



PRES ALUMNI
Where Are They Now?



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Tale of George Bailey



PRES VISITORS
Elenore Roosevelt

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE POUND RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FALL 2019

VOLUME XXXVIII No. 3

PRES Turns 80

This year the Pound Ridge Elementary School (PRES) celebrates 80 years of teaching our town's children. This is how it all began.

Abridged from "Tell Me A Story of Pound Ridge" by Lawrence Brotmann, PRHS Trustee

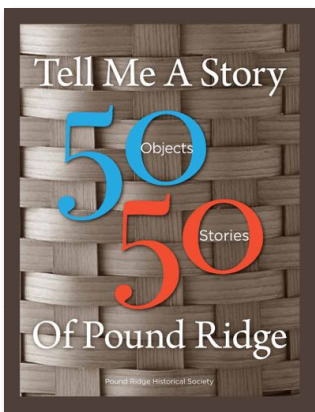
In the early 19th century, Pound Ridge had 10 one-room schoolhouses scattered throughout the town. Schools had to be nearby because the children walked to school in all kinds of weather. The students were ages 5 to 16. In Pound Ridge's early years, children were

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Calendar Contest Winner. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of PRES, Houlihan Lawrence sponsored a calendar art contest. Kindergartner, Colleen Moore, was featured on the cover.



OWN THE BOOK!



"Tell Me A Story Of Pound Ridge - 50 Objects, 50 Stories"

This delightful book was created to accompany our most recent exhibition. It proved so popular that we held it over for a second year. But, all good things come to an end. The "50 stories" are timeless, and a perfect way to introduce you and your family to the history of our town. Fun for all ages!

Pound Ridge 2020 Our time capsule is underway.

We've contacted every business and organization in Pound Ridge. For the year of "perfect vision" – 2020 – we're challenging everyone to place something in the capsule that will represent them to Pound Ridgers 100 years from now. And, give us an object for our museum exhibition that will open in the Spring.

Any questions, just give us a call, and we will be happy to work with you. 914-764-4333. ■



PRES: 80

Continued from page 1

“needed to help at home on the family farm and rarely attended for the entire school year. Teaching all grade levels in a single room was challenging. Envision and 8 year old and a 16 year old learning side by side.

But change was coming. In July 1937, Eleanor Roosevelt visited Pound Ridge and toured the one-room schools. As a result of her comments and concern over the quality of education provided, the one-room schools were closed and auctioned off.

PRES — originally known as “The Union School” — was a centralized elementary school with six classrooms for grades kindergarten to eighth. It was built on four acres of land provided by Hiram Halle.

Children, living further than a mile from the school, rode there on buses provided by the new Marshall Bus Company.

The PTA helped change these...



Pictured (clockwise from upper left): One-room schoolhouses: Great Hill, Village, East Woods, Plains and Rock.

...into this



Pictured (above): Architect's early rendering; Poundridge Central School, completed September 1939.

Miss Hilda “Skiddy” Skidmore: The First Principal

Abridged from “A Backward Glance”, written by Ethel Scofield, who was the 2nd Grade teacher at PRES during the 1940’s. Later Ethel was P.R. Town Historian and President of our Historical Society.

Hilda P. Skidmore had been tempered in the cauldron of life. She had been engaged to marry early in her career and her love had been killed as a

soldier in WWI. After that, her students became her life. She boarded, as was common then, with Pound Ridge families. After years of teaching in a one-room school, she was selected to be the first PRES Principal. “Skiddy,” as she was known, was a tall woman with a large-boned frame...she was a formidable physical being.

Appropriate adjectives would be intelligent, compassionate, focused,

strong, healthy, determined and definite! Miss Skidmore



had a thorough knowledge of each student in the school. She understood their backgrounds, ambitions, abilities and molded the best they had to a offer – a rare gift which makes teaching an art! After leaving PRES, in her later years she finally married Everett Knapp, the town clerk of Pound Ridge.”

Miss Skidmore was the beloved grandmother of our Trustee, Adele Dillane ■

Readin' and writin' and 'rithmetic

By Gail Keene,
PRHS Trustee

Manhattanite Dorin Seymour may well be the oldest living graduate of the Pound Ridge Elementary School!

