

Belgrade Historical Society

April-May 2020 E- Newsletter
By Eric Hooglund, Editor

Dear BHS Members and Friends,

The novel Corona virus (COVID-19) migrated to Maine in early March, and on the 15 of the month—State of Maine Day—our governor, Janet Mills, declared a civil emergency, initially to last for four weeks, but extended for another four weeks on April 15 and the same again on May 15. What this civil emergency has meant for the BHS, in practical terms, include the following:

1. Loss of access to our files and records in the BHS History Room in the Belgrade Community Center because the Town closed that facility to the public.
2. Cancellation of the monthly Board of Directors meetings in March, April and May.
3. Cancellation of our bake sale at the Annual March Town Meeting because the Board of Select Persons voted to postpone the Town Meeting from March 21 to July 14.

4. Cancellation of the first BHS 2020 program, scheduled for May 28, as well as the BHS annual meeting scheduled in conjunction with that program.
5. Cancellation of the first Saturday in June Yard Sale in conjunction with Friends of the Belgrade Public Library.
6. Cancellation of our popular Walking Tours of historic Belgrade Lakes during May and June.

The combined effect of the above Covid-related cancellations has been a long delay in being able to get the newsletter out to all our members, and I apologize to each and every one. Our annual meeting, the yard sale (of donated items), the bake sale and the walking tours are fund raising events, the revenues from which are important to help finance on-going operating expenses. A priority expense right now as warm weather returns is to continue the renovation work on Belgrade's Old Town Meeting House that we commenced between Thanksgiving and Christmas last year. I plan to prepare an updated progress report for our June newsletter.

Meanwhile, for this newsletter, I am pleased to present below a special memoir of Green Island in Lower Long Pond. The memoir is a transcription of a 1972 interview of Green Island's former owner, Jeanette Holliday Baker Paine, age 86 at the time. Mrs. Paine's granddaughter, Jeannette Myrle Mills, who spent the first 17 summers of her life with her grandparents on Green Island, taped and subsequently typed a transcript of that interview. On behalf of BHS, I am most grateful to Jeannette Mills for sharing this unique memoir:

About the transcript, she says: "I am the person, Jeannette Myrle Mills, who transcribed the following transcription, only my correct, married name in 1972 was Jeannette Myrle Mills Rutan. I married my first husband, Franklin

Guy Rutan, on June 2, 1962. He passed away September 17, 1968. I then married my second husband, J. Raymond Edward Boucher, on September 11, 1979. He predeceased me on December 19, 1995.

Growing up, I spent every summer of my life on Green Island until sometime when I was around 17, when my grandmother sold the island. I dearly loved my grandmother and have very happy memories of my summers there. The following was transcribed and edited from a tape Jeannette Holliday Baker Paine made in the year 1972 when she was 86 years old. She was born August 9, 1896, in Jeannette, Mississippi. Her parents were Everett Green Baker and Joan Nevitt Fleming Baker (known by the name Nevitt). On June 14, 1905, she married Andrew Dean Paine (born May 17, 1870 to Stephen Paine and Adelaide Borden Paine), in Jeannette, Mississippi. They moved soon thereafter to Providence, Rhode Island. They had one daughter, Laura Baker Paine, born February 23, 1906, in Jeannette, Mississippi. Laura was raised mostly in the Providence, Rhode Island area. The family also owned a farm in Harwichport, Massachusetts, and an island, known as Green Island, on Long Pond, in Belgrade Lakes, Maine, where they spent summers. Andrew Dean Paine had purchased this island before marrying his wife. The editor of this tape is Laura Baker Paine's daughter. On August 27, 1936, Laura Baker Paine married Ernest Merle Mills in Portland, Maine. To them was born the one daughter, Jeannette Myrle Mills, born in Providence, Rhode Island, September 30, 1938. On this tape there are references to Jeannie, which is the nickname Jeannette Holliday Baker Paine gave to her granddaughter, Jeannette Myrle Mills. Jeannette called Grandmother Paine,

Gongie, and Grandfather Paine, Gotten. Gotten died January 18, 1943, at the age of 72, in New Brunswick, New Jersey.] Transcript of Jeannette Paine begins:

