

Mussel Ridge News

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More About Francis Haskell (1752-1842) of South Thomaston, ME

By Christina D Linscott

The Haskell family arrived here from England during The Great Migration around 1637. They settled in Salem, MA, near Beverly, then considered part of Cape Ann. The original settler that Francis was a descendant of was (Capt) William, who was a mariner and fisherman. He later moved to Gloucester, MA and is mentioned numerous times in documents. The family stayed in Gloucester for another 3 generations until Mark Haskell (1695-1775). He moved to Attleboro, MA first and then around 1768 he and his family moved to Deer Isle, ME near the Northeast Harbor part of the island. (Of course this was still Massachusetts until 1820.) Many families who settled around the Boston, Salem, Beverly area first, migrated to the Cape Ann section around Gloucester or Essex. And then later they migrated again further up the coast to current day Maine. Conjecture is that Mark went back to either Attleboro or Gloucester for a visit and died there in 1775. Mark married Jemina Tilton, from Ipswich, MA. Mark and Jemina's oldest son was (Deacon) Francis, was born in Gloucester, MA in 1722. He followed his father to Deer Isle around 1770. The land he owned was near his father's property. When the church formed in that area of the island, Francis was chosen as a deacon and was referred to as Deacon Francis after that.

Now we arrive at Francis Haskell (b.1752) mentioned in the earlier newsletter, who was a son of Deacon Francis. As many of you are knowledgeable about Ash Point history you are aware of Angus Staples, who lived in the house on the south west side of Crocketts Beach Road and Ash Point Drive in the early 1900s This land is part of the original plot that was sold from Henry and Lucy Knox to Francis Haskell. Angus is a relative of Francis. (Side note-there were many males named Francis in the Haskell family.) This Francis, whom I refer to as 1752 Francis, was named after his older brother, Francis (b. 1747) who had recently passed away.

Francis Haskell was born in 1752 in Gloucester, MA and died 14 JUL 1842 in South Thomaston, ME. He moved to Deer Isle first and then to Ash Point. More details about 1752 Francis in a later article.

One of Francis' brothers was Tristram, who was born 27 DEC 1767 in Newburyport, MA and died 29 MAR 1854 in Deer Isle, ME. Tristram had numerous children, one of them being (Capt) Francis Haskell, born 25 Sep 1792 in Deer Isle, ME and died 11 MAR 1839 in Boston, MA. One of his children was Phebe Haskell, who married Ephraim C. Staples. They were Angus Staples' parents. Phebe Haskell Staples was one of my 3x great grandmothers through my maternal grandmother Evelyn L. Ross. Evelyn's mother, Annie Staples Leaned, was a daughter of Angus Staples and Margaret Marks Staples.

Information about land transactions dealing with Francis Haskell's property at Ash Point are located at the Lincoln County (ME) Registry of Deeds until 1860, when Knox County was incorporated, so after 1860 any related deeds are at the Knox County registry. Henry and Lucy Knox sold the land to Francis in 1800. Francis' daughter Jane Haskell Kalloch and her husband, Ambrose Kalloch sold the land to their son Charles Kalloch in 1882 and then Charles sold it to Angus in 1887.

Sourced information from WikiTree, but available in many other publications.

Description of Francis Haskell in "Eaton's History" Vol II, page 256 is available online. (DOB is incorrect, it is not 1749.) Thank you Leah Carver for uploading this.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/31454366/francis-b-haskell#view-photo=266659327>



Angus Staples Ash Point Maine

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1921



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Owls Head Cemetery Committee

Ash Point Cemetery

The Ash Point Cemetery was established in 1820. It was expanded in 1939 and again in 1996. The Ash Point Cemetery Association independently managed the cemetery until December of 2017 when the APCA dissolved. Six more lots were added in December 2017.

Ash Point is Owls Head's largest cemetery in town with at least 683 folks interred there. Seventy six of those unfortunately have no headstones, but cemetery and funeral home records clearly indicate they are indeed buried here. Ironically, several members of the Odiorne family, associated with granite quarrying on nearby Dix Island during its heyday in the late 1800's, are buried here without headstones.

