

- [12-25-09 Niles Nelson Greenhouses](#)
- [12-18-09 Lloyd Alexander – Knightville barber](#)
- [12-11-09 Aqualab](#)
- [12-04-09 Some 20th Century Entertainment](#)
- [11-27-09 Some 19th Century Entertainment](#)
- [11-20-09 Giving Thanks](#)
- [11-13-09 Cash Corner – Pan-Am Service Station](#)
- [11-06-09 Portland, Saco & Portsmouth Railroad](#)
- [10-30-09 Spring Point Ledge Lighthouse](#)
- [10-23-09 Mt. Pleasant Cemetery](#)
- [10-16-09 Phil Cash Mobile Market](#)
- [10-09-09 Then and Now – 93-95 Ocean Street](#)
- [10-02-09 Preserving South Portland's History](#)
- [09-25-09 Sea Scouts at the SP 50th Anniversary Parade](#)
- [09-18-09 Jack O'Lantern Casino](#)
- [09-11-09 First United Methodist Church](#)
- [09-04-09 Back to School – Elm Street School](#)
- [08-28-09 Spot to Shop](#)
- [08-21-09 Cash Corner in the 1930s](#)
- [08-14-09 Lending a Helping Hand](#)
- [08-07-09 Knightville, circa 1975](#)
- [07-31-09 South Portland Rollerdrome](#)
- [07-24-09 Ice Delivery](#)
- [07-17-09 Peoples Meat Market](#)
- [07-10-09 Sheraton Inn](#)
- [07-03-09 Harold Thompson and Class of 1930 Football](#)
- [06-26-09 Celebration: 4th of July South Portland](#)
- [06-19-09 Moran's Cash Market](#)
- [06-12-09 Summer Days](#)
- [06-05-09 Helping to Make History](#)
- [05-29-09 Summer in Maine 2009 Online Auction – May 31-June 6](#)
- [05-22-09 Dr. Messer's Sanatorium](#)
- [05-15-09 Hillside Market](#)
- [05-08-09 R.L Graves Field](#)
- [05-01-09 SoPo School Kids Making a Difference](#)
- [04-24-09 Willard School Demolition](#)
- [04-17-09 SPSHS Boys Basketball in 1928 – Part Two](#)
- [04-10-09 SPSHS Boys Basketball in 1928 – Part One](#)
- [04-03-09 Can you identify? A class at Brown School](#)
- [03-27-09 South Portland Historical Society - Lecture, April 1:](#)
- [03-20-09 Aladdin's Lamp](#)
- [03-13-09 This 'n' That Shop](#)
- [03-06-09 Matchbook Histories: The Marketplace Restaurant](#)
- [02-27-09 Ray's Market](#)
- [02-20-09 Leave Your Mark in History: Buy-a-Brick](#)
- [02-13-09 The Cloyester](#)
- [02-06-09 Solving Mysteries](#)
- [01-30-09 Pigs and Piggeries](#)
- [01-23-09 Stu Brown's Variety and the Maple Inn](#)
- [01-16-09 Downtown Ferry Village](#)
- [01-09-09 the Days of Ice Delivery](#)

12-25-09 Niles Nelson Greenhouses



Carol Campbell and I recently visited with Richard Nelson to talk about the greenhouses that his father and grandfather, both named Niles Nelson, operated in the Ferry Village neighborhood in South Portland. The accompanying photo from the Etta Gregory Watts collection at the historical society shows the greenhouses; we think the photo to have been taken from the steeple of the old Peoples Church on High Street. It looks toward Portland Harbor from the corner of School and High Streets.

Mr. Nelson's grandfather Niles was a screenmaker for the E.T. Burrowes Company in Portland back in the 1880s. By 1890, he was working with Edward Harmon at the Harmon family business, E.J. Harmon & Co. According to Mr. Nelson, the Nelson family was related to the Harmon family. It appears that, from the start, Edward Harmon was running the retail floral business on Congress Street, while Niles Nelson ran the greenhouses on High Street in South Portland that supplied the flowers for the florist business. After Niles Nelson died in 1911, his son Niles continued running the greenhouses until the Depression years when the greenhouses were shut and then torn down. In the early 1930s, a gas station opened on the lot on High Street, run first by Maynard Scott and later by Edgar Allen. When the station closed, the little building was put on a flat bed and taken to a lake where it was turned into a camp.

During World War II, the lot was filled with gravel and turned into a parking lot. According to Mr. Nelson, they would charge "25 cents a day, or one dollar a week for parking." The lot held 100 cars so they made roughly \$100 per week by renting out the space for parking.

Note to readers: The historical society's museum at Bug Light Park will be closed from Christmas to New Year's Day. Our hours will be changing after the holidays - we will announce the schedule in an upcoming column and you may also call the Society at 767-7299 to determine open days and times.

12-18-09 Lloyd Alexander – Knightville barber



What a precious photograph we have for this week's column. This image comes to us courtesy of Milton and Jean Alexander. For residents of Knightville in years past, this will surely be a treat as they are bound to recognize the man in the photo as Lloyd Alexander who served our community as a barber for about 40 years.

According to Milton Alexander, his father Lloyd and mother Mildred moved here from New Brunswick. Lloyd attended barber school and worked at first for someone else before becoming the proprietor of his own shop. When he opened his barber shop in Knightville in the late 1920s, the business was located in the building at 54 Ocean Street. During WWII, he relocated to the building next door, 62 Ocean Street (now the Griffin Club building), in space that he rented from Edmond McLaughlin. During the war Lloyd would go in to work "at 8 in the morning, and he didn't leave until he had cut everyone's hair who was waiting," said his son, Milton. With few barbers working in South Portland in those years, it made for long days. After Lloyd retired around 1968, he took his barber shop equipment home with him and, because he had cut some residents' hair for so many decades, would still answer their calls at times by going to their homes to cut their hair.

Note to readers: The South Portland Historical Society is holding an open house at its new museum and gift shop from now through Dec. 23rd. We hope that you will come and visit to see how the historic Cushing's Point House is being renovated to become a South Portland history museum at Bug Light Park. Hours thru Dec. 23 are: weekdays 10-1, Saturdays 10-4, and Sundays 12-4. FMI call 767-7299.

12-11-09 Aqualab



By Craig Skelton, guest columnist
South Portland Historical Society member

The dock at SMCC sits empty today as it has been for a number of years now. Fascinated by boats, I used to ride my bike down to the campus and walk out on the dock to get a close look at the Aqualab. I'm told there were four versions of the Aqualab over the years. The one I remember was called the "Leaky Tiki" by students at the school and was a retired mine sweeper. An old friend and neighbor Dale Lincoln served as a classroom teacher at the then-SMVTI and was the chief engineer aboard the Aqualab from 1963 to 1965.

Although that Aqualab and the others stationed at the college probably spent more time at the dock than at sea, Dale tells an incredible story of one cruise in his book "*Clyde Found Fruit Flies in the Berries.*" It was January 1964 when after preparations the Aqualab, with four licensed officers, a steward, 21 seniors, four of whom were student officers along with 24 freshmen, cast off from South Portland towards Florida on a training cruise.

There were a number of planned stops along the way and after visiting the Woods Hole Institute in Massachusetts, the boat set sail south for Morehead City. After passing the Diamond Shoals Lightship at Cape Hatteras, they encountered rough going. Dale describes their encounter as being the longest 32 hours of his life. The Aqualab, caught in a storm, was tossed about quite badly and the crew endured many incidents such as flooding from a broken toilet pipe, loss of use of the electronic gear, the gyro Compass being disabled and the worst of all things, seasickness. Many of the crew were reluctant to go out on deck for fear of being smacked by flying vomit!

Due to the seriousness of their condition a MAY DAY call was attempted at the height of the storm. Along with two student officers, Dale repaired the radio antennae that had blown loose. The Coast Guard radioed back that the Aircraft Carrier USS FORRESTAL was moving toward their position and soon after one of the planes from the carrier circled above the Aqualab. A while later the Coast Guard Cutter USS JOHNQUIL arrived to escort the Aqualab and her crew into Morehead City.

Dale had brought along something special that he used to restore the crew's morale. A softball and bat brought on board at the last minute before leaving South Portland days before was trotted out and, that day and many days thereafter, when they found themselves in port, softball games became a common occurrence amongst the crew.

There are many interesting stories in Dale Lincoln's book and I would like to express my thanks to him for his contribution.

Note to readers: The South Portland Historical Society is holding an OPEN HOUSE at its new museum and gift shop from now through Dec. 23rd. We hope that you will come and visit to see how the historic Cushing's Point House is being renovated to become a South Portland history museum at Bug Light Park. Hours thru Dec. 23 are: weekdays 10-1, Saturdays 10-4, and Sundays 12-4. FMI call 767-7299.

12-04-09 Some 20th Century Entertainment



After last week's column about some 19th century entertainment events, I thought it would be fun to look into a sampling of some of the ways South Portlanders enjoyed life in the 20th century. One interesting resource is the City's annual report which lists some of the highlights of our Parks and Recreation department. So, from the 1957 and 1958 annual reports, here is a glimpse of some of the activities of that time:

"The swimming program, under the direction of James Connolly and assisted by Miss Beverly Baker, was conducted Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 10am until noon at Willard Beach. While Willard Beach is not ideal for a teaching situation, the classes remained large and enthusiastic throughout the season and many children passed their Red Cross certification."

"Two White Call ducks were placed in the pond at Mill Creek Park in early May, and a small house was erected for their use. The two parks – Peary and Mill Creek – and the four memorial plots – South Portland Heights, Thornton Heights, Pleasantdale and Meeting House Hill – were cared for during the summer season."

“A skating rink, 60 x 120 ft. in size, was constructed in November at Thornton Heights. An area 200 ft. square at Old Joe’s Pond, off Pine St., was bulldozed to a depth of 30 inches to make a skating pond. Two-inch pipe was laid underground for a distance of 250 feet to flood and maintain it. The cost of the actual rink was financed by the City Council, with the piping and labor furnished by the Commission. Other rinks maintained for skating include Mill Creek Pond, Marion, Mildred and Smith Streets. Twenty-six streets were posted for sliding, at all intersections.”

“A sewing class, under the instruction of Miss Gretchen Nickerson, was held on Wednesday evenings at the high school during the school year. On the same evening, a workshop in wood and metal projects was held, with Mr. Linwood Wallace as the instructor until the close of school in June. At the beginning of the fall term, Mr. Richard Horr took charge of this project.”

