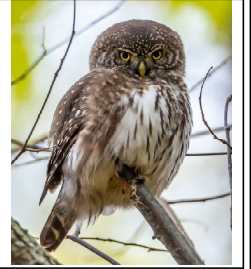


Mussel Ridge News

A Free Publication of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society
Winter 2024 ~ Issue 61 www.musselridge.org



Amassing a Collection Reflecting Our Community

A heartfelt thank-you to all who voted in favor of the Town of Owls Head's adding to what the Mussel Ridge Historical Society had raised—and continues to raise—for a learning center! We are readying an RFP so that interested contractors can bid on the construction of the building, the primary purpose of which is to house our collection. That means the dream of a permanent repository for artifacts of historical and cultural interest to residents of and visitors to Owls Head and the surrounding areas is about to be realized.

In anticipation of constructing our very own facility, we turn again to you, our supporters, to ask you to consider donating items for display. Many of you have been serving as “archivists” in the absence of a secure place for storing and displaying community treasures. Without an environment protected from the excesses of exposure to sunlight, temperature variation, humidity, and infestation, you have safeguarded fragile, irreplaceable items. Again, we owe you a debt of thanks, this time for your conscientious stewardship!

Now, however, we can offer you assurance of safe preservation and the opportunity of sharing your treasures with neighbors and visiting guests. Following are some useful reminders for making a donation:

- You can either loan or donate items. The MRHS will keep records of all donations, and those records will be marked as either “Permanent” or “Temporary/On Loan.”
- If you possess photographs, deeds, or documents with which you are loathe to part, we can scan and return them in your presence, while you wait. If you wish to donate originals, we pledge to care for them with an eye to preserving them for posterity.
- As a reminder, we are interested in any/all of the following:
 - Historical photos of people, places, or things native to Owls Head or the Mussel Ridge Islands, including the Knox County Regional Airport;
 - Family photo albums;
 - Deeds and surveys;
 - Veterans' photographs;
 - Items of military history;
 - Signage from bygone local businesses or boarding houses.
- Items you are currently using or displaying in your home may be designated for donation by means of an instrument called a Letter of Instruction. We recommend you consult with your estate planner as well as advising your beneficiaries when drafting this non-binding document that details the postmortem handling of your personal property.
- Because we are intent upon creating a clean environment, the MRHS may have to decline the honor of any bequests with signs of mold, mildew, or other contaminants.

Questions? We have answers, or we will research the matter and get back to you. Please contact any member of the MRHS Executive Board of Directors: Marty Shaw, Carolyn Philbrook, Rod Weeks, Dave Matthews, Kay Dodge, Ann Rafferty, Michelle Miller, Susan Thomas, or Gail Ladd.

Questions??? email us at history@musselridge.org

Trees in Owls Head 250 Years Ago



Poplar Trees are still abundant in town! It is hard to imagine our town in the late 1700s, Indians traveling around and getting used to the settlers. Also, the banks of the "Keag" river and surrounding region were covered with a magnificent growth of pines, whose age, judging from the youngest species left and more recently examined, must have ranged from 300 years downwards. The pine growth, ancient and noble as it was, had however, been preceded, it was thought, by one of a different kind; for the ground was strewn with huge trunks of poplars, 3 or 4 feet in diameter, covered with moss.

Eaton's History by Cyrus Eaton

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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 _____

Mussel Ridge Historical Society, PO Box 133, Owl's Head, ME 04854 history@musselridge.org

