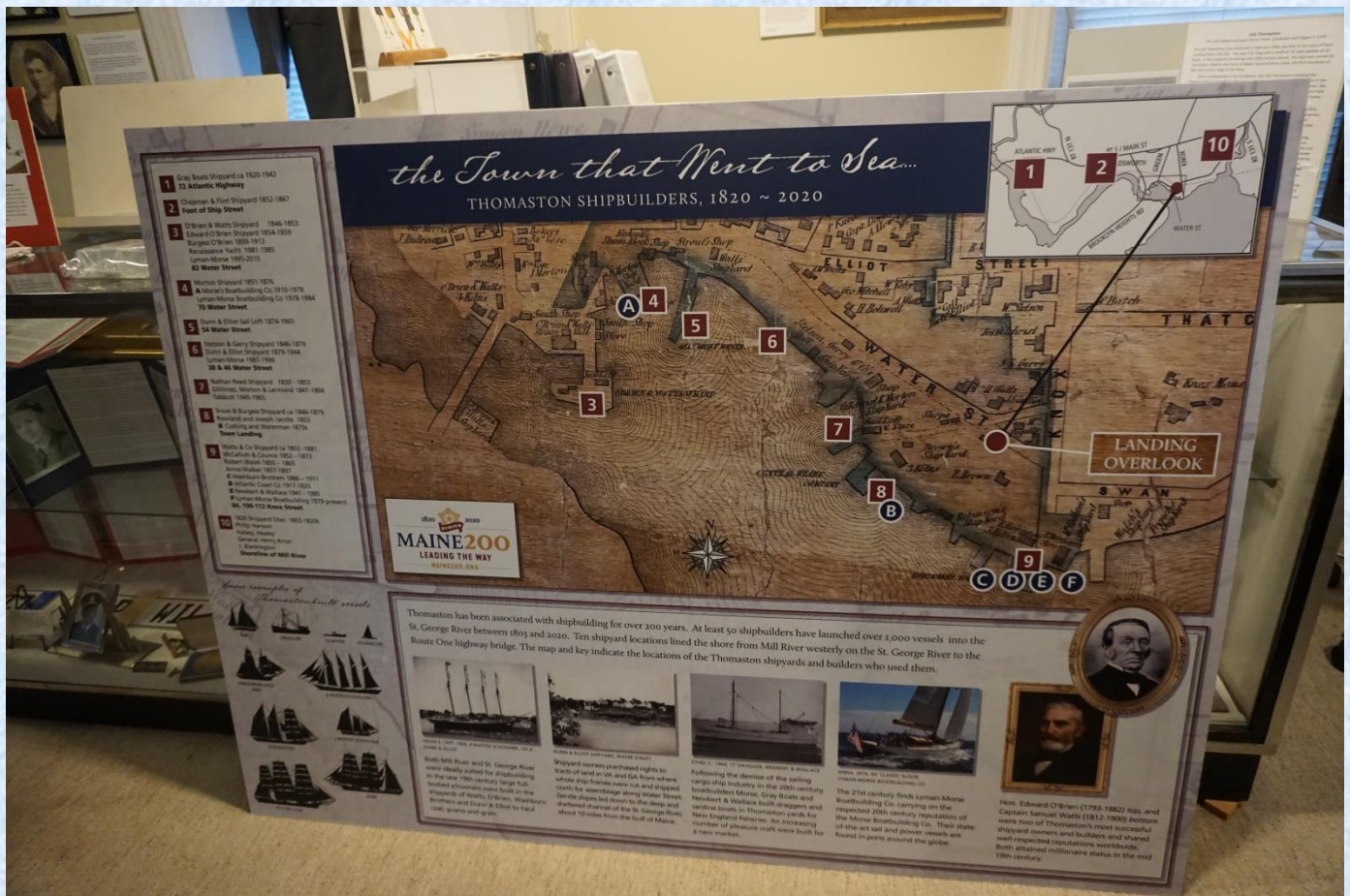


Thomaston Historical Society

Spring Newsletter No. 52 – May 2020



Above is a picture of a new plaque for the waterfront to celebrate 200 years of Ship Building in Thomaston. This was drafted by Peggy McCrea and produced along with a wonderful booklet about the history of Thomaston Ship Building through a Maine Bicentennial Grant. Unfortunately the anticipated May installation and dedication is delayed due to the pandemic. It and the booklet are now in the main room of our museum.

