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12-16-11 Cape O' Takeout Clam Shop in Knightville



The small building at the top of the photo, with three cars parked out front, is one of very few images existing that show this seasonal business.

This week's Window on the Past is a rare glimpse of the clam shop that was once located in the Knightville neighborhood of South Portland. The shop was situated right next to the Million Dollar Bridge. Society member Ron Jenkins remembers it in the 1950s, known as the Cape o'Takeout at that time. The very few people we've talked with who remember that shop all seem to remember the great clam cakes and French fries.

Because the clam shop was a seasonal business, very little information has survived through the years and very few people have any memory of it. We would love to talk with anyone who has

memories of it, and we would especially love to receive copies of any photographs that might exist. If you have any knowledge of this business, please contact the historical society at 767-7299, sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com, or at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland ME 04106.

If you would like to see the South Portland Historical Society's exhibit that covers the Knightville neighborhood, this is your last chance to do so. The Society's museum at Bug Light Park will be open on Saturday and Sunday, Dec 17 and 18, from 10am to 4pm. The museum closes for the season on Sunday and will be closed through April while we work on new exhibits for the 2012 season. Why not pick up a unique, local gift at the museum gift shop for that someone special on your gift list – proceeds from the gift shop go directly to support the museum.

12-09-11 Knightville Visions



Ellen Gould Harmon White

As the historical society's Knightville/Mill Creek exhibit is drawing to a close, we have another interesting historical note to mention relating to this neighborhood's past. Those who have lived in the Knightville neighborhood for any length of time have surely heard this piece of oral history that has been passed down through the generations. In December of 1844, a young Ellen Harmon met with four other women for a prayer meeting, in the building which now houses the Griffin Club. There, on the second floor, Ellen had a vision of the Advent people ascending to heaven, and of the second coming of Christ. Ellen would go on to become one of the founders of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, with her husband James White. She was a prolific author during her lifetime; she died in 1915.

Among the many things Ellen White wrote about was her vision in Knightville. This solidified the building at 62 Ocean Street as a "mecca" of sorts for some people in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. I have spoken with many residents who remember busloads of people coming to visit the site. At our Knightville oral history night last year, Michele Danois remembered how she and her friends would sell lemonade to the visitors back in the 1950s.

Note to readers: we are seeking your memories of the clam shop which operated in Knightville at the foot of the bridge in the 1950s. If you have any memories to share, please call us at 767-7299 or write to us at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com or on Facebook.

If you haven't come in this season to check out the Knightville/Mill Creek exhibit, you don't have much time left. The South Portland Historical Society's museum at Bug Light Park will be open on Saturdays and Sundays through December 18. We hope to see you!

11-18-11 Then and Now: 17 Ocean Street



This week's Window on the Past shows an apartment building that once stood in the Knightville neighborhood, at 17-19 Ocean Street. The 1936 historic photo shows the structure when it was owned by Samuel Bernstein. It's a delightful image – I love the architectural details of the building, plus we can see the great vintage automobile, the old-style fire alarm pull box on the corner, and the trolley tracks in the street that bring to mind the sights that could be seen by anyone sitting on those wide front steps. In the present-day photo showing the corner of Ocean and A Street, you see only a parking lot where the footprint of this building was located; however, the small one-story

masonry building behind it, at 33 A Street, is still there.

There are many old buildings in Knightville featured in the South Portland Historical Society's exhibit at its museum in Bug Light Park. Now that November is upon us, the Society's museum has changed its operating hours to weekends only. The museum will be open on Saturdays and Sundays, 1-4pm, through December 18. The Knightville/Mill Creek exhibit will only be on display through December 18, so if you haven't seen it already, plan a trip to the museum soon. That exhibit will be removed this winter to make way for a new exhibit featuring the Thornton Heights neighborhood.



11-11-11 Thornton Heights preservation event next Thursday



Thornton Heights School photo from Mary Marsh collection. An early image of the Thornton Heights School. The school was later renamed the Alice E. Sawyer School.

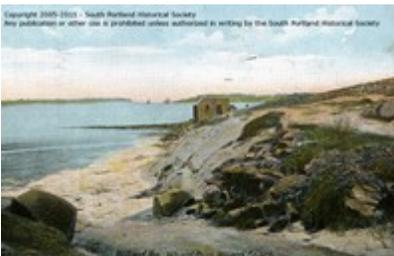
Do you remember Bennett's Ice Cream Bar, Taylor's Drug Store, or perhaps going to the Thornton Heights School? Did you ever see wild pigs in the woods at the back of Sunset Park? We want to talk with you! In another installment of the historical society's popular Evening Chat series, we will be meeting in the Council Chambers at City Hall at 6:30pm on Thursday, November 17 to talk about "Thornton Heights Memories". We will extend the boundaries of our discussion to include Sunset Park and Country Gardens, as well. For those less familiar with our neighborhoods, this is the area just west of Cash Corner, running down Main Street all the way to the Scarborough line, and the neighborhoods alongside Westbrook Street from Main Street to Broadway.

Evening Chats are oral history programs that are open to the public and which are filmed by South Portland Community Television for preservation. The program is intended to preserve memories and oral history related to this neighborhood, and also to help the Society prepare for mounting a new exhibit in the museum in 2012.

We will begin the Chat promptly at 6:30pm with a short slide show of historic photographs of the area. Participants will then be invited to participate in a round table discussion and/or just listen in to learn more about one of South Portland's neighborhoods. The program is later edited and aired on SPC-TV.

If you have ever lived or worked in Thornton Heights, we hope that you will join us. Also, if you know of someone who has lived in the neighborhood for many, many years, we hope that you will help us get the word to them about this important preservation event. We also continue to seek old photographs and artifacts related to Thornton Heights and surrounding neighborhoods; please contact us at 767-7299 before the meeting if you have photos to share so that we can incorporate them into the slide show so that everyone can see them. If you want to keep your original photos, we can simply scan the images to include them.

10-28-11 A Willard Ghost Sighting



When Halloween comes around each year, we usually receive several calls and emails at the historical society from people interested in any past reports of ghost sightings or house hauntings in South Portland. Of course, one of the more famous ghost stories in this area is that of the ghost bride, Lydia Carver. The story is a tragic one – Lydia Carver sailed to Boston in 1807 to buy her wedding trousseau. On her way sailing home, the schooner she was on was wrecked off the coast of Cape Elizabeth, close to Richmond Island. Lydia died in the shipwreck and was found on Crescent

Beach with her trunk nearby and her wedding dress folded inside. Lydia was buried in a small cemetery behind what is now the Inn by the Sea and there have been reportings by locals ever since of a "lady in white" seen around the inn and on Route 77.

The story of Lydia Carver came to mind when Glyn Williams wrote to us last year about a sighting that he had on Fisherman's Point at Willard Beach. Mr. Williams wrote quite eloquently about what started out as an ordinary trip to the point with his dog. While heading out the dirt path to the point, his dog stopped in its tracks and wouldn't move ~ as Williams turned to look, he glimpsed a woman standing next to the dog. In his words, "Here is what I saw for a brief moment: a lady dressed in white, a full-length skirt with lots of lace and matching hat. She looked Victorian to me; I could even see the omnipresent hat pin. Her white low-heeled shoes looked a little the worse for wear. An angelic smile beamed from below the brim on her hat. She seemed at home at the point. I felt for a moment that I had spoiled a special moment she was having. Perhaps she was at the point to greet a loved one on a ship that may never dock again... I have not seen her since that first glimpse, but like your first love, it is with you forever."

10-21-11 Peoples Meat Market



The South Portland Historical Society has been working with Mr. Harmon's 7th grade students at Mahoney Middle School on a local history project this fall. The students have learned how difficult it can sometimes be to research local history topics. Internet sites tend to be one of the first places to turn to, and most Internet sites have either very little information, incorrect data, or nothing at all. We've had a lot of fun looking into a variety of local topics and I'm hoping that some of the students will be reading this column to learn about one of the historical society's own research projects.

In 2009, we had been researching the accompanying photograph that is housed in the Society's archives and we hoped to find out where this old storefront was located. With "Peoples" in the name, we had wondered if the store might have been located in Ferry Village, especially with there being both a Peoples Church and the Peoples Ferry located in that village. Although we knew the photo was very old, we tried running it in the Sentry to see if there might be a reader who recognized either the store or the people in it from their own family photos. We weren't surprised to get no response and continued to hope that some further clue might arise.

While researching another site location in Knightville a few weeks ago, we finally came across a listing that we believe to be this Peoples Meat Market. In the 1895 through 1897 directories, Peoples Cash Meat Market is listed on Ocean Street (then called Main Street), on the corner of C Street. William Roche and John T. Young were both listed as agents for the store. We continue to seek additional information on this early business. If you have any information about this store, William Roche, or John T. Young, we would love to hear from you! The Society can be reached at 767-7299 or by mail or in person at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland, ME 04106.

10-07-11 Knightville/Mill Creek exhibit winding down



Our thanks goes out to Janet Romano who recently donated this lovely photograph of the Casco Bank & Trust branch office building in Knightville. The photo was taken in the 1930s; we suspect the bunting on the building was in celebration of the branch opening. In the early 1910s, George Calderwood used to run a small grocery on this corner, and in the mid 1920s, a small gas station was located close to the corner. This attractive building at 2 Cottage Road was built first to house the Fidelity Trust branch; Fidelity Trust was in operation here in the early 1930s. By the mid-1930s, Casco Bank had opened its branch and remained here for nearly 50 years.

