

The Historian

BURRILLVILLE HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2005

Exterior Work Nears Completion

The exterior restoration of the Bridgeton School is almost complete! Insulation in the walls had been trapping moisture and causing the paint to peel off in big flakes. The insulation has been removed with a gigantic vacuum. Broken, rotted or cracked clapboards were replaced with new cedar clapboards that were custom-milled in Waitsfield, Vermont so that they would have the same thickness as the originals. They were nailed on with galvanized square cut nails.

The trim on the two end gables of the building was pulling away from the building. Trim boards were repaired/replaced and fastened

properly. There were two large holes in the trim boards allowing squirrels to enter the attic. Once inside the attic, they chewed their way up into the tower. When the "chew-holes" were fixed, the squirrels attempted to get back in by chewing through the outside of the bell tower. We trapped two young squirrels and relocated them.

All of the attic windows have been restored and operate beautifully. They now glide up and down with the original weights. New flashing was installed over the attic windows and over the two front porches. The old flashing was rotten, allowing water to get behind it and causing paint to peel on some of the clapboards.

The entire building has been painted in "Spring Dust" with dark green trim. The railings on the handicapped ramp were repaired/

replaced and the ramp was power-washed before a preservative coating was applied. The two front doors are being restored. All work should be completed in July.



REMOVING DAMAGED CLAPBOARDS

President's Message

The Society has been very active this spring, participating in a number of events. In April the Society hosted author, J. Stanley Lemons who made a presentation on his book titled "The Ocean State - An Illustrated History." Also in April, there was a public showing of a video on the bell tower restoration produced by Betty and Carlo Mencucci.

BHPS participated in the Family Fair, and the Pascoag Sidewalk Sale. Besides that, we had a truly gigantic yard sale and a very successful Victorian Tea with 76 people attending. In July, the Levy Foundation will hold one of their meetings at the school. Our next big event will be the Footsteps in History weekend in October.

I attended the dedication ceremony for the Mapleville bridge where BHPS was given

a piece of ribbon used in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

I would like to thank Joyce McKenna for the donation of a \$50 gift card from Staples.

We are still looking for ideas on how to celebrate Burrillville's birthday. We have already purchased red, white and blue bunting to decorate the Bridgeton

Upcoming Meetings/Events

August 23 - to be announced

October 8.9.10 - Footsteps in History

Footsteps in History Weekend

On October 8-10, 2005, the entire Blackstone Valley will showcase its historic sites to the public. The Bridgeton School will be celebrating this "Footsteps in History" weekend with historic displays, a photo exhibit, slides shows, videos, and educational activities. Information on the building's recent restoration work will be highlighted. We are planning to be open on Saturday Oct. 8 from 10-4, and Sunday and Monday from 12-4. Members will greet guests in Victorian costume. We are looking into the possibility of having artisans doing demonstrations outside. We will need lots of help. If you would like to volunteer in any way, please contact one of the officers.

Grant Info

BHPS has received a \$300 grant from the RI Foundation to have a collection of glass plate negatives printed. These photos will be on exhibit during the Footsteps in History weekend. We have also received a \$5000 grant from the Levy Foundation to start production on a video for Burrillville's birthday in 2006. This video will be produced by Betty and Carlo Mencucci. It will take an in-depth look at James Burrill and how the town was separated from Glocester. We are looking for any old photos and information from people with first hand knowledge of some of the old schools and businesses. If you would like to get involved in this historical documentary, please contact Betty at 568-8449.

Building News

On June 13, Basement Technology installed a pump system that will handle water coming in on the east side of the building. Hopefully the two pumps in the basement should keep it dry.

Callahan School Visit

On June 15, Rose and Giles Shaw hosted an informational tour of the Society for 30 William L. Callahan School students.

\$500 from Truehome Realty

At the April meeting, Ron Hope of Truehome Realty presented the Society with a check for \$500. This generous donation is part of a fundraising program we have with them. If any real estate transaction is accompanied by a special card available to BHPS members and friends, the Society receives \$500. Contact BHPS if you or someone you know is buying or selling property and would like to have one of these cards.

