

# South Bristol Historical Society

Est. 1998

## Newsletter

South Bristol, Maine 04568

207-315-0558 • SBHistorical@gmail.com • www.southbristolhistoricalsociety.org

Volume 15 Number 1

Spring 2012

### 2012 Program Preview

This year's program will begin at 9:30 am on **Saturday, May 19**, when everyone interested in seeing several of the oldest, and least well-known of South Bristol's 16 cemeteries will meet at the Rutherford Library. Trustee Carolyn McKeon has studied the SBHS cemetery files compiled over the years and added much new information to guide us along the way. On **Thursday, June 21**, at 7:30 you can learn all about the somewhat mysterious US Navy research going on in the '60's and '70's at a facility on the John Gay Road, including a film made by Tracor Marine, the last of the companies involved. The **Annual Meeting on July 19** will feature **Laura Fortman**, newly appointed executive director of the **Frances Perkins Center** in Damariscotta who will bring the career of the first woman cabinet member, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins.

Since construction of a new bridge at the Gut has been postponed until next year, instead of 'Celebrating the Bridge' as originally planned, we will celebrate '**Christmas in August**,' at the **S Road School**. The article in this newsletter tells you all about the plan, and a date will be announced in our June mailing. Also in this newsletter is more information about our **September 20** program, The **Fabulous Forties**, based on a script found in the SBHS archives. The final gathering of 2012 will be our "**Movie Night**" complete with fresh popcorn, on October 18.

Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar, and watch the *Lincoln County News* for more details and updates.

### South Bristol Centennial - 2015

The 100th anniversary of the creation of South Bristol as an independent entity will be celebrated in 2015, and it is not a moment too soon to be thinking about how SBHS will join in that celebration. A number of ideas are being considered, among them the publication of a comprehensive history of our town's first one hundred years and a joint project with the South Bristol School to create an online exhibit about the history of South Bristol, with guidance from the Maine Historical Society and its Maine Memory Network. We welcome more ideas – and people to help bring them to life!

### The "Fabulous Forties" return to South Bristol - with your help!

During a "Winter Wednesday" work session at the SBHS building, the script for a program remembering the 1940's was discovered. It chronicles national news events from Pearl Harbor, through the major battles of WW II, to the beginning of the Cold War as well as the

rise and fall of major sports figures of the decade. A parallel track traces the everyday life of South Bristol families during this time - young men enlisting in the service, weddings, births, a cracker-eating contest, someone hitting the house with her husband's new car, and much, much more!

The script was written to include a chorus singing songs popular in that decade, as well as dozens of photographs of local residents. We plan to recreate this program at our September 20 meeting, but unfortunately the photographs are missing, and we

have been unable to find out who wrote the script, or when and where it was performed. That's why we need your help!

If you're in the middle of spring cleaning, take a break and look in that box of old photographs or thumb through those dusty albums. **Check for pictures of South Bristol people and events during the 1940's. We can use just about any photo - young, old, family gatherings, school or church events, weddings, young men in uniform - as long as you can put names to the faces.** We'll scan your photos and return them promptly. And, **search your memory for a program about the 1940's with lots of singing and photos, probably presented in South Bristol sometime in the late 1950's or early 1960's.** Call Cathy (644-1253) or the South Bristol Historical Society (207-315-0558) or contact any SBHS board member with your information, or to make arrangements for your photos to be scanned.

Help us turn back the clock and recreate this Fabulous Forties Review!



*South Bristol men in their World War II uniforms at the dedication of the memorial visible at the left foreground. If anyone knows where the memorial is now, please get in touch with SBHS.*

## Remembering Christmas Past at the S Road School

What better excuse could there be for festivities in August than to deck out the old schoolhouse as in times-gone-by with a Christmas tree, crepe paper, tin foil, strings of popcorn and cranberries? There are plans afoot to do just that!

As a starting-off point the SBHS will make use of its collection of vintage Christmas cards, most of which were received by the Henry McFarland family in the 1930's and '40's. Excerpts from the 1976 interviews with school-mistress Sarah Emery will be the guide for recreating the Christmas decorations for the schoolroom. Miss Emery, who was the teacher at the S Road School for most of the years between 1915 and 1935, related to the interviewer her fond memories of Christmas time at the old schoolhouse: "... *And I didn't want a great big tree, you know, because it would be – well – kind of hard to take care of. So we used the table that was for little folks which was so high...we would put it right on this table... now, they didn't have as many ornaments, no electric light ornaments... so sometimes someone would string a load of cranberries...Some of them would string popcorn... I would let them fix the tree. And, of*

*course, I stood by and supervised after school. And they drape it all. I said, 'Now you stand here and see if it is alright.' They would see something out of kilter and they would fix it."*

Miss Emery bought gifts for each of her students and put them on the tree unopened but with the gift tag hidden so that when the children came in in the morning they: "...*wondered who that was for, and who this was for. Well, that's for a boy; that one's for a girl... The whole schoolhouse was decorated... It was really beautiful... we would put things up, pretty things all around, and sometimes I would put a Christmas border on the backboard.*"

