

Mussel Ridge News

A Free Publication of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society
Owls Head, Maine
Spring 2015~ Issue 26



Town folks...Vera Payson Mathieson



My Home at the bottom of Ingraham Hill was a modest home and it was at one time a barrel factory. My dad purchased it around 1917 and made it into a five room home, three rooms on the first floor and two bedrooms on the second. Having just one child, Mildred, he thought he had plenty of room but soon he and my mother had a boy, Robert, followed by another girl Eleanor, so by 1921 there were three children. In 1924 a new life was expected by my parents and Robert was very ill with something the doctor didn't seem to be able to diagnose so in February just a month before I was to be born, Robert died. My dad made a wooden coffin and reverently placed Robert in it and proceeded to wheel the coffin up in back of our home to

the neighborhood cemetery. In march when I was born I can imagine how my parents felt to have another girl when I am sure they wished for a baby boy to take the place of their little boy who had just died.

The year 1926 they were blessed with a baby boy, Albert, and their family was completed but by that time our little home was bursting at the seams.

My dad was a good provider and always had a big garden so mom put up jars and jars of fruit and vegetables. There were jars of string beans, corn, peaches, blueberries, jams and jellies for a few. Carrots were put down in the sawdust and apples in many barrels. In the shop he would have 100 lbs of sugar and a barrel of flour, along in November he would have a deer hanging there as he would have gone hunting up north and always came home with a deer. Dad and mom would make mincemeat with the neck of the deer and other ingredients. That simmered on the back of the wood range all day and smelled so wonderful. Mama would then seal it in the jars and that made many lovely mincemeat pies especially for daddy as it was a favorite with him. She was a wonderful cook and even as poor as we were we always had tasty home cooked meals.

Life at Ingraham Hill was simple with homes always open for us to visit whenever we felt like we wanted to talk to someone outside our family. We would go up the boardwalk that went up the west side of Ingraham Hill and visit Louise Ingraham whose husband was a descendent of the original Ingrahams and if she was not busy she would have a game of Chinese Checkers or Parcheesi. Sometimes she would take us for a short ride to town (Rockland). That was a treat as we never had a car in the family and any ride was exciting. They has a nice looking son so as I got older that was another reason I visited often.

In the winter we would go to the top of the hill and a group of us would put our sleds together and slide down the snowy hill as in those days they never plowed it much just tramped it down with horse and sleigh. There was an occasional car but far and few between and then they would appear we would holler "here comes one of

those cars”. In the summer we would live on the beach and swim in the cold ocean water. We would build a fire and gather periwinkles to cook over the fire and pick the meat out with a pin. This tasted some like clam but a little tough. Other times mama would give us some potatoes to bake in the ashes or if she came with us we would cook onions in a black spider (fry pan) and lay hot hogs on to of them. I never had a hotdog taste so good since those days.

On top of the hill was a one room schoolhouse which held anywhere from 30 to 40 kids and with one teacher to rule over it. This was the center of the neighborhood. On cold days we would huddle near the schoolhouse stove until it was warm enough to go to our desks. The desks were double seats with a footstool underneath and I can remember in kindergarten I would go under the desk and sit on the footstool when I got tired. I was only one of three kids in my grade all 9 years and as I loved to talk I dominated the other two and probably they did not like me too well but back then the teacher had me recite my lessons maybe because I was willing to do so. The other two kids never seemed to offer to talk or maybe I took over too much when I look back.

The days spent on Ingraham Hill were very interesting, my mother was very easy and didn’t have us do much work. Dad was different and in the fall we spent many hours piling up wood in the shed. We would complain to mama and she would say “Harry I think they have worked long enough”. Sometimes he did not agree and would keep us working there but I am sure we weren’t abused. I think my mother was so easy with us because she lost her mother at 11 years of age and wanted us to enjoy our childhood. Looking back I wish I had done more to help around the house. As we got older and had families of our own we did more to help out as we papered the rooms and helped her clean and shop for them.

Where do you come up with so many Interesting pieces for the Mussel Ridge NEWS?

