

# Mussel Ridge News

*A Free Publication of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society*  
Owls Head, Maine  
Summer 2023 ~ Issue 59 [www.musselridge.org](http://www.musselridge.org)



## A Win-Win!

by Michelle Miller



We've all heard of Christmas in July, but it's September, and summer—what little we had of one this year—is fast slipping into the rearview mirror. However, the recent exchange between the Mussel Ridge Historical Society (MRHS) and the Town of Owls Head represents the fulfillment of more than just delayed holiday wishes. At the Annual Town Meeting held in the gymnasium of the Ash Point Community School on August 28, the citizens of Owls Head voted to accept a \$100,000 donation from the MRHS and contribute up to \$175,000 from the Town's unassigned fund balance to finance construction of an historical Learning Center, which the MRHS has desired since its inception in November 1960. Although securing the preservation of the Old Homestead was one of the organization's first property acquisitions (The Town owns the Old Homestead and leases its care to the MRHS), the ultimate objective has

always been a central repository for the MRHS's collections, all the treasures preserved by local families and donated or loaned to the society, which are currently spread across Owls Head, many in places unsuitable for storing artifacts.

In August 2019, the Town approved fundraising on the part of the MRHS for an historical center that may also be used for meetings and classes. However, the pandemic stifled efforts to amass the money required to pay for the project. Not only were folks restricted from congregating, which eliminated virtually all fundraisers, but economic uncertainty made raising funds extra difficult. The 2019 article that the Town approved came with a deadline, and that time came and went, unfortunately without the MRHS reaching their goal and due mainly to circumstances beyond our control.

The Town's 2023 vote on Article 31 breathed new life into MRHS's aspirations, and now we are intent on planning the Learning Center, while continuing to raise funds to defray the contribution made by the Town. So much remains to be done:

- Finalizing architectural plans for the Learning Center, currently being drawn up by a local architect;
- Putting those plans out for competitive bids;
- Preparing the site for construction;
- Tying into the Community Building's sewer and electrical systems;
- Planning the building's interior design;
- Overseeing the actual construction;
- Outfitting the Learning Center with furniture and tools necessary for operation; and
- Relocating the collections and installing them in the newly constructed building.

We're back at the drawing board, working hard on the next phase of a dream coming true, all thanks to the Owls Head community's support. We could use some help with what lies ahead. If you want to be a part of this exciting development, please contact one of the members of the MRHS Board: Marty Shaw (President), Carolyn Philbrook (VP and Historian), Rod Weeks (Secretary), Dave Matthews (Treasurer), Kay Dodge (Director and Historian), Ann Rafferty (Director), Michelle Miller (Director), Susan Thomas (Alternate Director), or Gail Ladd (Alternate Director). We can be reached at [history@musselridge.org](mailto:history@musselridge.org).

## A Bit of History



*MRHS Board in 1964 "L to R": Evelyn Ross, Beryl Borgerson, Elisabeth Walker, David Knowlton, & Clemice Pease*

We would be remiss if we did not recognize the first officers and members of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society. Their foresight and vision are finally being realized with the dream of having a location to store and preserve our town's history. All through the years, folks have worked by documenting and saving memorabilia, photos, documents, and artifacts. A long-lost "art," due to the "digital" age has been collecting scrapbooks, which hold a vast amount of history.

At their 3rd meeting held at the Owls Head Central School, officers elected were: President: David Knowlton, VP: Helen Ciarivino, recording secretary: Elisabeth Walker, corresponding secretary: Miriam Tourney, treasurer: Evelyn Ross, historian: Clemice Pease, curator: Elizabeth Seavey, directors: Grace Faunce, Grace Casanova, all of Owls Head and Jerome Burrows of Rockland.

An article in the Courier at this time told of the "long felt need to preserve the history of the past of this well known coastal region. It is hoped that everyone who has had any connection both past or present will be interested in helping this society by always contacting one of the members before destroying any deeds, letters or newspapers pertaining to any of its past history. Any memoirs will be gratefully acknowledged and filed for future historical reference."

The present MRHS board and members are presently continuing this never-ending task. Any help from those who have a desire to preserve history are welcome to assist us. Just call 207-593-2667 or email [history@musselridge.org](mailto:history@musselridge.org).



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## October 24th Fall Speaker Swamp or Ledge? Geology of Owls Head in Maps and Photos.”



We will use publicly available maps from 1908, 1974, 1985, 2002, and 2023, to discuss the Surficial and Bedrock Geology of Owls Head.

We will also share geographic information systems maps under development to study the water in our town.