This is one of many activities planned for this year by the Thomaston Historical Society and by the Thomaston Maine 200 committee. Several have already been canceled. As yet, we don't know what events will take place as scheduled in the future, delayed or canceled. In addition, the Thomaston Historical Society museum is closed until it is considered safe for visitors and volunteers to reopen.

Likely our June annual meeting at which we elect the 2020-2021 Board will be canceled as well. With this newsletter is a ballot for you to mail/email so that election can take place.

Please stay safe and watch for subsequent news about how our activities will roll-out in the future.

Susan Devlin
President, Thomaston Historical Society

Summer House Tour—A Sneak Peek for 2021!

Like so many other enrichment activities here in Thomaston, in Maine and around the country, our annual Summer House Tour is postponed until June 2021. But here is a sneak peek at the special opportunity that is coming our way when we are allowed to trade Social Distancing for socializing!

Many remember Snow Marine, the sail loft, chandlery and boat storage business on Water Street. It has always been a dominating presence on the Thomaston waterfront and a beehive of business!

This property was purchased by Thomas Dunn and George Elliot in 1873. The following year Walker, Dunn and Co. erected the sail loft still on the site today. In 1965 it was sold from the family by Captain Arthur Elliot, who retired from the sea in 1908 as one of the last of Thomaston's 19th century sea captains. The property re-opened as Snow Marine in 1969 and also served as the Thomaston Outboard shop in the 1970s. Snow Marine closed in 1985.

In 2016 Claire Priest purchased the property with an eye of preserving the loft for generations to come. The building was raised 5' to accommodate the addition of a new foundation with a two-foot increased height to keep the St. George River from lapping at the lower clapboards. The roof was re-shingled, exterior walls were re-sheathed and windows were individually re-aligned, carefully saving the original glass panes. Old materials were saved and reused during the restoration. Even the cupola was removed by crane, completely restored and then replaced in its original position.

Claire Priest submitted an application to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission which approved her application for acceptance by the National Register of Historic Places.

When asked why she was allowing the THS to show her house, Claire responded that she has undertaken this project for the town as well as herself and she would like to share the results by extending the opportunity for a tour. So please join us next June! Details will be available in a Spring 2021 Newsletter!

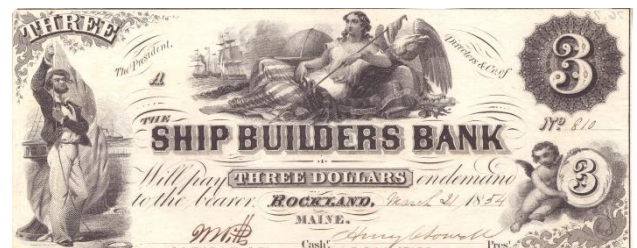
Mimi Zwick, Chair of THS House Tours, and Margaret McCrea, Historian



Interesting Find in the Archives - Ship Builders Bank

This banknote from the Ship Builders Bank came to light as we were reorganizing files to prepare our new archival library and gallery. The bank was a Rockland Bank but the history, date and time period make for an interesting story. This is basically from Eaton's History of Thomaston, Rockland and South Thomaston.