The Mills of Burrillville: Pascoag, Part II – The Sayles

By Pamela S. Cardin

The Sayles' family involvement with the village of Pascoag began about 1792. Brothers Daniel and Elisha Sayles purchased approximately 200 acres of land (including the site of Josiah Arnold's saw and grist mill) and began a forge at what would eventually become Clear River Woolen Mills off what is now Centennial Street.

Daniel and Elisha were the sons of Revolutionary War Veteran Israel Sayles (b. 1726, d. 1801; Richard (4), John (3-2-1)) and his wife Mercy Whipple (b. 1727, d. 1815). They were part of a large, thriving family that had come to Rhode Island shortly after Roger Williams. In fact, John Sayles (2) married Mary Williams, daughter of Roger Williams and had seven children. As the family branched out, the name of Sayles became increasingly common in much of northern Rhode Island as well as nearby eastern Connecticut and Massachusetts. For example, there is a Saylesville, Rhode Island in the city of Pawtucket. The village took its name, no doubt, from the family who owned and operated one of many mills there. Israel Sayles owned a large farm on what would become the border between Burrillville and Glocester. This farm became part of what is now the Episcopal Conference Center. He and his wife had eleven children.

Elisha Sayles (b. 1757, d. 1845) married Lydia Angell (b. 1766, d. 1836) and had ten children: Cyrus (b. 1789); Charles (died at birth 1791); Freelove (b. 1793, d. 1796); Avis (b. 1796); Whipple (b. 1798); Sarah (b. 1801); Amey (b. 1803); Calista (b. 1805); Angell (b. 1808) and Horatio (b. 1811). Daniel Sayles (b. 1769, d. 1849), married Phebe Smith and had nine children: Mary Mowry (b. 1793); Smith (b. 1795); Hardin (b. 1797); Maritta (b. 1798); Pitts (b. 1801); Marcilla (b. 1804); Phydela (b. 1806); Elizabeth (b. 1808) and Eliza Ann (b. 1811).

The Sayles Brothers ran their forge until about 1814 when Daniel apparently decided the textile business might be more lucrative. He built a mill for the fulling and dressing of woolen cloth in about the same location where the Granite Mill once stood. Soon after, he added a carding machine. The farmers, who had once done all of these processes at home, discovered they could have their cloth finished far better than they were able to do and began to bring their cloth to him. Gradually Daniel Sayles' fulling and finishing mill became a full-fledged woolen textile factory – the first woolen mill in Pascoag.

In 1819, the mill was enlarged again and Hardin Sayles, son of Daniel, became owner. Power looms, which were new to the business, were introduced about the same time. Hardin

Donations

Large reproduction of 1870 Burrillville map and information on the Paine family- William MacIntosh

Several old Pascoag photos - Rose Lavoie

Tax books (1858, 1862, 1881, 1890, 1917) - Joyce and Russell Knibbs

Original copy of "Wallum Pond Estates"- Lee Finley

The following people allowed the Society to scan photos:

- Bridgeton School (1950s) - Richard Nolan
- Joslin Farm - Averill Maher
- Joslin Farm - Benno and Sigrid Bartel
- Bridgeton Square and School - Ralph Cook
- Bridgeton Square - Shirley Greene
- James Burrill - Helen Maroney

Carousel of slides taken by Oscar Greene in 1970s donated by Shirley Greene. Also a genealogy book and box of genealogy magazines

Ralph Cook let us copy VHS tapes of the last class

Gigantic Spring Yard Sale

On May 21 the Society held a gigantic yard sale on the front lawn of the Bridgeton School. Ken Hopkins of Affordable Tent generously donated a large tent and 19 tables. The tables were set up at 5:00 a.m. and we started carrying the massive amount of collected yard sale stuff out of the basement. Items were spread all over the lawn as they were too numerous to all fit on the tables under the tent. At 6:30 a.m. we had our first sale and by 7:30 business was brisk. By the end of the day our sales totalled \$1000 ! We made an additional \$143.75 on the bake sale. This would not have been possible without the help of so many volunteers who all deserve a huge thank you.

