



MEMORIES OF MAINE



Bath Iron Works, 1943. This oil painting of Bath Iron Works by Carroll Thayer Berry shows the construction of two large naval vessels in the shipyard. Carroll T. Berry (1886-1978) was born in New Gloucester, Maine, and later became a well-known figure of Rockport, Maine. He received an engineering degree from the University of Michigan, but then returned to New England to pursue education in fine arts. Eventually he was drawn back to the sea, and to Maine, where he was the only artist permitted to paint Bath Iron Works during World War II.

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SPRING 2021**

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DOWN MEMORY LANE

by Aimée N. Lanteigne

In a time when social media relays news and gossip at lightning speed, it's comforting to know some folks still appreciate the old ways. Reading a newspaper you can hold in your hand, talking on a phone attached to your wall, or meeting an old friend for lunch are some of the purest joys of communication that have fallen by the wayside because of formats like Facebook, Instagram, and Zoom. One person



Toby Airplay, 1986.

who still appreciates the old ways is Toby LeBoutillier. For over 40 years Toby has hosted a weekly radio program called *Down Memory Lane*. He plays century old classics on shellac, or vinyl records, while regaling his audience with old news stories from the early to mid 1900s. His distinctive voice, a mix of Philly, Maine, and across-the-pond English, is both mesmerizing and comforting. To understand how LeBoutillier got into radio, you have to go back to his freshman year of college at the University of Maine.

But first...Toby was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, in March of 1941. His father owned a bookstore and his mother was a school teacher. The couple loved music.

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Toby during the early years of *Down Memory Lane*.

the music bug. He loved show tunes, classical music, and 50's pop and rock. LeBoutillier "played radio." He would make up commercials and record them on his tape recorder. He would make his own cuts by pretending to be a reporter asking a question, and then cut in the answer using a line from a popular song.

In 1958, LeBoutillier entered the University of Maine at Orono to study physics because, as he said, "we were behind the Russians in the space race and America needed scientists." While there, he signed on with the ROTC program. Every male student at the university was required to participate for their first two years as UMaine was a land grant university funded by the federal government, and having a military program was part of the deal. Some 900 young men drilled

They had side-by-side baby grand pianos on which they played show tunes for their children on a regular basis. When the family moved to Brooksville, to be closer to where his father spent his summers as a child, in Castine, the pianos went with them. The family then moved to England to be near his mother's side of the family. Whether in Maine or in Europe, Toby caught

every day around the campus and on the football field. During Toby's sophomore year, he had to make a choice. He could stick with ROTC, or drop out of the program. Dropping out meant he may get drafted into the regular army where he would have much fewer choices as to where he was sent and what he would do in the military. Common sense prevailed and he agreed to stay in the

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ROTC program to become a commissioned officer. “The Cold War was pretty damn bad, almost hot,” quipped LeBoutillier in a recent phone interview. Joining the army as an officer was, as he put it, “a necessary evil, but not his future.” “It’s better to graduate college, be an officer, and be treated like somebody than to be drafted and dragged through the mud.”

LeBoutillier graduated from UMO in 1962 with a physics degree, but didn’t have to report for duty until February, 1963. He bummed around a bit, managing a hotel resort near Brooksville, and helping out with a seasonal wreath business until it was time to report to Aberdeen for boot camp. His MOS (military occupational speciality) was in the ordnance corps of the field supply company. He was sent to Germany on the Rhine River. His company took over an old Hitler warehouse as a base for their twenty 5-ton trucks. During his two-year stint in Germany, he listened to a lot of German radio and made recordings of what he heard. He was “...just doing my time and my duty.” He knew the army was not where his future lie.

Back in the U.S. in January 1965, he needed a job. In order to do anything with his physics degree, he would need to acquire further education and pursue a doctorate degree, something he was not interested in doing, especially since he had been out of the rhythm of school for two and a half years. “I wanted to do what I’ve always wanted to do, and that’s be on the radio!” While visiting in Castine, he met up with a family friend who was



Toby gliding gracefully *Down Memory Lane*.

running a record company in New York City at the time. His grandmother was still living in Philadelphia so he decided to take a trip to visit with her. During this visit, he detoured briefly to New York City to meet the family friend, David Hall, in his office. David introduced him to another friend, Martin Bookspan, who ran WQXR Classical Radio. It was Martin who gave the 24-year-old LeBoutillier some very sage advice that would mold his future in radio, especially for someone who had no experience in it. “Go somewhere where it doesn’t matter that you don’t know. The place will train you! Go out into the country and get a job in it!”

Toby’s chance would come one day at a party back

DOWN MEMORY LANE continued on page 26



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THE LETTER IN THE WALL

by Theodora Weston

The following article is courtesy of the Winterport Historical Society and appeared in our 2007 Summer issue.

It is surprising and quite exciting at times when a small tidbit of information leads to the discovery of an interesting story about a facet of our local history. Such was the case when Don picked up a burlap sack full of old papers and letters which led to the uncovering of the story of Dr. Tyler Thayer who was tried for murder back in the 1850s.

Another similar incident has led to the subject of this story. It was about thirteen years ago that Vera Sleight called me to say that they had found something I might find interesting when they did some renovation in their house and opened up a petition between two rooms. The Sleights at that time lived in the house at the corner of Main and School Streets where today Arpel's Salon is located.

I wasted no time in visiting Vera and found that what she had was an envelope directed to James Haley, Esq. and postmarked Sacramento, California, November 13, 1865. The two cent stamp with the picture of Andrew Jackson on it is known among stamp collectors as the "Black Jack" and is undoubtedly of some value. James Haley who was born in 1811 and died in 1894 was a



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former owner of that very house. The envelope and contents were obviously more than 125 years old. The mice had apparently had a field day in that wall and chewed up some of the paper but enough of it was intact so that we could see what it was. The condition of the paper was such that I did not feel it could stand much handling, but I did make a copy of it so we could all see it.

It was a formal declaration by the Governor of California that “in accordance with the recommendation of the President of the United States, I do hereby appoint Thursday, the 7th day of December next should be a day when the people of California... along with her sister states, of PUBLIC THANKSGIVING to the Great Ruler of the Universe.” This was dated the tenth day of November, A.D. 1865. At this point in time the president was Andrew Johnson who had assumed the presidency after the death of Lincoln on April 15, some seven months previously.

