

May 2012

# The Sou'West Voyage

## Traditions and Records

	Norwood Cove	Greening Island
Manset	Southwest Harbor	Seawall

### Southwest Harbor Historical Society

#### Officers

Phil Whitney, President  
 Janet Patton, Vice President  
 Wayne Patton, Treasurer  
 Diana Pinkham, Secretary

#### Board of Directors

Becky Burnham  
 John Burnham  
 Karen Craig  
 Bob Davis  
 Susi Homer  
 Bruce Komusin  
 Henryetta Ponczek  
 Bernie Mauger  
 Ralph Stanley  
 Kathe Walton  
 Aimee Williams  
 Warren Worcester

email:

[swhistory@yahoo.com](mailto:swhistory@yahoo.com)

web site:

[www.swhhs.org](http://www.swhhs.org)



Front row (l to r): Richard Brown, Keith Clark, Richard Herrick, Lawrence Ballard, Gerald Rich, Jon H. Wallace, Keith Newman, LeRoy Greenlaw, George Spurling, Cleo Alley, Edwin Dunbar, Ronald Smith, Morgan Grindle

Middle row (l to r): Wilma Hamblin, Agnes Dolliver, Margaret Reed, Lucille Spurling, Edwin Clough, Rosalind Philbrook, Mary Lou Long, Kathleen Bouchard, Norris Reddish, Mary Robinson, Cynthia Carroll, Juanita Dunbar, Harold Billings, Esther Stanley, Emerson Spurling, Gail Perkins

Back row (l to r): Herbert Hamblin, Wilder Stanley, Lowell Noyes, Edward Hinckley, Donald Sullivan, John Carroll, George Hall, (?), Dean Whitney, Lawrence Robinson, Leigh Robinson

*Thanks to Gerald Rich for naming the people in the picture*

### SWHHS President Message

Spring has arrived. Along with the usual signs of the season – warmer weather, sprouting flowers, scattered tourists and lawnmowers cranking up – the SWH Historical Society has its own indications of Spring: Our seasonal Directors begin heading northward, planning begins for our 7th(!) Summer program season and, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, our small museum in the former SWH Elementary School re-opens.

Those folks returning with suntans include Bob Davis, John & Becky Burnham, and the irrepressible Bernie Mauger. These migratory birds contribute immensely to our organization – providing anecdotes and humor to our monthly meetings, devoting volunteer hours supporting the Summer Program series, archiving our growing historical collection, and researching special projects of nostalgic interest.

The Summer Program Series is set (see separate article). This season should be especially exciting, with a wide variety of historical entertainment ranging from films to fish to wartime to a specific year of nostalgic memory. Program presenters will include retired business executives, military veterans and a Historical Society Director who sometimes wishes he never grew up. Come see what we're all about. I think you'll have fun, and perhaps collect some great memories along the way.

We have many other projects keeping all our Directors occupied this coming season. Thanks to Bruce Komusin and Wayne Patton, we have a beautiful new "SWH Historical Society Museum" sign, which will be hung in soon on the schoolhouse building facing Main Street. Janet Patton is putting the finishing touches on the "Manset / Seawall Photo History Book", her equivalent of "War & Peace". The initial proofs shown at our last meeting had everyone gasping at the extensive research accomplished. If technical equipment and human resources permit, we hope to have several DVD's for sale this season of previous presentations of the Summer Program Series. Karen Craig, ably supported by Bruce Komusin (technician) and Kathe Walton (transcriptions) continues to produce memorable historical interviews with some of our senior citizens, preserving their memories of earlier life & times in SWH for the enjoyment of future generations.

Our first fundraising appeal, held this Winter, proved quite successful. We deeply appreciate the support provided by a wide segment of SWH citizens, both former and current. Please consider encouraging your friends and relatives to join the SWHHS. You can learn much about your town and its heritage.

Finally, I would like to officially welcome aboard new Director Henryetta Ponczek, who joined our merry gang in January. Henryetta has already taken the plunge, researching an historical piece on SWH schools which unearthed some forgotten, but intriguing information. Also welcomed is Susi Homer, who just joined us in May and promises to be a great asset to our group. If you have an interest in our local history, and would like to join us in our travels back through time, on the Board of Directors, call me at 244-5933. We have a vibrant group who enjoy sharing nostalgic memories, humorous anecdotes, and researching our past.