First, we have several people who write and contribute to the NEWS. Some specialize in one genre such as cooking or maritime history while others enjoy picking up ideas from conversations, books, television. We encourage our readers to submit questions or you can submit a brief manuscript about some aspect of history in Owls Head, or Knox County, or Maine in general.

Our submission rules are quite simple: You write it and we print it just as it’s wrtten. We don’t proof read, but we will scan your item for any vulgarities or ambiguities. We ask that you keep your text to no longer than a page or so. We cannot guarantee that your piece will be in the next issue, but it would be rare when we wouldn’t be able to print it. Be sure to include your name and phone number or email

Send typed manuscripts to: Mussel Ridge NEWS, P.O. Box 133, Owl’s Head, Maine, 04841-0133 or email them to: cmphome@midcoast.com

Owl’s Head Village Library has a really great selection of Maine Books to compliment your research or for simply relaxing with a cup of tea. Don’t like to read? They have DVDs galore! Their winter hours are Saturday 9am to 5pm or by pre-arranged appointment.

	<p>OWLS HEAD VILLAGE LIBRARY 31 South Shore Drive Owls Head, ME 04854 Hours: Sat. 9 am - 5 ish Internet Access, DVD’s, Children’s Room, Large Print Large Marine Books Selection WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT - STOP BY!</p>
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A DIFFICULT DECISION

After nearly five months of deliberation, the members of Mussel Ridge Historical Society unanimously voted to not host our Fall Craft Fair this year. Each year the time required for planning and the myriad chores of producing the craft fair have increased. Only through the help of many devoted volunteers were we able to host a fair for the past six years. Additionally, last year we were faced with an unexpected expense which took a hefty bite out of our profits and we were informed that the Transportation Museum won't be available for the 2015 fair. We've considered several other venues for the fair, but none were satisfactory.

The Fall Craft Fair was intended as a fund raiser for the restoration of two dilapidated one room schools we hold a lease on. We believe the citizens of Owl's Head want these landmarks preserved and we believe that, in due time, each will be restored. This history is your history. So, we now come to our readers for suggestions on how to raise funds for the restoration of these two very tired schools. All ideas will be respectfully considered. The Mussel Ridge Historical Society is a non-profit organization. We'll gladly issue a receipt for any donation of any amount.

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LIFE ON MILL TIME

When Marty Shaw wrote of the joy she and her sister experienced in riding their bike around town all day, I think every reader recalled similar days. But when she mentioned they had to get home before the five o'clock whistle, that brought to my mind a flood of memories.

In the summer of 1956 we moved from a rural hamlet at the intersection of two dusty roads to a village in the shadow of the papermill where Dad was employed. I thought the farm was a perfect place to raise an eleven year old boy but the reality was, we were a one car family and the forty minute commute to and from the mill twice a day had become quite wearing on my mother. Our new house was much smaller than the farm house and the actual real estate it sat on was less than one-quarter acre. The neighbors' houses were close enough to hear their domestic tiffs if the windows were open. But, one lucky break was our area of the village didn't get that foul paper mill stench until moments before a hard rain arrived. This we learned to accept as an omen on laundry day or if we kids were planning to sleep out in our tent.

Every aspect of life revolved around the mill. St. Regis Paper Co. took responsibility for all municipal functions, i.e. road maintainance, street lights, trash removal, volunteer fire department, even providing a place for the shift workers to deposit their utility payments. Four times a day the mill blew a whistle that sounded similar to those old World War II air raid warnings, but only a short three or four second blast. That whistle could be heard for miles and Moms embraced it as if it were a mandate from on high. For us kids, though, it could be a royal pain in the neck.

The first toot of the day was at 7 a.m, a mere formality serving notice that the day shift had begun. My mother would awaken us before she left to take Dad to work and we were expected to be up and at the breakfast table when she returned. Now, the drive to the mill was less than fifteen minutes round trip so, for us kids, that seven o'clock whistle was our notice to roll out and get hopping before she came back. For the men in the pine woods, or anyone else working outside, that whistle was signaling, "It's time to get a sweat on". My Dad said they couldn't hear the whistle inside the papermill so obviously, it was for the benefit of everyone outside.