Gavin Elliott
Branch Manager I
NMLS# 2144748



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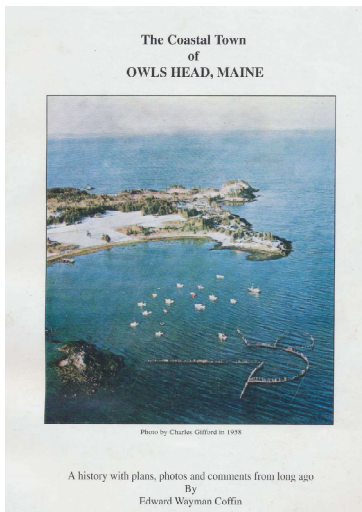
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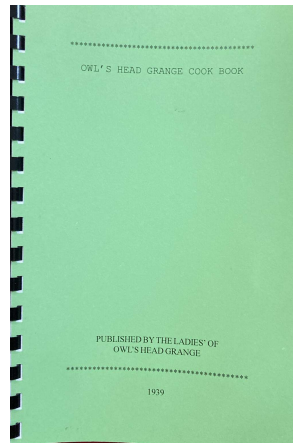
Cell 207-441-7203

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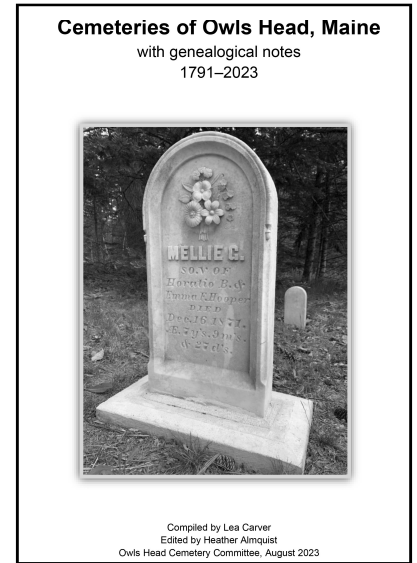


\$36 - The Coastal Town of Owls Head, ME by Edward Coffin (limited quantities)

Products for sale



Owls Head Grange Cookbook \$10



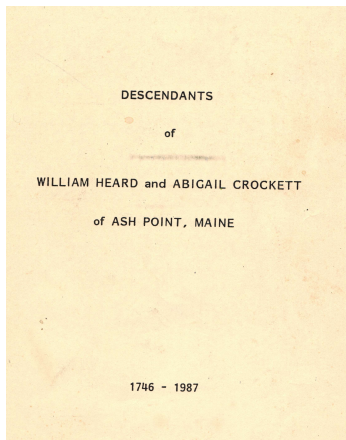
\$25 - Cemeteries of Owls Head by Lea Carver



\$10 Mugs (11 oz), \$13 (15 oz) choice of The "Old Homestead" or "1873" Chart



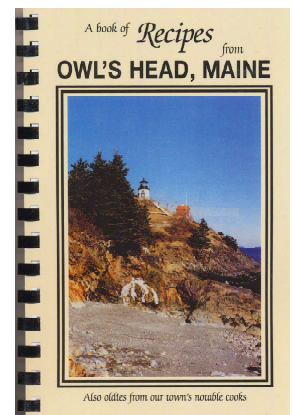
\$49- 1873 of Owls Head canvas chart 16" x 20"



Reprint with over 300 pages \$39
Descendants of William Heard and Abigail Crockett of Ash Point, Maine by Charles Candage



Ash Point, ME 1930s Home Movies by J. Rodney Weeks DVD - \$15



\$15 - Recipes of Owls Head, Maine

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 Prices include ME state sales tax
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Our Paypal link is: https://paypal.me/MRHS1921?locale.x=en_US

Crescent Beach Inn - Thank you Shirley Frost!



Photo of original sign for the Crescent Beach Inn being donated to the MRHS by Ms. Shirley Frost.

Accepting the sign on behalf of the MRHS is Rod Weeks, Secretary of the MRHS.

This is hopefully just one of many historical artifacts to come that will find a new home and be proudly on display in our new Learning Center.



Does anyone remember where this sign was located/displayed on the Crescent Beach Inn? If you have a photo of that please let us know. CBI (Crescent Beach Inn), has a very long and important part in the history of our town. "Fred Smith of Ash Point opened the Inn in 1885 with only an open pavilion with a canvas top. The wooden floor was floated and rescued from the Sunnyside Hotel after it burned on Norcross Point.

