

# Blue Hill Library Notes

Spring/ Summer 2015

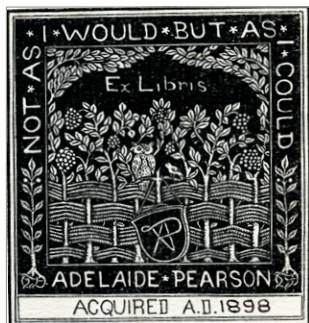
## ADELAIDE AND ANNE THE BLUE HILL "EXPERIMENT"

Before Blue Hill could build a dedicated library building, it needed to build a full service library. Although the Ladies' Social Library was a valuable resource for the community with a rich history, it was primarily a volunteer enterprise funded by annual membership dues. However, there was one patron who always thought it could be more than that.

Adelaide Pearson belonged to a wealthy and well-connected family in Boston. She spent summers at her grandparent's house in Blue Hill and moved here year-round in 1928. She had long taken an interest in the Ladies' Social Li-

brary, calling it her "principal center of interest from the time I was 16." As a teenager she purchased the library's first card catalog with money she raised carving wooden figurines and spent her summers helping to catalog and organize the collections. So it is not surprising that when she moved full time to Blue Hill at the age of 53 she would make the library a focus of her time and resources. She had a vision of a library that began rather than ended with books. A world traveler, she wanted to bring the world to the residents of Blue Hill and felt that a library was the perfect institution to bring literacy and culture to the village.

*continued on page 3...*



*Bookplate found in a volume donated to the Ladies' Social Library and part of BHPL's special collections.*



*Adelaide Pearson in 1894.*

*For questions and information about programs, services, and hours of operation, please visit our web site, [www.bhpl.net](http://www.bhpl.net), or call us, 374-5515*

You are invited to a 1940s-themed birthday bash to celebrate the Library's 75th Anniversary featuring the GSA Jazz Band. Friday, October 2, 2015. More details to follow. Save the Date!

## 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PARTY



Blue Hill Public Library  
5 Parker Point Rd.  
Blue Hill, Maine 04614

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR: **WHAT'S OLD IS NEW**



This year we are celebrating 75 years at 5 Parker Point Road, the first and only permanent home for Blue Hill's library which has had several names in over 200 years. A lot has changed since 1940—music, telephones, cars—but surprisingly little has changed at the Blue Hill Public Library.

To explain, we have to go back to the 1930s when two women, Adelaide Pearson, visionary and benefactor, and Anne Hinckley, librarian, decided to make the long-held dream of a public library in Blue Hill a reality. Both of these women embraced the idea of a library that would have an impact far beyond its walls, something we think of as innovative even today.

There is a fascinating article from 1937 in the trade publication, *Library Journal*, wherein Mrs. Hinckley writes about the "Blue Hill Experiment." She describes the library's program of activities: the rotating exhibits, the early use of inter-library loan, and public programming such as guest lectures and storytimes. Throughout, Mrs. Hinckley places a great emphasis on services to youth and students. These are all things we continue to this day.

Seventy-eight years later, we are providing services in a digital

age, and technology has become increasingly central to the work we do. We recently added binoculars, a telescope, a microscope, and a 3-D printer, thanks to the local chapter of the ME Audubon Society and a Cornerstones of Science grant. Our extensive digital collections now include Mango (an on-line language service), and free streaming music, plus audiobooks and ebooks.

There may be some traditionalists who fear a reduced emphasis on paper books. But if they were alive today, you would get no complaint from Adelaide or Anne. They embraced any improvement that would make using the library easier and more fun—whether it was a car for distributing books, a telephone for answering questions, or a television set for kids to watch after school. Anne wrote in her *Library Journal* article:

*"So, the Library was nourished, strengthened and inspired, even horrified and shocked beyond expression to hear the Friend of Youth [Miss Pearson] announce that books were not the main province of the Library or of any Library; books were merely an incidental byproduct of a cultural institution."*

"The Blue Hill Experiment" would, in time, become the Blue Hill Public Library where it continues to find new ways to be a meaningful addition to people's lives. With the continued generous support of the community, we hope to be serving the peninsula for many years to come.

