

# MILBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Milbridgehistoricalsociety.org 207 546-4471

Volume 17, #1  
Spring 2013

*"History is a novel for which the people is the author." Alfred de Vigny*

## MEMORIES OF A HOMETOWN, by Lloyd Holland, one of "the people"

Recalling one's childhood in a town such as Milbridge is truly a pleasure. My grandparents, Ernest and Maggie Strout, lived in a modest cape atop Morse's Hill on the east side of the river.

They had three daughters, the youngest being Lottie. After high school Lottie met a young, wounded veteran of WWI from Steuben, Charles Holland, and began a romance which set the stage for my entrance into this world. Some time after my birth my father died and my mother remarried a man named Guy Leighton.



In 1930 I was living with my grandparents on Morse's Hill and started school in the Primary Class of the East Side Grammer School. My

fellow students came from all over the east side and an area known as North Milbridge. The Great Depression was upon us in earnest by this time and, although my grandfather, a lobster fisherman, was doing comparatively well, I remember my stepfather saying that if the hot dogs were large you got four of them, and if small you got six.

On the west side of the river, known as "overtown", there were stores such as "Humpy" Dinsmore's, Al Strout's and O.P. Gay's grocery store, Jim Burnham's Hardware, Joe Leighton's department store, Fred Strout's general store and Evie Wallace's general store. I remember the Atlantic House on Main Street had been converted to a nursing home operated by Vinyl Smart and his wife.

There was a knitting mill on the Cherryfield Road, owned by Chauncy Leighton, who outsourced much of the work, and my grandmother crocheted many pairs of booties for him. The Milbridge Telephone Company, owned and run by Frank and Mildred Bixby, had its central office in one of the rooms of their apartment over Leighton's store. My mother worked there many years as an operator, along with Cora Kelly and others. The system consisted of bare galvanized wire strung on glass insulators between poles. There were only party lines then with hand cranked phones mounted on walls. Much gossip was gathered by listening to other parties.

During my high school years I walked across the bridge, up Bridge Street and into School Street, where the Milbridge High School, the Alumni Hall and the Opera House stood. The Opera House was also referred to as "The Rink" because roller skating was done there for some years.

One of the incidents of my childhood that still burns bright in my memory occurred in early spring of 1937. I was standing in the backyard of our house, which afforded a spectacular view of the bay and its islands, when I saw a huge gray shape slowly move out of the mist into the sunshine beyond the islands. It gradually formed into the shape of a dirigible and was heading southwest along the coast. Having no camera I could not take a picture, but I watched it until it moved slowly out of sight. The next day the radio was full of the news about the German dirigible Hindenburg exploding and burning at its mooring mast. I had seen the Hindenburg on its great circle route from Frankfurt to Lakehurst. Tragically, it was its last flight.

The FDR programs helped those who could not find work elsewhere, but with war looming ominously the country began gearing up for the conflict. Shipyards were built and began running three shifts. Civilian factories were turned into war plants. My family decided that Portland, with its shipyards and war effort industries, was the place to be, so on my 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, in 1941, we moved to Portland, never to live in Milbridge again. Thus ends the story of my short life in Milbridge, and there are many fond thoughts and reminiscences of those time. LCH





### FROM THE CURATOR'S CORNER

The winter months have been very quiet this year. There was little physical work to be done at the museum which gave us a bit of a break after welcoming over 400 visitors last summer.

This summer's display is entitled 'Old Milbridge'. We'll be using Milbridge artifacts, such as a set of china made especially for a general store in Milbridge around 1920, old store signs, photographs, etc.

Last year we began to put together a notebook composed of remembrances of the old Alumni Hall (the building taken down and replaced by the new town offices and library). We have deeds dealing with the old building, early photographs and personal stories from people. If you have something you'd like to have included in this book, please send it to us or bring it by the museum. The book will eventually go to the new building where it will be available for viewing.

We are always thankful for items donated to our collection. It is, however, important to remember that items and artifacts must, 1) have a connection to Milbridge, 2) to DownEast or 3) to Maine. Because we have limited storage space and are a small museum, sadly, we can't accept everything even of historic value. Too, simply because something is old doesn't mean it's valuable. For our records we also need an item's history (as much as is known) and local family connection. Photographs, especially, must be marked with names and dates in order to be of value.

We would truly welcome new volunteers (both year 'round residents and summer people) to our midst. There are a number of tasks that need doing. We need docents (even one afternoon a month would be wonderful), a volunteer coordinator (a job that can be done from home), help putting displays together, taking care of the buildings and grounds, etc. No matter what your interests or skills, we really need you. Please consider giving an hour or two of your time for a good community cause.

We will look forward to seeing you at the museum for programs and events this summer. Thank you all for your past support.

Lee-Lee Schlegel, Curator

## TREASURER'S REPORT



While I'm certainly aware that Spring is coming quickly, at this writing, here in Milbridge we just endured the great 'blizzard' of 2013! So, it's now a good quiet time to sit down to pull some thoughts and figures together to let you know how the Historical Society is doing financially. In my Autumn Newsletter input I remarked that we and our economy appeared to have turned a financial corner and the future was looking brighter. I'm pleased to say that this forecast seems to be on track.

During the 2011 calendar year we received a total of only \$1,050 in dues, but in 2012 we received \$1,400, a 33% increase. Similarly, in 2011 we received only \$786 in donations compared to the \$1,339 we received in 2012, or a 70% increase! At \$2,659, our Gift Shop sales were comparable to our 2011 sales. Our calendar ads and birthday announcements in 2012 were, at \$1,079, comparable to our 2011 income. Unfortunately, our Yard Sale income in 2012 (\$1,119) was significantly lower than our Yard Sale income in 2011, which had been an amazing \$4,028. That said, our total income in 2012 was \$9,368.

