

Mussel Ridge News

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Vera Payson Mathieson - Remembered

Vera with her smile and gentle ways always was such a special lady! She was oldest and a most loved member of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society. At her age of 101, she remembered so many details about growing up in Owls Head. Such interesting conversations were had.

Vera Payson Mathieson, 101, passed away surrounded by family on January 3, 2026, in Rockland. Born March 17, 1924, to Harry and Ida Payson, Vera attended a one-room grammar school on Ingraham Hill and was a graduate of Rockland High School in 1943.

Her life was marked by quiet strength, unwavering love for her family, and genuine care for others. She is deeply missed by all who knew her. Her life is further chronicled in the book, *One Sunday Morning*.

Vera worked in the Owls Head Central (Elementary) School for many years a Title 1 teaching assistant. She helped the kids less fortunate and at one point fostered a girl. She was a mother figure to younger teachers too.

She loved her camping group. The Good Sam Club with Joyce Ross Wooster. And if someone moved into the neighborhood she made them a pie. Later on, she would take older friends who didn't drive anymore to the grocery store. She also was a very active member of the Owls Head Garden Club for many years. She wrote her own childhood memoirs.

She always had an open door to anyone stopping by. I don't remember a day that went by where we didn't have someone drop in for a little visit.



Vera and Louis Mathieson



Vera and Georgia Tasho at our Founders Picnic & both lived to 100+.

Faith was central to Vera's life. Louie and Vera attended the Rockland Congregational Church from its days on Main Street to its later location on Limerock Street. After Louie died, Vera became an active member of the Owls Head Baptist Church.

She is survived by her children, John, James, Nancy, Ann, and Mary Jo, plus 11 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren, and 8 great-great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by husband Louie.

"Goodbye, Vera – May the Lord keep you and remain with you, always. - Amen." – Rod Weeks.

"Vera, you were 'one in a million', and I loved talking and interviewing you. So thankful we saved the video of you telling the history of Ingrahams Hill and growing up there. Also, folks will be able to watch this as well as our program of her and others titled "WWII on the Homefront." - Carolyn



Vera with her daughter, Mary Jo on her 92th birthday!

A FIVE-GENERATION GROUP

Headed by That Rugged Fisherman and Farmer,
Capt. Thomas J. Young of Vinalhaven

Down in Orland, Me., Gene Allen Stover, a lonesome little chap of 2 sighs plaintively now and then and makes known in his 2-years-old language that he would like to see his gweat, gweat, gwandfather, Thomas J. Young of Vinalhaven, who be 83 come next October

And thereby hangs a tale of five generations, destined in the natural course of events to exist for quite a number of years, as Mr. Young at 82 is an alert and virile challenge to the encroachments of old age.

Mr. Young is a lifelong resident of Vinalhaven and strange, indeed it would have been if he had not taken up the vocation of fishing. In his younger days he went to La Havre and Prince Edward Island in large vessels, looking for mackerel. In the main it was a prosaic life, with lots of hard work and lots of risk, but the only time when he did not expect to see land again was when the schooner Leaping Water became dismasted in a hurricane and was helplessly adrift until succor came three days later. This was off Cape Canso, in the seventies. The shipwrecked crew was taken into Gloucester. The schooner was commanded by Capt. Edward Hopkins of Vinalhaven and carried a crew of 12. Mr. Young was married in Rockland to Mary Wentworth, who died 21 years ago, and from the time of his marriage until his retirement from the sea 20 years ago he was in small boats netting and trawling, principally in Penobscot Bay. A net income of \$500 from a season's fishing was considered a good return in those days.

Since retirement from the sea Mr. Young has been engaged in small farming and after a winter's visit with his son at Owl's Head is going back to his home near Brown's Head Light, and show envious neighbors what a nice garden he can cultivate at the age of 82.

Mr. Young is a lifelong Democrat but has not voted in recent years because it has meant a nine-mile trip to the polls. He believes that

prohibition with all its faults is better than the old way. "I have seen enough of rum," said he.

Aside from a touch of rheumatic fever he has had little physical ailment, and is scarcely acquainted with the village doctor. He is a member of the Baptist Church at North Haven, and recalls having led a meeting in the First Baptist Church, Rockland, some 30 years ago.

"But I guess I'm a free thinker," he told a Courier-Gazette reporter the other day. "I believe in prayer; that we are created to help one another; that love is the main point—because God is love; God is all there is."

Mr. Young believes in a hereafter; that a soul cannot die; that it will live again in some other form. He was prominent in Good Templars when that order was active in Knox County, and was raised a Mason 60 years ago, March 7. He is a member of Moses Webster Lodge, F.A.M., and Atlantic Chapter, R.A.M., of Vinalhaven.

To Mr. and Mrs. Young were born seven children five of whom survive—Grover C. Young of Owl's Head, Mrs. Mabel Studley of Glencove, Mrs. Theresa Whitmore of Rockport and Mrs. Caroline Bray of Owl's Head.

The members of the five-generation group show in the accompanying picture and in the order mentioned are:

Thomas J. Young, of Vinalhaven, Mrs. Mina York of West Penobscot, Mrs. Hazel Stover of Orland, Mrs. Mabel Stover of Orland and Gene Allen Stover of Orland.

Should there be a reunion of this family it would be necessary to lay 52 plates. Mr. Young has seen all of the members but one.

Courier-Gazette April 7, 1931



Owls Head - Young Family

Submitted by his 2nd Great grandson

Ian K. Furstrand of British Columbia who is a descendant of Nathaniel Bray of Deer Isle, and the late James and Carolyn Bray and Harold and Irene Bray of Owl's Head, son of Celia Bray

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Owls Head Cemetery Committee

Evergreen Cemetery

Evergreen Cemetery measures just under one acre. There are currently 305 known burials although 28 gravesites have no headstones or markers. 43 veterans rest here, as well as 2 keepers of Owls Head Light.

Evergreen Cemetery was established on land behind Chandler and Ann E. Farr's home in Owls Head Village circa 1897. Henry Speed seems to have purchased the first lot in 1897. Plans for the cemetery were submitted in 1906 which list Chandler as the owner. There were 4 central sections at that time, each with 19 lots for a total of 76. Unlike all other Owls Head cemeteries, lots here were uniform, all measuring 15' x 15'.

It is interesting to note that Eunice Farr, Chandler's mother died in 1853 and was apparently buried in Rockland at that time. Nearly a century later however, in 1941, her remains were removed from Rockland and re-interred in the Farr lot here.

Chandler died in 1917 leaving all his worldly goods to his wife Ann. She continued selling lots until 1923. She passed away in 1926. Both Chandler and Ann are buried at the far end of the cemetery.

In 1923 Edith R. Young purchased the unsold lots (33) from Ann Farr. Edith sold lots until 1942 when she sold the remaining open lots (20) to Carolyn Bray. In 1961 plans were submitted to the town adding 2 more side sections, each with 19 lots. The total number of lots were then 114. Carolyn Bray sold cemetery lots until 1976. She died in 1981 and is buried with her husband at Evergreen.

It is assumed that the Bray family gave the cemetery to the town in the 1980's but no record of that transaction has been found yet. **The Owls Head Cemetery Committee (OHCC) is eager to hear from anyone with pertinent information.**

Lastly, the OHCC is happy to announce that we will be holding our annual conserving project in this cemetery September 7th through the 10th. This will likely be a multi-year effort.

