

Mussel Ridge News

A Free Publication of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society
Owls Head, Maine
Winter 2016~ Issue 29

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL GETS A NEW BONNET

In 1922 the students at Owl's Head Village School began attending the Timber Hill School, about a mile down the road. Over the next ninety five years the Village School has been utilized as a town meeting hall, fire truck garage, storage for the Harbor Master and public works crew. During that time, the woods began to fill the clearing around the building. In spite of the foundation settling and overhanging tree limbs abrading holes in the roof large enough for critters to crawl inside, the building has managed to maintain good posture. Viewed from a distance, the school appears to be plumb with a straight roof line.

After considering several quick fixes, including the use of a blue tarp, Mussel Ridge Historical Society members realized that simply patching the roof would not be in the best interest of the School nor would it be consistent with the wishes of the many townfolks who had donated money toward the project. One of our most important concerns was to have the work completed before winter set in.

Several local contractors were invited to submit a bid with Murray Builders, Inc. given the job. Thanks to good weather, Les Murray's crew had no trouble repairing the Village School roof and the installation of beams under the Old Homestead on Ash Point Drive. There is still much work to be done on these two buildings along with the Grange Hall at the Head of the Bay. We invite comments and questions from our readers. Any cash donations, no matter how small, are tax deductible and will be gratefully accepted with a receipt issued for your records.



Village School during repairs of December, 2015

Ingraham Cemetery Signs



Did you know that the town's cemeteries are open from sunrise to sunset? Or that it is illegal to ride an ATV or snowmobile in them? As a reminder to the public of these ordinances, the Owls Head Cemetery Committee put two signs in the Ingraham Cemetery (aka Don Wiley Cemetery) on Freedom Drive.

Getting the signs installed was both easier and harder than we thought. We also wondered how the town's signs get made. First, we had to come up with the wording and get the Selectman to approve both the idea and the cost. Then Andrew Carpenter worked with Frank Ross to figure out the size, which also determined the cost, and decided on the color. Frank used a computer program to format the wording and

got the metal signs and sign posts (thank you very much). The hard part came with the installation. Those posts are heavier than they look and pounding them into the ground was a workout! Thanks to Sue and Larry Choate, Bill Gay, Kermit Voncannon, and Andrew Carpenter, who also coordinated the project, both signs got installed around the end of November.

We're very happy with them and plan to eventually put similar signs in all of the town's cemeteries.

SEEKING MISSING CEMETERY INFORMATION!

It has been brought to the attention of the Owls Head Cemetery Committee that there was once a cemetery consisting of 15 or 20 headstones behind a house just off Birchmont Rd. Now there is just one stone remaining – perhaps one of the oldest in Owls Head. The stone reads:

In memory of Bethiah, daughter of Jeremiah Sleeper, who died Oct 12, 1826, age 1 year. Eaton's historical work shows that her father was born about 1781 and married Abigail (Sherman) March 18, 1804. Bethiah was their 9th child born Oct 18, 1825. The Cemetery Committee would like to find out what happened to the other stones or any information about this burial ground. Several sources have suggested to us that the stones were removed and used as paving stones for a patio or path at the old "Tilting Hilton". If so, does anyone know what might have happened to them when that spot was converted to condos? Any additional information regarding the cemetery would be appreciated to add to our historical files. You can contact Bill Gay at: 594-2302.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

When the Titanic set sail on April 10, 1912, a fire broke out in a bunker below decks which wasn't fully extinguished until the luxury liner sank four days later. (from booklet, *Amazing Facts* by D.L. Nagle)



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DUSTY GARDENER'S NOTEBOOK—*for the anxious gardener*

As a kid I totally abhorred tending the family garden, but today I'm looking forward to the musky smell of damp earth and lazy worms. Having visited the local gathering places around town, I realize there are a lot of us yearning to feel the sun on our shoulders and hear the chirp of peepers in the bog. Try these "mud season" chores to satisfy your March anxieties.

Wood ashes evenly sprinkled on the snow over your garden will absorb the sun and speed up melting. The ashes will work into the soil as potash. But, keep in mind too little is better than too much. And don't put any ashes where you intend to plant potatoes.

For those gardens with an abundance of clay, there'll be plenty of sand in your driveway and along the edges of the street to be swept up later this Spring. The sand will help aerate the clay and allow any late melting snow to leach through it.

New England mariners introduced rhubarb to the United States during the 1820s. Today's anxious gardeners can be the first in their neighborhood to harvest rhubarb by gently removing any accumulated snow around where your plant will emerge from its winter snooze and then place an upturned bushel basket over the spot at the first signs of rhubarb greenery. This can produce a crop of fresh pie filling weeks earlier than usual. Think Spring!

Which came first, the phrase "Juke Box" or "Juke Joint"? "Juke Joint" was 18th century slang used by people along the Carolina- Georgia coast meaning a rowdy and disorderly place. It wasn't until 1890 that Louis Glass and William Arnold invented a mechanism that required a nickel be dropped into a box before a song could be heard on a phonograph. The first selective jukebox was introduced in 1927.

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SCHOOL DAY MEMORIES

by Hazel Payson Beal

There once was a little white school house;
It sat on Ingraham's Hill.
Now it's just a pile of lumber
But memories linger there still.

There used to be around 50 pupils
from grade one up through eight.
In the wintertime we carried our lunch
and sat at our desks and ate.

There was a long black iron stove
Which we fed big chunks of wood
One wall was covered with blackboards,
In the corner a victrola stood.

We started the day with the "Pledge of Allegiance,"
After that said the "Lord's Prayer"
Then everyone opened their desks,
All of our books and pencils were there.

Oh what a feeling of satisfaction
To get one's lesson done.
Then take a little time for dreaming
While waiting for 3:30 to come.

I can recall all of the faces,
Some have long since gone,
Then, sisters, brothers and cousins
All lifted their voices in song.

I'll bet they can all remember
The magic of those wonderful days.
Now the children who sat in one room
Have gone their separate ways.

Yes, memories still linger there,
And I wonder each time I pass by,
What it would be like to go back again,
And I brush a little tear from my eye.

*1929 Ingraham Hill School, and Hazel is
the girl at the far right of the second row,
standing in front of the tree with her hands
folded in front of her.*

"ODE TO AN APPLE TREE"

by Hazel Payson Beal

What is that lovely scent wafting on the breeze?
Why! It's coming from the blossoms on the apple tree
A most wonderous, beautiful sight to be found.
Pink and white buds hanging clear to the ground.
A fairyland sight, to say the least,
with birds and honey bees having a feast
All summer the little green apples grew.
Kissed by the sunshine and dampened by the dew.
But the most miraculous thing of all
was the big juicy apples that came in the Fall.

ABOUT HAZEL PAYSON

She was born 1920 in Warren, Maine,
the second daughter of Herrman & Ethel
Perry Payson. Herman, a carpenter by
trade, was also well known for the apple-
wood pipes he carved (for smoking).

By 1929 the family had moved to Owl's
Head, into the yellow "Rug Shop" house at
Head of the Bay. Hazel, her three sisters
and brother all attended the little one room
school on Ingraham's Hill. Often during the
walk to school, the kids would climb up onto
the railing of the boardwalk and stroll along
as casually as if they were on the ground.
Hazel wrote these poems in her adult years
before passing away in 1983.

Our thanks to Vera Payson Mathieson
for sharing her cousin's writing with us.



WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Would you like to receive the Mussel Ridge NEWS in your email? We can do that. Do you have pictures or artifacts you'd like to donate to the Mussel Ridge Historical Society? Maybe you'd like to simply loan it to us for a brief while. We can handle that, too with whatever restrictions you prefer. Any money donations will be issued a receipt for your tax records.

We'll gladly accept suggestions or questions for the Mussel Ridge NEWS; or if you want to write a short article we ask that it be no longer than one page. Items are printed exactly as submitted. We don't edit your work, but will review it for controversial or inappropriate language.

Contact: Mussel Ridge Historical Society, P.O. Box 133, Owl's Head, ME. 04854- 0133 or
Tom Christie at 207-594-2438 or Kay Dodge at 207-596-6879

BRAIN STEAM

Here's a new column we designed around some of the questions that were asked over the past few years; many of which didn't require much research nor a full paragraph to answer. So, we saved them for our readers to exercise their mind. Since the trivia questions, puzzles and riddles under this banner come from the years before google and other search engines, we think these questions should be answered with your computer turned off and your brain fired up to a full head of steam. Hence the name "Brain Steam"

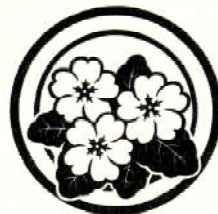
- 1.) What 1940's singer was called the "The Frail Finch", "The voice", and "Chairman of the Board"?
- 2.) Name the swing band leader who's plane disappeared on a flight to France in 1944
- 3.) What big star never showed up for his gig on Louisiana Hayride, thus providing an unknown musician named Jim Reeves the opportunity to launch his own singing career?
- 4.) What was the first song (in any genre) to sell one million copies?

Answers to BRAIN STEAM: 1.) Frank Sinatra, 2.) Glenn Miller, 3.) Hank Williams, 4.) The Wreck of old '97



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COMING SOON

Mussel Ridge Historical Society is making plans to have available for purchase the books, *The Coastal Town of Owls Head, Maine* by Edward Wayman Coffin and *A Book Of Recipes from Owl's Head, Maine*, which was originally published by the K.A.M.P. Group in 1994. We hope to have both available by Spring.

Snow Frosting Recipe by Mary Dyer

1 egg white
3/4 cup sugar
Dash salt
3T. water
1t. light corn syrup
1/2 t. vanilla

Combine egg white, sugar, salt, water, and corn syrup in top of double boiler, beating with electric beater until thoroughly mixed. Place over rapidly boiling water; beat constantly with beater. cook 4 minutes, or until frosting stands in soft peaks. Remove from boiling water and add vanilla. Continue beating until thick enough to spread. Make enough for one 9x9 cake.

Valentine's Day is this week, which brings back memories of heart shaped cakes my Mom (Norma Curtis Meserve) used to make. She made these double laker cakes not only for our family but our teachers at Owls Head School. The cake was always frosted with what she called "boiled frosting" a.k.a. snow frosting, then topped off with coconut. The cookbook we are reprinting has Mary Dyer's recipe as well as so many more. Give it a try when you make your next cake and you will not be disappointed!!

Did you know??

In the last newsletter we gave you excerpts from Beryl Borgerson's booklet - The History of The Owls Head Baptist Church. Here are a couple more interesting facts:

It was about 1925 when the church installed electric lights. Mr. White (Alice Woodman's father) first came at this time. the lights were a gift from Dr. Robert Emery of Winchester, MA in memory of his father, Deacon B.A. Emery. The master builder of the church was B.A. Emery.

The gravel used to grade the church grounds was taken from a pit owned by Chandler and Ann Farr out behind Evergreen Cemetery. This pit is the Lily Pond, a well known place to the village youth.

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