I hope to see you this summer, as we continue our journey uncovering the history of SWH and its surroundings.

Phil A. Whitney - President



In our last edition we asked if anyone could help us identify the people in this photo. Phil Gilley sent us the following names: The 2nd kneeling from the left is Henry Ward. Next to him is Merton Alley. The older boy kneeling is Phil Gilley. The boy behind Ward is Leonard Gilley. The furthest to the right is Bobby Elliott. In the next to the top row the first boy is ??? Sinclair. Next to him is Joe Stanwood. The 3rd from the left is ??? Alley, and the 4th is Bobby Jackson. In the top row, the 2nd from the left is Phil Whiney, Next is Abe Harris, next is Joe Trask and last is Maurice Robinson.

Thanks for your help Phil!!!

### Progress on our Interview Project

from Karen Craig

Interviews are going well. Kathe Newman Walton is transcribing the tapes so that we have a typed copy for anyone to read. We are putting in many long hours on this and is doing a great job. So far there have been eleven interviews, most done on tape and recorder. Three have been done on DVD with Bruce Komusin's expertise with the video. The interviews done so far are Jack Gilley, Tom Newman, Les Thurston, Harold Beal, Pat Wass Benedetti, Hershel Norwood, Jennie Sawyer, Linwood Ginn, David Benson, Dorothy and Warren Worcester, and Marion and Willard Colson. There is a suggested list of about 50 people that I am working from. It is such a joy to hear people's stories.



We recently received this photo from Bruce Komusin at the Cranberry Island Historical Society. We are wondering if anyone can tell us the cannery name and the names of any of the people working in this photo.

### *Membership Dues*

*This is our second publication for our newsletter for 2012. Many members still owe the dues for this year. If you see a star on your address label it means you have paid. For those of you without a star, we are still waiting to hear from you.*

*Thank you for your continued support.*

## Our Summer Programs

June 20: Addison Packing Company with Jack Gilley

July 18: World War II with Hugh Dwelley, President of the Islesford Historical Society

August 15: Ice Cutting In Southwest Harbor

September 19: The Big Hotels, Claremont, Dirigo, Island House, Pemetic, Freeman House, Stanley House, Ocean House, and Central House

October 17: Southwest Harbor in 1962, a talk by Phil Whitney

All of our programs begin at 7:00 PM and will be presented at the Harbor House building on Main Street

There is no admittance fee, but donations are welcomed  
Refreshments will be served

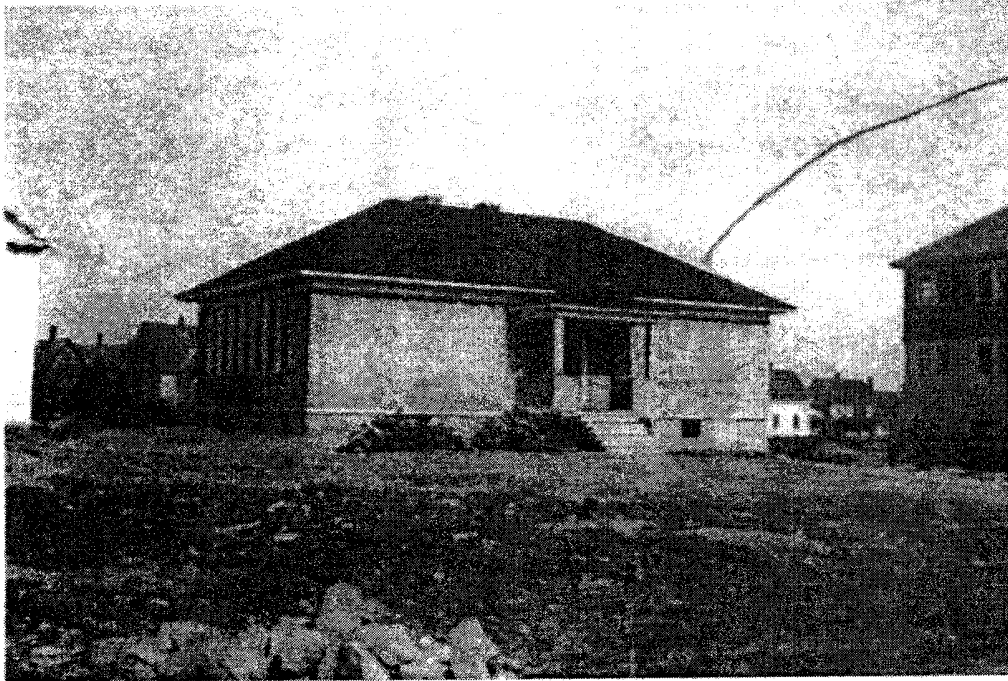
Southwest Harbor is celebrating another annual Pemetic school reunion on June 30th. The reunion now includes all graduates of Pemetic, high school and/or junior high. This year the reunion will be held at the school, both the afternoon get together and the dance in the evening. The afternoon session will be from 1pm to 4pm in the cafeteria. There will be a large selection of vintage pictures from the historical society for alumni to see. Many of the pictures have names, but we are also hoping for further identification where needed. The classrooms will be open for touring. Many have yet to see the newest of the "new" additions. There is a dance planned in the evening from 7pm to 11pm. Roberta Demuro will be playing and singing and we understand she will have a sax player with her as well as a very well known Southwest Harbor drummer. Hint: this drummer comes from a long line of Southwest Harbor musicians. See you there!

