



Sebago
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEBAGO ECHOES

Spring 2019

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UPCOMING EVENTS

POETRY MONTH

Saturday, April 27 from 2-4:00pm
Spaulding Memorial Library

MALAGA ISLAND PRESENTATION

with Kate Higgins McBrien
Saturday, May 11 at 7:00pm
Spaulding Memorial Library

ANTIQUES ROADSHOW

with guest Glenn Grant
Wednesday, June 19 at 6:30pm
Sebago Historical Society Museum

41ST ANNUAL SEBAGO DAYS

July 18 - 20
Sebago Elementary School Grounds

11TH ANNUAL HISTORIC HOME TOUR

to be held on a Saturday in August

AUTUMN OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, September 21 at 1:00pm
Sebago Historical Society Museum

HISTORIC CEMETERY TOUR

Saturday, October 19
Pike Yard on Allen Road

VETERAN'S DAY MEMORIAL

with Wayne Peabody
Monday, November 11 at 12:00pm
Spaulding Memorial Library

The Sebago Historical Society is happy to be publishing our longtime newsletter Sebago Echoes. It was begun in 1993 by then president Ann Burns, who single handedly found interesting facts and stories to print in the newsletter four times a year. The society would like to invite new and old readers alike to enjoy the Sebago Echoes and to remember that "You're never too old to learn something new about something old." - Sherrill Brown, SHS President



Sebago Elementary School, formerly the Fitch Homestead built c. 1792

SEBAGO SCHOOLS - MAKING HISTORY FOR 193 YEARS AND COUNTING

by Margaret Allen

Sebago was incorporated as a township in 1826, and from that date until 1895, Sebago children of all ages went to school in neighborhood one-room schoolhouses. In 1830, there were 271 school children in town, and six one-room schoolhouses. By 1848 there were 10 schools and 341 children, and the 1871 map of Sebago continues to show 10 separate schoolhouses. Each schoolhouse has its own history; some are still standing and owned privately today, others are no more than stone foundations in the woods. According to town records from 1830, each school drew \$176.50 from the town, and requirements included "an 18' x24' schoolhouse, well boarded and shingled outside, ceiled to the window and plastered inside, with seats, writing tables and a desk for the master; a good chimney, panel door and windows shuttered outside, and to have at least 72 squares of 7" x9" glass". No indoor plumbing was provided! ...continued insided

By the late 1800's the number of school aged children in Sebago was declining. By 1878, there were nine schools and 263 children. By 1905, there were eight schools and only 150 children, and by 1926, there were six schools and 161 children. There was a growing need for young people to prepare for futures in local industries and businesses as well as in small towns and farming. In response to this need, Potter Academy was built, endowed by a trust fund left by Dr. Joseph Fitch Potter for the building and maintenance of the Academy, with free tuition for students of Sebago. Potter Academy opened in the fall of 1895, and older Sebago students left their neighborhood one room schoolhouses to attend this new school. The main schoolhouse was built in the location of the current Sebago Town Office. Dormitory facilities were soon added, so that students from outlying areas as well as some from other townships, would not have to travel long distances on a daily basis. Potter Academy was open for 72 years, from 1895 until 1967. It closed when the Sebago schools joined the Maine SAD 61 in 1967. The buildings were, and still are, used by the town and community residents for other purposes, with the exception of the main school building, which burned down in 1974.



The Brick Schoolhouse on Route 107 built c. 1836

Some of the neighborhood one-room schoolhouses continued to be used for the education of younger children for another fifty years or so, until a comprehensive elementary school was built in 1951 in East Sebago on the site of the Fitch homestead, one of the earliest residences in Sebago. In 1951, the property was purchased from Harry and Edna Fitch by Mrs. Dorothy Spaulding, who then donated it to the town of Sebago. The March 1951 Town Meeting voted to accept the gift from Mrs. Spaulding, and the property became home to the single school for all elementary aged students of Sebago, Grades 1 – 8. This consolidation created a more up to date educational environment for the elementary grades. It also marked the end of the one-room schoolhouse era. The new Sebago Elementary School opened in its current location in November 1951. There have been several expansions of the facility since then.

THE ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSES

The Brick Schoolhouse – *Sebago Center on Bridgton Road*

The Convene-New Limington Schoolhouse – *Convene Road*

The Old Potter School – *Bridgton Road – No longer standing*

Hillside School – *Hillside Neighborhood on Bridgton Road*

Folly School – *Folly Road, near Peaked Mt. Road – No longer standing*

The Old Dike Schoolhouse – *No longer standing*

North Sebago School – *Behind Sandy Beach*

East Sebago School – *The bottom of Long Hill Road*

The Larrabee School – *Near the east end of Peaked Mt. Road*

Rankins Mill School – *Hiram Road – Now the town of Hiram*

To learn more about the history of Sebago Schools, see the 1997 Sebago Historical Society Calendar, available for viewing on our website at sebagohistoricalsociety.org and stay tuned for stories about early Sebago Schools as part of our Oral History project

In 1967, the town of Sebago followed the model of many other small towns in Maine in the 1960s by joining together with Bridgton, Naples and Casco to form a larger school administrative district, the Lake Region School District, MSAD 61. Elementary age schoolchildren continued to attend Sebago Elementary School. Potter Academy closed as part of this re-organization, and older Sebago students enrolled in the Lake Region High School in Bridgton and the Middle School in Naples. Sebago schoolchildren benefitted from the resources available to a larger consolidated school district during the fifty years that Sebago was part of MSAD 61 and Sebago children prospered and became known as successful and resilient students.

