2023—2024 Newsletter

the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society

A Tale of Two Stones

Daniel Sullivan was one of the original New England settlers of this town, then called New Bristol in the 1760s. As local militia captain, he led his men against the British at Castine and Machias during the Revolutionary War.

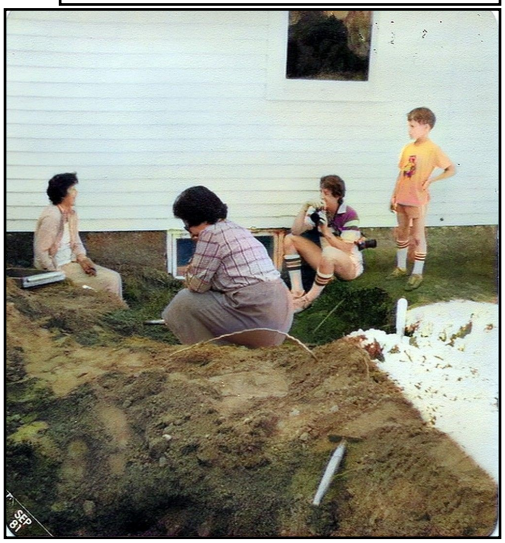
The British captured him here in 1781, burned his home, and imprisoned him on their prison ship 'The Jersey'. His brother, John Sullivan, who was in the Continental Congress, negotiated his release but Daniel was so feeble from the imprisonment that he died on the ship before it could return him.

To honor him, the town petitioned to change its name to Sullivan in 1789, and pledged to take care of his widow and children.

The 1828 stone in its wheeled cart in the museum. The inscriptions reads: *Capt. Daniel Sullivan, a Revolutionary patriot taken prisoner by the British —— New York —- Refused par—- Died Apr. 1782—Abigail his wife and daughter of John and Hannah Bean—died Apr. 1828 AE. 81yrs.*

The impressive colonial-style slate stone in his memory at Sorrento's Doane Cemetery was erected in the 1870s by his great-grandson John Emery, reportedly after the original stone was damaged. The original limestone marker had been erected in 1828 upon the death of his widow, Abigail, but was seemingly lost.

Over a century later in 1981, the original stone was found in a most unexpected way. The Simon family had just moved into the old Emery house and were digging to install a septic tank when the backhoe hit a stone. The pieces were carefully removed, and another piece was found nearby shoring up a cellar window half buried. The stone was pieced back together and is now on display in our museum.



The Simon family carefully excavating the stone from their backyard, Sept. 1981.

Archives & Museum

Open Tuesdays & Saturdays
June to September
(and by appointment anytime)
1776 US-1/PO Box 44
Sullivan, ME 04664
(207) 422-0995/266-4448

info@sullivansorrentohistory.org
www.sullivansorrentohistory.org

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President's Report 2023

Coming out of COVID, 2023 has been a time of catching up and moving forward.

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

The annual Hotson Scholarship to a Sumner Senior was awarded to Elaina Thomas. See separate story.

Directors: Six new directors were elected to the board at the annual meeting. Welcome Judy Ashby, Tobey Connor, Darla Crocker, George and DJ Deans, and Sam Younger. It is the plan to have a more active board in the coming year to continue moving the society in a positive direction. There is still room for more board members, who now can be appointed by the board. The board will be creating some committees to address ongoing needs and we would like non-board members to sit on these as well.

With the departure of Raina Sciochetti, our Island Institute Fellow for two years, much of the work has been continued by current volunteers and our contracted Communications Coordinator Tobey Connor. We congratulate Raina who has since completed her Master's degree from Simmons College in Library Science (Archival).

Social Media: Tobey has continued the progress started by Raina of improving our social media presence. Our Facebook and web page have continued to be popular. We can now take memberships and donations online and are working on making some of our collections available online.

Programs: We presented a series of "History Hour" programs done by Zoom over the winter that were attended by members and friends from all over. We also had four programs in-person this year. Many of these programs are available to view at www.sullivansorrentohistory.org .

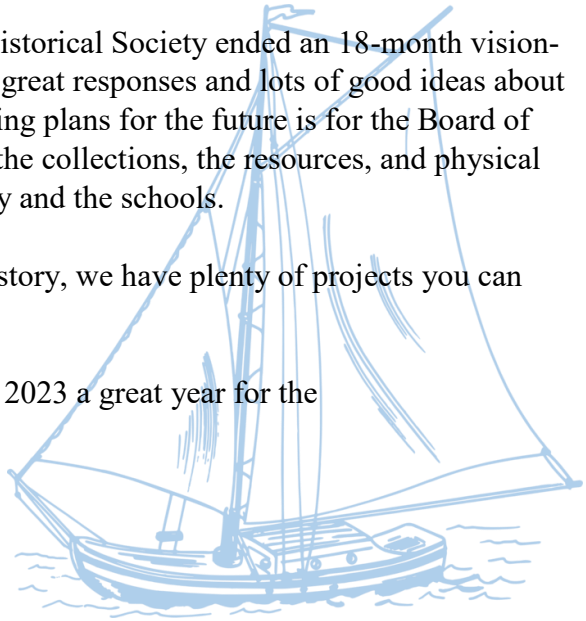
Urann House project: This project has been on hold for two years but will be our priority project for 2024. We will be appointing a committee to help design and implement the restoration of the interior of the house. If you have an interest in being a part of this process, please contact me.