Early highlights included a bowling alley, 13 rooms, dining hall for 400, and the first telephone in Owls Head. He also was responsible for bringing the trolley car to town, cleared 60 acres of land, and built two miles of excellent roads."*

**Rest Stops In Owl's Head by Carol Jean Walker*

Cooking Corner

20th Century Corned Beef Hash

What to do with the "New England Boiled Dinner leftovers??"

Make a hash consisting of leftover corned beef, potatoes, cabbage, onions, and carrots. Some eat it as a meal, some for breakfast topped off with an egg, all these ingredients are mixed together and heated in a fry pan. Enjoy!

It originated as a way to use up leftovers. In the U.S. by the 1860s, a cheap restaurant was called a "hash house" or "hashery."

In the 20th century, during World War I, plenty of corned beef hash was dished out at garrisons and field kitchens. Toward the end of the war, canned corned beef hash appeared in field ration kits. They continued in World War II, as did corned beef hash and other hash recipes on the home front. The meat had to be purchased with not only money but with ration stamps, limiting the amount of meat any one person could have. Because of meat rationing, the dish became popular during World War II. Although born of necessity, it was tasty, and it became an American comfort food. Corned beef hash remained popular after the war. In 1950, Hormel Foods introduced canned corned beef hash and roast beef hash.



After two decades of persistence, Owls Head finally has a cemetery for future burials in perpetuity!

In the early 2000's it was clear that none of the existing town cemeteries had room left for new burials. There were no burial records whatsoever - headstones were the only proof of gravesites. And lots that appeared empty very likely contained unmarked burials.

Knowing that there were folks who would want to be buried here in the future, the Owls Head Cemetery Committee (OHCC) searched for property appropriate for a new cemetery. The only option they found was land near the corner of Ash Point Drive and the Dublin Road which was owned by Knox County. At that time, the County was unwilling to sell the land, but agreed to lease it for 99 years. In 2004 that land became the new Owls Head Cemetery. Many people wondered, however, what would happen to the cemetery (and folks buried there) in 2103 when the lease expired.

In 2007 Selectman Dick Carver approached the County to see if it would sell the cemetery property to the Town. That request was categorically denied. Fortunately, Dick never gave up, and in 2022 he and several members of the OHCC approached the Airport Manager and County Administrator to explore whether the Town might purchase the land. Both indicated it would be possible. Research and negotiations moved forward and in August of 2023 citizens voted in favor of buying the cemetery land for \$21,000. The 2-acre Owls Head Cemetery finally became a town-owned property. In addition, by terminating the lease the Town saved well over \$59,000!

The Owls Head Cemetery is the only cemetery with lots for sale. It has 60 lots dedicated for cremations and 105 for full burials. Currently 14 folks are interred there. Residents and non-residents may purchase lots at the Town Office.



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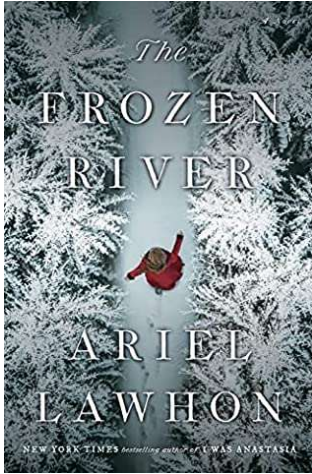
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Review of *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon

In the “Author’s Note” to *The Frozen River*, Lawhon says her “longtime readers know how closely [she] stick[s] to historical fact,” which is why they call what she writes “biographical fiction.” However, in her latest



publication, Lawhon departs from her penchant for the facts, just the facts, with the caveat that it “is *inspired* by real events as opposed to being *based* on them.” For example, in 1785, the Kennebec River did freeze, but Lawhon sets her story four years later, in 1789, and there were three men charged in the rape of Rebecca Foster featured in the novel, but Lawhon omits Elijah Davis, choosing to focus only on Joshua Burgess and Colonel Joseph North. Lawhon’s narrative does not suffer from the embellishments, omissions, and fabrications in her story. Martha Ballard still plies her trade as an 18th-century midwife and healer; she still keeps a diary, mostly a record of the weather, the births at which she assists and the ailments she treats, and the events of consequence in her community. She is still married to Ephraim, whose prosperous lumber mill is set on a tributary of the Kennebec in Hallowell, Maine. What results from Lawhon’s combination of historical research and imaginative thinking is a

gripping murder mystery, which Lawhon’s Ballard feels compelled to solve because a Harvard-educated physician has impugned her testimony about the cause of death of one of the two accused rapists, whose body is cut out of the river’s frozen surface at the opening of the novel. Dr. Page’s version of the cause of Joshua Burgess’s death undercuts Ballard’s credibility and jeopardizes what little authority her society grants her as a woman, and Ballard hopes that solving Burgess’s murder will restore the authority upon which her practice of midwifery depends. The investigation that ensues provides a riveting tale, and along the way we are also treated to herbal remedies, details of life on the early American frontier, and a love story for the ages. Now, I am eager to read *A Midwife’s Tale* by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, an historical biography based on Martha Ballard’s daybooks. Stay tuned: perhaps that will be the subject of the next book review of our newsletter.

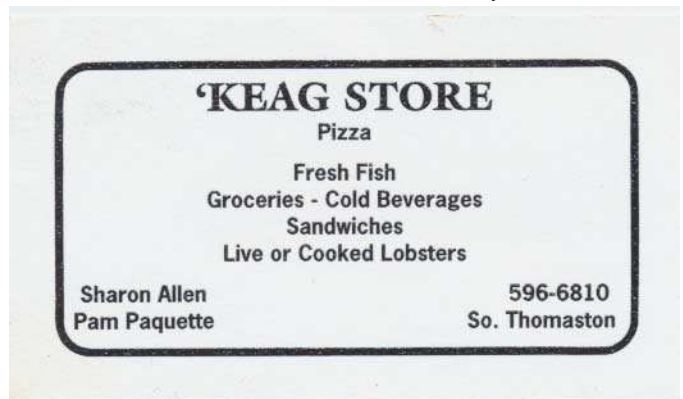
Review by Michelle Miller

JAKE BARBOUR
PRESIDENT

GOT DIRTY?

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Alvin Hurd

Rockland Courier-Gazette, Saturday, September 8, 1951

It isn't everyone who can live to the ripe old age of 90, but Alvin Hurd of Ash Point has accomplished it and is having a world of fun about it. While he looks back on a lifetime of work, which a fortune teller once told him would fill three men, he is looking ahead to a very comfortable Winter in his tight little home close to his giant size garden patch which he is now harvesting.

Persons of advanced age generally have an ailment or two, with poor eyesight an accepted condition. "Uncle" Alvin, as he is generally known, is as strong as a man of 50 and needs glasses infrequently.

An outstanding individualist in a State where individualists are common, he lives alone although his children's homes are open to him. He likes the snug little cottage he put up 12 years ago. At the age of 78, he dug and walled the cellar and then dug and rocked up a 15-foot well.

His garden, a mere three quarters of an acre in size, is one of the wonder spots of the seacoast village. Everything from beautiful smooth skinned potatoes to tomatoes with corn, beans, squash and countless other vegetables thrown in grow for the retired fisherman with a green thumb.

He cares for the big garden himself, employing not one of the modern mechanical aids. His cultivator is homemade. A pair of clam hoes attached to a pair of saplings and weighted down with rock made up the rig which he hauls along his 360 foot rows through the growing season.

The products of the garden, some 110 bushels of potatoes, with everything else in proportion, are largely given away to his family and friends. First, however, he stows away an ample supply in his deep, dry cellar to take him through the Winter and around to next harvest time.

