

# Mussel Ridge News

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[musselridge.org](http://musselridge.org)

## The Ash Point Cemetery Arch

By: Rodney B. Weeks

When writing articles for the MRHS Newsletter, I have been admonished more than once to check and re-check the facts I am writing about because you don't want to be accused of getting the name of a person, place or thing wrong. Readers now and in the future may rely on what I write today for whatever research they may be pursuing. That being said however, anyone who knows me, knows I like stories – why? Because they give color to history and keeps a reader's interest versus boring them to death with “just the facts ma'am - just the facts”.

Which leads me to the value of **anecdotal history**. Webster's dictionary defines an anecdote as *something such as an account which is not necessarily true or reliable because it is based upon a personal account rather than facts or research*. So as long as I can get away with it, I will try and write a couple of stories (I mean anecdotal histories) as they have been told to me to give my readers a glimpse of **How Life in Maine Used to be**. [My apologies for torturing the state's official slogan].

In Edward Wayman Coffin's history book *The Coastal Town of Owls Head, Maine*, Mr. Coffin writes that he was drawn to this area in 1948 because the way of life practiced by the native population reminded him of where he was raised on Nantucket. “The thrifty natives made their living by fishing the seas or working a small farm while others worked in town for wages \$25 to \$35 a week”.

The people were independent, hardy, and self sufficient. Those who could not do for themselves relied on their neighbors for help. There were no “Big Box” stores or “Angie's List” back then. Life was slower, simpler and you had to rely on yourself and hard work if you were going to get anywhere in this world.

In my research of the people who inhabited Ash Point in the early days, no one seems to embody these self-reliant characteristics more than a man named Alvin Hurd (1865 to 1956). Stories around Ash Point of Alvin Hurd are as numerous as they are legendary. It seems he could do almost anything. He was a jack of all trades. Anyone who needed help would turn to Alvin first whether it was a personal matter or digging a new well (by hand by the way) building a home, operating a fishing weir, or acting as a lender of money. I don't know what the local banks were doing during the Great Depression of the 1930's, but I have seen documentation in the Knox County Register of Deeds Office where Alvin was listed as the lender or mortgage holder of a number of homes of his neighbors in Ash Point where he provided the “seed” money to get folks into a new home. He was truly the leading citizen of Ash Point.

Someday I hope to write down some of these stories (I mean anecdotal histories) about Alvin Hurd, but for now I thought (as the title above indicates) that I would convey the title story of how the Ash Point Cemetery got its arch, as told to me by Alvin Hurd's grandson, Karl Hurd.

It seems that as the number of residents in the Ash Point Cemetery grew, Alvin Hurd thought the cemetery should have something a little more formal and dignified at the entrance to the final resting place of many of Ash Point's early settlers. So as the story goes, Alvin hired Mr. Anson “Hans” Lottie, the local blacksmith, who lived just down Ash Point Drive from the cemetery, to design and fabricate the arch that stands there today. Karl Hurd did not know who actually came up with the design, but Hans Lottie did a masterful job fabricating the arch. The next time you drive by the cemetery, take the time to stop, and take a long look at the arch. You will notice the arch stands on two square iron box columns that are reinforced with an intricate lattice network of supports. Within the lattice work, there are individual pieces of iron work in the shapes of diamonds,



Alvin Hurd

squares and the ace of spades. At the top of the arch is a large Ace of Spades pointing up to the sky.




Within the arch is the name Ash Point Cemetery with the dates 1820 to 1939. No one knows for sure what the significance of the dates is, but my best guess is 1820 is the date Maine became a state and 1939 is the date when Hans Lottie finished and installed the arch.

Alvin paid for the entire cost of the arch out of his own pocket and 17 years later, in 1956, was buried in the Ash Point Cemetery alongside his many friends and neighbors.



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## Owls Head Cemetery Committee

The Owls Head Cemetery Committee (OHCC) held a conservation project with grave stone expert Joe Ferrannini in the Ingraham Cemetery on Freedom Drive from September 1st through the 4th. During those 4 days we were able to repair/reset/clean 29 stones and clean 5 others. While we were not able to work on every single headstone, we prioritized those that were leaning heavily, on the ground, and/or dangerous. Many yards of soil were dug out, and a LARGE number of rocks of all sizes were removed before we could properly reset stones. We were extremely fortunate to have the help of two outstanding volunteers, Ted Brooks and Lee Harvey, plus Mike & Kermit Vonnannon provided food & beverages every day which was awesome! The OHCC is grateful that the Select Board and the town citizens support our efforts to preserve the cemeteries of Owls Head.

