

October 2017 E-Newsletter **By Eric Hooglund, Editor**



The above postcard photo depicts a crowd, 79 years ago, watching from the docks on Long Pond as the first ever airmail plane touches down on Long Pond to pick up mail from the post office in Belgrade Lakes village. That historical event occurred on May 12, 1938. The Belgrade Lakes post office already had a seasonal water route mail boat service on Great Pond dating back to 1900—and which still continues today. So was the water plane going to replace that service? No! That event was staged to help promote tourism in the Belgrade Lakes region. A mailbag filled with inviting brochures was picked up and flown to a large post office, perhaps in Augusta (?), to

be mailed to addresses in Maine and ‘away.’ Many Belgrade residents also sent letters and postcards to their family and friends, as all the mail that the air plane picked up that day had been stamped with a special commemorative airmail stamp.

We are grateful to BHS member William ‘Bill’ Pulsifer for providing us this airmail service in Belgrade Lakes. Bill was a very young boy at the time, but he remembers his father taking him down to the docks to watch the airplane land on Long Pond. He does not recall standing on the docks, however, but rather believes he was perched on a nearby boulder. If any members also witnessed that event in 1938 or heard about it from parents or older siblings, please share your recollections with us. Meanwhile, thanks to Bill for giving us the postcard photo and telling its story.

* * *

Bill Pulsifer also gave to BHS the photograph below. It is a 1908 view of Main Street in Belgrade Lakes village. Bill says this is the earliest photograph showing a fire hydrant in Belgrade (it is on the left, between the first and second electricity posts and to the right of the sidewalk). Note also that electric poles are on both sides of the street, which is still unpaved. BHS has not been able to find any record for when electricity came to Belgrade Lakes, which we believe was the first part of Belgrade to receive electricity. We do know that the Union Gas and Electric Company, based in Waterville, provided the first electricity for Belgrade Lakes. Our best estimate is that this happened in 1901, the same year the Belgrade Hotel opened. The promotional brochures for the grand opening of this luxury hotel promised patrons that every one of its ‘sleeping suites’ had electricity and private baths. If any of our readers have information on the precise date that electricity arrived in Belgrade Lakes or any other part of Belgrade, please share it with us. A final note about this photograph: if you look at the second building on the right, there is a sign that reads: “W.J. Damren, Co.

Gasoline & Oil Shop.” There is a smaller sign under this sign that reads: “Belgrade Boats.” If any readers have information on these early 20th century enterprises, we would welcome hearing from you.



Upcoming Program

October 19, 2017

“Viewing Belgrade’s Past Through
Postcards and Snapshots”

Eric Hooglund

Maine Lakes Resource Center-7:00 p.m.

Old Artifacts Uncovered in Belgrade Lakes village



Bill and Vicki Mitchell, the new owners of the historic Chandler house (built in 1831) on Main Street in the village of Belgrade Lakes, found two old iron implements buried in the dirt when workers excavated an area near their front porch in order to shore up a wooden pillar. Below are the photos. The first photo obviously is an old horseshoe. But how old? From the shape of the horseshoe, can any readers identify from what period it might date?

The second photo is a round iron disk that seems to have been part of an apparatus, perhaps one that operated with chain pulleys (?). Has any reader seen such a disk and can you identify what its purpose may have been? Thanks for your help!



Belgrade Historical Society News

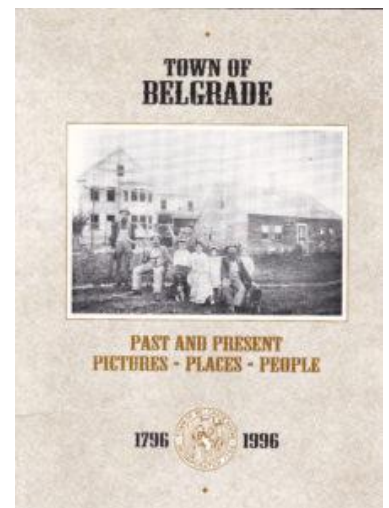
The Society has exciting news! The Belgrade Historical Society has been looking for a permanent home for many years. The BHS is now moving forward with plans put into place over the past four years. On November 7th, residents will vote on the following referendum question;

