



Counting House Times

Old Berwick Historical Society, P. O. Box 296, Main & Liberty Sts., South Berwick, ME 03908 - 207-384-0000 Summer 2000

"It's About Time: The Homes of Yesteryear and Today"

On Saturday, July 15, ten beautiful local homes will open their doors from 10 am to 3 pm on village streets and country roads around South Berwick and Rollinsford.



The 1909 Cummings Mansion at 75 Railroad Ave., home of Brian McNulty, was built by shoe factory owner William Cummings and still sports the high-tech accoutrements of its day, such as a telephone room, a chamber intercom and beautiful brass electrical fixtures.

Tickets are \$15, purchased at the Counting House or any home on this self-guided tour. Advance tickets at \$12 are available by mailing a check to the Old Berwick Historical Society. Children under 12 admitted free.

On the tour in South Berwick are the Dr. Lowe House, 117 Portland St.; the Cummings Mansion, 75 Railroad Ave.; the Jennings' Cape, 16 Brattle St.; the Academy Street Inn; the Lees' Contemporary, 6 Quarry Dr.; the Peones' Victorian, 12 Vine St.; and the Bousquets' Cape and the Hamels' Cape both on Great Works Dr. The Rollinsford homes are Old Ricker Tavern, 610 Silver St., and the 1810 Brick-Ended Cape, off Route 4. Also included on the tour are the Jewett House, the Hamilton House, and the Counting House.

"The spirit of our tour will be opening up our homes to friends from away, and the different ways of welcoming -- fancy and plain, historic and contemporary," said Nicole St. Pierre, house tour organizer.

Proceeds benefit the array of local history programs the Old Berwick Historical Society offers throughout the year. Rain date is July 16. More information on the house tour can be obtained by calling (207)384-2248.

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History Mystery!

Recently found in *Old Eliot* (Book Three, Vol. VIII, p. 195) was the following entry:

Second Regiment first Brigade and first Division of Maine Militia-- South Berwick, September 24, 1829:

Pursuant to a Brigade order of September 21st A.D. 1829, Capt. Samuel F. Staples [of Eliot] will parade the company under his command on the plain near the Revd. Mr. Boyd's Meeting House in South Berwick, on Wednesday the fourteenth day of October next, at Seven o'clock in the forenoon, armed and equipped as the law directs for military duty, review and inspection; and there await the orders of the Adjutant of Said Regiment. Capt. Staples will make written application as by law directed to the Select Men of the town wherein his Company belongs for the rations to which they are entitled. The Regiment will be ready for the reviewing officer at nine o'clock in the forenoon.

*By order of the Colonel,
Isaac P. Yeaton, Adjutant*

The mystery: Who was Rev. Boyd? Where was his Meeting House? And where was the nearby plain? If any readers can help us answer these questions, please contact OBHS Board Member Norma Keim (384-2915).

Refurbished Counting House Open Weekends 1-4 pm through Sept.



New exhibits have been prepared on the textile mills, the Chadbourne Archeology Project, the Piscataqua River gundalows, Quamphagan Landing and the port of South Berwick, and traditional carpentry tools. The museum is open on weekends throughout the summer and early fall, and at other times by appointment. Admission is free. For more information, please call (207)384-0000.

Thank you to the over 200 donors who've made our Counting House renovations a success!

Rare Book Donated

Most 19th century local girls married farmers or millworkers, but the husband of Frances Rollins Hale of Rollinsford was a painter and adventurer whose travels took them both far beyond the Salmon Falls. Now Edwin Lord Weeks' illustrated account of his 1892 travels, *From the Black Sea Through Persia and India*, is part of the OBHS collection, thanks to member Rick Coughlin, who spotted it on the Internet and purchased it for the archives. The book is one of the many documents you can peruse by appointment at the Counting House.

Chadbourne Dig Continues

Would-be adventurers in archeology are encouraged to join us again this summer from August 12-24 at the 17th century Humphrey Chadbourne homesite. Come volunteer at the site or help with the artifacts at the Counting House. We'll show you how! Current OBHS membership required -- helps support the project. For information, call (207)748-0074.

Fall Events

The programs of our series *Looking Back From 2000* take place at 7:30 pm on Thursday evenings in the community meeting hall of the First Parish Federated Church, Main and Academy Streets, So. Berwick. Admission is free and the public is invited. Refreshments served after the program.

September 28 - "DIGGING DOWN THE BONES" - Archaeologist **Bob Proctor** interprets food and diet in the 17th century from animal remains at the Chadbourne and nearby sites.

October 19- "CHADBOURNE PROJECT UPDATE" - Archaeologist **Tad Baker** offers his annual report on the summer dig.

November 16 - "YOUNG MAN ON THE SEA" - Former Liberty Ship engineer **Paul Colburn** recounts his experiences in the Merchant Marine in World War II.

Hidden Fireplace Restored

A long-concealed fireplace dating back to the 1830s has been restored at the Counting House. Bricked over for more than a century after first a woodstove was installed, followed by central heating, the original was a Rumford-style fireplace made of brick with a soapstone hearth and side jambs made of stone. **Rick Irons** of Early American Masonry of South Berwick donated the restoration work during this past winter's museum improvements undertaken by the Old Berwick Historical Society.

Preservation carpenter **Tom Glynn** of South Berwick then restored an early 19th century mantel and mounted it around the fireplace.

When the Counting House was built in the 1830s as an office for the Portsmouth Manufacturing Company, the room where the fireplace was located was the mill agent's office. Nearby was the paymaster's office, where mill workers received their wages.

Today it's the exhibit area of the Counting House Museum, and during the past winter the Old Berwick Historical Society also installed a new ceiling and lighting system, as well as a handicapped entrance walkway, thanks to many donations.

Other volunteers deserve a vote of thanks for their work on the building: **Dave and Mary Stansfield, Dick Lunt, Catherine Woodard, Dana Hughes, Bobbie Stephenson, Faith and George Murray, Bob Brunelle, Lee and Carol**

Hodsdon, Ken St. Hilaire, Norma Keim, Rick Coughlin, Bill Evans, Paul Colburn, Andrea and Chris Strassner, Peter Michaud, Len Barron, and Ernie Wood.



Rick Irons explains his restoration work at the OBHS May open house and annual meeting.