Also, thanks to the efforts of OHCC member Heather Almquist, two veterans buried in Owls Head finally have headstones long after they died. Civil War veteran Alden W. Dyer (1841-1904) and Philippine War/WWI veteran Adelbert T. Philbrook (1832-1937), both buried in the Holiday Beach Cemetery, now have marble headstones provided by the VA. Alden's was installed in September and Adelbert's will be installed in the coming year.



Please contact us if you have any new information about burials in Owls Head, especially concerning veterans:

### A Note of Appreciation

As the MRHS Newsletter enters its 17<sup>th</sup> year of publication, it seems appropriate to thank all of our business sponsors who, through their advertising fees, have supported us year in and year out.

In the beginning, local Owls Head businesses such as JBI and Rock Bound Computers were early supporters, but they were soon joined by other businesses owned by local folks such as the Trade Winds Hotel and Maritime Energy.

As you read through this edition, please take the time to note the businesses listed and patronize them if you can. We appreciate their support and couldn't bring you all of your Town's history without them.

Also we would like to thank all the great cooks that have so generously cooked for our "Voting Day Bake Sales." It does not go unnoticed. Folks really look forward to enjoying some great Maine baked goods!

*Many thanks for your generosity in supporting us!*

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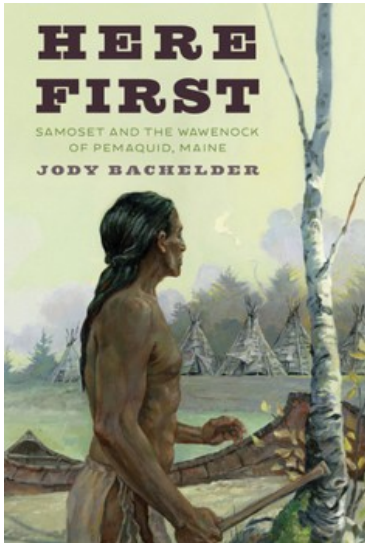
Hopefully this will be finished soon!! We are excited. This winter will be filled with moving in, organizing displays, photos, memorabilia, etc. Folks who have an interest and love for history, we welcome your assistance.

Send us an email  
[history@musselridge.org](mailto:history@musselridge.org).

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### *Here First: Samoset and the Wawenock of Pemaquid, Maine* by Jody Bachelder

*Book Review by Michelle Miller*



Bachelder is upfront about the fact that she does not come to Samoset's story as an insider, i.e., a descendant of Indigenous peoples reconnecting with her family's culture and history: "My connection to Samoset is geographic" (6). In other words, Bachelder grew up on the Pemaquid peninsula, always wondering, "Why was Samoset in Plymouth?" in 1621 (8). Her abundance of caution to avoid cultural appropriation lends transparency to her research and thoroughness to her investigation: Bachelder is mindful of her outsider status and goes to great lengths to lay bare the parameters of her authorial authority and to document her sources. The result is an in-depth overview of the years 1492 to 1696, focusing on Mwooshen territory and the life and deeds of Samoset, sagamore of Pemaquid, Maine.

Bachelder's study subdivides into three sections, chronologically arranged and sandwiched between an Introduction and an Epilogue. Part I focuses on what Samoset's youth might have been like by describing the Wawenock lifestyle, a "[l]ife [...] of] structured rhythm that revolved around the seasons" (24). Bachelder gives her readers a sense of what activities the Wawenock pursued in spring, summer, fall, and winter before providing a synopsis of "The European Invasion, 1492-1604" (52). What emerged for me in this first section was a Maine at once familiar and foreign: I recognized the delights and hardships of

each season, but the abundance that once provided for Wawenock communities, who migrated between the coast in the spring and Maine's interior for the winter, was obviously diminished by the incursion of European civilization, which "had limited resources that were quickly being exhausted" (57). Sustainability did not drive the "merchant adventurers" who visited the shores of the New World (58); they believed in the superiority of a market economy, which bled into Wawenock life. The Wawenock's traditional practices of sustainability eventually fell prey to European fashion crazes like beaver felt hats, altering their culture indelibly.