The proclamation was very upbeat noting in how many ways the nation prospered. I quote in part: *“Let the day be set apart throughout our borders for religions exercises in our churches and social festivities in our homes; for upon no occasion, since the foundation of the Republic, has there been so much reason to recognize the hand of God in our concerns... Our schools and seminaries of learning are in a flourishing condition... Our mines are still yielding of their abundance, our harvests have been plenteous; and all our industrial pursuits have prospered in an unusual degree... But above all, and more than all, we have reason to rejoice that peace has been restored to our beloved country. The deluge of blood through which for four years the Nation’s flag was carried, has been stayed by an Almighty hand. The war for the Union has resulted in the triumph of liberal principles and the complete vindication of constitutional authority...”*

This was interesting in itself but even more so when you note that the proclamation is signed by Frederick F. Low, Governor of California. This is the Frederick Low who was born in Frankfort, Maine on June 30, 1828 (some records say 1820), the son of Daniel Low, Jr. who owned a farm on the Goshen Road then Frankfort and now Winterport.

The house is still standing and, up until about 12 years ago, was the property of Louis and Patricia Madrazo. Before the Madrazos moved, Pat gave us a copy of the abstract of their deed which included the research done by Ellery Bowden, a prominent local lawyer. This showed that a Daniel Low of Penobscot (now Castine) had purchased about 100 acres from David Bolton in 1792. His son Daniel Low, Jr. inherited the property in 1826. When this Daniel died in 1871, the ownership of the farm came to his five sons. Their names were Joel W., Charles, Frederick F., Joseph, and Horace. Joel became the new owner after the others signed off on their claim.

Here is where we first find mention of Frederick Ferdinand Low who was the ninth governor of California during the Civil War 1863–1867. Of course the question arises as to how he got to Sacramento from the farm on the Goshen Road in Frankfort/Winterport. Fortunately, D. Jeffrey Hollingsworth of *The Republican Journal* of Belfast had the same question, and his research became an article in that paper in July of 1984.

After a few years of a somewhat limited grammar-school education, Frederick Low was apprenticed at the age of fifteen to a trading firm in Boston doing business with countries of the Orient. He took advantage of this work to learn as much as possible about the business and his firm’s clientele. In addition, he attended lectures and public seminars at Faneuil Hall, where he heard some of the leading intellectuals of the day.

In 1849, when he was twenty one years of age and had completed his apprenticeship, he got caught up in the gold fever and went to California hoping to make his fortune. Like so many others of that time, he saw no future in panning for gold, but decided to go into business in San Francisco, operating a store in partnership with one of his brothers in 1850. After a few months, he moved to Marysville and set out to establish a shipping business. His experiences in Boston stood him well, and by 1854 he consolidated practically all the steamship lines between the Sacramento River and San Francisco Bay. At this time he married Mollie Creed, and along with the shipping business, he established a bank in Marysville.

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In 1860, the census proved that California was entitled to add another Congressman. Frederick Low, by then, was considered one of the most prominent men of the region, and he became the Republican nominee. He was elected and sworn in June 3, 1862. He chose to serve only one term, and then accepted appointment as Collector of the Port of San Francisco. His reputation and popularity were such that he was nominated for governor, and was elected in September of 1863. He defeated the Democratic incumbent, and became the ninth governor of the State of California and the first to serve a four-year term under the provision of a new amendment to the state constitution.

As governor he was considered to be a Unionist and a strong supporter of Lincoln. An account of his life from the internet reports that “he encouraged a state university and some consider him the founder of the University of California.” Very likely, he was instrumental



in the creation of the State Park system in 1864.

At the end of his term in 1867, he went back to his shipping businesses. His familiarity with the Far East prompted President Johnson to appoint him U.S.

Ambassador to China in 1869. These were tense times for relations with China, but Low, with his firm diplomatic skills, won the respect of both Chinese and Americans so that he stayed on until 1874, well into President Grant’s second term of office. At that time, he left this position and returned to his banking and business activities in San Francisco, where he died in 1894 at the age of 68.

Frederick Low was 17 years older than James Haley to whom he sent a copy of his Thanksgiving proclamation. Obviously they knew each other but

it would be interesting to know about the relationship. They both died in the year 1894.

The millions of visitors to Golden Gate Park today might be surprised if they knew that the man who established this park came from Winterport, Maine. This hard-working, competent man spent a lifetime of solid achievement reflecting great credit on his family and place of birth. He served his adopted state and nation well. His father, Daniel, Sr. who lived until 1871, must have taken great pride in this son who became Governor of California and Ambassador to China.

The name Frederick Low joins a long list of those from the small town of Winterport who have made significant contributions to the development of our fair state and nation.

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THE SINGHI DOUBLE COTTAGE

Birthplace of Edna St. Vincent Millay

by Kathy Onofrio

In 2016, a somewhat sad looking home at 198-200 Broadway, in Rockland, was scheduled for demolition. Fortunately, a group of local residents saw the importance of preserving the house and now, with its exterior renovation complete and interior renovation in progress, the house is slated to regain its rightful place in Rockland's history, and American literature.

The house, listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the "Singhi Double Cottage," is also known as the Millay House, the house where poet Edna St. Vincent Millay was born in 1892.

Built in 1891, the Singhi Double Cottage is a good example of the many double houses built in Rockland as affordable housing for the blue-collar workforce of this industrial city. By 1912, there were 1,376 dwellings in the neighborhoods east of Broadway, 125 of which were double houses. Seventy double houses remain today, more than any other town or city in Knox County. The double cottages are significant in that they made a recognizable contribution to the broad patterns of Rockland's history. Throughout the 1800s, as the town grew, business leaders were dependent on boarding houses for their work force; which were not ideal for men with families. As a way to create more acceptable, family-friendly and affordable housing, working-class brothers, or fathers and sons, began building double houses in Rockland, most often within walking distance of jobs in the business district or along the waterfront. Each builder split construction costs, and each owned one side. The Singhi Double Cottage was built by Wellington Singhi toward the end of the period in which Rockland double houses were built (1837 to 1900) and conveys a sense of that time and place.

Several distinctive features make this house a good example of the Queen Anne style of architecture—for

example, the patterned shingles above its first story clapboards, and the gabled roofs on each side that protrude slightly with their decorative pediments supported by tall carved brackets. Inside, corner woodwork around the first-floor doors and windows contain Queen Anne bullseyes, and an original stained-glass window remains on the south side.