**GIGANTIC
YARD
SALE**



3rd Annual Victorian Tea

Our third annual Victorian Tea was held on Sunday, June 5 at 2:00 p.m. The Tea Committee would like to thank members who helped bake, serve, sell tickets and cover the gift room. Several of our guests have sent their thanks and many more are looking forward to next year's event.

Rose Shaw and Liz Morin
Event organizers



May Meeting at Odd Fellows Hall

BHPS would like to thank members of the Odd Fellows for hosting our May meeting at Granite Lodge #33 and for their interesting presentation and historical insight into the I.O.O.F.

Election of Officers

Congratulations to Joyce McKenna, our newly elected treasurer. Many thanks to Ron Lapierre for his dedication and years of service.



**ASHLEY
HOPKINS
SIPPING
TEA
WITH
A
SMILE !**

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Sayles began the manufacture of satinets in 1834 and the privilege was enlarged by a new dam. It was about this time that Pitts Sayles (brother of Hardin) and John Chace (or Chase, brother –in –law of Hardin) were brought into the business as partners.

During the financial crisis of 1837, the mill was shut down. It reopened in 1838 with the addition of Jacob and Josiah Seagraves as partners – and a change in name to the Union Woolen Company. Union Pond derives its name from this time during the mill's long history. It is likely that Union Pond was the first mill pond created to supply power to the growing textile mill. Mill ponds – such as Union Pond and Mill Pond in Harrisville – were created by mill owners to provide more reliable (as well as additional) water power for their mills. Initially, early grist and saw mills harnessed fast-moving streams with waterwheels. Occasionally, they built a “chase” – a deep, narrow passage that made the water run faster thus turning the waterwheel(s) faster. Unfortunately, if there was a drought (as did and still does happen during the summer months) the mill would very likely have to shut down due to lack of power. Creating a “mill pond” by damming a stream or river gave the mill owners literally a reservoir of power to fall back on because by regulating the flow of water over the dam or through a spillway into the chase, they were better able to have a source of power all year long. At the very least, they could keep the mill operating longer.

In 1844, the mill was enlarged yet again and the machinery adapted to the manufacture of fancy cassimeres. By 1847, however, the Union Woolen Company was dissolved and was reorganized under the names of Lyman Copeland, Stephen Thompson, Hardin and Pitts Sayles. Over the next three years, Thompson sold out his interest and bought out Copeland's interest in another mill they had bought together from Peter Place. Copeland retired in 1850 leaving, once again, Hardin and Pitts Sayles. The business continued to run under the name of H. & P. Sayles.

It is in 1853 that we first meet Albert Leprelet Sayles, son of Hardin and Laura (Wood). Albert L. was born 29, August, 1826 in what is now Harrisville (then Rhodesville). He was one of six children: Maria Maretta (b. 1832, d. 1853); Elliot Smith (b. 1834); Hardin Rosco (b. 1835); Ellen Augusta (b. 1839, d. 1864); and Addison Clark (b. 1841). Albert L. married Fannie Jane Warner of Uxbridge, Massachusetts and they had four children: Edgar (b. 1855); Ellen Maria (b. 1857); Albert H. (b. 1863); and Frederick Lincoln (b. 1865).

Albert Leprelet Sayles began his association with the textile industry at the age of 15 when he started work for Daniel Whipple at his mill in Gazza. He worked for Whipple for about three years then joined the firm of L. Copeland and Co. of which his father was a part. In 1848, he took charge of the finishing department in the mill. When Copeland retired in 1850, Albert L. became superintendent of the mill. In 1853, he bought out the interest of his uncle Pitts and the name of the company changed yet again to Hardin Sayles and Son. Hardin Sayles died in 1861 and Albert L. continued to run the mill with his mother and four siblings.

Things were changing rapidly, however. America, not yet a century old, was being torn apart by Civil War. The troops needed uniforms, blankets, saddle blankets and horse blankets – not to mention other textile items. Mill owners all over the North geared up in anticipation of supplying those needs. Publicly, they called for a quick end to the “Rebellion”. Privately, they hoped for a windfall.

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The money we receive from the IGA and Dino's receipts has allowed us to print scanned photos and purchase supplies to preserve our archives—so keep the receipts coming! Please mail them if you cannot attend meetings. Ask a friend to save them too.