Andrew Paine spent the winters in Natchez buying cotton, and his summers he was free to roam. After being in Providence a while with his mother, he, with a friend, George Waterhouse, went up to Belgrade Lakes, Maine, to try the fishing. They stayed at the Belgrade Hotel. Every morning they rented a rowboat and went four miles down the lake where they found the fishing very fine. After fishing all morning, they wanted to go ashore to cook their noon meal. They saw an island in the middle of the lake [and] which was nearer than going to the shore. They went to the island. There was a little shack on one end, and a hunchback—a cripple—lived there. They asked him if they might come ashore and cook their meal. He said certainly, he would be glad to see them. So they went ashore and they fried their fish, made their coffee, fished all the afternoon, and went back to the hotel. The next morning they repeated what they'd done the day before. They did that every day they were there, and Mr. Paine grew to love the place. Before leaving, he asked the owner, "Would you sell this island?" To which the owner replied, "Yes, I'd be glad to, but I only own half; my brother owns the other half." Mr. Paine said, "I'm only interested in buying the whole island. I'm not interested in half. Write to your brother and ask if he's willing to sell his half."

Mr. Wing said that he would write his brother, Mr. Peabody, from Boston and asked if he would be willing to sell his half of Green Island and what his price would be. And Mr. Peabody replied that he would sell his half for twenty-five dollars. Mr. Wing said he would take the same amount for his.

So Mr. Paine bought Green Island for fifty dollars. It is one-half mile long and has 3 acres on it. It is heavily wooded with pine and is opposite Elizabeth Arden's Maine Chance Farm.

Green Island is unlike most of the other camps in that it's not posted. Some campers, being appreciative of the privilege granted them because of its not being posted, took the liberty of cutting their initials on the house or wrote original verses on one of the white shuttered windows. Here are some of them: [she reads some of the verses left by visitors]:

*We stopped upon your doorstep and ate our lunch together.
Fried veal and boiled potatoes, in the windy, sunny weather.
We fished the long dark morning, and never got a bite,
Then fished the whole bright afternoon, as long as it was light.
We may not lure the fishes, they may not bite at all,
But friend, we will remember your isle, your house, this wall.*

*From foreign shores that we come over,
To feast upon this isle of clover,
Wild strawberries here, and daises too,
And buttercups—all to welcome you.*

*So guard its treasures, all you who come,
And gentle giver, thy will be done.
He who would this place mutilate.
Deserves himself a similar fate.*

AFL NYC

*We, too, have come from foreign climes,
And read these gentle, proper rhymes.
Nor tree nor house would we disturb,
Our well-trained instincts thus were good.*

But we will thank the generous man,

*Who on this isle has made his plans.
And who allows the sporty rover,
To eat in peace with fields of clover.*

*The little green island
So near yet so far,
In memory you shine
Like a bright morning star.*

*Deep down in my heart
With zeal, I attest
Sincerest thanks
For the night's peaceful rest.*

*Oh little green island
Way off in the deep,
Eight years have passed
Since last did I sleep
On your beautiful shores
So rocky and green.*

*And through all those eight years
My one fondest dream,
Was that the girl of my thoughts
Should camp on these banks.
It was granted last eve,
And the owners, we thank.*

*There is a green isle in Long Lake,
A place of peace and rest,
And there four campers stopped
To take a long night's sleep, the best.
We know not whom to thank
For the fun that we've had here,
But host or hostess, please be sure
That memories of your island
We hold dear.*

*Little green island
With your emerald shores,
Shutters on windows*

*And bar on the door.
Your trees and your shores,
We have left both alone.
Good-bye little island,
We must beat it for home.*

October 20, 1915

*Isle of the whispering pines
Isle of memory, a silver wild,
But more than this isle
There shines perfect love,
Father, mother, child.*

*Dear Mrs. Paine
We are in the rain.
But still we think of you.
As we eat our fish,
We sincerely wish,
Your fondest dreams come true.*

