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## 12-21-07 Hobbs Funeral Home



Photos courtesy of Hobbs Funeral Home

Celebrating its 66<sup>th</sup> year in business, Hobbs Funeral Home has been in business in South Portland for as long as most of us can remember. The funeral home was founded in November 1941 by Frank Hobbs, Sr. (1916-1979) and his wife, Elizabeth “Betty” Hobbs (1917-2006), when they purchased the former farm on Cottage Road.

The home on Cottage Road was originally known as the Clemons farm; the Clemons family owned that piece of land which once stretched from Cottage Road to Broadway. The first service that took place in the home was described by Betty Hobbs in a memoir, as follows:

“Our first call came December 1, 1941, when a Mr. Marshall had died. Mrs. Marshall was the Clemons’ daughter, born and

raised in this lovely old home. Because people were coming to the service from California, we scheduled the funeral for Sunday, December 7. This gave us the needed time to get rugs and furniture in place, plus papering and painting in the two front rooms. My mother borrowed a sewing machine and made beautiful draperies from material I had purchased at Goodall-Sanford Display room where I worked before we were married. Folding chairs and lamps were loaned to us by two Portland funeral homes and the service was held. Not until we were cleaning up and getting ready to return the equipment did we turn on the radio – and learn of the bombing of Pearl Harbor!”



Photos courtesy of Hobbs Funeral Home

Frank and Betty Hobbs ran the funeral home on the first floor, while living and raising their three children on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the building. Both of their sons have been involved in running



the business: Frank Jr. joined the business in the 1960s and has since retired; Jeff Hobbs joined the business in 1979 and continues running the business today. Unlike most funeral homes in Greater Portland, Hobbs remains a local, independently-owned business.

Thank you! In the third photo, Jeff Hobbs presents a check to the South Portland Historical Society from Hobbs Funeral Home in memory of his parents, Frank and Betty Hobbs, Sr. The donation will go to support the Society’s capital campaign to acquire the Cushing’s Point House. Accepting the check on behalf of the Society is board member Sharyn Dawson.

## 12-14-07 Cock and Bull Restaurant – 1970s



Photo by G. Arnold Roberts

I recently purchased a postcard that features an old South Portland restaurant – I’m sure many readers will remember it. It was the Cock and Bull Restaurant that was located at 195 Maine Mall Road. The building was later the location of the Ground Round, and now is home to the IHOP Restaurant.

This card is from the 1970s and describes the restaurant as “an attractive new building, representative of an Old English, half-timbered style tavern.” The restaurant served lunch and dinner and featured steak, fish and chops.

What a great example of how quickly today becomes history. Do you have any memorabilia from a South Portland business that has come and gone?

We'd love to hear from you! Email [Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com) or call Kathy at 767-7299.

## You are Invited - Society Benefit Hosted by Bill Arnold and Norma Albrecht

On Sunday, December 16th, the public is invited to the home of Bill Arnold and Norma Albrecht at 6 Northeast Lane (off Alfred Street) from 1pm to 4pm. Come enjoy light refreshments and view an incredible collection of original works of art that will be on display. In addition to 18 oil paintings by Paul Black and another 18 paintings by Cameron Sinclair, the collection also includes original paintings, sculptures, ceramics, mobiles, masks and more by artists Michelle LaPerriere, Lois Hennessey, Tom Maciag, Milt Doda, Maria & Philip Annal, and other local artists. Suggested donation of \$10 per person or \$15 per couple with proceeds going to benefit the South Portland Historical Society's capital campaign to purchase the Cushing's Point House. FMI call 767-7299.



Linwood Cross, shown at left, recently presented a check from Cross Professional Associates to the South Portland Historical Society in support of its capital campaign to acquire the Cushing's Point House. Accepting on behalf of the Society is board member David Mishkin.

### 12-07-07 Purpooduck Point and Cushing's Point – An Early View



Here's a great old lithograph print showing an 1832 view of Portland, taken from Fort Preble. The area that we now call Spring Point was known as Purpooduck Point in earlier times; it was the location that the first colonial settlers of our city chose to build their homes, back in the 1600s. Although this is an artist's rendering of how Portland looked from this area, it nonetheless gives an interesting view of Cushing's Point and Ferry Village.

Note to readers: the South Portland Historical Society maintains a research office in City Hall. We are open on Wednesdays from 10am to noon, or other times, by chance or appointment.

We have historical books, DVD history programs and Paul Black's "Cushing's Point House" prints available for sale – all are great gift ideas with proceeds going to benefit the historical society. For more information, call Linda at 799-3937.

The Pleasantdale Hose Co. No. 3 recently made a \$500 contribution toward the South Portland Historical Society's capital campaign to acquire the Cushing's Point House. Seen here is Captain Richard Cotton of the Pleasantdale Hose Company on the left, and accepting on behalf of the historical society is board member Michael Eastman. Photo courtesy of David Mishkin.



### 11-30-07 Frank I. Brown Elementary School



Built in 1937 at a cost of \$78,237, the Frank I. Brown Elementary School later underwent an expansion in 1958 that doubled its size, then another expansion and renovation in 2003/2004 doubled its size once again. The school was named for Dr. Frank I. Brown (1860-1933), a respected South Portland physician who served on the South Portland School Board for many years. His home and practice was located at 41 Pine Street in Ferry Village. Dr. Brown actually began his career as a high school principal in Norway, Maine and then Hopkinton, MA; he would later return to school for his MD degree so that he could practice medicine.

The accompanying photo of the 1949 Brown School football team was sent to us by alumnus Wayne Upton. Do you have similar school photos from your childhood in a South Portland school? We'd love to

see them! The South Portland Historical Society's office is located in City Hall and is open on Wednesdays from 10am to noon, or by appointment. You can also email to [kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:kathy@barrenhillbooks.com), or call 767-3268.

### 11-23-07 Giving Thanks



Saco & Biddeford Savings recently pledged its support of the South Portland Historical Society. Pictured above are members of Saco & Biddeford presenting a check for its first installment on a \$25,000 pledge. From left to right: Carl Chatto, treasurer and Kathy DiPhilippo, director, of South Portland Historical Society; Linda Noone, vice president and manager of SP office and Betty McGovern, assistant manager of SP office, of Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution.

Now that Thanksgiving and the holiday season are upon us, I thought it a good time to update residents on the progress that the South Portland Historical Society has made since announcing our capital/endowment campaign in late May. We certainly are giving thanks on a daily basis to the remarkable support and encouragement that we have received from the public in regards to our plan to acquire the Cushing's Point House and create a museum there which will preserve and tell the history of our wonderful community.

We continue to work diligently on phase one of our capital campaign – to raise \$400,000 to acquire the building itself. This past summer, as we began to submit grant applications, we were awarded a grant of \$40,000 from the Davis Family Foundation. This was soon followed by a pledge of \$15,000 from the Greater Portland Public Development Commission. As contributions began pouring in from the public, we received a major gift of \$5,000 from former historical society president, Richard A. Davis. These early donations gave us a quick start.

The South Portland Lions Club, which has been generously supporting the Society for many years now, voted this fall to give a very generous check for \$5,000 to go toward our capital campaign. Last month, the Society held its first Antique Appraisal Day at the Community Center. The event, with professional appraisers Bruce Buxton, Douglas Harding and Geraldine Wolfe, was both educational and entertaining. Attendees were able to have their own treasures appraised, as well as watch the show as the appraisers reviewed an incredible variety of items. Thanks to the generosity of many businesses and individuals, we also held a silent auction in conjunction with that event. The combined event raised over \$5,000.

We are thrilled to receive the support of South Portland resident and noted Maine artist Paul Black. When Mr. Black heard of our plan for the Cushing's Point House, he painted a truly inspired image of the building and Bug Light Park, then commissioned a series of prints and donated the painting and the prints to the Society to use as a fundraiser (if you would like to buy a print as a holiday gift for a loved one, know that 100% of the proceeds go toward the Society. Call 767-3268 for more information).

This fall, the Society has also crossed another landmark. As the public has responded with enthusiasm to our plan, our membership numbers have surged. We now have over 400 individual members of the Society, making our organization one of the largest, membership-based, local historical societies in the state! This is a wonderful reflection of the caring and generosity of our community. Thank you! Of course, we would love to see that number go higher, so if you are not yet a member, we hope that you will consider joining today – membership dues start at just \$10.

In our most recent news, Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution has pledged its support of \$25,000 toward our campaign! What an amazing gift from a community bank that truly values our community. Thank you, Saco & Biddeford Savings!

To date, we are thrilled to have raised \$115,000 toward our phase one goal. Thank you to all donors, large and small. Every donation, no matter the size, brings us closer to turning the Cushing's Point House into a museum for all to enjoy. We encourage you now, as the holiday season approaches, to consider including the South Portland Historical Society on your gift list. If you would also like to make a donation as a gift for a friend or loved one, let us know and we will send a letter to that person letting them know a gift was made in their name. Thank you and Happy Thanksgiving!

[Donation Form](#)

**11-16-07 Memories of Ferry Village**



From the Etta Gregory Watts collection.

I had a very enjoyable visit with Bob Bennett lately – Bob stopped in our office and shared some delightful memories of growing up in Ferry Village. He agreed that our column readers might enjoy reminiscing with him, as well (thanks, Bob!).

When Bob was growing up in Ferry Village, the shipyards were in full production. He worked for Proco's on High Street. For our readers who aren't familiar, Dominic Proco ran a sandwich shop in Ferry Village for years, and many locals will tell you that he made the best Italian sandwiches you could get. In the 1930s, his sandwich shop was located under the stairs of the movie theater at the corner of Sawyer and High Streets. In the 1940s, he moved his shop first to 70 High Street, then a few years later to 74 High Street.

Back to Bob's story: every day in the summertime, Mr. Proco would send Bob down to the West Gate of the shipyard with sandwiches and peanuts to sell to the shipyard workers when they came out on their break. Each time, he would have six large Italians (25 cents each), six half Italians (15 cents each), and six bags each of salted and unsalted peanuts (10 cents a bag). He would sell them all and if

he had extra time, would run back for more.