11-27-09 Some 19th Century Entertainment



Newspapers can be a treasure trove of information about people and places from earlier times. Some of the details can be found in the news articles; others can be found in the classified ads and business advertisements. There are many newspapers that have covered South Portland and Cape Elizabeth’s history over the years. In our historical society’s collections, there are newspapers dating back to

1851.

One newspaper that I found interesting was a copy of the Cape Elizabeth Sentinel from January of 1882. In that particular edition, there were three events taking place over the course of four days – I thought it a great example to use to answer a common kids’ question, “What did people do back in the days when there was no television?”

The first event that week was on a Monday evening, Jan 23 in Ferry Village at the church building on High Street. “The Ladies Methodist circle will give a grand musical entertainment...to raise funds to pay for their church organ.” Tickets to the event were 15 cents for adults and 10 cents for children.

Two days later, there was another evening event advertised for Jan 25th: “Masquerade Ball at Union Hall, Ferry Village. Tickets 75 cents, gents in costume 50 cents. Oyster supper free. A few costumes and masks may be had at the hall that evening, by those who have neglected to secure them in advance. Stabling for horses, free. Steamer will run to the city after the dance.” That steamer, of course, was the ferry that ran between Portland and Ferry Village here in South Portland.

Finally, on Thursday that week, Jan. 26, 1882, the following event: “Social Assembly! At Town Hall...with good music, plenty of partners and polite floor managers, we have made our assemblies the most popular in town. Come and try us, gents tickets, 50 cents. Objectionable parties not admitted.”

Note to readers: we hope that you will come and visit the South Portland Historical Society for our Open House weekend on Dec. 5th and 6th. The museum and gift shop will be open for the holiday season on Saturdays from 10am to 4pm and on Sundays from 1pm to 4pm. Since moving the museum building to its new site in Bug Light Park this year, there has been a lot of construction going on as the building is being converted for use as a museum. Feel free to stop in and see what we’ve been doing! Take Broadway east to the ocean, then a left on Breakwater Drive and a right onto Madison Street that leads into the park.

11-20-09 Giving Thanks



W.D. Matthews Machinery of Auburn donated the use of a lift to assist with the window installation at the historical society museum.

Thanksgiving is always my favorite time of year – the holiday season has arrived and it is a time for reflection over the past year and all the many blessings, large and small, that we have to be thankful for. Our historical society in South Portland is 45 years old and, without a doubt, this year has offered many blessings as the Society finally acquired a permanent home, thanks to Portland Pipe Line Corporation, the City of South Portland, and a whole community of individual donors, businesses and grantmakers.

Anyone who has come to visit our museum at Bug Light Park has seen the constant activity in the building. Our visitors felt the heat this summer when our building had no air conditioning – and this fall has had some very cold days indeed. We are very grateful and give thanks to Mechanical Services of Portland who has recently donated

and installed a high efficiency heat exchange system in the museum. This is a combination heating and cooling system that extracts heat from the air outside and pumps it into the building, which will save the

Society money in the long run because the furnace doesn't have to run as often. The system reverses in the summer and cools the building by pumping the heat out.

Another exciting development has been the Society's receipt of 18 Paradigm windows to replace the first and second floor windows. Our thanks goes to both Paradigm and to Applicators Sales & Service who collaborated to make this possible. The windows have been manufactured to recreate the look of the windows that were original to the building, but with today's technology. The Paradigm windows, utilizing double-glazed lowE glass with argon gas, will reduce heating and cooling costs down the road and will also help to reduce UV rays that cause damage to photographs and artifacts.

The look on the inside and outside of the museum has also recently improved, thanks to Peter Cotter, the South Portland/Cape Elizabeth Rotary Club, Sherwin Williams, Maine Paint Service, and the Cumberland County Sheriff's Community Services crew. The crew worked for several weeks putting a fresh coat of paint on the interior and exterior.

There are many ways that you can help as the Society continues renovating the building and site to become a museum we can all be proud of. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the [Society's 2009 Annual Appeal](#), please download the form and send to us. If you would like to become a volunteer with the Society starting next spring, please call us at 767-7299. And if you are doing your holiday gift shopping, please consider a trip to our museum gift shop, which features many unique Maine-made gifts (including many South Portland and Cape Elizabeth artists and craftspeople). The museum and gift shop is open now through the end of December on most weekdays 10-1, Saturdays from 10-4 and Sundays from 1-4.

11-13-09 Cash Corner – Pan-Am Service Station



We are thrilled to see this rare image of the Pan-Am gas station in Cash Corner, which comes to us courtesy of James and Patricia Dickens in Naples. The gas station was located at 278 Main Street, on the property where the vacant Capitol Cash Register building is (beside One Stop Party Shoppe). The photograph is quite clear, allowing us to see the architectural detail on the station that was owned by Mexican Petroleum from roughly 1926 to 1933. With its clay tile roof, stucco-ed walls and arched parapets, the building was a great example of the Mission Revival architectural style.

The man standing at the gas pump was identified as Joseph Manning. Mr. Manning ran a store across the street from roughly 1927 to 1942, on the site that is now home to Willow's Pizza & Restaurant.

The Pan-Am gas station was converted to become an Amoco station, circa 1934.

Our historical society has received a lot of support this year from current and former residents who have shared historic photographs of Cash Corner. This will go a long way toward preserving the history of this section of South Portland. Another section of our city that has been seldom photographed is the Mill Creek/Knightville area. Businesses and gathering places come and go, so we would be very interested in seeing images of that area. In earlier times, the circus would come to South Portland and set up in the area where the Shaws Plaza is now located; although one would think that circus-goers would have brought cameras, we have not seen photographs from those events. If you have any images or other artifacts to share, please contact the society at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland, ME 04106, or by phone at 767-7299. Thank you!

11-06-09 Portland, Saco & Portsmouth Railroad



Turner's Island in 1871, showing the roundhouse and other buildings where the railroad could service engines and equipment.

It's easy to forget about the railroad tracks that cross Broadway at Evans Street, and the trains that used to cross there. Before the automobile was invented and became the popular form of travel, traveling to Boston was best accomplished by train or steamboat. The origins of the Portland, Saco & Portsmouth Railroad started in 1837. According to an interesting book, *The Eastern Railroad* written by Francis Bradlee, the Maine legislature passed an act in March of 1837 to form the Portland, Saco & Portsmouth Railroad Company; the railroad was to extend tracks for 52 miles, from Portland to Portsmouth, where it would connect with the Eastern Railroad. Construction began in 1841 and the section from Portland to Saco was opened on February 7, 1842. On the Portland end, a station was built near the steamboat wharves on Commercial Street – the tracks ran down Commercial and then across a wooden trestle to Turner's Island in South Portland and on down through the intersection of Broadway and Evans. The entire line was completed on November 21, 1842, establishing both passenger and freight service from Portland to the south.

A station was erected at the Broadway/Evans intersection, known as Cape Elizabeth Depot, and in 1853 with usage of the railroad on the rise, our first post office opened here in Mr. and Mrs. Freeman Evans' store, located roughly in the area where Amato's now operates.

The Portland, Saco & Portsmouth Railroad was originally jointly leased by the Eastern Railroad and the Boston & Maine. An ongoing feud between those two railroads later resulted in two rail lines extending through South Portland. In 1870, the Portland, Saco & Portsmouth Railroad broke its contract with the Eastern Railroad and B&M, which started an intense competition between not just the Eastern and B&M, but also Maine Central Railroad. The line that was later run through Rigby Yard resulted after the Eastern Railroad refused to allow the B&M to use its tracks. The drama that plays out makes the book a fascinating read.

10-30-09 Spring Point Ledge Lighthouse



We see a lot of lighthouse buffs at our new museum at Bug Light Park - South Portland is lucky to have not one, but two beautiful lighthouses on its shores. Looking at our two lighthouses from a historic standpoint, it is interesting to consider that Spring Point Ledge Light is at the end of a long breakwater, and yet Portland Breakwater Light (aka Bug Light) is seemingly sitting on the shore with no breakwater. In fact, when the two lighthouses were built, it was Bug Light that was at the end of the long breakwater (hard to tell since the land was filled in during WWII), and Spring Point Ledge

Light was built as a stand-alone light out in the water with no breakwater.

The origins of the Spring Point Ledge Light date back to 1891 when seven steamship companies got together and requested that a lighthouse be built on that ledge to prevent further damage to their ships. The lighthouse was built by Thomas Dwyer in 1897 – and was first lit on May 24, 1897 by the first keeper of that light, William A. Lane. Spring Point is a sparkplug-style lighthouse and was referred to as a “stag light” because the keepers and assistant keepers would normally row out to the light and stay out there, leaving families at home on shore (although we do know that some keepers would take their kids out now and then to stay over for fun – lucky kids!).

It wasn't until 1951 that the long 900-foot breakwater was constructed – many locals still recall the construction quite clearly.

One of the most famous lighthouse keepers at Spring Point was Gus Wilson, who served as keeper from 1918 to 1934. He put his spare time out at the light to good use; he was an excellent wood carver, carving duck decoys that are now among the rarest and most valuable at auction.

If you'd like to learn more about the history of Spring Point Ledge Light and Bug Light, I highly recommend that you tune in to Maine PBS, Channel 10, on Saturday, October 31st at 11am. PBS will be airing “Portland Head Light and the Lighthouses of Casco Bay.” This documentary film was very well done, featuring interviews with local historians (including yours truly) and, especially of interest, interviews with some lighthouse keepers and their descendants. In addition to covering South Portland's lighthouses

and Portland Head Light, the film also covers Ram Island, Half-way Rock, and Two Lights. If you miss the film and/or would like to buy a copy as a gift or for yourself, you can buy it on DVD at the historical society's museum gift shop, open Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and other days by chance or appointment. You can reach the museum by phone at 767-7299.

10-23-09 Mt. Pleasant Cemetery



Of all South Portland's cemeteries (and there are at least 11 known cemeteries within our city limits) I find Mt. Pleasant to be one of our most interesting. As one of our oldest cemeteries, and located in a highly populated neighborhood on Meeting House Hill, there is a lot to appreciate about this mid-sized resting ground.

