

CORNISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER

From the President's Desk:

Dear Members and Friends,

As I write this, Maine life is returning to near pre-Covid normalcy. What a wonderful thing! We are relieved and grateful. This means that Cornish Historical Society can safely begin opening to the public again.

The belated Maine State Bicentennial can now be celebrated and there are statewide plans being made. Check the website www.Maine200.org for coming events. Cornish Historical will open the new exhibit " Life in 1820 Cornish" on Saturday, July 17. Please watch the "Shopping Guide" for details. Featured will be reproduction of the stenciled walls of Hon. Thomas Ayer Johnson's great house, and the "walking /great (spinning) wheel" donated by Dr. Mark Beever. Of course we are always open by appointment for those needing assistance with research; give any of us a call.

Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 24th at 40 Main Street, and we anticipate the current officers continuing in their roles for another year, and also our Board of Directors: Meredith Harding, Judy Leonhardt and Gary Mason. Thank you all. Please remember we love having members and new friends help with our open houses, outlying cemetery work, scrapbook and news clipping recording, and volunteering for events we may have. We will be creating a 2022 fundraising calendar by Fall , and would appreciate your ideas and suggestions.

Stay tuned, stay well, and have a wonderful Summer,

Sandy Howe





The outlying cemetery group is planning on a busy summer.

We will be clearing some known sites and hopefully discovering more.

In the photo above, we are viewing one of the Pendexter family burial grounds.

If you would like to help, contact Gary Mason at: (207) 749-3461 -or-

mason.garyb@gmail.com

*Thank you to the citizens of Cornish
for your
continued support at town meeting.
We look forward to seeing you when
we are open this summer!*

Can anyone identify the
man in this photo?



CORNISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President	Sandy Howe	(207) 625-4813
Vice President	Diann Perkins	(207) 625-3281
Treasurer	Cynthia Mason	(207) 671-6354
Secretary	Dorothy Maxwell	(207) 787-1478

Town of Cornish

Spirit of America Recipient

MERLE GOOGINS

Merle Googins was born in Falmouth, Maine and attended Falmouth schools. He was one of 13 children. After school Merle enlisted in the National Guard as a cook for 9 years. Most of his employment he worked at lumber yards. In his later years he worked at Walmart and Kezar Falls Hardware until retirement.

Merle married Glenna Mae Parker in 1958 and raised two children Merlene Ann and Glen Allen. He received his high school diploma 2 weeks before his daughter from the same school: Sacopee Valley High School.

Throughout Merle's life his goal was to make a difference in the community he resides. In Falmouth he was a member of the Pleasant Hill Fire Dept. for many years. We are lucky he moved to Cornish in 1969.

Merle joined the Masonic Greenleaf Lodge #117 in 1973. Later he became Master and Deputy District for the 18th Masonic district. He volunteers to organize & fundraise many different activities; coordinates & prepares table lodges, suppers for both the brethren and public; organizes the annual golf tournament to raise money for 3 scholarships awarded to graduating students at SVHS; organizes the Greenleaf Lodge sponsored Red Cross blood drive. The Grand Lodge of Maine AF&AM awarded Merle with the Simon Greenleaf Medal which represents the contribution of his time, thoughts & service to Masonry beyond the usual life of duty.

Merle keeps the Riverside Cemetery in tip top shape. He makes sure the graves are prepared for burials, the burial sites are ready for Memorial Day, and general ground maintenance. He does this along with the support of his wife Glenna, who is Secretary and Treasurer of the cemetery.

Merle is a member of the Cornish United Church of Christ. The church is another recipient of his tireless energy. He has served on many committees, spends countless hours organizing fundraisers to aid in the cost of maintaining 3 church owned buildings, monthly bean & casserole suppers, luncheons, yard sales, church sponsored blood drives, repairing & operating food booths at fundraising events, etc. He is the "go to" person when the church property needs maintenance.

