

Mussel Ridge News

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Owls Head, Maine*

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“The Gillette Connection”

by Carolyn Meserve Philbrook

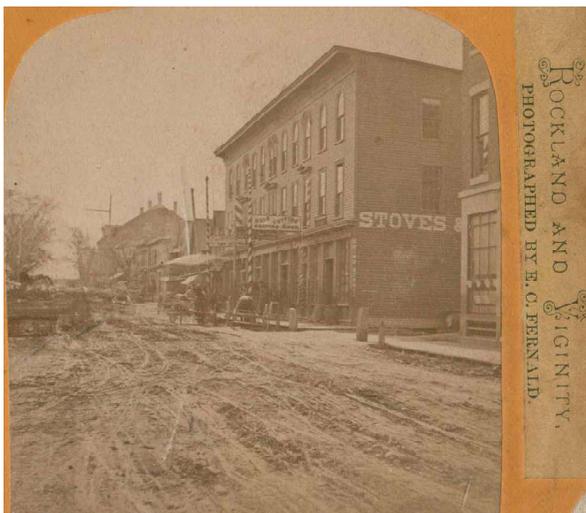
In the near future the MRHS will have a new website, and one feature will be a display of its photo collections. Some of the photos are from Miss Julia Mildred Gillette and her family who have a rich and long history in Rockland and Owls Head.

Julia Mildred Gillette (1887-1982) was a resident of Owls Head for many years and in many houses. I knew her as “Miss Gillette”, my parents called her “Mildred”. She is probably the oldest person I ever knew too, born in the 1800s! Like many of us now I regret not asking these elders more questions about what life was like in the “olden days”. I first knew her as she lived across the road from me in Ash Point on the “Old Crockett Farm” back in the early 1950s. They sold it and a few years later bought it again. Then she lived in Rockland and moved to Woods Rd in the early 1970s. By this time she was alone, her sister had passed away and she became like family to us. My Mom, Norma Curtis Meserve, cleaned for her and took care of her till she passed.

She was born in Massachusetts, but her maternal grandparents lived on the corner of High and Masonic St in Rockland. A note was found where she stated that her grandparents (Mr. & Mrs. Wood) had a home like the Farnsworth’s, whom they were friends with. Her grandfather Walter Wood had a hardware store on Main St in Rockland (see photo). Her mother M Luella Wood had a schooner named after her in Rockland that was launched in 1882 (The Main Beam by Bertram Snow). So Maine was always close to her heart even when she lived in MA. I think by conversations with her she lived for a time in the Beacon Hill area of Boston. She did tell me how the children on a Sunday afternoon in Boston, would wait patiently for an “automobile” to drive by them, that was their entertainment! In the 1930s while still living in MA she and her sister, Vira Gillette Wheaton had what they called a “tea room” called “Madame V’s Vanities”. It was located in Hyannis on the Cape. I do have a couple tables and chairs from the shop still. She told of how Rose Kennedy would stop by with Teddy and she would run up quite a tab!



Julia M. Gillette about 1905



Her Owls Head connection was first at the Crescent Beach Inn. Her father, like many in those days would send his family to the cool coast of Maine for the summer. He would come up weekends by steamer. She also said, (not sure of year) she remembered taking a ferry before the Bath Bridge was built. She told us of playing with the Smith girls (daughters of Fred Smith); they were called the first

*Walter Wood Hardware Store on Main St in Rockland -
now I believe the location of the lobster takeout on
corner of Elm/Main St*

girls of Crescent Beach. What wonderland it must have been to play on the beaches and have picnics those hot summer days long ago! Not sure how long they were here before they eventually purchased a cottage which might have been Holiday Beach.

Photos that her family took were of Crescent Beach, Holiday Beach, the Lighthouse, and the quality is very nice on quite a few of these. So stay tuned and will share some of these Gillette photos.



J. Mildred's father, Edgar Gillette on right and Peter Pipicello on the left

Recollections of a Summer Kid growing up in Ash Point in the 1950s & 1960s By: Rodney B. Weeks

My most memorable Ash Point character
"Captain" OTIS R. "OTE" LEWIS
1889 - 1979

Just before the beginning of and after WWII at least five men moored their boats and fished for lobsters from Fisherman's Beach. They were, Al Crowley, Otis "Ote" Lewis, his son, Donald L. Lewis, Alfred "Fred" Fredette, and Maurice "Morris" Harvey. A narrow strip of land in front of Ote's house [Trail's End] was and still is owned by the Town of Owls Head which allowed access to the small stone beach. Of the five lobster fishermen mentioned above, probably the most well known was Ote Lewis, not so much for his fishing skills, but for his larger than life personality.