To understand the beginnings of Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, it is helpful to know a little of the history of the First Congregational Church. Back in the 1700s, when Maine was still a part of Massachusetts, and when South Portland was still part of the larger town of Falmouth, the early settlers were members of the First Parish of Falmouth. In 1733, the portion of Falmouth that was south of the Fore River (that would later become Cape Elizabeth and South Portland) was allowed to break off and form the Second Parish of Falmouth. By 1734, a church was built on the north side of Cottage Road. After the church was in place, a small graveyard was established next to the church – the very beginnings of Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. The church building was rebuilt in 1835 and later moved across the street to where it now resides, and the cemetery has continued to grow.

Each fall, I meet in the cemetery with the 4th grade students from Small School to take a short tour of the cemetery. We talk about what life was like during the 1700s and 1800s in America, and specifically South Portland's early history. We also look at early symbolism on grave stones and talk about how the symbols sometimes reflect the lives of people of those times. As an example, the accompanying photograph shows the preserved stone of Hannah Doane Cushing, the first recorded burial at the cemetery. Mrs. Cushing was the wife of Ezekiel Cushing, for whom Cushing's Point was named; she died in 1742. Mrs. Cushing's stone shows the symbol known as "winged death" or "death's head." This symbol was very common in the 1700s, in a time when life was tough, sometimes too short, and society in general held a pretty grim view of life and its fleeting nature.

10-16-09 Phil Cash Mobile Market



This week's historic highlight comes to us courtesy of another Cash family descendent, Patricia Harmon. Along with some genealogical records and photographs related to the Cash family of Cash Corner, Patricia also donated this wonderful nostalgic photograph of a previously-undocumented food business run by her father, Phil Cash. Cash ran this neighborhood delivery business during World War II.

According to Patricia, her father bought this bus in Massachusetts, brought it back to Maine, removed the seats and installed shelving so that he could carry produce, canned goods, bologna, and other food items. He drove regular routes in South Portland and Cape

Elizabeth, to all the war-time housing neighborhoods like Broadview Park, Mountain View Park, Peary Village, Redbank and Long Creek. The photo here was taken on his route at Elizabeth Park in Cape Elizabeth. This mobile market would have been a great service to the residents of these neighborhoods; many were shipyard workers and their families, so being able to buy food so close to home would have been a valued convenience.

Note to readers: The South Portland Historical Society is open at its new home at Bug Light Park. The open hours continue to be flexible as construction continues on site. Normal hours this fall are Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 4pm, and Sundays from 1pm to 4pm. The museum may also be open by chance on other weekdays from 10am to 2pm. To reach the park, take Broadway east to the ocean, then a left on Breakwater Drive and a right on Madison Street which leads into the park.

10-09-09 Then and Now – 93-95 Ocean Street



I thought this photograph of The Champ and The Gray Surf might make for an interesting then-and-now opportunity. The old photograph was sent to me by Jan Curry after she had read my book on South Portland's neighborhood stores. She sent along a letter with the photo, noting that you can see her great-grandfather, George Sawyer, standing in the window on the 2nd floor above The Champ, in the apartment where his daughter and son-in-law lived. I took the newer photo just the other day, and thought it interesting how many of the building features have stayed the same, making it very easy to take this comparison shot.

The business to the right was a long-running store, the Gray Surf gift shop at 93 Ocean Street. The Gray Surf started up around the late-1920s and continued in operation for three decades, right through the Depression years and World War II.

On the left is The Champ, a bar/restaurant that is still familiar in the minds of many – Harold Richards started the restaurant



around 1936 at 95 Ocean Street. The site had previously been home to another pool/beer parlor. The restaurant stayed in business for about three decades, as well; it then evolved in the mid-1960s into The Dugout Sports Grill when it was acquired by Eddie Griffin.

According to Jan Curry, she remembered The Champ because she and her brothers would “peer out the front window at Nana’s and watch as the man used big tongs to lift blocks of ice into a funnel shaped chipper. He would place a container underneath (I think it was a basket) and out came what would pass for ice cubes for the ‘beer parlor’ as we called it. It’s amazing what we found entertaining back then! Occasionally an organ grinder and monkey would appear in the area.”

10-02-09 Preserving South Portland's History



One of the great joys of working and volunteering at the historical society is accepting donations of photographs and artifacts. Most of the time, these donations come in one-by-one and, over time, the collection covering South Portland's history expands and gaps in that history are filled. Those of us working with the collection are always on the lookout for those holes where we have no photographs or information – that is one of the ways that I select the topic of the week for this history column. Sentry readers have been wonderful about seeing our appeals for information and coming forward with any pieces that they may have.

Once in a while, though, someone will arrive with a significant donation that will really give meaning to our mission of preserving South Portland's history. Two such donations have been made since the Society moved to its new museum at Bug Light Park and I thought readers would appreciate hearing about them. Just this past month, we were visited by Leon Tibbetts who had an incredible story to tell. Mr. Tibbetts' father and sister were both employees at the South Portland shipyards during WWII. As part of a contest, the father sold war bonds and as the prize for selling the most, he was allowed to select his daughter Doris to christen the Liberty ship, the SS Robert Rogers.

Mr. Tibbetts then presented the historical society with a wonderful collection: the commemorative christening bottle from the launching day, a silver plate engraved with the date and specifics of the Liberty ship launching, a photo album that preserved the memories of the launching day, his sister's shipyard employee badge, his father's employee ID card and other related items.

Another recent donation involves the history of Cash Corner. The accompanying photograph shows Maggie (Cash) Baird and other family members presenting a primitive oil painting depicting the first Cash store, A.J. Cash Co., established in the mid-1880s by their ancestor, Andrew Cash. Cash family members owned three separate stores in Cash Corner, covering the span from the 1880s to the late 1940s. In

addition to donating the original painting, the family donated the Cash family papers which include photographs of all three stores and other locations on our city's western end. The South Portland Historical Society can be reached at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland ME 04106. Museum hours are currently Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 4pm, Sundays from 1pm to 4pm, and other days and times by chance or appointment. Hours will change as winter approaches; if you would like to check the hours or schedule an appointment, call the museum at 767-7299. You can find more information at www.sphistory.org.

09-25-09 Sea Scouts at the SP 50th Anniversary Parade



The accompanying photograph comes to us courtesy of Jim Berryman, showing his Sea Scouts unit standing with their parade float in front of Bagley's Variety on Ocean Street. This picture was taken at the 50th anniversary of the City of South Portland in August 1948. Bagley's Variety was located directly across Ocean Street from the then- high school, now Mahoney Middle School. According to Mr. Berryman, his Sea Scouts unit was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club and was based at the Engine 5 building in Cash Corner. Sea Scouting is an outdoor program for youth, affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America.

Speaking of our 50th anniversary, South Portland wasn't actually formed 50 years earlier in 1898 – that was just the year that it changed from being the Town of South Portland to being the City of South Portland. It is certainly a much older town, but has undergone several name changes in its history. After an early period of scattered settlements in the 1600s, the area was resettled in the early 1700s, and incorporated as the Town of Falmouth in 1718 (at that point, Falmouth's land area included the current-day cities and towns of Falmouth, Portland, Westbrook, South Portland and Cape Elizabeth). The portion of Falmouth lying south of the Fore River was allowed to detach as the "district" of Cape Elizabeth in 1765 and in August of 1775, we were officially established as the Town of Cape Elizabeth. The town changed its name to South Portland in 1895 after the southern section split off to form a new town, and South Portland prepared to annex with Portland (which did not happen after Portland citizens voted against the annexation). The population in South Portland had grown to such an extent that improvements to infrastructure were badly needed and, understandably, our neighbors to the north and south were not excited at the prospect of helping to pay for them.

Note to readers: the South Portland Historical Society's museum will be closed on Sunday, Sept. 27th so that volunteers may attend the Celebration of Life for Michael Eastman, which will be held at 2pm that day at the South Portland High School Auditorium.

09-18-09 Jack O'Lantern Casino



The accompanying postcard image shows a view looking down Pillsbury Street toward Willard Square; the road coming in from the right side is Davis Street. On the right in the photograph is a large, long building that was known as the Jack O'Lantern, a popular spot for dancing, located at 88 Pillsbury Street. What is most intriguing is the writing on the reverse side of the postcard: "Does this place look natural? The Meaher house is used now as a dance hall and big crowds there, especially on Saturday nights. You see it is called the Jack O'Lantern. In the field all round it, and the field opposite are now built up with pretty houses, you would not know the place. You

see there is one tree still left which was planted by the school house."

The school the writer is talking about is the Willard School, most likely where the photographer was when he or she took this picture.

The building had been home to Dennis and Alice Meaher in the early 1900s. Dennis Meaher was an attorney with an office in Portland. After Mr. Meaher died, his widow lived in the house for a short while, and we believe that the building then became used as a dance hall in the mid- to late-1920s. We would love to know more! If you have any information or stories to share about this dance hall, please contact the historical society at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland, ME 04106, or by email at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.

09-11-09 First United Methodist Church



This late-1800s photograph shows men at work on the steeple of the Brown's Hill Church, now known as the First United Methodist Church. According to William Jordan's *History of Cape Elizabeth*, the origins of the Methodist church in South Portland/Cape Elizabeth date back to 1794 when the Methodist Elder Jesse Lee came here from Virginia as a missionary. There was a small group of practicing Methodists in the town by 1800, a formally organized Methodist church was formed in 1803, and in February 1807, the Methodist Society was officially incorporated in Cape Elizabeth with 40 men listed as members.

For a meeting place, the Methodists first built a simple church in 1808 at Barren Hill (in the vicinity of Evans Street and Highland Avenue), then moved the structure to Brown's Hill in 1824 on land donated by Elisha Brown. After several decades of use, the old church building was in bad shape and the congregation built a new church on Brown's Hill which was completed in 1867 and dedicated in January 1868. Two brothers, Eben and Henry Nutter, were instrumental in the construction of the new church – when the congregation found itself far short of the \$13,000 needed to build the church, the Nutter brothers donated \$5,000 to meet the goal – a

substantial sum in that day. A few years later, Eben Nutter purchased and installed a Liberty bell in the steeple.

Note to readers: the South Portland Historical Society is open this fall in two locations. On Wednesdays from 10am to noon, the Society's research office is open in City Hall. We recommend that you call 347-4137 to make an appointment for the research office as space is very limited. The Society's museum at Bug Light Park is normally open on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 4pm, and Sundays from 1pm to 4pm. Open hours are weather dependent - watch for our open flag to be flying from the building.