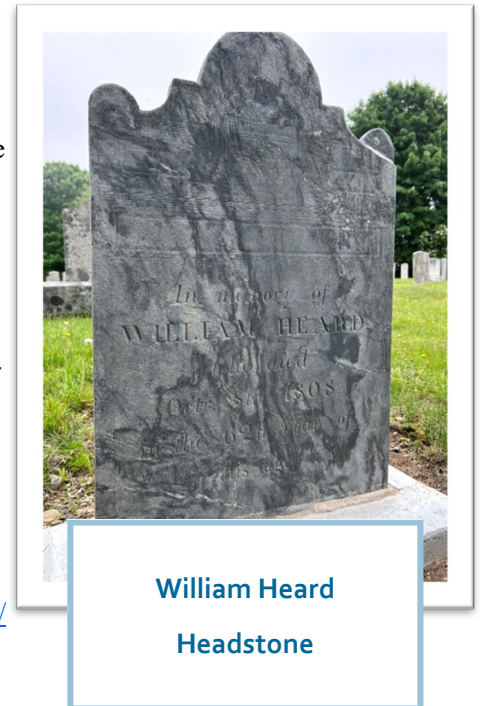
The oldest burial is likely William Heard who is believed to have originally been buried on his property near Trails End in 1808, and relocated to the cemetery years later. In June of 2025 the Owls Head Cemetery Committee was able to conserve his locally quarried Thomaston black marble headstone and put it back upright after lying broken on the ground for decades. His wife Abigail (Crockett) and 27 Heard descendants are also buried there. In addition there are also 16 Hurd family members and 38 Crocketts.

The cemetery is the final resting place for 67 known veterans who served in conflicts from the War of 1812 through Vietnam. The Cemetery Committee believes there is a veteran buried in the Lindsey lot (near the right/north fence, half the way up the main roadway) but there is no headstone, just an illegible old funeral home marker and American Legion medallion. **Kindly let us know if you have any information about this mystery.**

Another notable burial is that of Archford Haskins, the last civilian keeper of the Owls Head Light, who is here with family members.

The Cemetery Committee has added obituaries to many of the memorials for folks buried in this cemetery (and others in town) on Find A Grave (<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery>). If you have one that has not been added, please contact us!

On a related note, did you know that the *Courier Gazette* has been digitized from 1882 through 1970 (the older Rockland Gazette and Limerock Gazette have also been digitized)? It is fascinating to read these old newspapers which can be accessed for free thanks to the Rockland Historical Society: https://digitalmaine.com/courier_gazette/



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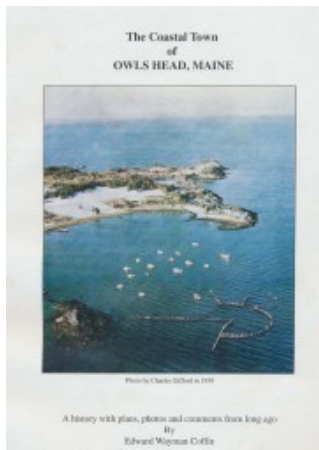
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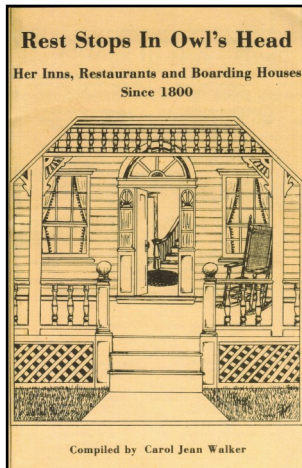




\$36 - The Coastal Town of Owls Head, ME by Edward W. Coffin



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\$49- 1873 of Owls Head canvas

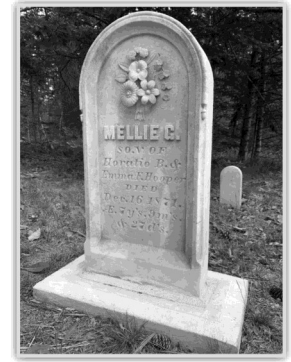


Ash Point, ME Home Movies by J. Rodney Weeks DVD \$15 Flash Drive—\$15



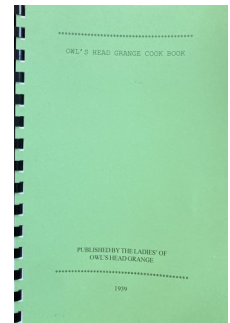
Slate Coasters \$7 or 4 for \$25

Cemeteries of Owls Head, Maine with genealogical notes 1791–2023

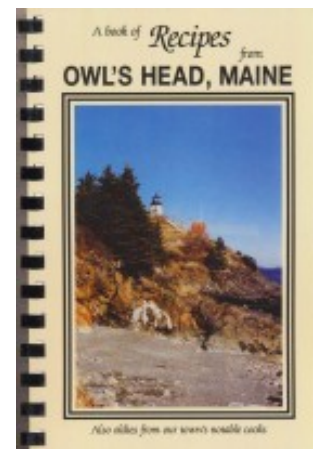


Compiled by Lea Carver
 Edited by Heather Almquist
 Owls Head Cemetery Committee, August 2023

\$25 - Cemeteries of Owls Head by Lea Carver



Owls Head Grange Cookbook \$10



Recipes of Owl's Head, Maine Cookbook \$15

Who was Merle B. Foster?

