

Nobleboro Historical Society

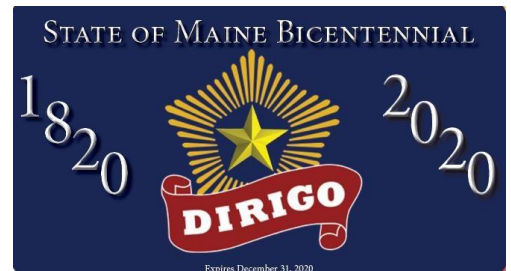
198 Center Street, PO Box 122
Nobleboro, Maine 04555

Fall 2019

Dear Members,

Two outstanding programs about Nobleboro around 1820

Maine's 200th statehood anniversary is March 2020 -- and these two programs by Carolyn Hardman and by Bill Hill will set the stage of tumultuous and everyday things that were happening right here in Nobleboro as statehood was looming.



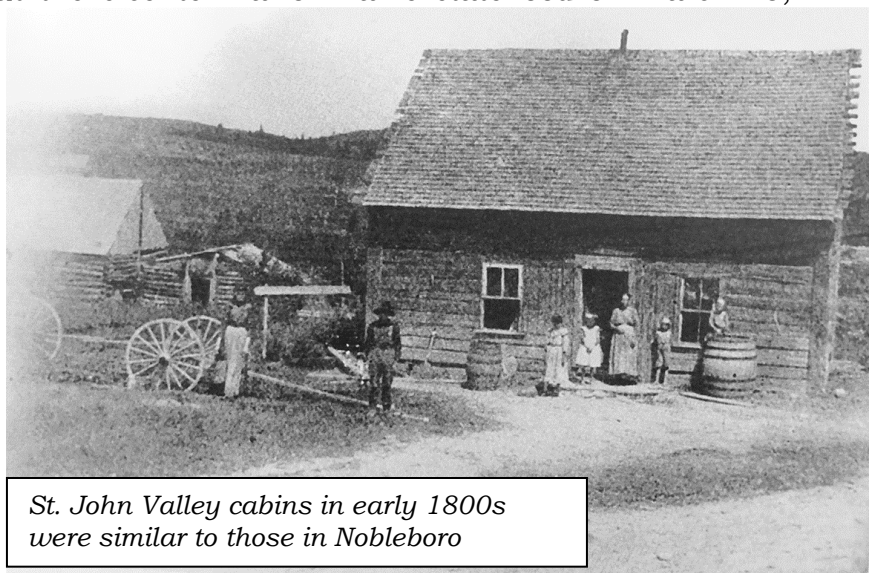
Friday, November 1 7:00 PM at Historical Center

"Maine Statehood in 1820: Hard-Won and Controversial"

You're going to be hearing a lot about the bicentennial of Maine statehood on March 15, 2020. It's likely you'll wonder why Maine started out as part of Massachusetts in the first place. How was the beheading of Charles I in England connected to the Massachusetts Bay colony's conquest of Maine? What benefits and problems came with Massachusetts dominance?

Why did it take so long to gain Maine's independence? Why was Lincoln County opposed to separation until the last vote? How did Nobleboro (which included most of Damariscotta) vote?

Then in 1820 when Maine applied to Congress to be admitted to the union, Maine's statehood was part of the Missouri Compromise. Why were Maine voters evenly and bitterly divided about the compromise even though its defeat would mean Maine would not become a state? And today, why isn't everyone in Maine wholeheartedly celebrating Maine's bicentennial?



*St. John Valley cabins in early 1800s
were similar to those in Nobleboro*



Portland was the state's first capital when Maine became a state in 1820. The capital was moved to Augusta in 1833 when the State House was completed there. Watercolor by Anna Bucknam. Courtesy, Maine Historical Society and the Maine State Museum

In an illustrated talk **Carolyn Hardman**, who taught Maine history and government, will answer these questions about the statehood controversy.