For more information about the folks buried at Evergreen, including photos of headstones and many obituaries, you can visit: <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2329562/evergreen-cemetery>
Please let the OHCC know of any errors or omissions: cemeterycommittee@owlshead.maine.gov



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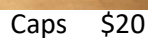
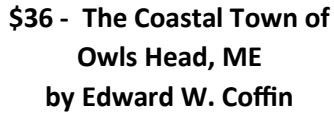


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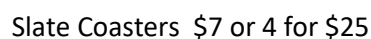
\$49- 1873 of Owls Head canvas



Home Movies by J. Rodney Weeks

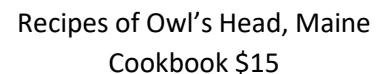
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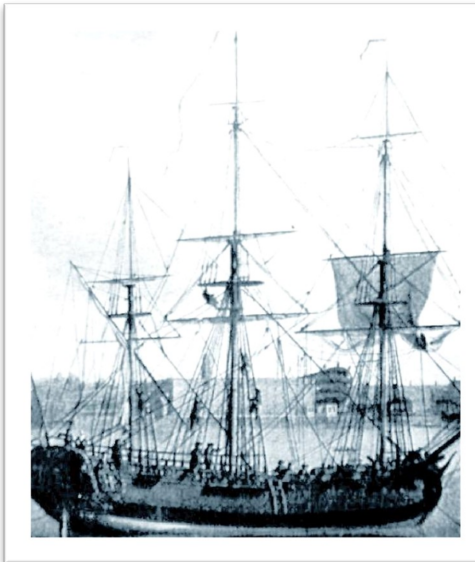


A photograph of a gravestone for Mellie C. Davis. The stone is light-colored, possibly marble or granite, and has a rounded, arched top. At the top center of the arch is a carved floral design featuring a central flower surrounded by leaves and smaller blossoms. Below the carving, the name "MELLIE C." is inscribed in large, bold, capital letters. Underneath the name, in smaller capital letters, is "WOMAN". The inscription continues with "BORN FEB. 21, 1847" and "DIED FEB. 16, 1877". At the bottom of the inscription is "AGED 30 YRS. 10 M. 15 D.". The gravestone is set on a simple rectangular base. In the background, there are dark, leafless trees and a small, white, upright gravestone. The ground is covered with dry leaves and grass.

**\$25 - Cemeteries of
Owls Head** *by Lea Carver*



Francis Haskell and the H.M.S. Albany Rescue



H.M.S. Albany

“Francis Haskell, born 23 February 1752, apparently soon after the death of their first son. Known as “Junior,” in 1770 he moved with his father to Deer Isle and was one of the earliest settlers. Shortly afterwards he moved to nearby South Thomaston and established a salt works at Ash Point near the home of his brother-in-law. He was also a farmer and master-mariner, probably going to sea as a child on one of his grandfather’s ships.

In 1780 he was a master of a vessel chartered at Ash Point. In 1780 he also distinguished himself by rescuing the crew of the H.M.S. Albany, which had run ashore in a blinding, winter snow storm on a ledge called the Triangles, lying between Muscle Ridges and Green Island. The vessel went to pieces not long after, and her cannon smashed through the broken hull onto the rocks below where they remain to this day. He conveyed the stranded crew to Majabigwa-duce, ME, and one must speculate what level-headed decisions this 28-year-old young man made as he conducted so daring an operation.

Thomaston in 1817 and owned also by Snow, Crockett, and Dean. It cannot be ruled out that his thirty-three-year-old son of the same name and also captain was here intended, however.

Francis is shown in the 1790 census, the first census to be taken in the United States. He was one of the 801 inhabitants of Thomaston and headed a household which reported having two free white males under sixteen years of age and four over the age. He married twice, first to Lydia Crockett of Fox Island on June 7, 1775, with David Fales, Justice of the Peace, presiding (Vital Records, Lincoln County, Wiscasset, MA), and then to Jane Stinson. Francis died 14 July 1842 at the age of ninety three years. His first marriage saw the birth of three children, and his second brought ten more.”