The Casco Bank building is one of many landmark structures in the Knightville neighborhood. We hope that you have already come to the historical society's museum to see its 2011 exhibit that covers the Knightville and Mill Creek neighborhoods. If you haven't been in to see it yet, you'll want to plan to do so soon while the exhibit is still in place. The museum is currently open every day from 10am to 4pm. Starting in November, however, the museum will only be open on weekends through December 18 and then will close for the season. The Knightville/Mill Creek exhibit will be removed at the end of the season to make way for a new exhibit in 2012.

We have enjoyed exhibiting the history of Knightville/Mill Creek this year and we'd like to thank the exhibit sponsors for making it possible: Ainsworth, Thelin & Raftice, PA; Flynn & Company Real Estate; Noyes, Hall & Allen Insurance; and O'Hare Associates, CPAs. For more information , call the museum at 767-7299.

09-30-11 Goings on in South Portland in 1898



The South Portland Historical Society thanks the following individuals and businesses for their donations of time and/or materials for the sign at the museum: Ed DiPhilippo, Rick Angell, Art Gaffar, Robert Akers, New England Tech Air, H.H. Harris Co., American Steel Corp., Applicator Sales, Drillen Hardware, Sherwin Williams, Handyman Tool Rental, Dragon Concrete, and L.P. Murray.

The South Portland Historical Society has many scrapbooks of news clippings from long ago. Some of the interesting tidbits we glean from old news stories are not only the news of the day, but the language that was used. For example, in the late 1800s, people went out to eat at “dining rooms” rather than restaurants – and if you read that “a collation was enjoyed,” it meant that a light meal was served. Here is a sampling of stories from early 1898 that give us a glimpse of what was going on in South Portland.

From January 21, just after the Willard Casino had burned down, “Mr. M.W. Trefethen, the owner of the bowling alleys at Willard is considering the proposition of moving the building to the Ferry wharf vicinity near N.E. Gordon’s store and poolroom. It could be done very readily and at small expense and certainly the alleys will no longer pay now that the pavilion and casino are burned.” Also, another small item from the Willard neighborhood, “The hose boys extend thanks to the soldiers for their assistance at the fire.”

From January 28, “The members of the South Portland Cycle club are beginning to make arrangements for their fourth annual ball to occur next month.”

From February 4, “Mr. Trefethen has decided to move the bowling alleys from Willard to South Portland [Ferry Village] by floating around Fort Preble and Portland breakwater by means of rafts. The building will be placed upon Ferry wharf upon piles driven to receive it, and will also be lengthened to regulation size alleys.”

From May 20, “Quite a number visit the golf links [in Thornton Heights] every fair day, which are being improved by clearing away the running juniper which covered a great part of it.” Also from May 20, “Dr. F.I. Brown took a day off the first of the week and went on a gunning trip and bagged some game, adding to his reputation as a nimrod.” Nimrod was intended to mean “skilled hunter,” of course.

From May 27, “About 6:30 Monday morning, two employees of the Lovell bicycle factory were returning on their wheels to the city, and reaching the corner of ‘B’ and Main [Ocean] streets in Knightville, one of them knocked over a 7 year old boy, Eddie, the son of Mr. and Mrs. A.C. Haskell, who was unable to get out of their way (they were riding as usual so furiously) and the second wheelman rode over the neck of the prostrate lad...the boy appears now for a while with a black eye, and still the scorchers scorch down Main street.”

09-16-11 Thornton Heights Memories



Fall is almost here so it is time again for another installment of the South Portland Historical Society’s Evening Chat series. Evening Chat programs are designed to preserve oral history related to a specific theme. Our theme this year will be “Thornton Heights Memories” and we hope that current and former residents of Thornton Heights will turn out to share their memories of living, working and having fun in their neighborhood.

The Thornton Heights Evening Chat will be held on Thursday, November 17th at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers at South Portland

City Hall. We are announcing this early so that residents will save the date and help us to prepare for this event. The Thornton Heights neighborhood is located west of Cash Corner and, for this program, we will include all the way down Main Street to Sunset Park on the South Portland/Scarborough border, as well

as Westbrook Street from Main Street to Broadway, including Country Gardens. We hope to hear from participants about memories of Bennett's Ice Cream Bar, the Thornton Heights and Sawyer Schools, the A&W Restaurant, Howard Johnson's, the piggery behind Sunset Park, area farms, having milk delivered to your door by Ted Dyke or Lund's Dairy, and any other memories that come to mind.

During the Evening Chat program, we will start with a short slide show of historic photographs; participants will then gather in a round-table discussion about the neighborhood. In addition to preserving these memories for future generations, the historical society is also starting to research and plan for a special Thornton Heights exhibit to run at the museum during the 2012 season, so the memories shared may be incorporated into the new exhibit.

Evening Chat programs are produced with the assistance of South Portland Community Television; the program will be filmed for preservation and will be edited for later broadcast on SPC-TV's cable channel 2.

This week's historic photograph is shared with us thanks to Margaret Hawkins; in the photo, we see a wonderful street-level view of Taylor's Drug Store and the attached IGA grocery store on Main Street. If you have photographs of places and people in the Thornton Heights neighborhood, we would love to hear from you before the Evening Chat program so that we may incorporate your photos into the slide show program for everyone to enjoy. We would also like to hear from you if you know of a current or former long-time resident of the neighborhood who should be included in this event. Please contact the historical society at 767-7299, at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com, or in person at the museum in Bug Light Park.

09-09-11 The Davis Company ~ Motor Sales and Service



With the recent razing of the Angelone's Pizza building at the corner of Broadway and Ocean Street, there has been some interest expressed in the history of the site. In looking for a photograph of the gas station that used to be located in that building, I discovered that the street level photo in the historical society's collection is actually an early photo with a different building at that 225 Ocean Street address. Charles Prout started his service station at this location in 1924; the building, however, was noticeably different than the distinctive structure that most of us remember. In the early 1930s, the Prouts sold this station to Gulf Oil and continued their business down the street at 161 Ocean Street.

The gas station on the corner remained a Gulf station for many years, operated by many different proprietors over the years. At various times it was Romeo Blanchard's gas, Ken Cusker's Gas, Kaplan Auto Sales, Art's Gulf, Meserve's Gulf, Chaplin Motor, Davis Company, Donaldson & Young, and Preston Cole's Gulf, among others, before the gas station was vacated and then converted by John Angelone to Angelone's Pizza in 1969.

We are not exactly sure when the old gas station was replaced by the "new" white structure that became home to Angelone's for so many years. The accompanying photo was taken circa 1955 and we are very grateful to Richard Davis for coming to our aid by locating this terrific image in his family photo album. His father, Ellsworth Davis, operated the gas station as the Davis Company Motor Sales and Service for about six years, from roughly 1955 to 1961. Ellsworth Davis, SPHS Class of 1929, is shown on the left in the photo; to the right is mechanic Mal Carnrick.

If you have any additional information or photographs related to the gas stations on this corner or Angelone's Pizza, please contact the historical society at 767-7299, at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com, or come visit us at the museum at 55 Bug Light Park.

09-02-11 A 1960s view of Knightville and Mill Creek



To look at the Knightville/Mill Creek area today, it is hard to picture what that section of South Portland used to look like, so we are very thankful to Lloyd Reynolds at South Port Marine for sharing with us this historic 1960s aerial photograph that covers much of the neighborhood. This is a picture that has so much detail ~ for a person like me who loves historic photos, it's hard to stop looking.

Toward the left-middle of the image, the old Million Dollar Bridge comes across to South Portland and we can see the twin smoke stacks of the Cape Power Plant that used to blow its steam whistle at various times throughout the day. Just below the bridge on the left of the photo, we can see the west end of A through E Streets; you'll notice no Waterman Drive there and that's because Waterman Drive was built on filled land. Just below this area, trash used to be burned and pushed into the ocean (times have changed quite a bit).

Toward the bottom of the image, the Bowl-a-Rama is pictured. The field behind the building, now home to the Shaws shopping plaza and parking lot, was on several occasions the site of a traveling circus/carnival. The location of the carnival did change over the years. Some residents remember the circus being here ~ others remember it as taking place in the area toward where Bank of America and Wendy's are now located, which is just out of the scope of this photograph. Regardless of which location the circus/carnival was in any particular year, it certainly was a fond memory for many. Lynda Pietroforte remembers riding on a camel with her sister, and Nancy McKenney remembers riding on an elephant and a giant tortoise. Do you have any photos of family members enjoying a circus or carnival in South Portland? If so, please contact the Society at 767-7299.

Cutting diagonally across the photo from upper left to lower right is Ocean Street. The Masonic building in Legion Square is always a distinctive landmark on this street. Toward the lower right corner of the photo, we see the long building with surrounding parking lot – this was the First National Store. Directly across Ocean Street from that building is what looks like a residential home – in the 1960s, this is where Inness Photo was operating from. Prior to that, the home was where George Henry ran his funeral home and ambulance service. That house was torn down quite a few years ago now, and the site serves as parking for City Hall.

The Knightville/Mill Creek exhibit at the museum in Bug Light Park is being sponsored by the following: Ainsworth Thelin & Raftice, P.A.; O'Hare Associates, CPAs; Noyes Hall & Allen Insurance; and Flynn & Company Real Estate. The exhibit will be showing only through the 2011 season, so please plan to stop by to visit soon! The museum is open daily, 10am to 4pm, through October.

08-26-11 Historical Society looking for families of lighthouse keepers



One of the exhibits at the South Portland Historical Society's museum covers the histories of our city's two lighthouses: Spring Point Ledge Light and Portland Breakwater Light (known more commonly as Bug Light). We were visited at the museum this week by Skip Larrabee; Skip's father was Douglas Larrabee who served as a keeper at Spring Point Ledge Light from the early 1930s until 1942.

