

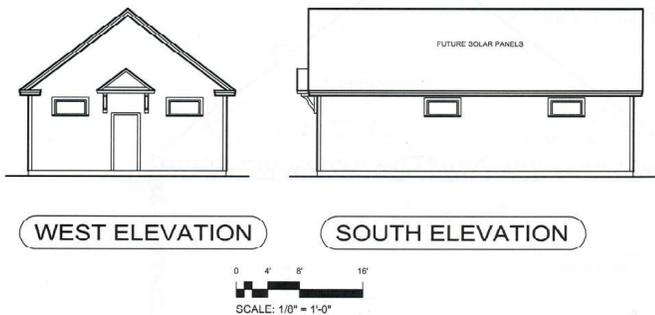
Mussel Ridge News

*A Free Publication of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society
Owls Head, Maine*

Fall 2019 ~ Issue 44 www.musselridge.org



Many Thanks... By a unanimous vote at Owls Head's annual town meeting held on August 26, 2019, the Town voted to allow The Mussel Ridge Historical Society to build a local history center on a portion of town property adjacent to the Community Building.



The following is from the November 16, 1960 edition of the Courier Gazette:

Owls Head- David Knowlton was elected president of The Mussel Ridge Historical Society at its 3rd meeting held at the Owls Head Central School. Other officers elected were: vice-president, Helen Ciaravino; recording secretary, Elisabeth Walker; corresponding secretary, Miriam Tourney; treasurer, Evelyn Ross; historian, Clemice Pease; curator, Elizabeth Seavey; directors, Grace Faunce, Grace Casanova, Marion Lindsey, and Jerome Burrows.

The organization adopted an official spelling of Mussel, and voted to incorporate. The following were voted as

honorary members: Ella Maddocks, Winfield Maddocks, Fred Maddocks, Martha Speed Dolliver, Anna Tolman Donahue, Helen Guptill Garnet, Adriel Post, Ada Allen Hewett, Hattie Tripp Jackson, Annie Drake Stackpole, Arthur Brown, Katherine McKusic Hurd, Ella Dow Watts, Louise Butler, and Lillian Rowell.

The MRHS will fill a long felt need to preserve the history of this well known coastal region. It is hoped that everyone who has any connection, past or present, will be interested in helping this society by contacting members before destroying any deeds, letters, or newspapers pertaining to any of its history. Any memoirs will be gratefully acknowledged and filed for future reference.

An illustration of how a letter may bring back memories was brought to the notice of those at this meeting by Beryl Borgerson, who read the following letter from V.W. Smith, a summer resident of Lucia Beach. Dear Miss Borgerson, "At one of the suppers sponsored by The Owls Head Fire Dept, last summer, I noticed there were table decorations of pink pond lilies, and I knew without asking that they must have come from the pond back of the cemetery in the village, where my grandfather planted them nearly 70 years ago. These bulbs came originally from Bermuda, and there is a story connected, worth telling. My grandfather's daughter, Lucy Farr was married to Capt. Manford Dyer, who was master and part owner of the three masted schooner "Maynard Sumner," engaged in coastwise trade extending from Maine to the West Indies. On this particular voyage my Aunt Lucy and cousin Edgar were aboard. It was February and the captain was on his way from Cuba to New York, with a return cargo. When off the harbor they were suddenly hit by a heavy gale that soon iced the ship, so that they were obliged to cut away the sails and rigging, put about and run before it. In the process of coming about they lost the mate overboard, as the seas were extremely high. For nine days they ran before the storm and were finally picked up by another ship off Bermuda and towed to port there. All aboard were in rather poor shape and an English family, by the name of Heywood, took the captain, my aunt, and cousin into their home providing for their needs and comfort until such a time as the vessel could be outfitted to resume the return voyage back to Rockland. Grandmother Farr, who was always grateful for any good deed for any of her kin, wrote a letter to

the Heywoods, thanking them for their kindness, which resulted in friendly correspondence and finally a visit to Owls Head by the Heywood family, where as a boy I remember meeting them. At the time of this visit grandfather was engaged in landscaping the old village cemetery, and in hauling gravel from outback, had managed to leave quite a pit, that quickly filled with water. When Mrs. Heywood saw this little pond she asked if they would like some pond lily bulbs, which in due course she sent. There were pink, yellow, and white and were a beautiful sight to behold in those early days. So that is how the pink pond lilies happened to grace the festive tables at your fireman's supper, 70 years afterwards." Sincerely, V.W. Smith

