



BATH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

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Bath Historical Society

*This newsletter is published every
other month by the Bath
Historical Society.*

*President - Lynn Roebuck
Vice President - Donald M. Povich
Secretary - P. L. (Bub) Pert, Jr.
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*Society member Gordon Struble,
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33 Summer Street,
Bath, Maine
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A holiday message from the president

Dear Friends,

'Tis the Season . . . for Christmas this year how about a gift membership to the Bath Historical Society for your childhood friend, parents, relatives who live away, your college age son or daughter, or a neighbor? They are available starting at \$10.00 for student memberships to \$30.00 for a family membership. The membership entitles the member to free admission for any society lectures and the Times of Bath and the newsletter. It's a great way to stay in touch with Bath and its history.

We are moving ahead on the school project with Don Povich leading the charge for the Historical Society. Look for a Christmas Tea and our lecture series continues.

We love new members and volunteers. Any questions about either can be addressed to me at 442-7988 or Chuck Richelieu at 443-4530.

Season's Greetings to you all. May we all have safe and happy holidays.

Yours truly,

Lynn Roebuck

The truth about why North Street is the widest street in Bath

(Editor's note: Until 1937, when what is now called old U. S. Route One was constructed leading from outer Court Street to the New Meadows River and beyond, the principal route leading into Bath from Brunswick was along the old Brunswick Road past the site of the Bath Junior High School, Oak Grove Cemetery and the State Armory.

If you've ever wondered why North Street in Bath is so wide — the widest street in the city, actually — these excerpts from past issues of the Bath Daily Times give the answer:

(March 25, 1919) It is claimed that this spring, work will begin on North street, making that avenue into a state road leading down to Commercial street and the ferry. The present state road and avenue to the ferry is down Lincoln Street to Center. It is claimed for the North street approach that it avoids the steep hill to the ferry. Critics of the plan assert that automobilists coming that way see little of Bath and that the route takes them away from the business center of the city. The new plan does however avoid one awful hill.

(Sept. 16, 1919) The new State road down North Street has received its foundation of coarse rock as far as Bailey street and the tarvia is there ready to use after the small rock and gravel are put on.

(Sept. 18, 1919) After many weeks when the street has been closed residents of North street begin to see a chance of using their front doors once more, and it is said the road will be open to traffic in about two weeks, if material and labor are secured and the weather is favorable. While the road from the car barn to Lincoln street has been practically closed for nearly two months now and then motorcycles and even automobiles have gone around the barriers and risked their tires at least on the rocky surface.

Beginning on the State road on Lincoln street and continuing east 1,200 feet brings this stretch of road to about Bailey street this year, and it is planned for

the State road eventually to continue through North Street to Front, to Commercial to the ferry. The road is 25 feet wide and is built of crushed rock to a depth of six inches, the lower three and a half inches being egg size stone with a rolled surface of two and a half inches of Jay granite, the top course being Bermudez road asphalt or what is called natural asphalt.

(Aug. 23, 1921) The Board of Highways and Sewers through its secretary, Charles R. Oliver, has petitioned the State Highway Commission for a relocation of its State aid highway from Lincoln street to the Bath State ferry by way of Oak and Commercial streets. The original location was from Lincoln street through North street to Middle street to Oak street to Washington street to Linden street to Front street to Ferry street. The road has been built through North street as far as its intersection with Middle street. The State Highway Commission would liked to have extended it through North street to Front street to Oak street to Commercial street, but refrained because of the grade crossing of the Maine Central railroad tracks on North street.

The other route designated by the Commission has six turns and in addition considerable opposition has been developed by residents of Middle street against having the State highway come through Middle street from North to Oak streets.

Under the proposed new plan traffic would have a straight run through Oak street from Lincoln to Commercial street. It is understood that tentative plans have been made for easing the two grades on Oak street, one west of High street and the other east of High street, while in all probability the A. & K. Ry. Co. will be asked to remove its tracks from the south side of Oak street to the center of the street so as to give a two way course for automobile and team traffic.

A conference between members of the State Highway Commission and members of the Board

North Street (cont'd)

of Highways and Sewers will probably take place in Bath this week.

(Sept. 21, 1921) The Oak street suggestion as a State aid highway from Lincoln street to the Bath state ferry was vigorously opposed by a number of Bath business men at a hearing before the municipal officers in the common council room Tuesday afternoon over which Mayor Charles H. Cahill presided. These merchants were also opposed to the route originally mapped out by the State highway commission for the road to pass through North, Middle, Oak, Washington, Linden, Front and Ferry streets. Instead, they want it to pass through Lincoln and Center streets to Front street as the greater part of the automobile travel now passes through the city, thus bringing it through the business center of Bath. In fact it was the sense of those attending the hearing by a rising vote to endorse this route and Secretary Charles R. Oliver of the Board of highways and sewers was directed to so notify the State highway commission.

(Oct. 1, 1921) The location of the State aid highway from the termination of the State road at Lincoln and North streets to the Bath State ferry has been determined by the State Highway Commission. It will pass through Lincoln, Oak and Commercial streets.

Enrichment program begins

The Bath Historical Society's enrichment program for the Bath schools has begun.

During the week of November 23rd, four programs were presented at the Fisher Mitchell School in Bath. The programs were about the Rev. Robert Gutch family, the first family to live in what is now Bath. The Gutches lived in the area in the 1600s.

The presentations centered around the family's day to day living with emphasis on the children's activities. It was a hands-on program using a model of the Gutch home and various articles which were in use at the time. The program closed with a spinning wheel demonstration.

The series was presented by Gorden Struble, Historian of the Maine History Room of Patten Free Library, and Donald Povich, Society Trustee and Vice President.

During the month of December the program will be presented at all the second grades at the Dike-Newell School. These enrichment presentations are partially funded by the Davenport Fund through the Bath School Department.

February program to feature State Museum Director J. R. Phillips

Bath resident Joseph R. Phillips, Director of the Maine State Museum in Augusta, will be the featured speaker at the February program of the Bath Historical Society scheduled for 7:30 p. m., Wednesday, February 10, 1993.

The subject of his presentation will be the State Museum, its resources, programs and existing and planned exhibits. The State Museum is an independent state agency responsible for research, exhibition and education in the fields of history, archaeology, and natural history.

Mr. Phillips formerly worked for 10 years in various administrative capacities relating to research, business development and marketing for the Bath Iron Works.

He received a B. S. Degree in Marine Transportation from Maritime College of the State University of New York in 1972, and earned a Master's Degree in History Museum Studies in the Cooperstown Graduate Program of the State University of New York in 1981 and an M.B.A. at the of New Hampshire College Graduate School of Business in 1990.