In the first decade on the 21st century, community involvement in local education increased, but local town budgets strained to meet demands of schools, roads, facilities, personnel and other financial needs. Families in Sebago looked for reassurance from MSAD 61 that the elementary school in Sebago would not be closed in the future as a cost-saving measure. After many meetings and community discussions. It became clear that this could not be guaranteed and a process of withdrawal from the school district began. In 2017, residents of Sebago voted in favor of withdrawing from MSAD 61. Committees were set up and school board members selected to do the work needed to launch a new independent Sebago Elementary School.

In September 2018, the newly independent Sebago Elementary School opened for business. In June 2019, the new school will celebrate its first successful year as an independent, locally administered public elementary school. A new era in the history of Sebago schools has begun!

IN REMEMBRANCE

GEORGE TINKHAM: 1930-2019

George C. Tinkham Jr., 88, passed away on Jan. 7, 2019 at the Maine Veterans Home in Scarborough. He was born in Portland on Nov. 19, 1930 and graduated from Portland High School in 1948. He was a veteran of the Korean War and served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

George was very active in the community. He served as a Selectman from 1989 - 1998, he was active in the Sebago Lions Club and he owned and operated the Stop and Chop Tree Farm on Hogfat Hill Road.

George played an important role in the reorganization of the Sebago Historical Society in 1993. After he was elected Vice President, one of his first activities was building a permanent booth for Sebago Days, assisted by Ted Greene. In 1995 to 1996, George worked tirelessly on various committees to locate a suitable property to house the Sebago Historical Society. In 1996, he worked with the town to finalize the purchase of the former Nazarene Church building in Convene as a permanent home for the historical society. Following the purchase, he oversaw the exterior painting of the building and worked with a crew on numerous interior modifications as well. In October 1996, George was elected President of the Historical Society, and immediately began work on the next important project – work on the Veterans' Park and the Veterans' Monument. He gave countless hours of time and effort to improving the historical society and its assets, to the benefit of the whole community.

In 1999, while George was a selectman, the Sebago Historical Society was entrusted by the town with the presentation of the Boston Post Cane and George carried out this honor for the first time by presenting the Boston Post Cane to Vinal Good. George's work for the Historical Society continued as he held the office of treasurer from 1999 until 2005 when health problems brought his active role to an end. He continued to participate in the work of the historical society as much as he could, continuing his efforts and productive work on behalf of the townspeople of Sebago. We will remember him with gratitude.

CURATOR'S CORNER

SCHOOL SUPPLIES: BACK TO BASICS

by Donelle Allen



School supplies have certainly evolved over the years. Shown is a slate from the late 1800's belonging to Will Douglass, a silver fountain pen discovered between the walls of the C.A. Newcomb house, another fountain pen which was a gift given to June Allen upon her graduation from Potter Academy in



1952, an inkwell dug up in the 1970's from a dump across from a Sebago homestead, a six inch wooden ruler, and a brass school bell (origin unknown). A tin lunch pail estimated to be from the late 1800's to the turn of the century.



The Convene-New Limington Schoolhouse on Convene Road

JACK BARNES' POETRY IN APRIL

by Susan Gasset

As many of you know Jack Barnes, native son of Sebago, world traveler, teacher and writer passed away in December 2018. Jack's wife, Diane, has donated his poetry to the Historical Society. We are so honored to have received this gift! We plan to publish the poems in a chapbook, or series of chapbooks to share his poems with the community and beyond. Since April is poetry month we plan to host a program of poetry readings at Spaulding Memorial Library on Saturday, April 27 at 2:00pm, which will include some of Jack's poems, poems by members of the community and readings of favorite poems. We hope you can join us to listen and perhaps read a poem you love.

Jack wrote many nature poems. Here is a short one appropriate for the season,

Rebirth

From down the distant pine-clad hill
A warm and gentle March breeze floats
Over the dunes of crystal snow
And deep beneath layers of ice
The liquid voice long silenced by the cold
Utters the first message of spring.

BOSTON POST CANE IS PRESENTED TO ROBY DYER, OLDEST CITIZEN OF SEBAGO



On January 27, 2019 Roby Dyer was honored by the Sebago Historical Society as the oldest citizen of the town of Sebago with the presentation of the town's Boston Post Cane. This tradition, still active in many small towns in New England,

was started in 1909 by the owner of the Boston Post newspaper. The presentation event took place at the North Sebago United Methodist Church where members of the community shared memories and stories of Roby Dyer's remarkable presence and contributions to the town. Congratulations, and many thanks, to Roby from us all!



Sebago
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Left: Potter Academy opened in 1895 for the older students in Sebago.

KINDLY DELIVER TO: