

BELFAST HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 2025 Programs at the Belfast Free Library

April 28:

“Hello America, the Story of the Experimental RCA Radio Station in Belfast” will be the topic of the Belfast Historical Society’s meeting at 7:00 pm, April 28, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. Harry Nelson, radio historian will present the history of RCA’s experimental relay station. March 14, 2025 marked the 100th anniversary of the history making first live trans-Atlantic long-wave radio broadcast from London, England to the Radio Corporation of America’s relay station located in Belfast in 1925. This broadcast paved the way for full global communications.

May 19:

“The Grand Army of the Republic: How Warrior Identity and Survivor Obligation Drove Union Veterans to Fight Jim Crow” will be the topic of the Belfast Historical Society’s meeting at 7:00 pm, May 19, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. Stephen A. Goldman, M.D. psychiatrist and Civil War historian, will discuss how and why Union veterans assumed critical roles as moral and political forces, particularly through the nation’s most prominent biracial postwar organization, the Grand Army of the Republic.

June 23:

“Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives: 200 Years of the Murch Family in Belfast” will be the topic of the Belfast Historical Society’s meeting at 7:00 pm, June 23, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. Dana Murch, local genealogist and historical society member, will present the program will include stories about the *Mayflower*; the War of 1812; pump and block making; lawyers and judges and postmasters; Gettysburg; poetry; ice-making; hydro-electric generation; weather-keeping; shoe shops; the Pygmy Circus; and World War II.

July 28:

“Belfast – Biggest Little City in Maine Before MBNA Came A’ Calling” will be the topic of the Belfast Historical Society’s meeting at 7:00 pm, July 28, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. Megan Pinette, Historical Society president, will present a program taking a look at the years preceding the arrival in 1995 of MBNA, the Delaware based company that was a national leader in the sale and servicing of credit cards to affinity groups. Prior to their arrival, Belfast had experienced both boom and bust years including a period of adjustment following the end of the poultry industry in the late 1980s. No longer “Broiler Capital of the World” Belfast questioned what the future might bring.

August 25:

“Belfast, When the Cows Were Still Wearing Pajamas” will be the topic of the Belfast Historical Society’s meeting at 7:00 pm, August 25, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. David Ruberti, Historical Society vice-president, will take the audience on a time travel back to a gentler time in our city. The evening will feature a myriad of postcards and images of a bygone era in our little burg. You will see downtown, neighborhoods, churches, schools, businesses, the waterfront and some fun. David shall be your tour guide.

September 22:

"Warding Off Witches to Protect House and Home" will be the topic of Belfast Historical Society's meeting on September 22 at 7:00 pm in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. Cultural historian Jan Eakins will discuss concealed shoes and other protective devices long used to keep witches and bad luck at bay here in Maine and around the world. We'll examine shoes from the historical society's collection, and we'll learn how to find shoes and witch marks in old buildings around us - and what to do if you find one. If you've discovered an old shoe or other object hidden in your house or barn, please bring it or a photo or story to enrich our discussion.

October 27:

"Packed Like a Can of Sardines" will be the topic of the Belfast Historical Society's meeting at 7:00 pm, October 27, in the Abbott Room at the Belfast Free Library. Kevin Johnson, Photo archivist at the Penobscot Marine Museum, will present his program illuminating how the sardine industry supported Maine coastal communities for well over a century. The workforce in canneries included thousands of women, even more than the number of men fishing for herring. This industry was a part of the economic, cultural, and social fabric of families and communities all along our state's coast. The Penobscot Marine Museum will be celebrating this industry in their *Sardineland* exhibit and photo archivist Kevin Johnson will cast a net into PMM's photo archives and share many fishy photos and the stories behind them in his presentation.