In collaboration with the Island Institute, the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society ended an 18-month visioning process this summer with a community survey. We got some great responses and lots of good ideas about what interests Sullivan and Sorrento people. The last step in making plans for the future is for the Board of Directors to use those responses to set priorities: how to manage the collections, the resources, and physical assets like the Urann House, as well as outreach to the community and the schools.

Volunteers: We can always use help. If you have an interest in history, we have plenty of projects you can help with.

In closing, I want to thank everyone who pitched in to help make 2023 a great year for the Society.

Gary Edwards, President



Hotson Scholarship Awarded to Elaina Thomas

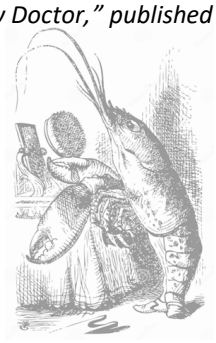
Leslie and Mary Hotson were long-time summer residents of Sorrento who bought land from the town and built a summer cottage there in the 1930s. The Hotson Scholarship, established through a sizeable donation from the Hotsons, which has been invested and managed by the Board of Directors since, is awarded 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.

"Hello, my name is Elaina Thomas and I am a Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society Scholar! I have lived in Sullivan my entire life and graduated from Sumner Memorial High School as the Salutatorian for the class of 2023. I am currently a full-time student at the University of Maine at Machias, majoring in Elementary Education with a Psychology Minor.

I spent most of my younger years attending the nighttime readings at the Library in the Sullivan Sorrento Recreation Center, playing on the community playground, and shopping at my favorite thrift store downstairs. During high school I took part in a cleaning of the building with my classmates eager to clean the building that made my childhood better! I am so grateful to have been chosen for this scholarship as it is helping me to receive higher education. I am loving college so far and I cannot wait to get my teaching degree in just a few short years! The photo is the day I moved into college!"

Congratulations to Elaina, the 2023 recipient of the Hotson Scholarship! We wish her all the best of luck in her future endeavors.

Excerpts from "The Family Book of Rare and Valuable Recipes to which is added The Completed Family Doctor," published 1845, from the Cookbook Collection of the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society:



Lobsters, how to tell freshness
Lobsters, if they have not been long taken, the claws will have a strong motion when you put your finger on the eyes and press them. The heaviest are the best.

Crust on Tea-Kettles
Keep an oyster shell in your tea-kettle, and it will prevent the formation of a crust on the inside of it, by attracting the stoney particles to itself.

Apple Pie
Pare and core the fruit . . .; which with the cores, boil with a little water till it taste well; strain and put a little sugar and a bit of bruised cinnamon, and simmer again. In the mean time place the apples in a dish a paste being put round the edge; when one layer is in, sprinkle half the sugar, and shred the lemon-peel, and squeeze some juice or a glass of cider. If the apples have lost their spirit, put in the rest of the apples, sugar and the liquor that you have boiled. Cover with paste. You may add some butter when cut, if eaten hot; or put quince-marmalade, orange-paste or cloves to flavour.
(Note: this is the entire recipe, no quantities or measurements, no time or temperature for cooking. You just had to know!)

Communications & Outreach Update for 2023

The Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society has one year under its belt with its first contractor, Communications Coordinator Tobey Crawford Connor. There was no dearth of things for Tobey to improve and expand upon. She capably picked up the communication projects put in place by Raina, such as our internet presence on social media and our website. High –performing content has been consistently posted on our Facebook page, with one post generating over 11,000 interactions when it was cross-posted by other groups. We've enjoyed growing numbers of new followers who actively engage with her postings.

Tobey added new features to our website to make it more responsive and user friendly, including online payment for memberships and donations. She created a single manageable database from multiple email lists which allows us to reach out to not just our members but to the larger community. As part of our visioning process, she helped to design and then upload a community survey to our website, yielding a greater response than the written surveys. She also designed a Nelly Butler display and has been networking with area news organizations, fellow historical societies, and the Charles M. Sumner Learning Campus.

