

2024 Program Schedule

April 22: “1911, Busy, Booming Belfast”

Is the topic for the Belfast Historical Society meeting at 7:00 pm, Monday, April 22, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. Megan Pinette, historical society president, will present a look at 1911 as recorded in the Waldo County Herald newspaper. That year saw several important additions to commercial Belfast; the Colonial Theatre, a corn canning factory, and a sardine packing plant. In the words of WCH editor, Edgar F. Hanson, “Belfast is on the move. Commercially and industrially the city looks better than it has in years.”

The Belfast Historical Society presents talks of local historical interest on the 4th Monday of the month from April through October. All presentations are at 7:00pm in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library and are open to the public. Seating is limited to 75. FMI visit BelfastMuseum.org or call 207 338-9229. These programs will be recorded and can be viewed on Belfast Community Television and on the museum website.

May 20: “The Mighty Goose River” is the topic for the Belfast Historical Society meeting at 7:00 pm, Monday, May 20, in the Abbott Room of the Belfast Free Library. Gary Stuckey, museum volunteer, will present the history of the Goose River, from the first dam built to power sawmills to electrical power generation at its mouth. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries the river provided power for grist mills, sawmills, leatherboard factories and axe factories. Several ice businesses flourished along its length.

June 24: New for 2024, “That Looks Familiar, Where is It?” is the topic for the Belfast Historical Society meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, June 24, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. David Ruberti, historical society vice-president, invites you to challenge yourself to take the fun quiz and try to identify from photographs as many mystery places and Belfast landmarks as you can. Some will be easy and others may leave you scratching your head.

July 22: “Helen B. Shute, Newspaper Woman, Photographer and Civic Leader” is the topic for the Belfast Historical Society meeting at 7:00 pm, Monday July 22, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. Megan Pinette, historical society president, will present the writing and photograph collections of Helen Shute now in the Belfast Museum archives. Helen’s newspaper career spanned 65 years, writing for a total of 16

newspapers from the early 1900s to the 1960s. Her news articles and extensive photograph collection illuminate Belfast history in the 20th century.

August 26: “Ships and Shipbuilding in Mid-Coast Maine” is the topic for the Belfast Historical Society meeting at 7:00 pm, Monday August 26, in the Abbott Room of the Belfast Free Library. David Ruberti, historical society vice-president, will present the history of shipbuilding and ships in the mid-coast, including Belfast. Belfast was a shipbuilding center with shipyards lining the waterfront. In 1793, Robert and James Miller built the schooner *Jenny Miller*, the first of many ships to be built here. Over the years, more than 600 vessels, known for their size, speed and beauty were launched by Belfast area shipyards. The program will include early, traditional shipbuilding as well as more modern boatbuilding and waterfront activities mostly in Belfast and a little in other towns.

September 23: “Your Father Fears New England Will Be Depopulated: Belfast and the Rush to California” is the topic for the Belfast Historical Society meeting at 7:00 pm, Monday, September 23, in the Abbott Room of the Belfast Free Library. Jan Eakins, a cultural historian who has researched, written, taught, and lectured on Maine in the West for more than two decades, will present the histories of some of the people who caught California gold fever early and hard. The bark Suliote cleared Marshall Wharf for San Francisco mere weeks into the nationwide rush. Hazeltines, Peirces, Lothrop, Lockes, and Ladds were among more than a hundred locals who headed west that year of 1849. Jan Eakins traces their journeys by sea and land. She relates their successes and sorrows as they kept shop, practiced law, erected buildings, and dug gold on the western frontier. She considers who left home, who returned home, and how gold shaped Belfast’s future.

October 28: “McKenna and Her Camera: Artists and Their Work” is the topic for the Belfast Historical Society meeting at 7:00 pm, Monday, September 28, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. Kevin Johnson, photo-archivist Penobscot Marine Museum, will present Peggy McKenna’s “unportraits,” photographs of artists and local celebrities living and working in the midcoast 1987 to 2002. With some time out working in New York City as a photographer, she spent most of her adult life photographing the life and people of Montville and Waldo County, working as staff photographer both for the Republican Journal (1980-83) and the Waldo Independent (1988-2002). This program is in conjunction with shows this summer at both the Penobscot Marine Museum and Waterfall Arts.