

## October 2018 E-Newsletter

**Eric Hooglund, Editor**

*Published monthly for members of the Belgrade Historical Society*

This summer, as I have done for many summers, I led walking tours of Main Street in Belgrade Lakes village. Inevitably, at least one person participating in these tours asks whether we would be seeing the camp of the legendary retailer L.L. Bean (1872-1967). I always compliment a participant for knowing about the Bean connection with Belgrade! But, alas, I must tell the group that, although L.L. Bean's former camp—a nice cottage, actually—still exists, it is not in the village and can't be seen on a walking tour. Rather, it is on Great Pond, right astride the point of land that marks the beginning of the Mill Stream, which flows from Great Pond and into Long Pond at the dam at the northern end of the village. And then I tell the participants that L.L. Bean had a younger brother who did not achieve international fame but was very important as a tourism entrepreneur right here in Belgrade Lakes during the first half of the twentieth century. And they will be seeing a lot of his former property on this walking tour! That brother was Ervin A. Bean.

Much of what we know about the history of Ervin Bean (1876-1940) comes from the narrative he told a summer visitor to Belgrade Lakes in 1923. That man, Edward Mott Woolley, lived in New Jersey and was a popular author and journalist who, from 1923 to 1925, wrote a series entitled "Romances of Small Business" that were syndicated weekly in newspapers. In the BHS archives, we have a copy of the one he wrote about Ervin Bean. This copy originally appeared on p. 6 of New Brunswick, NJ's *The Central New Jersey Home News* for November 14, 1923. According to Mott,

*Everywhere in that vicinity [Belgrade Lakes region] I heard people speak of Bean's store ... No matter what anyone wanted, he went to Bean for it—from groceries and patent medicines to bait. Bean seemed to dominate the business of the place. So, it looked as if Bean was worth a story—and he was.*

Mott 'interviewed' Ervin Bean and wrote his story by quoting him directly in the article. Here is what Bean had to say:

“I was born in Maine on a farm. My father and mother died and were buried on the same day, and I, the second youngest, was sent to live among strangers on another farm. I was six years old. My schooling was very limited, and the farm work grinding. At sixteen, I left school for good and engaged myself to a farmer for \$200 a year. Then I worked in a general store at \$7.50 a week, and quit that to enlist in the Spanish War.” [Spanish-American War of 1898]

“When I came home, I started a little furnishing store at Freeport, Maine, and kept it going for five years, quitting to take a job on the road selling fishing tackle for a New York house. Belgrade Lakes was on my route—and there you have it. I liked the place, and made up my mind it would be a good summer region, and a good place to start a business in. That was thirteen years ago.” [In 1910].

Ervin Bean purchased Bert Kelly’s sporting goods store on Main Street (see photo below). Originally, Charles Austin of the Central House had built it in 1890 as a general store for his daughter Jennie and son-in-law Harvey Parker, but by 1910 Kelly owed it. Bean transformed it into a store catering to the tourists. [Note that this was 2 years before his older brother, L.L. Bean, founded his famous boot company in Freeport!] He told Mott:

“My greatest early problem was to find out what people wanted, and, having found out, to get these goods. It was hard to adjust a proper outfit [for fishing], and to give my customers prompt service. But I attribute my success to the accomplishment of all these things.” (He also told Mott that he had “sales of \$75,000 a year in the store”).



**Photo Caption:**  
**Postcard, ca.**  
**1910, showing**  
**Ervin Bean’s**  
**store, 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**building on**  
**right.**

**BHS: Pope Postcard collection**



Bean sold all the fishing gear, bait and sports goods tourists wanted, as well as the groceries they needed and the tourist trinkets and souvenirs they desired as mementos of their summer vacations. And for his customers' children, he installed a marble top soda fountain in the back of his store! And he branched out. The first motors to fit on boats appeared in 1910, and soon Bean also was operating a profitable business of renting powerboats on a site near the dam on Mill Stream. The increasing numbers of tourists sparked his entrepreneurial spirit, and he bought the former residence of Henry Golder—the 1843 white house with the distinctive widow's watch on its roof—and operated it as the Lake View Manor guesthouse, complete with a famous dining room where guests could eat breakfast, lunch and dinner while looking out at Long Pond (see photo and ad below). He also acquired the white house next to it—currently the home of Balloons n' Things gift shop—which became The Cottage annex to the Lake View Manor.