He is known far and wide as a weirman of long standing, having run weirs in this area most of his adult life. His son, Harlan Hurd of Rockland, now carries on the family tradition, and there are grandsons who will probably keep the family business in operations for decades to come.

The day Alvin hit 90, his neighbors, a wide circle of friends and the family turned out to honor him. Gov. Frederick G. Payne sent him a congratulatory letter and an autographed picture. He is mighty proud of a beautifully illuminated testimonial which was prepared and presented to him on his birthday. It contains the sig-

natures of 52 persons who called on him that day. Space on the large document ran out and a guest book was filled with signatures, too. It is now framed and has a prominent spot on the wall of his little home.

He recalls that he started out lobstering as a boy and at the age of 22 took eight years off to try out the stone cutting trade on High Island. He recalls the huge boarding houses, Shamrock, Aberdeen and Dix Island House on Dix Island and the 2000 or more people who once populated the Penobscot Bay outpost.

The memory of the huge pillars cut on Dix Island for a government building in Philadelphia still is with him. He remembers that the huge stones, four foot high and the same across and 40 feet in length which were cut out by the Scotch and Irish workers. Twenty pairs of oxen and a mass of steel cable and blocks went into the effort to move the great stones to the pier, he recalls.

Once on the pier, there was no vessel which could take them on deck. The result was that the barkentine Ephraim Williams was built especially for the haul to Philadelphia. The craft had her mainmast set well aft and the foremast well forward to leave space amidships to place the stone. With none of the present day tools of the granite trade, the stones were merely rolled aboard the vessel at high tide with all hands from the quarries, plus all available oxen working at the task.

Along with his lobstering after he left the granite trade, he spent four days of the week catching and corning fish and the rest of the week peddling the product back through the country.

He met up with a whale which was in search of a herring dinner one day when he was 18, and came out second best. Seems that he had his trawls set about halfway to Hurricane Island one day when he noticed that instead of scattering at his approach as usual, the herring hung close to his 16-foot wherry.

A moment later, the lap strake boat shot skyward as if jet propelled. Clinging to the rail, he saw the tail of a whale flip 10 or 15 feet in the air as the creature scooped up a meal of the little fish, oblivious of the fact that he had ruined Alvin's trawl and boat.

The craft started down by the head where a chunk of the side had been ripped away and Alvin started balling with a trawl tub and yelling for the Matineus packet Julia Fairbanks, which was a mile away, to come to his aid.

His lungs and arms were powerful. The packet turned and came back as he lifted a half barrel of water at a time and dumped it over the side to keep afloat until the little sailing vessel had come about and beat its way down to him.

The memory of his aunts, Lucy and Peggy Hurd and an Uncle

Mose are still with him. Family legend has it that Moses and Peggy, when in their teens, repelled a party of Britfishers who sailed close into Ash Point with the intention of burning a salt kiln on the shore near where Trill's End now is.

With Moses firing an old muzzle loader and Peggy loading another for him as he fired, the pair dashed from one tree to another, firing from several points, until the Britfishers hauled off, convinced that there was a small army ashore. The fact that one officer fell before the youngster's fire and others were wounded helped the Redcoats reach a decision. The officer was buried on Monroes Island as the raiding party made its way toward Castine, then British headquarters north of Boston. Later, it was understood that the leader of the party reported to Castine that he faced a large and aggressive force which drove his small party away with heavy gunfire.

While he can recall the past as clearly as events of this morning, he does not live in the past at all. Today's events and people are what interest him the most. Tomorrow, well, there will be something doing then, too, to make this old life interesting, he feels.

Living at a great age, remarkably healthy and keen of mind and with a wealth of friends, he is perhaps one of the most completely happy men alive today. There is only one thing that will dim that merry twinkle in his eye and his sparkling wit and he isn't worrying a bit about that, today.