There were other means for a young lad to make money during those years. Bob and his brothers or friends would take a rag bag and go to parking lots to pick up beer bottles. Bob remembers returning them to the store on the corner of Sawyer and Front Street where they would get about five cents for a big bottle and two cents for a small one. On a good night, Bob and his friends could make ten to fifteen dollars by cashing in bottles. They would also go "junking" – finding metal to turn in – and a man on the corner of School and High Street would pay them a penny a pound for the metal. They would use the money to go to the movie theater on Sundays.

The accompanying photo shows a moose standing in the water on the beach at Ferry Village with the Bennett Contracting Corporation building in the background. Bennett Contracting was a company that did pile driving and pier construction – they stored pilings and materials in that building at 287 Front Street. Just to the left of the building in the photo is Bob's "swimming hole". Bob and his friends would go to Bob Miller's on Dyer Street and would buy big boiled crabs – then they would go the beach there and sit and eat their crabs. What a nice way to spend a day!

We love to hear about residents' memories of their neighborhoods. If you would like to share some of your memories, please email [Kathy@BarrenHillBooks.com](mailto:Kathy@BarrenHillBooks.com).

**11-09-07 Portland Breakwater Light**



The breakwater leading to Bug Light. From the Etta Gregory Watts collection.

Portland Breakwater Light, known to most of us as “Bug Light”, and the adjacent Bug Light Park are truly gems in South Portland. Some residents make a trip to the park on a regular basis; for those with limited mobility, even sitting in your car there is a pleasant experience – with the wide expanse of Casco Bay and all of its activity right there in front of you. I usually take my kids there on our bikes in warmer weather – we enter onto the Greenbelt at Mill Creek and I’d guess it’s about a mile from there to Bug Light. Long enough for some good exercise, but not so long that I’d get complaints from the kids. They love the hill by the Betsy Ross House. Seeing Bug Light now, you’d never know that the little lighthouse used to sit at the end of a roughly 2,000 foot breakwater. During World War II, the cove there was filled in to create the massive South Portland shipyards. In the photo (at left) from the Etta Gregory Watts collection, you can actually see the very beginning of the breakwater, as it used to be in years prior to WWII.

Step up onto the breakwater and it was a long walk to the lighthouse.

As seen in the historical society’s logo, Bug Light used to have a keeper’s house attached

to it. Society member Judy Kelley provided us with the photo (right) of a group of people gathered at the keeper’s house at Bug Light.

We do have some of Judy’s relatives identified, including her grandfather standing at the far right, Mr. Holbrook, who was the lighthouse keeper at Bug Light, but there are many unidentified people in the photo. If you recognize anyone in the photo (maybe your grandparents are in the picture!), I would really appreciate hearing from you.



A gathering at the keeper’s house at Bug Light.

The South Portland Historical Society has a research office in City Hall, open on Wednesdays from 10am to noon or by appointment. You can call Kathy at 767-7299.

### 11-02-07 Peoples United Methodist Church



From the Etta Gregory Watts collection: a view of the early Cape Elizabeth Ferry Village Methodist Episcopal Church (later renamed Peoples Church) on the corner of High and School Streets. The man in the buggy is believed to be a sewing machine salesman.

By guest columnist Arthur Tordoff  
South Portland Historical Society member

Peoples originated with a Methodist Class established in the Point Village (Willard Square) area of South Portland in 1839. Reverend Jesse Stone who had been appointed to First Methodist Episcopal Church on Brown’s Hill the previous year founded this class. The class began to break up around 1850 when some members reestablished themselves and opened a formal church in Ferry Village in 1853. Others from that original congregation reformed on the Bowery Beach Road in Cape Elizabeth. In 1888, the Cape Elizabeth Ferry Village Methodist Episcopal Church adopted the name Peoples. The church was one of the most active churches in the Village until the building of the shipyards of World War II. The trustees began looking for another property due to the decline in membership caused by the uprooting of

families in the area. The present location at 310 Broadway was settled upon and the new sanctuary was opened on January 4, 1948. Peoples' history has been dotted with service to members of the church, the local community and the world. One of the first Sunday schools in the state had been established in the Ferry Village Church. A welfare program was operated by church members long before governments adopted the idea. The church facility and members of have been involved with many community programs including: The Red Cross, Meals On Wheels, Root Celler, and Wayside Soup Kitchen.



A view of the church where it stands now at 310 Broadway.

Fifty-eight pastors have served Peoples since its inception. Presently co-pastors Jamie and Gwyneth Arrison serve the congregation. At least 26 former members of the church have entered or studied for the ministry in the last 50 years.

**10-26-07 Antique Appraisal Day with silent auction - to benefit the South Portland Historical Society**



Proceeds from the Antique Appraisal and Silent Auction will go towards the historical society's capital campaign, to acquire the Cushing's Point House, shown above.

On Saturday, October 27, the South Portland Community Center, 21 Nelson Road, will be the site of the South Portland Historical Society's own antiques roadshow. An Antique Appraisal Day with Bruce Buxton will feature appraisers of fine art, furniture, glass, ceramics, books, documents, paper, linens, and textiles. The public is welcome to bring in items for appraisal from 10am to 2pm - items should be small enough to carry in your arms. \$10 for one item, \$18 for two, or \$25 for the appraisal of three items. All proceeds will benefit the historical society's capital campaign to purchase the Cushing's Point House near Bug Light Park. Refreshments will be served. No coins, stamps or bottles, please.

The Society will also hold the culmination of its Silent Auction at the same event. A preview of auction items and advance bidding will be available at the SP Public Library from Oct. 22-26. The auction will move to the Community Center for final bidding on Oct. 27th. Bidding will close at 2:15pm. Winning bidders can either pay for and pick up items at that time, or the Society will call winning bidders who are not present and make arrangements for an alternate pick-up time. FMI, call 767-3268 or 799-3937

Some of the items which will be available for auction include: gift certificates to local restaurants, hotels, stores and area attractions; holiday gift baskets; a trip for 4 on the Portland pilot boat as it escorts a ship in or out of Portland harbor; a 5-day stay at a lakefront log cabin; a ride to school in a police car; the preparation of a will; a large selection of framed art and photographs; and much more.

**10-19-07 Taylor's Pharmacy and Mystery Photo**



We thought readers would enjoy this view of Taylor's Pharmacy as much as we do. Our thanks to Kevin Bagley for sharing this great image with us. This picture of the popular pharmacy in Thornton Heights was taken in 1942; you can see both Taylor's as well as Burnett's Thornton Heights Market on the right side of the building (the right side was later occupied by E.G. Shettleworth Co. 5 & 10 cent store).

Taylor's Pharmacy was at 563 Main Street and was established around 1924 by George E. Taylor. The business was later purchased by John "Ted" Gill in the 1950's. The building pictured was destroyed by fire in 1969.

Can

readers help us out with a mystery photo? The photo, at right, comes to us courtesy of Society member, Judy Kelley. We are hoping that someone out there might recognize where this photo was taken and/or someone in the photo – a grandmother, perhaps? It appears to be some group that had met in South Portland in years past. If you can help identify anyone, please call Kathy at 767-3268.



*Note to readers:* Don't forget to check out the Society's Silent Auction at the SP Public Library all this week. And bring your antique and treasured items to the Community Center on Saturday, Oct. 27th where the Society will host an antique road show from 10am to 2pm. FMI, call 799-3937 or link to our website through [www.southportland.org](http://www.southportland.org).

### 10-12-07 Ferry Village Shoreline



The three accompanying photos this week speak of times long past in Ferry Village; all three photos come from the Etta Gregory Watts collection at the Society. We are tremendously grateful to Ferry Village historian, Carol Campbell, for bringing this significant collection to the Society. Carol is Etta Gregory Watts' granddaughter, and also the latest in a long line of historians in her family. I will write more about Etta and her preservation of South Portland history in a future column.

The photo, at left, shows the Upton house which formerly stood at 195 Front Street, which was on the northern/water side of Front Street. The next two photos both show the fish house that was behind the Upton house, right on the shore of Ferry Village. The location was between the old ferry landing on Portland Street and the E.W. Brown sardine factory that was closer to Bug Light.



In the first photo of the fish house, fisherman Walter Johnson is seen hard at work, with fish laying out to dry and the Portland



waterfront off in the distance. The five men in the last photo are also standing by that same fish house. Three of the men have been identified: at the far left, the first man is Charles Upton; standing in the middle is Al Upton; and just to the right of Al is Walter Johnson, interestingly in the same pose as the previous photo, hard at work.

If anyone can help us with the identity of the man standing between Charles and Al Upton, in position #2, or the man on the far right with the hat and cane, we would appreciate hearing from you. Please write [SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com](mailto:SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com), or call Kathy at 767-7299.

### 10-05-07 Cushing's Point House – Limited Edition Prints



As I am sure our Sentry readers are aware, the South Portland Historical Society is in the midst of a capital campaign to acquire the Cushing's Point House on Madison Street, adjacent to Bug Light Park, to create a history museum and permanent home for the Society. The Society is very pleased to announce the generous support of artist Paul Black. Known for his original impressionist oil paintings of the Greater Portland and coastal Maine areas, Black has a home and studio right here in South Portland (you can check out his website at [www.paulblack.com](http://www.paulblack.com)). A frequent visitor to Bug Light Park, he painted this inspired image of the Cushing's Point House (at

left) to donate as a fundraiser.

In addition to the original oil painting, Black himself commissioned a limited edition print for the Society,



overseeing the production process from start to finish. He then donated the prints and the original painting to be sold to raise funds for the Society's purchase of the Cushing's Point House.

The signed and numbered 16" x 24" prints are available for purchase at the Old Crow Gallery, 331 Cottage Road. Due to the incredible generosity of Paul Black, 100% of the proceeds from the prints will go directly to the Society's capital campaign. The Old Crow Gallery has generously agreed to handle the sale of the prints without commission; you are welcome to purchase the print only, however if you would like the print matted and framed, they would be happy to take care of that for you.

For more information, contact the South Portland Historical Society, [SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com](mailto:SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com), or call Kathy at 767-7299. The Society's research office in City Hall is open to the public on Wednesdays from 10am to noon, or by appointment.

### 09-28-07 Church Changes: Thornton Heights United Methodist Church



The Thornton Heights United Methodist Church has been a part of the Thornton Heights community for 88 years. Its congregation first formed and met in 1919 and within just a few years, they had built their first church building on Braeburn Avenue. The image, at right, is from my personal postcard collection: a lovely view of the church in its early years. The building still exists today, but is now home to the Rock Church.

In 1967, the congregation had the current church building built on Westbrook Street, see image below, and moved out of the building on Braeburn Avenue. Thornton Heights UMC is one of four Methodist churches in South Portland: the others being the First UMC on Brown's Hill, the Elm Street UMC in Pleasantdale, and the Peoples UMC on Broadway.



### 09-21-07 The Brawn family of Cushing's Point



Cushing's Point

Next Thursday, the South Portland Historical Society will be holding another Evening Chat. The topic will cover the Cushing's Point neighborhood as it existed prior to World War II, so I thought it would be interesting this week to talk about the family that lived in the houses on Cushing's Point itself. The Brawn family purchased the land on the tip of Cushing's Point and built homes right on the water.

The Brawn family was originally from Nova Scotia, and moved to the town of Lubec, Maine in the late 1800s. George Brawn started a sardine canning business in Lubec with a partner, Mr. Wolfe. George packed his first can of sardines on April 24, 1881. The Brawn family later moved to Port Clyde, opening another sardine canning business there. By the time George and his wife, Lizzie, moved to the Portland area in 1910, three of their four children were already following in their father's footsteps.

The Brawns first joined forces with the E.W. Brown sardine canning business in Ferry Village. The Brawns later opened a new sardine packing company with Frank Willard, known as the Brawn & Willard Co. In 1925, the Brawn family began their own business with \$50,000 capital, incorporated on April 27, 1925 as The Brawn Co., located on Deake's Wharf in Portland.

George and Lizzie Brawn's son, Ralph, had an accounting degree and handled the financial end of the business. Their daughter, Nettie, was the forewoman who was in charge of the packers, and her husband, Norman Hooper, was in charge of the machinery. George and Lizzie's son, Guy, was also a

machinist and an entrepreneur. Thinking that American Can was charging them too much for their sardine cans, Guy decided they could make the cans themselves for a much better price. They opened Cushing's Manufacturing Co. in 1935, also on Deake's Wharf, and would then buy tin plate and punch out their own cans.

During World War II, the Brawns had their homes taken from them by eminent domain and they all moved to new homes. They continued in business as The Brawn Company until 1950.

The Society would like to thank Gary Hooper, the great-grandson of George Brawn, who shared information for this column.

*Evening Chat: Cushing's Point and Ferry Village- Before and During World War II will take place on Thursday, Sept. 27th at 6:30pm in South Portland's City Hall. Free and open to the public, the event will be taped by SPC-TV and will air at a later date. FMI call Kathy at 767-3268.*

### **09-14-07 Church Changes: Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church**



Like other cities and towns across America, South Portland has always had residents of various religious beliefs and practices. I thought residents might enjoy a look at our many congregations and the changes that have taken place over the years in their places of worship. This will be an on-going column that will appear from time to time. I'd love to hear from your congregation – perhaps you'd enjoy helping the Society by sharing some of your history with us?

The photo postcard shown at right is one of my favorites; it shows the old Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church that once served the Knightville neighborhood. The photo insert shows a minister of that congregation. There was a Methodist society active in Knightville as early as the 1880s when they reportedly built a small building to serve as a chapel. We are not certain what happened to that early chapel, but the building pictured on the postcard was being used as the Trinity M.E. Church

in the early decades of the 1900s. This church at 25 Cottage Road was later converted in 1931 for use as a municipal building and is now home to the South Portland City Hall. From its church beginnings, who knew that the building would later house the police department and the basement would be converted to act as the South Portland city jail! I have heard several residents talk about memories of the holding cells downstairs where the conference room is now located (all were residents who saw the holding cells from the outside, of course!).



Do you have history or photos of your church in South Portland? We'd love to hear from you and include your church in an upcoming column. You can reach the Society at [SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com](mailto:SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com). Our office is located in City Hall and regular office hours are now held on Wednesdays from 10am to noon.

### **09-07-07 Bagley's Variety Store**



Harold Bagley's Variety was a small store on Ocean Street, across from the old high school (which became Mahoney Junior High in 1960). The store was in the small building at the front of 251 Ocean Street and was in existence from roughly the late 1940s to the mid-1970s. Although Harold Bagley was legally blind, he amazingly ran that store and was much loved by the school kids who would run across to buy some candy or a soda.

I wrote briefly about Bagley's Variety in my book on South Portland's neighborhood stores, but I had been

unable to locate a good photograph of the store. This summer I was contacted by Harold Bagley's granddaughter who donated a copy of this wonderful photograph to the Society. Interior photographs are rare

and we are so blessed to have received this incredible image documenting this South Portland social landmark. The photo shows Mr. Bagley standing behind the counter inside his store (note to Barry Edwards – you can see a box of Ring Dings in the case!). Several residents who I have talked with remember hanging out in Mr. Bagley's store, helping to stock shelves, and keeping an eye out to make sure no one took advantage of Mr. Bagley; although he could tell the denomination of coins by their feel or by the sound as they clinked on the counter, Mr. Bagley relied on his loyal patrons to help with dollar bills.



*The South Portland Historical Society maintains a research office in City Hall. Starting September 12, the office will be open on Wednesdays from 10am to noon. You can contact Kathy at 767-7299 or [Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com).*

### **08-31-07 Back to School**



Thornton Heights School

as well as serving as the school principal.

Our kids head back to school next Tuesday as another precious Maine summer comes to an end. The accompanying photos show one of our old South Portland elementary schools which, like many old neighborhood schools, is no longer used by our school system. As shown in the photo (at left), the old Thornton Heights School on Westbrook Street started out as a one-story structure and was later added on to. The school was renamed the Alice E. Sawyer Elementary School after Mrs. Sawyer retired in 1976 after 48 years; Mrs. Sawyer had taught first and second grades at Thornton Heights,

### **Calling all Redbankers**

Suzan Norton has started a wonderful online effort to collect Redbank school photos and stories. Do you have photographs of Redbank, Redbank school photos, or other items from that neighborhood? We'd love to hear from you! You can reach the Society by email at [SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com](mailto:SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com), or call Kathy at 767-7299.



Sawyer School

### **Labor Day Bottle Drive**

Are you planning a Labor Day cookout to celebrate the end of summer? Do you have lots of returnable bottles left over from the summer? Please consider donating your bottles to the South Portland Historical Society! Call 767-3268 or 799-3937 to arrange for a volunteer to come pick up your bottles. Most pick-ups will take place on Saturday, September 8, but we can set up a time or day convenient for you. Thank you!

### **08-24-07 Captain Benjamin J. Willard and Spot**



Captain Benjamin J. Willard

The Willard name plays a prominent part along the eastern shore of South Portland with Willard Beach, Willard Street, Willard Square and the neighborhood of Willard itself reminding us of the well-known family that was among the early settlers of this area. The “village” of Willard was formerly known as Point Village, but officially took on the Willard name in 1884 when its post office opened there.

Perhaps the most famous Willard was Captain Benjamin J. Willard. Captain Willard was born in 1828 at the family’s home at Simonton’s Cove (Willard Beach). Coming from a long line of fisherman, he naturally started out at a young age as a fisherman, and he also became a sea captain, pilot and stevedore. In his time he was widely-known and in his retirement years in

the late 1800s, he wrote an autobiography entitled “The Life History and Adventures of Captain B.J. Willard” (also known as “Captain Ben’s Book”). The book was, and still is, a very enjoyable account of his life’s experiences. Yes, the book does have some great fish tales, but seeing that Willard lived through the time of the Civil War, the wreck of the Bohemian, and other local events, it is an interesting read to say the least.



Captain Benjamin J. Willard's office in Portland in the 1800s

When Captain Willard died in 1899, he was buried in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. It is a statement of Willard’s standing and reputation that his beloved dog Spot is also buried at Mt. Pleasant; Spot is one of only three dogs that have been allowed to be buried at the cemetery. According to Willard, “In the spring of 1866 the captain of a British



Spot's gravestone at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery

brig, loaded with molasses from Matanzas, brought back with him a black and white spotted, full-blooded Spanish coach pup...” which the captain then gave to Captain Willard. The dog reportedly learned to do 55 different tricks to entertain people. Although someone offered Willard \$500 for the dog (a large sum in the 1800s!), Willard easily turned down the offer. Willard wrote “I had him buried on my lot in the cemetery at Cape Elizabeth [now South Portland], with a fifty-dollar head-stone on which he is carved in the act of performing one of his tricks.”

*Please note: The Society’s office hours are changing. The office will be open on Saturday, August 25 from 1 to 3pm, then the open hours will change to Wednesdays from 10am to noon, starting September 12. We also open by appointment. Our office is located in City Hall, 25 Cottage Road. FMI, call 767-3268.*

### 08-17-07 South Portland’s Farming Past



With all the recent talk of chickens in South Portland, I thought residents might enjoy this photograph (courtesy of the Maine Turnpike Authority) that shows a turkey house in South Portland in 1946. This photo was taken at 489 Westbrook Street, showing the James Luce property close to the corner of Westbrook and Broadway (also known as Crockett’s Corner). The house, and turkey house, was lost to highway construction.

It may be hard for residents of today to believe, but South Portland was once covered with farms. It was quite a common sight to see hen houses in people’s back yards in the 1940s. There once were dairy farms all over the city. In Ferry Village, you had the Tripp’s farm and

Frank Prout's dairy. In Thornton Heights, the Dyke Farm on Westbrook Street supplied milk to a lot of local dairy bottlers, John Johnson had a market garden on Main Street, and even out beyond the pig farms where the Maine Mall is today, the Crosby dairy farm was on the old Payne Road. The entire neighborhood of Redbank was built on the old Phinney farm – Phinney owned 200 acres there. In times past, if you came up Evans Street to Highland Avenue, on that right corner you would have seen cows grazing in the field. On Highland, there was Fickett's piggery, George Dunbar's dairy, the Messer farm and on the site of the Nazarene Church was the Buck Bros & (Stewart) Taylor greenhouses. Even Charles Willard, who ran the Willard Haven Inn on Willard Beach, had extensive gardens on which he grew much of the produce that was used in his business.

Of course, this is just a very small sampling of farms that have existed in South Portland. If you want to still catch a glimpse of our farms (before the chickens arrive), you can check out the sheep on Broadway near the old Lincoln School and horses on Highland Avenue and Stillman Street.

We'd love to see more pictures of farms in South Portland. Robert Dyke and his family have shared many photos with us of their old family farm on Westbrook Street. We have very little other photographs of the farms that once spanned our city. If you have any photos of farms, or even old hen houses, in South Portland, we'd love to see them! We'd also love to have you write to us of any memories you have of farms in South Portland. You can contact Kathy at 767-7299 or [Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com).

#### **08-10-2007 Seeking information – 875 Broadway**



Gone but not forgotten, the building in the accompanying photo once stood on the corner of Broadway and Elm Street, at 875 Broadway. This photo was taken in December 1950, when the building was occupied by the VFW.

Early on, the children of Pleasantdale attended school here. On an 1871 atlas, Schoolhouse #12 is listed at the site; the school became known as the Elm Street School. In 1906, the Pleasantdale Hose Co. 3 leased out the stable underneath the school to use for their hose wagon; that volunteer fire company used the space through 1921, when the firehouse on Robinson Street was constructed. The school continued to operate from the building throughout the 1920s, until the Kaler School building was built on Kelsey Street in 1929. After the Elm Street School closed, this building was listed as vacant for over a decade. In October 1944, the VFW Post 832 received its charter, and meetings were held in the building until October 1957 (VFW Post 832 is now located on Peary Terrace). The Knights of Columbus also utilized the space for meetings in the 1950s.

Here is where we have a mystery to solve and hope that some current or former residents might recall what happened. The Loyal Order of Moose started using the building around 1961 and it continued as the Moose Lodge until roughly 1988. Somewhere in that time period, there was a fire. According to Captain Richard Cotton, a second alarm was called, meaning it was a substantial fire, and this could perhaps have resulted in the building being torn down and a new building constructed. We do not have any photos of the building when the Moose Lodge was in residence. The next picture we have is the Bike & Blade Sports Center, in the building much as it looks today. The building occupants now are Cheryl Greeley Dance Studio and Big Red Q Quickprint.

Do you know more about the history of this building? When did the fire occur, was the building remodeled after the fire and/or was the old building pictured completely torn down? How about the cannon that is pictured in the photo on the right side of the building – does anyone know what happened to that cannon? We'd love to see photos that show any building at this location. If you have any information to share, please call Kathy at 767-3268 or email [Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com).

*Note to readers: Don't forget the Evening Chat next Thursday, August 16th at 6pm at City Hall. We'll be talking about the South Portland Shipyards of WWII.*

#### **08-03-07 Willard Haven Inn**



The Willard and Loveitt's Field neighborhoods of today are primarily residential neighborhoods, but back in the early 1900's, the neighborhoods had a different feel to them in the summer. With the Grandview Cottage on Preble Street (near Woodbury Street), the Cloyster House and the Hasting's boarding house in Loveitt's Field, and the Willard Haven Inn and the Willard Inn on Willard Beach, there was much more tourist activity in this section of South Portland. These lodging houses were very popular with Canadian tourists.

The accompanying photo shows the Willard Haven Inn that was located on Willard Beach at the foot of Deake Street. The photo is on an advertising card that reads as follows: "Willard Haven is situated at a delightful little beach, just twenty minutes from Portland, where bathing, boating, fishing and other sports may be enjoyed. Several golf clubs within a few miles of Willard Haven. A modern house in every particular. Rates \$7.00 to \$14.00 per week. No extra charge for two persons in a room. Some rooms with bath. Special rates for shorter and longer periods. Dining room connected. Meals served American or la carte. Charles J. Willard, prop., Willard Beach, Maine."

*South Portland Historical Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit, preserving the history of South Portland. Our office is located in City Hall and is open this summer on Saturdays from 1-3pm, or by appointment.*

### **07-27-07 An Evening Chat: Liberty Ships and the South Portland Shipyards**



Construction of the Todd-Bath Yard in early 1941, this yard was later referred to as the East Yard.

On Thursday, August 16th, the SS John W. Brown is scheduled to arrive in Portland harbor and dock at the Maine State Pier for a week-long visit. The John W. Brown is one of only two remaining operational Liberty ships (the other being the Jeremiah O'Brien, built here and based now in San Francisco). Although the John W. Brown itself was not built in our shipyards, it will nonetheless be an exciting event and will offer a rare opportunity for the public to be able to see a Liberty ship firsthand.

In light of the arrival of this Liberty ship, the South Portland Historical Society has scheduled a special Evening Chat to take place on Thursday, August 16 at South Portland City Hall. The topic for the evening will be "The South Portland Shipyards." The event is free and open to the public and we especially invite any former shipyard workers as well as anyone who lived or worked in South Portland during World War II. Evening Chats are oral history discussion events which are filmed by SPC-TV for preservation and for airing at a later date. Participants are welcome to arrive at 6pm for light refreshments; the Chat will begin promptly at 6:30pm with a short slide show about the South Portland shipyards, followed by an open discussion.

If you have any photographs to share to include in the slide show for the event, please contact Kathy at 767-3268. The Society would also appreciate hearing from anyone who has artifacts, documents or other items related to the South Portland Shipyards. We will have a small exhibit of shipyard-related items at the South Portland Public Library in August. We also would like to add to our shipyard collection in preparation for a permanent shipyard exhibit at our new home. As previously announced, the Society is currently conducting a capital campaign to raise funds for the purchase of the former Captain Nichols House at Cushing's Point. Do you want to make a difference in South Portland's future? Please print out [this form](#) to be a part of this exciting endeavor! Thank you!

### **07-20-07 Summertime in South Portland**



Courtesy of Kenneth Thompson Jr.

It's summertime in South Portland and for many of us that means frequent trips to Willard Beach to enjoy the day. How interesting to see how different people enjoy the same beach in so many different ways. Some enjoy just sunning themselves on their towels or chairs while others tend to head straight for the water. Some frequent the snack bar while others carry in their food and drinks. Some head north towards the SMCC side and others head south toward Fisherman's Point. My kids and I mostly enjoy the beach at low tide, when the rocks are exposed near the fishing shacks and where the hermit crabs can be found in abundant supply.

The accompanying photos offer a glimpse of our same beach being enjoyed by residents and visitors in the early 1900s. Although clothing styles have changed, enjoying the waves on a hot summer day has not.



Courtesy of Kathryn DiPhilippo

The South Portland Historical Society office is located at City Hall. The office is open on Saturdays from 1pm to 3pm, or by appointment. Questions? Call the Society president, Linda Eastman at 767-7299.

### 07-13-07 Monuments and Markers in South Portland: Civilian Conservation Corps



By Craig Skelton, board member  
South Portland Historical Society

For many of us locals, the Spring Point Shoreway is a recurring destination. I often will venture that way in the early evening after dinner when parking usually isn't a problem, to take a walk there before heading off to a nearby ice cream establishment. In addition to Spring Point Ledge Lighthouse, the shoreway offers sights and sounds for the senses and a pleasant walk over to Willard Beach.

The stairway around behind the Harbor Museum at the end of Fort Road takes you to the top of Battery Rivardi at Fort Preble. Fort Preble was established in 1808, built upon the location of the former Fort Hancock which itself was formed around the time of the American Revolution. The view is spectacular and will divert your attention from our destination. Back on the descending trail towards Willard Beach you will follow the rocky shore for several hundred feet, passing by the parking lot below the McKernan Center and around one of the classroom buildings to a pleasant park and picnic area. There you will find the marker for the Civilian Conservation Corps dedicated back in 1986.

For the non-hikers, direct access by car to this location is through the parking lot behind the SMCC Administration Building at 2 Fort Road.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was in existence during the depression from 1933 through the start of WWII and operated a post on the grounds of then Fort Preble. According to an old friend, Philip Gouzie, there were 18,000 young men from Maine involved in the CCC during its existence and 85 percent of those young men went on to serve our country. The CCC worked on many projects; the most memorable of them are a legacy of wonderful State Parks enjoyed here in Maine and throughout the country.



For more information on the Civilian Conservation Corps or to view newsletters from the local CCC Chapter 111, log on to [http://ccclegacy.org/other\\_locations.htm](http://ccclegacy.org/other_locations.htm) or contact the Chapter President Philip Gouzie at 207-799-1419. Phil is also the First Vice President of the National Association of Civilian

Conservation Alumni.

The South Portland Historical Society has embarked on a capital fund raising campaign to establish a permanent museum at the Cushing Point House where we will create exhibits to display artifacts and help educate visitors about important topics such as the Civilian Conservation Corps. Please consider a charitable donation towards the purchase and renovation of our new Museum Home by sending a check to the South Portland Historical Society.

### **07-06-07 The Beginnings of the Portland Country Club**



You may know that the Portland Country Club was once located here in the Thornton Heights section of South Portland, but did you know that the club actually started near Fort Preble? I was very interested to learn this fact in the Portland Country Club's 100th anniversary program that was published in 1995 (we have a copy at the Society office for anyone interested in reading further).

The club had its first recorded meeting on May 15, 1895, when 15 people gathered at the home of Mrs. Woodbury in Portland to discuss the formation of a golf club. They named it the Portland Golf Club and voted to "secure the right to the course selected near Fort Preble." From 1895 to 1897, the club did use a 12-hole course that was reportedly on or near the now-SMCC campus.

In the fall of 1897, the club found land available on the "Thornton Farm" in Thornton Heights and set up a course there. The house and barn belonging to "Mr. O'Donnell" was used as a clubhouse at first. This was at the time that the Rigby Trotting Park was still in existence, as Rigby didn't close until 1898. The land was rented at first; later purchased by the club in June 1898. Also in 1898, the club's first official clubhouse was built, a two-story building with a wrap-around porch.