Likewise, the noon whistle announced lunch time. It's rumored that business people scheduled their appointments to meet with clients at ten minutes past the "nooner". This gave them a good excuse to invite their client to lunch if things looked profitable or cut the meeting short if discussions were going nowhere. Mr. Dawson, our town barber, had several men with standing appointments on specified days for "... the first haircut after the nooner". That whistle could be an aggravation for the local churches, tooting every day including Sundays. All the veteran clergy knew enough to keep their sermon short and finish up before twelve o'clock, but often a guest pastor, although forewarned of the time constriction, became so intent on their sermon they seemed to deliberately taunt fate. As the minutes droned on you could sense the tension building amongst the worshippers. Inevitably, a blast from the mill whistle interrupted the speaker's dramatic conclusion or, worse yet, the benediction. Women shrieked, children giggled and the speaker fumbled and mumbled on to the end.

The three o'clock whistle signaled the end of the day shift and beginning of the evening shift. For the kids who had an after school job, it meant you were late for work or, if you played on any of the church softball teams, you were late for practice, too. Then at about 4:25 p.m., the L&N freight train blew it's horn as it approached the hi-way crossing. This was our final call to beat it for home and supper which was served promptly at five p.m. There was no good excuse for being late. In most milltown homes, supper was a family time where conversation was encouraged and guests were welcomed as long as the invite was previously okayed by Mom. Boys showed up with hair combed and shirts tucked in. Young ladies, too, had their long hair under control with barretts. Short shorts were generally discouraged at the supper table, but culottes or Bermudas were acceptable.

We met Constable Grigor the first week in our new home. He'd stopped by to introduce himself and explain a few things about life in the village. Before leaving he informed Mom that, "Children under sixteen and all dogs

must be indoors before the mill whistle blows at eleven p.m.” State law allowed sixteen year olds to work until ten o’clock and eighteen year olds still in school could work until eleven, but no more than three nights a week. Grigor knew the schedule each kid worked and any teen on the streets late would be given a cheerful wave of his hand, or a lift to their front door if needed. Infractions of the curfew by younger teens usually subjected the errant child to a lecture on a good night’s sleep equals good grades in school. For repeat offenders, their worst fear was to be taken home by the Constable and made to stand there while he delivered his lecture to your parents.

Today it’s a whole different world. Woodsmen break for lunch anytime they please, now. Softball practice continues well past five o’clock, (families rarely eat together any more), and the curfew whistle was suspended several years ago allowing youngsters to hang around the Tasty-Freeze until it closes at 11:30. Constable Giogor’s beat is patrolled by a Deputy Sheriff. But one thing remains. Preachers still yield to the Sunday “nooner”.

BRAIN STEAM - COWBOY SIDEKICKS

Every self respecting cowboy had a “pardnor” who backed him up in a tight situation and helped save the day. We’ve listed here the western stars and a list of supporting sidekicks, but not in the same order as the stars. Can you match them up? Of course you can! But, can you come up their real name? Answers are found on back page of this NEWS

Stars

- 1.) Lone Ranger
- 2.) Roy Rogers
- 3.) Matt Dillon
- 4.) Tim Holt
- 5.) Gene Autry
- 6.) Cisco Kid
- 7.) Gil Favor
- 8.) Buster Crabbe
- 9.) Miss Kitty
- 10) Daniel Boone

Sidekicks

- A.) Sam, the bartender
- B.) “Fuzzy” Q. Jones
- C.) Rowdy Yates
- D.) Mingo
- E.) Pancho
- F.) Festus Hagen
- G.) Hopper
- H.) Frog
- I.) Tonto
- J.) Cookie



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OUR SUMMER & FALL SCHEDULE

2nd Thursday of each month, (10a.m) —the Mussel Ridge Historical Society holds its monthly business meeting at the Owl's Head Community Building. Any interested persons are encouraged to join us.

Memorial Weekend —Owl's Head Lighthouse will be open to the public for tours. Bring your camera!

June 9th (8am- 6 pm) —Baked food sale at the primary election polls, downstairs in the Owl's Head Community Building. Anyone wishing to donate food can drop it off on Election Day after 8a.m.