-Rich Boulet

## WHAT'S IN A NAME? OR WAIT, HOW OLD IS THE LIBRARY?



### **Blue Hill Library 1796-1848**

In 1796, Ebenezer Floyd, Reuben Dodge and forty other citizens formed the Bluehill Library. The books were kept on a shelf in the general store, and there were fines for spilled drops of oil or tallow. Jonathan Fisher, settled minister and renaissance man, carved a lovely bookplate to label the library's lending collection. The Bluehill Library folded in 1848, but we still proudly use Rev. Fisher's graphic as our logo.



Lizzie Hinckley circa 1898

### **Ladies' Social Library 1868-1961**

At its modest beginnings, the Ladies' Social Library was similar to a book club, where women gathered weekly to discuss books and eat ice cream. It quickly grew to be much more. The American Library Assoc. estimates that women's groups founded 75% of all public libraries. In 1896, the Ladies' Social Library moved into two rooms in the new Town Hall.



### **New Building 1940**

In 1938 the library broke ground on a permanent home. To satisfy the needs of a large federal grant from the PWA, the building had to be owned by the town—and so, the name over the door reads "Blue Hill Public Library."



### **The Blue Hill Public Library 1961-present**

In 1961, the Ladies' Social Library incorporated as an independent non-profit entity called the Blue Hill Public Library, which remains its name today.



...Adelaide and Annie continued from page 1

The first step was to provide a basic operating budget for the library, including a salary for a trained librarian. Adelaide was known for her tremendous energy but she had other projects—Rowantrees Pottery and travel for research—so to make her dream of a public library a reality, she needed somebody young and willing to roll up their sleeves and work until the job was done. In 1931, the Ladies' Social Library hired a recent graduate from Colby Collee, Anne D. Hooper, who would soon become Mrs. Virgil Hinckley. Mrs. Hinckley was no ordinary 24-year-old. Her enthusiasm for the task of creating a full service library in Blue Hill with the guidance and patronage of Adelaide Pearson was remarkable.

If Adelaide could envision it, Anne could execute it. Bi-weekly story times and book delivery for all eleven schools in Blue Hill? Establishment of book distribution centers with a regular collection schedule to make the library accessible to all villagers? Weekly rotating displays of unusual collections?



*The First Library Car (1931). Present Car Is Larger And Used Twice As Much*

An illustration from the Library Journal article. Guest lecturers? Book talks, stamp clubs, story hours, psychology seminars? All of these were done within the first couple of years. Mrs. Hinckley developed and oversaw a student-run library at George Stevens Academy that became a model for other

communities. She became active in the American Library Association, sitting on committees, attending conferences, and participating in an ALA lecture tour discussing the "Blue Hill Experiment." Mrs. Hinckley's annual library reports

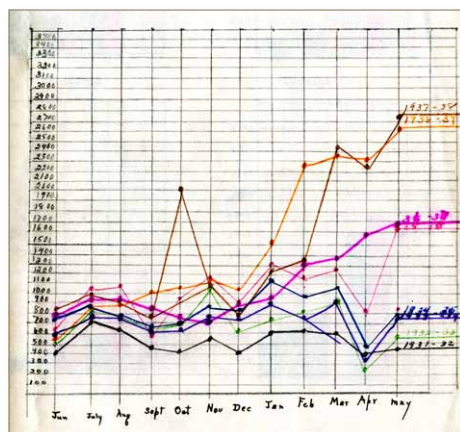


*Adelaide Pearson*



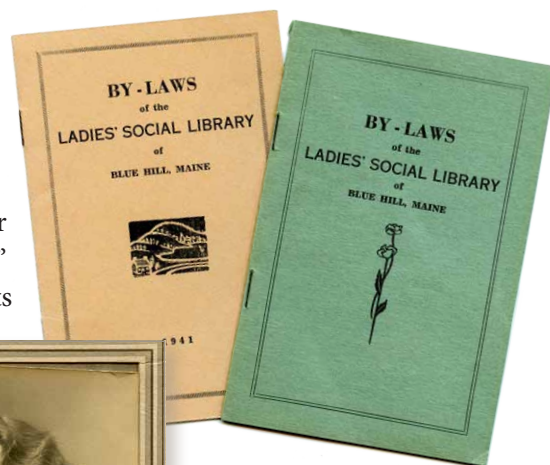
*Anne Hinckley*

*"The work is sound, the conception is a glorious one, and it is growing and flourishing as only a good thing can grow."*



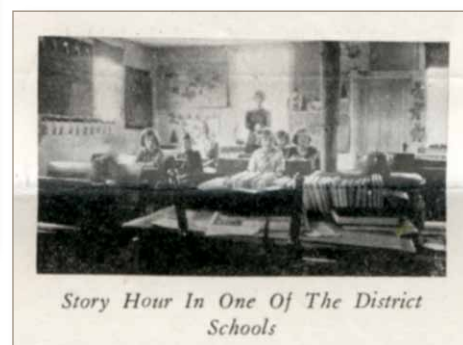
*A circulation chart from Mrs. Hinckley's 1938 report.*

rival any modern day Library Director's, with bar graphs and trend lines all neatly drawn with fine point color pencils. She adhered to rigorous analysis of data to document the library's success and she was eager to share her work. In her 1935 report she writes: "The work is sound, the conception is a glorious one, and it is growing



and flourish-  
ing as only a good thing  
can grow."

It is the great good fortune of the people of Blue Hill that Adelaide and Anne's life paths met at the Ladies' Social Library. Surprisingly, Anne Hinckley did not move into the new building in 1940 with the books and Adelaide's world treasures. She resigned due to poor health and died in Damariscotta in 1945 at age 38. Adelaide would continue to inspire new generations of librarians and patrons with her boundless energy, cultural vision, and financial support until she passed away in Mexico in 1960. In letters to the library Board chair, A. Gurnee Gallien, toward the end of her life, Adelaide continued to brainstorm: essay contests, current event



*Story Hour In One Of The District Schools*

exhibits, even a bowling alley. "You will think I am a persistent, old thing, and I am," she wrote, "that is the way I have gotten things done!"

## BLUE HILL BUILDS A LIBRARY: 1938-1940

When Adelaide Pearson heard that Public Works Administration grants could be used to construct libraries, she urged the board of the Ladies' Social Library to pursue the opportunity. They agreed and a building committee was formed that consisted of Anne Hinckley (Chairman), Mrs. Wilma Butler, Harold Parker, Judge F.B. Snow, Miss Pearson, and Walter Pierce. The committee had to: find and purchase a suitable property on which to build, convince the board of selectmen to endorse the project, assess the requirements of a full service library building, hire an architect, and raise the money to build it; all in addition to securing the P.W.A. funds, which was no small feat in the height of the depression. It took years of planning and politicking before they could break ground on December 19, 1938. At one point, it looked like all was lost: the promise of funds from Washington, which made up 45% of the budget, fell through in 1938. In a letter to Adelaide, who was traveling around the world, an unnamed committee member wrote: "the only hope was for someone to go to Washington, and get what pull and drag we could. It was decided to ask Anne to go and she did, and I want to say now and say it in capitals had she not gone we would be completely out of it so far as the P.W.A. is concerned." It was a nail-biter right up to the end, but like many good stories it had a happy



*The library starts to take shape in the summer of 1939.*



*A PWA sign marks the library construction site.*

ending. The 1940 Town Report describes the completed project this way, "Local Labor, local granite, local brick, local gravel, and local crafts have gone into the building. It has dignity, charm, and distinction, yet has a high efficiency rate because it was definitely planned for the work which it will contain."

*Brad Emerson will present a talk: "Blue Hill Builds a Library" on July 21, 7pm in the Howard Room.*

## DIARY OF A LIBRARY BUILDING

### A SAGA OF TRAVAIL—AND TRIUMPH!

*Before leaving Blue Hill, Anne Hinckley created a scrapbook about the building of the library and dedicated it to Adelaide Pearson. What follows is hand-written on the first page.*

Once upon a time, there were dozens of Ladies' Social Libraries, and Ladies' Church Reading Groups, and Ladies' Literary Circle Libraries—but they crept away into history or grew up to assume married names. Finally there was only one left—the Ladies' Social Library of Blue Hill. This one grew up and became emancipated and in spite of criticism and controversy retained her maiden name.

Established in 1862, with the idea of serving ice-cream Saturday night and exchanging books, it carried on and aided

in the building of character and culture in such folk as Alice McGouldrich, George Clough and Mary Ellen Chase.

It outgrew many homes and wore out many volumes.

In 1902 it needed a permanent home.

In 1931 it had 3,000 volumes and a circulation of about 3,000.

In 1935 it was filled to volume capacity.

In 1938 it had 4,000 working volumes more than it had room for.

It had no money but hundreds of friends.

By suggestion, by coercion, by blackjack methods of publicity, a sum was garnered from the field of endeavor. Came Conservatives, came Radicals, came Architects, contractors, and Insurance

*From Anne Hinckley's scrapbook about the building of the library.*

Recipe:  
Warm idea slowly 7 years  
Add publicity  
Add all the cash available  
Allow to simmer briefly  
Add few grains of sense  
Sprinkle with tears of rage  
Stir, vigorously  
— and stir  
— and stir.  
If it falls—start over.

Agents.

Came Woe in large letters but came a Library.

This is the story of what any Building Committee must experience.

The committee, the public, and the librarian are satisfied—an achievement in itself.

The Library has a dignified exterior and a workable interior.

O, Librarian, when you build, be brave and wiley, and above all adamant, for your committee has the eyes of a lawyer, a club-woman, a merchant, of a Druggist—not a librarian.

Build your building around your work. Don't stuff your work into a building.



## BUILDING ON TRADITION: RENOVATION IN 2001

When the Ladies' Social Library building committee designed their building, they carefully planned to have more than enough shelves for all their books, a comfortable reading room, plenty of space for staff and the bonus loft on the second floor which served as a meeting space, dance hall, gallery, and auditorium. And for a while it was just as they envisioned. However, the population on the peninsula doubled between 1940 and 1998 and with it the number and circulation of materials at the library. First, free standing book shelves were added to the center of the reading room and in time, additional shelves were stacked on top of those. Comfortable chairs made way for computer stations. Large tables were shrunk to fit in tighter spaces. Eventually the stage upstairs was walled-in to create storage and office space.

Susan Farrar, who was on the library board from 1993 to 2005, said, "It was really getting tight, you had to defend your space at a table and things could get stressful." Marcia Schatz, who was the Library Director at the time, noted, "The children's section had shrunk to a cramped space between the stacks. There wasn't adequate space for the level of services we wanted to provide."

Although most people could see that the library needed expansion, it would take years of deliberation and planning before the necessary renovation would be possible. "There was a lot of fear about taking money out of the endowment," Farrar explained. "It wasn't until we received an unexpected and significant bequest from Louise Frederick that the board felt it could tackle renovating the library." This bequest along with a soaring stock

market in 1999 made the timing right, and the two combined to fund a portion of the project.

Schatz, who also served on the library board before becoming Library Director in 1994, explained, "Before we could build the

addition, we needed to modernize the library's services by weeding the collections and transitioning to an electronic circulation system. A huge, time consuming job."

Robin Clements chaired the Campaign Committee that raised the \$2 million dollars necessary to revitalize and expand the Blue Hill Public Library. The building committee of Henrietta Clews, Brad Emerson, Susan Farrar, Stan Myers, Libby Rosemeier, and Marcia Schatz worked tirelessly for two years assessing needs, hiring an architect, sourcing fixtures and managing the construction. The committee interviewed six architectural firms and chose Sam Woodward of Surry who designed the three new wings which doubled the space and also fit the brick Colonial Revival style of the original building.

Surprisingly, the library remained open for all but two months of the construction which was a priority for Marcia Schatz. "The staff was amazing," said Schatz, "it was not easy to work with the noise, but they were

very supportive of the project." Susan Farrar agreed, "Atlantic Builders were really good at working in phases and accommodating the operation of the library," adding, "It's really wonderful how once we got started everything fell in to place."



*A photo of BHPL in 1985 published in Mainetimes.*



*The same view today.*



*Construction on the west wing.*



*Robin Clements speaks at the ribbon cutting ceremony in 2001, architect Sam Woodward in the foreground.*

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Town of Blue Hill

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*Anne Hinckley breaks ground  
 December 19, 1938.*

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The library is grateful to the many local businesses who support the work we do through contributions to our Annual Appeal, event sponsorship, and in-kind donations. Thank you.

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River Wind Woolies  
Rooster Brother  
Saltmeadow Properties  
Sara Sara's  
Seachange Resources  
Shoreline Auto Detailing  
Sunset Acres Farm  
The Blue Hill Inn  
The First, NA  
The Mill Stream  
The Wave Frozen Yogurt Cafe  
Three Wishes  
Tradewinds Market Place



### Our Doors are Open:

Mon, Tues, Wed, Friday 9-6  
Thursday 9-8  
Saturday 9-5

### What we offer:

Comfy Reading Rooms, Books, Newspapers, Magazines, Movie DVDs, Music (CDs and Freegal), Children's Room, Youth Programs, Reference Help, WiFi Connection, Computers and Printers, Copying and Faxing, Meeting Space, Author Events, Workshops, Concerts, Discussion Groups, Binoculars, Microscopes and Telescopes, plus more.

### How to Support our Mission:

Use the library  
Attend Events  
Join the Friends  
Volunteer  
Donate  
Join Four Seasons Giving

### Want to do More? Planned Giving

Consider extending your financial support for generations to come with a bequest to the library. The library's endowment is comprised of legacy gifts, both large and small, from loyal patrons.

Please contact us if you would like to discuss how you can become more involved with the library.

## FAREWELL TO A FRIEND

Elvira Falco Bass, a truly great friend to the library, passed away in April. There are few people, if any, who can claim to have volunteered as much for the library as Elvira Bass. In the last twenty-five years until her "retirement" in 2014 she presided over various incarnations of the Blue Hill Library's book sales, from the once annual big tent approach, to the current basement "Book Nook" sales, to the wildly successful online sales. The library's basement meeting room is named after Elvira to commemorate these efforts. She will be missed by all who knew her and all who share her love for the library.



*Elvira at a party in 2007  
honoring her many  
contributions to BHPL.*

## ADELAIDE PEARSON SOCIETY

The library is pleased to announce the Adelaide Pearson Society, honoring donors whose generosity has left a lasting legacy for future generations through bequests to the Blue Hill Public Library's endowment. Below are the establishing members of the Adelaide Pearson Society who extended their support of BHPL by remembering the library in their estate plans.

Elvira Bass  
Karen H. Berry  
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Esther E. Wood

*This tile of the library  
was produced at  
Rowantrees Pottery  
and adorns the  
Adelaide Pearson  
Society plaque  
located in the upstairs  
front hall.*



# THEN AND NOW

For generations the Blue Hill Public Library has been a place for quiet study, cozy reading chairs, fun children's programs, and lots of wonderful things to borrow—in 1935 the library lent costumes and board games, and today we have microscopes and telescopes in our collection.

The library has been a proud partner with area schools for many years, providing enrichment services from toddler story hours to youth reading programs. This summer, BHPL is partnering with School Union 93 to host three weeks of a free literacy camp. In addition to the many special programs for kids, students of all ages make their way to the library after school to study, socialize, and relax. If it's a nice day, they might

check out a soccer ball or sidewalk chalk.

We regularly welcome service dogs to the library, but every once in a while there is a more exotic four legged visitor. One of the library scrapbooks has photographic proof of a porcupine browsing the stacks. More recently, youth librarian, Pat Horton, saw a Moose at the library. After she posted a picture of the size and exact spot the Moose looked in the library window on the library's facebook page, an enterprising patron photoshopped the missing details.

Although many things have changed in the last seventy-five years, the library's position as the community's living room has not. We hope you come in soon and get comfortable.



A 1953 newspaper photo featured Stevens Academy students Ferol Beissett, Beverly Wescott, Judy Sweet, and Patricia Clapp.



Current GSA students, Abigail Jakub and Grace Hylan, pose in front of the library's new sign.



A cluster of boys share a good book on the floor of the Larchwood room last November.

A group of girls gather to read at the library in the 1950s.



## BOARD NOTES

At a June 7<sup>th</sup> reception, the library said thank you and farewell to three Board members with a combined service to the library of 40 years. Ellen Best accounts for 23 of those years! She served on the library board from 1991-2007 and again from 2008-2015, holding the position of President



*Lisa Arhontes-Marshall and Greg Forrest, two new BHPL Board members.*



*Steve Collier, Ted Johnson, and Ellen Best holding "thank you" plates from Rackliffe Pottery.*

twice. Ellen's counsel and expertise—from legal advice to catering—has been invaluable to the library in more ways than we can list here or ever adequately thank her for. Steve Collier joined the Board in 2006 and, in addition to serving as secretary and

on multiple committees over the years, is the mastermind behind *Paint the Peninsula*, the library's most successful fundraiser. As a member of the Finance and Development committees, Ted Johnson has been instrumental in improving the library's communications and development strategy since he joined the board in 2007. All three leave the library a stronger, more focused, and more vibrant institution and we are grateful to them for their service.

The library also welcomed five new members to the Board: Lisa Arhontes-Marshall of Blue Hill, Stephen Lindsay of Brooksville, Greg Forrest from Surry, Maria Matthews from Blue Hill, and Mary Whiting from Blue Hill.

## HATS OFF TO BHPL!

In 1941, Blue Hill native Bob Slaven was an impressionable first grader who walked to the library from the Consolidated School with his class for the first time. The librarian was Eleanor Snow, but the school kids were greeted and introduced to the wonders of the library by Adelaide Pearson who took a special interest in local youth. Miss Pearson, as she was known, was eager to instill a sense of awe and respect for the institution of learning and culture that she helped build. "Now remember, when you come into the library take off your hat!" she instructed the school children. The new library had only been open a few months but it was already a source of tremendous pride for the town "and still is!" Bob notes. Many years later Bob would have a chat with Henry Alley (GSA '33) about how he worked construction on the library during the depression and how grateful Henry was for the job as a brick layer. The library was more than just an impressive building to show off to visitors; it was a boost to the local economy.



*Adelaide Pearson, on crutches, and librarian Dorris Parker with some young patrons in the 1950s*

"The library has always been enmeshed in the life of the town," says Bob, a retired Navy Captain and self-proclaimed "wannabe" historian, "this is symbolized by the 1796 book plate fashioned by Jonathan Fisher that

the library still uses today."

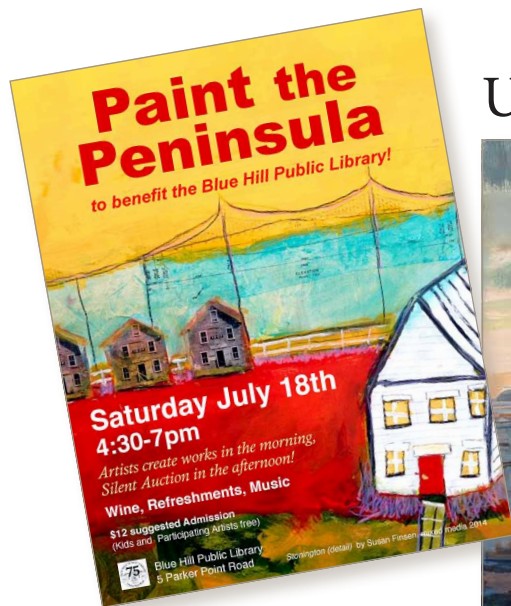
Bob suggests that there is something about living on the Maine coast that fosters curiosity and a spirit of adventure. Many Blue Hill men and some women went to sea and traveled to ports around the globe. They brought back news, fashion, fine goods, and ideas from the rest of the world and with them a degree of sophistication not commonly found in other rural Maine villages. So it is no surprise that a library would begin here as early as 1796 lasting to the present (except for the period 1848-1868). Bob's great-grandfather, Franklin Maddox, was a stonecutter and perhaps never opened a book in his life, but his children were well-read and most of his grandchildren attended college. This was in no small part because Blue Hill had a fine, well-established library.

So when the doors to the Blue Hill Public Library building were opened 75 years ago, it was not the beginning but the culmination of decades of local commitment to literacy, culture, and enlightenment. And, although he may be the only one who still does it, and it's been a long time since Miss Pearson was here to see it, Captain Robert Slaven takes his hat off every time he enters the building.



*Captain Robert Slaven*

*Captain Slaven will be presenting a talk on the "Seafaring History of Blue Hill" on Thursday, July 30, at 7pm, in the Howard Room.*



## UPCOMING ART SHOWS



### Water and Light

#### Opening Reception:

**Friday, August 7 at 5pm**

Join us for wine, refreshments, and wonderful art. The reception is part of Blue Hill's First Friday, when local shops and galleries stay open in the evening.

"Thumbcap and Out" by Louise Bourne will be part of the August Art Show (courtesy of Cynthia Winings Gallery).

### PAINT THE PENINSULA

Saturday, July 18 from 4:30 to 7:00 pm

Over 80 artists create works in the morning to be sold at a reception and silent auction in the afternoon! Proceeds are shared by the artists and the library.

### WATER AND LIGHT

August 1 through 30

The August show in the Britton Gallery features a collection of works by over 20 well known artists in a variety of media.

## UPCOMING HISTORY-RELATED EVENTS

In addition to celebrating the library's history this year, BHPL is sponsoring programs that explore other aspects of our area's rich past.

### JULY

**Thursday, July 9 at 7:00 pm**

Maine Historian Earle Shettleworth:  
"Homes Down East" slide show and talk

**Wednesday, July 15 at 7:00 pm**

Betsey Harries: *History of Music in Blue Hill*

**Tuesday, July 21 at 7:00 pm**

Brad Emerson:  
"Blue Hill Builds a Library" 75 years ago on  
Parker Point Road

**Thursday, July 30 at 7:00 pm**

Robert Slaven: *Seafaring History of Blue Hill*

### AUGUST

**Thursday, August 6 at 7:00 pm**

"What's Happening in 1940?"

A multi-media presentation from 75 years ago!

**Thursday, August 13 at 7:00 pm**

Brad Emerson: *Blue Hill Tries Mid-Century  
Modern Architecture: The Blue Hill Pavillion*

**Thursday, September 10 at 7:00**

Brooke Dojny: *Down East Foodways:  
A Historical & Contemporary Look at Setting the  
Maine Table*

**Thursday, September 24 at 7:00 pm**

Carl Little: *The History of Art in Maine*

**Thursday, October 1 at 7:00 pm**

William Haviland: *Original People of the Peninsula*

**Thursday, October 15 at 7:00 pm**

Northeast Historic Film presentation

## TIME TRAVEL AT THE BLUE HILL LIBRARY

Did you know that the library is an excellent place to research local history? The BHPL reference section, archives, and special collections are cataloged and available for historical research and general curiosity. Ask at the Reference Desk for more information and to get started.

### RESEARCH RESOURCES INCLUDE:

Blue Hill Town Reports: 1892 to date

Weekly Packet: 1960 to date

GSA yearbooks: 1903 to date

Cemetery records, early vital records, family histories, town histories, Maine history, scrapbooks, some archival materials from Blue Hill's early founding. Access to Ancestry.com.