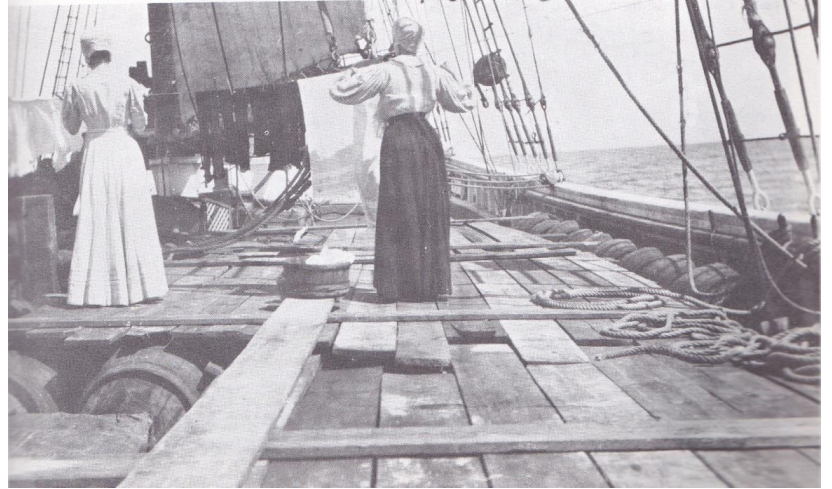
As a long-time Society member, Carolyn has been creating programs for Nobleboro Central School students at our Center. Her goal is to show that, contrary to what you may have learned in school, history is not a list of dates and facts, but is actually just one good story after another.

Friday, November 15

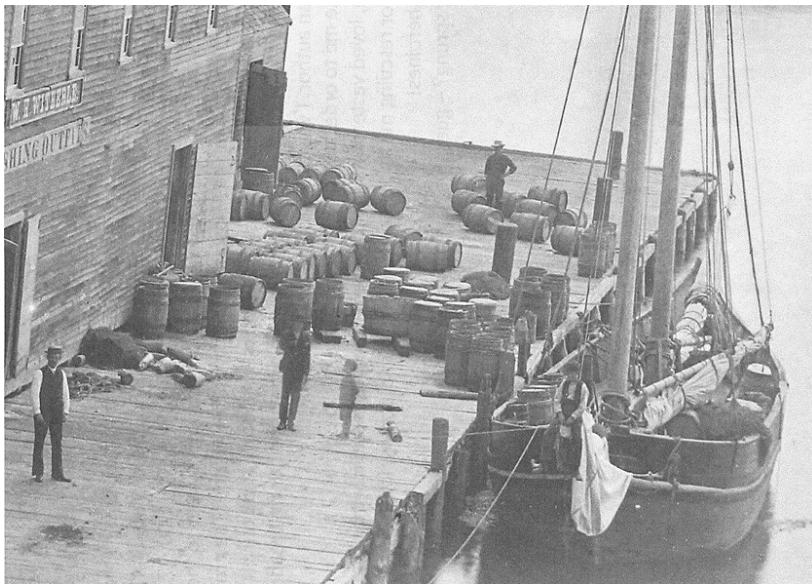
7:00 PM at Historical Center

"Ships and Shipping when Maine was About to Split from Massachusetts"

Bill Hill, Nobleboro Historical Society member and avid boater, has researched ships and shipping in the Nobleboro area around 1820, when Maine was deciding whether to split from Massachusetts. His illustrated program will include many elements of the whole industry from working in a shipyard from dawn to dusk, skills need to build the ship with futtocks and rabbets, trunnels and ribbands, horn timbers, transoms and stems, planking, ceiling and decks. You'll learn how they got the ship to river, ports travelled to, border agents, along with life on a ship including captains and wives, good times, dangerous cargo, crew discipline, working underway and how they fished in pinkies beyond our shores.



Women on ship hanging laundry while at sea



Locally made Pinky boats were used for fishing and hauling cargo. Courtesy of New England Historical Society and Castine Historical Society.

Bill has always been fascinated with boats and ships and when we suggested learning about life in Nobleboro in 1820, he said "I'll do the part about ships!" He started with his collection of ship books at home, proceeded to George Dow's files at the Historical Center for local information, then to Skidompha's genealogy area for more references, looked online for relevant books and found more answers in the Mariners Museum Newport News, Virginia. Bill has built several small boats and is familiar with the challenges of using today's tools and will tell about the methods 200+ years ago.