She even bought a Santa Claus suit "... *with the head gear, and it was cute.*" And even though she couldn't emulate the celebrations at her church where Santa Claus drove in "... *with goats and a sleigh... we had Herbert Thompson's grandfather... for the Santa Claus. He was lovely... You see, he would take presents off the tree but he wouldn't pass them around. I would have three or four children doing that. Oh, they loved it! ... And then when everything was stripped, why we would all sit down and have coffee & cakes... the children did all the serving. They served the coffee and everything...*"

**Wanted for this celebration– Christmas memorabilia – anything that will bring back memories of Christmas in the 1930's and '40's. Photos, reminiscences, a vintage Santa Claus suit, vintage toys & decorations, family recipes, perhaps even a volunteer Santa Claus?**

We are looking for any of those special vintage Christmas items that you might have tucked away in your attic to use in our "Christmas in August" celebration. We are willing to pick up items, keep them in safe hands and deliver them back to you. If you would like to loan or donate something or help with decorating or cooking up some old-time Christmas goodies, please contact the SBHS. You can email us at [sbhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:sbhistorical@gmail.com), call 207-315-0558 or talk to any board member. Let's make it a Merry Christmas—in August!



A sampling of 1930's Christmas cards from the SBHS collection.

## Meet Samuel A. Miles and Family - Part III

The Spring 2011 Newsletter began the story of Sam Miles and family by introducing Sam, his wife Maud Mary and adopted son Arthur, outlining his successful career as a leader in the marketing of the automobile, and describing his life on the estate he built in South Bristol. The Fall 2011 Newsletter introduced Isabel R. Miles and told of the summer camp at the Miles estate.

This last installment describes the Wills left by Sam Miles and Isabel and the various memorials still to be found in the South Bristol area. All three articles are based on research done by Stan and Ellen Wells over several years, in places from South Bristol to New York City and Asheville, North Carolina where Virginia Saunders, Miles' only living grandchild lives.

### Will of Samuel A. Miles (1862-1932)

The Will left by Sam Miles at the time of his death in 1932 was short and simple, just three paragraphs long: first, the usual instruction to pay all debts and taxes; second, that "having made ample provision by trust agreements for all other beneficiaries for whom I desire to provide, I give... all the rest, residue and remainder of my property" to Isabel R. Miles of Christmas Cove, Maine; and third, the

appointment of Isabel R. Miles as the executrix.

When Isabel Miles filed for probate of the Will in the New York Surrogate's Court, she listed Maud Mary Miles, "widow of the deceased," Arthur T. S. Miles, "adopted son of the deceased" and herself as "all the distributees" of the Will even though neither Maud Mary nor Arthur are mentioned in the Will. Both Maud Mary and Arthur Miles filed affidavits with the Surrogates Court waiving any further notice of the

Will, and neither ever filed any objection to its contents.

No inventory or appraisal of Miles' estate was found in the Lincoln County Courthouse or at the Surrogate's Court, so the precise nature and value of Miles' estate at the time of his death remains unknown. However, in 1924 Miles established a trust with a fund of \$202,000, naming Miles himself the income beneficiary during his lifetime, with the principal going to Isabel on his death. At her death, the remaining principal was to be divided among several charitable institutions. In 1925, Miles transferred all of his real property in Maine, except the Camp, to Isabel.

Another trust was created in 1928, the terms of which are not known although a reference to that trust in a later document indicates that Maud Mary Miles, Arthur Miles and his wife Geneva, and Isabel Miles were all aware of its terms. As a result of all these transactions, it seems probable that most of what might have been in Miles' estate had been transferred elsewhere well before his death, making an elaborate Will unnecessary.

Just a month after Miles' death in 1932, Isabel entered into an agreement with Maud Mary, Arthur and Geneva. A memorandum, signed by Miles at the same time as he executed his Will, is recited in the agreement: "I have made ample provision by Trust Agreements for all of the persons who would share in my estate in case of my intestacy, and rely upon them as a matter of good faith to make no effort to disturb any of the arrangements which I have made." By the terms of the agreement, Maud Mary, Arthur and Geneva agreed to relinquish any claims they might have had to his estate, or against Isabel as his executrix. Isabel agreed to set up a trust with principal of \$60,000 within 60 days of the Will being probated, and to pay to Arthur the sum of \$250 a month until that trust could be established. The trust was in fact created on July 15, 1932.

In correspondence with Arthur during the summer of 1932, Isabel goes into considerable detail about the expenses for the camp in Maine and in the difficulty she has had in ascertaining just what her income will be in the future, suggesting that she and Arthur remained on good terms. She also may have wanted him to understand why she was not able to make any further provisions for him and his family.