The ensuing years brought much success to the club and by 1907, membership had grown so much that the clubhouse was becoming too small for the club's needs. In the spring of 1907, club members voted to build a new clubhouse. The club also incorporated that spring and changed its name to the Portland Country Club. By Thanksgiving of 1907, the new grand clubhouse was completed and an all-day grand opening celebration took place on December 5, 1907. The footprint for this new clubhouse is believed to have been close to where the St. John's Church on Main Street is now located. The old clubhouse building was moved to a location on Westbrook Street and was converted for use as a residence.

Club members had only six years to enjoy their new clubhouse, as a devastating fire occurred the night of April 25, 1913 - the impressive building burned to the ground. The golf course itself was not damaged in the fire. The "Dodd house" at 532 Main Street was first leased for a short time for use as a temporary clubhouse. In June 1913, the club secured a lease for the "Carter house" in Thornton Heights. By July 1913, however, the club was already negotiating for the land in Falmouth Foreside. Although plans were soon underway to move the club, play continued at Thornton Heights throughout the 1913 and 1914 golf seasons. Portland Country Club opened its 1915 season in Falmouth where it is still located today. It is reportedly the second-oldest organized golf club in Maine (the oldest being the Kebo Valley Club on Mount Desert Island).

**Notice to South Portland residents:** The South Portland Historical Society will be holding a bottle drive on Saturday, July 7th. Please save your bottles and cans for us!!! You can leave bags of bottles on your front steps on the morning of July 7th and we will have volunteers come pick them up. Please call 767-3268 to make sure a volunteer will be in your neighborhood.

### **06-29-07 The Grist Mill and Ship Yard Point**





Many people may not realize that the area where Hannaford Supermarket is located in Mill Creek was once a shipyard. It was in fact, perhaps the oldest site of a shipyard along the South Portland coastline. The area was referred to as "Ship Yard Point." The shipyard had been leased back in the early 1800s by Jonathan Fickett, who ran the shipyard with his sons.

What some residents may remember is the Old Sparhawk Mills rug manufacturer which used to be in a large building on Cottage Road, the footprint of which lies roughly in the Hannaford parking lot. Out behind the Old Sparhawk Mills building was the P.H. Doyen ship building company from roughly 1914 to 1930.

Frances Lobdell Magyar is now 86 years old and she still remembers it well. "As a small girl growing up, I lived at 90 Highland Avenue with Ma and Pa Doyen (that is what everyone called them)," she writes. "Pa had a shipyard on Cottage Road by the Mill Creek. He built ships for the Greek government during World War I. There was a small office building and a large building where they cut the lumber. I can remember in the 20's, a Greek count and his daughter came for a visit. Pa used to walk to the shipyard every morning. He and our dog "Touser." After Pa passed away, the dog went by himself to the ship yard and back for about a week or so....Little by little, things dwindled away at the shipyard. The large building was a rug factory and then was all gone."

Of course, Mill Creek is named for the tide water grist mill that used to be located at its mouth. The mill was apparently first built in 1727 as a corn mill, and for many years there was both a corn/grain mill and saw mill located there. The mill changed hands many times through the years and burned in the mid-1800s, replaced by a new tide water mill about a decade later. The mill sat on a stone dam that stretched across the mouth of Mill Creek. The 1871 Cumberland County Atlas shows the "C. and E.P. Oxnard Grist Mill" sitting on the dam, with a good-sized water reservoir extending behind it, flowing under Cottage Road and covering a sizeable piece of where Mill Creek Park exists today.

**Notice to South Portland residents:** The South Portland Historical Society will be holding a bottle drive in South Portland on Saturday, July 7th. Please save your bottles and cans for us!!! You can leave bags of bottles on your front steps on the morning of July 7th and we will have volunteers come pick them up. Please call 767-3268 to make sure a volunteer will be in your neighborhood.

### **06-22-07 Cushing's Point House**



As you drive down Madison Street to Bug Light Park, an unusual sight causes a double-take amongst many residents and visitors alike. The Cushing's Point House sits alone, a beautiful two-story brick home with a widow's walk looking out over Casco Bay; a house seemingly stuck in the middle of nowhere.

In the early 1900's, Howard Wright's great-grandparents, Lewellyn and Ada Smith, owned this home. According to Mr. Wright, his great-grandfather kept a cat boat, the "Dorothy", right at the end of the street so they could sail off from there. The driveway in front of the building has been known as Cushing Court, Cushing Street, and

before that, it was actually the beginning of Front Street. Front Street used to start here at the water, crossed Madison and curved around the waterfront to where you find it today. When the shipyards went in, many of the streets were abandoned as the land was filled in and designed for the production of Liberty Ships.

This building holds intrinsic historic value. It is the only house from its neighborhood before World War II to remain standing in place. Did you know that even Madison Street was lined with houses? Most other houses were torn down and a few were moved to other locations around South Portland, Scarborough and elsewhere. This house, however, was specifically chosen to be saved and used by the shipyard. Even as a shipyard building, the house holds value – very few buildings from the shipyard are still around today.

Our goal is challenging - we absolutely need the support of the residents of South Portland. We all need to come together and show that support by making a donation. Please take action today! Cut out the accompanying form and send in with your check. Early contributions will be especially appreciated as there are several significant grant deadlines coming up in August and community support will weigh on grantors' decision-making.

Please join your friends and neighbors in this community endeavor! With support from residents, businesses and local grantors, this museum will be a legacy that we create for our families and future generations.

### South Portland Historical Society - Cushing's Point House Capital/Endowment Campaign

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Donation amount: \_\_\_\_\_

The Society will recognize donors on its website, in its newsletter and in other public areas. If you would like your donation to remain anonymous, please check here \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and mail with your tax-deductible donation to South Portland Historical Society. For donations by credit card, call 767-7299 for more information. The Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

#### 06-15-07 Remember When – Willard Square



This undated photograph offers an incredible view of Willard Square. In the foreground, we can see children gathered around a May pole alongside Pillsbury Street. In the background, we can see the old horse watering fountain in Willard Square, as well as many of the buildings that still exist today. The building at 412 Preble Street appears to be only a one-story structure. Based on that, I'd guess the photo to be taken in the 1920s and the store would have been that run by Howard S. Thompson.

Can anyone out there provide more information on this photo – either a more precise date or perhaps someone recognizes some of the people in the photo? Does anyone remember May Day events happening like this in South Portland? We'd also love to receive any artifacts or ephemera relating to old businesses in Willard Square. You can email at

[SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com](mailto:SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com) or call 767-7299.

#### 06-08-07 Remember When – 391-395 Cottage Road



We doubt many residents remember this sight. This 1936 photograph shows 391-395 Cottage Road, where the Cape Veterinary Clinic now sits. Cape Vet opened back in the late 1950s. Before that, several gas stations had been located at that same spot in the 1940s and 1950s. We've never before seen this image that shows the house that used to exist on that spot before the first gas station went in.

In the 1920s, the directories show Harold Wade living and running a fish market here. In the mid-1930s, residents listed include Morris Blumenthal, Hattie Thorndike and Arthur McCubrey. If you have memories or information to share, we'd love to hear from you! You can email us at [SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com](mailto:SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com), or come visit us on a Saturday at our office in City Hall – we're now open on Saturdays from 1-3pm. FMI, call 767-7299.

#### 06-01-07 The Strand Theatre



Thanks to Woody Bailey for suggesting the topic of this week's column; Woody found a reference to the Nordica Theatre in the 1918 Portland Directory and was interested in what that was. The accompanying photograph was taken in April of 1934. It shows the Strand Theatre building at 115-119 Sawyer Street, on the corner of High Street. On the left in the photo, you can see the Strand Theatre sign just above the door. Moviegoers would go through that door and up the stairs, as the theater was on the upper floor. The movie theater first opened in the late 1910's and was known then as the Nordica Theatre. It was renamed and operated as the Strand Theatre in the 1920s and early 1930s, then renamed the Seville

Theatre in the late 1930's.

On the first floor of the building, you can see the front store windows of Tilton's Hardware, facing Sawyer Street. Charles A. Tilton & Co. operated from that storefront for many decades, well into the 1930's.

Located under the stairs that led up to the theater was a small sandwich store known as Proco's Italian Shop. Proco's started at this location and would in later years move and operate from different locations on High Street.

By World War II, the building was vacant and it was later torn down.

If you have any photos or artifacts from Proco's Italian Shop or of the theater when it was known under any name, we would love to hear from you! We are interested in any type of ephemera: a matchbook, an ashtray, a ticket stub, a program flyer...anything that has the name imprinted from a South Portland business from long ago.

*Note to readers: The South Portland Historical Society office is now open on Saturdays from 1-3pm. We are located in South Portland City Hall on Cottage Road. FMI, call 767-3268.*

### **05-25-07 Broadview Park**



Broadview Park Brown Frederick circa 1950

Last month, we ran a column asking readers to contact us with any information they may have on Broadview Park, the government housing project constructed for shipyard workers during World War II. What a fantastic response we received! Many people called and emailed in with stories of living at Broadview Park during and after the war. The photo below was one of several shared with us by Helen Brown; her son is pictured on his tricycle with a rare glimpse of the neighborhood in the background, circa 1950.

Society member Doris Cook also shared some valuable information and photographs with us; her family moved to Broadview Park in 1946. Some papers she shared documented the opening of Broadview Park in February 1943 with 100 housing units, with an additional 200 units being added later. Broadview Park covered about 28 acres and included a Community Building (where some residents remember going to watch movies), a playground and the Marion Street School (later renamed Helena H. Dyer Elementary School).

Due to the number of people responding, and the limited amount of information which has been recorded about Broadview, the South Portland Historical Society has organized an oral history-gathering event to take place in June. This will be the first of a series of *Neighborhood Chats*. We welcome anyone who has any information about Broadview to come and join with your neighbors to enjoy a little nostalgia and share your stories with us. Please save the date - *Neighborhood Chat: Broadview Park* will take place on Thursday, June 28th at 6:30pm at the South Portland City Hall. Additional announcements about the event will be posted as the date nears next month. We will put together a slide show about Broadview Park to show at the event – if you have any photographs to share, please contact us as soon as possible so that we will have time to scan the photos and include them in the presentation. Email to [SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com](mailto:SPHistoricalSociety@maine.rr.com) or call 767-3268.

Future *Neighborhood Chats* will cover the South Portland shipyards, Cushing's Point neighborhood, and other wartime housing projects such as Mountainview Park, Peary Village, and others. If you have suggestions for future topics that you would like to see, please let us know.

