

The Brooksville Breeze



The newsletter of Brooksville Friends & Neighbors

Spring 2008

Oakland House Seaside Resort

By Becky Poole

Alive and Well in Brooksville

By Joan MacCracken

"Oh, I used to love going down to the Oakland House with my grandmother!", my mother (Avis Dow Poole) exclaimed. She reminded me that not only did she go there as a child, but she worked there as a teenager, and her mother (Inez Dow) worked there as well. This certainly explains my own fondness and love for this grand hotel on the spit of land between Eggemoggin Reach and Walker's Pond.

On a snowy, colorless day when I met with Jim and Sally Littlefield, it was not hard for me to imagine the very beginnings of this beautiful farm built by John and Hannah Billings, a rope maker from Lincoln, Massachusetts, who went north after losing his business on a shipment of damaged hemp. The Billings family had faced the dangerous prospect of settling on the east side of the Penobscot River where land was still available due to the greater risks for settlers from the hostilities of the native peoples who used this land as a prime portage area between the Eggemoggin Reach and Gray's Pond (Walker's Pond).

Their son, Isaac Billings, was the first generation born in this house just as it was finished in 1776. Through farming and the export of lumber and granite, the Billings Farm thrived in spite of the political upheavals of the times. By 1815, ice harvesting became profitable and perhaps contributed to the building of the pier in 1829. It was the pier that allowed Isaac's granddaughter Flavilla and her husband Emery Herrick, with a loan from brother-in-law Charles Babson, to establish Oakland House as an inn. Amazingly, with special permission from the Superintendent of the Boston-Bangor shipping line, passenger steam ships were able to stop at the Herrick Pier and summer guests or "rusticators" began arriving.

"Guests often came for the entire summer season. The old boardwalk ran from Herrick's landing up the hill to the Hotel. It was built for arriving guests and the huge trunks of an entire summer's worth of clothing. Guests traveling from Boston on the steamer sailed from Boston Harbor in the late afternoon bound for Rockland. The steward's clanging on a frying pan, or such, awakened the passengers at 5:30 am in time for



Flavilla Herrick, Avis Dow, Emery Herrick
And Bonnie the Dog-- circa late 1920's

transfer in Rockland to the local steamer which stopped at Herrick's mid-morning on its way to Blue Hill." (Herrick Littlefield, Oakland House, Centennial Celebration 1889-1989).

Early 20th century life on the coast included the influx of people from "away", creating a booming summer tourism industry that would replace the raw materials export industry. Brooksville alone would have over forty inns to meet this new opportunity for prosperity and growth. The family at Oakland House adapted each step of the way. Starting in 1930, Flavilla and Emery's daughter, Josephine Littlefield, took over the helm with her son, Elmir and his wife Katrina. The dining room service became more refined, more cottages were built, and Shore Oaks, a large ten room cottage, was

The good news is that Brooksville as a community, as a neighborhood is alive and well, and much caring and sharing takes place between neighbors, friends, and family. A long history of this neighborly outreach exists. Whether it's been a prolonged power outage from an ice storm, a lost dog, firewood needing stacking, or help in someone's kitchen, neighbors in Brooksville have stepped up over the years. The local churches and social groups have and continue to reach out to help their neighbors. (The June issue of *The Breeze* will present Brooksville's outstanding Meal-for-me Program, which touches so many lives here.)

More good news is that Brooksville also has a network that can pick up and assist when some of our neighbors may fall through the cracks of the existing organizations, those who don't know where to turn when they need a helping hand. This network, called Neighborcare, is alive and well in Brooksville and other peninsula towns, but may be unknown to many of our residents. *The Breeze* would like everyone in Brooksville to learn about it, so that its very existence can ultimately lead to its dissolution by successfully creating that neighbor-wide network where neighbors can help all neighbors in need. Most folks in Brooksville are willing to help if they are asked. And it

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Mud Season in Brooksville

By Edson B. Blodgett and Joan MacCracken

When the "Bay Froze Over," folks could drive from Brooksville to Belfast across the Penobscot Bay. But with warmer winters and still warming springs, Brooksville residents have had to face Mud Season with some fortitude. Wheeled traffic has had to use other routes, and it is interesting to note that other "routes" connecting our community have changed from the earlier days.

Within the confines of Brooksville, there is a record of some dozen roads or segments of roads that have been abandoned as town responsibilities. One such road in West Brooksville has been referred to as the Tom Tapley Road. This was originally part of a road that carried commerce from the town landing at Smith's Cove through to the Varnumville Road and on to North Brooksville. A large swampy area on the road discouraged many a traveler especially in the spring. At the town meeting of February 1918, voters elected to abandon this road between Tom Tapley's home, now the Curtis home, and the old Bickford Place on Varnumville Road. More recently, snowmobilers have maintained some semblance of a trail. The Varnumville Road in the 1920's and '30's had about six or seven homes, while today at least thirty seven addresses are listed. The road is now "completely" paved, and still the potholes appear annually.

