

ARNOLD EXPEDITION HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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October 31, 1977

NEWSLETTER NO. 34

TO MEMBERS OF A.E.H.S:

Since our July newsletter, your Society has been active in several directions, the following meetings and events having taken place:

On the week-end of Aug. 20-21, a pleasant summer's day was enjoyed at the Colburn House. The Colburn Militia had set up an 18th century encampment behind the barn museum, tents lined up either side of the campfire, with primitive lanterns to light the way. A gun rack had been installed and the insignia of the militia waved in the breeze. The Colburn Militia, headed by Ray Chavarie, in their AEQ-75 uniforms and gear, always puts on a good show. The Chavarie's, Ray and wife, Carol, can always be depended upon to act the part, and the odor of beef stew which Carol made in the big, black kettle over the open fire wafted over the grounds. Bob Cunningham and Joe Brown were in charge of the arrangements for the week-end, and although other militias planned on for competition did not show up, there was no lack of activity, with flag raising, close order drill, demonstration of musket and rifle fire and a short bateau paddling exercise, when the bateau was carried on the men's shoulders down a steep hill to the shores of the Kennebec and later transported back up the hill in the same manner, not an easy stunt on a hot summer's day. The office and gift shop were open to greet visitors and much interest was shown in the bateau collection in the museum.

On August 18, Arthur Griffiths, Cecil Pierce, Jannice Baker and Audrey Hanks met at the Colburn House with a representative of the Southern Kennebec Valley Regional Planning Commission in the evening. Holly Dominie, coordinator of that commission, outlined the purposes of SKVRPC and the proposal for a study of the Kennebec River from Bath to the head-of-tide at Augusta. She narrated how they can assist groups along the Kennebec River in promoting the river's historical, economic, recreational and wildlife resources, and presented a proposed base map upon which resource inventories of the river can be plotted to give greater visibility to the river's assets for the information of tourists. A letter is going to be sent to the groups in the region, asking that they list their attractions and what services they have available or are needed to accommodate tourists (fuel, food, etc.) Mention was made that the end result hopefully to be obtained is a promotional brochure highlighting a trip by water or by land to attract tourists to the points of interest for the benefit of all concerned. We will follow the progress of the commission's work with interest.

A second meeting of interested groups, (commercial, recreational and historical) was held at the Chamber of Commerce Building in Augusta, on the evening of October 5, 1977. Our Society was represented by our President, Arthur Griffiths (also a member of the commission), Audrey Hanks and Jannice Baker.

KENNEBEC HISTORICAL ALLIANCE

At the request of Arthur Griffiths, Audrey Hanks attended a meeting of the Kennebec Historical Alliance at Fort Western in Augusta on September 23, and again on October 21st at the Dresden Historical Society's Old Brick Schoolhouse Museum in Dresden. Jannice Baker also attended the latter meeting.

This Alliance is sponsored and chaired by White Nichols and, although loosely knit and unorganized at this time, it has the potential of advancing the mutual interests of historical societies and museums in the lower Kennebec Valley area through a coalition of endeavors and publicity.

At the present time, it appears that the following organizations have evinced an interest in becoming members of the Alliance when it is more formally established:

Bath Marine Museum
 Lincoln County Cultural & Historical Society
 Fort Western Trustees
 Dresden Historical Society
 Sagadahoc Preservation Committee
 Arnold Expedition Historical Society
 Litchfield Historical Society
 Richmond Rural Museum

There will be expenses of organization (office, telephone and travel) incident to setting up the formal organization and carrying out its purposes, but the method of taking care of expenses, either through membership dues or contributions or fund raising activities, has not been resolved. White is working on a proposed map of the region and Maida St. John of the Dresden Historical Society outlined for the Map Committee the dimensions and format of the map.

Sheila MacDonald of the Maine State Museum Staff attended the Oct. 21st meeting and explained how her department could serve as a conduit of communication with the historical societies to provide a service by analyzing the needs of small, unfunded historical societies and museums in Maine and how the State Museum might assist.