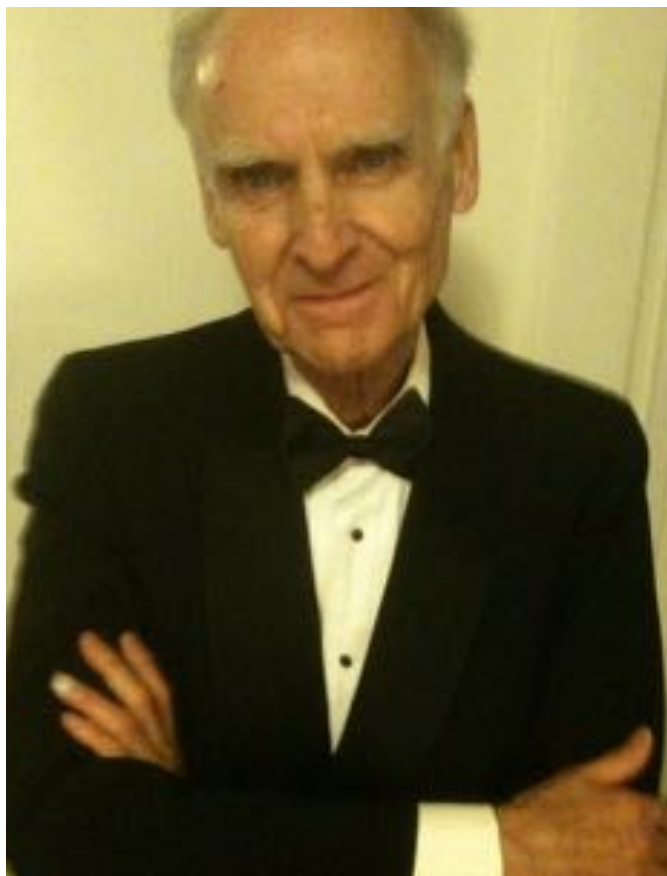
The debonair actor attended the Rock School at the corner of Trinity Pass and Barnegat Road, the fourth generation of his family to do so, before the 1939 opening of the school that would unify several one room school-houses in Pound Ridge.

He recalls a pot-bellied Franklin stove that provided poorly controlled heat in the winter, only a few books, a blackboard covered with chalk dust, no electricity and no running water. Each morning one of the older boys would go to a nearby house to fetch a pail of water for drinking.

The rocky playground had no equipment until the children earned enough money to buy a circular swing. There was no organized team play. Pick-up games were the norm.

Mrs. Dorothy Platts, the teacher, was strict. She had to be--- in order to teach such a disparate age group. Unlike today's sophisticated educational techniques, rote learning, involving memorization based on repetition, was employed. To this day, Dorin is able to recite the entire Gettysburg Address from memory.

During the 1940-41 school year, Pound Ridgers



Dorin Seymour

“Perhaps it might seem unbelievable to students of today, but generally speaking we were happy children who enjoyed life to the fullest. We competed vigorously, but remained friends!”

opened their arms, hearts and school to three British children fleeing the London blitz, Antoinette, Greta and Daniel Christiansen. Their father, Arthur, was the famed editor of Lord Beaverbrook's news-paper the *Daily Express* from 1933 to 1957.

Dorin has tried in vain to find out what happened to his three friends after they returned home on a ship in 1941.

We asked Dorin what it was like that first day

of school in 1939 at PRES. What were his impressions?

Riding the Marshall Bus topped the list of favorite memories. The bus ride was a real luxury after six years of walking to school in all kinds of weather. The time on the bus also allowed for new social interactions.

The new building had electricity *and* plumbing!

Mrs. Platts was joined by Miss Skidmore in teaching the students from all corners of Pound Ridge — and there was even a weekly showing of a historical documentary in the auditorium. Dorin remembers that the film was constantly breaking, much to the glee of the children — and the frustration of the handyman who tried to fix it.

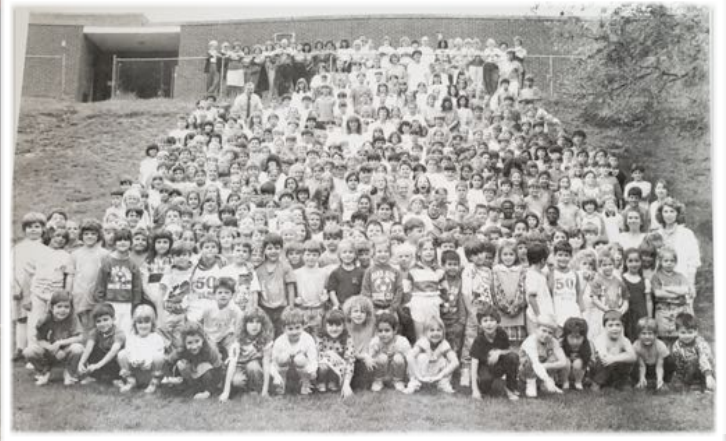
Plutarch wrote that “the mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be ignited.” Dorin Seymour's mind was ignited; countless other minds were ignited — and are still being ignited, thanks to teachers, past and present, in the schools of Pound Ridge. ■



The Rock School, now 61 Trinity Pass.

