

Belgrade Historical Society

E-NEWSLETTER

September 2021

Edited by Eric Hooglund

Thanks to all our friends and members who stopped by the BHS display booth in the Village Green Park on the last Sundays of June, July and August crafts fair. Many of you asked about our progress in restoring and renovating Belgrade's OLD—like built in 1814—Town Meeting house. Thus, I thought this month's E-Newsletter would be a good place to update everyone on the progress we have made to date. Despite COVID, renovation work has been continuing since early spring and much progress has been made. Below is a summary of what has been accomplished as of Labor Day (September 6, 2021). The details in the report below are courtesy of BHS Board Member Rod Johnson, who has been overseeing the renovation process.

First, the work on the exterior of the 207-year-old building is nearly complete. New windows and doors, manufactured in early 19th century style, have been installed. The 20th century addition of a garage door on the east end has been removed, and a new window installed as per original 1814 location. Now the building has eight windows, two per side, as in 1814, and the two front doors are back in their original 1814 locations.

We also have installed new granite steps and wooden railings, which are modern versions of the original hand-cut granite. An original piece of the old granite steps will be on display inside so visitors can see the hand-drilled holes. Iron feathers and wedges were inserted into these holes to split the pieces in 1814.



Front view of Renovated Old Town House, with doors, granite steps and wooden railings (Photo courtesy of Rod Johnson)

The old and very weather-worn clapboard siding has been replaced with new cedar clapboards, which have been painted with 2 coats of white paint. They look very nice! Although we have no record of what type of wood was used for the original clapboards, cedar commonly was used for clapboard siding in the early 19th century. And those beautiful plantings in front of the Old House in the above photo? They were donated by Scott Davis and Marie Pulsifer, each of whom we thank profusely. And Doris Mathias is the angel who planted them in front of the Old Town Meeting House.

Tasks that need to be completed: If you have visited the old Woodside Cemetery recently, you probably noticed the 120-year old grove of pine trees that shade it. Unfortunately, the pine closest to the Old Town Meeting House has extensive roots that are going right under the left side of the building. The Sexton decided that the tree needs to be removed before it damages the Old Town House; that task was done this week. Also, John Gawler and his daughters plan to install snow stops and custom gutters and downspouts on the roadside (south) side of the building.

Second, the interior of the Old Town House: It has been cleared of all its 20th and 21st century partitions, etc. It now is a nice-looking large room that the town folks attending the first town meeting in 1815 would recognize! The hand-hewn beams were squared up with an adz! These beams will be left open for the public to see. The four crossties are amazing 8x8x32 feet long Hemlock logs! (See photo below)



Looking up at ceiling beams with crossties (Photo courtesy of Rod Johnson)

The beams are strong enough to support the permanent display of special treasures donated to BHS over the years but which we have had to store in private garages for lack of any space to display them. These include a canoe from the legendary hotel, The Belgrade, one of the rare items to survive the 1956 fire that destroyed this iconic symbol of our town's summer tourism; an early 20th century Hoosier (farmhouse pie-baking station, see photo), recently donated by Kirsten Johnson, a granddaughter of the late Gladys Johnson; and a 1884 piano that belonged to Henry Golder, who built the general store in Belgrade Lakes village that became Bartlett's Store in the early 20th century and since 1958 has been Day's Store. Finally, I ought to add that a new floor has been installed, although it still awaits a third and final coat of finish.



Hoosier (pie-baking station), ca. 1890-1910 period (Photo courtesy of Rod Johnson)

Before closing, I would like to give a shout out and thank you to our BHS Treasurer Duane Farnham, who provided 95% of materials at his cost, which saved us a bundle of money!

Also, thanks to Dan McKenzie, our town electrician, fire chief and civic-minded resident, who plans to have his company install new electric lighting inside the Old Town House.

Now that we have reached this point in our renovation, the BHS will be deciding about the next phase, which will include opportunities for you to visit!

Also, Hot off the Press!

Eighty-Eight Years on a Maine Farm, by Will and Minnie Penney

Reprint of the 1970 edition by *Down East Books*.

Retail price: \$19.95

BHS price: \$17, plus \$4 postage and packaging if mailed

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

**BELGRADE,
A
HISTORY**

EXCERPTED FROM

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

Editors: Henry D. Kingsbury, Simeon L. Deyo



Also available is 'The History,' 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. \$10.00 includes postage.

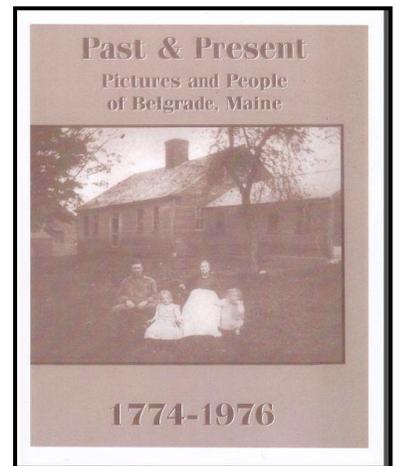
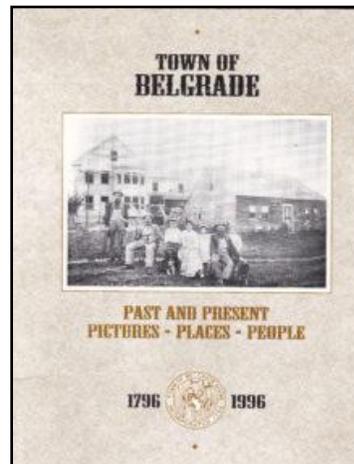
Town of Belgrade Past and Present Pictures of People and Places

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

Special price: \$26.00, featuring over 100 old photographs, each with historically

accurate descriptions! \$18.00 includes postage. includes postage and handling

The Past and Present, reprint of 1976 Bicentennial book featuring over 100 old photographs, each with historically accurate descriptions! \$18.00 includes postage.



BHS Capital Campaign



Rendering of Townhouse after complete Renovation

Sketch by Artist Erik Johnson

For those who want to give and have not yet done so, it is not too late. 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 <http://belgradehistoricalsociety.org>

Or contact us through email at the following email address: belgradehistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Don't forget that BHS is a non-profit 501 (3) 2 organizations, 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.

Remember...history not recorded is history lost!

Don't forget our face book for the most up to date news and information on The Belgrade Historical Society at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/httpwww.belgradehistoricalsociety.org>