Grandmother, Ann Farr was Postmistress at Owls Head for 25 years, her husband Chandler, ran the mail and stagecoach. Vinal Smith's parents were Frank and Addie (Farr) Smith—The Maynard Sumner was a three masted, steam auxiliary, schooner, the only one of her kind ever built, as they decided the steam engines were impractical, by taking up too much cargo space. Described as being built in Rockland, Maine in 1882—Tonnage 307—Length 143.3ft—Beam 28.5ft.—Depth 10 ft.

Cemetery Restoration

Most people assume that a cemetery restoration is just a beautification project. Hardly. While that is hopefully a result, the reasons to restore a cemetery are much more important. Not only are there moral and legal (per Maine State Statues) reasons to keep cemeteries, especially veteran's graves, in good order, but there are safety and liability issues as well. Imagine taking your children or grandchildren to the cemetery to visit a beloved's grave. Now imagine that the child leans on or pulls a loose headstone which falls on them or someone else.... Not a leap of faith to see that this is a compelling reason to keep our cemeteries in good repair.

The Town of Owl's Head Cemetery Committee finished a 7-day restoration of MacPhail Cemetery, located behind Hall Cemetery (a/k/a Head of the Bay) on September 16. Our professional restorer, Joe Feraninni of Gravestone Matters, worked 11 to 12 hours each day and 8 volunteers put in another 265 hours of work on this project. Originally, the project was expected to take four days to finish, but as work progressed other problems, like extensive concrete slabs that had to be jack-hammered out, came to light. Since setting up equipment is time consuming, Joe and the Cemetery Committee felt



Before renovation

that continuing for another two days (partly funded by a generous donation from Art and Kitty Stanley) and completing the project would be the best use of resources. Two of the volunteers, Joy and Lee Harvey, came from South Portland to help and were experienced with this kind of work. Walter Guptill, who has helped Joe on many occasions, was also putting in long hours of heavy lifting. Al Hooper, a new volunteer, took to the work like a duck to water and he was invaluable hauling off debris with his trailer and bringing in much needed yards of loam. His friends, James Godfrey and Vivian Kelley, turned out to support us too. Bill Gay was our jack of all trades and Michael Voncannon stuck to the cleaning tasks.

Most restoration work involves righting leaning headstones, repairing loose, broken ones, resetting fallen ones back on to their bases, often on new foundations, and cleaning all of them. MacPhail Cemetery had an additional, widespread problem of erosion attributed to using an herbicide (probably Roundup) for an extended time and aggressive string trimming. This erosion eventually caused gravestone foundation issues and, in one case, the exposure of a casket vault. Yards of stone dust (donated by Sam Hall of George C. Hall and Sons), yards of loam, pounds of seed, erosion mats, and straw

were spread. Hard, dirty work was the order of everyone's day for a week. All the cemetery's gravestones were cleaned and a total of 38 stones were reset and/or repaired. The restoration was exhausting, but well worth all the effort.

The Town of Owls Head and its Cemetery Committee are very grateful for the wonderful work Joe Feraninni has done and to all those who volunteered their time, energy, money, and materials to make MacPhail Cemetery restoration a beautiful success. Please come out and see the results. You'll be proud also.