### **05-18-07 The Dyer family and Portland Yacht Service**



The Dyer name is one with a long history in South Portland, the family being among the early settlers of the city and involved in business, government and social life over the years. There are the Dyer family lines that have been merchants and shopkeepers (think of John A.S. Dyer and sons), and the Dyer family line that is the subject of today's column: the line that followed the family business of shipbuilding.

Caleb and Maria Dyer were early settlers of then-Cape Elizabeth. Caleb was a shipbuilder and a prominent man in the town. His son, Nathan Dyer, was born in 1803 and learned the shipbuilding trade from his father. Nathan operated a shipbuilding and repairing company in Portland and also ran the ferry service between Ferry Village and Portland for a time. In 1868, he became superintendent of the Merchant's Marine Railway in Ferry Village.

Nathan's son, Nathan Randall Dyer, was also a shipbuilder, starting out at a company in Portland and later working for his father at the Marine Railway in Ferry Village; upon his father's retirement, Nathan Randall Dyer also became superintendent there. Nathan Randall Dyer served as a town Selectman for three different terms, starting in 1873. Nathan Randall Dyer's son, Frank, continued in the shipbuilding business, working for his father at the Marine Railway. The Merchant's Marine Railway would later become the Portland Ship Building Co.



In 1932, Nathan D. Dyer and a few other men organized Portland Yachting Service, Inc. at the same location as the former Portland Ship Building Co. A large basin was constructed to provide a protected water area, 250 wide and extending out 550 feet, with a railway running down into it. The site is roughly in the area where the Salt Water Grille Restaurant and marina are located today.

We thank descendent Charles Dyer for sharing photographs of the basin, shipyard buildings and vessels, as well as other history about his family in the shipbuilding and repair business, so that we might preserve this piece of South Portland's history.

#### **05-11-07 Glimpses of Mill Creek**



A glimpse of Cottage Road in 1965.

We would like to thank South Portland resident, Sharon (Smith) Bosquette for sharing some nostalgic photographs of Mill Creek with us, two of which are shown here. Sharon grew up in the house on the corner of Cottage Road and Thomas Street, with a perfect view of South Portland's "downtown" from her bedroom window. She has many happy memories of growing up in Mill Creek. About the photograph showing her standing in front of the mill stone, Sharon writes, "If you look close, the pond is frozen and the wood is around the old fountain that was made of cement, painted light green with dark green frogs around it. The kids would climb up on top of the wood fountain to put ice skates on or off...How we loved to skate and

the city had a music hookup so we could skate to the music.” What fun!

If you have photographs or other items to share, please contact the South Portland Historical Society. The Society is a membership-based non-profit and we welcome your donations to support our efforts. Membership brochures are available at our office in City Hall or online; you may link to our site through [www.southportland.org](http://www.southportland.org). Interested in becoming a volunteer? Call Linda at 767-7299.



Sharon Smith standing in front of the mill stone at Mill Creek Park circa 1959.

### **05-04-07 Come Join Us! An Evening with South Portland Trolleys**



A trolley on Ocean Street, passing in front of South Portland High School in 1934

On Wednesday, May 9th, Donald Curry from the Seashore Trolley Museum will be the featured speaker at the South Portland Historical Society’s annual meeting. Following a brief business meeting, Mr. Curry will talk about the history of the trolley system in South Portland. The event is free and open to the public and will take place at 7pm at the South Portland Community Center. Light refreshments will be served.

If you had lived in South Portland in the early 1900s, getting around by trolley was a fact of life. There are still many residents who fondly remember the trolley system, which began in 1895 and continued for several decades. Trolley lines covered the length of the city, from Willard to Thornton Heights. The trolley system was gradually shut down in South Portland throughout the 1930s, with the discontinuance of various lines. The last trolley car to serve South Portland was on July 21, 1940.

Donald Curry began working for the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine in 1953. He served as its Director from 1989 to 1997 and currently serves as the Lead Restoration Technician. We hope that you will join us for what will surely be a fun and informative evening!

Interested in joining the South Portland Historical Society? You can sign up to be a member at this event, or mail your contact information with donation to the Society. Questions? Call Linda at 799-3937 or Kathy at 767-7299.

**04-27-07 Seeking Info – Broadview Park**



Barracks-style housing at Peary Village, circa 1942

During World War II, there were many government housing projects constructed to accommodate the influx of shipyard workers in South Portland. Some of these included Redbank Village, Peary Village, Mountain View Park and Broadview Park. We recently received a request for information from Kathy Fisher who lived at Broadview Park with her parents in the late 1940s after the war. We hope that there might be current or former city residents who can help us gather additional information.

Broadview Park consisted of barracks-style structures that were located on Alfred Street. A school was built there for the children of the shipyard workers – known first as the Marion Street School, the school was later rebuilt and renamed the Helena Dyer Elementary School. Mrs. Fisher writes, “My mother was very involved with the women’s club in Broadview Park and probably played bridge with a group there. She was a writer so wrote for some type of publication while there also.”

Do you have any information or photographs of Broadview Park, or of any other wartime housing project, that you could share with us? Perhaps you or your parents/grandparents lived there and you might have some oral history to share? We would really appreciate hearing from you! Please email to [Kathy@BarrenHillBooks.com](mailto:Kathy@BarrenHillBooks.com).

#### 04-20-07 Monuments and Markers in South Portland: Two Bridges



By Craig Skelton, board member  
South Portland Historical Society

Take my advice and pack your picnic basket. You will want to head down to the end of Ocean Street where the Million Dollar Bridge once launched off toward the City of Portland. This spot now known as Thomas Knight Park invites you to bring along your fishing pole to drop a line in off the new South Portland Boat Landing or to simply enjoy a picnic while taking in the view.

One item of interest you will find is a bronze sculpture called Two Bridges. The sculpture was originally formed in clay by Maureen Regan’s 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at Dyer Elementary School back in 1997. With the guidance of Dara Jarrendt, an art teacher at the High School, the students worked on individual tiles that were assembled like a puzzle into a mural that became the basis for the bronze replica now displayed at Thomas Knight Park.

The sculpture depicts a moment in time when both the old Million Dollar Bridge stood while the new Hundred Million Dollar Bridge weaved its new skyward path above. The sculpture is really an assemblage of many tiles that were created by students who worked in teams to assemble the collage. The Two Bridges project included development of a scrapbook containing period newspaper clippings related to the history of the Million Dollar Bridge. The class also produced a video on the history of the bridge that was broadcast on the local public access channel.



There is always more to a story than appears in any printed article. As you follow along to visit any one of the spots I find, just remember that there can be so much more to the story than I can convey. One of the students who helped form the clay mural for this project, Angel Cota Rosa went on to serve our country. He was attempting to work the clay of freedom over in Iraq when sadly he lost his life in action just last month. I would like to personally offer my thanks to him and his family for his service. Please pause for a moment when you stop by to visit the “Two Bridges” and ponder all that came before us.

#### 04-13-07 Lloyd W. Jordan Co. Service Station



Before you read on, can you identify where this service station used to be? Our thanks to Norman Jordan for sharing the accompanying photos; they were taken at the Lloyd W. Jordan Co. Shell station, formerly at the corner of Broadway and Ocean Streets (where Pizza Joint now resides). The photo, at left, is a fantastic head-on view of the station; for our younger readers, that sign does not read \$2.29 per gallon, but instead a whopping 22.9 cents per gallon. If you look beyond the two gas pumps, you can even make out Harold Bagley's little store in the background. Mr. Bagley was legally blind and lovingly remembered by many residents who used to head across

the street from the school to buy some candy.

The photo below was taken from the station circa 1954. Across the street, you can make out the new Mill Creek Park that had recently been completed, on the site of the former city dump. Perhaps some of our older residents might recognize the Old Sparhawk Mill rug manufacturer building in the left background.



Do you have vintage photos of South Portland that you would like to share? Please reach Kathy at [Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com).

#### 04-06-07 Monuments and Markers in South Portland: American Legion Square



By Craig Skelton, board member  
South Portland Historical Society

On a walking tour of Knightville, you will find a very inviting spot to stop and sit awhile to reflect on how much it has changed over these past few years.

American Legion Square sits at the intersection of Ocean Street and Cottage Road. This location once housed Knightville School which was featured in an article by our historian Kathryn DiPhilippo last

summer. Sitting on one of the granite benches, you can look down Ocean Street toward the location of the former Million

Dollar Bridge. What is nice to notice is that there is only an occasional car going by which is a sharp contrast to the 30,000 cars that traveled through Knightville before the Casco Bay Bridge was opened in 1997.

Not so long ago, my father's very dear friend, Ed Flynn of Highland Avenue, restored the "American Legion Square" sign that has watched over this location since 1970 when the park was originally dedicated. That sign and the memorial marker to "Veterans of all Wars" await your visit. I know you will enjoy viewing the well-groomed landscaping maintained by the South Portland Parks Department. Stop by and stay awhile. You may just spot one of my next subjects that sits within plain view from this pleasant spot.



I would love to hear from you if you are able to share photographs or information about markers and memorials within our great city. Please email me at [craigskelton@yahoo.com](mailto:craigskelton@yahoo.com) or call 799-8589.

#### 03-30-07 A Tour of Ligonias



The acid factory

The old South Portland neighborhood of Ligonía is interesting - even most "native" South Portlanders seem to know next to nothing about it. That is not true for Dick Curry who grew up in that neighborhood. I had the pleasure of meeting with Dick last week and going on a drive through Ligonía with him.

Ligonía is that area of South Portland which has significant historic meaning to our City and State; it was the site of a Civil War training camp known as Camp Abraham Lincoln (later renamed Camp Berry). After the Civil War, the Portland Rolling Mills built a substantial complex in Ligonía – in addition to the business, housing

for workers was constructed, as well as a school and church. The rolling mills went through several owners and name changes, the last owner being Bancroft & Martin.