09-04-09 Back to School – Elm Street School



Another summer has passed and for most children and their parents, this week marks the beginning of yet another school year. This week's column is a look back at one of our old elementary schools, the Elm Street School that was once located on the corner of Broadway and Elm Street. Now home to the Cheryl Greeley dance studio and Big Red Q copy center, that corner has had an interesting history including its first use as a school and later housing the Pleasantdale Hose Company, VFW, Knights of Columbus, the Moose Lodge and Bike & Blade sports center.

In the accompanying class photo, we can see the Elm Street School's first graders of 1927/28 standing on the front steps of the school. The building was used as a school through the 1920s, but is listed as a vacant school through the Depression years and into World War II. If you have any photographs or artifacts to share related to the old Elm Street School, please contact the Society at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland ME 04106 or at sphistoricalociety@maine.rr.com.



08-28-09 Spot to Shop



The accompanying photograph comes to us courtesy of Skip Matson, whose step-father Bob Collins operated the Spot to Shop store in Cash Corner for nearly three decades. The store at 327 Main Street started out as Cash's Market, run by Harold Cash (this was one of three different Cash stores in Cash Corner over the years). Harold and Virginia Cash sold the store to Bob Collins in December of 1944 and Collins continued to run the business under the Cash's Market name for a few more years. Circa 1949, Collins changed the store's name to Spot to Shop.

The Spot to Shop building shown in the photo here is an early version of the store. Collins made upgrades to the building and its signage over time so that the look of the front entrance changed in later years. But this early image is sure to bring nostalgia to some of our older residents – note the fresh produce displayed in baskets in front of the store and the bunches of bananas hanging on both sides of the front door.

In 1973, Collins sold the property to Brian Dearborn who changed the name to Bri's Variety. In time, the variety store was converted to become a full-scale restaurant with seating on two floors. The restaurant remained in operation until 1997. No evidence remains of these stores today; the site next to Dairy Queen is now home to the Stop & Shoppe Fuel Mart.

If you have photographs or artifacts from South Portland in earlier times, we'd love to hear from you! You can reach the South Portland Historical Society at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland, ME 04106 or at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.

08-21-09 Cash Corner in the 1930s



The accompanying photograph was recently donated to the South Portland Historical Society by sisters Jean Allen and Lois Allan. Their father, Henry Allan, worked at the Fred J. Stubbs Garage when it was located at 306 Main Street, around the time that this photo was taken, circa 1937. It is a terrific documentation of the look of Cash Corner in the mid- to late-1930s.

The road running from left to right in the photo is Main Street; Broadway comes from Brown's Hill at the top left side of the photo, crosses Main Street, and heads off at the bottom right. In the area where Dairy Queen sits today (on the right side of Cash Corner in the photo), we can make out the Socony service station in that spot.

Roughly in the location where today's Pleasant Hill Auto is now located, we can see the Stubbs Garage, operating from the building which had previously housed the Cash Corner School in the 1920s, and later became home to the Engine 5 hose company.

Among the cluster of buildings on Main Street (where Rite Aid now operates), we can see the large building on the left that later became the Woodward & Austin auto dealership; that building housed Irving's Garage in the 1920s and '30s, and became known as Woodward & Purinton in the 1940s. The white building to the right of that large building was home to Joe Ward's Market – remembered as a great old store with a wooden floor that was covered in sawdust. The building just to the right of Ward's looks to be Cash's Market, run by Harold Cash. That building reportedly burned in the late 1930s and Jimmy Lano set up his diner on that spot in the early 1940s.

08-14-09 Lending a Helping Hand



As the summer is now well under way, I thought it a good time to update our readers on recent activities at the South Portland Historical Society. The new museum at Bug Light Park is really starting to come alive as our community continues to be involved and supportive of this exciting endeavor. Open on a fluctuating basis since July 4th, the museum's hours have gradually begun to take shape as we build a volunteer network. You can normally find the museum open to the public on Fridays and Saturdays from 10am to 4pm, and on Sunday afternoons from 1 to 4pm. We also open on other days depending on volunteers and scheduled construction activities at the building – watch for the flag flying from the front

porch to know that we are open.

Of course, our historical society still has a lot of work to get done to finish off the interior and exterior of the building. Much of the building's progress has relied on generous individual and business donors, one of which I wanted to highlight now. A-Top Chimney of South Portland is currently volunteering both its time and materials on our museum building, reconstructing a chimney and also lining the chimney so that equipment can be properly vented. The accompanying photo was taken at the museum last week when the A-Top crew was hard at work on the roof. The Society would like to offer its warm thanks to A-Top Chimney and its owners, Wendy and Bill Soule, for such a generous donation for our community's benefit.

There are also many construction expenses at the museum which require financial support – and the Society is grateful for funding from several other recent sources. The construction of the handicap ramp and alterations to the front porch to make it handicap accessible were accomplished in large part due to funding through the Community Development Block Grant Program. Other support for repairs and renovations includes a \$7,500 grant from the Historical Facilities Grant Program, which is a collaborative effort of the Maine State Archives and Maine State Museum with financial support from the state's New Century Community Program.

We hope that our readers might consider lending their own helping hand at this time. The society and its museum are open to the public for free, due to the financial support of members who pay annual dues. With annual dues of only \$15 per person, this is a very affordable way to become a member and show your support of the society and its efforts to preserve and exhibit South Portland's history. If you can help, please make your check payable to South Portland Historical Society and mail or drop off to us at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland, ME 04106. To reach Bug Light Park, take Broadway east to the ocean, then take a left at the stop sign and your next right onto Madison Street that leads into the park. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you soon!

08-07-09 Knightville, circa 1975



Our thanks goes to historical society member Ron Jenkins for sending in these snapshots of Knightville from around 1975. It's great to have a chance to look back and see both sides of the street at that time. As you were driving toward the Million Dollar Bridge, on your left you could see the Legion Square Florist shop on the corner of D Street, and on the building next door, you can make out the barber pole for Bob's Barber Shop at 77 Ocean Street. The long-running Bridgeway Restaurant had already been at its location here for about a quarter century by the time this photo was taken. I also

love the glimpse of another piece of history that is fading in our new age of cellular phones – you can see the phone booth peeking out from between the two buildings.

If you have some nostalgic photos of South Portland to share with us, please contact the South Portland Historical Society at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland, ME 04106, or by email at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.



07-31-09 South Portland Rollerdrome



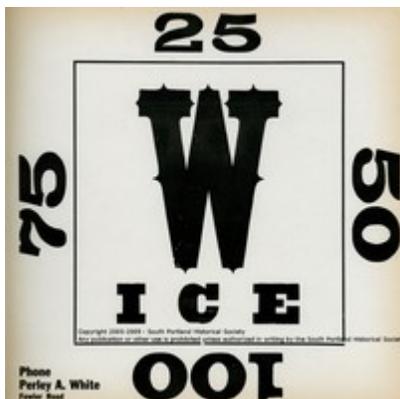
The historical society recently obtained this photograph that is sure to be very nostalgic for many residents. This is one of those places that seem like not long ago for many of us, but a place where few ever thought to bring a camera. The South Portland Rollerdrome was located on Thadeus Street in the Brown's Hill area of South Portland – the street runs off of Strout Street. The Rollerdrome opened circa 1955 and was owned by William Faulkingham from Gardiner. The roller skating rink was a fun recreation spot in the neighborhood for about 25 years. I still remember skating there in the 1970s – listening

to songs like "Dancing Queen" by ABBA. Around 1979, the Rollerdrome changed its name to Happy

Wheels for about a year; the Happy Wheels Skate Center at 331 Warren Avenue had already been in operation for many years by that time. After our roller rink closed on Thadeus Street around 1980, the new Happy Wheels Skate Center opened on Payne Road in Scarborough, but that location is now gone, too.

The building on Thadeus Street has had several occupants since the Rollerdrome closed, among them: Jacobson Auto Supply from roughly 1982 to 1984; Harbor Parties, a Tupperware sales rep company, from 1984 to 1998; and Wordwrap Service Corporation, a dealer of computers, equipment and furniture. If you have any photographs of the South Portland Rollerdrome, exterior or interior, we would love to hear from you. You can reach the historical society at its new home at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland, ME 04106, by phone at 347-4137, or sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.

07-24-09 Ice Delivery



An ice card from Perley White's ice delivery route in Cape Elizabeth

By Linda Eastman, President
South Portland Historical Society

Enjoying that cold drink during the warm days of summer? It wasn't always possible to keep cool by going to the refrigerator and taking out an iced tea or a frosty bottle of soda. Prior to the commercializing of the electrical refrigerator in the 1950s, food was kept cool by the use of small two-sectioned galvanized ice boxes. The availability of ice to keep the iceboxes cool was an absolute necessity. Blocks of ice were purchased and placed in the upper section of the icebox with the hope that it would keep the food stored in the lower compartment at least cool and free from spoilage for a few days.

Larry Greer, a South Portland native who grew up in Ferry Village, delighted me one morning in late winter by telling me of his experiences working for the City Ice & Coal Company, one of the last of numerous ice houses which proliferated the area prior to the advent of electrical refrigeration. Larry was 16 years old in 1945 when he was hired by Jake Lamport to work 8 hour shifts harvesting, storing and cutting ice during the cold winter months. The ice was harvested from what is referred to as Jake's Pond on Highland Avenue. Larry recalled helping to cut the ice into 400 pound blocks and guiding the blocks onto a mechanical device that pulled the ice into a three storied wooden building where the ice was covered with straw to slow melting. Later the huge ice blocks were cut into smaller pieces by chain saws. Come summer, Larry would transport the ice by truck to Portland where housewives and store keepers would indicate their need for ice delivery by placing a cardboard sign in their window. The work was hard and the days were long but Larry was happy to be able to put his youthful energy and strength to a profitable means. The downside, Larry laughingly recalled, was that his mother insisted that he wash the day's dust and hay chaff off before she would let him enter the house for supper!

07-17-09 Peoples Meat Market



The accompanying photograph of the Peoples Meat Market has been an enigma to us at the historical society, so I thought we'd run it here in the hopes that someone out there might either have a similar photograph or might recognize someone in the picture from their family photos. We aren't even sure that the store was located in South Portland, but we do believe there is a strong likelihood it was here. Regardless, it is a beautiful image to look at with the horse and carriage, the vintage clothing and the glimpse of an earlier time.