From the book:

In Search of Ancestors - More Haskell Chronicles
by Winthrop A. Haskell and Gertrude O. Haskell



**Grave of Francis Haskell at the
Ash Point Cemetery**

Additional Notes:

From the book **Descendants of William Heard and Abigail Crockett of Ash Point, Maine 1746-1987** by Charles S. Candage

“William and Abigail Heard lived near Trails End, where the salt kilns were. Francis married into the Heard /Crockett family. Salt works here ended here by 1808, when wood was becoming scarce.”



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Garden Snippets Wild Bee Conservation

Bees are the most important group of pollinators. With the exception of a few species of wasps, only bees deliberately gather pollen to bring back to their nests for their offspring. Bees also exhibit a behavior called flower constancy, meaning that they repeatedly visit one particular plant species on any given foraging trip.

On a single foraging trip, a female bee may visit hundreds of flowers, transferring pollen the entire way. In contrast, butterflies, moths, flies, wasps, and beetles visit flowers to feed on nectar (or on the flower itself, in the case of some beetles) and not to collect pollen. Thus, they come in contact less frequently with the flower's anthers than bees do.

Bees are immensely diverse insects that form an important group within the Hymenoptera, an insect order that also includes ants, wasps, and sawflies. Worldwide, there are an estimated 20,000 species of bees, with approximately 3,600 species native to North America north of Mexico. North American species range in length from about 1/12 inch to more than 1 inch (2–25 mm). They vary in color from dark brown or black to red or metallic green and blue; some have stripes of white, orange, yellow, or black; and some even have opalescent bands.

Solitary Bee Lifecycle

Of the roughly 3,600 species of bees in North America, more than 90 percent lead solitary rather than social lives, each female constructing and provisioning her own nest without any help from other members of her species. Solitary bees usually live for about a year, although humans only see the active adult stage, which lasts about three to six weeks. These insects spend the other months hidden in a nest, growing through the egg, larval, and pupal stages.

Female solitary bees have amazing engineering skills, going to extraordinary lengths to construct a secure nest. About 30 percent of solitary bee species use abandoned beetle burrows or other tunnels in snags (dead or dying standing trees). Alternatively, they may chew out a nest within the soft central pith of stems and twigs. The other roughly 70 percent nest in the ground, digging tunnels in bare or sparsely vegetated, well-drained soil. A few species nest in eclectic places such as empty snail shells and potlike cells that they construct on twigs from pebbles and tree resin.

We are always delightfully surprised at how far-flung support for our efforts to preserve the history and culture of the Mussel Ridge area is! If you are one of our "remote" supporters, please consider sharing your story with us.

You may be featured in a future edition of this newsletter, when we publish your story of why you love Owls Head and its surrounding environs and how you are connected to midcoast Maine.

Write to: history@musselridge.org to connect with one of our historians!

Each bee nest usually has several separate brood cells in which the female lays her eggs, one egg per cell. The number of cells varies by species. While some nests may have only a single cell, most have five or even many more. Female woodnesting bees make cells in a single line that fills the tunnel. Females of ground-nesting species may dig complex, branching tunnels. To protect the developing bee and its food supply (from drying out, excess moisture, fungi, and disease) the cell may be lined with waxy or cellophane-like glandular secretions, pieces of leaf or petal, mud, or chewed-up wood.

Article complements of XERCES SOCIETY



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_____ I Would Like TO HELP Preserve the History of Owl's Head in the Following Ways

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There is More to Genealogy than Meets the Eye!

By Carolyn Meserve Philbrook

“Genealogy is fun because it functions as a thrilling, real-life detective game that solves mysteries, uncovers scandalous family secrets, and reveals surprising connections to history, royalty, or famous figures. It satisfies deep human curiosity, offers the satisfaction of piecing together puzzles, and fosters a profound sense of identity, belonging, and personal legacy.”

So says AI!