Part II, "Meeting Europeans, 1605-1625," and Part III, "Keeping the Peace, 1626-1653," present a series of scenarios involving interactions between Indigenous peoples and Europeans in the region that became known as New England after Captain John Smith visited Monhegan in 1614. The first encounter describes the kidnapping of five Wawenock in 1605, although "[b]etween 1500 and 1776, approximately 175 Native men and women were transported to England alone" (87). Bachelder also discusses the Popham Colony, a failed settlement located south of the current town of Phippsburg, before covering the Tarrantine Wars (1607-1615), all under the umbrella of trade between European settlers and Indigenous peoples. The advent of European muskets changed the nature of conflict by increasing the number of fatal battle wounds inflicted and sustained. The reduction in the number of able-bodied Native men due to the introduction of guns was just a prelude to the loss of "from 67 percent to 98 percent, depending on the location" attributable to the illnesses introduced by Europeans (129). Illness from pathogens against which the Wawenock had no defense, warfare, mass deforestation, and a steady influx of settlers seeking religious freedom fed "a circle of destruction Native people could not escape" (214).

Samoset lived from around 1590 to about 1653. What we know of him derives entirely from records left by Englishmen, and those records are few in number. Bachelder painstakingly pieces together the scant clues about the life of a leader who, "[b]y learning the Englishman's language and customs, [...] successfully bridged the cultural divide" (223). Her well-crafted study takes readers back to an era when "Samoset would have been the last sagamore of Pemaquid to remember what life was like before Europeans came to their shores" (225). It is a trip worth taking.

## Changing Seasons Save the Stems

*By Cole Campbell, Production Horticulturist*

If you are like me, the first signs of fall means that my inbox, group chats and community groups are flooded with posts advising readers to “leave the leaves” in my garden. It’s a great reminder to pause before jumping into fall cleanup and consider how the choices I make in my garden affect the wildlife in my area. But leaving the leaves is just the starting point. An often-overlooked counterpart is “save the stems.”

These dry flower stalks that provide vital food and shelter for wildlife are often removed from traditionally managed gardens. Seed heads support many overwintering native birds – American Goldfinches, Black-capped Chickadees, and Dark-eyed Juncos. Hollow and pithy stems also provide critical nesting sites for stem-nesting bees, cavity-nesting wasps, stem-boring moths, and some spider species. Small mammals and birds also use stems as nesting material in the early spring.

Best practice studies suggest leaving stems untouched over winter and trimming them to between 8 and 24 inches tall in the spring. If the uncut stems seem too ungainly at first, consider cutting back a few that are closer to paths to prevent flopping, while leaving intact those farther back in the bed. Another approach is to create intentional “stem islands” in your garden that can expand over the years. In addition to their ecological value, stems can also add winter interest into your garden space with their ornate seed heads, intriguing textures, and infinite shadows of brown

## Recipes from the Past

Who else collected the cookbooks published by the Courier Gazette?

The 1967 one had our own Fish Chowder recipe.



### Mussel Ridge Fish Chowder

(To Serve 50 to 60)

Served Many Times at the Mussel Ridge Suppers

15 pounds fresh haddock fillets	2 gallons milk
2 tablespoons salt	2 cans evaporated milk
1½ pounds salt pork, cut in small cubes	1 pound butter
3 pounds onions, sliced	1 cup flour with water to make paste
1 peck potatoes, cubed	

Cook fresh fish 10 minutes, drain, save water. Set fish to cool, as this is added last, just before serving to eliminate breaking up. Fry out salt pork, cut into small cubes; remove the cubes after they become brown and set aside to serve separately.

Slice onions and fry lightly in pork fat; add cubed potatoes to onion mixture and the remaining fish water, cooking until potatoes are tender. Add regular milk, evaporated milk and butter and let stand several hours, if possible, for flavor. This mixture may be divided in half at this time into two large double boilers so your chowder may be re-heated without scorching. At this time mix the flour and water to thicken slightly the chowder so that it is not a sloppy mixture; and the very last thing add the 15 pounds of fish (divided if you are using two double boilers). Stir as little as possible so that fish is not broken up. Four pounds of crackers or pilot bread will be needed to serve with this and of course nice dill or sour pickles.