### *About our speaker:*

Russ Krauss of Owls Head consults to investors in the environmental sector. He holds a BA, Geology from Boston University, where he studied the geology of Maine. He also earned an MBA from the University of Houston. Russ began his career as a computer geologist with Marathon Oil Company, then spent 25 years supplying technology to the global energy industry. Russ later joined Resource Environmental Solutions (RES) and spent 12 years building a small wetland mitigation banking firm into the nation’s leading ecological restoration solutions company. Russ also now serves as a Certified SCORE Mentor for small businesses across Midcoastal and Northern Maine.

**October 24th at 6 pm, Owls Head Community Building**



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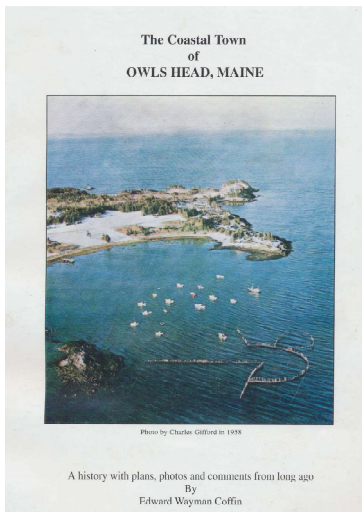
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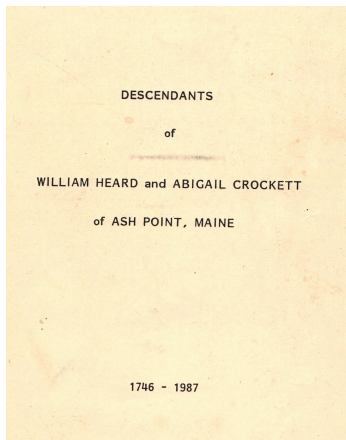
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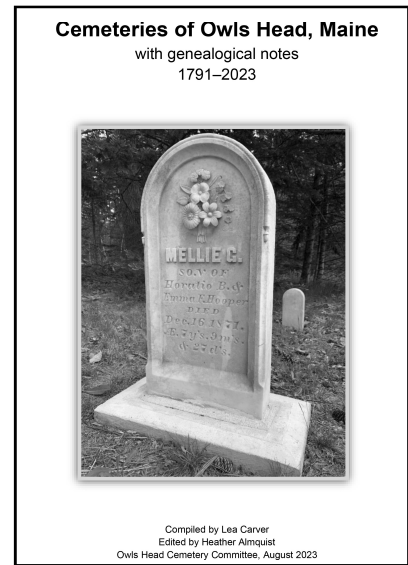


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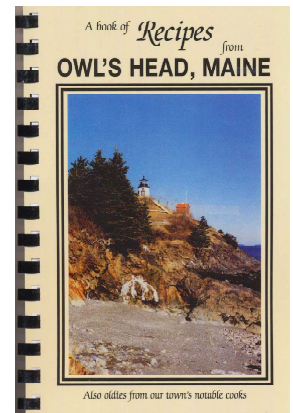
**New Item!!!  
\$25 - Cemeteries  
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by Lea Carver**



**\$49- 1873 of Owls Head canvas chart 16" x 20"**



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**\$15 - Recipes  
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# Owls Head Cemetery Committee News!

## The Merriman (aka Lighthouse) Cemetery



This small cemetery is named for the Nathaniel Merriman family who settled in the area near what is now Owls Head Light. Nathaniel Merriman was born in 1776 in Harpswell, Maine. According to deeds, in May 1807 he bought 80 acres in Owls Head. Nathaniel was a sea captain, a farmer, and a veteran of the War of 1812. He and his wife Mary had 9 children, five of whom are buried in this cemetery. It is likely that several others are buried there as well, in unmarked graves.

Of the 17 burials with headstones nearly all were relatives or neighbors of Nathaniel Merriman. One exception though is Captain Llewellyn S. Norwood who was a keeper at Owls Head Light for 16 years. According to a Courier article, he died while on duty in April of 1911 when roads were impassible so he was

temporarily buried in the Merriman Cemetery (no record can be found that he was ever removed to Trenton, Maine where his wife and relatives are buried). In 1962 Captain Norwood had a bronze marker placed on his grave by the MRHS but unfortunately it has been missing for years. Thanks to Burpee Funeral Home (now Burpee, Carpenter & Hutchins) records we now know where he was buried and Captain Norwood has a new metal marker too!