We found listings for Douglas Larrabee in the Portland Directories, showing him as assistant keeper at Spring Point from 1934 through 1936 when he was elevated to head keeper. He continued on as head keeper until 1942 and then moved on to service at the Isle of Shoals. Our thanks to Skip Larrabee for providing this photograph of his father in uniform. Although Larrabee is shown here in 1945 at the Isle of Shoals, this is not long after he left service in South Portland.

This visit was similar to a visit we received last year when one of Preston Marr's descendants arrived at the museum and, learning of our lighthouse exhibit, returned with photos and stories of Bug Light's last keeper and his family. We continue to hope that other lighthouse keepers' families and descendants will eventually find us, but we are hoping that our readers might help us in proactively seeking them out.

Some of the former keepers at Bug Light that we don't know much about, and who have last names that are familiar to many of us: W.A. Dyer, William Lee Willard, Benjamin Willard, Benjamin Walton, Levi Strout, Paul McKenna, Stephen Hubbard, Albus Angell, Parker Haley, and William Stetson. Spring Point Ledge Light is a newer lighthouse and had keepers into more recent years, so we're hoping some of these keepers' families might still live in the area: William Lane, Harris Grant, Frank Cotton, Charles Stanley, Otto and Gus Wilson, Daniel Doyle, Leroy Elwell, Ralph Norwood, and Joseph Bakken.

We would love to receive copies of photographs of any of the keepers at Spring Point and Bug Light and any other stories or information that families might have related to their service at our lighthouses. If you can help, please contact the Society at 767-7299, sphistoricalociety@maine.rr.com, or at the museum at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland, ME 04106.

08-19-11 Civil War soldier profile: Noah B. Knight



Noah B. Knight, shown in an undated newspaper clipping. According to the clipping, "The office shown is at the present time occupied by South Portland's city treasurer, and is in the Masonic Building in Knightville."

The historical society's museum at Bug Light Park is featuring an exhibit which describes our community's role in the American Civil War. Not many people have realized the significant role that South Portland (then known as Cape Elizabeth) played during the war. A major military center at the time, our community was host to soldiers mustering in and training for the Union Army at Camp Abraham Lincoln in our Ligonias neighborhood. Soldiers were also actively serving at Fort Preble, protecting our harbor and, in some interesting and unusual cases, holding prisoners at the fort.

Some wonderful artifacts are on display at the museum, including some of the personal effects of Noah B. Knight, a young man from Ferry Village who mustered into the 17th Maine Volunteer Infantry as a private in Captain Ellis Sawyer's Company E. The artifacts include items which Mr. Knight carried in his knapsack, including his toothbrush, razor, eating utensils, canteen and Bible. Knight was born in 1839 and at the time of his enlistment in August 1862 was reported to be 5 feet 7 inches tall, of light complexion with blue eyes and brown hair. A cooper at the time of his enlistment, he was also a painter and would later become South Portland's first town clerk in 1895 and continued on as our City Clerk until his death in 1901. Noah Knight and his family are buried at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in South Portland.

The museum at Bug Light Park is open daily from 10am to 4pm. Free admission. For more information, call 767-7299.

08-12-11 Fickett farm in Pleasantdale



This week's Window on the Past is another terrific glimpse at Pleasantdale before World War II. I am particularly pleased with this photograph as I have interviewed so many people over the years who remember the old Fickett farm in Pleasantdale and T-Ledge Stables, and there has been such a lack of photographs available to actually see what the landscape used to look like. Our historical society sends its thanks to Portland Pipe Line Corporation for allowing us to use this photograph from their files.

At the center of this circa-1941 photo is a line of pipe stretching across the field, as the Pipeline was preparing to develop its new property. The early 1940s was a time of rapid development in South

Portland as the shipyards were going into production. Even in this one section of the city, we saw farms and other open land developed into Broadview Park, Stanwood Park, and Mountain View Park, along with numerous other new homes built onto extensions of existing streets. Those residents who remember this area before WWII can attest to the dramatic changes brought to this landscape.

Above the line of pipe shown in the photo is the distinctive-looking Kaler School on Kelsey Street. This old Kaler School was torn down in 2002 to make way for the new Kaler School which opened in 2003.

Just to the right of Kaler School in the photo is the Robert D. Fickett homestead and barns. I remember talking with the late councilor Bob Fickett about his memories of going to his grandfather's farm there as a child. Mr. Fickett would ride his pony across the land that is now covered by South Portland High School, across Nutter Road and through a fence gate onto his grandfather's field. Robert D. Fickett raised cattle at his farm and occasionally residents along Kelsey Street would see him driving cattle up the street, across Broadway, and on up to the train tracks where they would be loaded on a train.

Also shown at the bottom of the photo is the back side of the T-Ledge Stables field, owned by Nell Barnes Knorr. As shown here, the T-Ledge property butted up to the Fickett field. These fields, along with the fields belonging to the Messer farm on Highland Avenue, the Nutter farm on Evans Street and many others provide an intriguing look at South Portland's farming past.

07-29-11 Then and Now: Cottage Road



In a wonderful glimpse of a moment in South Portland history, this March 1920 photo (at top left) shows a well-recognizable spot on Cottage Road at the top of Meeting House Hill. The South Portland Historical Society would like to thank Gail Lowell for donating this historic photo. In the image, a street sign for Vincent Street is clearly visible, so we know that this shows the corner of that street, looking down Cottage Road. Gail's family used to live in a house further down Cottage Road on the right, just before the building where DiPietro's Market is now located.

The accompanying photo (to the right) was taken this past week

showing that the building on the left has not changed much – it is now home to the Artascope Studios at 352 Cottage Road – the upper floor center window with the arch is clear in both photos.

The historic photo shows a group of workers from the Portland Railroad Company working on the trolley tracks on Cottage Road.



07-22-11 Civil War soldier profile: George F. Small



The new Civil War exhibit at the South Portland Historical Society's museum at Bug Light Park has been a continuous work-in-progress, and will continue to be so as we research and uncover more about our community's role in the American Civil War. At the start of the season, we opened the exhibit with a collection of artifacts which were some of the personal items of George Small which he had carried in his knapsack during the war. Some of those items include Small's engraved pocket watch, his wallet, cigar cutter, knife, fork, and a book of Bible quotes given to him by his mother when he left to muster into the Union Army.

George Frederick Small was born in Cape Elizabeth in May, 1840, and lived with his family in the Ferry Village neighborhood. Small mustered into the 17th Maine Volunteer Infantry on August 18, 1862, as a private in Captain Ellis Sawyer's Company E. During his service, he was promoted to Corporal, then to Sergeant, and finally to Orderly Sergeant. Small was wounded at Gettysburg, receiving a flesh wound to the left thigh; the bullet was extracted while on the field and he spent 94 days in a hospital during recovery. Small was wounded again at Locust Grove, VA, in the right shoulder. He received an honorable discharge in June 1865 due to the end of the

war.

A fisherman before the war, Small worked as an inspector at the U.S. Customs House in Portland after the war. He died in 1914 and is buried with his family at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in South Portland.

After the museum opened for the season with this exhibit, we were visited by Susan McClure, who is the great-granddaughter of George Small. Susan and her sister, Gail Lowell, donated both the accompanying photograph of Small and a document which has been passed down in the family which certifies Small's military service during the Civil War and provides additional details of his life.

We hope you will plan a visit to the historical society's museum this summer to see the exhibits and learn more about our community's history. The museum is open every day from 10am to 4pm. FMI, call 767-7299 or visit www.sphistory.org.

07-15-11 Historical Society planning trip to Gettysburg



Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution recently presented a check for \$5,000 to the South Portland Historical Society. The check marked the completion of the bank's total \$25,000 capital campaign contribution to the Society to help acquire the Cushing's Point House and open it as a museum in Bug Light Park. Shown from left to right are Saco & Biddeford's South Portland branch manager Melanie Lee, the historical society's president David Mishkin, and the society's director Kathy DiPhilippo.

In June of 1863 the American Civil War was in its third year. Along the Mississippi River, a Confederate army was surrounded in Vicksburg. In Virginia, another Confederate army under the command of General Robert E. Lee was heading north to invade Pennsylvania. The Union army was also on the move. The Union general, George Meade, was keeping his army between the Confederates and Washington D.C. Early in the morning on July 1, 1863, the armies clashed at Gettysburg. For three days the soldiers fought the bloodiest battle of the Civil War.

In the fall of 2012, the South Portland Historical Society would like to sponsor a trip to Gettysburg. This would be open to all members of the Society and to the general public. As planned, the trip would be by motor coach equipped with a restroom and a DVD player with video screens and WiFi. The trip is expected to be four nights and five days: one day in transit each way, with three days in the Gettysburg area. We would stay at reasonably-priced accommodations. Activities would include a narrated battlefield tour that focuses on Maine's contribution to the war and the battle, the visitor's center including its museum and Cyclorama, and other

nearby historical sites such as the Eisenhower Farm, the David Wills house where President Lincoln

finished writing the Gettysburg Address, and other local sites and museums. There would be time for shopping as well.

The exact dates are not yet set. We're working on costs now. For planning purposes, we're estimating \$600-\$700 per person for double occupancy, plus meals. If this sounds like something you're interested in, please contact us at 767-7299, or by email at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com, so we can gauge the interest in this exciting trip.

07-01-11 Fun in the Park at 4th of July South Portland



Summer is finally here and the time is now to make the most of each day in our beautiful Maine home. On the anniversary of our nation's birth, we hope that means that you'll come out and join with your friends and neighbors at *4th of July South Portland!* sponsored by the South Portland Historical Society at Bug Light Park.