Ote was a real character - a first class bull **** artist. However, with the benefit of hindsight, I think Ote, above all else, was a promoter, not just of himself, but of his adopted home town of Rockland, Maine. (Despite "Captain" Ote's carefully crafted self-image as a native born son, he actually was from Brooklyn, NY and didn't make his home at Trails End until he was in his early 40's).

Ote was one of the first members of the Maine Lobstermen's Association and was also a founding member and lifelong supporter of the Maine Lobster Festival. Each of these activities involved promotion and Ote was good at it. Of course, as a promoter Ote never missed an opportunity to get his picture in the newspapers and many times, especially with the



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promotion of the Maine Lobster Festival, Ote had the opportunity of having his picture taken with a bevy of young bathing beauties all of whom were competing to be the next Maine Lobster Festival Queen.

Ote especially liked children. Why? Because they were the most susceptible to believing all of the tall tales he liked to spin, usually with himself cast as the main character. Everyone I have talked to who knew Ote seems to have a story about him. Here is an example that Richard Cross shared with the Mussel Ridge News back in the Summer of 2015:

“Following the local filming of the movie, Peyton Place [in the mid-1950s] the Sleepers [owners of the Crescent Beach Inn] hosted the film’s cast and crew party. Of course, everyone knew about it well in advance. On the evening of the party, one of my friend’s older sister and her friend decided to get as close as they could to the crowd, hoping to get some autographs. They even had bought little autograph booklets beforehand so they would be well prepared. Needless to say, they were not permitted to mingle inside where there was a lot of alcoholic drinking going on, so they hung around on the grounds hoping to catch someone for an autograph. About dark, the two returned home to my friend’s parent’s house and were asked how many autographs they got. To my knowledge, the little booklets included only one name, and that name was Ote Lewis. Ote Lewis was a local man who had been asked by the Sleepers to provide and cook the lobsters for the event. Ote was as friendly and as outgoing as the Sleepers and so he likely got a real kick out of providing the girls with his “celebrity” autograph. Those girls were pretty disappointed when they were told that old Ote was no Hollywood movie personality”.

Ote loved pulling pranks on kids like this or doing something outrageous just to get a response. Example, he named his lobster boat the DAMNITYOU which at the time was pretty profane, but funny at the same time. Here is my Ote story:

[DON'T EVER TRY THIS STUNT TODAY – IT IS VERY DANGEROUS, STUPID AND ILLEGAL]:

Ote had a full size 1958 baby blue Plymouth Belvedere convertible with a very large engine in it. On the side of the driver’s door he had professionally painted “**Capt.**”Ote Lewis. Now the fact of the matter was, Ote was never a Captain in the US Navy or any other navy for that matter (he was a Boatswain’s mate) but that didn’t stop him from insisting that everybody address him as “Capt” Ote. Anytime Captain Ote was leaving for town us kids would try to talk him into letting us go with him for one reason only – We knew something outrageous and fun would happen – he was just that kind of guy.

Now you have to remember, back in the late 1950s there wasn’t a Owls Head Community Building or any homes on the stretch of Ash Point Drive that lead from the entrance to the Knox County Airport to the Owls Head Central School. As soon as we passed the Airport driveway, with the top down and with 3 or 4 of us kids in the back seat, without any safety belts on, Ote would stomp on the gas pedal and we were off like a shot. The goal was to try to reach over 100 mph before we got to the school.

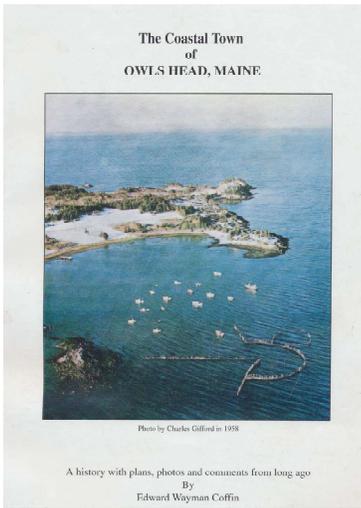
Fortunately, we never had a tire blow out, Ote never lost control of the car, we never came close to hitting anyone coming the other way and we always came to a safe stop at the bottom of the hill next to the Grange Hall. These many years later, I still have my life and the bragging rights of a 10 year old boy of having survived a 100 mph + run down Ash Point Drive.