At the Oct. 21st meeting, White offered the following, which, with minor revisions, were agreeable to those present:

AIM AND PURPOSES OF THE KENNEBEC HISTORICAL ALLIANCE

1. To form an alliance of lower Kennebec River historical societies and museums; encouraging a closer cultural relationship between groups that have a common interest in this unique historical region.
2. To cooperate on matters of mutual interest involving this area, in promoting and developing the historical heritage of the lower Kennebec River valley.

3. To coordinate activity programs and to create a central information source for all museum events in the lower Kennebec River valley.
4. To encourage a land and water transportation system (accommodating visitors) forming a circuit that would encompass, and include, all member museums and historical sites in the Kennebec Historical Alliance area.
5. To encourage and develop a close liaison and communication between all member groups of the region.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for Friday, November 18th, at the Wiscasset Museum and Jail of the Lincoln County Cultural and Historical Society at 1:00 p.m.

KENNEBEC RIVER CRUISE

On Sunday, September 18th, our annual river cruise took place. Through an early morning fog, Capt. Bob Fish piloted the "Goodtime" from the Boothbay Harbor pier out into the bay and steered for Bath where more passengers boarded. We were most fortunate in having two able narrators aboard in the persons of Mrs. Polly Roberts of the Richmond Historical Society, who knows the history of the southern Kennebec region, and Mr. Paul Adamus of the Center for Natural Areas, who called attention to the wildlife of the area, adding greatly to the enjoyment of the cruise. Heading up the Kennebec to Pittston, as the boat approached the Colburn dock the sun broke through for a delightful day. Passengers climbed the hill for their luncheon or picnic respite.

The Cunninghams (Bob and Margaret) and the McGlamery's (Thornton and Mary) put on a delicious luncheon at the Congregational Church parlor next door to the Colburn House. Did you taste that steaming spaghetti with hot meat-ball sauce, that crisp green salad with special dressing, those succulent green beans and the fresh fruit topped off with hot coffee? And when second helpings were offered, did you join the line-up? That is evidence of culinary expertise and the compliments received on the meal at a low price should suffice for the time and talents making it possible. But, thank you Margaret and Bob, and Mary and Thornton for service beyond the call of duty.

Seen on the grounds greeting our visitors before departure for the return trip were Arthur Griffiths and wife, Lois; Jannice Baker, our Secretary; Florence Winter, a director, and Chuck Booth, a director, who headed up the cruise and took care of the arrangements.

As you know, we are a non-profit organization and usually more than live up to that classification in our fund-raising endeavors (especially when the bills for advertising come in and we settle with the Captain), but we have lots of fun and count our profit only in pleasurable work and association.

RESTORATION OF SOUTHEAST PARLOR

The restoration is all but completed in the southeast parlor of the Colburn House. So now, with a little plaster and paint yet to be added, we have an authentic 18th century parlor in which, when furnished, we can entertain our members and guests with a hearty welcome. Just the view of the bend in the river from the south windows is worthy of note.

A salute and a curtsy to the first contributors towards furnishings go to: Mrs. Helen Colburn Pomeroy of San Francisco, Cal., to Dr. and Mrs. George B. Dyer of New Hope, PA., to Mr. and Mrs. Brownlow Thompson of Conway, N.H., and to Mrs. Walter C. White of East Pittston, Maine, for their cash contributions in response to our plea in the July newsletter.

And for his generosity that knows no bounds, a thank you again to Dr. Dyer for his donation of books for our reference library.

We are most grateful to them all.

We have our eye on some bow-backed Windsor chairs that would fit in just fine. So the till is open for additional donations - always appreciated.

THE RIVER KENNEBEC - A Little History

The Indians called it "Manitou Kinnibec"; "for the Kennebec twists like a serpent sprawled in the sun on a tilted ledge. At its head its tongue is forked; and far away, at its smaller end in the Northern forests it has its rise in small lakes strung together like rattles on the tail of Manitou Kinnibec. Likewise, the men of Maine, though they write its name "Kennebec," speak always of it as the Kinnibec, and always will, for that is the fashion of their speech. Also, there are some of us who, though we love it, must think of it, at times, as of Manitou Kinnibec - cold and sinister and dangerous, threatening torture and death to the unwary." (Quoted from "Arundel" by Kenneth Roberts (1930))

For a good story of the hearty people who settled and developed the Kennebec River Valley, see "Kennebec - Cradle of Americans" by Robert P. Tristram Coffin, renowned Maine author and poet. (Available in softbound reprint for \$3.75.)