### Will of Isabel R. Miles (1876-1948)

Isabel, who outlived Sam by 16 years, continued to spend a large part of each year in South Bristol. The Will she wrote was long and detailed, some forty-one paragraphs. At her death in 1948, the appraisal of her estate, filed in the Lincoln County Courthouse in 1948, shows a total value of \$441,065. The residence, Clifton, and 40 acres of land with one and one-half miles of shore frontage were valued at \$45,000, and other small properties including the 5 camp dormitories and buildings added another \$7,000 for a total real property value of \$52,000. The "Clugston" cottage and property, located across from the Union Church on Route 129, was left to the daughter of Isabel's deceased niece. A piece of waterfront property facing "The Gut," adjoining a portion of the Clugston land was left to Stanley Alley who had worked on the Miles estate for some thirty years. All other real property in Maine was left in equal shares to Charles J. Ellias, Esther Jacobs, Pauline Jacobs, Helen Ellias and Marion Wertheimer, all relatives of Isabel. In 1953, they sold the property to Walton Hendry, who began to sell the camp buildings to private individuals. Details of later transactions can be found in *A History of the Families and their Houses: South Bristol Maine*, by H. Landon Warner on pages 104 and 105. (Some of the statements about Sam Miles on those pages have been corrected by later research as related here and in earlier newsletters.)

Isabel was generous to her family, giving over \$100,000 to various relatives. She left Arthur Miles' daughters Betty and Virginia \$2,000 each. She made special provision for Salvation Army Major Walter Phillips and his wife who had been closely involved in the Camp, giving them each \$3,000 in her original Will and adding a codicil later giving another \$18,000 to them, to be held in trust during their lives. Her personal property in Maine, including numerous furs and jewelry as well as the furnishings of Clifton, was valued at \$12,174.25. She gave eight pieces of diamond and sapphire jewelry and seven fur coats to various nieces. A china closet with its contents was left to Emma Alley whose daughter Betty House still has some of the china, as well as a mahogany secretary which was in the living room. In addition to the real estate, Isabel left to Stanley Alley a truck, tools and a wood sawing machine. She also left \$5,000 to the Lincoln Home in Newcastle.

The remainder of the estate was divided into three equal shares. Two-thirds went to two charities devoted to helping poor children in Bristol, England, and one-third went to the Children's Aid Society of New York

*continued on next page*

**CAR MAKERS PAY TRIBUTE TO SHOW MANAGER MILES**

The death in England last Monday of Samuel A. Miles, nationally known in the automobile industry as manager of the shows in New York and Chicago, came as a shock to automotive leaders, many of whom were attending a conference of sales managers in Detroit when advice of Mr. Miles's death was received.

Alfred Reeves, vice president and general manager of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of those present issued the following statement:

He was an important factor in the growth of the motor industry. He was a fine, gentlemanly sportsman, a loyal friend with a praiseworthy, charitable spirit that was reflected in his contributions to many causes, including his boys' camp at his country estate at Christmas Cove in Maine.

*One of many notices of the death of Sam Miles, this appeared in the New York Times.*

**South Bristol Historical Society**  
2124 State Route 129  
PO Box 229  
South Bristol, ME 04568

*Meet Samuel Miles and Family* . . . . . *continued from page 3*

City. These were the charities named in the 1924 trust established by Miles noted above.

**Memorials**

The best-known memorial to Samuel A. Miles is Miles Memorial Hospital. In 1938, some six years after Miles' death, Isabel donated land she had purchased in Damariscotta, known as Walker's Point, and \$50,000 to build a hospital in his memory. Miles Memorial Hospital opened in 1941 with a total of twenty-five beds – and nine bassinets. It replaced the Lincoln County Memorial Hospital, also in Damariscotta, of which Miles had been a director. In 1949, the Hospital received \$25,000 under her Will, for the purpose of paying off the remaining mortgage on the property. Portraits of both Sam Miles and Isabel can be seen at the hospital.

Isabel also gave the Union Church in South Bristol and St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Newcastle \$3,000 each for a “window, plaque of other memorial bearing the name of Samuel A. Miles.” The South Bristol church decided that a lectern with a memorial name plate would be appropriate. At St. Andrews the

memorial can be seen at the back of the sanctuary.

Two other memorials can be found in South Bristol. One is a plaque affixed to a boulder at the side of the small pool at the end of Little Harbor where the children who came to the Miles' Camp swam. It reads: “In Appreciation of Sam Miles' Rotary Spirit in Establishing this Camp” and was erected by the Damariscotta-Newcastle Rotary Club in 1937.

The other is at the northwest corner of the Island Cemetery across from the South Bristol post office. In an area marked off by a low stone wall sits a large grave marker surrounded by marble pillars holding up a marble slab on which is written “MILES”. Below it are inscribed the names and dates of birth and death of Samuel A. Miles and Isabel R. Miles. The inscription on the grave marker below reads: “Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit forever. Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seem,” words taken from the Bhagavad Gita, a Hindu text which became a canon of the Buddhist religion.



*The Miles grave marker in the Island Cemetery, South Bristol.*

Although some believe that Sam Miles' ashes were originally buried there, the ashes of both are now interred at the Ferncliff Mausoleum in Ardsley, New York, apparently at the request of Isabel.