2022—2023 Newsletter

Planning for the Future with History in Mind

2022 was a very productive year for us with the conclusion of our Island Fellow Raina Sciocchetti's term, funding a Summer Internship, the hiring of a Communications Coordinator, and beginning the visioning process for our organization going forward.

We will continue that process into 2023, buoyed by the recent designation of Hancock and Washington Counties as the Downeast National Heritage Area. A vital part of the planning process is dependent on your input, as members, and stakeholders in the community.

This spring we will be conducting surveys, polling, and gathering feedback from the public on *YOUR* ideas and what you want to see happening at your historical society. Our history is our heritage and we wouldn't have that without you, our community members.

Reunited at last! Captain Jeremiah Wooster's compass from the ship Azalia, donated to SSHS in 1974, was reunited this year with his portrait, donated by descendants.

Archives & Museum

Open Tuesdays

June to September

1776 US-1, Sullivan, ME 04664
(207) 422-0995

info@sullivansorrentohistory.org
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President's Report 2022

With the diminished effects of COVID-19, S-SHS has had a productive year, the major emphasis being the updating of our museum and archives.

The Archives and Museum were open for regular hours for most of the summer.
Individual visits may still be scheduled by calling us at 422-0995 or e-mail at gandjedwards@gwi.net or info@sullivansorrentohistory.org

Our Island Fellow, Raina Sciocchetti, with the help of many volunteers, coordinated an ongoing effort to upgrade the Archives and Museum.
Listed below are the main components of the project:

- Develop a more complete inventory of items in the collections.
- Continued culling out of surplus items in both rooms. Many items of more interest to other organizations have been sent to them.
- The addition of shelving, donated by Home Depot, has enlarged our storage space.
- The modification of display cases to make them more mobile, making it much easier to keep the exhibits fresh.
- Updating the main display in the museum.
- Reorganize and create finding aids for files in the archive that tell the stories of our past and the families that created those stories.

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Programs: This was another year of virtual programs. With the technical skill of our Island Fellow, Raina, we presented a series of "History Hour" programs done by Zoom and attended by members and friends from all over. We also had three in-person programs.

Note: many of these programs are available to view at www.sullivansorrentohistory.org

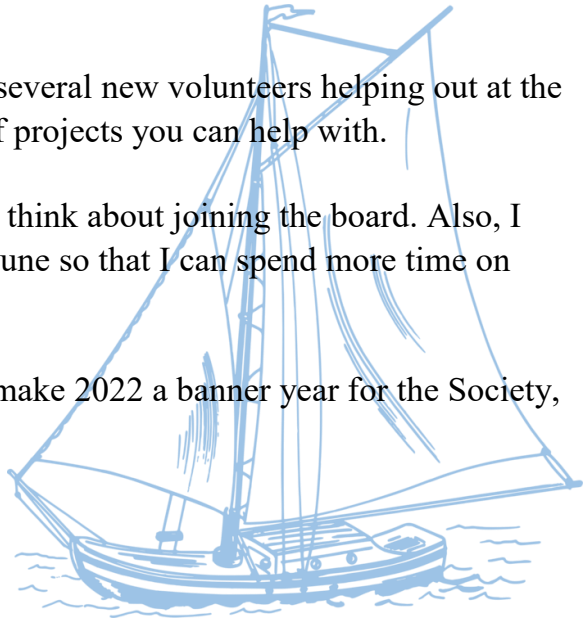
Urann House Project: With the exception of re-roofing the garage little was done this year. It will be a priority this year.

Volunteers: We can always use help. This summer we had several new volunteers helping out at the museum. If you have an interest in history we have plenty of projects you can help with.

Directors: We need to fill out our board of directors. Please think about joining the board. Also, I will not be running for reelection at the Annual Meeting in June so that I can spend more time on projects.

In closing, I want to thank everyone who pitched in to help make 2022 a banner year for the Society, despite COVID-19.