**Photo Caption: Photograph of Bean's Lakeview Manor, ca. 1920. BHS: Pope Collection**



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50 Rooms with Bath

Spacious Lobby and Dining Room overlooking Long Lake

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J. B. CRONIN, Prop.

## LAKE VIEW MANOR

LAKE VIEW MANOR is located on the shore of beautiful Long Lake in the charming little village of Belgrade Lakes. Lake View Manor is complete with all modern conveniences. The dining room, a wide veranda and some of the sleeping rooms are on the lake side of the house, affording a wonderful view of the lake.

Rates: \$4.00 per day and up. Rooms with bath, \$5.00

E. R. BEAN, Prop.

BELGRADE LAKES, MAINE

**Caption: Page with advertisements from *Abenque*, Camp Abena Yearbook for 1925. Note last ad, which is for E. R. Bean's Lakeview Manor. BHS: Dowd Collection**

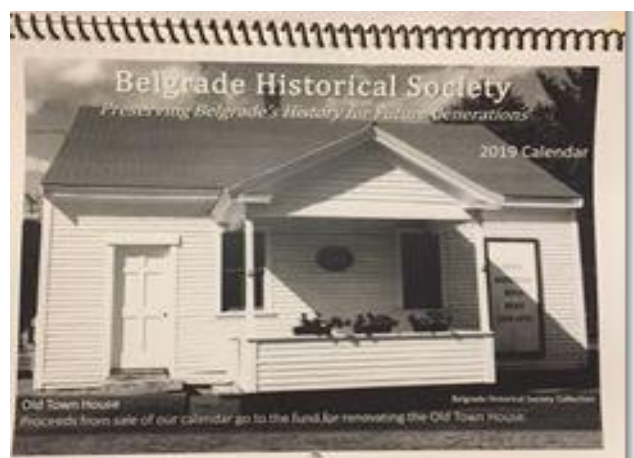
Bean's successful tourist lodgings needed clean linen, so in 1920 he opened a laundry in the small building across the street from his store—the place that now is the Maine Made Shop. Soon, the many guest houses and hotels in the village wanted to send their soiled lines there to be washed and pressed, so Bean eventually had to move the laundry to a larger building down near the dam. Indeed, by 1923, he dominated business in Belgrade Lakes, as Edward Mott Woolley discovered!

The BHS has not been able to ascertain where Ervin Bean lived in Belgrade Lakes between 1910 and 1918. But we do know that he married Inez White in 1914 and brought her to Belgrade Lakes. In 1918, they bought the home that now is known as the 1830 House. It was right next door to his general store, and within easy walking of all his various enterprises. In the 1930s he sold the Lake View Manor to Edwin Megill, who operated the Locusts' House guesthouse right across the street (the Locusts' House would become the Village Inn in the 1960s). Ervin Bean died in August 1940; according to the Waterville *Morning Sentinel* (Aug. 8, 1940), his funeral took place at the Union Church on Main Street in Belgrade Lakes village. Subsequently, in 1942, Michael and Marie Nagem of Waterville bought Bean's house and store from his estate. Those of us who remember Belgrade lakes in the 1940s and 1950s have fond memories of enjoying ice cream sodas and milk shakes during the summers at the marble top soda fountain in the former Bean's store, now owned by 'Ma Nagem.' The store was demolished in the 1960s, and the spot now—in the summers—is a green space between the Bean/1830 House and the old Chandler House (1831), in which the Nelson Harnden family were living when Irvin and Inez Bean resided in Belgrade. BHS member Rod Johnson—recalls that during his late boyhood in the mid-1950s, Mrs. Bean--Ervin Bean's widow--lived, at least during the summers, in a winterized cottage at the inlet to Mill Stream right across the water from the cottage of her brother-in-law, L.L. Bean.