If you have an Ote Lewis story you would like to tell I would love to hear it OR if you have a “Memorable Character” from your childhood, please e-mail it to me at ledgemere1@gmail.com]

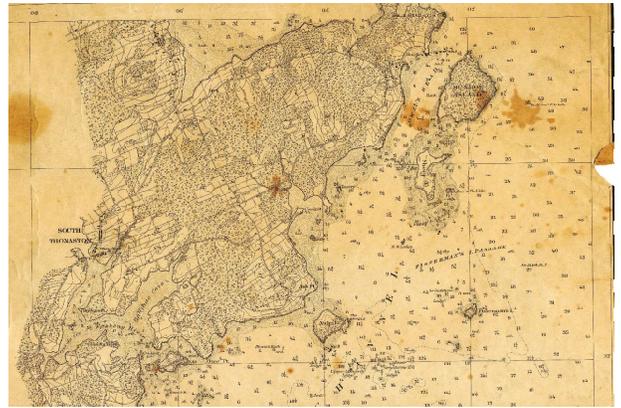


*1950 Lobster Festival with Ote and Sea Princesses
Top L to R: Edith Gushee, Mary Clark, Barbara Stevens, Gail Clark & Margaret Fletcher
Bottom L to R: Janette Escorsio, Ote Lewis, Priscilla Starr*

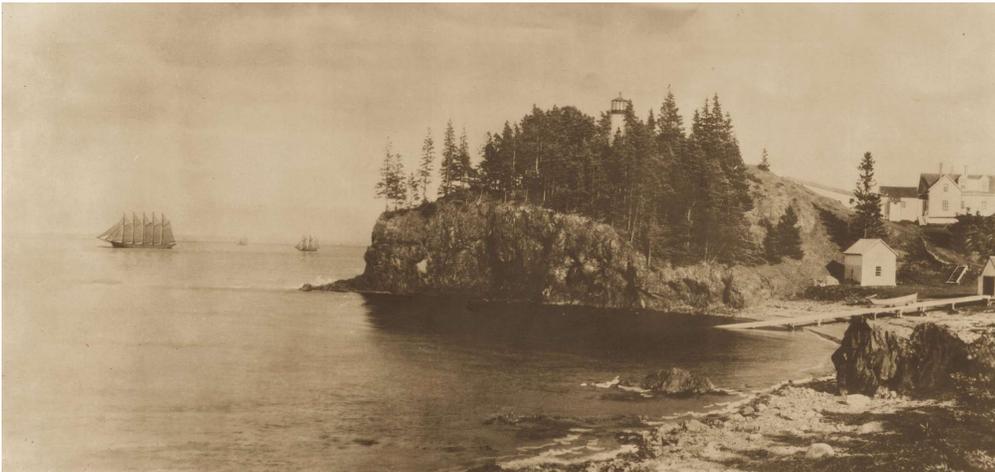
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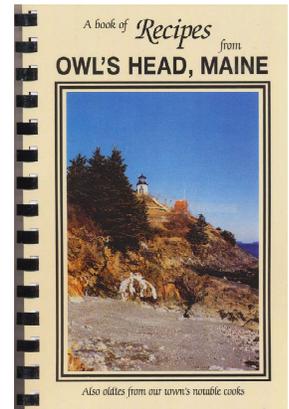
\$32 - The Coastal Town of Owls Head, ME by Edward Coffin



\$40 - 1873 of Owls Head canvas chart 16" x 20"



\$100 - 1800s photo of Owls Head Light professionally printed 18" x 38"



\$15 - Recipes of Owls Head, Maine

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Garden Snippets



During January, when it was so warm, (so to speak) it felt like maybe we'd go right into spring. Apparently, that's not going to happen. And I know that's a good thing— we really need winter. The plants will be so much happier with a blanket of snow. And they'll be far less likely to die of frostbite and windburn.

And we need winter to plan for spring, if nothing else. We've learned a lot during this past growing season—some things didn't do very well and hopefully we were able to figure out why. And some things did stupendously. So we have to plan for next year while we can still remember this year. Many people do their plant shopping on line--- I think there are a lot more choices of things that way; one can zip from nursery to nursery or plant to plant or design to design. But I am never so happy on a cold winter day than when I can sit back with some catalogs, a pencil, and a cup of tea or coffee.