As fate would have it, the first renters of one of the Singhi Cottage apartments were Cora Buzzell Millay and Henry Tolman Millay. Henry, at that time, was a clerk at a men's clothing store on nearby Main Street. On February 22, 1892, the first of their three daughters, Edna St. Vincent Millay, was born in the largest second-floor bedroom on the north side of the house overlooking Broadway. When Singhi sold the double house to Oscar Blackington in September of that year, the Millays moved to Union, ME.

Later the family moved from Union to Camden, where Edna and her two sisters went to school, graduating from Camden High School. Cora and Henry divorced when the three girls were young, and Cora often worked away from home as a visiting nurse. A great reader, Cora imparted her love of literature to her daughters, and Edna wrote poetry from an early age, entering into, and winning, local and national poetry competitions. At age 18, Edna wrote *Renascence*, the poem that helped launch her writing career. As the story goes, one night, Edna's sister Norma

SINGHI continued on page 12



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DAMARISCOTTA, THE FIRES OF 1845 AND 1943

by Calvin Dodge

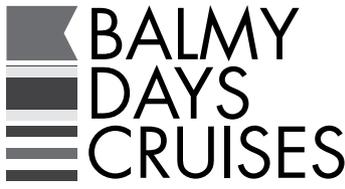


Firemen try to hose down the fire on the Damariscotta Baptist Church steeple but water pressure was low.

Disaster struck the village of Damariscotta in 1845 when it was ravaged by a devastating fire. That great fire wreaked havoc on the business district of Main Street. It consumed

seventy percent of the town's stores and shops, all wooden structures. It burned for twenty-four hours.

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group of men; store owners, merchants and land owners met to discuss rebuilding the lost structures. All were in agreement the new structures were to be made of brick and granite. Plans were drawn to determine each new building's style and size. In 1846 leaders of the small village of Damariscotta accomplished a remarkable feat when ten new brick blocks were constructed in the business district. The brick used came from local brickyards along the Damariscotta River. The granite came from local quarries and the lumber from local sawmills.

During World War II, on July 19, 1943 the village of Damariscotta was ravaged by the second disastrous fire in its history. Most young men of the village were away, serving their country in the conflict overseas. Many of the town's older men were working in various shipyards along the

DAMARISCOTTA continued on page 22



The Alden Flye Block where The Lincoln County News building was consumed by fire on July 19, 1943. Six buildings were destroyed on Water Street.



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SINGHI continued from page 9



Before renovation.



After renovation.

encouraged her to come to the White Hall Inn in Camden, where she worked on the wait staff. There, Edna recited *Renascence* to a receptive audience of guests, including Caroline Dow, the woman who would become her mentor and benefactor. Dow was beneficial in Edna earning a scholarship to attend Vassar College in New York in 1913, from which she graduated in 1917.

Thus began her rise to national fame. Millay's many written and published works include books of poetry, poems, short stories, plays (performed by the Provincetown Players in Greenwich Village) and an opera libretto. In 1923, she became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, the same year she married Eugen Boissevain, a Dutch importer. During the 1920s and 1930s, she was the most popular woman in the country, giving readings over radio and performances of her poetry to standing-room-only crowds across the country.

Although the Millays' time at the house was brief, the double cottage is a local landmark today because of Edna's universal and unparalleled popularity as a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet. In 1935, Maine State Historian Edward K. Gould convinced the Woman's Educational Club to place a bronze plaque on the house to mark the birthplace of "the loveliest voice in American poetry," and in 1966, the Sunday *New York Times* featured the Millay House in a story titled "Landmarks Along a Literary Trail in Maine." Residents of Rockland and lovers of literature have been fascinated with this modest, working-class house, possibly because it represents great talent coming from humble beginnings.

Today, the building and property are owned by Millay House Rockland, a non-profit whose mission statement is to preserve the birthplace of Edna St. Vincent

Millay and celebrate her legacy through education, the literary arts, and significant collaboration within the Maine community and beyond. In addition, the organization believes it is important to appreciate and preserve this simple working class house, since it is more often the splendid examples of architecture that are valued and

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preserved.

The Singhi Double Cottage has changed little over the years, and Millay House Rockland maintained the cottage's external integrity when Les Fossil's Restoration Resources renovated its exterior in 2016. Similarly, the house retained its distinctive double feature when Phi Builders and Architects completely gutted the interior in 2018. The two dwellings under one roof share a common wall, each side a mirror image of the other with a living room, small dining room, powder room, and kitchen on the first floor, and three bedrooms and a bathroom on the second.

Millay House Rockland has spent the intervening time raising funds to restore the north side and replace the roof. The organization has been very fortunate to receive generous donations from Roxanne Quimby, and a matching grant from the Davis Foundation, among many other important donations from foundations, local businesses, and generous individuals. They have now garnered enough funding to begin, and Millay House Rockland has hired contractor Kirk Rouge to create a rental apartment that will enable modern living for renters on the north side, the side in which Millay was born in 1892.

As work proceeds on the north side, Millay House Rockland will strive to raise funds to restore the south side, in which they plan to offer classes and workshops, as well as partner with other Maine literary organizations, to add to Rockland's cultural opportunities and activities. They have entered into one such partnership with the Ellis Beaugard Foundation to offer a writer-in-residence program for which Millay House will provide the space, and Ellis Beaugard will provide a writer's stipend.

Millay House Rockland will continue to sponsor events such as the Millay Arts and Poetry Festival in September, the Millay Birthday Celebration at the Farnsworth Art Museum in February, Poetry Slams at Fog Bar & Café, and Millay Poetry Recitals on the Rooftop Garden at Harbor Square Gallery during Rockland's First Friday Art Walks. Attendees at last year's pre-pandemic Millay Birthday Celebration enjoyed a unique musical performance in the Farnsworth Library of some of Millay's poems put to music by Edna's friend, Efram Zimbalist.



Downstairs dining area showing Queen Anne doorway.

Each side will cost approximately \$100,000 to restore. Millay House has established a GoFundMe account at www.gofundme.com/f/millay-house-rockland-renovations, and will continue to apply to granting foundations, local businesses, and lovers of Millay's poetry. Supporters can also mail checks to Millay House Rockland, P.O. Box 831, Rockland, ME 04841. Please consider joining us in promoting this unique legacy of Maine's architectural and literary history. 

An advertisement for 'Blaze' featuring a background of flames. On the left, a yellow circle contains the word 'BLAZE' in large black letters with a flame above the 'A', and 'CRAFT BEER & WOOD FIRED FLAVORS' below. On the right, a red circle contains the text 'LUNCH DINNER DRINKS' and 'LOCATIONS IN: Bangor Bar Harbor Camden, Biddeford'.