It'll be a day of fun events at the park on Monday. The museum will open at 10am and, starting at 11am, we'll enjoy the high-energy bluegrass music provided by Tricky Britches – a Portland-based band that is just back from their promotional tour through the southeastern U.S. and Louisiana. You won't want to miss the great acoustic sound and harmonies that these string players put out – a modern fusion of bluegrass and folk rock. At 11:30am, there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new engraved brick walkway at the museum. This walkway is a great addition to the museum grounds and reading through the many honorary and memorial bricks is like taking a walk through South Portland's history, as well.

At 12 noon, we will be treated to what has become a highlight of 4th of July in South Portland – a reading of the Declaration of Independence by the honorable Benjamin Franklin. Brought back to

life by South Portland's own John Kierstead, Mr. Franklin provides a lively and energetic reading of the document that declared our independence from Great Britain in 1776. Listening to the original fiery words of patriotism is a great way to get into the spirit of the day and to remember why we celebrate the 4th of July each year.

<>

Throughout the day, the museum will be holding a barbecue fundraiser, serving up tasty hot dogs, hamburgers, sausage sandwiches, cold drinks and much more. It's great affordable fun to enjoy a picnic in the park! Proceeds from the barbecue go directly to the historical society and museum, to help keep the museum open with no admission charges.



Afternoon events will include games at 1:30pm – no electronic toys here – it will be old-fashioned fun like sack races and three-legged races. At 2pm, kids will have a chance to see a live lobster up close and learn more about these iconic Maine creatures at "Lobster Lore", a hands-on event offered by Weathervane Seafoods at the museum.

Bug Light Park is a gem in South Portland with its lighthouse, grassy expanse, and amazing views of Casco Bay and the islands. The windy point is considered an ideal spot for kite flying and is home base for many members of the NorEasters Kite Club. On any nice weekend, park-goers can usually find at least a few members of the club on hand with exquisite kites in fanciful forms like scuba divers, birds, or lobsters. On the 4th of July, club members will be bringing out their patriotic-themed kites to fill the sky.

The museum gift shop carries a wide variety of kites so you can join in the fun – come early for the best selection of red-white-and-blue, bald eagle and other patriotic kites.

Of course, at the end of the day Bug Light Park is one of the best vantage points to watch the fireworks. Bring a blanket, lay back and enjoy! FMI, call 767-7299.

06-24-11 A view of southern Pleasantdale, circa 1941

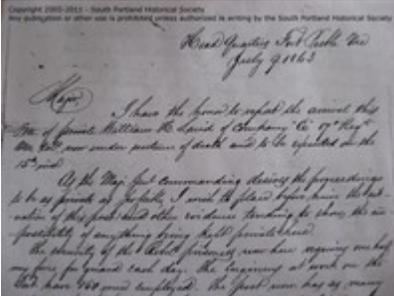


This week's Window on the Past looks at a large section of what was originally considered part of the neighborhood of Pleasantdale. Most people these days think of the Pleasantdale neighborhood as just the streets along and in the vicinity of Broadway, between Anthoine Street and Evans Street. Prior to World War II, however, the neighborhood included the area along Highland Avenue, as well.

In this incredible circa 1941 view, we see just how rural an area this was in earlier times. In the foreground is the Fickett field being prepared for the future tank farm between Hill Street and Nutter Road. The building in the front right corner is the old Evans Street School – Evans Street can be seen just beyond the stand of trees, heading up to its end at Highland Avenue. To the right of the corner of Evans and Highland is the huge field where cows used to graze – the field was developed during World War II into Stanwood Park.

Nutter Road is running horizontally at the center of the photograph. Between Nutter Road and Highland Avenue at the top of the photo is all of the land that is now home to the South Portland High School and Community Center. In this photo, we can see the Nutter farm and fields on the site. The field to the top left of the photo is where the high school tennis courts, parking lot and some athletic fields are today. Not long after this photo was taken, this land between Nutter Road and Highland Avenue became home to a temporary government housing site known as Mountain View Park.

06-17-11 Civil War Novelist to appear at museum Saturday



As we have continued to explore the history of our community in the time of the Civil War, one of the most tragic stories is that of Private William Laird. In 1862, Laird had mustered into service with the 17th Maine Volunteer Infantry and received his training at Camp Abraham Lincoln in the Ligonja area of what is now South Portland. In August 1862, he shipped out with the 17th Maine to the warfront to fight for the Union. After a few weeks, Laird was detached to an artillery battery, not even a Maine unit. This illiterate and mentally-challenged young man was uncomfortable in this different duty and among strangers who made fun of him, so he deserted on October 15th and headed home to Berwick, Maine.

The following year, he was arrested at his home, found guilty at a court-martial in Augusta, and sentenced to be executed at Fort Preble. Although appeals were made on his behalf and a stay of execution was actually signed by General Wool in New York City, there were draft riots taking place in New York at the time and the telegraph lines were down, thus the news of the stay did not reach Fort Preble in time for Private Laird.

Author Jean Flahive used this tragic story as the inspiration for her novel, *Billy Boy*. This Saturday, June 18, Ms. Flahive will be at the museum at Bug Light Park at 1pm to talk about Private Billy Laird and his tragic story. Books are available for sale in the museum gift shop. To reach the museum, take Broadway east to the ocean, then turn left on Breakwater Drive and right onto Madison Street that leads into the park. For more information, visit www.sphistory.org or call 767-7299.

06-10-11 Peary Village



Our Window on the Past photo this week comes to us courtesy of George Robisheaw and Mary Duncanson. We are so grateful that George and Mary came into the museum last week with an amazing find – photographs of Peary Village. During WWII, there was a tremendous shortage of housing in the Greater Portland area with an increasing number of incoming shipyard workers. One of the solutions that the government came up with was to set up temporary housing complexes consisting of barracks-style housing units. In South Portland, we had many instant neighborhoods spring up this way – Peary Village, Broadview Park, Mountain View Park, Cushing

Village, Long Creek Terrace and the Westbrook Street trailer park.

George and Mary's parents, John and Helen Robisheaw, moved their family into the Peary Village neighborhood that was located behind the old Lincoln School (now the Greater Portland Christian School). You can reach that area by driving down Peary Terrace. We are incredibly lucky that the family took some photos and saved them. Because the housing complex was there for such a short period of time, very few photographs exist to document its existence. In the accompanying photograph, we see a winter scene at Peary Village and a great view of how the housing units were laid out on the site.

If anyone has any additional photographs of Peary Village or any of the wartime housing developments in South Portland, please give us a call at 767-7299.

Summer in Maine Auction ends this weekend

It's not too late – get your last minute bids in at www.summerinmaineauction.com where you'll find tickets to amusement parks, museums, hotel stays, windjammer sails, whale watch and other harbor cruises, golfing, theater, restaurants and more. Nearly 100 items have been donated to the South Portland Historical Society's signature fundraiser, the Summer in Maine Auction. Auction proceeds support the society and its museum at Bug Light Park, which is now open for free, every day, from 10am to 4pm. FMI, call 767-7299.

Civil War author talk at museum on June 18

Jean Flahive, author of the historical novel *Billy Boy*, will be at the museum at Bug Light Park on Saturday, June 18, at 1pm, to talk about the Civil War soldier who was the inspiration for her novel, Private William Laird. Books are available for sale in the museum gift shop.

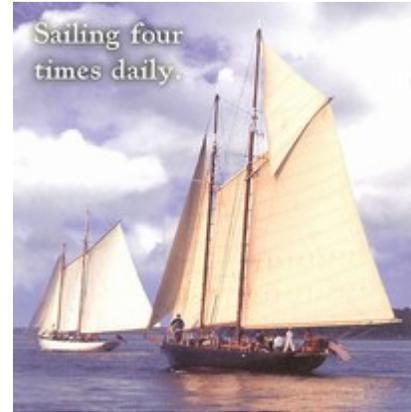
06-03-11 Summer in Maine Auction opens June 5



Ocean breezes, windjammer sails, heading to the lake, cruising out to an island – that's what summer in Maine is all about. The South Portland Historical Society is very excited that its signature fundraiser is finally here. The Summer in Maine Auction has grown over the past five years and has become the premier online auction featuring all the best that Maine has to offer. All items up for bid have been donated by the service providers, allowing all auction proceeds to go directly to benefit the historical society and its museum at Bug Light Park.

The auction website

can be found at www.SummerInMaineAuction.com. On Sunday, June 5th, the auction will go live and will run through June 11th. Auction-goers will be able to simply click the bid button to place a bid. Anyone spending time here in Maine in the summertime will be able to find great places to stay, excellent restaurants, cruises all along Maine's coast, museums, outdoor activities and more. You can bid on a five day vacation stay in a log home on a lake. Some of the many donors include Sebasco Harbor Resort, Downeast Duck, Amtrak Downeaster, Portland Sea Dogs, Aquaboggan, the Inn on Peaks Island, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, Portland Discovery, Downeast Windjammer Cruises, Maine State Music Theater, Village by the Sea, Spruce Point Inn & Spa, Robert Akers Photography, Victoria Mansion, Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine, Casco Bay Lines, Soma Massage & Wellness, Courtyard by Marriott,



Portland Schooner Company has donated a two-hour sail for two on one of its schooners, the Bagheera or the Wendameen.



McKernan Center, and Scratch Bakery. There are nearly 100 separate auction items up for bid.

Now that the donors have generously given these great vacation packages, the fundraiser is now in the hands of auction goers. Bid early ~ bid high! FMI on the auction, visit the website or call us with questions at 767-7299. Our thanks to the community for your continuing support of our historical society.