After renovation—different angle

The Lighthouse Road as we know it today was made in 1905. Previously if you wanted to get to the lighthouse the road ran along the shoreline. "One improvement and a great one should be mentioned. Every winter the storms made inroads upon it till the authorities of So. Thomaston got tired of making the constant repairs needed and laid out a new one for the residents. All the houses were about 350 yards from the shore, which distance had to be traveled to get to the Post Office, store, or anywhere else. The new road has reduced the distance by two thirds."

from the journals of Aaron Appleton Plaisted.



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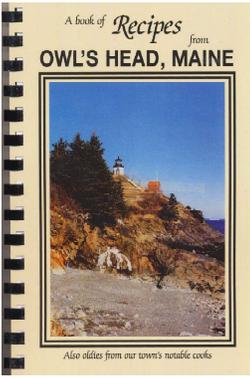
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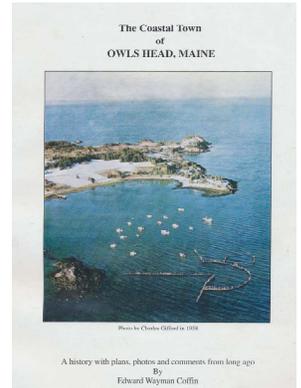


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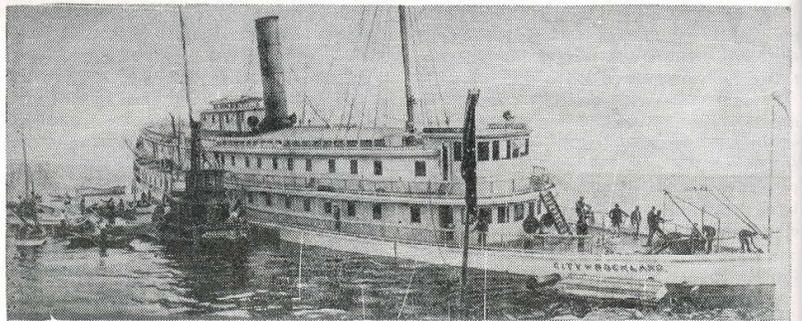
Ash Point Pirates

by Carolyn Meserve Philbrook

This name has stayed in my mind over the years. My mother (Norma Curtis Meserve) grew up and was a life long resident of Ash Point. She said this phrase many times. Wish I had written down more details from her. Other folks have heard the term too. So what does this mean? I do think the name could be attributed to how town folks helped themselves to the goods found on shipwrecks. Also to maybe their neighbor's chickens or whatever else might they have a need for (without asking first)! This name could also and probably is a name that could be changed to any village on the coast of Maine and beyond!

Doing some local history readings, an article written by Ella Maddocks, mentions the following. At Trails End Ote Lewis' home being moved back from the road. A salt works kiln on the front lawn. This is the area of Ash Point where a couple or more ships went aground off Ash Island. She goes on to state:

“*City of Rockland* went down out by black buoy to the left of Ash Island. Ash Point pirates. Someone went aboard and went to get some dishes that Rackliffe was getting and stepped backwards into the coal chute. Bolts of cloth. He has ladder.”
(@1904)



CITY OF ROCKLAND

Above is pictured the *City of Rockland* as she lay on Grindstone Ledge in 1904 while yet a new ship. At her starboard gangway is the old Rockland tug, *Frederick M. Wilson*, and round about are numerous small craft of the genus piraticus.

—Photo courtesy Henry B. Bird.



STEAMER "CITY OF PORTLAND,"
OF THE INTERNATIONAL STEAMSHIP COMPANY

City of Portland

Another ship, the *City of Portland* went down here too in 1884. Locals were waiting to get the goods off this one also. My son, Micah Philbrook recently went diving there at Grindstone Ledge and found some remnants and broken dishes.

This wreck should not be confused with the other "City of Portland" wreck in the storm of 1898.