Cutting through the heartland of Maine, the Kennebec is part of the history of the Colburn House, our heritage, our roots, ours to preserve for generations to come.

WHO'S WHO

Thinking you might like to get acquainted with the present management of Arnold Expedition Historical Society, we are featuring a member of the Board of Directors in this and subsequent newsletters.

This will introduce you to Cecil Pierce of West Southport, Maine, a charter member of A.E.H.S., a director, a member of the restoration and museum development committee, and a most willing and able worker for our Society.

Cecil was born at West Southport, Maine, on December 27, 1906. He attended the Southport Grammar School and graduated from Richmond High School in 1924. Self-taught, by reading, observing and doing, he mastered many trades. From a mechanic in a local garage, he advanced to owning and operating Marine Service at Boothbay Harbor for many years. He worked for Maine Steel, Inc., in Windham for a short time, but gave it up to go lobster fishing. He combined the fishing with boat building which he did in his shop at West Southport during the winter months. He built them completely by himself. Now he builds fishing rods in his shop, mastering that trade also.

He served as a selectman of the town for 27 years, and is a member of the Southport Fire Co., serving as Fire Chief for 16 years.

He is a member of the Southport History Committee which authored the book "Historical Gleanings from The Town with Three Names, Cape Newagen Island, Townsend, Southport." He is a member of the Boothbay Region Historical Society and a director of the Arnold Expedition Historical Society. The seacoast was Cecil's environment; he is an outdoorsman and his hobbies are reading and fresh water trout fishing in the northern lakes. Since the loss of his beloved wife, he has built himself a new home recently in West Southport on the Hendrick's Hill Road, Route #27, doing most of the work himself.

After much research, Cecil built a replica of the bateau used on the original Arnold Expedition for the Reenactment in 1975, and supervises the display of the Society's collection of bateaux in our barn museum.

And, as we progress with our long-range project of establishing a replica of the Colburn Shipyard on the shores of the Kennebec, we can depend on Cecil to lend his time and talents to the realization of that goal. His experience and judgment are greatly valued by A.E.H.S.

"Back of the job -- the Dreamer
Who's making the dream come true!"
(Berton Braley - poet)

" GLEANINGS "

MARY BETH WAKEFIELD WRITES FROM FLORIDA THAT IN " THE PEOPLE'S ALMANAC"
BY DAVID WALLECHINSKY AND IRVING WALLACE, PAGE 1317, UNDER " FAMOUS LAST
WORDS ", ARNOLD SAID REGARDING HIS CONTINENTAL UNIFORM, " LET ME DIE IN
THE OLD UNIFORM IN WHICH I FOUGHT MY BATTLES FOR FREEDOM. MAY GOD FORGIVE
ME FOR PUTTING ON ANY OTHER . "



DUES

We don't like to harp on a subject, but the receipt of annual dues renewals is so necessary to our operations that we feel constrained to mention them once again. After our gentle reminder with the July newsletter the response was prompt and encouraging, but we don't want to lose one of you by an oversight. We have exciting projects and plans for the future of the Colburn House Complex and the Arnold Trail, and membership renewals make possible the carrying out of those plans. Also, once a year we cull our mailing list, reviewing the renewals and new members and regretfully eliminate those who haven't supported the Society by dues payment in the current fiscal year, starting July 1st. So, please help us to keep you informed of our progress. The newsletter is one of the privileges of membership.

We think you will be proud to be associated with A.E.H.S. and we will be proud to have you continue as a member.

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With warm, good wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season,

Sincerely

Audrey Hanks
Membership and Public Relations

October 31, 1977

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