Traveling to Blue Hill presented significant problems. The Mines Road from Joe Gray's corner in West Sedgwick to the present Tradewinds for many years was paved at each end, but the middle section beginning at the town line of Blue Hill just prior to the current Christmas Greens Shop remained gravel or mud until the Grindville Road. This section became a real challenge in the winter and even more so in the spring. In "bad going" the hill essentially became a two-wheeled route and, for all intents and purposes, was a one-way traffic road. Granted, the number of vehicles per hour that passed through was not high, but if vehicles driving in the opposite direction met on this hill, a serious situation was faced. In ex-

treme weather, neither vehicle could get out of the one set of tracks. In less hazardous weather, the operator who might choose to attempt to turn out of the tracks probably was destined to get stuck on the shoulder or in the ditch, requiring towing. Usually the safest and sanest solution was for one vehicle to back to the top or back to the bottom of the hill. Not an easy chore, for sure!

The entire Mines Road was ultimately paved in the late 1950's. The fresh layer of black top applied last summer helped to smooth some of the perennial frost heaves through the mines area. Few of the majority of today's drivers could envision the trials and tribulations experienced on a trip to Blue Hill.



Hope on Varnumville Road!

Photo by Chris Raphael

CPR Class a Success!!

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors sponsored a CPR class in January that was an unqualified success—sold out!

If you missed this opportunity and would like to participate, let us know. If there is enough interest, we'll schedule another class. Thanks to all who came!

Just Who Are We?

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors is a group of residents who have been meeting monthly at the Town Hall since the fall of 2006. The goal of this group is to strengthen and support local activities that encourage health, both physical and emotional. Ideas to achieve this goal have included promoting exercise by mapping trails and areas for outdoor walking, skiing, ice skating, and biking, and encouraging indoor sports such as ping pong, yoga, volleyball as well as the exercise classes and other communal activities. BFN wants to reach out to the youth and elderly of the town as well as new arrivals and long-time citizens of Brooksville. We plan to promote sustainable local agriculture and neighborhood gardens and to inform residents of healthy resources.

Over the past year BFN has created new avenues for increasing communication and connectedness through their newsletter, *The Brooksville Breeze*, named after the old high school yearbook. Summer, Fall, and Winter issues have arrived at the mailboxes of every Brooksville resident and the Spring issue comes out 1st week of March, '08. The feature articles have been on people and places in Brooksville, upcoming Brooksville activities, health tips of some kind, biographies of student graduates and bits of humor, poetry, and history. Town phone numbers and office hours are also listed. Submissions or ideas for articles are encouraged.

The group has also been working on a welcome packet for newcomers, and discussing plans for a town kiosk for announcements of events and a map of Brooksville for lost tourists. A local foods interest group is being formed to study ways to promote local foods, both for successful, cost-effective production as well as local marketing.

BFN is open to all. It provides a forum for ideas for the Brooksville community. Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month from 6:30-8pm at the Town Office. For further information write BFN, PO Box 101, Brooksville, ME 04617, or call Joan MacCracken at 326-0916 or email joanmac@aol.com. Add your email address if you would like to receive agendas and minutes of the meetings.

Activities

For more information, call the number listed in each entry.

Brooksville Elementary School

Sat. March 8th Variety Show: "Slush and Mud." Dinner 5-6pm
 Variety Show 6-8:30pm.
 Pay at door. Contact Jen Chase 326-8751
 Fri. March 21st; Discovery Week Open House: 6-8pm
 Please check the Web or the School Newsletter for times and dates.
<http://www.brooksvilleschool.org>

Brooksville Free Public Library

Open Monday & Weds. 9am - 5pm,
 Thurs. 6-8pm, Sat 9am-noon
 Pre-school Story Hour Mondays 10:30am
 For more information call: 326-4560
 Friends of the Library call: 326-8520

Brooksville Historical Society

Monthly meeting the 2nd Wed. at 6:30pm
 at the Town House- all welcome! For
 more info: 326-0899

Keepers Baptist Church Preservation Group

For information on events & meetings
 call 326-8864

Brooksville Friends and Neighbors

Monthly meeting -1st Wed every month,
 6:30 pm at the Town House
 For more info call 326-0916

Wed, April 16, 7pm, Town House—How
 to Grow an Organic Garden—Talk by
 Brooksville Master Gardener Dan Huis-
 jen.