*City of Portland
finds from a dive*

Not sure what ship this came from but my Dad, Howard Meserve built a precursor to a septic field behind our home in the 1950s. It was called a cesspool. It was about 4 or 5 feet round with a hatch cover in the middle. He told me the round form for it came from a shipwreck, and was given to him by a neighbor. Most likely a wheel of some kind. In those days recycling was the norm! Also in Ash Point there were 2 brothers who lived in the Cann's Beach road area. There was a poem about one of them stealing neighbors chickens and potatoes out of the gardens. Gene Snowman was the author of this poem.

Continued on next page ...

The Steamer Cambridge

This Steamer was not wrecked off Owls Head, but contents made its way to Ash Point somehow. The *Steamer Cambridge* went down off Port Clyde. A piano made its way to Monhegan, and was said it was loaded with very valuable cargo. Guess we could say there were Port Clyde pirates too! Well somehow the clock from the steamer made its way to a cottage at Lucia Beach and is still working to this day! Not sure what the maritime laws were at the time but folks did not waste any time helping themselves.

Another article we will venture into the details of these shipwrecks.



CAMBRIDGE
—Cambridge, special pride of the Sanfords, struck on Old Man's Ledge on a clear night and broke in two, 1886—the only Boston-Bangor liner ever lost in service.



Steamer "Cambridge" Clock

(Photos from the Books "Steamboat Lore" by John Richardson)

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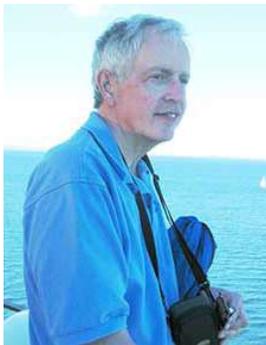


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GOOD-BY TO ONE OF OUR OWN

Stuart Wells Thro, Treasurer of the MRHS



Since our last Newsletter, The Mussel Ridge Historical Society has lost a wonderful and very supportive friend, Stuart Wells Thro, who passed away unexpectedly on September 5, 2019 at the age of 77. Stu was the Treasurer for the MRHS (as well as for the Rockland Rotary Club and the Knox County Democrats). Born in Rockford, IL on April 13, 1942, Stu was the second of Arlin and Mavis Thro's four children. Stu developed an early interest in electronics and obtained his Bachelor of Science degree from Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland, OH in 1964. He became a telecommunications systems engineer at Motorola for the next 32 years - patenting multiple inventions. He met and married his wife, Mary Ellen (n'ee Lehtinen) in the late 1960s and they moved to the Chicago suburbs for his working career at Motorola.

Stu later earned his MBA from North Illinois University. Having spent some of their childhoods in New England, Stu and Mary Ellen retired and relocated to Owls Head in 2000. They took to their new community right away and Stu became very active in many local organizations. Stu was a true renaissance man. He played jazz piano, was a bird watcher, a world traveler, a genealogist and he studied history of all kinds. Stu believe that everyone should be involved in their community and participate as a citizen-advocate, working with others to create a more effective and inclusive democracy. Hence his active participation in the Rockland Rotary Club, the Knox County Democratic Party and the MRHS. Stu's final project was helping us develop plans for a community historical building that will serve as a permanent home for our local history, memorabilia and family histories that will be publicly accessible for everyone to research and enjoy for generations to come. He will be solely missed by all of us at the MRHS and by all those who knew him.

Ingraham's Hill

by Vera Payson Mathieson

Vera grew up right on the Rockland/Owls Head Townline (the first house as you enter Owls Head). Thanks Vera for writing all these memories down!

“The house next to them, south was the home of a deaf and dumb couple who I believe were sister and brother. Their names were Mary and Ally Bowler and we were fascinated to see them use sign language. The house next to them was the residence of Pearl and Clara Fiske an elderly couple with no children. Next was the field where sometimes a carnival came and that was so exciting with all the rides and the side shows. Money was scarce but we managed to get a few dimes to ride the rides and that was so exciting but daddy didn't like the noise especially in the evening when he wanted to sleep. He would say “I should think they would quiet down after 8:00”. The building next to the field was a large building with the bottom floor a store and the second floor an apartment where different people lived over the years such as the Albert Guptills, Goodwins (who worked for Colonel Ross on top of the hill) and many others. Today it is many apartments up and down. The candy counter was our favorite place to visit with penny candy galore Boston Beans put in a little bean pot so we got four to six candy beans red with peanut inside, we had candy that was called bacon strips covered with sugar, peanut clusters, hot balls, sweet-sour tarts and the most interesting ones were chocolate covered creams that if they were pink inside we got a second one free. I'm sure there were others but cannot remember them all. This store was run by Jack Garnett.