Gary Edwards
S-SHS President



Hotson Scholarship Awarded to Rachael Hastey

Leslie and Mary Hotson were long-time summer residents of Sorrento who bought land from the town and built a summer cottage there in the 1930s. The Hotson Scholarship, established through a sizeable donation from the Hotsons, and investment and direction by the Board of Directors since, is awarded to a graduating senior at Sumner Memorial High School who is from Sullivan or Sorrento, who has earned distinction in the study of history, and intends to attend an accredited college or university. The scholarship is granted upon completion of the first term or semester of college attended.

Rachael is a 2022 graduate of Sumner and was class valedictorian. Her parents are Ryan and Kathrin Hastey. Here is how she described her first year at college:

"I am attending Cedarville University in Ohio and majoring in primary education. While my current plan is to graduate and pursue a career in teaching, I am also adding an entrepreneurship minor and am excited for the opportunities that may come with that as well. I have been enjoying the community Cedarville has to offer and meeting new people from different parts of the country. I miss Maine and my family and friends a lot, but I am excited to take back home all that I will have learned and experienced from my time here at Cedarville."

Dedication: Gerald "Gerry" Gordon

We would like to dedicate this year's newsletter to Gerry, who has moved to Maryland to be near family.

When Gerry retired from his career as a history professor he and Betty moved back to Sullivan, their hometown. Since that time he has served S-SHS in a number of roles, including president and long time board member. He rarely missed a program or meeting, often manning the membership table. He manned the booth at Sullivan Days, kept the lawn at the Urann House well-mowed even into his 80s and was available to help out whenever needed. He will be missed.

For those who want to stay in touch, his address is: 11584 Saggsville Rd Apt 319, Fulton, MD 20759.

Island Institute Fellowship Concludes

A few years ago, Gary Edwards, who is always out meeting and talking to people, ran into a Bike-Bus program for bike repair and riding, newly developed and managed in Milbridge by an Island Fellow. What's an Island Fellow? he wondered. He found out that for over twenty years the Island Institute has offered fellowships in Maine's island and coastal communities to strengthen and sustain local resources. Any nonprofit can apply for an Island Fellow, and Gary did.

A year later, the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society welcomed Raina Sciocchetti, our very own Island Fellow who was with us two years. Raina completed her Fellowship in August and left us with an historical society improved beyond what we ever expected when she arrived.

- She bumped up our presence on Facebook with frequent fun and interesting bits of Sullivan and Sorrento's history. People have loved it and have responded with fun and interesting bits of history of their own.
- She looked under the hood of our very out-of-date website and attacked it with mysterious technological thingies like "search engine optimization" and "parallax scrolling." Its new, fresh design is attractive and easy to use!
- She created a monthly online "History Hour" for winter evenings when virtual gathering and information-sharing perked us all up. The speakers gave us new insights into Sullivan and Sorrento's past and the feedback we got told us this new program was a hit! Look for our 2023 programs on page 8!
- Over months of hard work, she transformed our jumbled collection of Sullivan and Sorrento's history from stacks of mystery boxes and piles of unrelated papers to a well organized, labeled system. She found treasures we didn't know we had! Now we can locate things much easier and care for them properly.
- She rejuvenated our museum! She muscled big display cases into tight corners, sometimes with help, and filled them with treasures that had been out of sight for twenty or more years. New labels, more lighting. She made us shine!

We hated to see her go!

Raina's skills and hard work over two years – during a pandemic – gives Sullivan and Sorrento a great jumping-off place to plan for the future of the historical society.

CONNECT

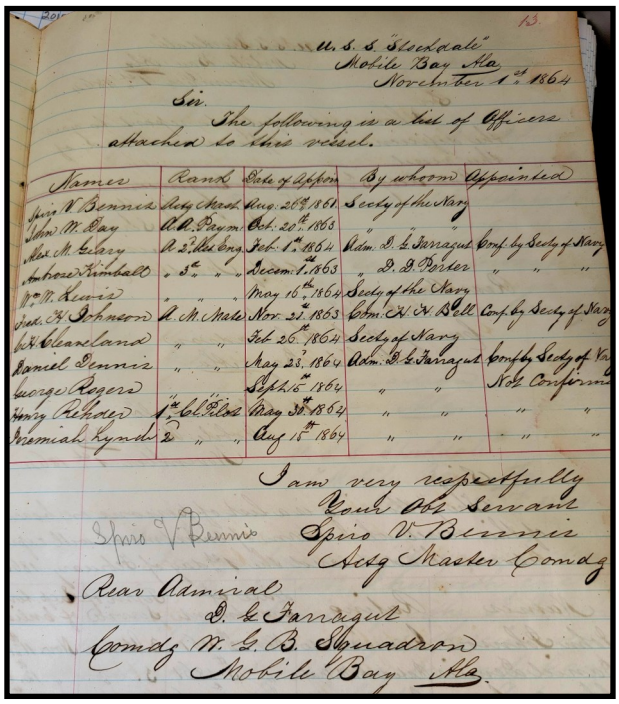
2022 EMCI Summer Digitization Internship

By Tobey Connor, University of Maine – Interdisciplinary Studies, Maine Studies

I completed my summer internship with the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society, which lasted for about 3 months to the tune of 200 hours. The internship, funded by a grant from the Eastern Maine Conservation Initiative, was focused on digitizing items in the archives, including photographs, letters, documents, artifacts, and more.

I entered items into our museum management software along with detailed descriptions, photographs, and scans. Two of the large boxed collections are completely digitized: the Bennis Collection and the Urann Collection, as well as work on several of the family files and films.

Given my background in museum work, my continuing academic journey in Maine Studies at the University of Maine, career goals, and interest in local history, this internship was hugely beneficial to my learning experience, and I am proud to be able to continue working with the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society.



Among the items digitized were Captain Spiro Bennis' Civil War letters from his time in the US Navy.

Communications Coordinator Hired

This year the Historical Society hired its first paid staff member, part-time Communications Coordinator Tobey Connor. Tobey joined us in June as a summer intern where she set her skills to digitizing more of our valuable documents.

Since August she has managed our internet presence and will continue our popular History Hour presentations in the winter. In December, she presented on the history of the Nelly Butler hauntings at a book event co-hosted with Frenchman Bay Library. She's also coordinated getting our annual newsletter sent out and writes periodic articles for the Sullivan and Sorrento monthly newsletters.

She brings extensive experience in media management, online development, and communications, as well as genealogy, research, and museum experience. The history of Downeast Maine is her great passion and the focus of her studies as a full-time student at the University of Maine. Tobey and her family live in Sullivan where her two children attend the Charles Sumner Learning Campus.

This is a baby step for the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society, which has been a 100% volunteer effort up to this point. From generous donations and bequests we have a small investment fund with the Maine Community Foundation that allows us to fund this new position for six hours a week.

50 YEARS AND COUNTING! WHAT'S NEXT?

The leadership of the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society, now in its 50th year, decided it was time to step back and take at look at where we have been, where we are, where we want to go. In modern parlance, you may have heard this called "visioning" or "strategic planning." This self-examination process is critical in defining what resources are available to the historical society and how best to use them.

Gary and Jeanne Edwards, who have been the leadership core of the historical society for more than a decade, are stepping down from their leadership roles in order to focus on specific projects at the historical society. We need to recruit new leadership, new board members, and new volunteers.

With the help of the Island Institute's Community Leadership Team, the historical society got to work in July. Kate Tagai of the Island Institute led us through a SWOT activity: an examination of our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

The result of that first workshop was a to-do list for the next few months:

Tasks:	***To Date:***
1. Need to hire a part-time person to maintain the technology and internet presence that our Island Fellow established.	Completed.
2. Prepare for transition from the work of the Island Fellow back to volunteers.	Ongoing. Have completed training on new manual for managing archives and museum.
3. Collaborate more with the Frenchman Bay Library.	Ongoing. In December, held book program and author signing. Well attended.
4. Revisit our mission statement: define our relevance in the community. a) Relevance b) Function c) Goals d) 2-5 year plan	Not yet done.
5. Find out what people in the community want for services from the historical society via social media, surveys, and other input.	Planned for Spring 2023.
6. Create awareness in the community of our resources (person-to-person).	Ongoing. Town Crier, Sorrento newsletter, posters, newspaper, etc.

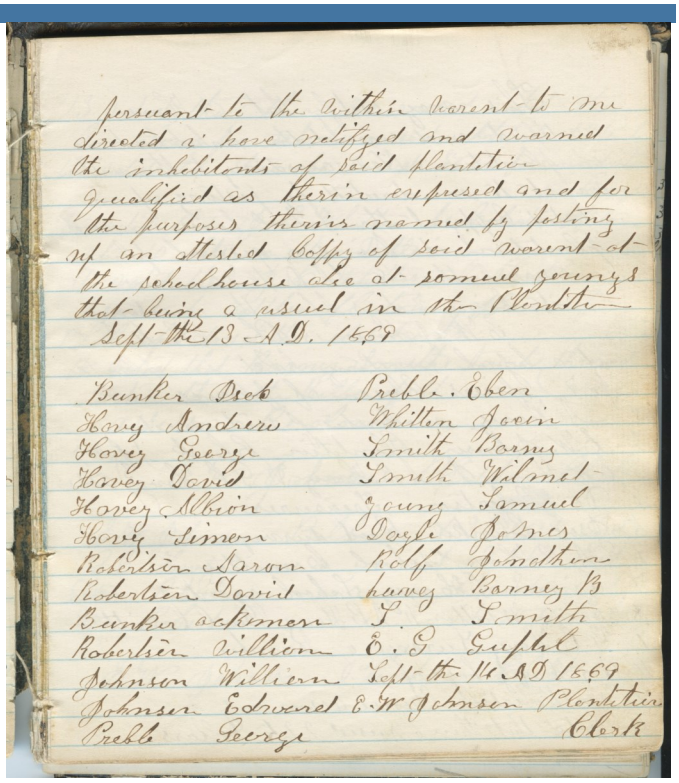
We will reconvene in March or April to map out next steps. Watch out for a survey from us—we are excited to know what our neighbors think about the purpose and goals of the historical society.

Would you like to join us to review the survey results and talk about the future?

Let us hear from you – via snail mail, via e-mail, Facebook, telephone!

All ideas are welcome.

Plantation 7 Records Discovered


pursuant to the within warrant to me directed I have notified and warned the inhabitants of said plantation qualified as therein exposed and for the purposes therein named by posting up an attested Copy of said warrant at the schoolhouse in Samuel Young's that being a usual in the Plantation Sept the 13 A.D. 1869

Bunker Dick
Hovey Andrew
Hovey George
Hovey David
Hovey Albion
Hovey Simeon
Robertson Aaron
Robertson David
Bunker Ackmore
Robertson William
Johnson William
Johnson Edward
Preble George
Preble Eben
Whitten Jacob
Smith Barney
Smith Wilmot
Young Samuel
Doyle Jones
Wolf Johnathan
Hovey Barney B
Smith I.
Smith E. J.
Sept the 14 A.D. 1869
E. W. Johnson Plantation Clerk

Last fall, we got an e-mail from a Mr. Tracy from Florida who was vacationing in the area with his wife and two children. He had ancestors from the area and wondered if we would be able to find any information about them? "Tracy" is one of the oldest names in the Sullivan-Gouldsboro area. Well, of course we could give him information and we'd be glad to meet him at our Archives! Little did we know just how much information we would be able to provide.

Last summer, Raina, our Island Fellow, unearthed a humble, black-and-white-speckled composition notebook, the kind that was always kicking around the house a hundred years ago to write recipes or for kids to practice their penmanship or to keep track of egg production and sales. This particular composition book did have a child's penmanship and recipes, but it also contained the original-and-only handwritten records of Plantation 7! It recorded the minutes of the annual and special meetings of Plantation 7 between 1865 and 1884, including lists of voters and school children in Plantation 7 by year.