There are a few signs visible – one speaks of corned beef for sale,

another refers to the store as the "Peoples Market."

Of course, we have the Peoples Church that set up in Ferry Village in 1853. And also one of the ferry services between South Portland and Portland was the "People's Ferry Company" that incorporated in 1885 – and the founders of that ferry company included, among others, Charles Tilton, David Kincaid, Aurelius Cole, Frederick Harford, and Albert Spear – all names we recognize from store fronts in Ferry Village.

If you have any information to share that would help us to identify this photo, please either email us at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com or call us at 347-4137.

Sheraton Inn, continued

Last week, I ran a photo of the Sheraton Inn under construction with the comment that I was surprised that the photo was dated 1983. Several readers aptly responded that that could not have been the case – our first respondent was Jeffrey Wilson, and honorable mention goes to Gordon Day who replied that he had actually stayed at the hotel in August of 1977. Thank you to everyone for pointing that out – there were a series of three photographs of the construction and all had been identified as 1983. Either the pictures are of a major renovation, or they were incorrectly marked. So, for the record, I found the first listing of Sheraton Inn in 1974, along with an advertisement for the on-site restaurant, Dunfey's...the advertisement referred to the hotel as the "new" Sheraton Inn. Another interesting note, the original address was 363 Payne Road as the road was not renamed to Maine Mall Road until a few years later.

07-10-09 Sheraton Inn



The Maine Mall itself isn't all that old – the first store, Jordan Marsh, opened in 1969 and then the Maine Mall itself opened in 1971 with about 50 stores. So I thought the accompanying photograph was very interesting. It is surprising to me that this photo is from just 1983 – it shows the construction of the Sheraton Inn. The hotel has now become the Wyndham Portland Airport Hotel. It is a good example of how fast things can change. Since the time it opened, the Maine Mall has been changing every year with stores opening and closing as society and economies change.

Museum Opening

The South Portland Historical Society had a soft opening of its new home at Bug Light Park on July 4th! A large crowd gathered on the beautiful sunny day to hear Benjamin Franklin read the Declaration of Independence from the front porch of the museum -our sincere thanks to John Kierstead for delivering such a fine performance for South Portland! He captured the spirit of Mr. Franklin and put us all in the spirit of the day.

While there is still a lot to be done at the Cushing's Point House, we are excited that the community can now come in and see the museum and gift shop as the work progresses - admission to the museum is free. For the summer, we will be open each day by chance or by appointment, as we start to work with volunteers and develop some regular hours. Watch for our flag to be flying from the front porch when we are open. We will plan for a grand opening next year after the work is completed on the house and surrounding grounds. For now, please excuse our construction and stop by for a visit! You can still reach us by phone at 347-4137, but our mailing address has changed to 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland ME 04106.

07-03-09 Harold Thompson and Class of 1930 Football



The accompanying vintage photo of a South Portland High School football team comes to us courtesy of Brian Boggia. Pictured in the front row center hovering over the football is Brian's uncle, Harold Thompson. Harold Thompson (1910-1984) was in the class of 1930 at South Portland High School. He later worked in the shipyards here in South Portland as well as other shipyards around the country. Brian wrote to us of his uncle, "He was also an artist and did many landscapes of South Portland and the Willard Beach area. His father Francis Thompson made stained glass that decorated many Portland

commercial buildings."

We would love to see one of Harold Thompson's paintings and hope that perhaps someone locally might still have one. Please contact the Society at 347-4137 if you can help.

July 4th South Portland

Don't forget to come and celebrate the 4th with the historical society at its new home at Bug Light Park! Events start at noon when Benjamin Franklin will join us and get us in the spirit of the day with a reading of the Declaration of Independence from the front porch of the museum. After the reading, volunteers will be selling hot dogs, hamburgers, drinks and other treats as a fundraiser for the historical society. This is a family event, with crafts and old fashioned games for kids. Hope to see you there!

06-26-09 Celebration: 4th of July South Portland



By David Rooker, board member and event chairperson,
South Portland Historical Society

On July 4th, the South Portland Historical Society will host **4th of July South Portland**, a family fun event at Bug Light Park. Events will kick-off at noon with a reading of the Declaration of Independence by Benjamin Franklin at the Cushing's Point House Museum. After the reading we'll have games and a crafts table for children. Hot dogs, hamburgers, snacks, and cold drinks will be available for purchase with proceeds to benefit the Society's new home. Come have some fun, some food, and learn about the Society. Afterward, get a good spot to watch the fireworks! You can reach us by car, by boat, by bicycle or by foot – you can even take advantage of South Portland's Greenbelt Walkway to reach the park. We look forward to making fun times at Bug Light Park part of your family's July 4th holiday tradition in South Portland for years and generations to come.

For more information, call the Society at 347-4137, visit www.sphistory.org, or if you are on Facebook, please visit and join the South Portland Historical Society group page for updated information.

06-19-09 Moran's Cash Market



The accompanying photograph, taken in 1957, shows a rare glimpse of one of South Portland's early neighborhood stores. Mrs. Delia Moran started this store at 1597 Broadway circa 1938 when the building was moved and set down on this site. The Moran family ran the store into the late 1950s, then Fred Ganem took over the store and changed its name to Freddie's Variety Store. Many other stores have operated from this location over the years, including Hatt's Cash Superette, Pooler's Variety, Rick's Variety, Phil's Variety, Hungry's, Folland's Variety, and Mum's Variety. It is hard to find photographs like this, as most people head to the corner store with

their wallet, not their camera.

If you have snapshots of old businesses in your neighborhood, the society would love to hear from you! Please call us at 347-4137 or email to sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.

The South Portland Historical Society will once again be hosting a 4th of July South Portland celebration – this year we will be holding the event at our new home in Bug Light Park. More information to come! If you could help out as a volunteer on July 4th, please contact Linda at 799-3937.

06-12-09 Summer Days



This is a great time of year when the kids are once again getting ready for the long lazy days of summer. The accompanying photo shows what Willard Beach-goers used to see – the line of fish houses at Fishermen's Point. Luckily there still are a few of those fishing shacks left, reminiscent of the time when Willard Beach was a fisherman's beach and many of the houses in the Willard neighborhood were home to fishermen and lobstermen. There still are a few there even today. We've seen a tremendous change in the Willard area in the past decade or so, though, as some of the older, more modest homes have been replaced by larger and, what would have been a huge surprise to the fishermen of days long ago, sometimes million-dollar homes.

Office hours are changing! The South Portland Historical Society's office in City Hall will have its last open hours on Wednesday, June 17th from 10am to noon. After that date, we will only be open by appointment – call 347-4137 or email sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com. Thanks to our tremendous membership, our business donors, and many grantors, the Society will be moving to its new home at Bug Light Park this summer!

06-05-09 Helping to Make History



Rufus Deering arrived last week with a donation of CorrectDeck for the historical society.

As I hope readers know by now, the South Portland Historical Society has been working hard to open its new home at Bug Light Park. Starting with the donation of the Cushing's Point House in January by Portland Pipe Line Corporation, each month has brought the Society closer to its goal. The building was moved in February and the foundation was completed in April. I thought this would be a good time to let readers know of the many businesses who are helping to make this possible.

From small donations to large, every business that is stepping up with assistance is playing its own part in helping to make history. We heard from A-Best Windows early on that they would be willing to supply and install our basement windows. By the time this column appears, those windows should be installed and looking great!

Two other very generous donors include Maine Paint Service and Sherwin Williams. Both have agreed to supply all the paint that is needed to get our new home in shape. Sherwin Williams is covering all the paint needed for the exterior – trim, windows, railings, etc. – and Maine Paint Service is providing all the paint needed for the interior – to paint out the rooms on the first and second floors.

When it comes to construction needs, the list of supplies needed continues to grow. A significant donor is Rufus Deering Lumber. In addition to supplying pressure treated lumber, Rufus Deering has donated all the decking needed to cover the porches and handicap ramp. We are so thrilled that the decking is CorrectDeck – a composite lumber that is made in Maine and that comes in a finish color so it will not need to be painted or stained down the road! This is a low-maintenance option and the material was recommended to us by AlphaOne as the best choice due to its non-skid, wood-grained construction.

When we found a need for concrete, Dragon Products answered our call for help. When we realized we had a lot of construction debris, Troiano's Waste Services arrived with a 30 yard dumpster to help us dispose of it. Tim Napolitano from T.A. Napolitano Electrical has volunteered to help the Society with its electrical work as we get ready to turn on the power.



Dragon Products delivers a load of concrete to the historical society building at Bug Light Park

It is heartwarming to see the support of the business community as we prepare to open this building to

the public. These are not easy times to make donations, and the Society sends a huge thank you to everyone who is helping to make this permanent home and museum possible. We are still looking for help with our plumbing and heating needs. If you would like to lend a hand, the Society can be reached at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com or by phone at 347-4137.

05-29-09 Summer in Maine 2009 Online Auction – May 31-June 6



It's time for the South Portland Historical Society's annual **Summer in Maine Auction!** With a huge variety of summer treats, this year's auction presents the best that Maine has to offer – it's a great way to get some great ideas of fun things to do with family and friends in Maine, and your winning bids go to support your local historical society in its new home at Bug Light Park. With cruises, museum passes, amusement park tickets, restaurant gift certificates, hotel stays, golf outings and more, the Summer in Maine Online Auction has something for everyone. To bid on the auction, go to the Society's special auction website at www.SummerInMaineAuction.com, and link to the exciting auction items.

A sampling of our generous returning auction donors include Aquaboggan, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, Eagle Island Cruises, Casco Bay Lines, the Songo River Queen, the Amtrak Downeaster, York's Wild Animal Kingdom, Palace Playland, and the Theater at Monmouth. There are also many new donors to this year's auction, including: the Maine Eastern Railroad, Maine Wildlife Park, Willowbrook Village Museum, Maine Narrow Gauge Railway, and the American Lung Association golf card. There are also some great unique summer vacation ideas, like a vacation stay at a lakeside cabin, a lobster boat trip to a Maine lighthouse, or even a professional landscape consultation.