### *Recollections of Southwest Harbor, Maine, 1885-1894*

by Jesse L. Parker

Edited by John P. & Rebecca D. Burnham

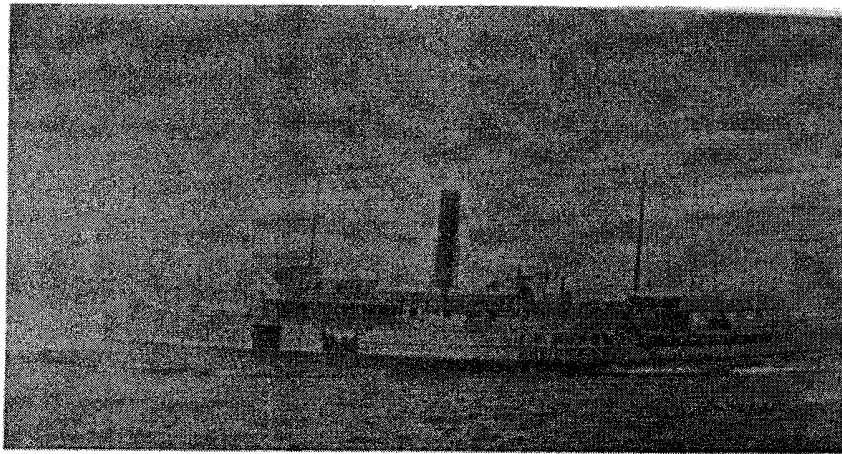
We are pleased to announce our first publication. It is the reminiscences of Jessie L. Parker, originally prepared by him in 1955. This 56-page narrative and the accompanying 25 photos and maps center around the Clark's Point neighborhood, but actually cover activities throughout the village during the late eighteen hundreds. He tells of his relatives and friends; the livelihood of the town, with its hotels and stores; favorite trips on the island; and all the hard labor needed to make a family and community function. He explains both the fun and work in meeting steamboats and their passengers and handling the buggy trips to nearby hotels and other villages. His grandfather Deacon Clark's projects and all the activity involved with getting the winter firewood supply sound exhausting to us. If you would like to purchase one of these books, they are on sale at the Southwest Harbor/Tremont Chamber of Commerce, at Carrolls Drug Store, or you can go onto our web site and find an order from.



### SOUTHWEST HARBOR SCHOOLS: A SHORT HISTORY

The history of schools in Southwest Harbor is a constantly changing one, prompted by increasing enrollments. Early schools had students of all ages from 6 to 20. Gradually elementary schools and high schools became separate. The first school in Southwest Harbor was held in the Harmon house around 1790 to 1795. The first schoolhouse was at Norwoods Cove soon after 1795 until 1860. From 1860 until 1914 a schoolhouse existed on Fernald Pt. Road when those students moved into the village school. At the same time in the village center, school was being held in what was known as the Freeman school from ca. 1839 until 1908. This Freeman school was located at the road in front of what is now Harbor House. It was bought by George Harmon and moved in 1906. In 1908 a new, certified high school opened (today's Harbor House). A primary school was built in 1917 on what is now the village green. It operated there until 1938. The high school operated in its new building from 1908 to 1938 when it moved into the brick Pemetec School. The primary grades then moved into the vacated high school in 1938 until increasing enrollment made another move necessary for both the high school and the elementary school. Today the high school students are at a centrally located high school on MDI, and the elementary school is the brick Pemetec Elementary School (formerly the high school). The above school was located where the Pemetec green is now located.