Article 3: Shall the Town of Belgrade vote to permit the Belgrade Historical Society to undertake certain restoration and renovation projects at the "Old Town House" located on the Cemetery Road, so the building can be used by the society for storage and display of its collections and other Society activities, provided that plans have been submitted to and approved by the Board of Selectpersons and all financial planning, and other costs association with the restoration and renovation projects are the responsibility of the Society.

The Belgrade Historical Society is confident the referendum article will pass and plans to move forward with a fundraising effort to reach our goal! You will be hearing from us in the next few months about the details of the fundraising effort. The Society would appreciate any and all support to reach our goal of creating a year-round facility, not only to display the town's historical items, but to provide a facility to hold educational and cultural programming for residents and non-residents of all ages!

Reminder, the BHS has the 2nd printings of the Town Of Belgrade Past and Present, Pictures -Places -People 1796-1996 available for sale at the Belgrade History Room. Pricing for these books are \$30.00 each or \$27.00 for Members.

We also have the 2nd printings of the 1774-1976 Soft Cover "Past & Present", Pictures and People of Belgrade, Maine Books, are available for sale at the Belgrade History Room, \$15.00 or \$13.50 for Members.



The books would make great Christmas Gifts!

Remember...history not recorded is history lost!

Remember, as we research issues that may be of interest to our membership and others, please know that we want your input on topics of historical interest that you would like to see in our newsletter.

Do you have a particular subject that you believe might be of interest to others? If so, please pass on the information to us by simply replying to the e-Newsletter. We will work to research the issue to develop an article on the subject. Better yet, if you have written on a topic that you believe might be of interest...send that along as well!

We want this newsletter to be educational, entertaining, and oriented to the topics about which our readers want to learn. Finally, we want your feedback. If you see something that is inaccurate in the information that we provide...let us know! We will be establishing a "Member Feedback" column in the upcoming issues and want to hear from you about what you liked or didn't like about your e-Newsletter.

Oldest Photograph of the OLD TOWNHOUSE

One of the oldest extant buildings in Belgrade is the Old Townhouse on Cemetery Road beside the Woodside Cemetery. Built in 1815 and in use as the location of the annual Town Meetings until 1873, the facility has a long and interesting history.

Dennis "Denny" Keschl, Former Chair of the Belgrade Historical Society's Board of Directors, has been researching this historically significant building. One thing he's not been able to find is a photograph showing the building without the front porch, which was added in the early 1940s. With his deep interest in the Old Townhouse, Denny is personally putting up a prize of \$100 for the oldest known picture of the building prior to the porch's addition.

If you have an old photograph of the Old Townhouse, please send us a copy with descriptive information to verify its provenance to:

Belgrade Historical Society
P.O. Box 36A
Belgrade, ME 04917

After reviewing the photo and information, our Collections Committee will make a determination as to which photograph will win the reward. All entries must be received prior to June 30, 2017. If more than one copy of the winning photograph is submitted, then the one that we receive first will be the winner. The society will keep copies of all the entries submitted for our use. If an original is submitted, we will make a copy and return the original unless it was given as a donation. The reward will be made immediately after the oldest photograph is selected.



Hope you enjoyed this newsletter, please send comments or questions to
Co-Chairs of the Belgrade Historical Society - Dianne Dowd at
dilib56@aol.com or Mary Vogel at yogel9252@roadrunner.com

Don't forget to visit our facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/belgradehistorical/>

**Our new facebook page editor is Laura Hudson, we would like to
thank her for her assistance. If you would like something historical
to Belgrade posted or a picture of Belgrade, please contact her
through the facebook page.**