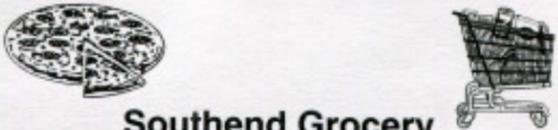
June 14th (1-3 pm) —Community Ice Cream Social at Owl's Head Community Building. Everyone is invited. Attendees are asked to bring photos, memorabilia and stories from your favorite school years. A guest speaker will discuss their career as an educator.

July, August & September, (Wednesdays 2-4 p.m) —the Old Homestead on Ash Point Drive will be open to the public for inspection. Members of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society will be on hand.

July 19th (Noon to 3p.m.) — Mussel Ridge Historical Society members will host a community picnic. Free hot dogs, cold beverages, hand cranked ice cream, and traditional music will be available for your enjoyment. We do ask guests to bring a family size salad or dessert for the buffet table. Forgotten skills and crafts will be demonstrated and old fashioned games will be practiced by children of every age. Yes, Kids, the tire swing will be waiting for you, too.

October 10,11, 12 —Last chance to visit Owl's Head Light and keepers cottage, (weather permitting)

November 10, (8am- 6 pm) —a baked food sale at the election polls, downstairs in the Owl's Head Community Building. Anyone wishing to donate food can drop it off on election day after 8 a.m.



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CALIFORNIA, HERE WE COME!

In a previous issue of the NEWS an article appeared recounting the 1849 experiences of a young man from Maine aboard the *Suliot*, a ship enroute to the California gold fields. The article was researched and written by Gene Barron, who is a regular contributor to the NEWS, and a life member of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society. Since that article appeared, Gene has located, and will make available to anyone interested, a list of the passengers aboard the *Suliot*. Additionally, he's prepared a list of all ships that departed Maine ports for the Gold Rush, which is printed below.

Gene has offered to assist anyone having difficulty in finding a ship they're researching. Our readers may contact him directly at ginob@twc.com. He makes no promises that his search will be successful, emphasizing a vessel's history can be very elusive, particularly if it ended at sea.

Vessels That Left Maine Ports For the California Gold Rush, Arriving at San Francisco (7 December, 1848 — 31 December 1849)

<u>Vessel's Name</u>	<u>Departure Date & Port</u>	<u>Arrival Date</u>	<u>(notes)</u>
Agnes	Oct. 18, 1849 Frankfort	May 10, 1850	
Almira	Nov.13, 1849 Bath	May 6, 1850	
Amelia	Nov.12, 1849 Eastport	May 6, 1850	
America	Oct. 24, 1849 Bath	May 29,1850	(via NewYork)
Anna E. Maine	Oct. 6, 1849 Bath	Mar. 7, 1850	
Arco Iris	Aug. 19, 1849 Bath	Feb. 20,1850	
Arno	Dec. 7, 1849 Searsport	June 20,1850	
B.M. Prescott	Nov. 8, 1849 Eastport	May 18, 1850	
Birmingham	Nov. 4, 1849 Bath	April 7, 1850	
Burnham	June 30,1849 Portland	Jan. 14, 1850	
Byron	Dec. 4, 1849 Castine	July 2, 1850	
Cantero	Nov. 4, 1849 Bangor	Apr. 29, 1850	
Ceres	Dec. 8, 1849 Portland	July 28,1850	
Charles Cooper	Nov. 11,1849 Bangor	May 8,1850	
Condor (No.1)	Aug. 20,1849 Portland	Feb. 17,1850	
Crocus	Dec. 9, 1849 Bath	June 23, 1850	
Cybele	Sept. 8,1849 Portland	Apr. 6, 1850	
Eagle (No. 3)	Dec. 7, 1849 Bath	June 23,1850	
Emma	Dec. 20,1849 Bath	June 15, 1850	
Eudorus	Feb. 12,1849 Frankfort	Sept. 15,1850	
F.A. Everett	Sept. 21,1849 Belfast	Feb. 17,1850	
Fawn (No.1)	Aug. 21,1849 Bath	Jan. 25, 1850	
Fortunia	June 12, 1849 Portland	Jan 12, 1850	
Franklin Adams	Oct. 29, 1849 Searsport	Apr. 28, 1850	
Glen	July 16, 1849 Portland	Jan. 16, 1850	
Glencoe	Nov. 11, 1849 Bangor	Apr. 7, 1850	
Golconga	June 15, 1849 Bangor	Nov. 22, 1850	
Gold Hunter	Oct. 12, 1849 Bangor	Mar. 26, 1850	
Hampton	Sept. 8, 1849 Belfast	Feb. 28,1850	
Harriet	Dec. 13, 1849 Bath	May 5, 1850	
J. Merithew	June 23, 1849 Searsort	Nov. 26, 1849	
James A. Thompson	Oct. 2, 1849 Bath	Mar. 29, 1850	
Jane A. Hersey (Br.)	Oct. 22, 1849 Bangor	Mar. 26, 1850	
Leo	Dec.11, 1849 Bath	May 16, 1850	