An advertisement for 'Genuine Automotive Services'. It features the word 'GENUINE' in large white letters on a red background, with 'Automotive Services' below it. To the right is a logo for 'GENUINE AUTO' with a car wheel and the name 'Jon Thompson, Jr.' written above it. Below the main text, it says 'Foreign & Domestic AUTO REPAIR' and 'A family-operated business that genuinely cares about you and your car.' At the bottom, it lists the phone number '594-5872' and the address '126 Main St., Rockland'.

An advertisement for 'Camden Harbor Cruises'. It features a photograph of a boat on the water with a lighthouse in the background. The text reads 'LOBSTERING & LIGHTHOUSE CRUISES' and 'NARRATIVE TOURS • CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS'. Below the photo, it says 'Offering Year Round Trips' and 'CAMDEN HARBOR CRUISES DEPARTING CAMDEN ABOARD LIVELY LADY and PERIWINKLE'. At the bottom, it provides contact information: 'BOOK ONLINE: www.CamdenHarborCruises.com', 'RESERVE BY PHONE 207.236.6672', and 'TICKET BOOTH ON THE PUBLIC LANDING, CAMDEN, ME 04843'.

A MAN OF LETTERS

by Bruce Wright

The following article was originally published in the 2007 Spring issue of Memories of Maine.

He was a man of letters ... and notes ... musical notes, that is. He carried mail for forty years before, during, and after World War II. He was the most popular man in town—a legend then and now. He was Oscar Tanguay, “The Singing Mailman.”

I worked with Oscar at the Bath Post Office in the 1940s and 1950s. He was a large man with a jolly, hearty laugh, singing and swinging jauntily along his business route three times a day. Oscar was proud of his job and his uniform. His distinctive postman’s suit sported a bow tie, and he tilted his cap over his left eye. He always had

a smile on his face. His rich, melodic voice entertained fellow workers as he began sorting and casing his mail at 6 o’clock in the morning.

Oscar’s singing was at its best as he happily walked the business district, upstairs and down, three times a day. He was everyone’s favorite, flirting good-naturedly with the young girls, chatting with the old folks and swapping friendly greetings and news of the day with business people. Oscar delivered the mail with a smile and a song on his lips and from his heart. The public he served awaited his call, not only for the mail he brought but for the good

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Oscar Tanguay (first man at left) singing and sorting the mail.

humor that accompanied it. Workers planned their breaks around his punctual arrival so they could chat with “Bath’s Singing Mailman.”

After a few strains of “Alouette,” sometimes in French, or “Old Black Joe,” jolly Oscar would swing into his customary greeting: “Good morning to you. How’s the world treating you this fine day?” He’d pause briefly for an answer, respond and then be on his way singing. Townspeople didn’t wonder when they heard the booming, cheerful singing in downtown Bath. They knew it was Oscar Tanguay, and smiles lit up their faces. His good humor was contagious.

A friend of all, this most happy fella brightened the day all over town. Older residents waited for Oscar’s news of the day, his words of wisdom and his inquiries about

their health and their families. He took time for a few words with those he met on his route, sympathizing with folks who had troubles and sharing joy with others. Many poured out stories about their private lives. He listened, offered words of encouragement and support, and kept their confidences to himself.

Bath’s popular postman was willing and eager to do favors for people on his mail route. He wrapped packages,

MAN OF LETTERS continued on page 23

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THIS BRIDGE SWINGS OVER THE ANDROSCOGGIN

by Nancy Randolph



Courtesy of the Pejepscot Historical Society.

Originally built to accommodate woolen mill workers from a new housing development, the Androscoggin Swinging Bridge has served many thousands of people of all ages who have used it to walk back and forth to school, to church, to visit family and friends, and to shop. It is an integral part of the Topsham and Brunswick community, and a popular attraction for people driving along Route 1 for its scenic view of the Androscoggin River or a peaceful pause in their vacation travel.

In 1891, the Topsham Land Company decided that a footbridge across the Androscoggin River would be a more direct route for workers walking to Brunswick's Cabot mill. It would also be safer than walking across the existing vehicle bridge. Thinking that a pedestrian bridge would add enough value to their lots for it to be a worthwhile investment, they contracted with the John A. Roebling Sons Co., the same company that designed the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City. Once the Cabot Manufacturing Co. granted an easement that allowed the bridge to connect on the Brunswick side, construction began May 19, 1892.

Completed in September of that year, the Topsham Land Company had intended for the bridge to be accepted as a public way. They did not promise to maintain it.

After many years of refusing to accept the swinging bridge as a public way, in 1906, the Swinging Bridge was so designated. Brunswick and Topsham became jointly responsible for bridge maintenance. Between 1913 and 1916, the bridge's timber-framed towers were replaced with steel.

Disaster struck in 1936 when a flood destroyed the bridge's railings, sweeping away the entire deck and rendering it completely unusable. However, the steel towers and original suspension cables survived. The federal

Works Progress Administration (WPA) replaced the span and resurfaced the bases of the towers with concrete in 1938.

This would be the last significant repair the bridge would receive until the turn of the 21st century. In 2000, a study jointly contracted by Brunswick and Topsham found the bridge in a distressing state: concrete abutments cracked, wood planks rotted, and rust covering every metal component.

With pedestrian traffic limited to twenty people and



Courtesy of the Pejepscot Historical Society.

the bridge not expected to survive into 2010, Brunswick and Topsham appointed a committee of residents from both towns to raise funds and restore the bridge. The citizen's group did just that. Securing finances from the Maine Department of Transportation as well as corporate grants and private funds, the group oversaw renovation

BRIDGE continued on page 21

THERE WILL BE PEACE

by Mike Kelley

Maine's George J. Mitchell Jr. has had a storied political career. He helped to broker peace in Northern Ireland during the Clinton Administration and the Middle East during the Obama administration. He exposed steroid users in America's pastime, and represented Maine in the United States Senate for nearly 15 years where he rose to the ranks of Majority Leader.

While Mitchell was a successful politician and diplomat, some, including Mitchell himself, have wondered if his career would have been the same, or possible at all, without Joseph Brennan.

The two men first came to know each other in 1971 when Brennan, as Cumberland County's District Attorney, hired Mitchell as a part-time assistant DA. The two would become rivals a short time later when both set their sights on becoming governor of Maine, in 1974. Brennan lost the Democratic primary to Mitchell, who ended up losing the general election to Independent James Longley.