The Summer in Maine Auction is a great way for Maine businesses and organizations to support our efforts while getting the word out about the great adventures that Maine has to offer. This auction is all about "local" - featuring items symbolic of summertime in Maine. Golf, cruises, hotel stays, dining out, family adventures – the fun stuff that makes Maine a true vacationland!

We hope you'll check out the auction and consider bidding on some of these great items, whether for yourself, your family, or as a gift (Father's Day is right around the corner). You can check out the site at www.SummerInMaineAuction.com. The auction will go live on Sunday, May 31st and will run until the bidding closes on Saturday, June 6th. All proceeds benefit the South Portland Historical Society. For more information, call 347-4137 or email to sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.

05-22-09 Dr. Messer's Sanatorium



Linda Eastman
President of the South Portland Historical Society

Were you to be living or visiting in the South Portland area a hundred years ago and found yourself to be afflicted with a "cancer, tumor, or other abnormal growth", Dr. Marion S. Messer of Elm Street in Pleasantdale held the promise of a cure. Dr. Messer's Sanatorium, located on the corner of Robinson Street and Elm, was a private

institution run by the physician and surgeon who boasted many years of experience in the treatment of cancer without the use of the knife. Dr. Messer offered his services for up to 30 patients at any time in his large home at 201 Elm Street, which was said to be elegantly fitted with all the necessary conveniences that promised the comforts of home, including a fine view of the city and the harbor.

While Dr. Messer and his promise of a knife-less cancer cure is long gone, the building that once housed his hospital still stands today in Pleasantdale. Converted into apartments, the building still resembles the beautiful home shown in the picture.

05-15-09 Hillside Market



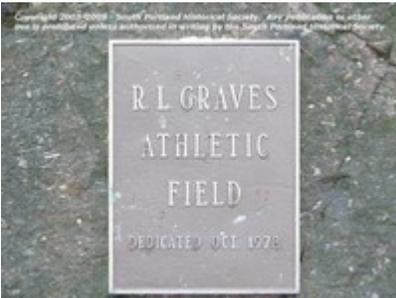
Here is a great, clear image of the Hillside Red & White Market on Cottage Road that I'll bet many readers remember. The store was originally opened in the late 1930s by George Standley. By the time this photo was taken in July, 1949, the business had been bought by Sooren Mardigan. Sooren's son, Ed Mardigan, took over the store in 1962 and ran it until the mid-1970s. Cherished Possessions has been operating from this same building since 1986.

Prior to 1970, South Portland had small neighborhood grocers throughout the city. Thinking just of the small grocers who were affiliated with the Red & White label, these stores come to mind: the Cape Red & White on Cottage Road, Hillside Red & White, Pleasantdale Red & White on Broadway, Goodwin's Red & White on Nelson Road, Perry's Red & White at Cash Corner and the Redbank Red & White. There were also many other small grocers in South Portland affiliated with A&P, IGA and others.

Volunteers

Volunteering is a powerful and rewarding activity! Would you consider becoming a volunteer for the South Portland Historical Society? As we are coming ever nearer to summer and the time of opening our new museum, the Society is starting to develop a group of volunteers to help keep our building open to the public. We will need people to serve as history docents (we will train!), run our gift shop, help with our collections, assist with our 4th of July celebration, and even some people to help take care of the outside gardens and grounds. If you can help us out with a few hours a week or a month, it would be a huge help and will go a long way toward making this a South Portland history museum to be proud of. Please let us know if you can help by contacting us at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com or call us at 347-4137. Thank you!

05-08-09 R.L Graves Field



Guest columnist: Craig Skelton, member, South Portland Historical Society

South Portland has so many gems like Hinckley Park, Willard Beach and Bug Light Park. The campus at Southern Maine Community College on the former site of Fort Preble is one of those gems, offers more than you can imagine and is a must-see. The Community College has existed for a little more than 50 years yet that location offers layers of history to uncover. As you pass by the baseball field looking out from Fort Road beyond Willard Beach to Portland Harbor,

you may notice the marker dedicating that field to R. L. Graves.

Romulus L. Graves was one of the original Vo-Tech instructors at

a school in Augusta. The Vo-Tech School was created after World War II and the students were made up of recently discharged veterans. The school was started on a shoe string budget based on contingency funds from Governor Horace Hildreth and was moved from Augusta in 1952 to establish a school on the former site of Fort Preble in South Portland.

After World War II the military installation fell into disrepair. Early days of the school upon this location were described as difficult and students and faculty repeatedly made up for a lack of funds. Many stories indicate it required ingenuity and determination to keep the school from closing for lack of funds.



Without funding, Mr. Graves and the teachers from the original school moved everything including machinery and equipment to the new location. Prior to moving into the building that became his classroom, Mr. Graves had to cut down a tree that had grown up in the entryway. The buildings were in tough shape and he and his students



rejuvenated the entire electrical system. Rom Graves loved sports and one favorite story that illustrates his ingenuity and determination involved the creation of baseball bats. As the story is told, a student donated an ash tree which he and Mr. Graves cut down together. Then Rom Graves fashioned a template and turned out 30 bats which he hand-finished for use by the school baseball team.

R. L. Graves played an important role throughout the early years of Southern Maine Community College and the ad-hoc committee formed to name the athletic field on Fort Road believed that his contribution went beyond that of being an instructor and mentor and

warranted recognition.

I would like to thank my friend Marie Chenevert at the South Portland Public Library. Marie has helped with research for numerous articles on monuments and markers some of which did not give up their story easily.

05-01-09 SoPo School Kids Making a Difference



Skillin School - The Society would like to thank the students at Skillin School who helped in a clean-up project at Wescott Cemetery a few weeks ago. In addition to raking and bagging leaves, and cleaning up the various branches and limbs that had come down over the winter, the kids had a chance to learn a little about their neighborhood cemetery.

The Wescott family originally came to America from England in 1636 and they were among the earliest settlers of South Portland (back in the time when we were still part of the town of Falmouth); Richard Wescott came to own approximately 600 acres in the area that is now known as Thornton Heights. The little cemetery started as a family burial ground in 1811 and over time Wescott family members and neighbors came to be buried there. The little cemetery used to be toward the rear of the Dyke Farm property, but since the creation of Marcelle Avenue, the cemetery now fronts on that "new" street. Wescott Cemetery was vandalized in the 1970s and then abandoned. A group of Society volunteers started reclaiming the cemetery back in the fall of 2006 and, with the help of the city, the cemetery has come a long way since then and now is fenced with signage. In respect to Josiah Wescott, a Revolutionary War patriot buried there, the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution also participated in the cemetery's reclaiming, planting daffodil bulbs in the cemetery that will return each year. Our thanks again to the students at Skillin School who helped with this spring effort to clean up and maintain the cemetery.

Brown School - Another school group that we would like to thank is the 5th grade students at Frank I. Brown School. This incredible group of kids, including Mrs. Baker's and Ms. Kandoian's classes, raised money and purchased a class brick that will be engraved and installed on the grounds of the Cushing's Point House museum. Students raised the money for the donation themselves by doing chores at home. These kids have set a wonderful example for us all – they are living proof that anything is possible when we work hard and work together.

Mother's Day

The South Portland Historical Society has added new items to its museum gift shop – some of these items make great gift ideas for Mother's Day. The Society is now offering a line of bath/body products

“from yesteryear” – products made in Maine, crafted by hand, using old-fashioned recipes, traditional herbs and natural ingredients. To view these and other gift items, go to the Society’s online gift shop at www.sphistory.com, or call the Society at 347-4137 to arrange a time to view and/or purchase your items. Another great gift idea: purchase an engraved Society brick in honor of your mom! Ordering information is available on the website.

04-24-09 Willard School Demolition



We would like to thank Jan Malcom for her donation of the accompanying photo to the historical society. It is a tremendous moment-in-time image capture of the demolition in August, 1978, of the Willard School which used to be located in the triangle between Cottage Road, Pillsbury Street and Davis Street.

Cushing’s Point House update

Thinking of brick buildings, the work on the Society’s new home – the Cushing’s Point House at Bug Light Park – continues. The building’s foundation was recently completed and the building was lowered and attached. There is still a lot of work ahead, but the project is moving along at a good pace. The Society would like to open the doors to the public this summer.

You can help be a part of opening the Cushing’s Point House, by purchasing an engraved brick which will be installed in a walkway on the museum grounds. The Society is offering two sizes, a traditional 4x8 brick for \$100 or a larger 8x8 brick for \$250. In addition to bricks for individuals and families, groups are encouraged to take part. Alumni might purchase a class brick, PTAs might purchase a school brick, or your business might appreciate the longevity of a business name on a brick. Churches, sports teams, booster clubs or others – if you are proud of your group and proud of South Portland, we hope that you will be part of our museum walkway! For more information, visit www.sphistory.com or call Linda at 799-3937.

04-17-09 SPHS Boys Basketball in 1928 – Part Two



Guest columnist: Kenneth E. Jones, class of 1965, member South Portland Historical Society

The Capers’ 1927-1928 season was not over after winning the State Championship because they received an invitation to represent Maine in the University of Chicago’s National High School Invitational Tournament. The South Portland community raised the money for the trip from Portland to Chicago, with important contributions coming from many businesses, individuals, and even surrounding communities.

On April 1, the team left by bus from South Portland High School to Union Station in Portland. Several hundred people came to see the send-off. In the accompanying photo taken of the team at Union Station, notice how “dressed-up” teens of the 1920s looked compared to today’s styles!

After transferring to a west-bound train in Boston, the team relaxed for the continuous trip to Chicago. In western Massachusetts, the tracks go through the Hoosac Tunnel for almost a half mile. Not expecting the sudden darkness in mid-afternoon, the team was very surprised, and then embarrassed when other passengers laughed.

The team arrived in Chicago after nearly two days. The train meals were excellent, but a tired Jim Greeley, missing a lot of sleep, fell out of his chair, his food going to the floor, to the amusement of all. The team stayed at the Hotel Windermere. Teams from Bristol, CT, Rutland, VT, Utah, and an Indian team from New Mexico also stayed there.

In their first game, the Capers faced Mize, MS, a team with several very tall players. The Capers were ahead at half-time, but Mize won in the end because of their dominating height. This put the Capers in the losers’ bracket. They next played Wilmington, NC, but to the players it seemed that fouls were called

much more closely than they had ever seen, resulting in a loss.