History done by Henryetta Ponczek



Dense fog shrouded the harbor on the morning in early July, 1929, when I stood with Eastern Steamship Co. agent Rod Clark on the end of the wharf at Southwest Harbor waiting for the arrival of the great steamer, J. T. Morse.

Her lonely, piercing whistle sounded every minute and as she drew closer Rod blew some blasts on a hand held horn to signal the ship to the direction of the pier. Then gradually out of the thick harbor mists emerged the ghostly shape of the big white steamer. It slowly approached like a partly occluded apparition and then took the definite shape of its 214 feet in length and 30-foot beam.

The 400-passenger J. T. Morse had its own special aura and it was a legend in its own time. It bathed in the majesty of the steamboat era on the Maine coast.

Capt. Everett Thompson was her skipper. He was a short man with a heavy black mustache and lush black eyebrows with a solid look of authority. His uniform cap bore tarnished letters that spelled "Captain". He stood calmly and confidently on the bridge and sent bell signals to the engine room where the engineer answered by shifting the big steam engine into forward or reverse or increase and decrease speed as demanded. This, in turn, meshed the gears that turned the giant paddle wheels on the sides of the ship that propelled it through the water to a speed of 15 knots.

That day I helped haul in the stern hawser to tie the Morse securely to the wharf. The passengers disembarked and the freight handlers began the laborious job of off-loading her Southwest Harbor cargo which included the produce, canned goods, and hardware my father had ordered for his store. I was 12 years old at the time and driving on old Dodge truck with the body enclosed in heavy black wire mesh. I had no drivers license but we didn't bother with such trivial matters in 1929.

Of course my hero was Capt. Thompson, and I spent hours in rapt fantasy as I imagine myself captain of a big ship, coolly giving crisp and decisive orders to a well-trained and responsive crew.

The freight handlers called me "grocery boy" and frequently warned me about eating some of my truckful of goods before I got to the store. I hustled my load back in time to get things sorted out to deliver to the many homes I would have to visit through out the day.

(continued on next page)

The J.T. Morse left at 5:30 a.m. from Rockland after transferring freight and passengers from from the Boston boat that arrived in Rockland around 3:00 a.m. Two big steamers, the Belfast and the Camden made the approximately 175-nautical mile run from Boston. After leaving Rockland, the Morse stopped North Haven, Stonington, Southwest Harbor, Northeast Harbor, and Seal Harbor, and arriving at Bar Harbor at 11:00 a.m.

The navigation equipment consisted of a clock and a compass, but during her 29-year Maine career she suffered only two groundings and two collisions, which was a seagoing miracle considering she made a total of about 5,500 trips and about 40 per cent of them were in the fog. She had to make 63 course changes in each 55 mile trip. A chore and a half by any standard.

Of course, I didn't realize it at the time, but I was witnessing and taking a part in the closing of one of the most significant and romantic spans in the history of Maine. The J.T. Morse was to make her last trip in 1933 and give way to a new kind of transportation—trucks.

I manned the store's small truck and sometimes did a favor for a local man who asked me to drop off some packages. I later found I was delivering illegal whiskey. If my father knew, he would roll over in his grave.

We said good-bye to the J.T. Morse and the glory days of steamers. It was sad, but then I realized my mother made her first trip here from Boston arriving on the J.T. Morse and later eloped with my my father. If she hadn't done it, I couldn't possibly be writing this article.

Ed. Note—Local rumor has it that if you pass close aboard of Bill in his sloop, Flying Frenchman, he can still be enticed into passing a visiting yachtsman an occasional round, brown-wrapped "package".

The above story was written by Bill Benson who grew up in Seawall.

The following recipes from the Family Favorites put out by the Gleaner's of Manset, Maine, copyrighted in 1983

#### Sweet and Sour Pork

¼ c ketchup	1 tsp vinegar
½ tsp dry mustard	2 tsp brown sugar
1 tsp soy sauce	1 chopped green pepper
Maraschino cherries	Pineapple slices

Add the above to browned pork pieces and simmer approximately 45 minutes.

Miriam Klausky

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#### Elva's Salmon Patties

1 can salmon	2 or 3 eggs
8 or 10 crackers, crushed	salt and pepper

Mix ingredients and form into patties and fry

Robena Smith