"I knew him well and admired him," Mitchell wrote in his 2015 memoir *The Negotiator*. "Running against him was difficult for me to begin with, and it got more difficult as the campaign intensified; the more I heard Joe speak, the more I respected him." Brennan would go on to serve two terms as Maine's 70th governor, starting in 1979. An encounter with Brennan, in 1980, altered the course of Mitchell's career.

Mitchell, a native of Waterville and graduate of Bowdoin College, never saw himself as a politician. His dream was to become an attorney practicing in Maine. That changed when longtime U.S. Senator Edmund Muskie stepped down from the position to become President Jimmy Carter's new Secretary of State. This caused a lot of speculation as to who would fill the seat, which Muskie had held since 1959.

"Muskie knew Governor Brennan would appoint his successor, but before saying yes to the White House, he

wanted to talk to him," Douglas Rooks wrote in his 2016 book, *Statesman: George Mitchell and the Art of the Possible*."



A young George S. Mitchell with Edmund Muskie. *George J. Mitchell Papers, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives, Bowdoin College Library.*

Muskie arranged to meet with Brennan privately and the conversation quickly turned to who Brennan was going to appoint.

Many thought Muskie might ask Brennan to pick Mitchell, who had worked for Muskie as an executive assistant and on his vice presidential and presidential campaigns.

There were many well-qualified applicants interested in the position, including former governor Ken Curtis, former state senator Bill Hathaway, former Maine Speaker of the

House of Representatives John Martin and former state representative, state senator and Portland City Councilor Gerard Conley Jr. Some people thought, Mitchell and Muskie included, Curtis was the natural choice.

"By any reasonable standard, Curtis appeared to be a much stronger candidate than I," Mitchell wrote in *The Negotiator*. Due to Curtis' eight years as governor and stint as Maine Secretary of State, he could be "expected to more quickly adjust to the demands of the Senate than I and better represent the people of Maine."

In a CSPAN interview, that was included in *Building Bridges*, a documentary by Professor Michael Connolly, Mitchell said Brennan "had every reason in the world not to appoint me because up to that point the only election he had ever lost was to me in the primary." Mitchell went on to say "much to Joe's credit, he overlooked all of that and said I want to pick the person I think will do the best job."

That turned out to be Mitchell, who had a few months prior been appointed a judge in the United States District Court for the District of Maine by President Jimmy Carter.

"Mitchell was far from the obvious choice," Douglas Rooks wrote in his 2016 book *Statesman: George Mitchell and the Art of the Possible*. "There were many besides Hathaway who thought they had a better claim, and they



Governor Joseph E. Brennan seated at his desk surrounded by staff from his administration. (Maine State Archives)

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were not shy telling Brennan's aides, the press and anyone else who would listen."

Connolly said, "When Mitchell lost that (governor) race, everybody thought his political career was over, but Brennan respected him and knew he needed the person who could do the best job at it." He ignored what friends were telling him and what higher ranking Democrats were telling him and went with his instinct."

In a 2015 interview with Richard Davies, as part of the dedication of the Maine Irish Heritage Center's Joseph E. Brennan archives, Mitchell said, "I had no thought of

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ever returning to politics. I assumed my political career was over. There had been quite a bit of criticism of me when I lost in the general election for governor in 1974 after winning the (Democratic) nomination. I took it seriously and thought I probably couldn't win an election and the best opportunity to serve and to do what I felt was important was in the position as a federal judge."

Mitchell's thoughts began to change when Shep Lee, a mutual friend of Brennan and Mitchell and an active Democrat, called Mitchell to talk to him about the Senate role. Mitchell said he was "taken aback" when Lee told him Brennan was wondering if Mitchell was interested in the position.

"I wanted it, but I wasn't sure if I should try for it," Mitchell wrote. "I loved being a federal judge. It was a safe, secure, meaningful position and I knew I could do it well. But the Senate! And Ed Muskie's seat! What an honor. What a challenge."

After mulling it over for a bit, Mitchell told Lee he was indeed interested. That message was relayed to Brennan, who promptly called Mitchell and asked to meet with him. Soon thereafter the official announcement was made.

"If I did a poor job as his appointee in the Senate, it would have an adverse effect on his own chances to be re-elected as governor," Mitchell told Davies. "I became very determined that I was going to justify his confidence in me."

Mitchell would later recall that Brennan had but one request of him in his new position.

"I ask only that you do the best you can for the people of Maine and the nation based on your conscience and best judgment. He concluded by saying, I will never ask you for anything else and he never did," Mitchell said. "In all the years since, including my years in the senate, and as Senate Majority Leader, never did Joe Brennan ask, or suggest or hint I vote a certain way, act a certain way or speak a certain way."

Rooks wrote "the Senate appointment became such an important turning point not only in the careers of Mitchell and Brennan, but also in Maine politics."

Connolly agreed. He said that for years Muskie, who served as one of Maine's representatives in the United

States Senate for 15 years, served as governor for four and as a state representative for five years, was one of the most prominent Democrats in the state.

That changed after he went to become Secretary of State, and Brennan appointed Mitchell to the Senate.

"In their era, they became the face of the Democratic party of Maine," Connolly said of Brennan and Mitchell.

Brennan said he took the appointment seriously because, as he indicated in *Building Bridges*, he "felt a very deep sense of responsibility for choosing the very ablest person because I was going to be making a two and a half year appointment that is usually made by 600,000 Mainers."

Others saw the choice as a strange one because; as Rooks wrote "very few federal judges ever resign to engage in politics. The process almost always works the other way."

"In the Senate, Mitchell's status as a former judge was an immediate calling card. Mitchell knew the risks, but said going through life without taking risks is inherently unrewarding," Rooks wrote.

It turned out to be a risk worth taking, for both Brennan and Mitchell, who both won re-election bids in 1982.

In 1994 Mitchell turned down an offer from President Clinton to be appointed to the United States Supreme Court to replace retiring Associate Justice Harry Blackmun, saying, although he was "honored and flattered" and "regarded membership on the Supreme Court as the pinnacle of professional accomplishment and opportunity



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for important service.” Mitchell feared his leaving the Senate would negatively impact the healthcare debate that was happening in the Legislature at the time.

Mitchell decided to retire from the Senate when his term was up in 1995. He did not stay retired for long. President Clinton had another job offer; Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State for Economic Initiatives in Ireland. “The lengthy and ambiguous title reflected the president’s concern that the British government not be offended,” he wrote. “That government had long resisted efforts by the government of Ireland to involve others, especially Americans, in efforts to end the conflicts in Northern Ireland. Clinton stressed my duties would be limited in time and subject matter.”