Lunette	July 23, 1849	Eastport	Jan. 2, 1850
Margaret	Oct. 8, 1849	Portland	May 28, 1850
Maria	Nov. 4, 1849	Bath	Apr. 25, 1850
Midas	Oct. 30, 1849	Thomaston	Mar. 27, 1850
Nathaniel Hooper	June 15, 1849	Eastport	Feb. 4, 1850
North Carolina	Dec. 7, 1849	Bath	June 14, 1850
Olinda	Dec. 8, 1849	Bath	(condemned on arrival at San Francisco)
Ortolan	Dec. 5, 1849	Portland	Aug. 6, 1850
Ottoman	Dec. 8, 1849	Portland	(no arrival date- may have been withdrawn)
Pilot	Dec. 10, 1849		(no info available after reaching the Pacific)
Plato	Nov. 23, 1849	Portland	June 18, 1850
Rio Grande	Aug. 22, 1849	Bangor	Feb. 21, 1850
Rival	Oct. 24, 1849	Portland	June 15, 1850
Ruth	Sep. 20, 1849	Portland	Feb. 14, 1850
S.D. Bailey	Dec. 11, 1849	Bath	June 25, 1850
Sam & Ben	Nov. 14, 1849	Thomaston	May 15, 1850
Samuel & Edward	Oct. 15, 1849	Bangor	May 25, 1850
Samuel French	Dec. 11, 1849	Eastport	Apr. 25, 1850
San Jacinto	Dec. 25, 1849	Belfast	May 6, 1850
Santiago	Nov. 23, 1849	Thomaston	June 17, 1850
Sarah Moers	Aug. 15, 1849	Bath	Feb. 21, 1850
Sarah Warren	Oct. 9, 1849	Portland	Apr. 6, 1850
Science	June 23, 1849	Bangor	Jan. 14, 1850
Siroc	Dec. 8, 1849	Eastport	June 15, 1850
Six Brothers	Nov. 18, 1849	Saco	May 6, 1850
Suliot	Jan. 30, 1849	Belfast	July 18, 1849
William O. Alden	Dec. 8, 1849	Belfast	May 6, 1850

LET'S GET TOGETHER

Not receiving this newsletter in your e-mail or would you like to sign up? Have you got memorabilia or pictures you'd like to donate? We'll gladly accept them or photograph the article(s) for our archives. Cash contributions to the Mussel Ridge Historical Society are tax deductible and we'll gladly give you a receipt. We also have need of volunteers to help with the our ongoing projects. Winters are usually uneventful.

Contact Tom Christie 207-594-2438 OR Kay Dodge- 207-596-6879 kayed38@myfairpoint.net
OR Carolyn Philbrook at 207-596-7803 ballyhacme@gmail.com.

HEY! WANNA DO DOUBLE GOOD DEED?

By sharing this copy of the Mussel Ridge NEWS with a relative or friend, (instead the waste can), our work will be promoted in a larger circle of people, which may lead to a new member or volunteer for our society; and the life of a tree may be extended for a few more days. Thanks

Answers to Brain Steam: 1.= I. (Jay Silverheels) 2.= J. (Andy Devine) 3.= F. (Ken Curtis)
4.= G. (Ray Whitley) 5.= H. (Smiley Burnett) 6.= E. (Leo Carillo) 7.= C. (Clint Eastwood)
8.= B. (Al St. John) 9. = A. (Glenn Strange) 10.= D. (Ed Ames)