Update on the Eben Perry house

Our thanks to Ron Lussier for helping us find the Eben Perry house that was shown in the 1880 sketch that we ran a few weeks ago in the Sentry. Ron recognized the roof line and the set-back in the sketch and sent in this photo of the house at 889 Sawyer Street that is right next to the First Baptist Church. There have been many alterations to the home since Eben Perry and his wife lived there in the mid-1800s, but we were able to find an old map which confirmed it as the Perry house.



05-27-11 View of Main Street



This week's Window on the Past looks at a section of Main Street in 1910. Our thanks goes out to Wade Merritt for finding this and sending it in. Wade found this photograph in the 6th Annual Report of the Commissioner of Highways, State of Maine, 1910. In the photo we can clearly see a portion of Main Street headed north/east, and along the left side of the street we see some stones and monuments at the corner of old Calvary Cemetery. Off to the right side of the street is quite a sight – a big open field leading up to where you would now find Ridgeland Avenue and a large neighborhood full of homes.

The photo appeared because the state had planned to pave this section of Main Street, between Cash Corner and Vaughan's Bridge. After soliciting bids for paving, the state received bids from three contractors – but all were too high. According to the report, "As only six thousand one hundred dollars (\$6,100.00) was available for this improvement these bids were all rejected and the specifications were changed, substituting a gravel surface 24 feet wide in place of the

bituminous macadam surface....the contract was awarded to John W. Gulliver, the lowest bidder," for \$4,449.00.

Note to readers: The Summer in Maine Auction is coming soon. You can preview the auction now at www.summerinmaineauction.com. Live bidding on the auction will take place from June 5th through 11th. Auction proceeds will benefit the South Portland Historical Society and its museum at Bug Light Park.

05-20-11 Eben N. Perry



The accompanying sketch was found in an 1880 book covering the history of Cumberland County, Maine. We love to come across pieces like this as it inspires further research into our community's past. Eben N. Perry was a prominent man in South Portland (then known as Cape Elizabeth) back around the time of the Civil War. He moved to Cape Elizabeth in 1859 and after farming for two years, he was elected collector of the town and served in that capacity from 1861-1863. In 1864, he was Cape Elizabeth's collector and treasurer. During the Civil War, he served as the enrolling officer for Cape Elizabeth and Scarborough, and he was also appointed by the governor to be one of the State's general recruiting officers.

He served as deputy sheriff of Cumberland County from 1865-1869, and then was elected county sheriff and served in that position from 1869-1871. We found him listed in the 1866 Portland Directory as "deputy sheriff" with a house in Knightville, but it doesn't list a street address. In the 1869 Directory, he is listed as "sheriff" and his house is listed as the jail building – makes one wonder if he would take troublemakers home with him to watch over. There is a Perry family shown on an 1871 map on D Street, but the house in the sketch sets back too far to be on D Street. It certainly is intriguing – it looks more like the grand layout of the Mearn house that used to be on the property where Brown School is now located.

If anyone has any additional information about Mr. Perry, we'd love to hear from you. You can reach the historical society at 767-7299, or stop in to the museum at Bug Light Park which is now open every day from 10am to 4pm. We'll continue researching to see if we can find where his house once stood.

In other news, the historical society's annual fundraiser, the Summer in Maine Auction, is coming soon! You can preview auction items on our dedicated website, www.summerinmaineauction.com. The auction will go live on June 5th.

05-13-11 Lecture on Wednesday: South Portland during the Civil War



In this circa-1923 photograph, one of the old abandoned soldiers' barracks at Camp Berry is shown still standing. Men mustering into regiments at the camp during the Civil War would have either slept in one of these barracks, or in large tents that were set up on the campground in warmer months.

With 2011 marking the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War, there are historical societies and museums putting an increased focus on this traumatic period of America's history. At the South Portland Historical Society, we also have put considerable effort into recognizing the sesquicentennial, and using this time to increase our own understanding of the role that our community played in the war.

Maine provided a very high percentage of men who fought for the Union. With over half the population living in southern and western Maine, and the training camp for this area located in South Portland (then known as Cape Elizabeth), our community was a major center for military recruiting and training throughout the war. One of the most knowledgeable people about Maine's role in the Civil War is military historian Kenneth E. Thompson, Jr. Mr. Thompson has worked very closely with our historical society in developing the Civil

War exhibit at the museum this year. He will also be the guest lecturer at the Society's annual meeting next Wednesday, May 18, at the South Portland Community Center, at 6:30pm.

Camp Abraham Lincoln (later renamed Camp Berry) was the mustering in point for regiments like the 5th Maine and the 17th Maine. Indeed, Gen. Joshua Chamberlain and his famed 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry

mustered in here and received their training before heading to war. South Portland is also home to Fort Preble which was not only active during the Civil War, but had its own role to play in Maine's only direct conflict with the Confederates – prisoners from the *Caleb Cushing* affair were taken and held prisoner at the fort.

Lending his considerable expertise on the subject, Mr. Thompson will talk about the significant role that South Portland played during the Civil War. Thompson is also the author of several books related to the subject; books will be available for purchase at the event. Admission to the lecture is free for current members of the South Portland Historical Society; non-members may attend with a \$10 donation. FMI, call the Society at 767-7299.

Kite Festival on Saturday

The Bug Light Kite Festival is all set to take place on Saturday, May 14. The museum will open at 10am and the kites will be flying from 11am to 4pm, thanks to members of the Noreasters Kite Club and KONE (Kites Over New England). The lighthouse will also be open thanks to volunteers from the South Portland/Cape Elizabeth Rotary Club. Hot dogs, hamburgers, sausage sandwiches and more will be available at a barbecue at the museum. It'll be a day of old-fashioned fun – no batteries required! To find the park, take Broadway east to the ocean, then turn left onto Breakwater Drive, and then right on Madison Street that leads into the park. Rain date: May 15. If the weather is uncertain, call the museum at 767-7299 for more information.

05-06-11 Bug Light Kite Festival on May 14



It'll be a day of old-fashioned, kite-flying fun at Bug Light Park next Saturday, May 14th, at the second annual Bug Light Kite Festival! Members from the Noreasters Kite Club and KONE (Kites Over New England) will lend their expertise and offer many activities, including a "How to Fly a Kite" workshop, demonstrations of show kites, bol racing and a candy drop for the kids. The club will also have a kite hospital to help with kite assembly and fixes. Kites are available for purchase in the South Portland Historical Society's museum gift shop.

Because of its location on a breezy point on the ocean, and with no power lines to entangle a kite string, Bug Light Park is considered one of the premier destinations for kite flying in New England. Come enjoy the fun and unusual kites flown by the kite clubs. Club members have a terrific assortment of kites to choose from, such as the unusual Fugu kites shown in the accompanying photo from last year's festival. The festival will run most of the day, starting with the museum opening at 10am.

Plan to stay at the park for lunch and enjoy reasonably-priced hot dogs, hamburgers, drinks and more at the museum barbecue. Proceeds from the barbecue will benefit the historical society's museum, helping to keep the museum open with no admission charges.



Portland Breakwater Lighthouse (more commonly known as Bug Light) will be open to the public during the festival, as well, giving a rare chance to see the inside of the lighthouse, thanks to volunteers from the South Portland/Cape Elizabeth Rotary Club. The kite festival will run from 11am to 4pm. Rain date: Sunday, May 15. For more information, visit www.sphistory.org or call 767-7299.

04-29-11 Museum Opens for Season on May 2



The members and volunteers of the South Portland Historical Society are excited about the new season at the museum at Bug Light Park. There have been a lot of changes made in the museum over the winter to create new exhibits and to improve existing ones so that visitors can learn more about how our past ties in with American history and the interesting pieces of our past that make South Portland unique.

One of the new exhibits for 2011 covers the history of the Knightville neighborhood and Mill Creek. Residents can wax nostalgic about some of the old places like Uncle Andy's Bakery, the Bowl-a-Rama, Wellwoods, and many other places that were part of South Portland's downtown. The Knightville/Mill Creek exhibit is sponsored

by four businesses: Ainsworth, Thelin & Raftice, P.A.; Flynn & Company Real Estate; Noyes, Hall & Allen Insurance; and O'Hare Associates, CPAs. The historical society would like to thank these local businesses for their generous support and for making this exhibit possible.

With 2011 marking the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War, the museum also has a completely revamped exhibit covering the role that South Portland played during the war. With the help of several individual donors, two new collections of Civil War artifacts have been added to the Society's collections and will be exhibited this season. One collection consists of some of the personal belongings of Noah B. Knight, a young man from Ferry Village, who mustered into the 17th Maine and carried these items in his knapsack when he went south to fight for the Union. The second collection consists of the items of another 17th Maine soldier from Ferry Village carried in his knapsack; the George F. Small collection was donated to the historical society in memory of Howard B. Fleming, one of the founders of H.B. Fleming in South Portland. Mr. Fleming had a great appreciation for history, especially the Civil War.

The museum at 55 Bug Light Park opens on Monday, May 2nd and will be open daily, from 10am to 4pm, through the end of October. We encourage readers to come by for a visit! To reach the museum, take Broadway east to the ocean, then turn left onto Breakwater Drive, then right onto Madison Street that leads right into the park. FMI, call 767-7299.

04-22-11 Milk bottles come home to South Portland



When thinking of the changes that have occurred in American home life in the past century, one of the most remarkable changes is in how we obtain the food and products that we need. In earlier times, home delivery was the norm and most common, everyday items were delivered right to your door – produce, meat, bread, milk, juice, ice and fuel are some examples. In South Portland, more than 75 milk men and small local dairy farms have been documented. No matter which neighborhood you lived in, there was some small farm nearby where you could stop in to pick up a quart of milk if you couldn't wait for the milk man to come. In Ferry Village, you could head to Frank Prout's on Stanford Street or the Tripp's house on Broadway. If you lived on Anthoine Street, you could head up to Highland Avenue where you could walk left to Howard Knight's house, or right to the Pillsbury's farm.