That didn’t turn out to be the case. What Mitchell thought would be a five-month job turned out to be five years. There had been turmoil and violence in Northern Ireland for generations between loyalists: those who wanted Northern Ireland to remain part of Great Britain and the Nationalists: those who wanted Northern Ireland to be part of Ireland. The government of Northern Ireland was strongly loyalist.

Mitchell was able to help bring the two sides together through an agreement that sought a share of governmental power. It was something, Connolly said in his documentary, requiring “patience, tolerance, and open mindedness, traits he displayed in great abundance.”

A peace treaty, the “Good Friday Agreement,” was

signed on April 10, 1998. Even though the agreement was supported by 95 percent of voters in Ireland and 71 percent in Northern Ireland, a small group of individuals, the Real IRA, opposed the agreement because it did not fully accomplish what they wanted: full and immediate British withdrawal in Northern Ireland. Peace was not immediate and Mitchell stayed on as special envoy until 2001 when President George W. Bush replaced him.

Maurice Fitzpatrick, an Irish filmmaker, author and professor said by the time Mitchell was appointed special envoy to Northern Ireland in 1995, “both sides were edging toward peace,” but it seemed they would “benefit from presence of the United States to oversee the talks, proceed the talks along and see a way through the very many smaller subsections of the bigger issue of power sharing and mutual recognition politically speaking.”

“It was very exciting he was coming, but it remained to be seen, of course, how much of an impact he could make,” Fitzpatrick recalled in Connolly’s film. “It was high drama and suspenseful if this man, in addition to all the others trying for peace, could have a decisive role.”

Much like the Senate appointment a decade and a half prior, Mitchell did prove to be the right person for the job.

Connolly wonders if peace in Northern Ireland would have been possible without Brennan and Mitchell. He said the answer may never be known, but he feels both played their part in putting in place the pieces that eventually led to peace. 



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Built in 1892, the Swinging Bridge has served many thousands of people of all ages. *Collections of the Pejepscot Historical Society.*
 Photo by Nancy E. Randolph.



In 1936, a flood destroyed the bridge's decking and railings, sweeping away the entire deck. *Paul Cunningham collection.* Photo courtesy Nancy E. Randolph.

BRIDGE continued from page 16

and restoration of the swinging bridge, reopening it to the public 2006.

Over the years, although nearly all the bridge's components had been replaced—from handrails, to planks, to beams—the original “Roebling wire rope” cables built into the structure in 1892 still support the bridge. The year after the 21st century rehabilitation, public parks opened on both ends of the bridge. Two of John A. Roebling's great-great-granddaughters attended the reopening and dedication ceremony on September 8, 2007.

In January of 2004, the Androscoggin Swinging Bridge was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In May 2011, the bridge was dedicated as a Maine Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the Maine Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. The Society paid for the installation of a plaque commemorating the honor.

The Androscoggin Swinging Bridge now spans the Androscoggin Riverwalk, enjoying routine foot traffic from Brunswick and Topsham—locals and tourists alike.

BRIDGE continued on page 23



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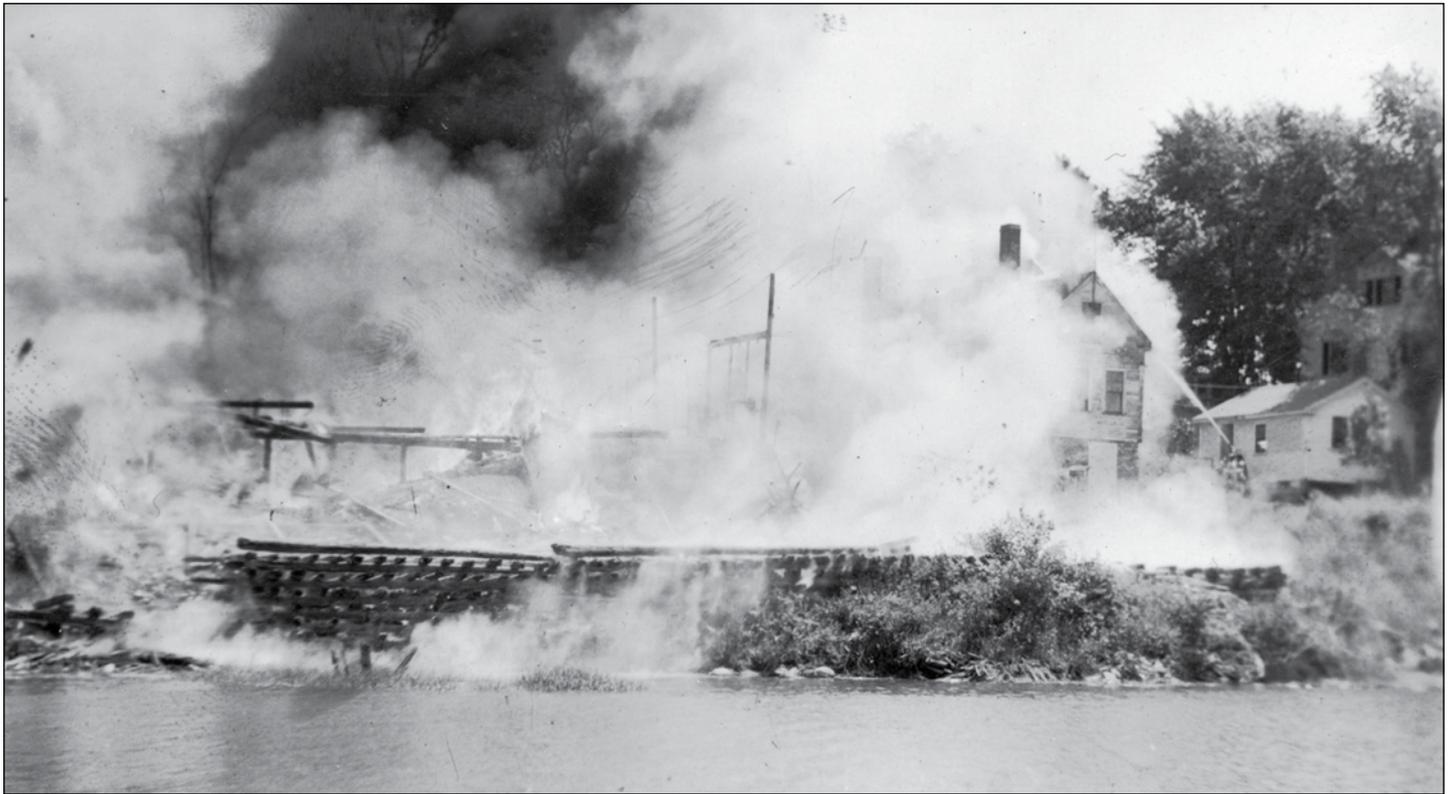
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Weeks & Waltz Garage and Captain Post's home were a total loss. The fire started here in oil-soaked cribwork in a trash barrel behind the garage.

