the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society

E. Buell

2019 – 2020

THE YEAR(S) IN REVIEW

In the year 2020, not much at S-SHS can be considered normal.

- All of our Bicentennial programs, except the Historic House Project, were canceled or will be re-scheduled to 2021.
- The Archives & Museum have not had regular hours, but individual visits may be scheduled. Please call or email to make an appointment. We continue to respond to telephone, mail, and email queries for research.

On a more positive note:

- We received a grant from the Davis Family Foundation of $8,000 for continued work on the Urann House Project. Some work was completed in the summer with more to come this spring.
- The annual Hotson scholarship to a Sumner Memorial High School Senior was given to Lauren Hanna for 2019 and Sydnie Cunningham for 2020.
- The Society was chosen as a host site in the Island Institute Island Fellow program. In March, S-SHS made application to the Institute, and in April we were notified of our acceptance as one of five host sites to be named in this year's cycle. Our Island Fellow, Raina Sciocchetti, joined us in September to provide support for ongoing projects and services and to develop new programs and

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Margaret (Peg) Walker, who died July 21, 2019 at age 96 in Aiken, South Carolina. When Peg lived in Sullivan, she was very active in the community and served on the board of S-SHS in addition to many other local roles. ***Continued on Page 4.***

Visit our website at:
www.sullivansorrentohistory.org

Or find us on Facebook:
Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society

Phone:
207-422-0995

Email:
info@sullivansorrentohistory.org

Historic Urann House
Route 1 in Sullivan

Visit our museum and archives in the Sorrento–Sullivan Recreation Center or tour the Urann House! Please call (207) 422-0995 or email gandjedwards@gwi.net for an appointment.

Board President: Gary Edwards
Vice President: Jeanne Edwards
Treasurer: Lynn Dunbar-Murphy
Secretary: Margaret Thurston
Programs: Jeanne Edwards
Scholarship Coordinators:
Gerald Gordon
Lynn Dunbar-Murphy
Curator: vacant
Board Members:
Margaret Thurston
Gerald Gordon

THE YEAR(S) IN REVIEW, Continued:

» Since 1999, the Island Fellows Program has placed college and master's degree graduates in Maine's coastal and year round communities for one to two years. Fellowships provide a unique opportunity for recent graduates to apply their skills and gain experience helping to build sustainability within communities whose way of life and identity face many challenges.

Raina comes from Northern California and has been in Maine to attend Unity College, where she recently graduated. In the fall, she assisted with ongoing project work and improved our online presence with renovations to the website and Facebook pages. Priorities for the coming year include working to develop new programs with an emphasis on virtual opportunities due to COVID, increasing membership and recruiting and supporting volunteers to help with our mission, and working with partner organizations to improve and market services in our region.

This program comes with a cash match. Donations to help with that would be greatly appreciated.

2019

2019 was a typical year for the Society. While we were not able to make as much progress on our major projects as I would have liked, we held open hours for the Archives and Museum through the summer, offered quality programs, and assisted researchers in learning about local history and solving family mysteries.

S-SHS hosted four well attended programs:

» **June** – An Nguyen, former S-SHS intern and doctoral candidate at the University of Maine presented the program "Vietnam: Beyond A War" about Vietnam, its people and history.

» **July** – Sarah Redmond, founder of Springtide Seaweed in Gouldsboro, introduced the audience to the cultivation and nutritional value of seaweed.

» **August** – We spent a relaxing summer evening at the Granite Garden on Whalesback Road with Obadiah Buell. After a picnic next to the quarry pond, Obie talked about his family history on the property and his newly formed non-profit, The Granite Art Garden, created to preserve and provide educational opportunities about the granite industry and organic gardening.