On the expense side of the ledger, we had one significant cost in the mold mitigation we had to do in the storage building. This mitigation effort cost us \$2,137 out of a total 2012 Buildings & Grounds expenditure of \$2,748. On the positive side, the cost of our insurance for both the museum building and storage building decreased from a total of \$1,221 in 2011 to \$1,151 in 2013 – a 6% decrease, but every little bit of savings counts! Our total expenditures for 2012 were \$9,359.

So, to the proverbial bottom line – with a total income of \$9,368, and total expenditures of \$9,359, we actually came out \$9 ahead for the year! But remember, without your continuing support, this positive condition can turn around quickly. As a 501 ( c ) 3 non-profit organization, your donations/contributions to the Milbridge Historical Society are still tax-deductable.

John Schlegel, Treasurer

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## AN HISTORICAL TREASURE

The Milbridge Historical Society has received an updated version of the Strout Family Genealogy 2013 titled "**THE DESCENDANTS OF CHRISTOPHER STROUT**". This version corrects past errors and includes extensive material from "The Early Narraguagus Families of Washington County, Maine". The book is a gift from Kenneth Strout who lives in Richmond, Va., and is a valuable addition to the museum's genealogy section. The document and CD are a complete re-issue.

## 2013 Milbridge Historical Society Programs

All programs will be held in the Historical Society meeting room, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

- June 11            **'The Baseline'**, presented by Nancy Willey (retired teacher)
- July 9             **'Lighthouses'**, (a new program), presented by Tim Harrison (editor, 'Lighthouse Digest')
- August 23       **'What's In the Water'**, presented by Dr. Brian Beal (Director, Downeast Institute For Applied Marine Research and Education)
- September 10   **'Restoring Seabirds to Downeast Islands'**, presented by Linda Welch (wildlife Biologist, Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge)
- October 8        **'Rockweed Harvesting'**, presented by Dennis Bryant (Director, Maine Rockweed Operations, Acadian Sea Plants)

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### GIFT SHOP

Picture yourself in this handsome hooded sweatshirt as you stand in the bow of your sailing vessel, cruising the Narraguagus Bay. This cozy pullover is only one of the many items available at our Gift Shop. Check out the complete list with pricing at [www.milbridgehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.milbridgehistoricalsociety.org) and please consider the Museum Gift Shop when making your next gift or personal purchase.

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### OFFICERS

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| Secretary           | Sally Leighton   |
| Treasurer           | John Schlegel    |
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| Curator             | Lee-Lee Schlegel |

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## What did you call that?

From "The Illustrated Dictionary of Lobstering", by Kendall Merriam

**Barvel** The old name for an apron. It was usually made from oilskin and kept the front of the lobsterman's clothes dry while he was hauling.

**Berried Lobster** A female lobster with eggs on her tail. The eggs resemble small berries. These egg-bearing females must be thrown back overboard.

**Cage** A framework of bronze rods surrounding the lobster boat's propeller to prevent the propeller from cutting off or fouling on warp.

**Can Buoy** A navigational buoy used to mark channels. Round, black cylinder shape. Kept on right leaving harbor; left returning.

**Dolphin** Three pilings fastened together.

**End Buoy** Last buoy in a lobsterman's string of buoys that are attached to traps. The end buoy is sometimes marked with a band or string on the spindle.

**Firing** Phosphorescence in the water caused by dinoflagellates (small marine organisms).

**Garboard** The first plank of the boat just above the keel.

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### MEMBERSHIP

The board, officers, staff and membership body thank you for supporting MHS and for making possible a look at the history of our town. Dues cover a calendar year, January 1 through December 31.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Summer Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address\_\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*Thank you for allowing us to email your newsletter.

Annual dues are \$10/year. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for 2013 2014 2015 Extra donation \$\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ I choose Lifetime Membership and am enclosing \$100.

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Please forward dues, along with the above form, or a facsimile, to Laurie Hall at P. O. Box 194, Milbridge, Me 04658. If there are questions, you may call Laurie at 546-2055, leave a message at 546-4471 or email [info@milbridgehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@milbridgehistoricalsociety.org). Thank you for your continued support.

## YUMMY!

For those of you who would like to prepare lobster without that big pot of water, here is a recipe from Stephen Cook of Cook's Lobster Pound and Restaurant on Bailey's Island

### BAKED STUFFED LOBSTER

Fistful of saltine crackers, crushed	2 tbs green peppers, chopped fine
2 tbs onion, chopped fine	1 clove garlic, chopped fine
Pinch of pepper	Meat of a one-pound boiled lobster
Cheddar cheese (optional)	One-pound live lobster

Mix all of the ingredients together, except cheese and live lobster. Be sure to include the juices from the boiled lobster body. If you need more moisture in the stuffing, melted butter may be added, or lemon squeezed into the mixture for a slightly tangy flavor.

Hold the live lobster by the claws firmly and with a large knife cut an opening in the stomach from the head to the tail. Remove heart and intestines. Lightly press the stuffing mixture into the spread opening until full. If the lobster is a soft shell, you may want to wrap the claws in tin foil to keep them from burning.

The stuffed lobster should be cooked twenty minutes in a 375 degree oven. About five minutes before the lobster is done, you may sprinkle cheddar cheese over the stuffing to melt.

*You can also substitute Ritz for saltines and crabmeat for cooked lobster, and use wine for any necessary moisture*

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