DAMARISCOTTA continued from page 11

coast, including Bath Iron Works. The average age of the men on the fire department was over fifty. The fire swept through the eastern end of Main and Water Streets.

It began in back of the Weeks & Wally Garage; in a barrel of oil-soaked cribwork where trash was being burned. The flames in the barrel set fire to the ground around it and

DAMARISCOTTA continued on page 39



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stamped letters and cards, and made special trips to help others. He helped fellow workers at the post office. "I like to help the other fellow," he'd say. Then he'd add: "Friendliness is next to Godliness." And when someone did a good deed for Oscar, he'd say, "You'll get your reward in heaven."

In his private life, Oscar found peace and inspiration from his regular church attendance. He lived quietly with his wife in a small white house a short distance from the Bath Post Office. The Singing Mailman and his wife had three children and enjoyed the company of other children in the neighborhood, who happily claimed him as their friend.

AFTER A FEW STRAINS OF "ALOUETTE," SOMETIMES IN FRENCH, OR "OLD BLACK JOE," JOLLY OSCAR WOULD SWING INTO HIS CUSTOMARY GREETING: "GOOD MORNING TO YOU. HOW'S THE WORLD TREATING YOU THIS FINE DAY?"

Oscar's recreation included occasional car rides with his wife, especially on summer evenings. He was content just reading, listening to the radio, and taking in a movie once in a while at the Bath Opera House. Two or three times a year, he left his quiet home to attend meetings and assume his duties as an officer in the National Association of Letter Carriers.

When Oscar was in the hospital for surgery, his friends remembered him with gifts, cards and letters. The post office was flooded with mail from city residents and summer visitors. Some were simply addressed "Oscar, c/o Bath, ME;" others to "The Singing Mailman, Maine;" and a few to "The Good Humor Man."

A few weeks after the surgery, he returned to doing what he liked best: singing his way along Bath's downtown streets, radiating happiness and good cheer wherever he went. It's said that a letter from the heart can be read on the face. And so it was with the man of letters, smiles and songs. His rich melodies filled the air as he greeted merchants and clerks in their downtown shops. Oscar was back. That's all that needed to be said.

Oscar retired in 1955. He was honored and presented a gift "on behalf of his innumerable friends and admirers" in 1957 at the annual meeting of the Bath Chamber of Commerce. He died a few months later at the age of 67.

In 2009, three citizens, Elizabeth Glover (Brunswick), Roger Caouette (Topsham), and Nancy E. Randolph (Topsham) created a 501(c)3 nonprofit: the Save Our Swinging Bridge.

Org with a mission to provide for the maintenance and the beautification of the historic Androscoggin Swinging Bridge and its environment in order that the public may enjoy the benefits of an historic pedestrian bridge for transportation, education, recreation, exercise, access to river views and community and cultural linkage between the towns of Brunswick and Topsham.

Maintenance continues even during the pandemic. CPM Constructors with the guidance of Hoyle-Tanner Engineers inspected the bridge and performed all needed repairs. Funds for repairs are raised through annual 5K runs and 2K walks, donations for engraved bricks, and contributions throughout the year.

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MAINE WOMEN'S HALL OF MAINE

by Aimée N. Lanteigne



Judith Magyar Isaacson, 2004. *Courtesy of Saba's Photography.*

In March, we celebrated Women's History Month, and what better way to celebrate women's contributions to our great state than to honor them with a Hall of Fame. This recognition was first established in 1990 by the Maine Federation of Business and Professional Women. The induction ceremony is held annually, on the third Saturday in March, at the

University of Maine at Augusta. The 2021 ceremony was done virtually.

In order to be considered for the Hall of Fame, nominees must meet the following criteria...

- Their achievements have had a significant statewide impact,
- They have significantly improved the lives of women, and
- Their contributions provide enduring value to women.

An independent panel of judges reviews the nominations and chooses one or two women to be

inducted into the Hall of Fame each year. Nominations can be made online, or can be mailed in to the Futurama Foundation. Nominations must be received no later than December to be considered for the upcoming year.

The Induction Ceremony includes a presentation by family, friends, and colleagues. A certificate is presented to the inductee. A Silver Tea is also part of the festivities.

Many well-known and not so well-known women



Senator Margaret Chase Smith, 1990. *Courtesy of Saba's Photography.*

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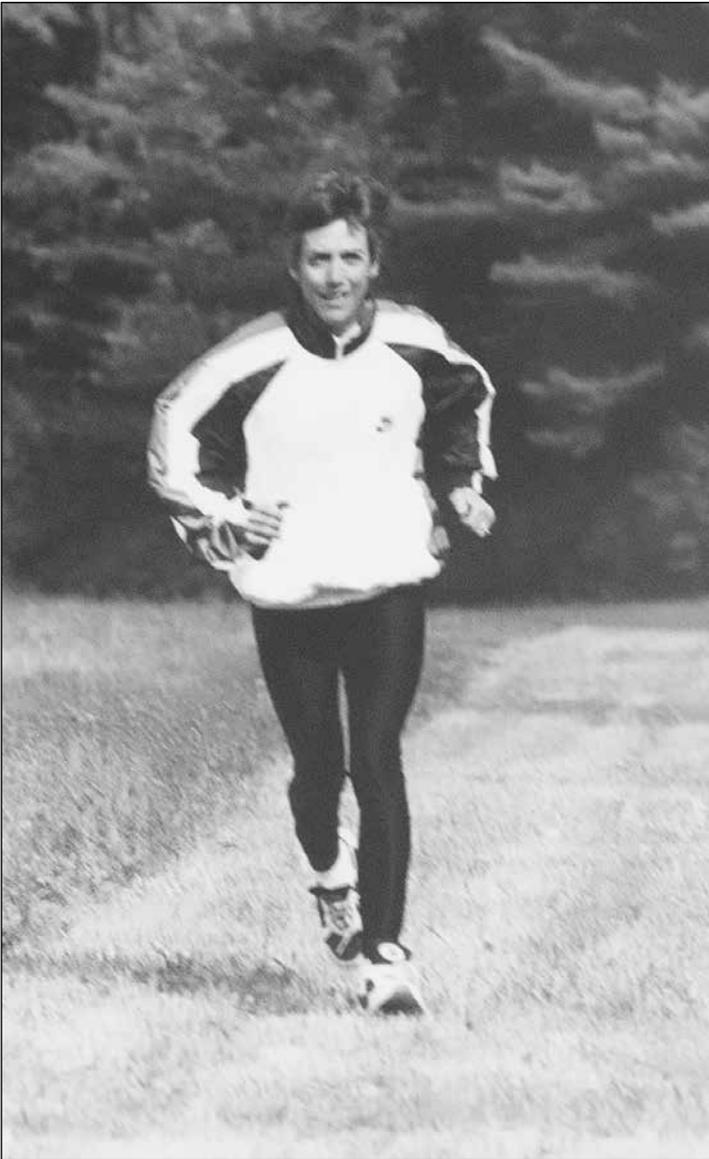
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Joan Benoit Samuelson, 2000. *Courtesy of Saba's Photography.*