After two losses, South Portland was out of the Tournament. A few players just wanted to head home, but enough money had been raised to cover the cost of being at the entire tournament. Before leaving Chicago, a Mrs. Emerson, formerly of South Portland, invited the team to a banquet at the hotel at her expense. The next day, her son drove one car and the only senior on the team, John Concannon, drove another of her cars since he was the one with the most driving experience on the team. They drove around the city all day to see the sights. Coach Gustafson decided to use the left-over money to visit all major cities between Chicago and New England to let his players learn more about our country. Instead of living and eating only on the train as they had done on the trip to Chicago, the team got off the train at each city and stayed overnight in a hotel. Detroit, Cleveland, and Buffalo were all visited for a full day, but at Niagara Falls the team spent two days seeing the falls from both sides of the border and other nearby attractions.

From Buffalo the team returned to Boston and transferred to the train for Portland. On the trip home to Union Station, the team chose next year's captain, Mel Rice. Because several phone calls were made or telegrams sent from Buffalo or Niagara Falls to contact people at home, a large crowd of people knew when to meet the train at Union Station for a parade through Portland to South Portland High School on Ocean Street. Despite the losses in Chicago, the team had memories to last a lifetime. The memories of the season in Maine and the trip to Chicago were passed on to younger generations of Capers!

[Photo caption: Capers pictured, left to right: William "Bill" Curran; William Anderson; Meldon "Mel" Rice; Lawrence "Mickey" Miller; Ellsworth "Dick" Davis; Robert Timberlake (manager); Elmer "Cappy" Johnson (team captain); Alfred "Al" Urbano; John "Quack" Concannon; Edwin Nelson; James "Jim" Greeley; and Coach Richard "Dick" Gustafson.

04-10-09 SPHS Boys Basketball in 1928 – Part One



Guest columnist: Kenneth E. Jones, class of 1965, member South Portland Historical Society

South Portland Boys High School Basketball was unequalled in Maine in the 1920s and early '30s: five Western Maine Championships and four State Championships (1922, 1928, 1929, and 1931). In 1926, South Portland won Western Maine and Bangor won Eastern Maine, but a State Championship game was not played that year.

However, the Capers (as SP teams were called until the 1950s) went beyond a State Championship in 1928 when they were invited to the National Boys High School Invitational Championship Tournament, put on by the University of Chicago. As far as can be determined, the 1928 team from South Portland was the only Maine team ever to participate in this prestigious tournament.

In the 1927-28 season in Western Maine, Portland was heavily favored to be the winner of the Bates Tournament (the equivalent of today's Western Maine Tournament). The University of Maine Tournament was the equivalent of today's Eastern Maine Tournament.

In a pre-season game against Caper Alumni from the past few years, the Alumni won decisively, but in the first regular season game against Biddeford, the Capers won 28-3 and confidence for the season returned for the team.

Portland won the mid-January game with the Capers at the Expo, with a huge crowd attending, 31-23. Late in the season South Portland faced Portland at the SP gym. The largest crowd to that date filled the gym to overflowing. The running track on the upper level of the gym was packed so that spectators on the walls could only see action on the far side of the gym. On the gym floor itself fans stood right up to the

out-of-bounds lines on each end, and all seats were taken early. The lead changed hands many times, but the Bulldogs won 21-17 and stayed undefeated. In both games with Portland, Caper freshman Bill Curran led in the scoring, and nearly brought his team to victory. At the end of the regular season, Curran had the second highest number of points scored in Western Maine for the season, quite an accomplishment for a freshman who went on to a spectacular career at SPHS and in college. He later returned to teach and coach at SPHS, but most of his career was as a teacher and coach at Cheverus, and then as Athletic Director there.

Late in the regular season, SP lost to Thornton Academy 13-18, but defeated Sanford in the last regular season game, 50-19. Then came the Bates Tournament in Lewiston for the Western Maine Championship. The Capers defeated Rockland 32-30 and Thornton 35-19. The Capers ended Portland's undefeated season 21-14. The next week the Capers defeated Bar Harbor in Bangor for the State Championship, 20-17.

At an assembly on March 23, 1928, of all students and teachers, and many parents, SPHS Principal George Beal honored the boys basketball team that had won trophies for winning the Bates Tournament and the State Championship. Coach Dick Gustafson and Team Captain Cappy Johnson presented the trophies to Principal Beal to be placed in the school's trophy cases. After lengthy applause, Principal Beal said that there was one more thing to announce. Only a few in the city knew what this final announcement was about. Mr. Beal informed the full auditorium that the South Portland boys basketball team's season was not over, because they had been invited to represent the State of Maine in the University of Chicago's National High School Invitational Basketball Tournament in early April. The audience managed their loudest cheering for this final announcement.

The team members: William Anderson (soph); John "Quack" Concannon (senior); William "Bill" Curran (fresh); Ellsworth "Dick" Davis (junior); James "Jim" Greeley (junior); Elmer "Cappy" Johnson (junior); Lawrence "Mickey" Miller (junior); Edwin Nelson (soph); Meldon "Mel" Rice (junior); Robert Timberlake (senior), manager; Alfred "Al" Urbano (junior).

Coach: Richard "Dick" Gustafson. Team Captain: Elmer "Cappy" Johnson.

04-03-09 Can you identify? A class at Brown School



Some photographs that come in to the Society arrive with little to no information on the people or places pictured. In the case of the accompanying photograph, we know only that this is a kindergarten class at Brown School and that the teacher is Mrs. Virginia Donovan. Mrs. Donovan taught at Brown School through the 1950s, '60s and into the '70s.

Do you know what year this class photo was taken and the names of any of the children pictured? We are sure that there must be some

South Portland residents out there who are in this photo. Please let us know if you can help identify anyone. The Society can be reached by email at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.

03-27-09 South Portland Historical Society - Lecture, April 1:

We hope that you will join us to learn about the problems in preserving videos, CD-ROMs and color photographs and what you can do to help preserve your family images and events. Are modern imaging methods better than the older processes that are still available? In many cases, the answer is "no." It is very important to museums, historical societies and families that are using these new methods to be aware of the problems that are inherent in each. Can you imagine the disappointment in displaying a beautiful color wedding photograph only to see it fading and shifting colors after only five years?

On Wednesday, April 1, David Mishkin will present "Modern Imaging Methods," a 45-minute lecture and slide show that discusses the longevity of video photography and why you should not use videos for preserving family or historic events. Mr. Mishkin will offer up the pros and cons of using digital imaging, cameras, printers and CD-ROMs for preserving images. He will also talk about the durability of color photography and what you can do to help prevent those color images from fading and briefly describe the proper storage methods for each medium.

The event will take place at the South Portland Public Library at 7pm. Free and open to the public. For more information, call 347-4137 or email sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.

03-20-09 Aladdin's Lamp



Our older residents will remember this building at 300 Main Street to be home to Lano's Restaurant from the 1950s to the mid-1970s. I remember this Cash Corner site in later years as the old Peking Gardens restaurant in the 1980s, then the Mandarin House in the 1990s and, after that restaurant closed, the building sat vacant for a long time before it was finally torn down to make way for the Pleasant Hill Auto business that now covers this spot. In between those periods, though, the building was the site of Cimino's Seafood Restaurant around 1975 and also, as shown in this 1977 photo, Aladdin's Lamp which specialized in Lebanese cuisine.

Unfortunately, the photos here are a bit out of focus to start with, and reproducing in the newspaper makes them grainier still. We would love to hear from anyone who has other Cash Corner photos to share. Please contact the Society at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.



03-13-09 This 'n' That Shop



Here's a classic photo of a business at 795 Broadway in earlier years – the area where Evergreen Credit Union is located today. The photograph comes from the Cora Shaw Simpson collection at the historical society. Going back to the early 1970s, the location was home to Braley's Sea Food Market from roughly 1971 to 1974 – Douglas Goodrich was listed as the proprietor of that business. Then the site become one of the locations of Genest Bakery from about 1975 to 1977 – Genest operated several of these bakery thrift shops, in Portland, South Portland and Scarborough.

Around 1977-1978, the business changed hands yet again, becoming "Faith and Tony's This 'n' That Shop." This was around the time that Kentucky Fried Chicken was in operation across the street. I lived close to this store, but have no memory of it so I'm glad that this picture exists. If anyone remembers this store, I'd love to hear from you!

After the This 'n' That Shop closed, Eugene Simpson operated South Portland Mopeds Sales and Service from this building, circa 1978-1979 (a business like that might do well in today's green world) and in the early 1980's, the site became home to AquaWorld, an aquarium shop.

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03-06-09 Matchbook Histories: The Marketplace Restaurant



About two weeks ago, I received a call from Janice Durand who wondered simply what the name of the restaurant used to be in the Jordan Marsh parking lot. A seemingly easy piece of information, I have been surprised in casual conversations with many long-time South Portlanders that the memory of that restaurant has faded, along with the other restaurants that pre-date what is now home to Pizza Hut Bistro at the Maine Mall.

The first store to open at the Maine Mall was Jordan Marsh in 1969; the Maine Mall itself was finally completed and opened in 1971 with about 50 stores – anchored by Jordan Marsh and Sears. Out in the Jordan Marsh parking lot was the Jordan Marsh Car Care Center and, in the early 1980s, the Marketplace Restaurant opened.

Although I have not been able to find a photograph of the Marketplace Restaurant, I did stumble upon the matchbook, shown here. When it comes to ephemera,

I've found that the matchbook can be a wonderful resource – sometimes showing a picture or drawing of a business, its logo and other pieces of information. This Marketplace matchbook indicates two locations – at the Maine Mall and also at Jordan Marsh in Bedford, NH. I had always thought the Marketplace Restaurant to have been affiliated with Jordan Marsh, but I'm not sure if that's just an assumption based on its vicinity to Jordan Marsh or not; I'd love to hear from anyone with firsthand knowledge of that. The Portland Directories show the restaurant in operation through the 1980s, but gone by 1989. Restaurant managers included Guy Streitburger and Jeffery Price. Later restaurants here were East Side Mario's in the 1990s – I loved their food, but the noise level was too loud for me – and then 99 Restaurant and Pub.