Merle is a member of the Ossipee Valley Fair Assn, Past President of the NW Chapter of Habitat for Humanity, member of Friends of Hillside Church, library volunteer – just to name a few.

When Merle sees something that needs to be done or someone who needs assistance-he is always there to help. It is hard to keep up with Merle's energy and vision for a better community!



During the quiet winter, CHS members assisted with genealogy queries from the families of Day, Sargent, Pendexter, Kennard, and Wales. Some have taken advantage of our membership in "Maine Archives and Museums", including their virtual workshops - Advocating for Museums on March 9 and Safe Outdoor Programming on May 11. Sandy also attended "Wabanaki REACH" workshop sponsored by Maine Humanities Council on May 27.

Fundraising has been a challenge for all nonprofits during the pandemic. CHS Daffodil Duck Derby was cancelled for two years but we are looking forward to the return of the duckies next year. Churches were not always able to hold sales and suppers. Rental income was not available for the completion of the Pike Memorial Hall restoration project.

Now as we are putting together this newsletter, life seems to be getting back to normal.



There was a flea market, pie and plant sale at the UCC Church on May 22, and a library book sale across the street at the same time.



In spite of threatening weather, we were able to have a small Memorial Day parade on May 31, and a traditional program honoring our veterans at the Riverside Cemetery.



Photo by Kathy Carr



Veteran Ken Hall, driven by John MacIntyre

Photo by Kathy Carr



On June 13, Vintage Base Ball returned to the Cornish Fairgrounds as the Maine Dirigo team played the Boston Union.



CORNISH AND HIRAM HISTORICAL PROGRAM

HELD MAY 25TH VIA ZOOM

"THE SHARED HISTORY OF HIRAM AND CORNISH"



Curved bridge between Cornish and Hiram
built in 1930



This wagon belongs to Jack Wadsworth and was built in the 1880s for his father Wallace Dean Wadsworth who used it to take produce to the Portland area via the Limington road. Though he lived in Hiram he traveled through Cornish. He was also hired by the City of Portland to carry and dump snow into the sea in Portland using this wagon.



WWII veteran
Harold Mason of
Hiram, Brother of
Bernie Mason
of Cornish.

Baby Carriages
Our 1915 line of Baby Carriages and Go-Carts is now complete. Prices range from 5.00 to 18.00. Each Vehicle is full value for the price asked. It is a pleasure to show them.

BICYCLES
We have five styles of Bicycles. All "up-to-date." Prices from 20.00 to 35.00. Also Tires and a full line of sundries. Call and see the new fixtures on the 1915 line.

Fishing Tackle
Any old kind of Fishing Tackle is good enough to catch the little fish with, but, in order to secure the BIG fellow, it is necessary to go properly equipped. Come in and let us "show you." Of course WE know how to do it—Any how, we have some mighty nice Rods, Reels, Lines, Hooks, etc. at right prices.

J. B. Watson & Sons
Cornish, Maine.

Bristol
STEEL FISHING RODS

Many people in Cornish already knew the story of Donald Sargent, but others only learned this important story about a month ago when a monument was dedicated in Columbia Falls, Maine and the story became part of the national news.

We are including the story about the dedication written by Brian MacQuarrie which was in the *Boston Globe* on May 15, 2021.

Donald Sargent was honored at the Cornish Memorial Day program in 2014. We hope that eventually he will also receive the national recognition he deserves.

Soldiers, crew lost en route to Vietnam almost 60 years ago honored

COLUMBIA FALLS, Maine — Fifty-nine years after their chartered airliner disappeared without a trace over the Pacific, after decades of agonizing and unanswered questions, 93 American soldiers and 11 civilian crew members who vanished on a secret mission to South Vietnam finally were honored in a public ceremony Saturday.

The names aren't inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, a move that the Defense Department said falls outside its official criteria for honoring the armed forces killed in that long, bitter conflict.

Instead, they were unveiled on a 7-feet-high block of donated Downeast Maine granite, an irregularly shaped rock with a black marble face that more than 200 relatives of the missing, gathered in one place for the first time, touched with their hands as they dabbed at their tears.