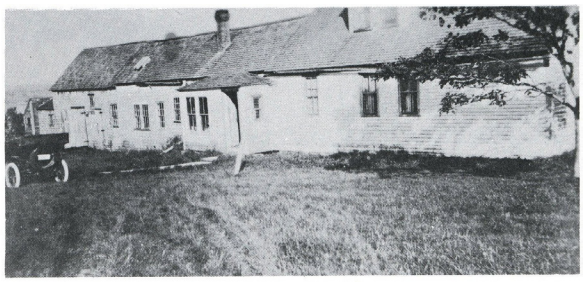
» **November** – Curt Bessette and Jenn Kurtz presented "A Few Seconds With Our Fathers," a musical tribute to their WWII veteran fathers. The program, a collaboration with Frenchman's Bay Library, included favorite songs of the era as well as original works of a more personal nature.

- Gary Edwards, S-SHS President

THE HISTORIC HOUSE PROJECT

S-SHS and partnering organizations are creating a database of historic homes in our area. We are concentrating on homes between Hancock through Gouldsboro with emphasis on homes built prior to 1820.

In the first phase of the project, we reached out to as many early homes as we could think of and received replies from about a dozen homeowners who wanted to participate. They filled out a questionnaire and are working with S-SHS volunteers to explore the history of their homes. Unfortunately, our research efforts have been hampered by resources being unavailable due to COVID-19 restrictions and closures. The next steps of the project include installing signage, publishing on our website, and sharing the project in other historical publications.



Western view of Blink Bonnie—Bragdon farmhouse.

The Bragdon House in Sorrento was in the Bragdon family, one of the earliest families in Sorrento. S-SHS has been working with Bragdon descendants on genealogical updates.

The Johnson House in East Sullivan is one of the original Johnson homes and is still owned by a Johnson descendant.

Join Us For History Hour

The Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society is announcing a new series of programs "History Hour with the Sullivan–Sorrento Historical Society." The programs will be presented Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m., meeting monthly. All are welcome and meetings are free to attend. Please visit our website sullivansorrentohistory.org to register or contact us for more details.

A Tour Through Time: History of Sullivan & Sorrento in Old Photos

February 24 at 7:00 p.m. – Put on your history hat and join us for a trip through town history and the historic photos in our collection, guided by Gary Edwards. Participation and questions encouraged.

Do you have an idea for a program or is there a history that you'd like to share? Contributions and guest speakers are welcome! Please contact Raina at rsciocchetti@islandinstitute.org.

Margaret Hildebrandt Avey Walker
1922 - 2019

Margaret (Peg) Walker died on July 21, 2019, at age 96, in Aiken, South Carolina, where she had gone to live near a daughter in her later years. Peg was born on December 21, 1922, the daughter of an Ohio State University philosophy professor and a mother from a farm family. Peg's mother died when she was thirteen, after suffering from the effects of childhood rheumatic fever. Peg's father remarried three years later, bringing her three stepsisters. She remained close to her father until his death.

Peg attended a progressive high school, established by Ohio State University. She went to college in Granville, Ohio at Denison University. After college and during World War II, Peg worked with the enlisted personnel who worked on the Manhattan Project in Los Alamo, New Mexico. Returning to Columbus, Peg married Harvey Walker, Jr. After the marriage, Peg earned a Master's Degree in Psychology at Ohio State. Harvey completed his PhD at the same time. She and Harvey raised five children in St. Louis, Missouri while she taught and was heavily involved in volunteer efforts.

In 1970, Peg and Harvey divorced, and Peg returned to full-time teaching. At this time, she also attended graduate school and earned a special education teaching certificate. Peg sold her house in St. Louis and moved to Sullivan, a location she had chosen, and she spent the happiest time of her life while living there. She bought a 150-year-old farmhouse on the Bert Gray Road (which may have belonged to A.D. White in the 19th century) and hired local people to repair it. She loved her house.

While Peg lived in Sullivan, she quickly became involved in community events. She was on the Mountain View school board for 12 years, the board of Frenchman Bay Library, and also joined the board of the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society. She was Grand Marshall one year in the Sullivan Fourth of July parade. Peg also enjoyed Monteux Concerts, the Schoodic Peninsula, and the Sculpture Symposium.

