



April 2021 E-Newsletter

Eric Hooglund, Editor

Published monthly for members of the Belgrade Historical Society

On April 1, the BHS learned about the passing of an icon of the Belgrade region's tourist trade, Horatio Castle, owner of Castle Island Camps. He had passed away a few days earlier, on March 27, in West Palm Beach, Florida, where he and his wife, Victoria Castle, spend their winters. He was 81.

Horatio was born in Belgrade in November 1939 to Leighton and Cora *Mills* Castle, the youngest of four children. His father, who originally came to Belgrade as a guide, bought the property at the narrows, where the southern end of upper Long Pond constricts to a narrow, short and rocky stream before broadening out again as lower Long Pond. There on the spit of land by the bridge over the Long Pond "stream" he developed Castle Island camps, in which Horatio grew up until 1947, when his parents moved to Florida. His aunt, Minnie *Mills* Penney, who was married to Will Penney, kept a diary from 1926 to 1967, and it forms a major part of the 1970 book, *Eighty-Eight Years on a Maine Farm* by Will and Minnie Penney (Farmington, ME: The Knowlton & McLeary Co.). In the entries for September 1953, she records the death of her sister Cora from cancer in 1953. Horatio would have been only 14 at

the time. As an adult, he would return to Belgrade and manage the camps in the summers, with his entire family as the own children grew up. Sadly, Horatio and his wife Valerie (whom he married 61 years ago) lost their son Russell Castle in 2011.

We hope to feature a story about how the Castles developed Castle Island Camps into one of the most familiar and loved tourist places in the Belgrade Lakes, due in large part to the legendary warmth and genuine affection that the Castle family has shown their guests, many of who continue to return not just year after year, but even generation after generation. Meanwhile, we have this fond remembrance of Horatio Castle by BHS Board member Rod Johnson. Thanks, Rod, for sharing it with us.

Rod Johnson's Memories of Horatio Castle

Horatio and I were not what I consider real close buddies, but it feels like I knew him forever. In the early 1970s, I was working at Day's Marina as an outboard mechanic. One fine spring day a green International pickup, with a broom sticking out of the stake pocket, backed into the yard where I was working on a boat.

A rather dapper looking man, a bit older than I, stepped out and said, "I'm Horatio Castle and I need a couple of outboards fixed." As he opened the tailgate, he added, "You're Rod, Cliff's son, aren't you?"

I said yup, and "What's up with the outboards?"

"One has a bad clutch dog and wont' stay in forward gear, the other needs a water pump."

Okay says I, "When do you need 'um?"

"ASAP," he replied, "My fishermen want to go back out tomorrow morning early, before they head back to Boston."

So it went. Boss, Darryl Day, told me to stay on them until they were ready for the morning. Horatio was a good customer and never unreasonable. Many motors later, Horatio and I became friends that summer and were for the next 50 years. In the later years, working as carpenters, my co-worker Melvin Pray and I rebuilt the Castle Island main dock, and always were called in for lunch by Horatio as he stuck his head out the back kitchen door.

As the years went by, my wife Doris and I intersected here and there with him and his wife Val, and no matter what the circumstances, both Horatio and Val were always looking dapper and pleasantly spoken. I don't think I ever saw Horatio a dirty mess, whether he was working on an outboard, fixing a dock or heading for the dump with a load of camp garbage. His good looks and neat ways fit right in with his cheery personality, always ready to hear your problems and help if he could. The International truck changed from green to red I think, but Horatio and his family are true icons of the greater Belgrade Region—and many, many people will miss him.



Members Comment on March E-Newsletter about Belgrade Depot:

1. Harvey Gile adds to his article: *"I was only 10 when we took Effie Adams to North Monmouth, where she died a year later. February 17th was the 70th anniversary of her death."* [EH adds: Effie Adams was Harvey's great-grandmother and the mother of his grandmother, Helen Adams Shepard, the twin sister of Mellen Adams, who died during World War I while serving in the US Army. The Adams-Cobb American Legion Post was named in his honor.]

2. Three comments from Dave Yeaton of Nashua, NH and a 1948 graduate of Belgrade High School, which was located in Belgrade Depot:

"First comment: Gowell's store is on the right in this picture." [Yes. My error! As a 'lefty', I tend to say 'left,' even when I am looking or pointing right; and 'right' when I am looking 'left.' Many left-handed friends—but not all—report doing likewise!]

"Second comment: Taylor's store was located next to and just to the right of Gowell's store. Taylor's store was not located next to the Grange Hall during the 1940s." [Thanks for this important clarification.]

"Third comment: Cy Tobin had the amazing ability to recognize any local automobile - who owned it and what brand it was."