While it can be hard to picture these early farms and farmers, and because few photographs exist, one of the remaining traces of these places from long ago can be found in milk bottles that still exist today. The South Portland Historical Society is very grateful to

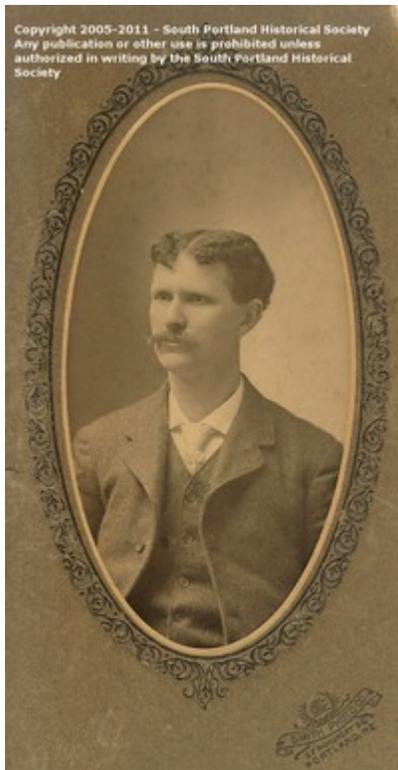
Robert Dyke for his recent donation of a large collection of milk bottles that will help to preserve the memories of many of these dairies. Mr. Dyke is the son of Ernest "Ted" Dyke who operated the Dyke Farm on Westbrook Street for many years. The farm was actually started by Robert's grandfather, Charles, who purchased the land in the early 1900s to become a market gardener, growing and selling produce. It was Ted Dyke who purchased the cows, milking equipment, and customers from the old Crosby's Dairy on outer Westbrook Street and turned his family farm into a dairy farm in the 1920s. The farm was in operation into the 1950s; the farm land was sold in 1956 and was later developed into the

Country Gardens neighborhood.

The collection of milk bottles donated by Mr. Dyke represents many of the dairies and milk dealers from South Portland's western side. Some of the bottles donated are known to be one of only a few left in existence, including a one quart bottle from the old Crosby's Dairy and a one quart bottle from the E.W. Dyke dairy. Other bottles include a one pint bottle from John M. Densmore's dairy on Payne Road (the farm site is now covered by a runway at the Portland Jetport), a one pint bottle from Fred J. Lund (the father of John Lund who operated Lund's Dairy in Thornton Heights), a half pint bottle from Charles Dean's Cloverdale Dairy on Main Street, and a pint bottle from John Burney's dairy on Broadway near Calvary Cemetery. Some other neighborhoods are represented as well, with bottles from Hand R. Dairy in Pleasantdale, Mrs. E. Connolly on outer Highland Avenue, and Fred R. Young in Ferry Village.

Our historical society continues to seek more information and artifacts from South Portland dairy farms and milk men. If you have any information to share, please contact the society at 767-7299. You may also contact us in person at the society's museum at Bug Light Park, which will be open daily from 10am to 4pm, starting Monday, May 2.

04-15-11 Identification of 19th Century Photographs



It is important for the owners of photographic collections to be able to correctly identify the photographic process by which they were made. Identification can be a valuable aid in ascertaining the date of a photograph that has no clue clearly evident in its pictorial image, and might help in identifying a relative in a family portrait or some other key element. From the standpoint of preservation, it is necessary to identify the process in order to understand how they deteriorate. For example, photographs on paper have different storage requirements and deteriorate differently than tintypes.

The South Portland Historical Society invites you to attend a program on Wednesday, April 20th at the South Portland Community Center at 6:30pm. Society president, David Mishkin, will present a lecture and slide show entitled **Identification of 19th Century Photographs**.

This 45-minute program will show the differences between a daguerreotype, tintype and ambrotype. Participants will see the differences in the photographic processes and learn when those processes

were popular. This lecture is designed for all levels, from beginner to advanced. Time will be allowed for questions at the end of the program. Admission to the lecture is free for current members of the South Portland Historical Society; non-members

may attend with a \$10 donation. FMI, call the Society at 767-7299.

Rotary Club of Breakwater Daybreak



In other news, the South Portland Historical Society recently accepted a donation of historical scrapbooks from Ted Richards, the historian of the Rotary Club of Breakwater Daybreak, South Portland-Cape Elizabeth. The club was formed in 2004 by Matt Griffiths, Shirley Mooers, and Susan Mooney. Acting as the club's historian since its inception, Mr. Richards prepared albums which provide a historic record of the club's activities and philanthropic efforts over the years. The Rotary Club of Breakwater Daybreak meets on Wednesdays at 7:15am at the McKernan Center on the SMCC campus.

04-08-11 Civil War Remembered



Fort Sumter under the Confederate flag, April 14, 1861. From the National Archives.

One of the most challenging times in American history came between 1861 and 1865 when our country lost over 620,000 of the 4 million men who enlisted during the Civil War. This year marks the 150th anniversary (also known as the sesquicentennial) of the start of the Civil War and museums and historical societies will be featuring many exhibits and events involved with Civil War remembrances and education.

Abraham Lincoln, a moderate Republican, had won the election of 1860 with a platform that included ending the spread of slavery to the west. After Lincoln's election, but before he was sworn into office in March 1861, seven southern states seceded from the United States over issues primarily concerned with slavery. Southern states felt that they had lost control of their federal government and that slavery in the south would be the next target.

On April 12, 1861, the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter in South Carolina, an event which marked the start of civil war. The Confederate states had been taking over federal forts and properties in the South and the Confederate government demanded that the military installation at Fort Sumter be turned over to the Confederacy without condition, but the U.S. government refused. After a two-day siege, the U.S. Army agreed to evacuate and the Confederates took over the fort. President Lincoln responded by calling for 75,000 volunteers to fight for the Union; four more southern states seceded; and our nation headed to war with itself.

At the time of the war, South Portland was known as Cape Elizabeth, and we became home to a training camp for Union soldiers. Although early on it was called by many different names –Camp Preble, Camp McClellan, Camp Butler, and Camp King – when the state Adjutant General's office officially declared three mustering in sites in 1862, the camp became known as Camp Abraham Lincoln, and then was renamed Camp Berry in 1863. This camp was the mustering in and training site for troops from southern and western Maine.

April and May will be a busy time for Civil War history-related activities. Coming up on Sunday, April 10th, the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum will have an Open House from 1-4pm at its museum on Peaks Island. Music, guest speakers, food and kids' activities will be featured. The Casco Bay Lines ferry departs Portland for Peaks at 12:15pm that day. On Monday, April 11th, the Cape Elizabeth Historical Preservation Society will have a talk at the Thomas Memorial Library at 7pm by Paul Ledman, author of *A Maine Town Responds: Cape Elizabeth and South Portland in the Civil War*.

The South Portland Historical Society will open its museum at Bug Light Park on May 2nd – one of the featured exhibits will showcase South Portland's role during the Civil War, including a history of Camp Lincoln/Berry, as well as Fort Preble. Starting May 2nd, the museum will be open daily from 10am to 4pm. On May 18th, noted military historian Kenneth Thompson, Jr., will offer a lecture and slide show entitled *South Portland during the Civil War* at the South Portland Historical Society's annual meeting at the SP Community Center at 6:30pm. Mr. Thompson is the author of several books related to Maine's history in the Civil War and I am very grateful to him for his help in creating our Civil War exhibit at the museum this year. FMI, call 767-7299.

04-01-11 Community Support of the South Portland Historical Society



Members of the South Portland Lions Club
visiting the Society's museum

The South Portland Historical Society would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to the South Portland Lions Club and its members for the recent donation of \$4,000 in support of the Society's mission. The South Portland Lions Club has been a generous benefactor of the historical society for many years and has played a big part in the Society's success in obtaining a home and offering a museum to the public. Of course, the historical society is only one of many causes and community efforts supported by the club. If you are interested in learning more about the Lions, you are most welcome to join them at any upcoming meeting – the South Portland Lions Club meets on the first Thursday of the month at 6pm at Old Country Buffet at the Maine Mall, and on the third Thursday of the month at 6:15pm at the Landry Village Meeting Room, 51 Landry Circle, South Portland.

Engraved Brick Program – The historical society celebrated the grand opening of its museum at Bug Light Park last summer, but there is still work to be done on the museum grounds. One ongoing effort that supports the museum is the Engraved Brick Program. A brick walkway and patio were installed on the grounds last fall and those who had purchased engraved bricks were included in the initial installation. A ribbon cutting will take place this summer after more landscaping is completed. We will have one more installation of engraved bricks before the ribbon cutting and we hope that you will consider purchasing an engraved brick to be placed in the walkway. If a memorial brick is purchased, the Society will send an acknowledgment to a family member, if requested. A standard 4x8 brick is just \$150 and the larger 8x8 brick paver is \$250. You can visit www.sphistory.org for more information, to print an order form, and if you would like to purchase a brick with a credit card, you can use the donation button on the website or call us at 767-7299. You can also simply mail a check with your contact information to the Society at 55 Bug Light Park, South Portland, ME 04106, and we will call to confirm the engraving information.

Membership – April is membership renewal time for the historical society! We send out our newsletter in mid-April to let our members know of upcoming events, recent donations and other Society activities. If you enjoy our weekly column and are not yet a member, please join! I often hear from people who say how much they enjoy this newspaper column – but becoming a member is the best way to let us know that you appreciate what your historical society is working on. Please consider showing us your support today by mailing in a \$15 donation (\$10 for seniors and students) to become a member.