Eventually Peg moved to Aiken, South Carolina. At the time of her death, she was predeceased by one of her sons, and leaves four children, sixteen grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Contributions in Peg's memory may be made to the educational organization closest to your heart.

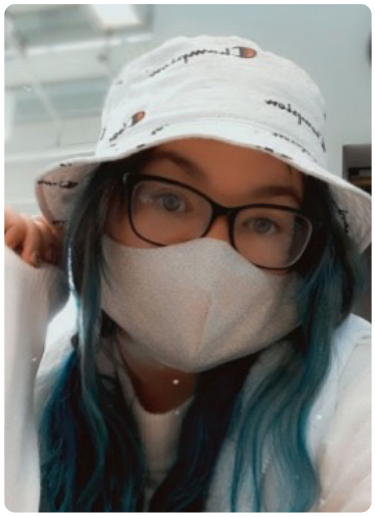
S-SHS SCHOLARSHIPS

2019 - Lauren Hanna

Lauren Hanna, a graduate of Sumner Memorial High School, was the 2019 recipient of the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society's college scholarship. She is currently studying Elementary Education with a minor in Special Education at the University of Maine Farmington.

After graduating, Lauren plans to continue living in the Sullivan area and teach in one of the RSU 24 schools. Lauren says that attending Mountain View Elementary and Sumner Memorial taught her so much about herself and about the community, and she would love to have the same impact on other local students as her teachers at these schools have had on her. Lauren is honored to receive this scholarship as she has lived in Sullivan her entire life, and her family has been in Sullivan for many generations. We wish her the greatest success in her studies!

2020 - Sydnie Cunningham



Sydnie Cunningham, 2020 recipient of the Hotson scholarship, is majoring in business administration at Thomas College and plans to use her degree to open a business of her own.

Sydnie's interests include cooking, painting, paintballing, cosmetology, and music. With this wide variety of interests, Sydnie feels that she has multiple options for a career, and she plans on traveling the world to find something that piques her interest enough to go into it for a lifetime. She believes that in order to start a business, you need to love what you're doing because you're going to be doing it for a while. Sydnie thanks the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society for helping her move towards her dreams by helping her pay for college so that she can focus more on her studies than the college bill. We wish Sydnie the best of luck in her studies!

Calling all Old House Lovers

Do you have an old house, want to have an old house, or just love old houses? S-SHS is partnering with Les Fossel to offer a class in old house restoration. Les Fossel is one of Maine's foremost experts on early buildings, and his award-winning business has specialized in preserving our early buildings since 1975. In small group format, the class will convene online to delve into the world of old house restoration right in and through the study of their own homes. The course will begin as soon as there are enough participants. Please contact us if interested.

Have you seen our new website?

www.sullivansorrentohistory.org

This year, we will be working on making more of the information housed in our collection accessible online.

STATEHOOD ACHIEVED:
THE SULLIVAN STORY

On March 15, 1820, Maine was accepted as the twenty-third state in the Union. William King, who had been president of the 1819 Constitutional Convention in the Maine District, was declared Acting Governor until the April vote. Maine entered the Union as a free state, but was only accepted as such due to the Missouri Compromise which accepted Missouri as a slave state, a compromise almost rejected by the proponents of separation in Maine who did not want to be any part of accepting the spread of slavery. Also, hovering over the heads of the separatists was the Separation Act of Massachusetts giving the District of Maine only a short period of time to achieve statehood.

While we may remember the Missouri Compromise from our high school years, not many of us learned of the struggles and history of gaining statehood prior to 1820. Even in the late 1700's, various people in the Maine District supported separation from Massachusetts. The first Convention for Separation was held in Falmouth (Portland) on October 5, 1785. A second convention was set for the following year. These conventions with towns from across the District sending delegates continued to be held until the Separation Act was accepted by the voters. Following that vote, the Maine Constitutional Convention met in October of 1819 to write a constitution. (Sullivan Town Records of April 16, 1818 voted to pay Jabez Simpson for his expenses incurred in attending one of the Conventions).

