



CUMBERLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P O Box 82

4A Blanchard Road

Cumberland, ME 04021

President:	Carolyn Small
Vice Presidents:	Diana Copp
	Annemarie Dawson
Secretary:	Pat Larrabee
Treasurer:	Sue Wall
Trustees:	G Morgan Knight
	Herbert S. Foster, Jr.
	Katrina Rich
	Brian Jensen
	Lynda Wilson Jensen

MISSION STATEMENT:

The purpose of the Society shall be to collect and preserve artifacts pertaining to the Town of Cumberland and its history, making it available to groups, schools, and individuals.

JANUARY THOUGHT

“What the New Year brings to you will depend a great deal on what you bring to the New Year.” —
Vern McLellan

**HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY TO THE REDMEN’S HALL, NOW THE OFFICES
OF SEVEE & MAHER ENGINEERING**



This building, in the center of town, was built in 1914 by the members of the Sawga Tribe No. 26. The ground was broken on April 26th of that year with appropriate ceremonies to start the whole thing off. The first shovel full of dirt was removed by Mrs. Bessie Burnell and Mrs. Florence Blanchard of Indianola Council , Daughters of Pocahontas. The Hall was dedicated on December 4, 1914.

(From a booklet of a 1951 Minstrel Show held at the Gyger Gym) “ First incorporated in 1835, this order has the honorable and enviable record of more than 100 years, or great suns. Prior to the American Revolution, and during it as well as the War of 1812, there existed several social and patriotic societies known as Sons of Liberty, Redmen , and Tamina. In fact, it was the Sons of Liberty who emptied the King’s Tea into Boston harbor in 1773. From these societies crystallized the IORM. Originally, the watchword was Freedom, and the part that these societies played in securing freedom for the American Colonies is well established historically. As a fraternity is pledged to defend the Flag of our Union from every danger, and to Freedom has been added friendship, brotherly Love, Charity and Patriotism. Its ritualistic ceremonies are purely American , original and distinctive, and give to posterity a demonstration of the best peculiarities of the primitive North American Indian. One of its great works of charity is the care of indigent orphans of its deceased members, thousands of whom have benefited over the years. The Daughters of Pocahontas is a degree for the special benefit of the female relatives and friends of Red Men . Its objectives are moral advancement of the IORM and its families, participation in social functions, and the promotion of the general welfare and prosperity of the Order. “

It held many a community function in its day, including a Grand Ball after parades, contests and fireworks to celebrate the Town of Cumberland's 100th birthday in 1921. Earlier on that day, there was a free dinner served to all in attendance at the festivities.

This building was for many years one of the largest in the town. Before the Gyger Gym and stage was built at Greely Institute, the Redmen's Hall featured many musicals, skits, minstrel shows, revues, theatrical shows, dances, public suppers, public meetings, wedding receptions, and many other events. The polished hardwood floor of the ballroom had the reputation of being the best dance floor in Cumberland County. When the old Town House on Tuttle Road became too small to hold Town Meetings, the Redmen's Hall was used. These were held there from 1928 to 1946 when Gyger Gym came to be used for that purpose. It was also the site of a huge World War II community drive to collect all scrap metal and rubber to be reprocessed and used to build machines to help win the war.

As early as 1929 there was interest in buying the Hall for a Town Hall. In 1936 the voters approved purchase of the building for \$3,500. The members of the Red Men continued to use the council chamber on the second floor with one of the smaller rooms being used as the town office. It remained the Selectmen's office until 1951 when the Town Office was moved into the 1853 brick schoolhouse next door. Until Cumberland Elementary School on Drowne Road was built in 1951, the overcrowded school system used the first floor and the stage as classrooms. Then, in 1975 the town voted to move the Town Offices back into the hall, along with MSAD #51. The cost of the remodeling at that time was \$60,000. It was estimated that erecting a new building would cost \$250,000 to \$300,000. The offices moved again, this time down to Drowne Road, and now, finally, to its current place on Tuttle Road.

In a January 19, 1988 newspaper article, headlined "Is the sun setting on Maine's Redmen?" Carlan Burnell was interviewed, stating that he would never tell what the members did during their biweekly meetings upstairs in the Old Town Hall. He did go on further to explain some of the vernacular of the group; a "paleface" is a nonmember, a "wampum belt" is the treasurer, and the longhouse or a teepee is the meeting room. He would discuss nothing else, as it was a secret society. The Maine Chapter of the Improved Order of Redmen, a nationwide patriotic service organization, turned 100 years old in 1988, but not many members were left to celebrate the occasion. In the 1930s and 1940s 30,000 members belonged to 115 tribes in Maine. In 1988, there were only 500 members in 15 tribes.

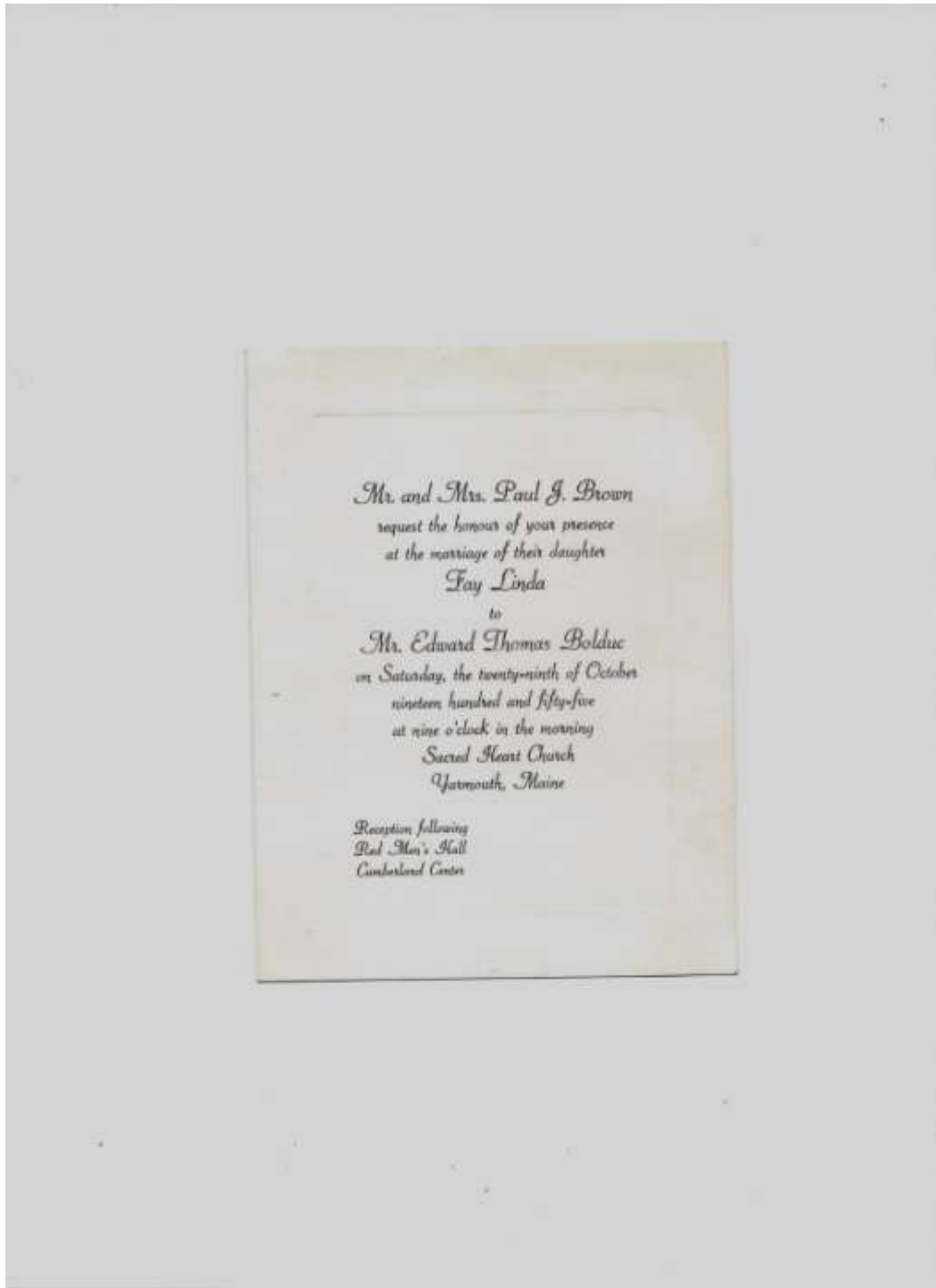


Top picture shows a Redmen's float getting set up at the Cumberland Fair.

Bottom picture is Carlan Burnell receiving a Redmen's certificate.

Another event at the Red Men's Hall was the wedding reception of Fay Brown and Edward Bolduc as is noted in the newspaper article and on their wedding invitations.





After the Town Offices moved from the Red Men's hall, the building has served as home base for Squaw Bay Associates and now is the home of Sevee & Maher Engineers.

Thus, as has been noted here, the Redmen's Hall served a very important part in the community.

What was going on 100 years ago in Cumberland:

The following excerpts are from the 1914 Town Report

To be voted on:

Article 31: To see if the Town will vote to repair Foreside schoolhouse and raise money for same. (*This schoolhouse was on Rte.#88 across from what is now Dean's Way. It was the first district schoolhouse, built in and remained vacant until 1952 when it was accidentally burned when a relative was burning the grass in the spring.*)

Article 33: To see if the Town will vote to contract with Portland Water District for four(4) or more hydrants to extend to Doughty's Store on Tuttle Road.

Article 37: To see if the Town will give a name to new grammar school. (*E. K. Sweetser School*)

The Selectmen were: E. H. Strout, A. J. Davis, and A. E. Hamilton, and Arno S. Chase was the Auditor

This was also the year of the building of E. K. Sweetser School, now the home of MSAD#51's Superintendent of Schools and business offices. It was named for Ezra Knight Sweetser, who provided the land upon which the schoolhouse was built. Mr. Knight was a beloved teacher for many years at the District #3 schoolhouse, which now houses the Cumberland Historical Society. His widow, Clara Sturdivant Sweetser was paid \$125.00 for the lot.

From the School Superintendent's (*D. W. Lunt*) Report:

"THE NEW GRAMMAR SCHOOL: The erection and opening of the new grammar school building at the Centre marks an important school epoch in the history of the town. This attractive building, located upon a pleasant site, will be the home of our children who have reached the most important part of their lives. The value of such a school cannot be overestimated, and pleasant surroundings are among the strong educational incentives of the present generation. For a one-room building, this is the best. The most approved requirements regarding light, heat and ventilation are fully met; the sanitary arrangements are good, and the playground, when finished, will be ample. The community may fairly expect the best service, both of those who care for the building and those who teach or direct the work of the pupils. A town's intelligence and public spirit is shown in nothing more clearly than in the way it provides for the education its children. Cumberland is very fortunate in having members of the School Board who have acted as a building committee who have conceived and carried into execution plans for a building which so fitly express in form and the best ideals of the town. No one who has not served on a committee of this kind can realize the amount of time and effort required in looking after an undertaking of this kind."

MAINE NATIONAL HISTORY DAY 2014 CALL FOR JUDGES

Do you love history? Do you support dynamic hands-on projects for students? Then we are looking for you!

Sign up now to be a judge for the 2014 Maine National History Day competition, to be held at UMaine in Orono, on Saturday, April 12. Whether you've been a judge for several years running, or never experienced the excitement and reward of History Day, we encourage you to take a few minutes to join the 2014 team. It's an inspiring experience!

The competition runs from 10AM-4PM; and judges must be on-site by 8:30AM.

Morning refreshments and lunch will be provided.

To register, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YBDB772> and provide your name, contact info, and rate your preferences for judging category. We strongly encourage you to sign up by February 28, and, as an extra

incentive, we will put your name in a drawing for a great prize. (Compliments of Maine Historical Society and Maine Humanities Council.) You'll get an initial confirmation email and, in mid-March, your judging assignment and detailed information and resources about the judging role and responsibilities, as well as the logistics of the day.

For questions about judging, contact: Nicole Rancourt, Program Officer,

Maine Humanities Council, 773-5051, nicole@mainehumanities.org OR Larissa

Vigue Picard, Director of Education & Interpretation, Maine Historical

Society, 774-1822 x215, lvpicard@mainehistory.org.

For more information on History Day 2014, visit

<http://umaine.edu/history/national-history-day/>, or <http://www.nhd.org/>. And THANKS!.

Update on the furnace fund: feeling confident that we will reach our goal because we are only a few hundred dollars away, and having experienced another freeze-up at the building this winter, we have forged ahead and installed the new heating system. A donor, who wishes to remain anonymous handed us a \$1000.00 check to have insulation placed in the attics (front and back) to keep the heat inside the meeting room. That was done after the heat was installed. Thank you, Anonymous Donor! Many people, members and nonmembers have been so very generous with the donations, and it is greatly appreciated. The Tuesday girls have been busy putting the building back in order after clearing out the attics and moving items in the meeting room. Found some neat stuff in the attic!

Again, this drive would not have been accomplished without the members who donated their money and time worked at the sales tables at all the places where we set up. Thanks to all of you. It was a great team effort, and we should see the fruits of our labors shortly.

Membership Application/Renewal

2013 -2014

CUMBERLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P O Box 82

Cumberland, ME 04021

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TOWN or CITY: _____

ZIP CODE: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ CELL: _____

EMAIL: _____

Do you your newsletter sent by email _____ or by USPS _____ ?

WINTER ADDRESS: _____

DATES THAT THE WINTER ADDRESS APPLIES: _____

IF YOUR BUSINESS IS INTERESTED IN BEING A CORPORATE SPONSOR, PLEASE INDICATE: _____

Membership dues are \$10.00 per person _____ Corporate membership is
\$100.00. _____

Donation to the furnace fund _____

COMMITTEES:

501c3 _____ Old House _____ Program _____

Refreshments _____ Special Events _____

Publicity _____

75th anniversary of Cumberland Historical Society _____

Thanks to SEVEE & MAHER , our corporate sponsor.