I think AI nailed it. I’m not sure how many people reading this have worked on their family trees, but what you discover is quite amazing. If you are considering taking the plunge, you won’t regret it. There are plenty of websites and software applications to choose from—to name a few, Ancestry.com, RootsMagic, Family Tree Maker, Legacy Family Tree, MacFamily Tree, Family Search, and Gramps—and they are much easier to use than trying to draw a family tree with paper and pencil. The services available connect you to a variety of sources. My favorite source is findagrave.com. There are so many places to find information: military records; U.S. Census records; digital newspapers; other folks’ trees; immigration records; birth, marriage and death certificates. Thanks to our Owls Head Cemetery Committee, we also now have a book that lists all the burial sites in town.

I think the best advice I can share is to start with what you know about your most recent relatives and work backward. If you’re lucky, a relative has already done some of the research. My family had, so I had a good start. You must be careful with information and links to your tree, as some folks do not check for accuracy, and digging deeper into the past can easily lead you down the wrong path.

I have traced my family tree back to when they came over from England. My father Howard Meserve’s roots trace back to the Isle of Jersey. I found he descended from Luke Heard, whose son William was one the first settlers in Owls Head. He never knew about this connection, and he would have been surprised to discover that he was buying into family-owned property when he purchased Moses Heard’s homestead. I had a cousin who did extensive research on the Meserve family. She discovered that a relative was the only female counterfeiter from New Hampshire. Another distant relative was murdered in St. George in 1880. Thus, AI’s prediction that you may discover scandalous tidbits and surprising connections when you conduct research proves true!

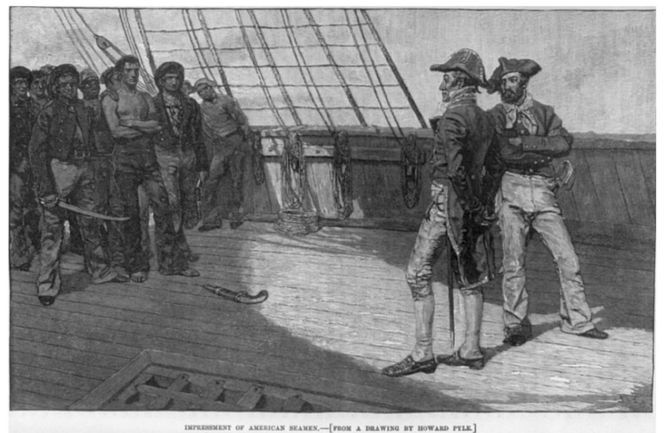
From the Gamage line—My maternal grandmother was a Gamage—I also traced back to their emigration from England. I was surprised to discover that Nicholas Wyeth (1600-1680), a mason whose granddaughter married into the Gamage family, is buried in the Gamage family tomb located in the Old Burying Ground at Harvard Square in Cambridge, MA. I also discovered a relationship to Myles Standish through investigating my maternal lineage.

Curtis is also a family name from my maternal line. My mother was Norma Curtis Meserve, and her great-grandfather, Blynn Curtis, served as a deckhand on the slave ship *Creole*. In 1841, Madison Washington led a successful slave revolt aboard the *Creole*. The enslaved people on board rose up and commandeered the vessel, sailing it to the British Bahamas. There, British authorities, who had abolished slavery throughout most of their empire with the Slavery Abolition Act 1833, which came into force on August 1, 1834, freed 128 of the 135 enslaved passengers, making it the most successful slave revolt in U.S. history. Thankfully Blynn Curtis made it out alive!

I have only touched the tip of the iceberg, and I’m looking forward to discovering more family stories. I’m sharing my family history with you today because the Mussel Ridge Historical Society would like to collect as many family trees as possible. We aspire to facilitate research in our museum as yet another resource in the fascinating realm of genealogy.



Moses Heard Grave at the Ash Point Cemetery. He was a veteran of the War of 1812.



**Slave Ship Creole Courtesy of World History Encyclopedia
Drawing by Howard Pyle**