

Mussel Ridge News

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

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Mike McConchie's Ash Point Memories



This is my remembrance of the “Old Homestead” on Ash Point in Owls Head, and its owner, Jim Mullins. All the kids living on Ash Point addressed him as “Uncle Jim.” The Homestead was halfway between the Ash Point School and the Wellesley Inn, where I lived until the 7th grade. I was born in 1923, so these memories are from the late 1920’s and early 1930’s.

Uncle Jim lived at the Homestead with Gram J (Jewers?). I can’t remember her last name. Gram J (Hannah Mullens Jewers) was a crippled lady who always was abed in the back room on the first floor. We kids often stopped at the Homestead to see Gram J. She always had a piece of candy for us. The other inhabitant of the Homestead was Uncle Jim’s work horse named Frank. Uncle Jim was married to Grace Ruth (Witham) Mullins who was the daughter of Edwin and Emma (Heard) Witham. Aunt Effie Dyer, Grace Mullins, and my mother Florence were sisters.

When Uncle Jim was cutting hay for Frank, he always had a couple of us boys tramping the hay in the hay rack in the middle of the field. Sometimes we played the tramping game in the barn’s hay loft.

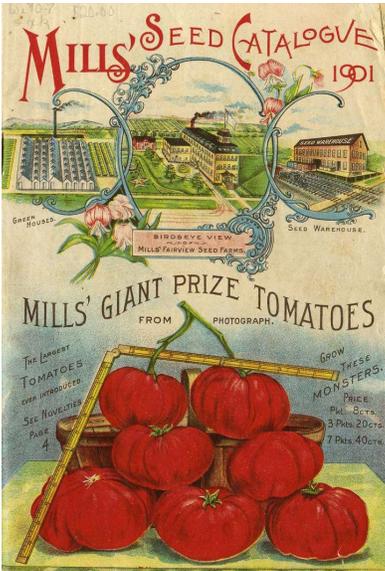
Uncle Jim and Oliver Heard were partners in a fishing weir at Ash Point that was used to catch herring for the sardine factories in Rockland. Uncle Jim used the shed attached between the house and the barn to repair the netting for the fish weir. There was a stone wall that separated Uncle Jim’s property from his neighbor Albert Crowley who lived next door. Uncle Jim and Oliver used the stone wall to tar the netting for the weir. A huge iron tar kettle sat on the stone wall above the Homestead. Uncle Jim and Oliver would put cold tar in the kettle. Then they would build a roaring fire to melt the tar to liquid, then place the white netting in the kettle. A couple of us boys would spread the netting on the field to dry. This process would prevent the netting from deteriorating too quickly in the water. When several of us boys would help seine the fish into the dories, Uncle Jim would give us each a quarter. Lastly, Frank the horse was used to haul the dories up the beach. When finished, Uncle Jim would slap Frank on his hind quarter, saying “Go home, Frank,” and Frank would go home alone.



These are some of the memories I have of the Homestead and its owner, Uncle Jim Mullins.

Mike McConchie

Garden Snippets



I was wondering which was the dreariest part of a garden's year—the brown of early winter or the brown of early spring? And I guess one is as unappealing as the other, but in the spring there's hope! At this time of year it all looks pretty sad, and knowing that all the plants and stems I did not cut down are providing homes for all manner of critters, doesn't make it LOOK any better!

I don't often—if ever—see the birds eating the seeds that are left on the goldenrod or joe pye weed or other seed-bearing plants—but that's what I left them for, so I hope someone is eating them.

In spite of my gloominess, it really **is** a good time of year to wander around and look at everything. We don't even have to work at it—just look and think! What did well this year? What didn't? Why? The “why” is usually guesswork, but sometimes one can guess correctly! Wouldn't the something-or-other look better over there? And don't you think the blah-blah would be happier with more sun?

So we make a list of all the things that need attention in the spring and hope we don't lose the list before winter is over. And then sit down with a cup of tea and a catalog, so we can plan for next year's new stuff! That won't be brown, but delightfully green and lush.

Marty Shaw

What's in our Road Names?



*Home of Mahala Moody early 1900s
(also known as the “Crockett Farm”)*

Someone asked who Mahala's Lane in Ash Point is named for and thanks to Kay Dodge for the answer.

“Mahala was a woman. My mother spoke of her often, so it was probably, at the very least, between 1906 and 1920. She evidently had pasture land for her cows across the road from the house, and every day led her cows to pasture, down the lane. My cousin Beryl Borgerson had probably heard the same story many times growing up from her mother. When the Selectmen were naming the roads in town, Beryl suggested that they name that one Mahala's Lane. Probably the best place to find information about when she lived there would be the Registry of Deeds. I'm sure that my mother and her siblings saw Mahala and her cows going by their house each day. My mother always spoke of her with kindness.”

Kay Dodge



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MUSSEL RIDGE LEARNING CENTER CAMPAIGN LAUNCH!



*Proposed
Mussel Ridge Learning Center will
be located next to the Owls Head
Community Building*



Join us in helping to make the Mussel Ridge Learning Center a reality! Our goal is to raise \$220,000 by September 2023, which will enable us to build the new Learning Center. So far we have raised \$50,000. This will serve as a home for preserving the Historical Society's collection and Owls Head history, as well as be a center for learning and education for people of all generations.

While our kickoff will not be the festive affair we had planned due to renewed COVID concerns, our excitement is great! We invite you to be part of this exciting project for our community. You can view our campaign brochure here at musselridge.org. To learn more about our plans as well as ways to support the project please contact Carolyn Philbrook, by phone (207-593-2667) or Marty Shaw via email at campaign@musselridge.org.

We look forward to connecting with you in the coming months. Watch for updates on our website, musselridge.org, Facebook ([owlsheadhistory](https://www.facebook.com/owlsheadhistory)) and Instagram ([@musselridgehistorical](https://www.instagram.com/musselridgehistorical)).

Thank you.



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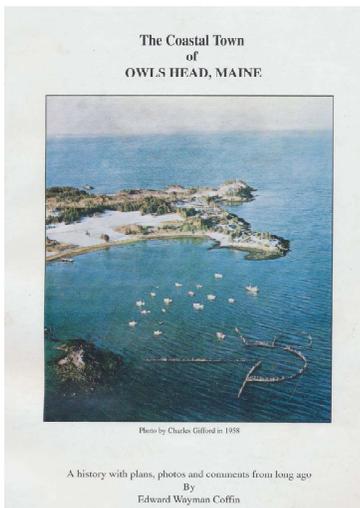
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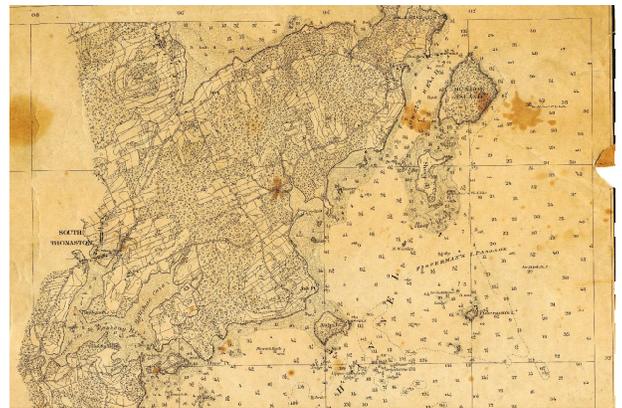
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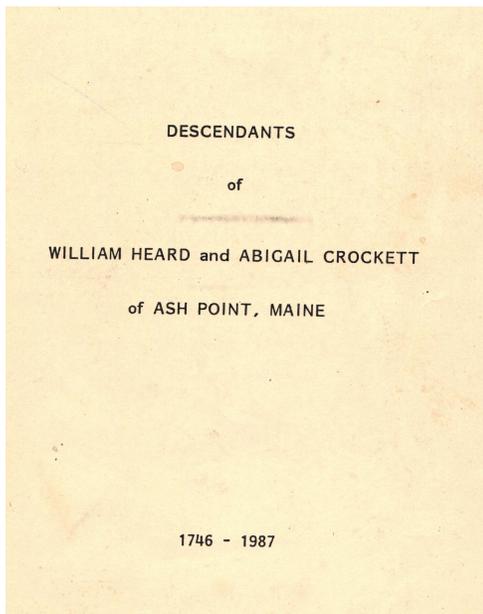
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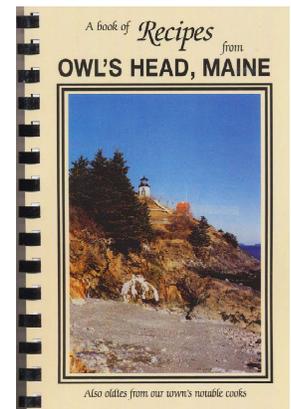
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Rose Hill Cemetery Restoration

The Owls Head Cemetery Association undertook a 3 day restoration of the Rose Hill Cemetery this summer. Active in the restoration work were – John Walker, Dick Carver, Lea Carver, Walter Guptill, Bill Gay, Mike Voncannon, Jesse Davis and several members of the Maine Old Cemetery Association. The work consisted of cleaning memorial stones, repairing and resetting of fallen and broken stones. For views of the work check out the Facebook page of the Owls Head Cemetery Association. There you will find Walter Guptill giving an 8 minute presentation of the work in progress plus over 45 photos. This is a small cemetery with approximately 22 burial sites The oldest dated 1834. Mostly from the Emery family.

Next summer, depending on funding, the plan is to do a restoration project at the Holiday Beach Cemetery.



John Walker cleaning stones



Repaired stones drying slowly

JAKE BARBOUR
PRESIDENT

GOT DIRTY?

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Mussel Ridge Historical Society Volunteer – Membership - Donation Form

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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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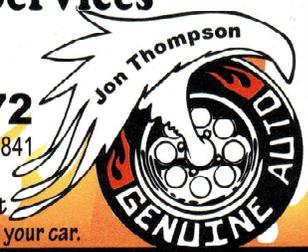
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The People Around Us

"Rough and ready as ever, and feeling like a kid except for a recent touch of rheumatism," is Harland Hurd of Rockland, who celebrated his 80th birthday, Wednesday. A man who kids that he's been in the fishing business "almost since I could walk," Hurd has spent a life spot seining the harbors from Rockport to Owls Head and the islands, and had fishing weirs in as many places. This summer, at 79, Hurd kept 135 lobster traps while he spent the season on his island off Owls Head called Treasure Island.

Last year, Hurd had skin-

divers saw down the last of the half-dozen fishing weirs he built years ago. This one, at Crescent Beach in Owls Head, was 40 years old. Like most weirs, it took a couple of seasons to build. Hurd speaks with pride at the size of the job: "It took the fall and winter travelling as far as Lincolnville to cut 3,500 brushes, 300 spiles (vertical stakes) up to 35 feet long, rails to support the brushes, the cost of \$1,500 for twine for the weir's pocket, bringing everything together at the site, and driving the spiles into the sea bottom to put the weir together." The weir, measuring

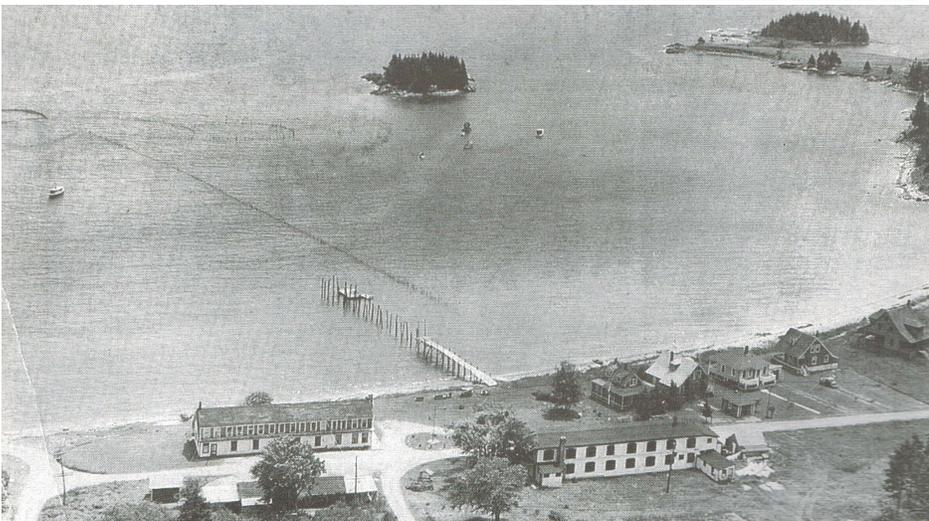
600 feet in circumference, on a lucky day took in 4-5,000 bushels of sardines, back when the fish were selling for 45 cents a bushel.

For 51 years now, Hurd has lived on North Street in Rockland. He first went fishing at the age of 10 with his father out of their native Ash Point. He was graduated from Rockland Commercial College in 1911, and continued to "share" in his father's fishing business until he could get a start for himself. In addition to fishing the weirs, up until five years ago, "when the fish stopped coming," he stop-seined for herring the entrances to harbors at Rockport, Glen Cove, Owls Head and sand beaches.

Hurd doesn't blame the Russian trawlers or the advanced methods of purse seining for the present decline in the herring population, though in his many years, he claims that this is the first time he's known the decline to extend the length of the coast. "I'll have to admit that stop-seining largely depleted the small fish on the coast, so that present operations have to go out farther for the larger fish, but these larger fish are the breeders. Nevertheless, I've seen cycles before, like the decline back around 1938 that turned around, so I won't say the fish won't come back. I expect a long life still to the fishing industry."

Hurd's birthday was Wednesday, but it seems his grandchildren couldn't wait. He was honored with one birthday cake a week ago. The Hurd family now includes two daughters and a son, and 13 grandchildren.

Harland Hurd on right in the boat



Fish Weir at Crescent Beach @1941

Recipe from The Owls Head Cookbook

FRUIT CAKE

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 c. white sugar | 1/2 tsp. cloves |
| 1 c. grape juice | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 1 c. seeded raisins | 1 tsp. cinnamon |
| 1 large pkg. mixed fruit | 2 c. flour |
| 1/3 c. butter | 1/2 tsp. baking powder |
| 1/4 tsp. nutmeg | 1 tsp. baking soda |



Put in saucepan the sugar, grape juice, raisins, mixed fruit, and spices. Boil 3 minutes. When cool, add flour and baking powder. Dissolve baking soda in 2 table-
spoons of warm water. Bake at 300° until done.

Recipe is 100 years old.

From the files of Ruth Chaples

F.L.S. Morse as Santa at Senter-Cranes

Who else had your photo taken with him? What memories do you have?

Send us your picture history@musselrdige.org



F.L.S. Morse (Santa) with Wayne Meserve & Carolyn M. Philbrook



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