Nathaniel Merriman died in 1821. In 1824 his heirs sold 17.25 acres of the family's land to the US Government for the purpose of a lighthouse. Owls Head Light would be established in 1825 on former Merriman property. During genealogical research of this family in 2022 it was discovered that the deed for the 1824 land sale did not include the small area set aside as a burying ground. The OHCC moved forward with the abandoned cemetery procedure and at the 2023 annual town meeting voters approved accepting this cemetery as a town cemetery. The OHCC hopes to do an extensive conservation project at the Merriman Cemetery to reset and repair the headstones in 2024-2025.

*Submitted by Lea Carver  
Owls Head Cemetery Committee*

### **Owls Head Cemetery Directory \$25** Over 127 pages

Information about all 16 cemeteries in OH (Adas Yoshuron too) • Transcriptions from every headstone to date and new information about 80+ unmarked burials • Genealogical information has been included for a number of cemeteries such as the Cooper, Rose Hill, Sleeper, Merriman, and Philbrook cemeteries • A comprehensive list of all known veterans buried in town and their service information • An "every name" index including maiden names • THE most accurate/comprehensive list of Owls Head light keepers is also included (6 keepers are buried in Owls Head)



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## Mussel Ridge Historical Society Volunteer – Membership - Donation Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Our newsletter is sent to everyone on our email list and we don't share addresses with anyone.

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

\_\_\_\_ Develop programs \_\_\_\_ Help with fundraising \_\_\_\_ Help on restoring the Homestead

\_\_\_\_ 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

\_\_ 1 Year Regular (\$10) \_\_ One Year Family (\$30) \_\_\_\_ 1 Year Sustainer(\$100) \_\_ 1 Year Benefactor (\$500)

\_\_ 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

I Would Like the Funds to go to the Following Area

\_\_\_\_ General Operations \_\_\_\_ Mussel Ridge Learning Center

\_\_\_\_ Old Homestead \_\_\_\_ As the MRHS thinks is best

Signature of Person Accepting the Form \_\_\_\_\_

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## Early Settlers – Clemice Pease, Part 1 Courier Gazette 5/18/61

Here are some excerpts from Clemice Pease's article on earliest settlers of Owls Head.

"I have selected the Owls Head Lighthouse Point as a starting point as I believe many people are familiar with this historic spot. And I do not say historic lightly for Owls Head shared in many of the struggles during the Revolution and the War of 1812, although at the time it was part of Thomaston.

The humble log houses of the early settlers had been re-built again and again by succeeding generations as they in turn had been forced to leave during the six Indian Wars that had lasted over 100 years. So by the late 1750s the people gradually returned to settle with some permanency and the first real tax assessed in this section was of Lincoln County in 1760. The first mention of Owls Head itself is by Capt. Benjamin Church who ranged over this territory during the Indian Wars with his trained band in the 1690s. His journal called it Owls Head in 1696, although it was spelled differently.

The first mention in a published history tells that the sailors on the Province sloop "King George" with Governor Thomas Pownall and Brigadier Samuel Waldo aboard, thought it resembled an owl's head as they sailed by followed by transports carrying 395 men on their way up the Penobscot in 1759 to build Fort Pownall.

Eventually the land was known as the "middle neck" which comprised the land in Owls Head, Shore Village, South Thomaston, and partly St. George. Henry Knox married Lucy Fluker and her inheritance of a portion of the Waldo Patent.

Stephen Peabody seems to have been the first settler of any permanency on Owls Head. He came to Owls Head at the same time Elisha Snow came to Wessaweskeag in 1767. John Crockett, the father of Jonathan and Nathaniel in 1770 "conveys to Stephan Peabody of Owls Head Harbor for 30 pounds a certain farm of land known by the name of Crockett Farm on Ash Point, with all improvements and appurtenances belonging to said farm which lies 400 acres to be the same more or less. This was dated August 10, 1770 and witnessed by Jonathan Carlton and Hugh Killa. As time went on Stephan Peabody spent most of his life involved in lawsuits about land. He was the first blacksmith around here.

In 1789 Peabody sold his property to James and Thomas Rendell. Land from the northwesterly side of the harbor thence running easterly by the shore and Round the Head, so-called. Containing 200 acres more or less. The Rendell brothers bought more land and controlled about 600 acres. In 1803 he sold the Mussel Ridge Island known as Long Island for \$300."

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## Old Time Crafts at the Homestead - Summer 2023



We had a great time presenting and learning about some long forgotten crafts this summer. Everything from hand cranked ice cream, cornhusk dolls, live music, cider pressing, creative writing, yarn spinning, sauerkraut making, and chair caning were presented. A BIG thank you for all the folks who shared their talents with us. We plan to continue this series next with a few changes, stay tuned in the spring!

**What would you like to see for demonstrations next summer????**





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