autumn play presentation. Raffle tickets are \$5 each with daily drawings from November 29 through December 23. Prizes include tickets to sporting events, tickets to the Portland Symphony, and a personalized, autographed copy of Julia Spencer-Fleming's tenth installment of her Clare Fergusson-Russ Van Alstyne mystery series *At Midnight Comes the Cry*. Tickets may be purchased from SRT board members or at the theater.



The BHHS Newsletter  
Is sponsored by

**Chad E. Poitras  
Funeral Home**

**Funeral Services and  
Cremation Provider**

498 Long Plains Road  
Buxton, Maine 04093  
207 929-3723

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

## *So You Think You Know Your Bradbury Ancestors* by Linda Towle

I have been very proud of my Bradbury ancestors – and that I was able to trace my family back to my 8<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather, Thomas Bradbury (1610-1694) who came here from a family estate in Wicken Bonhunt, England. Thomas married Mary Perkins (1615-1700), and they raised 11 children. I even enjoyed the fascinating story about Mary’s witchcraft trial at age 77, her imprisonment, sentence of execution, and eventual escape. But there has always been that question in the back of my mind about those who came before Thomas, and the place of his origin.

Steve and I made a trip to England and Wales in May of 2025 and enjoyed exploring areas where our ancestors came from. The most exciting part for me

was the day we visited the village of Wicken Bonhunt, the former home of Thomas Bradbury. The Bradbury family no longer owns the Brick House where Thomas grew up, but the current owners graciously gave us a tour. We also saw Wicken Hall (part of the original estate hall) from outside, and photographed The Coach & Horses, a pub dating back to the time the Bradbury family lived in the community. We met a church representative and a local historian at St. Margaret’s church, next door to Wicken Hall, and photographed it as well. From these very welcoming folks, we learned about the family in that part of England. And we found the Bradburys weren’t always the friendliest people we had assumed.

Linda Towle and husband Steve Roberts at the Brick House in 2025. The home is symmetrically built in the Dutch style. There is a classic Roman bust above the door and were two roman statues on the front corners of the house (not pictured – one is there but missing its head, the other is laying in a field in poor condition). The house has been hit by lightning more than once and a portion of the top right side was not restored to match the other side.





The Bradbury Coat of Arms described as: A black shield with and ermine chevron between three round silver buckles with the tongues pointed down. The chevron is said to be one of the earliest symbols to identify men encased in armor. The chevron can be thought of as a wooden roof of protection this symbol in Coats of Arms were also given to those who built churches or fortresses in their country. The buckle is considered an ancient symbol representing fidelity to authority.

Part of the original manor hall at Wicken Bonhunt stands near St. Margaret's Church. We were told that the hall was originally an open space to the roof. Very old paintings were found on the ceiling there.



The origins of our Bradbury family are as follows: the eldest son of Richard Bradbury of Ollerset (born about 1400; my 15<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather) moved south from the High Peak Forest of Derbyshire in the mid-fourteenth century. The family eventually settled in Littlebury. They were a landed family and owned several estates. The first known Bradbury of Littlebury was William of Braughing. Two of his sons, Robert and Thomas, are of interest to the line of Bradburys that ended up in America. Thomas became Sheriff of London, 1498, Lord Mayor, 1509, and was Lord Mayor of several manors in Essex. He married Dame Joan who died in 1509. They were childless and he named his nephew, William, (son of his brother Robert who had died by that time) heir to a portion of his estate.

Sir Thomas' heir, William of Littlebury (1480-1546) was my 11<sup>th</sup> great grandfather. William's son, Matthew Bradbury, was the first Bradbury to

become Lord of the manor of Wicken Hall. He purchased the property in 1557 and kept the coat of arms of the Littlebury family. This Matthew, who died in 1585 passed the manor house to his son, William Bradbury (1544-1622). This William became my 10<sup>th</sup> great grandfather, and this is where family history really becomes interesting.

William (1544-1622) was a ruthless bully and pursued many land grabs by threatening neighbors, killing sheep, maiming shepherds, and blocking rights of way whenever it was advantageous. He became rich from the land he bought, annexed, and forcibly enclosed. This sets the tone for the next three generations of Bradburys in Wicken. At his death, he divided his estate between his younger son, Wymond, and his grandson, John Bradbury (died 1628). William had built for Wymond the Brick House at Wicken and endowed it with land taken from the manor, as well as leaving to Wymond "all his goods

and chattels.” William’s grandson, John, inherited a reduced estate. John was “sickly” and lived only two years after receiving the manor.