Holbrook Island Sanctuary

Safe walking trails. Please call: 326-4012
 for more information.

Get Strong, Get Healthy

Monday, Wednesday and Fridays 7:30 am
 at the Brooksville Community Center.
 For more info: 326-9466

Cape Rosier Ping Pong

Sundays at 2-4pm. For more info: 326-
 4279

Meals-4-Me

Thursday's-Lunch for all ages. Please be
 sure to call Dot Bakeman for reservations

and more information-326-4912. Reserva-
 tions need to be made before 8:00 on
 Wednesday morning.

Good Life Center

Saturdays from March 15th—April 5th:
 9am-1pm. Learn to Grow Your Food.
 Each session is on a different topic. For
 topics and scholarship information call
 Bob St. Peter, The Good Life Center at
 326-8211.

Neighborcare

Neighbors helping neighbors. Volunteers
 provide free health related services; res-
 pite, transportation, errands, etc. Call
 Jeanie Gaudette for assistance or to vol-
 unteer at 326-4735.

Yoga

Fridays at the Town House-8:30am-
 10:00am. \$13 for one session or \$44 for
 4 sessions. For more info call 326-3236.

Belly Dancing

Interested? Call Christy McLaughlin at
 326-8836.

Meditation

Contemplative Prayer- Reversing Falls -
 Weds. 9am. For more info call: 326-8564
 Buddhist Meditation -Reversing Falls
 Church-Thursday's-5:30-6:30 pm
 For more info call 326-4047

Brooksville United Methodist Church

Sunday Service 9 am
 with Rev. Gary Vencill- 326-7850

West Brooksville United Congrega- tional Church

Community Breakfast-Sat. May 3rd 7:30-
 9am. Come see your neighbors and enjoy
 breakfast at the West Brooksville Congre-
 gational Church.
 Sunday Service & Sunday School- 10am
 with Rev. Allen Myers.
 For more info: 326-8283 or 348-5693.

To list your event call: 326-0916

or send us a note

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors

P.O.Box 101

Brooksville, Maine 04617

Kiosk Site Located!

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors is de-
 lighted to have located a site for an infor-
 mation kiosk for the Town of Brooks-
 ville! Thanks to Horace and Sylvia
 Wardwell of Sedgwick, we can now begin
 to plan and design the kiosk and welcom-
 ing space, which will provide help and
 information for residents and visitors
 alike.

This will be an exciting project. If you
 would like to be a part of this effort, call
 BFN at 326-0916.

Town Office Hours	326-4518
Monday	9am-2pm
Wednesday	9am-2pm
Thursday	6pm-8pm
Selectmen	John Gray
	Richard Bakeman
	Clifford (Kip) Leach
Town Clerk	Amber Bakeman
Treasurer	Frieda Peasley
Tax Collector	Joanne Van der Eb

Burn Permits (at Fire Station)
 Thursday

Harbormaster Sarah Cox 326-9622

.....Hours.....

Library326-4560
Monday	9am-5pm
Wednesday	9am-5pm
Thursday	6-8pm
Saturday	9am-12pm

Post Office (Window)	
Monday-Friday8:30am-12:15pm
2-4:15pm
Saturday	8:30-10:30am

Post Office (Lobby)	
Monday-Friday7am-4:45pm
Saturday	7-11am

Buck's Harbor Market ..	326-8683
Monday-Friday7am-6pm
Saturday-Sunday8am-6pm

The Brooksville Breeze

The newsletter of Brooksville Friends & Neighbors

Published Quarterly—Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors (BFN)

P.O. Box 101

Brooksville, ME 04617-0101

Phone: 207-326-0916

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Judy Tredwell, Peter Beaven,

Jean Webster, Katherine Clifford



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ECR WSS

Please complete the enclosed survey on local foods!

We would really like to have your opinions.

We have an active group that is trying very hard to bring producers and consumers together and they need your help.



Tell Us Who You Are...

Fill out this form and mail it to us at the address given. We want to know what you are interested in. Would you like to help with the newsletter? Do you belong to a group that would like us to help promote its activities? Brooksville Friends and Neighbors is a new and growing organization. We need you! We need ideas and we need to know how we can best serve the community.

The Breeze, P.O. Box 101, Brooksville, ME 04617

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Summer Resident? To receive *The Breeze* by email in the off-season, send us your email address (and a donation?).

Comments and Suggestions: _____

Attention Brooksville Voters!

Due to M.S. 20-A Section 1486, voters are asked to return to the polls March 10, 2008 to validate the school budget adopted at the annual Town Meeting. Absentee ballots are available at the Town Clerk's office.