3. Donato Nieman of Montgomery Township, NJ, writes:

"Hi All, I read the article about Belgrade Depot and found it fascinating. I remember when Route 27 ran through the Depot and then in the 1960's was realigned to its current location. My family vacationed in Belgrade Lakes starting in 1948 renting a cottage from Mrs. Gilman, then the Johnson's, at Long Pond Camps from Harold and Marilyn Young, even spending several

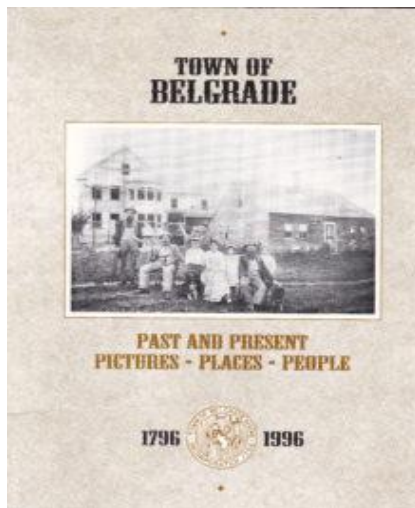
years at cottages owned by Ken Baker who also ran the Esso Station. My brother Tony Nieman built a camp on Castlevue Lane on property he bought in 1970, which he kept until 2018."

Thanks to each of you for writing and sharing your historical memories with all of us.

BHS Books!

All proceeds to our Capital Fund for renovation of Belgrade's historic Town Meeting House, built in 1814 and used for the March 1815 Town Meeting.

Town of Belgrade Past and Present Pictures of People and Places

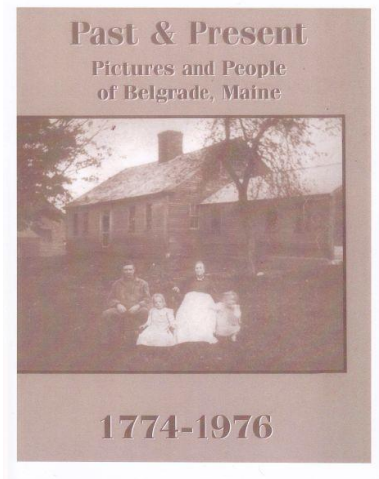


A special hardbound photo and text book for the coffee table!

Special price: \$26, includes postage and handling

Past and Present, reprint of 1976 Bicentennial book featuring over 100 old photographs, each with historically accurate

descriptions! \$18, includes postage.



Also available is *TheHistory*, reprint of 1892 history compiled by Belgrade native John Clair Minot who eventually moved to Boston and became editor of *Youth's Companion*, a popular magazine for boys & an editor for Boston's Herald newspaper. \$10, includes postage.

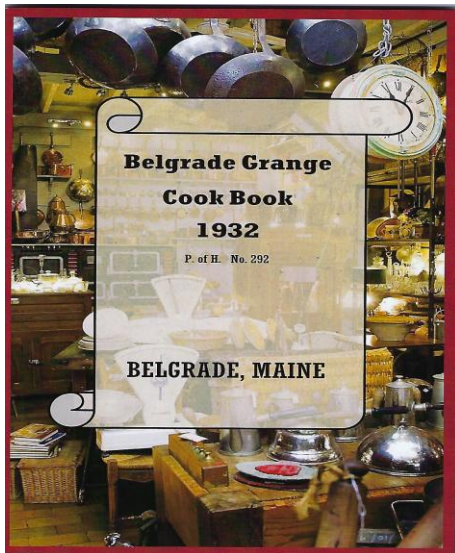
BELGRADE, A HISTORY

EXCERPTED FROM

Illustrated History
of Kennebec County, Maine
1625-1799-1892

Editors: Henry D. Kingsbury, Simeon L Deyo





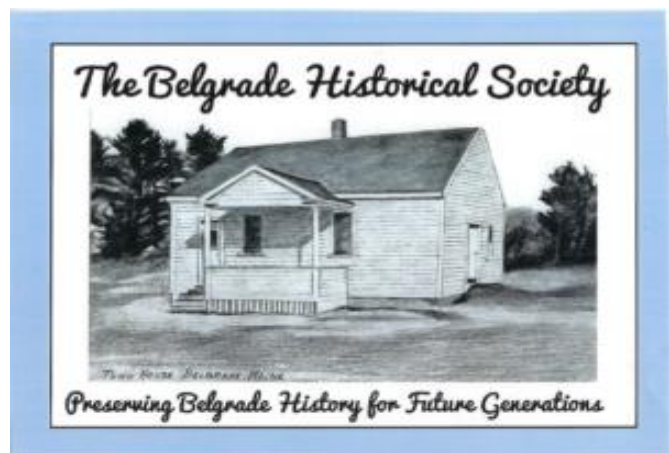
A reprint of The Belgrade Grange cookbook is available at Hello Good Pie and Oliver and Friends Bookstore in Belgrade Lakes Village.

It is also available from the Belgrade Historical Society for \$15.00 + a \$3.00 for Postage. To order from BHS send an email to

belgradehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Don't forget to renew your BHS membership for 2021!

Or consider buying a membership for a friend or a family member who would enjoy the stories of Belgrade!



The Belgrade Historical Society welcomes all who support our mission and share our commitment to preserve the rich history of the town and its lakes.

Individuals, families, organizations, or businesses may join. The membership year is January 1 – December 31, and at any meeting of the members each membership is entitled to one vote. Members may also attend any meeting of the Board of Directors . Please visit our website for more information on becoming a member or how you can donate to the BHS @

<http://belgradehistoricalsociety.org/>

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.

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.

Please stop by and check out the progress of the restoration of the Old Town House, they are doing a fantastic job of restoring the building!

It's never too late to buy the past as a present, a gift membership, or a make a contribution to our Town House Fund in memory of a beloved relative or dear friend!