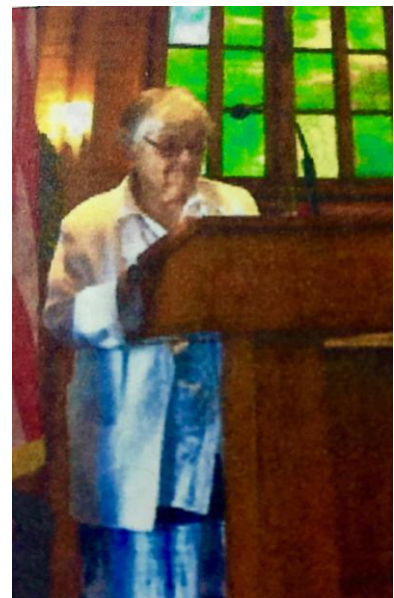


February 2019 E-Newsletter Eric Hooglund, Editor

Published monthly for members of the Belgrade Historical Society

In August 2017, I gave a presentation in the Union Church Hall on the transformation of the small 19th century manufacturing village of Belgrade Mills into the 20th century tourist village of Belgrade Lakes. In the post-presentation discussion with the audience, I met Sister Mary Alter, a Catholic nun with the religious order, the Sacred Heart of Mary, and who has visited Belgrade Lakes every summer of her life, as her grandparents owned a summer cottage on Great Pond, one that later belonged to her own parents and now to her siblings. I was interested to learn what she knew about St. Helena's Catholic Church, which has stood for over a century next to Route 27 on the right, just as one enters the village driving north on 27. She offered to send me a history of the church that she had compiled as a presentation for its **100th anniversary celebration in 2013**. She did send that account for me, but in care of the pastor of the Union Church. It took some time for Pastor Joe (Rev. Joseph Chamberland) and I to meet up, but I finally did get Sister Mary's account. Because she originally wrote it for a public presentation and also wished BHS to have a copy for our history files, I am happy to share this interesting memoir with our members. Thanks, Sister Mary!

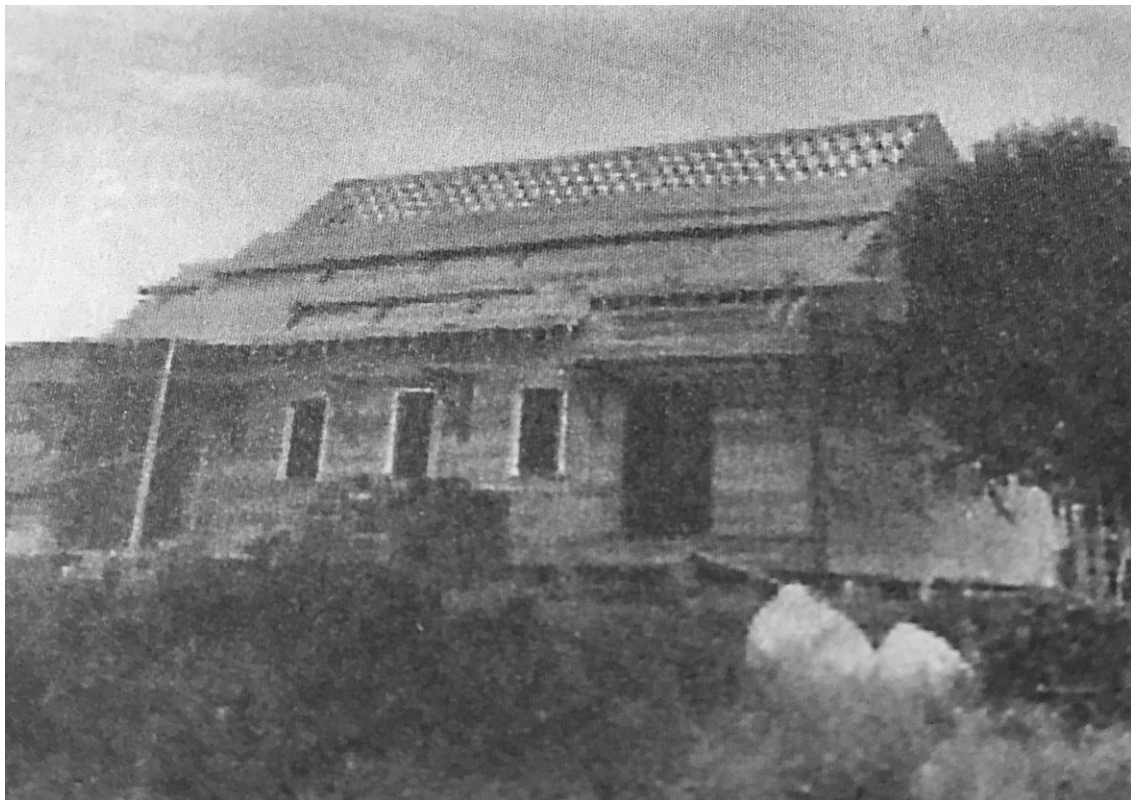
It is a privilege and honor to have been invited to share some of my memories of St. Helena's Catholic. I am Sister Mary Alter, the daughter of Catheria (Connie) McCormack-Alter and Louis William Alter. Being a decedent of Alice and John Louis McCormack, I will share some memories that were passed on to me, while I was growing up with mom and my grandmother. Her name was Alice McCormack. With so many of us, in our family they may have something else to add to the history of this church.