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02-27-09 Ray's Market



Images of old stores are among my favorites, especially those rare photos capturing the store owner standing out front or inside, but any time we run across a photo such as the accompanying, it is a treat. Store images are unusual because we don't generally bring cameras with us to the store. When was the last time you went shopping and stopped to take a picture of the store? A corner store can be many things to many people – a quick stop for milk, a loaf of bread, the candy counter. Stores can be the local hangout, where you hear the news about what's going on in your community. A good storekeeper will come to know customers by name, or maybe even know what

the customer prefers – pepperoni pizza, light cheese. Some stores build such a reputation that neighbors still talk about it 60 or 70 years later – I never went, but I'm told that Proco's in Ferry Village made the best Italians ever. I wish I had taken a picture of my childhood corner store in the 1970s, L & A Variety on Broadway, corner of Elm Street; I've never seen a photo of it and wonder if one even exists.

At right is a photo from the Cora Shaw Simpson collection showing Ray's Market, run by Ray and Helen Romano, at 71 Preble Street in the Ferry Village neighborhood. This was near the intersection of High Street. Ray's Market was only at this location for a few years during World War II; Ray became a welding instructor at the shipyard and, after Helen had a baby, they gave up the store. The store had previously

been run by the Lailer family – we ran a photo of the Lailer delivery wagon in the Sentry column on January 11, 2008.

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02-20-09 Leave Your Mark in History: Buy-a-Brick



Portland Pipe Line Corporation recently donated the Cushing's Point House to the South Portland Historical Society. Shown here from left to right: David Cyr (PPL), Kathy DiPhilippo (director, SP Historical), Marjorie Dawson (president, PPL), and Chris Gillies (PPL).

The South Portland Historical Society is on its way to opening at Bug Light Park! This is a tremendous collaborative effort which will result in a permanent home and museum to be enjoyed by current and future generations. As shown in the accompanying photo, Portland Pipe Line recently donated the Cushing's Point House to the Society; this past week, the building was moved successfully to its new home. The move was made possible in part through donations of in-kind services from Fairpoint Communications and Time Warner Cable; both companies had crews on site to move utility lines out of the move path.

Funding for this project has come from a large number of private foundations and grantors, businesses and individuals. A list of our founding supporters is updated on the historical society webpage on a regular basis. It is not too late to make a donation as a founding

member of the museum. Major donors will be recognized on a Founders Plaque that will be permanently mounted within the museum.

Another opportunity to support this effort is being offered through the Society's Buy-A-Brick fundraiser. Plans are underway to landscape the museum property with paved walks and flower gardens. You can support the Society and leave your mark in history for generations to come by purchasing a brick to be placed within a walkway on the museum grounds. A standard-size 4x8 engraved brick is just \$100 (three lines of type, 18 characters per line) and a larger 8x8 paver is being offered for \$250 (with six lines of engraving, 18 characters per line). The brick may be engraved as you wish, or in honor or memory of a loved one.

Complete details are available on the Society's web page – link to it through www.southportland.org. Or, simply send a check made payable to the South Portland Historical Society and write Buy-a-Brick on the subject line. Please include how you would like your brick to be engraved. FMI, call Linda at 767-7299.

02-13-09 The Cloyester



The Society is always on the lookout for brochures from South Portland's early lodging places. We recently came across an early brochure from the Cloyester in Loveitt's Field that we thought readers would enjoy.

"The Cloyester-By-The-Sea – a summer hotel, on the edge of the broad Atlantic. Thirty-five guest rooms. A large old New England fireplace in the reception room. A piazza 180 feet long, 9 feet wide around three

sides of the building, from any part of it are excellent views far out to sea, presenting the ever restless ocean in its many moods. Old fashioned hospitality and quietness make the Cloyester an ideal spot for a recreational vacation. Nearby walks along the beach or through pine shaded trails, bathing and fishing facilities add pleasure.”

The brochure goes on to highlight its cuisine: “Unsurpassed home cooking. Fresh, wholesome and appetizing meats, fowl and fish, with vegetables furnished daily from nearby farms. Served in varied menus cooked Maine style, satisfied appetites sharpened and stimulated by the bracing tonic of Maine’s air. Meals at The Cloyester are pleasant memories.”



The South Portland Lions Club has been a generous ongoing supporter of the South Portland Historical Society. In this February 2009 photo, Mike Cousins presents a check from the Lions Club for \$4,000. Accepting the donation on behalf of the Society is its president, Linda Eastman.

02-06-09 Solving Mysteries



One of the fun things about collecting and preserving history is the occasional investigative work that needs to go in to identifying photographs and artifacts. This week’s column is a case in point. The three accompanying postcard images all make reference to South Portland. Although the “Riverview” postcard says South Portland right on the front, we suspect it was a lodging house in Scarborough. The other two postcards indicate South Portland on the back, but we can not determine the locations.



Can



you help identify these images?

The Society can be reached by email at sphistoricalociety@maine.rr.com, or by phone at 767-7299. The Society’s research office in City Hall is open on Wednesdays from 10am to noon. We do follow the SP School Department calendar, so if there is no school due to snow or a holiday, our office will also be closed.

01-30-09 Pigs and Piggeries



Up until the mid-1900s, South Portland had a much larger agricultural base than most from our younger generations would remember. There were no limits on the number of residents owning chickens and chicken coops. Dairy farms were scattered about the City and milk men delivered milk from places like Howard Cotton’s on Evans Street, and the Dyke farm on Westbrook Street.

The accompanying photograph from 1952 has a great feel for a different time. On the far left in the photo is our own South Portlander, Bob Dyke, with his prize-winning pig. These boys were

given pigs as part of a project of the South Portland Kiwanis Club’s agricultural committee. Each boy was asked to fatten a pig for cash awards. In just seven months, Bob fattened his pig to 343 pounds to win the \$25 prize. The other boys participating were Robert Messer from South Portland, Richard Tash and Richard Sweetsir from Cape Elizabeth, and James Storey and Jasper Wiley from Scarborough.

South Portland has several areas known as “the Piggery” – these are areas which were once home to pig farms and, in some cases, so long ago that no one seems to know what pig farm. We do hear the story of

how the Maine Mall was built on a pig farm. That piggery was located roughly on the corner where Toys 'R Us is today. There is believed to have been two or three piggeries in that general vicinity, although not much information has been found about them.

Of course, Fickett's piggery on Highland Avenue is still remembered, but how many remember the piggery in the Dyer School area? Or the actual piggery that was once located in the area where Summit Terrace is today? Jeff Howe wrote to us and sent a map of "the Piggery" that was located across from Small School and ran down the hill to Virginia Avenue. He remembers sliding on a trail from the end of Summit Street to Virginia Ave. South Portland native Mike Eastman also remembers the Piggery there. He says, "I do remember sliding down the hill....I also remember picking a few blueberries there with my father when I was quite young. As I grew older, it was a good shortcut from where we lived on Stanford Street to the Cape Theater. Also someone tied some tow ropes to several of the high trees and naturally these were used as swings."

Do you have any photos that show South Portland's agricultural history? Please contact the South Portland Historical Society at 767-7299, sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com

01-23-09 Stu Brown's Variety and the Maple Inn



The accompanying vintage postcard shows the early Maple Inn Dining Room and Filling Station at 851 Main Street. On the corner of New York Avenue, this site has been home to many businesses over the years. The Maple Inn was in business through the 1930s and into World War II. It was one of many lodging places along Route 1 – the trolley tracks in South Portland ended here.

Also shown here is a great piece of nostalgia – a glass ashtray from Stu Brown's Variety and Filling Station. Stu Brown was a South

Portland City Councillor,

as well as a member of the state legislature. He and his wife, Esther, ran this store on the corner from 1947 into the 1960s. The site is now home to Rolando's Refreshment & Redemption.

If you have a nostalgic item that you would be willing to donate, please contact the Society at 347-4137 or sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com. Any advertising piece from an old South Portland business would be of interest – an ashtray, a book of matches, a calendar, a receipt or any other item imprinted with a South Portland company logo. The Society's research office at City Hall is open on Wednesdays from 10am to noon, or by appointment.



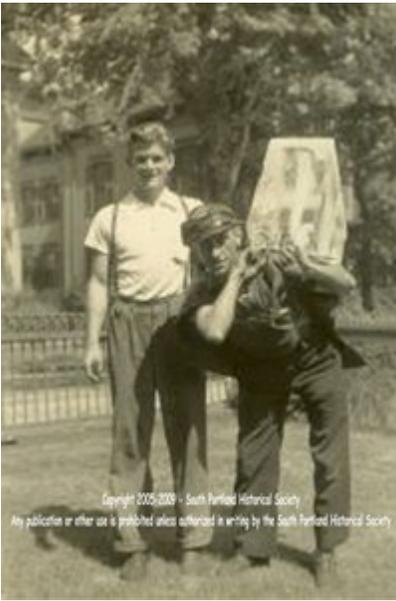
01-16-09 Downtown Ferry Village



The accompanying vintage postcard image shows our own Ferry Village circa 1910. This is the corner of Sawyer and High Streets, one of the busiest spots in South Portland at that time. The drug store on the corner that would later become Dow's Drugs was first run by Albert Thurrell – the sign hanging reads "A.E. Thurrell, Apothecary." The building has long been converted to apartments.

A regular sight at the time, the trolley car ran on tracks right down the middle of Sawyer Street. You can just make out on the left side of the photo the old movie theater building. When the theater was in operation as the Nordica Theatre, locals would come and enjoy the silent movies. In later years when "talkies" came to South Portland, the theater name changed to the Strand and then the Seville Theatre in the late 1930s. The theater was on the 2nd floor; on the first floor was the long-running Tilton's Hardware and, under the stairs to the theater, the much-loved Proco's sandwich shop.

01-09-09 the Days of Ice Delivery



The accompanying photo was more likely taken in Portland than South Portland, but ice delivery was a fact of life here in earlier days. Before the refrigerator came on the scene, families would have an ice box to keep their milk and other perishables chilled. A card was placed in the window to let the ice delivery man know what size block of ice was desired – when the ice man came by, he would chop the right-sized piece off from a larger block and carry it with ice tongs on his shoulder/back. In this photo, you can even see the rubber-type mat that the man has draped over his back like a cape to keep his clothes dry. The bent, “stooped” look was fairly common for an ice man.

Of course, kids loved to hang around when the ice man came on a summer day – eating ice chips from the wagon was a great way to keep cool.

If anyone has one of the old window cards that they would be willing to donate, please contact the Society at 347-4137 or sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com. The Society’s research office at City Hall is open on Wednesdays from 10am to noon, or by appointment.