"I lost it when they called his name," said Clifton Sargent, 87, of South Portland, whose brother, Donald, perished in Flying Tiger Flight 739 on March 16, 1962. "Just knowing that we have something now that's dedicated to them ... "Sargent's words trailed off, but his smile broadened above a pair of replica dog tags that bore a photo of his brother, a country boy from Cornish, Maine, who joined the Army to see more of the world and its opportunities.

"It just makes your heart feel all burst up," said Judith Sargent, Clifton's wife. She recalled that Donald, nicknamed Ducky because of his webbed toes, nervously asked for one last hug before leaving on a mission he sensed could be his last.

The monument and its circular plot, now open to the public, were donated by Wreaths Across America, a Maine-based nonprofit organization that since 1992 has coordinated wreath-laying ceremonies each December at Arlington National Cemetery.

Its mission has expanded since then, and last year the organization placed 1.7 million sponsored wreaths at more than 2,500 veterans cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and overseas.

The monument is ringed by countless balsam firs, set off a remote stretch of Route 1 outside this small town of 560 people about 40 miles from the Canadian border at Campobello Island.

Local businessman Morrill Worcester, who founded Wreaths Across America, said he learned of Flight 739 by chance, about a year and half ago, when he overheard Clifton Sargent and his family speaking about the tragedy and its lack of official recognition. "I said, 'You're going to have a monument, I'll tell you that right now,'" Worcester recalled. The 93 soldiers appear to have been hand-picked, and none of their families knows to this day what their secret assignment had been, three years before President Lyndon Johnson officially dispatched combat troops to South Vietnam. The Defense Department has been petitioned to add their names to the Vietnam Memorial. Congress has been lobbied. But the families have gotten nowhere. "They should be honored just like all the others that got killed over there," Clifton Sargent said. "But because it was a special mission and an unauthorized project, there was nothing. That was such a secret project, not a soul would touch it."

A Defense Department spokesman last week listed the following criteria for the Vietnam Memorial: armed forces who died in the combat zone; who died from wounds suffered in the combat zone; or who died while participating in, or providing direct support to, a combat mission proceeding immediately toward or returning from the combat zone.

Army Major Cesar Santiago, the spokesman, did not elaborate on why the soldiers aboard Flight 739 did not meet the criteria. "I have nothing further to provide," Santiago said.

Bonnie Baumgartner of Storrs, Conn., whose uncle died on the flight, said she is angry that Army Sergeant Efisio Simola Jr. and the others have not been added to the memorial. "When he left, he gave my mother the impression he wasn't coming back," said Baumgartner, who is 70. "They have every right to be on there as everyone else."

Donald Sargent reenlisted in 1961 after spending his first two-year hitch guarding missile sites in Connecticut and Colorado. By the following year, he had been accepted into the Army's elite Rangers unit, a quick-moving force capable of complex special-operations missions.

On March 14, 1962, Sargent boarded a Lockheed Super Constellation that left Travis Air Force Base in California for a hop-scotching, trans-Pacific journey that was intended to end in Saigon.

They stopped in Honolulu, Wake Island, and Guam before lifting off once again, this time bound for Clark Air Base in the Philippines. Just after midnight on March 16, about 270 miles west of Guam, Flight 739's last transmission was received.

The crew of a supertanker reported seeing an explosion in the sky near where the plane would have been, but an eight-day search by air and sea over 75,000 square miles turned up nothing. No bodies, no wreckage, no debris. Just a vast expanse of empty ocean, and no answers to provide more than 100 stunned families.

Clifton and Judith Sargent recalled the terrible day they received the news. There was no somber man in uniform calling on the house where his mother, Ethel, lived. No telephone call, either.