03-25-11 Carvel Ice Cream



I stopped by Asia Restaurant on February 20th to get some pictures of the inside of the restaurant on their last day at 51 Market Street. The building appears to be in flux since Rite Aid closed its store there and CVS purchased the building. While I'm eagerly waiting for Asia to reopen in their new location across the street in the Mill Creek Shopping Center, I thought we could take a look at one of the many earlier occupants of the 51 Market Street building – Carvel Ice Cream.

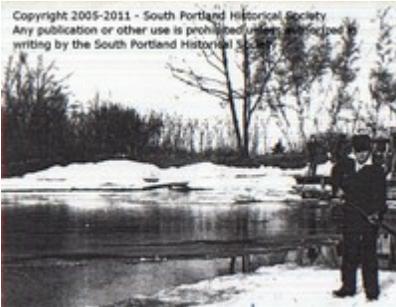
Of course, most of us who have lived in South Portland for 30 or more years probably remember that, long before Rite Aid, the site was home to the old Bowl-A-Rama. That bowling alley operated for about 20 years, from roughly 1960 to 1980. It was great to have a fun spot like that to head to in Mill Creek. After the bowling alley closed, we had Eagle Savings & Loan operating there for a time, but it was in the mid-1980s after the building have been divided up into several storefronts, that we had four stores in the building at once: 60 Minute Photo, Carvel Ice Cream and Wellby Super Drug along the front; and Gloria Stevens Figure Salon in the back right corner which was most recently occupied by Asia Restaurant.

I was a teenager at the time, probably in my junior or senior year at South Portland High School, when I went to interview at Carvel Ice Cream for a job. Considering that I had already interviewed for a job at Red's Dairy Freeze and been turned away, I was very excited when the manager at Carvel said, "You're hired," and was anticipating my first day of work a few days later. I had dreams of running their cake decorating machine and was looking forward to my training. You can only imagine my surprise and

disappointment when I showed up for my first day of work and found the door locked and a sign telling customers that Carvel had closed its Mill Creek location.

The accompanying photograph of the Carvel Ice Cream store comes to us courtesy of Bill Ciccarone. I know of no other photograph that exists to prove that Carvel was there. When I was working on my book about South Portland stores back in 2005, I interviewed a woman who was about 30 years my senior, and she insisted that Carvel was never located in Mill Creek – she had worked for Shaw's for decades and was positive that I was mistaken in my memory of it. I was very grateful to Bill Ciccarone, who had owned and operated 60 Minute Photo, for saving this rare photograph and sharing it so I have proof of my short history in the ice cream business.

03-18-11 Jake Lamport ~ City Ice & Coal Company



After we ran the two-part series about Tom and Joan Bakker's sheep farm last month, we were happy to receive contacts from several grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Jake Lamport. As you will recall, I mentioned Jake Lamport in the article, as he had owned the sheep farm prior to the Bakkers. That was an exciting discovery for us, as Jake Lamport is somewhat immortalized in South Portland with "Jake's Pond" being enjoyed by the public in Hinckley Park.

Jake Lamport owned and operated an ice and fuel company in South Portland - City Ice & Coal. According to Jake Lamport's granddaughter, Beverly Green, Jake owned the business with his brothers, Ralph and Henry. It seems that the ice business was in their blood, as prior to starting City Ice & Coal in 1926, the three brothers worked at Deering Ice Company in Portland, a company that had been around in the 1910s and '20s, and run by George Lamport who we presume was their father.

On land that is now part of Hinckley Park, the family manufactured their own ice by cutting it from ponds and storing in a large ice house there. Jake Lamport's grandson, Gary Nathanson, wrote to us with many details about his grandfather's life and business. "The two ponds at Hinckley Park were man-made," he wrote. "When they froze in the winter, they provided ice for the business. The ice was cut into large blocks and for many years there were large ice houses there where they stored the ice blocks in sawdust over the summer months. There were old metal conveyer belts that hauled the ice blocks up and into the ice houses. There were also storage buildings and a small residence there."

The accompanying photograph was provided by Beverly Green and shows her father, Abe Green, harvesting ice from the pond.

Gary Nathanson gave more details about the end of the business and what happened to the land. "Through the years the old buildings crumbled and were torn down. When the City Ice and Coal Co. business disbanded in 1955 (thanks to refrigerators), the Lamport brothers divided up the remaining assets and Jake ended up with the land. For us kids, he had the upper pond stocked with speckled trout and we used to fish there." In the mid-1960s, the 17.8 acre property was taken by eminent domain and became part of the now 40-acre Hinckley Park.

Jake and his wife Fannie lived in the farmhouse at 1292 Broadway and, as a "gentleman farmer," the grandchildren remember him keeping many animals including cows, horses, ducks, geese, chickens and a rooster. Beverly Green remembers her grandfather milking the cows and her grandmother making cottage cheese - she would wrap it in cheese cloth and hang it from the faucet in the bathroom to drain.

03-11-11 Jack O'Lantern Skating Rink



This week's Window on the Past looks at the old Jack O'Lantern Skating Rink on Broadway in Pleasantdale. Our thanks goes out to Jan Henderson for sending this great photograph to the historical society, as well as her memories of this local skating rink. The building is in the same location where you will find Events on Broadway and the SoPo Barbecue (formerly known as Beale Street Barbecue) today.

Originally home to the Jack O'Lantern dance hall, the skating rink was in operation for many years. Henderson has many fond memories going back to the mid-1940s. "Those probably were the best years of my youth. It was run by Mildred Smith and her husband. On the right where you entered the building was where you could rent skates and buy bottles of soda. Most everybody had their own skates. I still have mine in the red metal box they came in. The girls had these skirts that had many yards of material – maybe called poodle skirts. It is where many boy/girl friendships started." Henderson also has many memories of the music that would play over the speakers for the skaters, records like "Sentimental Me" and "Blueberry Hill." According to Henderson, "There was always a 'skate boy' for the evening that would skate around to make sure the skaters were behaving. Most everyone skated as couples and of course in those days the boy had to ask the girl."

If you have memories to share about the Jack O'Lantern or other South Portland places, we would love to hear from you! If you are on Facebook, please search for South Portland Historical Society and join our group page – it provides a great way to be interactive with our postings. You can view and let us know what you remember about them, or feel free to post your own images of South Portland.

03-04-11 Burgess, Fobes & Co.



For those of us who enjoy South Portland's industrial history, the old Burgess, Fobes & Co. was a major business in our community for many years. Originally founded in 1858, the business was one of the largest manufacturers and wholesalers in the country. This was, of course, back in the days when everyone used lead paint. Burgess, Fobes & Co. was one of the first businesses to offer a retail store devoted exclusively to the sale of paints. Its office and sales floor were located in frontage on Commercial Street and early on they operated a paint factory in Portland on the corner of Munjoy, Beckett and Wilson Streets.

According to the Portland Evening Express in 1899, "Between thirty and forty stone and iron mills are required at the works, for grinding domestic corroded lead, the material used in the manufacture of their celebrated goods." The article goes on to state that the factory "turns out a million pounds a year, and uses in the manufacture of their goods, considered the standard of high quality in the trade, 3,600 barrels of oil, annually."

By the 1920s, Burgess Fobes Co. was operating an additional large varnish factory in South Portland, located at 107 Lincoln Street, in the Ligonía neighborhood. Their varnish factory was in operation into the early 1950s. The site is close to the intersection of Lincoln and Main Street, on the northwest side. The intersection of Lincoln and Main Street had long been known as "Kerosene Corner" due to the operation of Portland Kerosene Works on the opposite corner – on the southeast side. Portland Kerosene Works had produced kerosene, naphtha and paraffine at that plant from roughly 1859 to the 1890s.

The accompanying photograph shows the Burgess Fobes' South Portland plant on Lincoln Street in 1932.
02-11-11 & 02-18-11 Sheep farm today: A glimpse at South Portland's past



Tom and Joan Bakker at their sheep farm in South Portland. Tom built the 900 sq.ft. barn shown behind them

Mary and Elizabeth are two pampered pets in South Portland, but they are also incredibly unique – both are sheep living on Tom and Joan Bakker’s farm on Broadway. Of course, most of us are familiar with the hubbub in recent years over raising chickens and bees within city limits, but there are still a few farms remaining from our largely agricultural past, and we can thank the hard work of Tom Bakker, Stan Cox and Bob Fickett who made sure that we can still enjoy a glimpse of farming right here in South Portland.

For as long as my kids can remember, when we have driven past the farm that is tucked away near the corner of Broadway and Peary Terrace, we have always kept an eye out for the sheep. Even today, there is usually a shout-out in our car – either “The sheep are out!” or “Aw, the sheep aren’t out.” My kids, like so many kids that have grown up in our city, have been able to enjoy seeing sheep up close without having to drive 30 minutes or more to find a farm.

I talked with Tom and Joan Bakker this week about their gem in our community. I found out much about the sheep that they have been raising since purchasing the old farmhouse and 1.5 acre sheep farm. Tom remembers moving to his house on Peary Terrace in 1965, back when Jake Lamport owned the farm on Broadway. Some readers may recognize Jake Lamport as being the “Jake” for whom Jake’s Pond in Hinckley Park is named. The Lamports owned the City Ice and Coal Company that harvested ice at Hinckley Park.