Sister Mary Alter presenting her memories of St. Helena's founding at 100th Anniversary Mass inside St. Helena's Chapel, August 18, 2013. Photo Courtesy of Portland Diocese: News & Events, 9/4/13]

Early in the summer months my grandmother would invite some Jesuits from Fordham University to come to Maine. They would spend their summer with the McCormack's, the only thing my grandmother requested was that they offer mass on Sundays. Her doors were open wide to all who wished to attend. Many a boat from Great Pond, and cars off US 27 would arrive for mass. As the number of people increased, it was decided that a better provision for the Eucharist should be found. Father Kelly was made the pastor of St. Helena's. He was approached by J. L. McCormack to look into buying some land. Fr. Kelly went to the Bishop of Portland, to see if he could purchase land for the church. The Bishop was delighted to hear someone was willing to buy land and build the chapel. My grandmother named the chapel in honor of his youngest daughter Helen at that time.

St. Helena was attached to Sacred Heart of Waterville, until 1961; it was given over to a Fr. Origene Guiller, who then became the pastor of St. Theresa in Oakland. My parents were married in the chapel in 1929. Subsequently, several of the McCormack family received other life giving sacraments here. The Chapman and McCormack families have had Altar boys serving mass over 100 years. The Chapman's are the fifth generation serving mass at St. Helena's. The Pastor of St. Theresa in Oakland has continued to serve us here at Helena. During the summer, we have college chaplains and retired priests assigned to the area.



Constructing St. Helena's Chapel, early spring, 1913. Photo courtesy of Portland Diocese: News & Events, 9/4/13]

The parishioners have wanted to keep the interior rustic effect that has been maintained for 100 years. The upkeep and repairs to the building have been carried

out by many parishioners. Mr. John Velleux of Oakland made the cross that stands on the roof of the chapel. He was responsible for the pedestals for the statues and drawers that hold all the vestments. Mr. John J. Casale is responsible for many other items too. He provided the installation of the pews and lights. Mr. Casale and Mrs. Connie McCormack-Alter were responsible for seeing that a new roof was put on. There is a large crucifix over the doorway leading to the parking lot that was given by the Alter family in memory of my grandparents. My grandfather gave it to our grandmother; it hung on a wall at the McCormack camp on Great Pond. Other items beginning with plants to the sacred vessels were donated by many loving families.

As for tradition, there is much more to say about this beloved chapel. We must not forget the women who were asked to clean the chapel every Saturday. As time went on, the keys were passed to someone else.



St. Helena's Chapel nearly ready for first Catholic mass, summer 1913. Photo Courtesy of Portland Diocese: News & Events, 9/4/13].



SAVE THE DATE!!!!!!

St. Patrick's Day Tea, Sunday, March 17, 2019, 2 – 4 pm.

**Join the BHS and our co-host, LakeHome Group Realty in the historic
Lakeside Inn, Main Street, in Belgrade Lakes village.**

**This is the Former Hiram Savage Tavern (1843), later the home of entrepreneur
Henry Golder, and later Irwin Bean's Lake View Manor (1917-1938). A rare
opportunity to see a grand historic gem!**

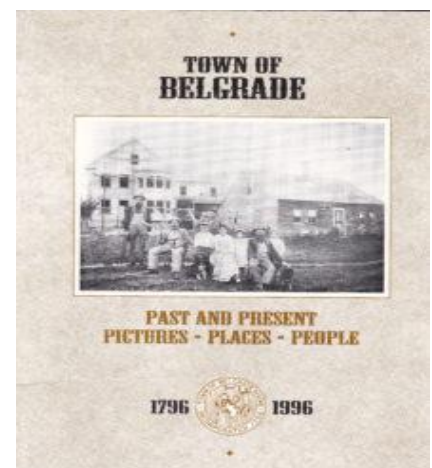
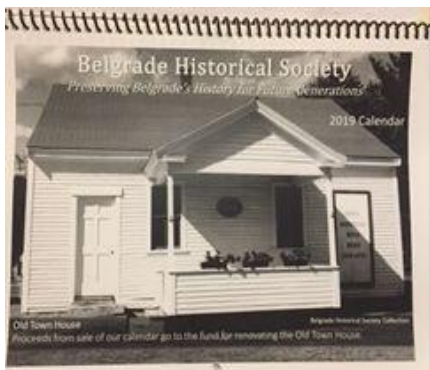
**Come and enjoy teas, including Ireland's popular Irish Breakfast tea, brewed in
antique teapots and served in antique teacups.**

Accompanied by Irish soda bread and other delicacies.

Donations welcomed for our capital campaign to renovate the Old Town House!

**Looking for gifts, don't forget our calendars and Reproduction Past
& Present Books. Available at the Center for All Seasons BHS
History Room or Day's Store.**

Our **2019 calendars**, with classic 8" X 10" photographs of Belgrade from
the 1890s to the early 1950s. Wonderful way to enjoy Belgrade all year
long! And the photos are perfect for framing as keepsakes when each
month is over. **ONLY \$15, a bargain for those who love Belgrade!**



Past and Present Books More than 140 unique and
priceless photos of Belgrade's past, all with historical captions. **Only
\$15, another bargain!**

Town of Belgrade Past and Present Pictures of People and Places
A special hardbound photo and text book for the coffee table! **Only \$30.**
Similar books are as much as \$75!

Capital Fund Drive



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.

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

Don't forget that BHS is a non-profit 501 (3) 2 organization, so all contributions to its capital campaign to renovate the Old Town House are tax deductible. Any donation you make to BHS can be deducted from your income tax to the extent allowable by law. Please think of making an end-of-year donation to our worthy cause and help to preserve our history.