As Bill avidly read, he realized shipping was part of Nobleboro's story too, as in addition to having many shipyards, shipping was happening in the south end of Nobleboro (now called Damariscotta).

Nobleboro men were captains of ships and, in addition to the cargos carried, the challenging life of the men -- and women -- onboard sailing ships for several months at a time was part of the local life. From the trees to the sailing life, it's a story you'll enjoy hearing.

BE SURE TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE 2019 PROGRAMS!

Programs are free and everyone's invited – Refreshments served too.

Membership Dues

Your membership and participation are key to the success of the Society! Now is the time to pay your NHS dues for 2020.

If you received the enclosed return envelope, then it is time to renew your membership, please send your check in the enclosed membership envelope.

Thank you!

If you did not receive a membership envelope in this newsletter, that's because you are a life or honorary member, or your dues are paid for 2020 – and thank you!

Donations are also helpful and appreciated and since the Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, they are generally tax deductible. A new membership in the Historical Society would be a nice holiday gift for someone too.

PLEASE ALSO INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS, as we send email reminders for activities. If your email address has changed or you think we may not have it, please email it to

Jean Vose, Corresponding Secretary at godslope@tidewater.net.

Damariscotta Mills' Historian George Weston

This past June, as George Weston was celebrating his 99th birthday, he was also identifying hundreds of photos and other papers from Arthur Jones' collection of things that he had stored away for posterity. George has been the Damariscotta Mills historian for many decades since he retired with distinction as the Director of the Navigational Science Division in the Hydrographic Center, US Defense Mapping Agency part of the Department of Defense. As our dedicated historian, he is very special as he has faithfully -- completely and accurately -- labeled all of his photos and other materials -- and readily recalls an enormous amount of local information about the last century. His records are a treasure trove of the history of The Mills -- and George could uniquely sort, identify, and label the many things in the six cartons of Arthur's materials.



Arthur, who passed away in June 2018 at 100, and his daughter Susan Jones McCuller generously donated the cartons of photos, photo albums, cards, glass negatives, slides, maps, newspaper articles, and other items to Nobleboro Historical Society. George and Arthur were friends from childhood and had many adventures in Damariscotta Mills and explored every nook and cranny of the area. They continued to gather and share information and documents about The Mills as they both loved The Mills and want it to be remembered. George continues to photograph changes in town and catalogues them in ring-binders along with other relevant information, including *Lincoln County News* articles. He has generously designated that all of this wonderfully labeled and organized information will eventually come to Nobleboro Historical Society for other historians to use.

George also donated to the Historical Society his Squadron Book for the Buccaneers of Bombing Squadron 104 that, typical George-style, he had filled with additional supplemental items that tell more of the story like his ID cards, letters, articles and other memorabilia from his service. He prepared this 'special edition' of the Squadron Book as a gift for his mother -- and now we will also value this record of his service and of the other men George served with as a bombardier over the Pacific in World War II.



The Vanners Donate a Cobbler Workbench

Charles and Elizabeth Vanner from Washington, Maine visited the Historical Center in August and donated a cobbler's work bench from the barn on their Vanner farm. Charles is a descendant of John Vanner (Varner) who lived in Nobleboro in the 1800s near Duck Puddle Pond (on 1813 Nobleboro map), who moved to Jefferson before 1857 (not on Nobleboro 1857 map) and established a farm on what is now Vanner Road in Washington. Charles and Elizabeth live on the Vanner Farm that has been in the family for over a century where the bench has been stored. They also donated a photo from a 1920 Vanner reunion with all the people identified.

The Washington Vanner family is distantly related to Nobleboro's Charles Varner (Vannah) whose farm was on the curve in Vannah Road overlooking Damariscotta Lake. On the 1813 Nobleboro map, Charles' land is contiguous with John Vanner's land. Charles was the great-grandfather of Hudson Vannah who died in 1998. They were descendants of the Werner family from Germany.