How does one get to Ligonía? Take Lincoln Street and as you are driving towards 295, don't bear left. If you drive straight on Lincoln Street to Main Street, you've driven right into Ligonía. If you were to take a right on Main Street, in years past you would have driven right over Vaughan's Bridge into Portland. The trolley came across Vaughan's Bridge here, with a switch in the road to allow the trolley to either travel up Main Street to Cash Corner, or else turn on to Lincoln Street to head toward Broadway. The lower part of Main Street today houses oil companies, Ledgewood Construction, Clean Harbors, and other businesses. According to Dick Curry, when he was growing up, there was a line of filling stations along that stretch.



The Ligonía School and the Curry house in the 1930s

As we stopped at the intersection of Lincoln and Main, Dick remembered the acid factory on the far right corner (later to become Valvoline Oil company) at 59 Main Street. He also recalled that on the far left corner used to stand a two-family house at 73 Main Street, home to the Kennedy and Kittelson families. We then drove across Main and continued on Lincoln to see where the main building for the Burgess-Fobes varnish factory used to be at 107 Lincoln Street. Just beyond that, you can see a pond on the right that used to be called the "acid pond" and on the left at that point, there are now many trucks and trailers parked on the site that used to be Calvary Pond. Dick says, "We used to skate here on Calvary Pond." Apparently much of the pond was filled in over the years – very little remains of the old pond. Just after these ponds was the site of the old Ligonía School on the left at 79 Lincoln Street; Dick's house was next door to the school at 77 Lincoln Street (see then and now photos, below). Extending beyond and behind the Curry house was an apple orchard, a cow pasture and the "school woods" where they used to pick blueberries. Across the street from the Curry house were open fields.

We continued driving to the end of Lincoln Street. Here was where Lincoln Street used to run into Central Avenue. On the near left corner used to sit the church. Across the street, on the corner of Central and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, there was a water spigot where local residents would bring their buckets to fill with water each day (this was before the advent of indoor plumbing). The spigot would freeze up in the winter sometimes; residents would have to wait for the water company to come and get it working again. Dick remembers that for years, there was just that one spigot for the neighborhood; later, the water company would add a second spigot on the corner of Central and 1<sup>st</sup> Street.



The same location today

Houses lined the far side of Central Avenue, mostly two-family houses that had been constructed for the rolling mills. Outhouses were a fact of life in those times.



Driving through the area today, there is very little left to give any indication of the old neighborhood that used to be Ligonía. We would love to hear from anyone else who remembers that section of South Portland. If you have any memories or photos to share, please contact the SP Historical Society or reach Kathy at 767-7299 or [Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com).

### **03-23-07 Portland Machine Tool Works**



The accompanying photograph may bring to mind the two oil rigs that were part of the Portland skyline for two years, until 2004, when Cianbro Corp. completed the construction of the Pride Portland and the rig left our port. The photo at right, however, was taken here in South Portland in the 1950s.

Our thanks goes to resident Frances Tracy for sharing some interesting photographs taken at Portland Machine Tool Works. Frances worked for Portland Machine Tool for several years. The company was located on the site of the former East Yard of the South Portland shipyards; the area is now home to Port Harbor Marine and Breakwater Condominiums. The "Texas tower" as

shown, was constructed in the former ship basins.

Do you have any old photographs of South Portland to share? You may contact Kathy at 767-7299 or [Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com).

### **03-16-07 Todd-Bath Iron and South Portland Shipbuilding Corporations**



South Portland has had a long history of shipbuilding, going back to the 1700s. In the 1800s, wooden ships were being manufactured all along our northern coastline, from Ferry Village and Cushing's Point to Turner's Island. When World War II began, the area of Cushing's Point was identified as ideal for the construction of a "modern" shipyard.

The first shipyard was built by the Todd-Bath Iron Shipbuilding Corporation. It was built in the vicinity of where the Breakwater Condominiums now stand today. This yard, known as the "East

Yard", was busy with a contract for the production of 30 British freighters. The contract with the English government was signed in December 1940 and by the following December, the first two ships were floated and sent to the outfitting pier (the first "Ocean" ship left the harbor in February of 1942).

Meanwhile, the Maritime Commission was also looking for a site to construct Liberty ships for the American fleet. The land adjacent to the Todd-Bath yards was identified, and the "West Yard" which was operated by the South Portland Shipbuilding Corporation, was created and began production in 1941. Much of the West Yard was constructed on filled land over the site of the former breakwater that led out to Portland Breakwater "Bug" Light. Although new residents may see Bug Light as sitting "on the shore", in years past, Bug Light once sat at the end of a roughly 2,000 foot breakwater. By May 1942, the very first Liberty ship was launched.

The East and West Yards later merged and became the New England Shipbuilding Corporation.

We have included the accompanying photo in the hopes that someone may be able to help us further identify it or the man in the photo. It is identified only as South Portland Shipbuilding Corporation, and the door on the building says Welding Wire Room. If you have any information or stories to share about anything in the picture, or anything related to the shipyards, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Kathy at 767-7299, [Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com)

### **03-09-07 The Calico Ball at the Old Town Hall**



Calico Ball Invitation - South Portland, Maine

Pictured (at left) is an item which was acquired by the South Portland Historical Society this past year. It is an invitation to the Calico Ball, which was to take place at the Cape Elizabeth Town Hall on May 5, 1890. The ticket price was 50 cents for men and only 25 cents for women.

For those readers who do not know, our community was known as the Town of Cape Elizabeth in 1890, and the current-day Cape Elizabeth and South Portland were one town. In 1890, the town hall was located at the corner of Ocean and Sawyer Streets, on the corner where the old Hamlin School sits today. A previous town hall had burned on the site in 1874, and the "new" town hall was then built: a two-story structure with the high school located on the second floor. The photo (below) shows the town hall as it would have looked in 1890.

In 1895, our town divided, the current-day Cape Elizabeth spun off as a new town, and the original town was renamed South Portland; we would adopt the city form of government in 1898. The high school was also renamed South Portland High School (although the sports teams remained the "Capers" for many years!) and the school remained in Town Hall until the building burned in 1921. Classes were then held at the Broadway Grammar School (later known as Henley School) until the new high school building was completed in 1924 (where Mahoney Middle School is now located).



Cape Elizabeth Town House in the 1890s at the corner of Ocean and Sawyer Streets

Another interesting piece of history: the Hiram Lodge, No. 180, Free & Accepted Masons, used to hold its meetings in the attic of the Town Hall. The Masonic Building in Legion Square was constructed in the early 1900s.

**03-02-07 Neuts Bakery**



Neuts Bakery - 82 Ocean Street

Some of our readers may remember Neuts Bakery. We thank Marion Clark for contacting us and sharing some photographs and history of her father's business with us.

Gustave "Gus" Neuts (pictured below) was born in Belgium and immigrated to the US in 1923. "He bought a book and taught himself to speak English," says his daughter, Marion. He eventually moved to Portland and worked for Clarke's Bakery (in Portland),

until opening his own bakery at 82 Ocean Street in Knightville. The photo (at top left) shows the bakery at that location, where he ran it from 1942 to 1946. Gus and his wife, Helen, both worked at the bakery, as did two of their four children who worked there after school. Marion says, "During the war, gas was rationed and my dad and brother slept in the coat room at the bakery many times."

The bakery had no tables, so it was a take-out only operation. "Not only did my dad do pastries, but he also sold baked beans on Saturday. He baked them on Friday nights."



Marion



Neuts Bakery

Neuts Bakery - 171 Ocean Street

remembers when her dad bought the house at 171 Ocean Street in the spring of 1946 and had the store built next door.

The building was constructed in two sections, with Neuts Bakery on the left and Frostbite frozen foods store on the right. The photo (at bottom left) was taken in 1946. According to Marion,

her dad became ill in 1949 and sold the business to Frank Sleeper and Fred Nanney. The bakery was renamed: Uncle Andy's. Nanney hired John Palanza to run the bakery, and by 1951, Palanza had bought the business and would go on to run Uncle Andy's Bakery for over four decades.

### 02-23-07 Cassidy's Cottage Road Pharmacy



In January, we ran a photograph showing the old A&P and Cassidy's Pharmacy on Meeting House Hill in the 1930's. We would like to thank Marita Gould for contacting us and sharing some wonderful historic South Portland photographs with the Society. In the photo, Mr. Cassidy is standing near the front window of his pharmacy on Cottage Road. In the second photo below, we get a peek at the inside of the pharmacy. Marita, the taller woman pictured, is standing behind the counter with Helena Brown.

When Marita Gould and her friends, Helena and Lucy Brown, were teens, they went up to Cassidy's looking for a job and all three were hired. They were all from Ferry Village. Helena and Lucy worked the soda fountain and Marita did many different tasks, including typing up prescriptions, making the hot fudge and syrups, preparing the fixings for sandwiches and filling the sandwich case, among others. Marita remembers the teachers from the Willard School coming in for lunch at noon each day. And when the shipyards were in production, the pharmacy was especially busy at night when the shipyard workers "would come in for cokes and sandwiches...they filled the place...the booths and counters." The sandwich case

would be filled with fixings – egg salad, tuna fish, ham salad, tomatoes, lettuce, onions, peppers, etc., and the sandwiches would be made to order.

Another South Portland resident, Betty (Berg) Deschenes also talked with us about working at the pharmacy. She worked behind the fountain and remembers making ice cream sodas and ice cream



sundaes. "The ice cream would be 5 and 10 cents." Betty would sometimes go to work in the morning, then leave for the afternoon and come back to work at night. "Marita was the lead person – she was wonderful," she says. Betty has a vivid memory of making the simple syrup one time. You would put the sugar and water in a big glass container and roll it on the counter to mix it. On this occasion, Betty had an accident and the glass container broke. She remembers Marita coming to her and saying "That's all right, I'll take care of it." A kindness that was not forgotten.

Do you have photos or other memorabilia from a local South Portland business which is long gone? We'd love to hear from you! You can send an email to [Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:Kathy@barrenhillbooks.com).

### **02-16-07 Monuments and Markers in South Portland: Old Colonial Post Road**



By Craig Skelton, board member  
South Portland Historical Society

I would like to give credit of this discovery to my friends Sara and Mary Lou from the South Portland Parks Department who told me about a stone post on Westbrook Street that I should check out. I found the discovery ironic given the fact that many of you who enjoy reading "A Window on the Past" in the Sentry no doubt received this installment in your mail box.