## Enjoy history every month in 2019!

Buy a copy of the new 2019 BHS Calendar, with an assortment of 12 old photographs of Belgrade from 1890 to 1950. Only \$15 each, and all proceeds benefit our capital fund to preserve the Old Town House. **These calendars make great Christmas gifts!** Available at **Day's Store** or can ordered directly from BHS.



**Don't forget to visit the BHS History Room**, which is located in the Belgrade Community Center. You can see our historical photos on the walls, which document visually, the transformation of Belgrade from a prosperous farming community to a popular summer resort; and you can view the historical artifacts in the display cases. As of October 3, the history room is not staffed by volunteer docents, but if you have questions, would like to donate items, or to do research in our archives, please call our curator, Eric Hooglund, at: 495-2310 to set up an appointment.

### **October is still warm enough for walking tours of historic and picturesque Belgrade Lakes village!**

Entertaining way to learn about the many historic houses and businesses in this 200+-year old village. We are requesting a \$10 per person donation, all of which goes into our capital campaign to preserve the Old Town House. Call Eric Hooglund to arrange: 207-495-2310.

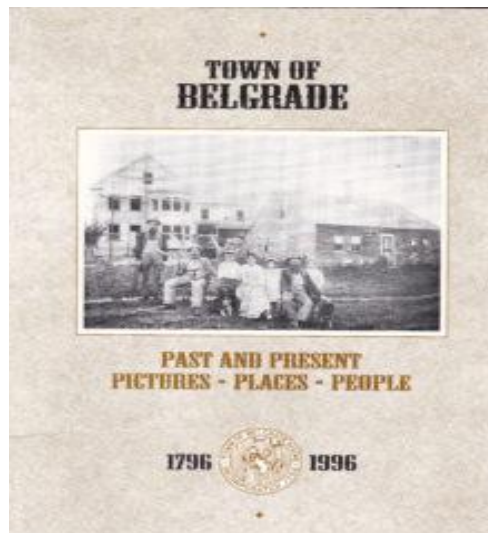
### **SAVE THE DATE!**

**Annual Holiday Stroll is Saturday, Dec. 1!** As in past years, there will be lots of activities in the Center For All Seasons, including vendors selling one of a kind, hand crafted Christmas gifts. And the **BHS History Room** will be open. Stop by to learn about our region's unique history! And we will be selling our **2019 calendars, reprints of Belgrade history books, antique postcards, and various other unique items!** Wonderful gifts that will be cherished for years by those who love the Belgrade Lakes region!

*Looking for gift ideas?*

*How about one of the reprints of the Belgrade Past & Present!*

*All proceeds support the BHS!*



The books have lots of information about old Belgrade and many of the families who resided here as well as pictures of many of the old buildings that make up this historic town. **The 2nd printings of the Town Of Belgrade Past and Present, Pictures -Places -People 1796-1996** available for sale at the Belgrade History Room, Day's Store and the Belgrade Town Office. Pricing for these books are \$30.00 each or \$27.00 for member



## Belgrade Historical Society's Capital Campaign



### Rendering of Townhouse after Renovation

Sketch by Artist Erik Johnson

The **Capital Fund Drive** is going well! We have received several thousand dollars and returns are coming in on a daily basis. A friendly reminder to those who want to give and have not yet done so. Use your return envelope or send your own to BHS, P.O. Box 36A, Belgrade, Maine 04917. Use PayPal as an alternative by going to our website [belgradehistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:belgradehistoricalsociety@gmail.com).

**Thanks to those who have already donated, all donations will help the bottom line!**



**Remember...history not recorded is history lost!**