Circling back a moment, William’s two older sons were Matthew (d. 1616; father of John), and Wymond (1574-1650). The brothers Matthew and Wymond married sisters, who were daughters of William Whitgift of Clavering, only two miles from Wicken Bonhunt. Matthew married Jane, while Wymond married Elizabeth (her third marriage). Their wives’ uncle was John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury under Queen Elizabeth and King James.

Wicken Hall passed from John (William’s nephew) to a series of heirs. John was succeeded by another Matthew, who died childless in 1645 at the battle of Abingdon, the year he came of age. At this point, the property was mortgaged to the Nightingale family (who were prominent among William Bradbury’s opponents and were also litigators). Francis, the

posthumous son of Matthew, inherited the property at 8 months of age and so there were two wardships until Francis came of age. Through poor financial decisions, litigation with other families, early deaths of heirs (many from smallpox), and infighting within the family, the Wicken Hall estate became badly indebted. The last remaining Bradbury heir, Dorinda Bradbury Sharpe (1717-1893) and her husband, Joseph Sharpe, were forced to sell the estate around 1739.

Dorinda and her father, Matthew, are buried just outside the wall of the chancel where the rectangular structures are visible in the lower right side of the picture. Dorinda’s father Matthew was particularly mean and abusive and through his actions was excommunicated by the church, though he was able to pay a fine to commute his penalty. Still, he has no memorial at St. Margaret’s.

The Lords of the estate often appointed the church Rectors, which meant they controlled the church. In 1742, Francis Bradbury (1600-1644) appointed a distant cousin, Wentworth Bradbury. Wentworth and his wife are memorialized in the chapel.



Before the story ends, I must circle back again to Wymond Bradbury (my 9th great-grandfather) and the Brick House. Wymond and Elizabeth Whitgift Bradbury had four children, William (born 1607), Thomas, Jane, and Anne. Wymond appears to have left the Brick House by 1628 and settled in

Whitechapel, where he died in 1649. It is said that he became fed up with the tangle of conflict.

Wymond’s second son, Thomas (my 8th great grandfather mentioned before) immigrated to New England. We asked our historian contact in Wicken

Bonhunt why Thomas might have left the Brick house where he was raised. Our historian felt there was nothing for a young man to do in that small village and so chose to make his life elsewhere. Thomas arrived in York, Maine in 1634 where he had secured a position as agent of Sir Ferdinando Gorges in return for his passage. The position was partially due to the influence of his mother's family.

Thomas completed his indenture to Gorges in 1640, and was one of the earliest settlers in Salisbury, Massachusetts. He held many offices including schoolmaster of the town, town clerk, justice of the peace, deputy to the court, county recorder, associate judge and captain of the military company. According to the book, *Bradbury Memorial*, this Thomas Bradbury served in these positions with credit to himself and satisfaction to the public. Having come from such a controversial family, it seems he turned out to be a decent person after all!

**BHHS OFFICERS**

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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Janice Hill, Past President  
 and Life Story Editor  
 Brenton Hill, Historian & Tech Support  
 Nancy Pierce, Membership Chair  
 Nancy Pierce, Librarian  
 Sue Schaller, Newsletter Editor  
 Bette Robicheaw, Hospitality Chair  
 Opportunity Knocks to be: Social Media Director  
 Opportunity Knocks to be: Accessions Registrar  
 Robert Yarumian, Clerk  
 John Myers, Auditor

The Coach and Horses, an historic pub, was also owned by the lords of Wicken Hall. The lords controlled the church and the pub and, therefore, the village. Today, the old pub hosts a Thai Restaurant.



**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  
 to my USPS mailbox

**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

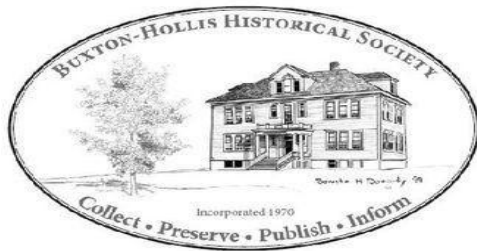
Send to: Buxton-Hollis Historical Society

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**

**Open Hours Thursdays 4-8 pm**

**October 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Potluck  
And CELEBRATION!**

**BHHS Now Owns the 1912 School!**

**Social at 5:00** – bring your potluck dishes

Awards at 5:45 & dinner at 6:00

Historic documentary video at 7:00 pm

**Gunpowder Mills  
of Gorham and Windham, Maine**

**December 6<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 – 2:00**

Santa's Shindig – crafts, food, fancies & books