Marie Louise Ogden Embree Franke

Nobleboro Historical Society has a wonderful oil painting of a lovely woman in a magnificent lace-topped gown wearing a 'statement' hat and a fur muff and stole.

She was identified as Marie Louise Franke, but we didn't know who that was until Bob Benner said "Marie Louise lived across the road from me and I worked for her daughter Lois and for her. I used to talk with Marie for hours when I was a teenager -- and she was a wonderful lady!"

It turns out that Marie Louise summered in Nobleboro from the turn of the century and spent her last winters here too until she died in 1955, when Bob was 19.



Marie Louise photograph



Marie Louise oil painting

Bob was given many photos of their family and clearly Marie Louise was a beautiful young woman and her first husband, Frank Embree, was a handsome 'dude.' They were apparently wealthy and lived in New York, traveled abroad, and summered in what Bob described as "a huge museum house" with tapestry wallpaper, wonderful fancy furniture, many chandeliers, handsome mantels over the fireplaces, several complete sets of china with every piece that you could imagine and lots of silver flatware, trays and other silver pieces that Bob would polish.

The house was on the rise on the east side of Atlantic Highway/ US 1 (across from what is now Medomak Veterinary Services), but it deteriorated and fell down.

Her second husband Mr. Franke was also wealthy even after the crash.



Frank Embree photograph

Marie Louise and Frank's daughter Lois married Raymond Downing Piercy and they had built a smaller "magnificent summer house" on the same property, but back closer to Old County Road. (That house is still there today with an original outbuilding behind it.) The original houses had lovely gardens and large trimmed hedges leading up from Old County Road and bordering the fancy gardens.

Bob is a descendant of the Benner families who arrived in Nobleboro in the 1700s. He was born in 1936 and his family lived on the Waldoboro town line across the Atlantic Highway from Marie and Frank, and he still lives there.

Bob worked at Marie's daughter's house when he was 11 until he was 16 but visited Marie to help and they chatted about "everything" until she died.

Bob's sister Sylvia also worked at Lois' and he remembers that she wore a white uniform to serve meals and Lois had a bell to summon her. But Lois also worked in the garden and helped Sylvia with the cleaning and both kids liked her. Lois Piercy's family was very generous and when they stopped summering here in 1956, they gave gifts of \$1000 to several local families.

When Bob knew her, Marie always wore white lace, ankle-length dresses with lace-up knee-high white boots. He remembers a French servant that Marie had because the woman loved to eat frog legs and Bob was very good at catching frogs. People liked Marie and she gave a farewell party each fall before she returned to New York and Bob's grandfather, Henry Benner was a butcher in what's now the Nobleboro Antique Shop, always saved the best cuts for Marie.

This was one of those special relationships that left strong pleasant memories that are recalled with a smile decades later.



Marie Louise in Nobleboro Summer House



Bob Benner

AppleFest 2019 was Wonderful!

Every AppleFest is wonderful, but 2019 may be a record-breaker with over 575 attendees. Not only was the weather perfect and the decorations wonderful, but folks bought 103 pies in 135 minutes, 120 great turkey-salad sandwiches in 165 minutes, all 10 of Shirley Bailey’s dry flower arrangements, all but a few of the 160 pounds of Beth’s apples and, of course, all of Fondy’s donuts sold as fast as she and Wade could make them. Luckily, the 8th graders, who were a great help with set-up and clean-up, also had an endless supply of hotdogs, popcorn and cookies.

The 115 silent auction items had lots of high bidding, our Crafts table did well with four new pumpkin painters and Barb’s excellent work, Playin’ Possum band got even more compliments this year, K-W Leadership School staff had fun games for the kids, the Historical Society table sold a lot of books and maps, over 100 people visited the Historical Center for the D-Day weapons exhibit and the museum, and the 11 vendor tables and those in the lobby all did well too. The good cheer and smiles from all our fabulous new and old volunteers set the happy AppleFest mood.

Whew -- what a great day!



*Robyn Henry and Janet Hatch
at the Apple Table*



Alice Scott



*President Mary Sheldon and Master
of Ceremonies Mitchell Wellman*

Looking forward to seeing you at the Fall programs!

Mary Sheldon, President