Instead, there was a taxi driver with a telegram, honking his horn outside the house, and delivering the news of Donald's disappearance to a family friend, who could not bear to break the news to Ethel. He brought the telegram to Judith Sargent at her workplace, and she relayed it to Clifton, who suddenly had the awful burden of telling his mother that his brother's plane could not be found.

Ethel Sargent collapsed. Although she lived for 44 more years, she never shook the shock and sorrow of that day. "She wouldn't admit that he died," Clifton said. "Right up until the end, she expected him to walk in the door."

All of the Sargents — Clifton, Judith, and their daughter, Jennifer Kirk — became emotional, their eyes welling with tears, during a lengthy interview at the older couple's residence in South Portland. Donald Sargent's brother and sister-in-law still see him, they said, full of life and playing gin rummy with his friends.

"Every day I think of him," Judith Sargent said. "What would he be doing if he were here? What would his life have been like?"

William Kennedy, a 46-year-old civilian from Braintree, Mass., was one of two navigators on the flight. His sons, William Jr. of Quincy, Mass., and Richard of Kissimmee, Fla, attended the ceremony.

"There was just a big hole," Richard recalled of his father's disappearance.

"When I was 10, I got used to my father going away for four or five days and then walking up the driveway again," he said. "For years and years, I kept expecting him to walk up that driveway, even to this day."

Phil Waite, a retired Air Force colonel who is director of engagement for a Defense Department program to honor and support Vietnam veterans and their families, said in an interview that he had not heard of the loss of Flight 739 until he began speaking with officials from Wreaths Across America.

Later, while addressing the families, Waite said to applause that their efforts would resonate, and that "there are many steps to come" to recognize their loved ones.

"It matters not where they fell," Waite said. "They are Vietnam veterans."

Karen Worcester, the executive director of Wreaths Across America, also sees an uplifting legacy amid the remnants of pain from that long-ago tragedy.

"The whole narrative has been that the Flying Tiger flight has been forgotten," Worcester said. "But the story should be that they have never been forgotten because of the families who have fought to keep their names alive."

Jennifer Kirk agreed. Inscribed on the monument are not only names, she said, but a lasting recognition of service and sacrifice.

"You die twice. Once when you take your final breath, and again when nobody says your name," Kirk said. "This will give my parents some peace, and it means they'll know he won't be forgotten."



CLASS ODE

We know tonight we are ending
Four years of school, dear and true.
Our joy and sadness is blending;
Old Cornish High we love you.

Memories, Memories
And now we say good-bye.
O're the years we've had good times
In dear old Cornish High.

High school days, good time days,
To us, they're all the same.
We leave you tonight, but we'll always think,
Of that High School in Cornish, Maine.