1892 – 1936

By: Rodney B. Weeks

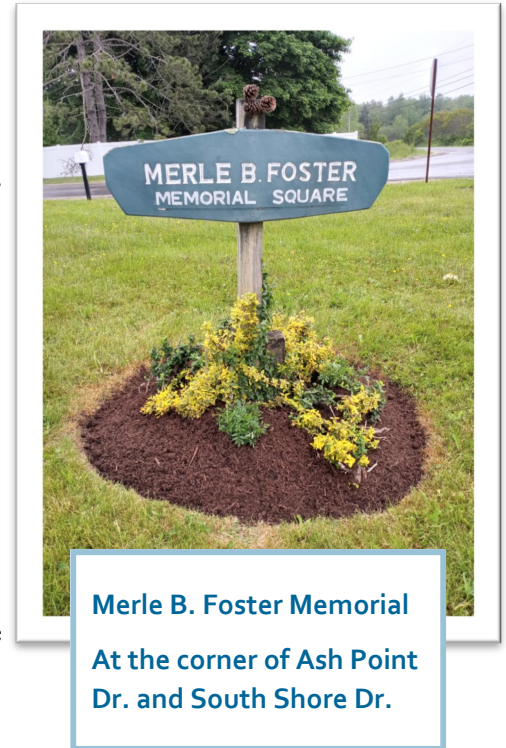
Research By: Lea Carver

At the corner of South Shore Drive and Ash Point Road is a small triangle of grass with a sign on it which reads “Merle B. Foster – Memorial Square”.

For the last 76 years I have driven by or been driven by that small patch of lawn - dutifully stopping by the stop sign (most times) and wondering - who was Merle B. Foster and why does he rate a memorial square?


It turns out that Mr. Foster, at the age of 18, was a boarder in the Ash Point home of Mr. John Snowman. He stayed there for the next 7 years until September 1917, when he enlisted in the US Army at the age of 25 to fight in WWI. He was shipped overseas to France and was assigned to Battery A of the 303rd Field Artillery as a Wagoner driving teams of horses or mules hauling field artillery pieces to the front. When the war ended he was honorably discharged and returned home in May of 1919 where he took up residence once again in the home of Mr. Snowman. Mr. Foster died at 2:30 am on the morning of December 3, 1936 when Mr. Snowman’s home accidentally caught fire and burned to the ground.

Five years later, in May of 1941, the Merle B. Foster Memorial Square was dedicated by the Winslow-Holbrook Post of the American Legion in a ceremony attended by Mr. Foster’s four brothers, Courtney, Oscar, Melvin & Clarence Foster and two sisters, Mrs. John Whalen and Mrs. Stephen Willis.



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SPINNING WHEEL

By Gail Ladd

We have the wheel part of a lovely old spinning wheel on display at the Old Homestead, but we have very little information on it. Knowing next to nothing about spinning wheels, I decided to investigate.

Spinning wheels, replacing hand held drop spindles, were first in use between 500-1000 A.D. in Asia. They were used in Europe for textile production by the 13th century. Two technological improvements increased the efficiency of the wheels. The invention of the flyer in the 16th century meant that women could spin & wind at the same time. In the 1700's, treadle wheels freed both hands of the operator to work the machine.

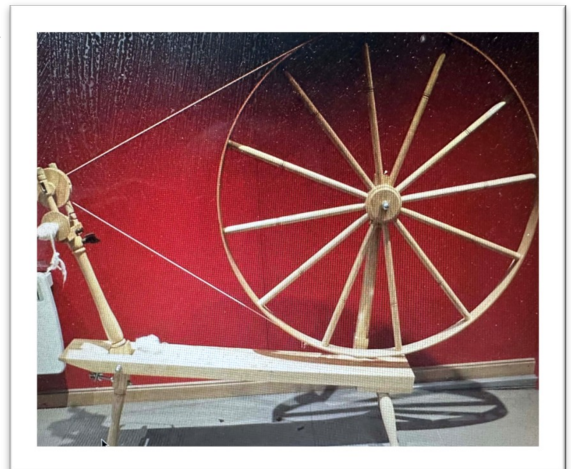
In Colonial times, many New England families owned & operated spinning wheels, as well as looms to weave thread into fabric. Before the Revolution, Britain had imposed the Wool Act, selling its textiles in the colonies at very high prices. In defiance of the Wool Act & these high costs, the colonists made their own cloth & yarn at home, thus boycotting the British textiles. It became a patriotic resistance that quickly gained momentum. The Daughters of Liberty held competitive spinning bees, & during the Revolutionary War, they sewed uniforms for the Continental Army. When the war ended, families continued into the late 19th century to use homemade textiles for work clothes, linens, and children's outfits. With the rise of industrialization, people began to prefer manufactured material, and spinning wheels became popular as antiques, symbols of our colonial history.