Many years ago, I'd get all excited about all the things I could do in the spring and all the things I could plant. Then came spring—with plants and seeds arriving by the ton and me thinking, "Good grief, what have I done?!!!" I don't know whether I learned something or whether I just got old and tired, but I have a much better system now. I still go through all the catalogs and mark everything I want. A few days later, I go back again and x out all the things I don't really need. And I get my order in early, so they'll have the plants I want. (My second order can wait a little bit; I can be a little more flexible at this point.)

Then I have all the rest of the winter to plan and envision and imagine how lovely next year's garden will be.

Marty Shaw

**** "To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root." -Chinese proverb ****

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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 ___ Local History Center

___ Old Homestead ___ As the MRHS thinks is best

Signature of Person Accepting the Form _____

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New Logo for Mussel Ridge Learning Center Campaign



Preserving Owls Head History Today

MRHS's campaign committee has been hard at work on the planning stages of the capital campaign for the new Mussel Ridge Learning Center. Behind the scenes the committee has been working on the branding for the campaign- including this new logo and its accompanying tagline which we are excited to share with you here.

Owls Head has a rich maritime and boatbuilding history, which inspired the inclusion of a sloop in the logo. This particular sloop is taken from a drawing of a 25 foot sloop designed by Alvin Hurd (1861-1956) of Ash Point, Owls Head. Alvin is a descendant of one of the first settlers of Owls Head, William and Abigail Crockett Heard, who purchased a vast amount of land in Ash Point from Henry Knox in the 1700s. Many of Alvin's descendants still reside in town today.

The Mussel Ridge Learning Center will be a center for learning and education, a place with appropriate storage to preserve artifacts, photos and stories like these of Alvin Hurd. Our goal is to ensure that the collection is accessible for the enjoyment and education of all.

Please watch for more news about the new building campaign in the coming months, as well as the launch of MRHS's redesigned website. To learn more about the campaign and ways you can help please contact Marty Shaw at campaign@musselridge.org or one of the campaign committee members: Betty Bird Mann, Gail Ladd, Carolyn Philbrook or Susan Allen Thomas.

Special thanks to Tayler Philbrook for creating the Mussel Ridge Learning Center logo for us.

The Mussel Ridge Islands - Dix Island



Many famous buildings were constructed from granite harvested from local islands. Dix Island granite built the New York Post Office. The iron framing was clad with a pale granite quarried in Dix Island. Some buildings lasted longer than others!

Regarding the building's lack of popularity, *The New York Times* wrote in 1912:

The Mullett Post Office has always been an architectural eyesore, and has, from the first, been unsatisfactory to the Postal Service and the Federal Courts beneath its roof.

The Second Empire style building, erected 1869 -1880, was not well received. Commonly called "Mullett's Monstrosity", it was demolished in 1939.

Wikipedia.org

Courier Archives. February 1928 Owls Head News - Library

Tuesday evening a Valentine social will be held in the Library and Community building which will also be in the nature of a dedication party. The Boys band of Rockland will be present if the traveling is good, and a radio sketch will be given, with games and charades. Cocoa, sandwiches and cake will be served. It is hoped everybody will attend. If anyone has friends visiting them at that time take them right along. We would be very glad to have those living out of town, who have summer homes here see the library and community room. Then next summer while on their vacation here when they have time for reading, etc., they will know just where to go for books, papers and 'magazines. This library was started a few years ago by Dr. Farrington of the Bancroft Training School who sent about 50 books. Now there are over 600 volumes, all having been donated and this year for magazines there are the the National Geographic, Good Housekeeping and Saturday Evening Post. The Owl's Head Village Library Association has been formed and incorporated and it is desired that all will join. So please be present Tuesday night and enjoy the evening together.

Recipe from The Owls Head Cookbook

GRAPE-NUTS PUDDING

<p>1/2 c. Grape-Nuts 2 c. milk Dash of salt</p>	<p>2/3 c. brown sugar 3 eggs 1 tsp. vanilla</p>
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Beat eggs; add remaining ingredients and pour into 1 quart casserole. Place casserole in shallow pan with water and bake at 350° till knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Cora Winslow - Grange Cookbook 1939



For those that eat Grape-Nuts, there has been a real shortage this year due to the pandemic. A very popular cereal, it's been a part of American history for more than 100 years. Developed by C.W. Post in 1897, who first prepared it as a batter that came from the oven as a rigid sheet. He then broke the sheet into pieces and ran them through a coffee grinder to produce the "nut"-sized kernels. How do you like Grape-Nuts: As a morning breakfast cereal, ice cream, pudding, bread, muffins, or mixed with yogurt?



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