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Total membership:

409 on November 22

Life Members: 150

December Program

“The Irish in John Ford’s Life and Films”

A Presentation by Professor Kevin Stoehr, Boston University

John Ford, the subject of the Kennebec Historical Society’s December program, is the only director to have won six Academy Awards, including two for documentaries that he made during World War II. His classic films include *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Young Mr. Lincoln*, *Stagecoach*, *How Green Was My Valley*, *My Darling Clementine*, *The Quiet Man*, *The Searchers*, and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. He was a major influence on some of the world’s most acclaimed directors.

Born into a large Irish family in Cape Elizabeth, Ford spent most of his youth amid other Irish families on Munjoy Hill in Portland. The program traces the influence of Ford’s Irish roots on his personality and his film career. It also features selected clips from relevant movies by Ford, ranging from fairly obscure silent films to his later classic *The Quiet Man*.

The scheduled speaker, Kevin Stoehr, Ph.D., is a professor of humanities at Boston University. His recent books include *Ride, Boldly Ride: Aspects of the Western in American Cinema* (University of California Press, 2012) and *Nihilism in Film and Television* (McFarland, 2006). He is the co-editor of *John Ford in Focus: Essays on the Filmmaker’s Life and Work* (McFarland, 2008) and the editor of *Film and Knowledge: Essays on the Integration of Images and Ideas* (McFarland, 2002). He is a native of Portland and organized a Ford film festival that took place there in 2005.

The program is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 21, at Augusta City Center, 16 Cony Street, Augusta. For details, call the society’s headquarters at 622-7718.

“The older I am, the more I respect Ford for refusing to explain his work to interviewers. He meant what he told me: ‘Everybody asks the same questions, all you people, and I’m sick and tired of trying to answer them, because I don’t know the answers.’ ... Ford’s intransigence now seems refreshing in an age when every new movie comes accompanied with scores of interviews with the director, telling us how to watch it rather than letting us discover it for ourselves. Ford wanted his work to speak for itself. And it is through his work, not through his public or private statements about it, that Ford speaks to us most passionately and clearly.”

Joseph McBride, *Searching for John Ford: A Life*, 2003



From the President's Bird's Eye View

There are a few trying moments in any volunteer organization; though in my "new" role as president, I experience, mostly, fun as well as challenges. Both make the leadership of the KHS appealing. I suggest that all members and friends of the society take up the challenge I presented to those who attended at our outstanding program on Milton Bradley -- to volunteer for at least two new endeavors:

1. To step up at our program meetings and help the Membership Committee and the Program Committee greet members, friends and our guest speaker, both at the dinner at Pat's Pizza or Rebecca's (or wherever), and especially at the meetings themselves at Augusta City Center or another venue. This to help deal with the details of advertising, promoting, and receiving new memberships; and to collect donations from nonmembers who attend. Contacting Joe Owen or Heidi Munro, two members of the Membership Committee, and offering to assist them with these needs would be greatly appreciated!

2. To come up with names of people that the Nominating Committee could consider contacting, during the remainder of this year and particularly during the early months of 2012, who might be willing to become KHS volunteers. This year, Tom Johnson, a member of the Program Committee, has been named Nominating Committee Chairperson. He and I, especially, would be pleased to take names that members provide us of people who might consider playing key roles with KHS. We will be asking key community persons to assist with this effort as well.

There are at least two major reasons for emphasizing and accelerating the efforts of item two above. One is that the current volunteers, as great as they are, are experiencing heavily overloaded schedules and responsibilities, and facing, weekly, it seems, ongoing and new responsibilities, especially the chairpersons and members of the standing committees and those who staff the KHS house with its plethora of activities and services, especially when the building is open to the public, Wednesday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., every week. Secondly, if KHS expects to sustain cutting-edge leadership in the future, younger and active KHS members, volunteers, committee persons, board members and officers need to be recruited constantly.

These should not be seen as hollow words coming from my birds-eye-view perch. They are serious words of reality that will require all of us stepping up our efforts, not only to keep KHS solvent financially, which the Development Committee and other groups have done admirably, but to keep it functioning in terms of the voluntary leadership roles that are in place now and which are needed (more abundantly) in terms of both current and future needs.

As we grow larger in scope and responsibilities, communicating the needs noted above and those that need daily attention becomes even more of a challenge for the Executive Committee, board members and the KHS committees. To expedite this trend, I've asked the general membership to step up their recruiting efforts, and I've also asked all committees to provide written reports at each board meeting (six per year) and of course a summary report for the annual meeting (January of each year). From these reports, agenda items for the board to consider will emerge!

I write periodically to the committee chairpersons, providing suggestions or reminders of projects (ongoing and new) that need to be addressed in these reports and related suggestions/recommendations that require KHS board action. These reports and related actions are not only for information and action purposes. They are filed administratively and as pertinent in the KHS archive.

I hope to hear from KHS members with respect to the essence of this president's message and its challenges during the next days and weeks and throughout 2011-12. Thanks.

Voluntarily Yours,
– Don Beattie

On Display at KHS

Currently on display in the Kennebec Historical Society's foyer is an exhibit honoring Louise M. Stackpole, drawn from family memorabilia donated by her niece, Judith J. Stackpole of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Louise was the first woman elected president of the Maine Pharmaceutical Association. Among the more interesting items are the gavel she used as president and a letter of congratulations from Governor Frederick Payne. In addition, there are several items associated with Stackpole's Drug Store, formerly at the intersection of Cony and Bangor streets in Augusta. Photographs of the store and of her house on Patterson Street are drawn from the Society's 1938 WPA Photo Collection. Please stop by and have a look. The display will be up through February.

Gifts Worth Giving

We all have those friends and family on our Christmas list who are hard to buy for, but you are in luck this year. The Kennebec Historical Society has the solution for you. Why not give a society membership to friends and family in your name? There are many levels of membership that will fit your needs. Consider an Individual Membership for \$20, a Senior Membership for \$15, a Student Membership for \$15, a Family Membership for \$30, or a Life Membership for \$200.

Or take a look at our Gift Shop on line at www.kennebechistoricalociety.org for more wonderful gift-giving ideas. To make it even easier for you, just stop in at the society anytime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and browse through the books, note cards, magnets, baseball caps and KHS mugs.

See how easy that is? In addition to solving your Christmas list problems, you also will be helping to support the Kennebec Historical Society. Happy holidays to you and your family.

Tozier's Tidbits

Monmouth's Forgotten Hero: Andrew Jackson Tozier

Color sergeant, Company I, 20th Maine Infantry Regiment, V Corps, Army of the Potomac

Awarded the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest military award, for heroism on July 2, 1863, on Little Round Top, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Little is known about Sgt. A.J. Tozier. He was born February 11, 1838, in Monmouth; died March 28, 1910, at the age of 72; and is buried in Litchfield. He was 25 years old at Little Round Top. There are conflicting reports about where he entered service. One report states he entered from Bangor and another from Plymouth. He was a veteran of the 2nd Maine prior to his transfer to the 20th Maine. He may in fact have been one of the 120 men who had been involuntarily transferred to the 20th when the 2nd was disbanded. Having enlisted for three years while the majority of the 2nd Maine had enlisted for two years, they were originally considered mutineers and were delivered to the 20th Maine as prisoners. When the majority of the 2nd Maine went home after their enlistment expired, the regimental colors went with them. It is said that the men who had enlisted for three years felt that they should go home with their colors too, so they went on strike, so to speak. This shows how deeply these men felt about their colors and that they would defend them to the death. Col. Joshua Chamberlain managed to persuade them to integrate into the ranks of the 20th.

An Overview of KHS's November Program

The Kennebec Historical Society and the University of Maine at Augusta's Holocaust and Human Rights Center sponsored a joint program at the center on November 16, 2011. The purpose of the event was to honor living liberators of World War II.

At the start of the evening's activities, member Tim Bolton asked those present to consider volunteering to help complete the identification of buildings in thousands of photos given to KHS years ago by the city of Augusta. The photos were the result of a Works Progress Administration project conducted in 1938. Photographers who took part in that project produced images of nearly all the buildings in Augusta.

Don Beattie introduced the evening's program as having four components: Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine's board chairperson, Scott Dow, presenting a summary of HHRC's history from about 1982 to the present, especially the early efforts of professor Robert Katz of UMA; an address by HHRC director Robert Bernheim on the layers of liberating phases, countries and allied armies in Europe and the Far East and the enemy's perspective of war in juxtaposition to the Allies and American perceptions; a 10-minute video about Harry Blumenthal, a Falmouth World War II veteran who helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp; and a round-table discussion by eight veterans who gave their personal stories in various lengths and scope. Their average age is 91.

The round table included Harry Blumenthal, noted above; Col. Cliff West of Winthrop, who served in the Marines, liberating Pacific islands and aiding in efforts to free China; Joe Lupsha, a KHS member who also served in the Pacific Theater, seeing plenty of action there comparable to West's; Helen Siriagusa of Winthrop, a nursing corps member who worked especially with 18 wounded paraplegic veterans in this country; Ernest Henderson of Winthrop, who flew 32 missions over Europe before he was shot down and made a prisoner of war for 19 months on his 33rd mission, then worked 33 years at the canteen at Togus; Louise Baghdoyan, currently of Winthrop, who was in the Navy's WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) and who worked on construction of metal war materiel, including propellers for aircraft; Clarence McKay of Gardiner, who spoke of his service and that of a Gardiner buddy in key action in the Pacific, and of another buddy from Gardiner who helped crack Japanese code; and Newell Perkins, a prisoner of war for 21 months after being shot down over the Rhine Valley near Bonn, Germany.

There was a Netherlands exhibit involving books such as *A Bridge Too Far*, by Cornelius Ryan, about the failures of the Allies to free southern Netherlands until 1945; *The Hiding Place*, by Corrie ten Boom; and the 1981 publication *Het Verstoorde Leven Dagboek van Eddy Hillesum 1941-1943* (An Interrupted Life: The Diary of Eddy Illesum, 1941-1943). Additional Dutch literature was in the exhibit, as were photos and booklets and letters about persons who were killed in German-run concentration camps. Also on display were letters from a Scottish pilot shot down in Holland to the Dutch family who rescued him and hid him from the Germans. After the war, he was able to resume his military career in Germany in the Royal Air Force. He returned for a visit after the conflict.

The most lavish of the exhibits was that displayed by Larry Day -- many uniforms, swords medals and related World War II memorabilia.

Many of those in attendance conversed with the veterans after their talks while enjoying refreshments provided by Anne Cough and Emily Schroeder as well as looking at Day's exhibit.

As another joint effort, HHRC and KHS are contemplating starting a video/audio/oral history interview process with these and other Maine World War II veterans, in conjunction with the Volunteer Services Office at Togus, headed by Lorna Hatch, which is cooperating with the Library of Congress to record all remaining Maine World War II veterans. Robert Bernheim and Don Beattie will work together to find volunteers to assist with this project. Denise Tepler of Topsham has volunteered to assist with veterans in her area.

New Members

Information about all remaining new members for 2011 will be published in the December issue.

The Collections Box

As we approach the season of giving and receiving, it is appropriate, I think, to mention some of the more interesting items we have recently received through donation and purchase.

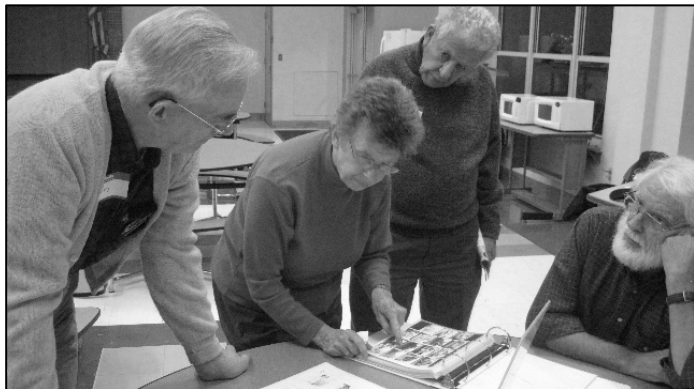
In November we added two wonderful items to our map collection. The first is a copy of a very large 1875 map of Augusta showing not only many streets and buildings that are now gone, but the location of fire “reservoirs” or cisterns, some located in the middle of city streets. They supplied water to fire engines before the days of hydrants. The second is a splendid, complete copy of the 1875 Atlas of Kennebec County. The volume is rarely found complete, as it is often cut apart and the maps sold separately. Third, we purchased an 1895 Sanborn map of Augusta. Produced for insurance companies, Sanborn maps not only locate structures, but also show their footprint and note the material from which they were constructed.

Just a few weeks ago, we acquired through purchase the original score book for the Augusta Trolley League baseball team for 1916. It not only has the record of all plays for every game played that season, but also clippings of the newspaper reports of each game. It will be added to the other items in our early Augusta baseball collection.

Over the past few months, we have emphasized assembling a representative sample of the work of 19th-century Kennebec County photographers. To that end, we acquired through donation and purchase more than 90 studio cards, stereo views, cartes de visite, and other images from the studios of photographers in Augusta, Gardiner, Vassalboro, Waterville, and other Kennebec County communities. Some of the images represent the work of photographers who are not listed in the Maine State Archives’ Maine Photographers database.

A final note: About 1938, a project funded by the Works Progress Administration photographed every building on the tax rolls in the City of Augusta. In the 1990s, the society received copies of those photos. Volunteers produced a guide that identified each picture as to street and number, but it was clear even when the society’s headquarters was at 61 Winthrop Street that the guide was not entirely accurate or complete. Thus, we have undertaken the task of verifying the data for each picture. Some buildings, of course, have been razed, and many of the surviving buildings have been altered. It is our hope, however, that errors can be corrected with the help of society members and others. If you would like to volunteer to examine the pictures for your street or any other street you know well and suggest corrections, we welcome your help.

For the Collections Committee
-- Bruce Kirkham



KHS members look over 1938 photos in hopes of identifying some of those about which the society does not yet have information.

About Our Tardy Newsletter

The Kennebec Current is an all-volunteer production. Sometimes emergencies or the demands of everyday life prevent those volunteers from producing the newsletter on time for publication within the months listed on the masthead. Such has been the case throughout 2011, including the production of this issue – which is why you see a three-month cycle identified at the top of page 1 instead of the normal two-month cycle. The newsletter team expects to publish a December issue as well, then get back on the regular schedule in 2012. Any available help would be appreciated.

For more information, contact the editor through the KHS office at 622-7718.

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Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Town/City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

Telephone number: Home _____ Business _____

E-mail address: _____

Type: New _____ Renewal _____

Category: Individual (annual) – \$20 _____

Family (annual) – \$30 _____

Senior (60+) (annual) – \$15 _____ Senior Family (annual) – \$25 _____

Student (full-time) (annual) – \$15 _____

Life (1 person) – \$200 _____

Business (annual, fewer than 25 employees) – \$75 _____

Corporate (annual, 25 employees or more) – \$125 _____

Nonprofit group (annual) – \$35 _____

Donation (optional): \$ _____

This is a gift membership, given by: _____

(Please send to Kennebec Historical Society, P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04332-5582.)

This line and below for society use only: Date received: _____

Cash _____ Check #: _____

Hours: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday; other times by appointment

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