PRES Turns 80: in Pictures

Pictured (clockwise from top left): 70th anniversary celebration, 50th anniversary celebration, "The King And I," a production from the '80s, 8th grade graduation in 1951, Alden Griffith on Olympics Day, Field Day, cover of 60th Anniversary invitation.



Left to right front rows
Sandy Rosen, Aldene Quade, Betsy Simmons, Patricia Perry, Emma Hawley, Debbie ^{Burgess}, Emily Shaw,
Dawn Landt, Daisey Sharples, Harold & Jenkins, John Ebel
Second row: Frances Kenneths, Annokake, Guy Funston, Wesley Bobletz, Jay Thomson

Milton L. Little
PHOTOGRAPHER

PRES alumni: Where Are They Now?

Richard Brooks Lyman / R. Brooks, Jr. / Brooks Michael Lyman, who is in 2nd grade. Three generations of Lymans – Grandfather, Richard “Dick” Brooks Lyman, son, R. Brooks, Jr., and grandson, Brooks Michael Lyman, who is in 2nd grade at PRES.



Maia Weinstock. One-time PRES student, Maia Weinstock, who grew up on the grounds of her family’s Poundridge Nurseries, is a strong advocate for girls and women. The science writer and editor at MIT News – who enjoys making LEGO figures of scientists, and posting them on Twitter – recently built a LEGO set of “Women in NASA,” and submitted it to the LEGO Ideas website for consideration. After receiving 10,000 votes from fans, LEGO announced it would manufacture the set.

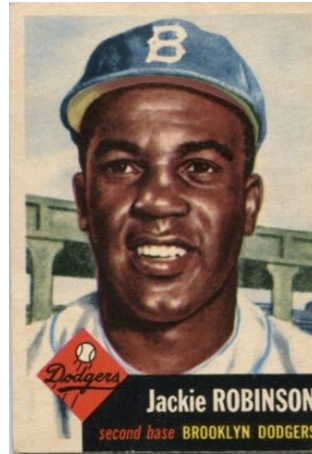


Dan “Skip” Landt. PRES graduate, Skip Landt, stands at the corner of Trinity Pass and Landt Lane, named for his mother, a former Town Clerk. Skip lives in Chicago and, for fun, plays banjo and harp in an old time Jug Band – “Strictly Jug Nuts.”



Baseball Crazy

On January 31st, I was watching the news and learned that it would be Jackie Robinson’s 100th birthday.



One of my fondest memories is my graduation from PRES in the 8th grade. (Yes, we didn’t go off to Middle School back then.) Jackie Robinson was there and gave each of us our Athletic Certificate

– with his signature – and shook our hand. He was a hero to the whole class.

Our class was baseball crazy. You were either a Brooklyn Dodger’s, Yankee’s or Giant’s fan. At World Series time, if we really behaved, at 1 o’clock, the radio was turned on and we listened to the game. The year there was a subway series, Dodgers v. Yankees, was a really big deal.

Jackie was my favorite player. He was at 2nd base, and so was I – on the 1st girl’s softball team at PRES. I wasn’t much good, but the school was so small that everyone was needed.

I marvel now that, Jackie Robinson, who broke the baseball color barrier and was later awarded the Congressional Medal Of Freedom, came to our little school.

A reprint of a Facebook post on “You Know You’re From Pound Ridge” by Ebie Wood



Pound Ridge’s first Little League team was started by three very special men. Pictured here (left-to-right in the back row): Bob Smith, better known as “Buffalo Bob,” who created the iconic children’s TV show, “Howdy Dowdy,” Herb Pittman, beloved PRES 8th grade science teacher, and Morris B. “Whitey” Ottman, PRES Principal for 25 years. Games were played on the field behind the school, as there was no Town Park back then.



A Pound Ridge Hero

The Tale of George Bailey from the Archives

By Susan Grissom, PRHS Collections Manager

Sometimes I find treasures saved in the archives that are simply unforgettable. Thanks to a 1934 newspaper article, I learned about a young adventurer, George Bailey — “Boy led Astray by 1st Long Pants, Home Again With Creases Intact,” — Special to the Herald-Tribune.

George Cooley Bailey began his adventures in life at an early age. In 1934, just before his twelfth birthday, his sister gave him his first pair of long pants, and yellow ones at that. The pants gave George a new sense of himself. While waiting for his Mother and Grandmother, who were in a PTA meeting, George noticed a driver unloading construction materials. He asked him for a ride to Stamford and the man obliged. When George didn't turn up for dinner his family became concerned and called a cmony of George's, the renowned newspaper



columnist, Westbrook Pegler. By evening Pegler had joined the search. The woods near the Bailey's home were searched, and the pond dragged until daylight, the state police were called in, and a two state alarm raised.