Vera (R) and her sister Eleanor

pick Lily-of-the-Valleys that grew there in abundance. We were coming down the hill which was across the field from the Wileys farm when Johnny came running

across and said those are my flowers because you picked them on our land and he grabbed the tops off the flowers. I was so mad that I jumped on his back and took hold of his shirt and doing so ripped it. He went home crying and soon his father came down to see my father and said what I had done. Thank goodness my father had heard what happened and said “I guess he deserved what he got”.

The next house we come to is the oldest house in the area, Jenny and Barney Ingraham home built in 1789. Malcolm Ingraham, who lived right above them told me that he was told a family of Indians who were summering up above the Wiley farm came down for the winter and lived in the cellar of the ell of that house. I do not know what year that was but know there were a lot of Indians in this area years ago. Going up the hill still on the western side we come to Frank and Louise Ingraham's home. There were two children, a boy Malcolm and a girl Norma but Norma died at the age of 8. The Ingraham home was like a second home for most of us kids around the hill and you could drop in anytime for a game of Chinese Checkers, Parcheesi or just to talk. One thing we liked to do was to use their outhouse as we went up the hill to school as it was papered with all sorts of cut out pictures. It was more interesting than our dull outhouse that was in the barn.

... to be continued in our next newsletter

Recipes from the Past

Sarah Abigail Marks was born at Ash Point on July 26, 1849. Her parents were Warren G. and Betsey Elizabeth (Hubbard) Marks, my Great-Great Grandparents. On July 3, 1879, Ab, as Sarah Abigail was called, married my Great Grandfather, Angus Staples, whose first wife Margret E. Marks had passed away on January 28, 1878. Angus was left with two small daughters, Annie Frances, age 5, (my grandmother) and Abbie Marie, age 3. Ab being Margaret's older sister had been assisting the family during Margaret's illness, and after her untimely passing at age 23. The little girls needed a mother and it proved to be a good match. Their home was on the right corner of the Crocketts Beach Road (now owned by Stones) on property long owned by the Haskell/Staples families. Ab never had any children of her own and not only raised the little Staples girls, but Annie also passed away as a young woman in the fall of 1913, leaving a large family. Three of Annie's six children were under the age of 10 and Ab and Angus helped in their upbringing as well.

I was asked to write a little about who Ab Staples was! She was a strong, loving, kind, giving, woman, from what I have gathered, through the years, from folks

who knew her. She was my Great-Great Aunt and also my Step Great- Grandmother, who was an excellent cook, and if everything she made was as good as this "Carrot Pudding", I can vouch for that.

Ab's Carrot Pudding	Abigail Marks Staples and Beryl Borgerson
1 lb. grated carrots	
6 oz. fresh bread crumbs	
4 oz. raisins	2 tbs. flour
4 oz. currants	1 egg, beaten
6 oz. brown sugar	grated rind of 1/2 lemon
8 oz. chopped suet	1/4 tsp nutmeg
	pinch of salt
Mix all ingredients together, pack into a pudding steamer + cover tightly. Steam 5-6 hours. Serve with hard sauce.	
Hard Sauce: 1/2 c. butter - softened - 1 tsp. vanilla - enough confectioner sugar to make stiff. Refrigerate to harden.	

Kay Ross Dodge

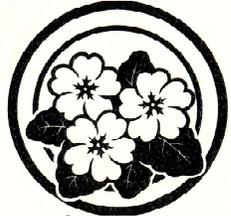


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