"The Bank was incorporated in 1853 with a capital of \$100,000, and such was its prestige that its stock was rapidly taken up. Some obscurity has ever rested upon the affairs of the Bank. However, the directors neglected the ordinary precautions against mismanagement. The bonds given by the cashier were not renewed at the expiration of his first year, and he rushed into hazardous speculations with the funds of the Bank, to supply the loss of which a vast and unknown amount of its bills were put into circulation with or without knowledge of the directors. These circulated for a time without suspicion; but as they began to return faster than the Bank was able to redeem them embarrassments arose. Attempts were made to examine into the cause of defalcation. These attempts resulted in nothing



certain, except the funds of the Bank had disappeared, its credit was gone, and the former cashier has absconded to avoid arrest. It went out of business in 1855 just 2 years after starting. Its President, unable to face the defrauded stockholders and an indignant public, sought a retreat for his family and his mortification in the far West. “

When we can re-open come by and search out other interesting items from the past.

Bill Gay, Vice President

Thomaston Celebrates Maine 200 - with Flags

The Maine200 Organization released a flag to commemorate Maine's 200th anniversary as a state. As part of Thomaston's celebration, the Select Board voted to purchase a flag to display at the Thomaston Municipal Building. Police Chief Time Hoppe further suggested displaying flags on each side of Main St. along with American flags.



Sandy Moore, a member of the Select Board who is also a Historical Society Board member and on the Thomaston Maine 200 committee, took the lead. She asked businesses in Thomaston for support. The response was overwhelming, with flags sponsored by Athens Pizza, Camden National Bank, Chambers Jewelers & Gemologist, Creative Images Hair Salon, Hall Funeral Home, Hoffmans, Hoppe's Tree Service, Midcoast First Aid/ Downeast Maritime, Inc., Orient Lodge of Masons, Playing Possum Band and Thomaston Café.

The picture shows Sandy and Select Board Chair Pete Lammert with one of the 11 Maine 200 flags now flying on Main St.



Meet Board Member – Mimi Zwick

Mimi Zwick has been a member of the Thomaston Historical Society since 2010. She joined shortly after moving to Thomaston with husband Gerry from Middlebury, CT, after retiring as a teacher and administrator for 39 years. Since joining, Mimi has served as membership chairperson, president and historic houses chairperson.

After taking over the position of Membership, Mimi updated the record keeping system from hand-written records to computer records, which allowed the sharing of information much easier and more efficient for all board members and committee heads. Computer records has also made it easier and less expensive to send out information about planned activities and special events that the THS sponsors, such as monthly programs, special history programs, walks, Victorian teas and Home for the Holidays.

Mimi accepted the position of president after a couple of years serving as membership chairperson. This came at a difficult time as several board members decided to step down from the board after serving for a number of years. But some new faces showed interest and eventually the positions were filled.

The most interesting position for her in which Mimi served was that of historic houses chairperson from 2012-2019. The main focus of this position was organizing the major annual fund raiser for the THS—



Home for the Holidays. During her tenure in this position Mimi was able to raise the income from this event from an average of \$4,000 to as much as \$10,000! A significant amount of the proceeds has contributed to the restoration projects that have been completed to keep our 1796 original Knox building in good condition! Another change that occurred under Mimi's watch was the addition of house and garden tours in the summer. Thomaston is blessed with many beautiful Colonial, Federal and Victorian homes and it a special opportunity to make tours of them available to the public.

While Mimi is stepping down as the historic houses chairperson, she will continue on the THS board as a member-at-large.

PLEASE HELP – Renew Your Membership

We know that there is much on everyone's mind of great importance, but we hope keeping the Historical Society going is also a concern to you. With one fund-raiser canceled and another possibly in jeopardy, it is most important to our cash flow that membership renewals come in.

Along with this newsletter is a membership renewal form – as well as an election ballot for our 2020-2021 board. Our new fiscal year starts July 1.

We also want to thank our gold business members for their support this year.

Susan Devlin, President

Cathy and Rod Grindell, Membership



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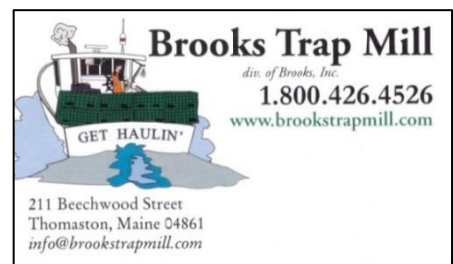
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