Prior to the 1807 vote, Jabez Simpson and Samuel Ingalls, selectmen of Sullivan, which also included Waukeag Neck and present day Hancock, posted this notice, "Shall the Senators and Representatives of the district, the District of Maine make application to the Legislature (Massachusetts) for the consent to a separation of the District of Maine from the commonwealth of Massachusetts that the former may be erected into a State" (Sullivan Town Records, March 18, 1807).

Sullivan Votes for Separation:	Yeas	Nays (Banks, p. 230)
1792	6	13
1797	6	9
1807	9	34
May, 1816	13	25
Sept., 1816	7	18
July 26, 1819	30	33

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Left: Mill Pond, located on the corner of Route 1 and the Bert Grey Road (Rt 200), a fixture in Sullivan Harbor since the beginning. Right: Treasure Island in Sorrento before the causeway was built, photo probably taken from the vicinity of Blink Bonny golf course.

THE SULLIVAN STORY Continued.

Sullivan Town Reports of September 6, 1819 show that Town Clerk, John Sargent, Paul Dudley Sargent's son, reported the town votes on separation. George Hinman, a selectman, was approved to be the delegate to the 1819 Constitutional Convention to be held in Portland.

The new State Constitution went out to all the towns for a vote in December of 1919. Hancock County voted 686 yays and 98 nays. The new Constitution was accepted. It should be noted that the Massachusetts Constitution had discriminated against Roman Catholics and Jews. The Maine Constitution being more liberal, guaranteed "absolute freedom of religion." The Maine Constitution also guaranteed "freedom of speech and press" whereas under the Massachusetts Constitution only "freedom of the press" prevailed (Banks, 154 – 155). Back in 1762, when Sullivan applied for acceptance as a town, the Massachusetts Legislature responded that they needed to "Settle more protestants…." (Williamson. P. 514, 1762 response to New Bristol [Sullivan] seeking incorporation).

Sullivan's votes were consistent with other coastal towns in the Maine District who were generally opposed to separation. These were Federalist towns with strong political, religious, and economic ties to Massachusetts. The "newcomers" to the District were mostly Republicans, inland farmers, Methodists, and Baptists who lacked the history of roots and strong connections with Massachusetts. Only in the final vote did Hancock, Washington, and Lincoln counties join the supporters of separation.

- Jeanne Edwards

Sources:
Banks, Ronald F. Maine Becomes a State; The Movement to Separate Maine from Massachusetts, 1785 – 1820., Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1970.
Sullivan Town Reports, Picton Press, CDs, no longer available.

Volunteer Corner

There are so many small things that our staff would never be able to accomplish without the help of volunteers and members who are willing to lend a hand. Some of our current volunteer opportunities include (but are not limited to):

◇ **Historic Photo Collection** – Work to record our collection of historic photos into a database of information about the photos.*
◇ **Sullivan & Sorrento COVID-19 Collection** – Help us to organize a collection of individual and collective experiences from our community during this world-wide historical moment.*
◇ **Paul Urann House Restoration Project** – Assist with various interior and exterior clean-up and restoration tasks.
◇ **Archival Assistance** – Assist with organization and research tasks, may focus work around topics of one's choosing.

Pictured: Jerry and Ann Maske of East Sullivan with the historic side light windows from the Urann House. The Maskes volunteered to restore the windows that had deteriorated with age. They replaced damaged glass and re-glazed each pane in the windows, made castings to replace damaged or missing decorative florets and bows, and painted the metal in the original gold color.

** These tasks can be done from home.*
If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Gary Edwards at (207) 422-0995 or gandjedwards@gwi.net.