Taken from Cornish High School
1954 Commencement Exercises Program

From recent acquisitions

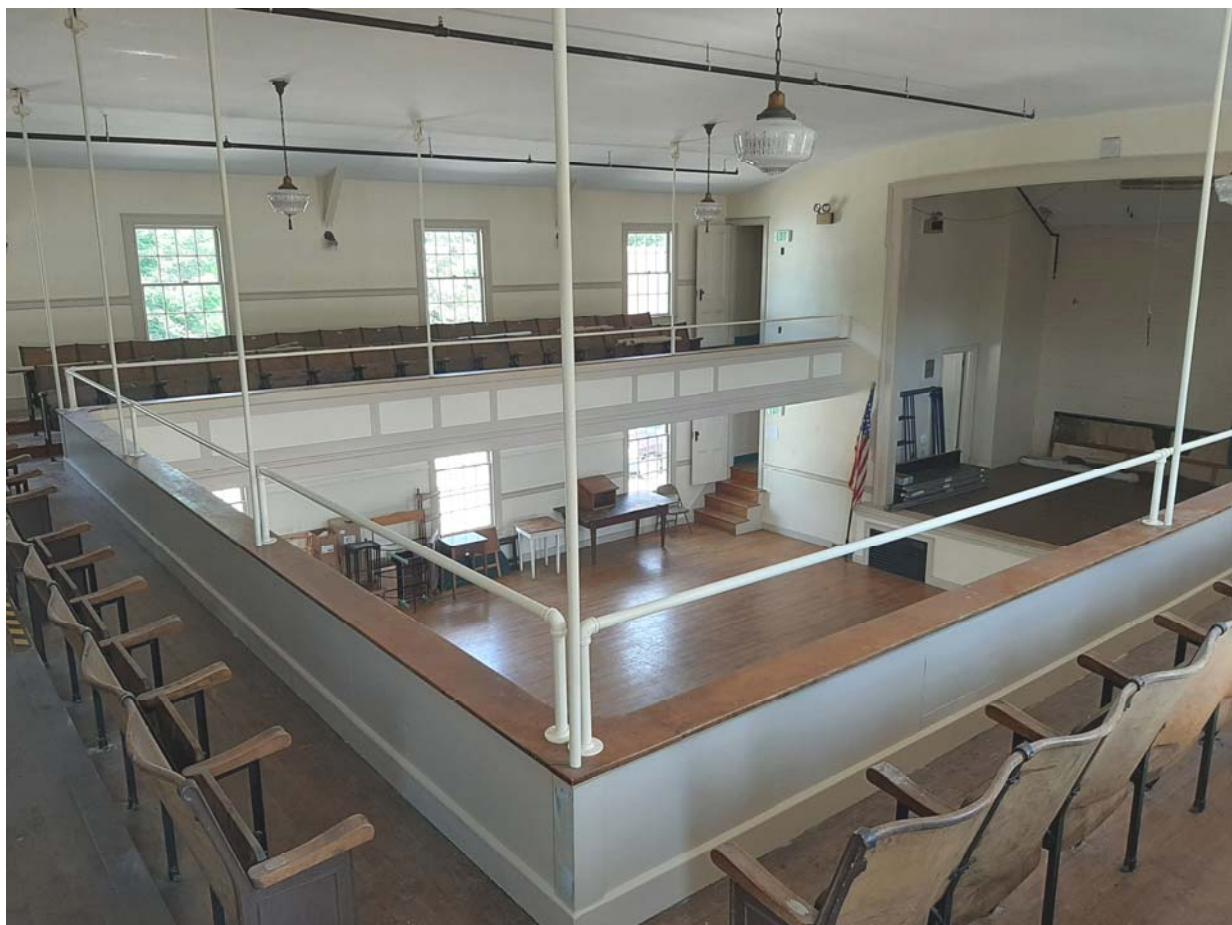


Opening the Pike Hall balcony is almost a reality, thanks to a grant from the Belvedere Preservation Fund of the Maine Community Foundation, the Cornish voters who supported us at town meeting, and generous donations from the many people who care about this historic building. We still have some fundraising to do to complete electrical work and painting. We also have a future project to install insulated blinds on all windows in the hall.

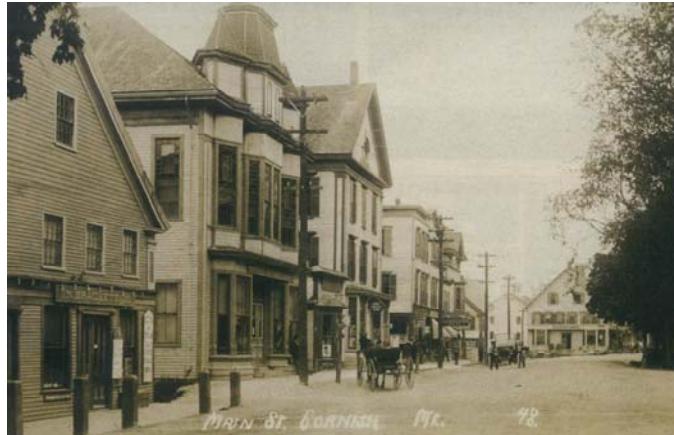


You will have a chance to become a permanent part of Pike Hall. The Pike Hall Committee will be selling small brass plaques as a fundraiser. Details of this project are still in the planning stage - please call 625-3177 or watch Your Weekly Shopping Guide for more information.