The post, which may be one of a very few left in existence, had a plaque in front of it indicating it to be Mile Post 122 on the Old Colonial Post Road which would have been the most direct overland route from Boston to Portland some 200 years before I was born. Unlike the turnpike we use for the trip today, the route that predates the Revolutionary War would better be described as meandering from Boston to Portland. Photographs tell a lot yet I encourage you to visit this "post" that rises from the ground as a forgotten reminder to early days of mail delivery. If driven in the ground only a few feet southerly of its current location the marker would now better serve as a tee off point for the 9<sup>th</sup> hole at the South Portland Municipal Golf Course.

Very little is written about the Old Colonial Post Road from Boston to Portland.

Yet the origin of the Post Road system dates back to 1673 when an attempt was made to encourage regular delivery of correspondence from New York to Boston. While researching the background of this marker, I found a wonderful book called "The Old Post Road – The Story of the Boston Post Road" written by Stewart Hall Holbrook; the book had a lot of historical information about the formation of the post roads in the northeast.



Benjamin Franklin was appointed by the King of England in 1751 as a "Joint Deputy Postmaster" to manage mail delivery matters for the Crown. During his tenure he completely reorganized the Post Office in existence at that time and put into place many changes. One change in particular was the placement of rocks (posts) along the road at each mile along the way for he had devised a fee based on the miles traveled to deliver a letter. The posts eliminated arguments that often occurred between patrons and post office clerks over estimated distances.

You perhaps have seen through your own eyes what post riders saw as they journeyed along the Old Colonial Post Road because some parts of the road traveled along the east coast stretching from Maine to Florida became what is now known as Route 1.

I hope you enjoy traveling with me along my journey through South Portland to find monuments and markers. I would love to hear from you if you are able to share photographs or information about this or any other historical topic. Please email me at [craigskelton@yahoo.com](mailto:craigskelton@yahoo.com) or call 799-8589.

**02-09-07 Lyric Music Theater**



"Courtesy of the South Portland Historical Society"

Although the building has undergone extensive renovations and additions over the years, the Lyric Music Theater building's exterior still resembles the church which it started out as. The Church of the Nazarene organized in South Portland in March 1900 and had the church building constructed at 176 Sawyer Street in that year. The photo (at top right) was taken in the early 1900s and shows how the building looked in its early days.

Around 1970, with the building showing its age, the church had a new building constructed on Highland Avenue; that building was dedicated in 1971. The building on Sawyer Street, now vacated by the Nazarenes, continued in religious use by other denominations for their weekly services, and by the time the building was purchased in 1977 by the Portland Lyric Theatre, it was in bad shape indeed, with roof leaks, old wiring, and a flooding basement. According to Linwood Dyer, "there were places inside that were completely white, covered in mold."



"Courtesy of the Lyric Music Theater"

The photo to the right shows a later version of the building, after it had been acquired and renovated by the Lyric Theater. The large building on the right in the photo has since been attached to the rest of the structure. According to Mr. Dyer, back when the Nazarene Church was in residence, that building had been added and contained a gymnasium on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor for the boys, and on the first floor, the girls could watch motion pictures - there was a frame on the back wall where the movies would be projected.

The Lyric Music Theater (founded in 1952) is a non-profit community theater, which produces four musicals each season. Its production of *Sweet Charity*, based on the book by Neil Simon, and directed by Linwood Dyer, runs from February 16 to March 4. The box office is now open for advance ticket sales.

**02-02-07 Stan's Pet Shop**



We are thankful to Sibyl Stanley Mahoney, who recently donated these photos and some other advertising pieces to the Society; we had not previously seen any photos of this storefront. Sibyl's brother, Durmont Stanley, opened Stan's Pet Shop at 183 Main Street, circa 1955. He later was joined by a partner, Bill Newcomb. The business advertised "unusual pets a specialty", which we get a glimpse of by way of the monkey sitting on the post in the accompanying photo.

According to Sibyl, the monkey's name was "Sijo" and he was a fairly good-natured little monkey. However, he was actually sold several times, and was returned to the store each time as he did not make a good pet. Eventually, Sijo ended up going to live at an animal zoo.



The store later became known as the Woof and Wag Pet Shop around 1960. The former pet store site is now home to Main Street Redemption.

If you have information you would like to share with the Society, you may contact Kathy at 767-7299, email [kathy@barrenhillbooks.com](mailto:kathy@barrenhillbooks.com)

**01-26-07 Meeting House Hill in the 1930's**



The accompanying photo from 1934 provides a fantastic view of the 378-380 Cottage Road building block. This would be about the time that John Cassidy took over the pharmacy from Joseph Lemellin; the pharmacy was formally known as the Cottage Road Pharmacy, but called "Cassidy's" by the residents of the neighborhood. The awning out front advertises "home made ice cream."

On the left is the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., a large chain store known to everyone as the A&P. This is long before the advent of the "super" market or shopping malls. There were stores like this all over South Portland; most neighborhoods had either an A&P, Red & White or some other independent grocer, and sometimes more than

one.

If you look very closely at the right side of the photo, you can make out a portion of the Willard School that was on the other side of Pillsbury Street.

### **01-19-07 An Afternoon with the South Portland Historical Society**



We hope you will join us on **Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup>** at the **South Portland Community Center** for an afternoon of programs and support of your local historical society. There will be two interesting and informative lectures, as well as a silent auction, and light refreshments will be served. The event is open to the public, free of charge, and no registration is necessary.

The accompanying photo shows a circa 1890s view of the South Portland shoreline at Ferry Village. Images such as this are a precious recording of our City's history and require proper

preservation techniques. Harmful elements such as heat, light and humidity need to be controlled when caring for photographs. Whether caring for an old photograph such as this, or for a more recent family photo which you would like to last longer than your lifetime (or less), it is important to learn how to care for your photographs. At 1pm, Society board member David Mishkin will present a slide show and lecture on how to properly preserve your family photos.

Following Mr. Mishkin's lecture, Kathy Amoroso, Society member and Director of Digital Projects for Maine Historical Society, will provide helpful research tips on genealogy in her lecture, "Beginning Genealogy Research" at 2pm. Have you been researching your family roots, or think you would like to try? Come and enjoy Ms. Amoroso's informative session on local resources that you might use in your search.

The silent auction will be set up at the Community Center starting at 9am. Come and view the auction items for sale, and place your high bids in support of the Society. Whether you are buying for yourself, for your kids, as a gift for a friend or family member, or bidding on a hotel where visiting relatives might spend the night, there is sure to be something in the auction for everyone. Following the lectures, the auction will close at 3:15pm, and you may either pay for your items and pick up there, or the Society will contact you for payment arrangements and pick up at a later date. We hope that you will join us for this fun community event!

### **01-12-07 Monuments and Markers in South Portland: WWII Marker Revisited**



By Craig Skelton, board member  
South Portland Historical Society

No sooner had I sent off my last installment featuring the World War II memorial on Broadway, when my friend Sara from the Parks Department recalled there was a memorial for something across from the Merry Manor at the corner of Main Street and the T-spur to the Maine Turnpike. She suggested I go take a look to see what it was. I could hardly contain myself knowing that there was a marker I had not yet discovered and rushed off to take a look.

It turns out that the citizens of South Portland may not have expressed their appreciation to Veterans with flashy, large or stylish monuments, yet apparently had done so in quantity. This being the second World War II memorial found thus far and one of more than a half dozen war memorials I am researching for future articles.

Not much is known about this memorial and in fact many long time South Portland residents I've talked with were not aware of its existence. Robert Flynn of Aspen Avenue knew the memorial was there, yet could not remember when it was dedicated. He mostly remembers walking by the location as a child on his way to the Sawyer School.

At that time the location was known as Bryants Field which later became the home of the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge. Westbrook Street intersected with Main Street in that spot and the roadway was vacated and a couple of homes were removed for the motel project.

A plan I discovered related to the motel project which occurred in the late 1980's indicates the memorial was moved slightly to the south from its original location to where Westbrook Street once intersected Main Street. Westbrook Street now connects to Main Street by way of a short section of Cornell Street adjacent to the Main Street end of the Sawyer School lot and next to the spot where an ice rink was flooded each winter for skating. We would love to hear from you if you have information or historical photographs of either the war memorial or skating rink.

Stay tuned for more discoveries as I travel throughout South Portland on my adventure to uncover and discover monuments and markers. My discoveries have not been limited to war memorials and I think you will be surprised in the coming months what is out there for you to see. Please contact me at [craigskelton@yahoo.com](mailto:craigskelton@yahoo.com) or 799-8589 if you are interested in contributing any photographs or have information you may like to share about this subject.

#### **01-05-07 South Portland's 19th Century Shipyards**



When you talk about South Portland shipyards, most people might immediately think of the shipyards during World War II. But what of our earlier shipbuilding history? There were many shipyards in production throughout the 1800s. One period of enormous change in South Portland (then-Cape Elizabeth) came during the mid-1800s, when George W. Turner and James B. Cahoon, Portland merchants, formed a partnership with a vision for the development of the land on the southern side of the Fore River. They purchased large tracts of land in Knightville and Ferry Village and proceeded to develop various shipbuilding-related industries, and residential housing to entice skilled workers to the area. By 1848, they had established a

large shipyard in the northeast portion of Ferry Village, and the first ship produced was a steam ferry, the *Elizabeth*, that immediately went into service between Ferry Village and Portland. They also established a



steam saw-mill and a chain-cable factory to produce tools and ship fittings.

The accompanying photo was taken circa 1890 in Ferry Village, and is believed to be an image of the Dyer Shipyard, which was roughly at the foot of Pine Street, on the westerly side. We have recently heard of the possibility that the records from the Dyer Shipyard might still be in existence. If you know of anything existing that is related to these early shipyards, we would appreciate a call (767-3268).



**Can You Identify This Photo?**

We ran this photo in our December 1<sup>st</sup> column, and had many callers with guesses, but very few people recognized the building and/or guessed correctly. Belle Graney knew the building well, though; she worked for Blake & Hamilton Insurance (predecessor to Blake, Hall & Sprague) when it operated in the building in the late 1930s. The location? 10 Cottage Road. The building is now home to Lone Wolf Documentary Group.