Meanwhile, George was enjoying himself, admiring the reflection in a Stamford shop window of his long trousers, taking great care not to wrinkle them. In a lunchroom he announced he was hungry, but had no money and would gladly work for a meal. They put him to work cleaning the woodwork. Someone he met there gave him a place to spend the night. George's journey took him all the way to Bridgeport, and after a few days, George made his way back to New Canaan. It was Anna Sefik, from Pound Ridge, who spotted him and alerted everyone. When George was finally home with his anxious Mother, he said, “Gee Mom, I just wanted a little trip by myself.”

George's next adventure happened four years later when he left home on a motorcycle to join the Canadian RAF, and enlist in the Second World War. He had been turned away from his local draft board as too young for the US military

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Pictured (top to bottom): George with his two sisters; paintings of the Bailey property, now 171 Trinity Pass, by Mrs. Wilson, a neighbor of the Baileys; the headline from *The Herald-Tribune*.



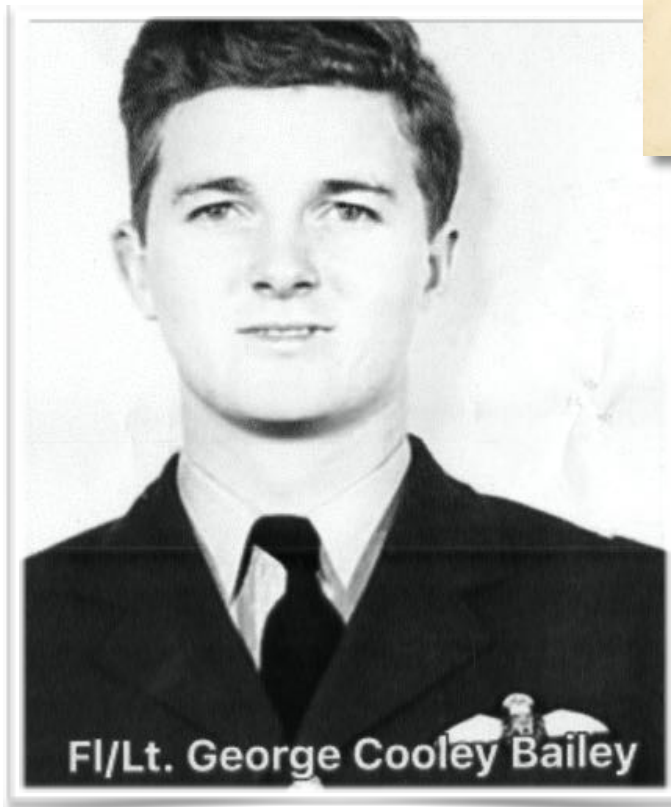
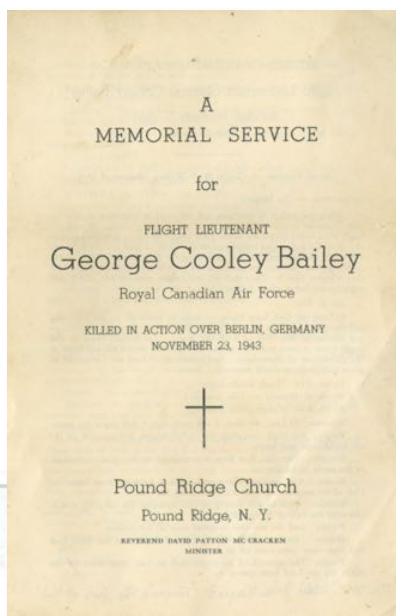
The Tale of George Bailey

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Through the RAF, George was part of a bold operation. According to the "Airmen Remembered" website, this raid was considered the most effective bombing attack on Berlin of the entire war and destroyed much of the

center and west of the city. George Bailey was 2nd flight pilot on this mission. Homeward bound, they were detected after crossing the Dutch coastline. Twenty-six aircraft were lost from attacks by night fighters..

There are no graves for those lost. George Cooley Bailey



and 20,456 men and women of the British Empire, lost in air operations, are commemorated by their names etched into stone at the Runnymede Memorial near Egham, Surrey England overlooking the Thames. In Pound Ridge George is listed on the World War II memorial in front of Conant Hall.

The boy with the long yellow pants who yearned for adventures always seemed to find a way to have one, but this time he played a significant role in history as a hero. ■

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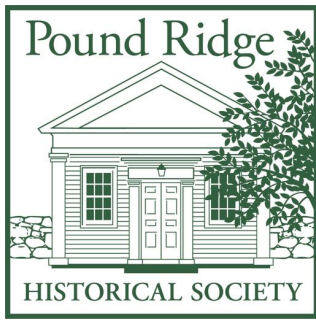
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Pound Ridge Resident

The Newsletter of the Pound Ridge Historical Society Fall 2019



In this Issue:
PRES Turns 80

*Pictured: PRES today
and Amy Fishkin, the
current PRES Principal.*