Tobey welcomes ideas, feedback, volunteer help—reach out by calling (207) 266-4448 or emailing her at tobey@sullivansorrentohistory.org

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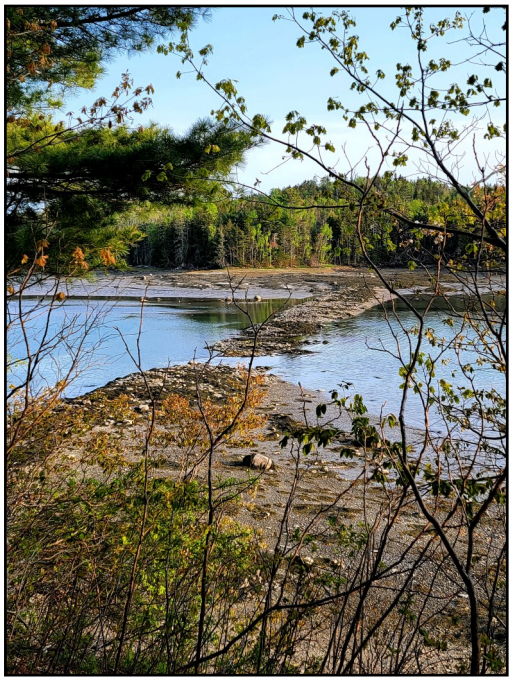
The Tide Mill Dam on Long Cove

At low tide, you might have noticed the remains of a dam across Long Cove between Sullivan and Sorrento. These are the stone remnants of a tide mill which was constructed over a three year period by some of the earliest New England settlers of the area beginning around 1762. Those first families here, including the Sullivans, Beans, and Prebles, came to take advantage of a land claim given to David Bean for lumber rights. Lumber was in high demand and had already been cleared from the southern part of the state.

As soon as Downeast was won by the British from the French in 1759, the Yankees poured in to reap the pristine natural resources of the area. The rocks to build the dam were floated from scows (small flat boats) from the shore, and the tide-powered lumber mill produced tons of product that was shipped to the other colonies as well as the West Indies. It was abandoned during the Revolution, when mills were shifted to freshwater sources for safety from continuing raids by the British. And yet, some 260 years later, the efforts of the labor of Sullivan's founders defy the persistence of both time and tides.



Remnants of the tide mill dam at low tide on Long Cove, between Route 1 and Sorrento.

Dedication: Margaret Haskell Thurston

We dedicate our 2023 newsletter to our dear friend, dedicated volunteer and board member, Margaret Thurston, who passed away on May 7 of this year. Margaret was a US Air Force veteran and sports enthusiast besides her passion for family histories and old cemeteries. She served as Secretary on the SSHS board for many years and will be missed.

1953—2023

Board of Directors

President—Gary Edwards
Vice President—Tobey Crawford Connor
Treasurer—Lynn Dunbar-Murphy
Secretary—Judy Ashby

Board Members

Darla Crocker
DJ Deans
George Deans
Jeanne Edwards
Leslie Potashner
Sam Younger

More excerpts from "The Family Book of Rare and Valuable Recipes to which is added The Completed Family Doctor," 1845:

Spinnage Pie
Prepare the paste and the sauce as for a fruit pie . . .; bake it, and fill it up, at the moment it is served, with a stuffing or filling of spinnage, with cream and sugar; glaze with a red-hot shovel, and serve.

Sneezing
To press the finger on the upper lip just below the nose, will make the severest premonitory symptoms of a sneeze pass off harmless. We have found the remedy useful many a time in creeping on game in the woods.

Upcoming Events

History Hour Winter 2024 Schedule

Held via Zoom online—free to all! To register, visit our website or Facebook page.

January 9th, 7pm:
Douaquet: The Early French in Upper Frenchman Bay
Tobey Crawford Connor
Learn about the history and significance of the Sullivan/ Sorrento area back when it was a part of French Acadia, before 1759. Also, the exciting story of how Flanders Bay got its name!

February 13th, 7pm:
Grassmere Cottage, Isaac & Lee Lawrence, & the First Wedding at the Church of the Redeemer
Sam Younger
Grassmere, the cottage in Sorrento more famously remembered as the one Frank Jones built for his mistress, had earlier history. The first owners were Isaac & Lee Lawrence, and they were responsible for planning what appears to have been the very first— and what was a most intriguing—1891 wedding held at the then-newly built Church of the Redeemer in Sorrento.

March 12th, 7pm:

Mystery Tusk: Searching for Elephants in the Maine Woods
Gary Hoyle
Join us for a fascinating book talk with former Maine Natural History Museum curator and author Gary Hoyle, who will discuss his journey of identifying a tusk found in the Maine woods, and whether it had 19th century origins, or prehistoric.

April: TBA

Dues for the Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society are being collected for the period of January 2024 through December 2024

Enclosed are my dues as checked:

_____ Individual $15.00

_____ Family $20.00

_____ Life Member $100.00

_____ Donation

Mail this form with your dues to:

Sullivan-Sorrento Historical Society
P.O. Box 44
Sullivan, ME 04664
-or-
NEW! You can now renew online on our web-site! Visit www.sullivansorrentohistory.org

Name: _____

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thank you!

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