Donations are also still accepted at the town office or by mail (17 Maple Street, Cornish ME 04020), checks made out to Town of Cornish. Please mark on your check that it is intended for the Pike Hall restoration fund.



Don't miss the free Summer/Fall issue of "West Coast Maine" magazine which is available at many local businesses. Sandy Howe helped provide historical information for the article "Cruising to Cornish" written by Christine Baptista (p.42-47). Lots of good information in this magazine will encourage you to explore all that our area has to offer!



FREE

CHS member Meredith Harding recognized this large framed photograph of Justice Nathan Clifford at the annual UCC yard sale on May 22 and we were able to acquire it for our permanent collection.



Nathan Clifford was born in Rumney NH in 1803, received his certificate to practice law in 1827, and opened his law office in Newfield ME. He later served as Representative to the Maine State Legislature, Maine's Attorney General, Representative to Congress, Attorney General of the United States, ambassador to Mexico, and finally Associate Justice of the Supreme Court from 1858 to 1881. He died in Cornish on July 25, 1881.

For more information, we recommend "THE CLIFFORD HOUSE IN CORNISH And Those Who Made Its History" by Janet Ellen Holmes Carper. She lives in the house built for Nathan Clifford's son George.

Serious Lock Down Advice

Everyone PLEASE be careful because people are going crazy from being locked down at home! I was just talking about this with the microwave and the toaster while drinking my pepsi and we all agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention any of this to the washing machine because she, she puts a different spin^{on} EVERYTHING! I certainly couldn't share with the fridge cause he's been acting cold and distant! In the end, the iron straightened me out. She said the situation isn't all that pressing and all the wrinkles will soon get ironed out! The vacuum, however, was very unsympathetic... and told me to JUST SUCK IT UP! But the fan was VERY optimistic and gave me hope that it will blow over soon..

The toilet looked a bit flushed but didn't say anything when I asked its opinion, but the front door said I was becoming unhinged and the door knob

told me to get a grip!! You can just about guess what the curtains told me. They told me to "Pull myself Together"

"We will survive!"



Thank you Judy Sargent for sharing this bit of humor with us!

CORNISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. Box 404

Cornish, ME 04020

What we'd like you to know about Cornish Historical Society . . .

Being a member can be much more than attending our monthly meeting - in fact you don't need to attend a meeting at all!

There are many ways to be a member. Maybe you would like to learn more about our town's history by spending time in our archives - or share your own memories of growing up in Cornish so that we can all learn from your experiences.

Maybe you and your family would like to share in the fun of our annual Daffodil Duck Derby in the spring or listen to our storyteller as we celebrate Christmas in Cornish.

If being outdoors is more your style, you might be interested in one of our more recent projects locating, documenting, and caring for some of the small isolated cemeteries in Cornish.

If you have a special interest or area of expertise, would you like to speak at our museum in a casual atmosphere, or write a few paragraphs for our newsletter? We are always looking for new ideas for programs, exhibits, or contributions to the newsletter.

Would you like to help with a yard sale? Maybe you like to bake and could contribute to one of our bake sales held during voting - or have some old photographs you would like to identify. You get the idea - being a member of Cornish Historical Society can be what you want it to be!

----- MEMBERSHIP FORM -----



Name (s): _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Sign me up as a member _____ \$10.00 for single member _____ \$15.00 Family
(Annual Dues)

Please mail your dues and membership form to: Cornish Historical Society,
P.O. Box 404, Cornish, ME 04020 – Thank you for joining!

Can anyone identify these young fishermen?

This George French photograph was in a 1959 calendar
published by the Berkshire Publishing Co.



INVASION OF THE FROG POND, CORNISH

"A boy's will is the wind's will
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

George French

Your Membership dues are important to us — Please mail today
Cornish, Maine 04020
Post Office Box 404
CORNISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY