

BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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GUEST SPEAKER ANNOUNCED

Entrepreneur Terry Bell of Edmunds, Maine will be guest speaker at the January Beals Historical Society's program meeting. Terry will begin his presentation with a look back to the year 1765 when the first generation of Bells arrived in Edmunds to establish the Tide Mill Farm on Cobscook Bay. The tidewater gristmill harnessed the power to grind Bell's grain into the invaluable flour required for the survival of many local families. We invite you to join us as we learn about how the Mill's production played into post-Revolutionary War history,

explore the past and learn about the present day farm and what it has to offer to Downeast Maine. Several generations later, the Tide Mill Farm is still a working, organic farm, which is still owned and operated by the Bell family. Samples of their products will be offered to those in attendance.

The program meeting, free to the public, will be held at Beals Elementary School on Friday, January 18, 2013 at 6:30PM. Light refreshments will be served.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 18, 6:30PM
at BES

History Of Tide Mill Farm

March 15, 6:30PM

Annual Biz meeting plus
program...TBA

May 4, 6:30PM

Talent/Variety Show

June 21, 6:30PM

TBA

September 20, 6:30PM

TBA

**PLEASE MARK YOUR
CALENDARS. WE GREATLY
APPRECIATE YOUR
ATTENDANCE!**

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

BHS membership begins January 1st and ends December 31st of each year. Annual memberships contribute to the general operating fund, which consists of items such as heat, electricity and the mailing of this newsletter, just to name a few. Life memberships contribute to an endowment fund, of which BHS is only allowed to use the interest portion incurred on the certificate of deposit, but has not been done to date.

The membership chairperson's report for 2012 shows 121 annual membership

renewals, three new memberships and four life memberships for a grand total of 185 members. In comparison to 2011, there were 119 renewals, 25 new and 57 life members for a grand total of 201 members, which means we had a combined loss of 16 members. If those who once belonged to BHS would renew their membership, we would have an additional 65 members added to the roll. Attached please find a membership application for your convenience. Thank you for your continued support of BHS!

ALEXANDER MILLIKEN, FIRST KEEPER OF THE MOOSE PEAK LIGHT

07-13-2009

By Homer Morrison

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Captain Alexander Milliken, the first and longest-serving keeper of the Moose Peak Lighthouse¹, was a 5th generation lineal descendant of Scottish immigrants Hugh and Eleanor (Allison) Milliken, settled in Boston by 1681. Alexander was born in Scarborough, Maine, 17 July 1771, the third of John A. and Abigail (Smith) Milliken's six known children.² He died in Falmouth in 1855 after a long and varied life of private enterprise and public service.³

Married in 1795, Alexander Milliken had seven children with his first wife, second

cousin Sarah Munson Milliken. Sarah was born about 1774 in Scarborough, died at age 60 in February 1834 in Jonesport² and is reportedly buried on the island where the lighthouse stood.² Their first four children were born in Scarborough and the last three in Frankfort.

By 1838 Alexander had married much younger second wife Michal Robbins, born on Fox Island (Vinalhaven) in 1811 and died in March 1876 in Portland. With Michal, three more children were born at Mistake Island near Jonesport between 1839 and 1843.³

A written reference to one of Alexander's occupations identifies him as a farmer at

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BRICK ORDERS

BHS continues to sell "personalized" bricks for the patio section as well as bricks for the Veteran's Memorial Park.

The bricks may be ordered between now and April 13th and will be set before Memorial Day in May. If you are interested in purchasing a brick, please use the attached form to place your order.

Condolences

*BHS wishes to extend its
deepest sympathy to the
family and friends of life member
Leta L. Beal.*

*Leta was a lifelong member
of our community whose loss
will be greatly felt.*

Charleston³ (Maine), but no evidence has been found that he ever lived there. He did own Charleston property and may have farmed there intermittently, or others for him, while living in the port town of Frankfort (that part which is now Winterport) on the Penobscot River. His fourth child was born in Scarborough in 1805 and the fifth in Frankfort in 1808.³

Alexander was living in Frankfort by 1808 and probably arrived there as early as November 1805 when his name appeared on a list of licensed Hancock County “innholders and retailers of spiritous liquors”⁴. He was the recorded owner of the 106 ton schooner *Martha*, built in Frankfort in 1806.⁵ (*Martha* was the name of his first daughter and fourth child, born the year before in Scarborough.)

Obviously energetic, ambitious and drawn to politics, Alexander Milliken seems also to have been well educated and was probably possessed of a persuasive, maybe forceful, personality. The naming of his second daughter, Rachel Jackson Milliken, born in Jonesport in 1839,³ might suggest a political philosophy and personal values in tune with those of “Old Hickory”, under whose administrations, 1829-1837, he would spend eight of his Moose Peak years.

His career as a mariner doubtless began in Scarborough, long before his move to Frankfort when in his mid-thirties, but no biographical details from those earlier years have come to light. Even with farming, postmaster, political and legislative duties, marine enterprises probably remained his primary occupational focus until at least 1827. In that year he was appointed by John Quincy Adams as keeper of the new Moose Peak lighthouse, Mistake Island, Jonesport, Maine⁶, foggiest location in the eastern United States⁷. He would keep the Moose Peak light for the next 22 years, but other careers preceded the lighthouse years.

Head keeper positions were much sought after. Appointments were usually made with consideration given to political loyalties as well as practical and physical abilities, character and depth of experience. Respected sea captains were often appointed to these jobs. In Alexander Milliken’s case, politics and a reputation for initiative and success in positions of public trust and marine commerce, in both war and peace, no doubt weighed heavily in his favor.

A privateer captain during the War of 1812, Alexander was prizemaster⁸ of the British letter-of-marque brig *Kutussof*, captured in April 1814 off the Azores by the Baltimore privateer schooner *Surprise*, Capt. Clement Cathell. After a chase of several hours, the two vessels had fought a close engagement with dead and wounded on both sides before the British captain waved his hat in surrender (unable to strike his colors, which had been shot away). After damage repairs at sea and a passage of 28 days, Alexander brought the valuable prize in to Frankfort where vessel and cargo were condemned as lawful prizes of war and sold.⁸

The sale prices brought have not been found, but the cargo of coffee, cocoa and hides was, with the vessel, appraised in newspaper reports at \$50,000 (about \$488,000 in 2007 dollars).⁹ Unfortunately for the Boston buyers, the *Kutussof* was burned at Hampden by the British when their ships and troop barges came up the Penobscot that fall in search of the disabled 28-gun U.S. sloop-of-war *Adams* (subsequently scuttled and burned by her captain, Charles Morris, to avoid capture.)¹⁰ The *Kutussof*’s cocoa cargo, still aboard, had been spirited away and hidden by local citizens as the British approached.⁹

Late in 1814, commissioned by Letter of Marque from President James Madison and in behalf of a group of approximately 10 investors, Alexander Milliken purchased, fitted out and took command of the 58 ton armed schooner *Fame* of Thomaston. The *Fame* mounted two carriage guns, a 12 and 6-pounder, and carried a crew of 35.^{8,11} Like other small American privateers, she relied heavily on speed and boarding force, or its threat, to carry the day when a British prize resisted capture. The sight of a rapidly closing belligerent, with boarders armed and crowding the rails, was often enough in itself to bring the colors down.

The *Fame* took several vessels running goods from Halifax to Castine. Her richest prize was her last, taken in December as the war was ending. In a heavy snow storm, her manned tender cut out the British schooner *Industry* from a Castine-bound convoy off Mt. Desert Island. Alexander brought the prize in to Rockland and then to Thomaston, where she was condemned; to Boston where the cargo was sold at auction; and finally to New York for sale of the vessel itself. The proceeds brought handsome rewards in the final distribution, each of the privates alone “... receiving some \$400 or \$500 ...”¹¹.

To mock the British and in parody of a published proclamation by General Sir John Sherbrooke, Lt. Governor and later Governor of Nova Scotia, Capt. Alexander Milliken issued his own proclamation on 17 November 1814. This announced his personal recapture of the eastern Maine seaboard from the Penobscot to Passamaquoddy Bay, the same coastline proclaimed captured and blockaded by the British. He went ashore at Machias and nailed his proclamation to the flagpole at the fort then in putative possession of the British.¹⁵

In an earlier incident of the war, he was the owner and presumptive captain of the 104 ton merchant schooner *Alexander*⁵ of Frankfort, captured 11 June 1813 by the British privateer *Retrieve*. The *Alexander*’s first mate and some of her crew were taken off and transferred to HMS *Retaliation*, which carried them in as prisoners to Halifax. The *Alexander* herself, under a prize crew from the *Retrieve*, was recaptured by an American privateer before she could reach Halifax. Her captor was the ill-fated and now legendary New York privateer *Young Teazer*, Capt. William Dobson, who ordered her in for Portland where she arrived on June 22nd.¹²

The mate of the *Alexander* is shown in Halifax prisoner of war records as Isaac Millikin [sic]¹³. This was undoubtedly Alexander Milliken’s nephew, second son of Alexander’s brother Samuel, born in Scarborough in 1785.² (A shipmaster himself, Isaac was also a Frankfort resident and, like Alexander, active in politics.)

Isaac and the crew members taken to Halifax were apparently released under parole or by prisoner exchange soon after arrival; their names appear only in prison receiving records.¹³ Alexander himself and the balance of the crew had presumably been retained on the *Alexander* and were liberated with her recapture by the *Young Teazer*. Privateer commanders often separated captured officers and divided the crew between vessels to minimize the likelihood of organized attempts at retaking the prize.

The Frankfort schooner *Alexander* was reported several times in postwar newspapers as sailing under Milliken command. Whether this captain was Alexander or Isaac or both, at different times, is not known.¹⁴

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Alexander Milliken represented Frankfort at the General Court (House of Representatives) in Boston, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, for at least the political years 1808 through 1812 and in 1815.¹⁶ In 1812 he was also listed as one of four justices of the Hancock County Court of Sessions.¹⁷ “Honorable” and “Esquire” as well as “Captain” were titles attached to his name in the press.

He was identified as Frankfort postmaster in 1808 and 1811, and again in 1819.^{2,18} (No records have been found for the intervening or later years.) In 1814, he was appointed by President Madison as Principal Assessor for the Second District of Massachusetts, term of appointment not found.² In 1818 and in 1822 he was appointed Justice of the Peace for Hancock County.² In 1834 he was listed as a notary public², perhaps an adjunct function of his lightkeeper position.

Political meetings convened at the Frankfort “house of Alexander Milliken, Esq.” were reported in 1809, 1812, 1818 and 1821 Boston, Portland and Bangor newspapers.¹⁹ “House” may have referred to an inn/tavern/public meeting house of which Alexander was owner-proprietor.

The 1812 meeting was held on July 4th by “the Republicans of the Town of Frankfort”. Their stated purpose was to express “their sense on the present important situation of our country”.²⁰ The United States had declared war on Great Britain on June 18th. It was already a politically unpopular war in much of Massachusetts, largely because of the predictably adverse effects on the shipping trade that supported the New England economy. The product of the meeting was a written address with three resolutions, prepared by a committee composed of Alexander Milliken and four others.

Addressed to President James Madison and the Congress, it carried a message of support that, coming from a New England source, was stronger than might be expected. In patriotic and spirited language, the resolutions condemned Massachusetts Governor Caleb Strong and the Federalist legislature for their anti-war, pro-British stance. Strong in particular was roundly castigated for refusing to order out the militia when so requested by the President. Copies, signed and attested to by Alexander’s nephew Isaac Milliken as secretary, were sent to the *Boston Patriot* and *Eastern Argus* (Portland), and were published.²⁰

Alexander was a delegate and signer at Maine’s constitutional convention held in Portland in 1819.²¹ After statehood was achieved in 1820, he served as an elected member of Maine’s House of Representatives for at least the political year 1822.²² (At that time, the legislators were elected to one-year terms.)

On July 11, 1821, “Alexander Milliken, Esq. of Frankfort” presided as President over a Castine convention of Hancock County Republicans. The convention was held to ballot for and recommend to the voters the Republican candidates for Governor, two state Senators, and a Representative to Congress in the upcoming elections. Twenty-six delegates from twenty-three towns in the county attended.²³

By an 1822 act of the Maine legislature, Alexander Milliken and two named others, with their “associates and successors”, were incorporated “into a body politic” to be known as the “Frankfort Meeting-House Corporation”, for the purpose of “erecting and keeping in repair a meeting house in the Town of Frankfort.”²⁴

Sons Alexander, Jr. (1799-1873); Samuel (1802-1830); and William (1810-1830) also became mariners. Captain Samuel and

his brother William were lost at sea together in 1830.³ By 1860, Alexander Jr. was a 61-year-old shipmaster living in Portland with wife Sarah and the two of his four children still at home.²⁵ By 1870 he had retired from his last occupation, grocer.²⁶ He died in 1873 at about age 74.³

Two vessels named *Alexander Milliken* were built at Jonesport while Alexander was at Moose Peak Light: a 144 ton schooner in 1846 and a 176 ton brig in 1848.²⁷ He was listed as one of the brig’s owners when it was enrolled at Machias Dec. 5, 1848, and again when registered there Aug. 14, 1849. No Machias registration or enrollment records have been found for the schooner.²⁸ In 1863, a second brig *Alexander Milliken*, 186 tons, was built at St. Andrews, NB.²⁹ These three vessels continued to carry Alexander Milliken’s name into many Atlantic, Gulf and West Indies ports long after his death in 1855.²⁹

During the Civil War, the Jonesport-built brig *Alexander Milliken* was chartered by the government to transport coal from Philadelphia to the U.S. Navy base at Key West.³⁰ Large quantities of coal were needed to fuel the steam-powered squadrons blockading southern ports. Throughout the two brigs’ peacetime careers in the coasting trade, marine news items recorded their arrivals at numerous east coast and Caribbean ports under a number of different masters.³¹ The schooner *Alexander Milliken* also had a coastwise trading career. From newspaper accounts, we know when the sailing days of the two Jonesport-built vessels ended:

December 12, 1869. Brig *Alexander Milliken*, Capt. Stearns or Lord; Castine and Boston owned; Bangor for New York with lumber; found abandoned at sea off Asia Rip about 120 miles east of Sandy Hook, lumber-laden with wheel gone, masts cut away and water-filled.³² The fate of her crew and a positive identity of her captain have not been found.

March 12, 1872. Schooner *Alexander Milliken*, Capt. Salisbury; Ellsworth owned; New York for Boston with staves; ashore at Nauset in a storm and lost, two crew members drowned, the rest saved through the heroic efforts of Capt. Salisbury.³³ (March 1872 was a bad month at sea: other reported Maine vessel losses included two barks and seven other schooners.)³⁴

The 37 ton schooner *George*, built at Eden (Bar Harbor) in 1831, was temporarily registered at Machias in 1838 with an Alexander Milliken as Master.³⁵ Considering Alexander, Sr.’s lightkeeper status at the time, the captain may have been Alexander, Jr. The possibility also suggests itself that this small schooner may have been employed as a lighthouse tender under Alexander Sr.

During Alexander’s 1827-1849 Moose Peak tenure, two petitions were presented and read by Maine representatives (partially quoted in italics below) in sessions of the U.S. Congress, House of Representatives:

January 5, 1829. “... *the petition of Alexander Millikin [sic], of the State of Maine, keeper of the light-house on Moose Island Peak [sic], praying for an increase of compensation.*”³⁶ This was referred from the Committee on Commerce to the Secretary of the Treasury, eventual resolution not found.

January 10, 1831. “... *a petition of Alexander Milliken, keeper of the light-house on Moose Peak Island, praying that an out-house may be erected for his accommodation.*”³⁷ (It is hoped that the urgency was recognized and a timely resolve passed and acted upon.)

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