“He [Jake Lamport] had chickens, sheep, a donkey and a horse” at the farm, Tom says. By 1980, when Tom bought the farm from Lamport’s daughter, Rhoda, and her husband Seymour Nathanson, there were only sheep left. One of the reasons Tom was interested in purchasing the farm was to preserve it as open land and as an active farm. Because of the zoning laws at the time, Tom made sure that the sheep were well-documented in the sale agreement. Tom chuckled as he remembered an early visit from a building inspector – the inspector accused him of increasing his non-conforming farm use by increasing the size of his flock, to which Tom replied, “What am I supposed to do? Tell my ewes not to get pregnant?” It took nearly 20 years of work on behalf of Bakker, Stan Cox and Bob Fickett – but they collaborated and worked hard to ensure that the few existing farms in the city were written into the city’s Code of Ordinances to protect their future use.

At the peak period of the Bakker’s farm, they had nine sheep and the flock would increase to around 15 each spring. Tom Bakker taught himself all about sheep farming, breeding and lambing from reading books on the subject. At lambing time in the spring, Tom was convinced that the ewes would wait for him to get home from work at 4pm before giving birth. He remembers many spring nights at lambing time, sitting and/or sleeping out in the barn waiting for the lambs to come, to make sure that the lambs and ewes were okay. He once had to help one of his ewes deliver twins; the lambs were not lined up correctly so he had to help turn them so that they could be delivered safely.



Over the years, the sheep farm has been a source of education and joy for many children, whether that has been the Bakkers’ children, neighborhood kids who have watched the sheep from over the fence, or at other times when Tom would bring the lambs to a school so the kids could get an up-close look. Tom laughed as he told me about watching his lambs once walking around in the hallways of Brown School – something you probably wouldn’t be able to see in a school today.

Of course, you don’t have to be a kid to enjoy sheep. Tom remembers fondly the trash truck driver who used to come by the farm every Wednesday. Tom had noticed for some time that on Wednesdays the sheep would come out and make a bit of a ruckus - he soon discovered that the trash truck driver would pick up leftovers from a local bakery and bring them to the farm where he would toss them over the fence

for the sheep to enjoy. Apparently it didn't take long for the sheep to recognize the sound of the trash truck coming.

The Bakkers used to raise Suffolk sheep which would be sheared each spring, with the wool sold through the Southern Maine Sheep Association. Some of the sheep would also be slaughtered each year, as well, keeping the year-round flock to about nine sheep. The Bakkers have always given their sheep biblical names, thus there have been many Rebekahs and Sarahs. The flock has dwindled in recent years, however; the Bakkers have only two ewes now, and those are Katahdins which don't need to be sheared. "Their hooves need to be trimmed, and we feed and water them every day," says Joan Bakker. But other than that, the sheep are pretty self-reliant and are viewed as pets now. You can tell that Mary and Elizabeth have a soft spot for Joan – although the ewes are a bit wary of most people, when Joan goes out to see them, they'll come right to her.

01-28-11 South Portland Junior High School



South Portland Junior High School, after the school had moved into its second home, on the corner of Broadway and Ocean. The junior high was later divided into two schools – this school building was renamed "Mahoney Junior High" and a second junior high school building was built on Wescott Road to house "Memorial Junior High."

It's amazing to think of how much a school system can change over the course of one generation. If you had lived in South Portland in early 1951, you would be living in a school district with a "9-4" plan – that is a system with the kindergarten/sub-primary through 8th grade in elementary schools, and grades 9 through 12 in the high school. The school system did have some elementary schools dedicated to higher or lower grades, but these changed depending on population. As an example, some people I know attended the Willard School, then Roosevelt, then Henley, and then the high school; others attended East High Street School, then the Pleasant Street School, then Henley, then the high school.

In the school building on the corner of Broadway and Ocean Street) changed its class sessions so that high school students ended classes at 12:30pm – then the new "junior high" students would come in and attend school until 5pm.

It wasn't until September of 1951 that the grade levels were reorganized into a "7-2-4" system – that is a system with kindergarten through 6th grade in an elementary school, then a junior high with grades 7 and 8, and grades 9 through 12 in the high school. In September 1951, the high school (which at that time was

This lasted for only one semester, as the new South Portland Junior High School building at 637 Highland Avenue was completed and ready for its students in January 1952. It wasn't until September 1960 that the high school and junior high swapped buildings. The feeling of the high school principal at the time, Daniel F. Mahoney, was that the "new" building for the high school provided better classroom and gym facilities, but that something needed to be done about the lack of auditorium and athletic fields.

01-21-11 South Portland's Recorded History



Society director, Kathy DiPhilippo, accepts a copy of "A History of Cape Elizabeth, Maine," from its author, Prof. William B. Jordan, Jr.

Jordan recently donated the copyright of his book to the historical society.

Retired history professor and noted Maine historian, William B. Jordan, Jr., researched and wrote what I consider to be South Portland's most complete and authoritative history to this day. After extensive research of original records, Prof. Jordan authored and published his book, "A History of Cape Elizabeth, Maine," in 1965, and anyone looking into Cape Elizabeth's early history (which includes the area which became present-day South Portland in 1895) can still look to his extraordinary history for answers.

Prof. Jordan had a personal interest in our community when he set out to research his book in the 1960s – one set of his grandparents (Jordan) were residents of the portion of Cape Elizabeth that remained as such in the 1895 reorganization, while his other grandparents (Weeks) were residents of the Knightville neighborhood in the northern part of town which was renamed South Portland. Indeed, George H. Weeks served as the mayor of South Portland from 1905 to 1907.

The drawback of the book is that it has been out of print for many years, so most researchers must seek it out at either their local library or historical society. In an act of incredible generosity, Prof. Jordan has donated the ownership and copyright of his book to the South Portland Historical Society. The Society plans to republish the book in the coming year, with proceeds earmarked to its new William B. Jordan, Jr. fund which will be used for the expansion of the Society's collections. We are very grateful to Prof. Jordan for his lifetime of work as a historian and educator, and for his generous donation which will allow proceeds from book sales to further benefit the preservation of our community's history.

In other news, the South Portland Historical Society is also working on another book to be published this year. This will be an anthology of first-person accounts of South Portland history. In this first volume, of what is planned to be an ongoing series of books, the Society will publish stories written by local residents covering Clark's Pond (a short story written by Elford Messer), the Hamilton Street and Hinckley Park areas in the 1920s and '30s (written by Edward T. Richardson, Jr.), and the Pleasantdale neighborhood (written by the late Raymond "Pete" Taylor).

This latest book has been underway with the rather utilitarian working title, "The Oral Histories of South Portland, Volume 1." The historical society would welcome your suggestions for a title for this new book series. Keep in mind that the title will be used on all subsequent anthologies (i.e. following editions will be "Volume 2," "Volume 3," etc.). Please submit your ideas to us at sphistoricalociety@maine.rr.com, or leave a message at 767-7299. If we use your idea, you will receive a free copy of the book at publication time.

01-14-11 Video Biz



It's funny how our memories can work sometimes. If anyone had asked me what I remembered about the building at 741 Broadway, I'd be quick to remember how Yerxa's Lawn and Garden Center had been in business at that location for most of my lifetime (I'm a little too young to remember the Globe Discount department store that was there previously). So when I received an email from Jeffrey Wilson this past week, asking about the video store that used to be in that storefront, I was surprised that it triggered my own memory of walking in the front door there into a video store. I remember standing in front of a display of VHS movies, asking my mom to explain the difference between Beta movies and VHS movies.

Intrigued at this vague memory, and with no photographs or other information on the business to go on, I started out researching the 1970s records for the business, but it turned out that the video store was actually there in the mid-1980s. In 1985 and 1986, Janet Pratt and Louis Solari were listed as the owners of "Video Biz" which was operating from the same building as Yerxa's. It appears that during those mid-1980s, Yerxa's sublet a portion of the building to the video store. In 1987, the store is shown under the same ownership, but its name had changed to "Five Star Video." By 1989, all evidence of the video store is gone and the records show that Yerxa's once again had expanded its operation to include the whole space.

The accompanying photograph comes from the Philip R. Yerxa collection at the South Portland Historical Society. Philip Yerxa is shown standing in front of his popular Yerxa's Garden Center. The society does not have any photographs of the building when Video Biz and/or Five Star Video were in operation. We are also still looking for earlier photos, when the Fantastic Fair and/or Globe Discount stores were at the site. If anyone has any photographs or other information to share, please contact the society at 767-7299 or at sphistoricalsociety@maine.rr.com.

01-07-11 Fernald's Florist



Back in February of 2006, I wrote a short column on A.C. Fernald, a florist business located at 1170 Broadway. A photograph of the long house was included with the story, the house was located roughly near the site of the Megquier & Jones property, but there was little additional information to be shared as we had only the one photograph of the house which had a florist sign hanging.

Since nearly five years have passed, I had given up much hope on receiving an answer, so I was very pleasantly surprised to receive a package from Judy Frank, the great niece of Alfred Fernald's wife, Harriett Cook Fernald. Ms. Frank had found the old column archived on our website and in response, she mailed a letter to the historical society, with additional photographs and information about the business and the Fernald family.

One of the pieces of information that we have learned is that the Fernalds sold gladiolus flowers and bulbs, which they grew on their own property. Ms. Frank sent along a cloth mailing pouch for the bulbs, stamped with the Fernalds' name and address. In the accompanying photo, we see a field of gladiolus flowers blooming in rows behind the house. Alfred and Harriett Fernald married in 1928 and they ran the business together until Alfred's death in 1932. We also suspect that the produce dealer, Royal Hasty, was actually running his business out of the same home which, according to Harriett Fernald's personal papers, was a "double house, our side is the one that shows [in the photo]...front door belongs to both families but isn't used much."



Our historical society would still like to hear from anyone with information on the Fernalds' florist business or Royal Hasty and his produce business. The society can be reached at 207-767-7299.