My grandmother served this family style from a huge soup tureen and floated common round crackers on top until they looked like dumplings.

*Submitted by Mrs. Clemice B. Pease, Rockland, Maine*

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\_\_\_\_ Staff the Homestead      \_\_\_\_ I have pictures that could be scanned

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

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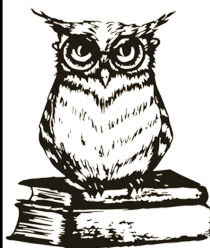
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# Stereoscopes and Local History

By Carolyn Meserve Philbrook

A bit of background history: “Stereoscopic photographic views (stereographs) were immensely popular in the [United States](#) and Europe from about the mid-1850s through the early years of the 20th century. First described in 1832 by English physicist [Sir Charles Wheatstone](#), [stereoscopy](#) was improved by [Sir David Brewster](#) in 1849. The production of the stereograph entailed making two images of the same subject, usually with a camera with two lenses placed 2.5 inches (6 cm) apart to simulate the position of the human eyes, and then mounting the positive prints side by side laterally on a stiff backing. Brewster devised a stereoscope through which the finished stereograph could be viewed; the stereoscope had two eyepieces through which the laterally mounted images, placed in a holder in front of the lenses, were viewed. The two images were brought together by the effort of the human brain to create an [illusion](#) of three-dimensionality.”<sup>1</sup>



If you’ve ever used a View-Master or tried a modern VR headset, you’ve experienced the same principle at work. In the late 1800s, stereoscopes were a centerpiece of home entertainment and education. They offered a rare chance to see vivid, realistic images of faraway places and historic events, turning living rooms into immersive viewing parlors.

My introduction to the fascinating lure of 3D photos began as a child. My grandmother (Myrtle Gamage Curtis) had one and a bunch of slides. I am so thankful to have inherited these gems! As a teen, she worked at a photo/postcard shop (@1920) at Christmas Cove, Maine (see photo). This was probably how her interest in photography began. My collection consists of some local Maine ones as well as from various states. My favorite collection is Sears, Roebucks & Co. Store Headquarters in Chicago about 1906. A fascinating story of what would be considered the “Amazon” of 1900!

The MRHS has been collecting photos of Dix Island and many/most of the photos are stereoscope slides. J.P. Ambrust, an American photographer active primarily in the 1870s, is known for his stereoscopic views and landscape photographs, particularly in Maine, capturing scenes on Dix Island, log jams at Ripogenus and street views in Rockland. His work documented late 19th-century American life and natural landscapes, with some images featuring printed lists of his work on the back.

If you have any sitting around collecting dust, we would love to make copies or would gladly accept donations. We are also in need of a couple stereoscope viewers.

While on the subject of Dix Island, we have quite a collection of photos and documents. Volunteers are needed so we can put together a display/story/booklet for our new History Center. If local history interests you and love digging deeper, this would be a perfect fit! Shoot us an email [history@musselridge.org](mailto:history@musselridge.org).

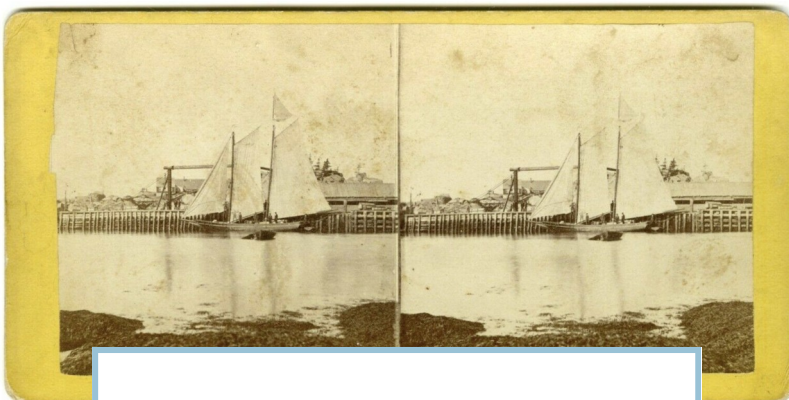
<sup>1</sup>. Encyclopedia Britannica



Sears & Roebuck Co. @1906



Christmas Cove, ME @1920 my grandmother Myrtle Gamage Curtis on left.



Dix Island and yacht Medora