Plantation 7 was a landlocked township, bounded on the east by Steuben, on the south by Gouldsboro, on the north by Plantation 10 and on the west by Sullivan. It was annexed to Sullivan in 1895.

Back to Mr. Tracy, our visitor from Florida — as we piled up family files and maps and obituaries, we added the Plantation 7 record book for him to look at. Jackpot! He not only found plenty of Tracy/Tracey names in the book, he found a hand-drawn diagram of a crossroad in the western part of Plantation 7 with a house marked "Tracy." That house was a reference point for a road and line between Steuben and Plantation 7. Our visitor now knew exactly where some of his ancestors had lived and he knew which Tracy voted or went to school in Plantation 7 year by year. It doesn't get better than that for a family researcher!

When the Tracy family left the historical society, they headed to Tracey's Seafood for a bite of lunch and maybe a meeting of cousins!

Did You Know?

Our story goes back thousands of years and includes prehistoric finds such as this full grooved stone axe dating to the Early to Middle Archaic Period. That's 5,000 to 9,000 years ago!

Found in present-day Sullivan, this tool would have been used for several things, but mainly chopping, carving, and splitting wood. A split wooden handle would have gone around the groove.

Solving Mysteries with Social Media

In our collections, there are sometimes things that were donated long ago that were mysteries then, and still are. Maybe they were tools in the barn of a long-dead ancestor, or an old photo album found in an attic, or artifacts discovered while gardening.

Using social media has its advantages and disadvantages, but thanks to the "hive mind" of Facebook, we've been able to enlist the help of community members young and old to finally identify some of these mystery objects.

Since we began our "What Is It? Wednesdays" feature in September, our Facebook followers have helped to identify nearly 20 items including tools from various trades, artifacts, and photographs. By identifying these things, they are given a name, purpose, and place in our history.

We look forward to continuing this series and hope you'll join in!

Thanks to input from our followers on Facebook, this mystery tool was identified as a cooper's bunghole borer, used in barrel making.

Upcoming Events!

History Hour Winter 2023 Schedule

Held via Zoom online. To register, visit our website or Facebook page.

January 18th, 7pm:
Marlinspike: Knotty Work with Tim Whitten
Tim is one of the world's few experts on marlinspike, the craft of rope work and knots. Tim will discuss the history of this ancient skill, share his personal story, and demonstrate the tools and products of his award-winning work.

February 15th, 7pm:
Making Maine: Statehood and the War of 1812 with Dr. Joshua Smith
Dr. Smith is a professor of maritime history at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. His recent book focuses on Maine's unique early geopolitical position and how the War of 1812 dramatically shaped the push for statehood. Dr. Smith will discuss this history as it pertains to Sullivan and Frenchman Bay, and in particular the role of Paul Dudley Sargent.

March 15th, 7pm:

Sorrento History with Sam Younger, topic TBA

April 19th, 7pm:

TBA

Summer 2023 Programs (In-Person)

- Baron de St. Castine with Dr. Mary Okin
- Roundtable Social with Rev. Charles Joy
- And more, check for updates!
- What would you like to see?

Thank you for making our 50th year a great one!

Board of Directors

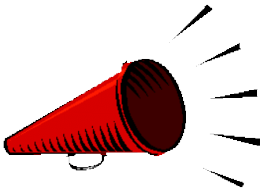
President—Gary Edwards
Vice President—Jeanne Edwards
Treasurer—Lynn Dunbar-Murphy
Secretary—Margaret Thurston
Director—Vernon Campbell

Staff

Communications Coordinator—Tobey Connor

SSHS is actively seeking new board members and volunteers!

Please call (207) 422-0995 or email info@sullivansorrentohistory.org if interested.



Dues for the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society are being collected for the period of January 2023 through December 2023

Enclosed are my dues as checked:

_____ Individual $15.00

_____ Family $20.00

_____ Life Member $100.00

_____ Donation

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

_____

Email: _____

Mail this form with your dues to:

Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society
P.O. Box 44
Sullivan, ME 04664

thank you!

Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society
P.O. Box 44
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