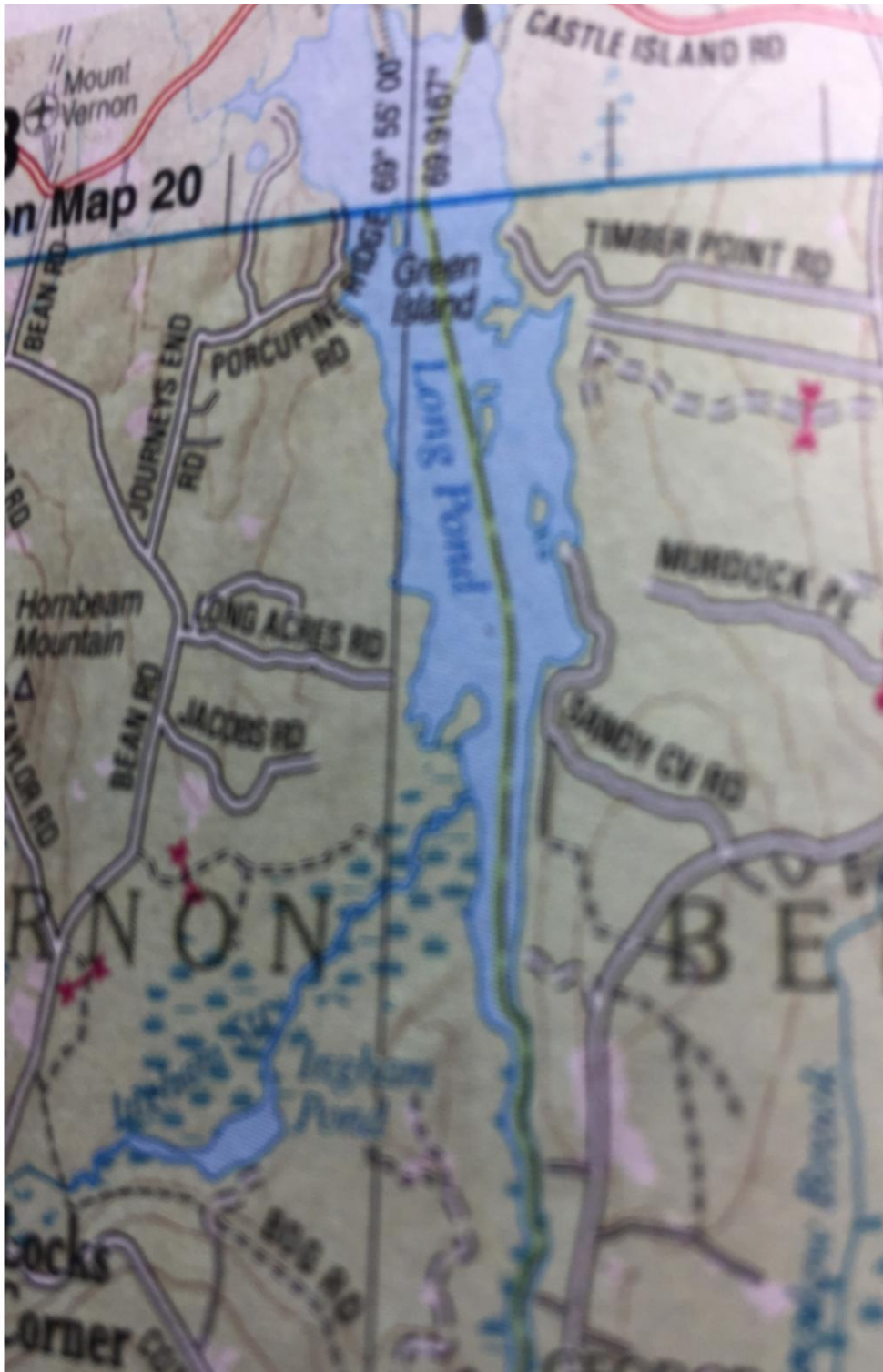
*I liked your island with its whispering pines,
Your shuttered window with its rollicking rhymes,
And the moon in the east last night, I wean,
Was quite the most wonderful moon ever seen,*

*We'd love to linger a number of days,
Before we depart on our several ways.
And the memory of woods and silver lake,
Away in our hearts, we'll take.*

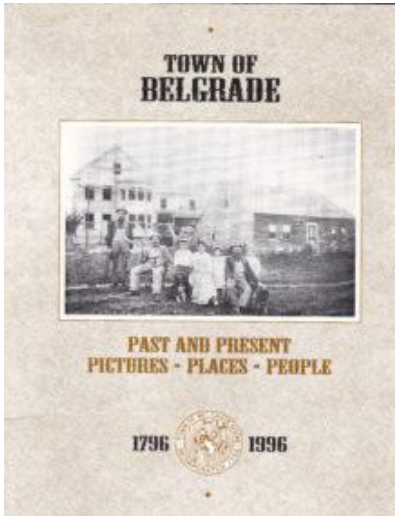
*And now Mr. Landowner, big of heart,
We want to thank you before we depart.
With hopes to return our sincere gratitude,
Someday in our own hospitable latitude.*

Signed by four men, one from Atlanta, Jacksonville, Philadelphia, and Buffalo.

Figure 1: Map of Green Island, upper left of Lower Long Pond. Map courtesy of The Maine Atlas and Gazetteer, p. 12. © Delorme, 2015.



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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.

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!