Two types of spinning wheels were used by colonial families. Great, or walking wheels, for spinning wool, required the operator to stand & walk back & forth.

Flax, or treadle wheels, were smaller, with foot pedals. They were used to spin flax into linen.

New England spinning wheels were frequently made from local hardwoods, with the initials of the maker etched into the wood. Wheels with decorative designs made by woodworkers at Shaker communities were common by the early 1800's. The spinning wheel be-



queathed to MRHS is an example of a great, or walking wheel. I would love to know who used it, and to see what was created on it. Perhaps a uniform for a soldier in the Continental Army was made from wool spun on our wheel!

References

www.chesterfieldhistoricalsociety-nh.org

www.paulwentworthhouse.org/wheels-of-industry-new-england-spinning-wheels/

<https://wams.nyhistory.org/primary-source/spinning-wheels-spinning-bees>

<https://wdmuseum.org> from the collection - spinning



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____ Develop programs ____ Help with fundraising ____ Help at the new Museum

____ Bring food for events or sales ____ Help with events

____ Staff the Homestead ____ I have pictures that could be scanned

____ Research. I am particularly interested in the following areas _____

Have talent/service I could donate _____

____ I would like to help in another way. (Please tell us how) _____

____ I have historical items I might like to donate or loan

____ I am joining the MRHS at the Following Level & My Check is Attached

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____ 1 Year Business Sustainer (\$250) ____ 1 Year Business Benefactor (\$750)

____ I am making a Tax Deductible Donation to the MRHS for _____ & My Check is Attached

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SUMMER FUN IN OWLS HEAD

by Michelle Miller

The summer program of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society (MRHS) launched on April 29, 2026, when the MRHS opened the new museum for a May basket party. Although the museum was hardly ready for viewing, people, young and old, gathered to create baskets containing candy, seed packets, flowers, and other small tokens of affection in honor of a tradition that has largely fallen out of fashion. At one table, four generations of the Crockett/Garrison family joined in the fun, making baskets and enjoying one another's company. Later that week, I watched one of our youngest participants, Amelia XXX, give her basket to Pat Dougherty, who leads exercise classes at the People's United Methodist Church. Pat was thrilled to receive a basket from Amelia and thanked her for her kindness. In 2015, the History Department of NPR described May baskets as a forgotten tradition harking back to an earlier time, perhaps a more innocent age:

The curious custom — still practiced in discrete pockets of the country — went something like this: As the month of April rolled to an end, people would begin gathering flowers and candies and other goodies to put in May baskets to hang on the doors of friends, neighbors and loved ones on May 1. In some communities, hanging a May basket on someone's door was a chance to express romantic interest. If a basket-hanger was espied by the recipient, the recipient would give chase and try to steal a kiss from the basket-hanger.¹

In preparation for the event, I visited Ocean State Job Lot to buy seed packets. My selection process intrigued a Vietnam War veteran standing near the display rack, who commented that I must be a prolific gardener. I replied that I was purchasing the seeds to include in May baskets, and he chuckled, "But that's a custom that has fallen out of practice." I responded that the MRHS was trying to revive the practice, and his skeptical chuckle transformed into a broad smile: "Oh, I hope you succeed!"

I think the participants in our afternoon of crafts would agree that we succeeded in keeping the tradition from disappearing entirely. Whether the May basket party becomes an annual occurrence will determine whether our local historical society has rekindled interest in a ritual intended to spread kindness and affection within a community.

Because we are still organizing the museum—arranging our collection, which has been stored for years in far-flung locations, and creating displays that testify to the rich culture of our area—the balance of our summer program may appear a little light. However, there's really something for everyone:

July 8 Tai chi/qi gong with Pete Schiot
July 19 Community Picnic (not exclusively our event, but we provide the venue!)
August 5 Sourdough breadmaking with Annah Danforth and Carolyn Philbrook
August 19 Creative writing in the natural world with Michelle Miller
August 26 Tai chi/qi gong with Pete Schiot
October 4 Cider press with Carolyn Philbrook and Kay Dodge



All these events take place at the Old Homestead, which will open on July 1 and be open every Wednesday thereafter until the cider press.

In the fall, the MRHS will resume its speaker series. Stay tuned for details. . . .

¹<https://www.npr.org/sections/npr-history-dept/2015/04/30/402817821/a-forgotten-tradition-may-basket-day>

Four Generations of the Crockett/Garrison Family