



April 2019 E-Newsletter

Eric Hooglund, Editor

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BHS Tea

Sunday, March 17, was St. Patrick's Day and a fine afternoon for an old fashioned tea party! Thanks to the managers of the historic Lakeside Inn on Main Street in Belgrade Lakes, the BHS held a tea party for members and visitors in this famous old village landmark. It was the first time in many, many years that this site was open for the public, and there was a lot to see, as well as Irish breakfast tea to sip, homemade Irish soda bread to eat with black currant jam, and shortbread biscuits to enjoy. The dining room accommodated 4 antique wooden tables, each with 6 comfortable wooden chairs, and every seat was occupied. The tables were set with antique porcelain teapots, china teacups and saucers, and antique desert plates, all of which were family heirlooms that BHS President Dianne Dowd had inherited and brought to the inn for use at this special event.

Before the tea service commenced, guests were able to take a guided tour of the six large bedrooms on the second floor, all of which had been restored in the early 1980s, as well as examine the architecture of the main floor rooms. The proprietors of the Lakeside Inn, Katherine Couture, Liz Fontaine and Linda Schultz conducted the guided tours and answered questions about the furnishings and decorations. During the tea, BHS Curator Eric Hooglund gave an informal presentation on the history of the Lakeside Inn, beginning with Hiram Savage, who constructed it in 1843, adding the distinctive rooftop cupola known as a 'widow's watch,' and which had become a popular architectural feature on homes in the coastal villages of Maine and Massachusetts. The widows watch probably functioned as means of bringing fresh air into big houses, but being on the roof, it also became a spot where wives of fishermen watched for the return of the fishing boats of their menfolk: If a boat failed to return, it usually meant it was lost at sea, hence the origin of its popular term, 'widow's watch.'

Hiram Savage built the generously large house to be both a residence for his family and a tavern—the term used in the early 19th century for a public house where travellers could get a bed and food for the night. The road through the village—a gravel road in the 1840s—actually was the main stagecoach road between Augusta and Farmington, so the tavern was a busy place for many years. Both Hiram Savage and his son were listed as blacksmiths in the 1850 census. Being

a blacksmith was a useful occupation for the keeper of a public tavern patronized by stagecoaches, as blacksmiths made iron shoes for horses, as well as metal implements and tools. The large barn adjacent to the house served as both a blacksmith workshop and a stable for horses and carriages (although we do not have documents to certify whether the current barn is the original one from 1843 or a replacement built during major renovations in the 1880s).

Belgrade Lakes was known as Belgrade Mills at this time on account of the several mills at the dam—the very first dam having been constructed in 1797. The railroad came to Belgrade depot in 1849, and as railroads gradually expanded throughout the 1850s, a rail service between Augusta and Farmington made the stagecoach road obsolete. Henry Golder, who with his father and brother owned Golder's Store—the present site of Day's Store--bought Savage's tavern about 1882 and remolded it to be his private home. He must have done major interior and exterior renovation, because John Clair Minot, author of the chapter 'Belgrade, A History,' in the 1892 *Illustrated History of Kennebec County Maine*, described the remolded house as “now the handsome residence of Henry W. Golder” (p. 1017).

Henry Golder died in the early 1900s, and his widow, Elvira *Chandler* Golder (d. 1916) sold their house, which passed through several owners before being acquired in 1918 by Irvin Bean (1876-1940), younger brother of L.L. Bean. By this time, Belgrade Mills had been renamed Belgrade Lakes and was a famous tourist center. Bean already had a home in what today is called the 1830 House, and since 1910 he had been the owner-operator of Bean's General Store and Bait & Tackle Shop (it was right next to his house but the spot now is the vacant lot between the 1830 House and the yellow 1831 Chandler House). He turned the former Golder residence once again into a public house, which he called The Lake View Manor. He added to it a basement dining room that overlooked Long Pond and was famous for its home-cooked meals. In the early 1920s, he acquired the white house next door—now the Balloons and Things gift shop, which he operated as the Home Cottage annex for The Lake View Manor.



Lake View Manor, Belgrade Lakes, Maine
Lake View Manor, ca. 1920, showing dining room in rear overlooking Long Pond and dining hours on tree sign.

Photo from the Pope Collection, BHS.

In the late 1930s, a few years after a fire had destroyed the famous dining room, Bean sold the Lake View Manor to Edwin Megill (1883-1970), who owned the Locusts House right across the street. Megill used the now former Lake View Manor as his private residence, but during the summers, whenever every room in the Locusts House was occupied, he would find space in his own house for overflow guests. (The Locusts House was sold after Edwin Megill's death and renamed The Village Inn.)

The former Lakeview Manor/Megill residence fell into despair in the 1970s. In the 1980s, Peter McManus purchased the building and undertook the major renovations—especially the six large bedrooms with private baths on the second floor—that impart to the house the sense of being in a 175-year old home with updated comforts! McManus dubbed the restored mansion the Forecastle, and for several years it was a bed and breakfast inn, despite changes in proprietors and names, although most recently it was a private residence.

The Belgrade Historical Society thanks Katherine, Linda and Liz for hosting our tea party and also the 20-plus BHS members and friends who joined us to celebrate St. Paddy's Day and the re-opening of an historic 'public house.'



Lakeside Inn dining room set up for BHS Tea, March 17, 2019.

Photo Courtesy of Linda Shultz

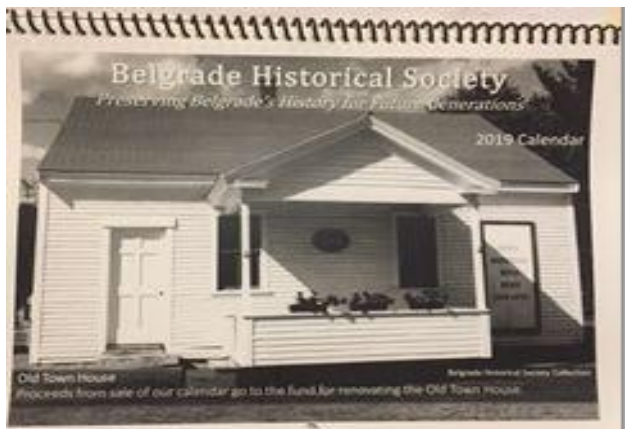
The BHS St. Patrick's Day Tea was not the first festive event to celebrate St. Patrick in Belgrade! During the years when the Grange was an active social organization, St. Patrick Day's was often an occasion to have fun. For example, below is an item under Belgrade on the local communities news page of the Waterville *Morning Sentinel* from 75 years ago!

A St. Patrick's party was held Saturday evening [March 18, 1944] under the auspices of the home and community welfare committee of the Grange assisted by Miss Jean Kimball. Games, dancing and cards were enjoyed. Paul and Oliver Yeaton, Mrs. Eva McDermott and Mrs. Margaret Jenney assisted with the music. The proceeds were added to the Grange contribution to the Red Cross quota. [From: WMS, Friday, March 24, 1944, p. 9.]

Readers may remember the names mentioned in the above article, and some members over 80 may have attended the above function held at the grange in the Depot. If so, please share your memories of that evening!



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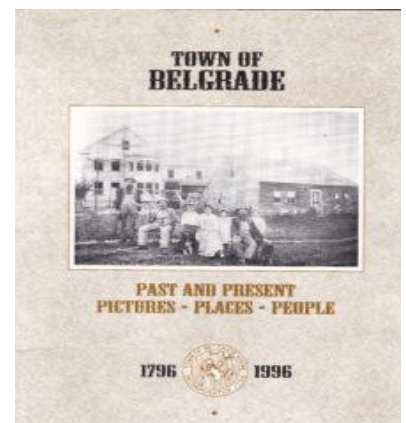
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Capital Fund Drive



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.