are among the list of prestigious Hall of Famers. The first two inductees, honored in 1990, were Mabel Sine Wadsworth, noted for her work with maternal and family planning as well as her work with the Legal Services for the Elderly, and Margaret Chase Smith, the first woman to serve in both Houses of the United States Congress.

The inductees run the gamut from writers to politicians to doctors and even actresses. Gail Laughlin was admitted in 1991. She was recognized posthumously. Gail was the first practicing female attorney in Maine, at the turn of the last century. Elizabeth Russell was recognized in the same year as a successful geneticist. Dorothy Healy was inducted in 1993 for her work in establishing the Maine Women's Writers Collection. Esther Wood was a beloved writer, teacher, and historian. Marti Stevens was an actress who became part owner of Lakewood Theater in Skowhegan, and even opened the Marti Stevens Learning Center to encompass her love for theater and education.

**JOAN BENOIT SAMUELSON
WAS INDUCTED IN 2000.
THE CAPE ELIZABETH
RUNNER WON GOLD IN THE
1984 SUMMER OLYMPICS IN
LOS ANGELES.**

Elizabeth Crandall was recognized as an environmentalist. In 1997, Billie Gammon, a personal friend and mentor of mine, was recognized for her amazing resurrection of the old Washburn farm in Livermore as the Washburn-Norlands Living History Center. This is a nineteenth century working farm that offers "live in" programs as well as college credits. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, and Representative Chellie Pingree are all Hall of Famers, as is Collins' mom for her work as mayor of Caribou in the early 1980s and with Catholic Charities of Maine. Florence Brooks Whitehouse was recognized posthumously for her work as a suffragette. Thelma Swain from Chelsea is part of the Maine Women's Hall of Fame because of her philanthropic donations to Maine's community colleges. Joan Benoit Samuelson was inducted in 2000. The Cape Elizabeth runner won gold in the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.

Other winners of the Hall of Fame recognition include Sharon H. Abrams, Executive Director of the Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers, Cornelia

WOMEN continued on page 28

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in Castine. He was socializing with an older lady who happened to be on the Board of Trustees for Maine Maritime Academy. In the midst of the conversation, he confided to her that he'd like to be in radio someday. As it so happened, the lady was on the Board with Rudy Marcoux, the manager of Channel 2 in Bangor. She mentioned Toby's name to Rudy and the connection was made! LeBoutillier began working as a promotion manager for WLBZ in April 1965 at \$1.50 an hour.

Video tape was coming into existence in Maine broadcasting at this time. The refrigerator-sized video players were expensive so the network needed to make some layoffs in order to save money. They figured the promotion manager was expendable, and Toby was given notice at 3:00 on a Friday afternoon that he would be canned that day at 5:00! As devastating as the news was, it gave him an opportunity to start over with a clean slate. He had always wanted radio, not television. He haunted stations in Machias, Millinocket, Dover-Foxcroft, Belfast, and Ellsworth. Then he met Terry St. Peter who got him into WTVL in Waterville. Carlton Brown ran the station which he started after World War II on Silver Street. Bookspan was right! Put someone smart in front of the console, and he'll learn. These were the final days of network radio. He helped broadcast "The Breakfast Club" with Don McNeil and learned how to operate the board and monitor it. Unfortunately, this would be a dead end job. He was there for only a year and a half.

Enter Ken Krall...he was the promotions director for Maine's Educational TV network. In the summer of 1968, Krall had a job opening for him. Toby started in September and has been there ever since.

LeBoutillier devised his program *Down Memory Lane* himself. He may play a song from the 20s and then add a bit of news from the time period as reported in the *Bangor Daily News*, then progress to the 30s, the 40s, and so on. He has a cellar full of records that he spins on the air. He gets a lot of donations from families doing a little spring cleaning or older radio stations shedding inventory. In 2012, his show of thirty-three years was cancelled. The station was going through "birthing pains," as Toby puts it, and was trying to get rid of music in favor of all talk shows. NPR, National Public Radio, was the PBS of radio nationally. Someone from the industry in Vermont was able to segue from a talk show to a music program so Maine tried to model the same thing here. Monday through Thursday aired all talk shows, but Friday was for music on Maine Public Radio. Toby transferred *Down Memory Lane* to the internet. He wasn't ready to be done; he told Charles Beck who oversees MPBN's radio and TV programming, "I'll come in, you don't have to pay me." Beck had to make an exception with the Union in order for LeBoutillier to work without pay as a volunteer. He was happy to do it for nothing. He recorded on Thursdays in the studio and fed it over the website on Friday afternoons for three and a half years at mpbn.net.

In 2016, the first station of Maine Public Classical aired. Charles wanted to put Toby back on the air! Charles offered to pay, but Toby ended up giving half of his salary back. He can't run the equipment for nothing. But, he believes deeply in the system and doesn't need the money personally. In total, Maine has seven Maine Public Classical stations. Portland's 104.1 FM operates at 250 watts and can be heard from Freeport to Scarborough. The others include networks out of Sanford, Fryeburg, Boothbay Harbor, Waterville, Bangor, and Milbridge.

Mark Vogelzang, the CEO of Maine Public, told *Bangor Daily News*, "What makes Toby stand out, after forty years, is how you can hear the joy in what he does, whether he's chuckling about some wacky song or reading a weird story from 1959. He's real and people feel

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connected to him.” Longtime listener, Amanda Pelletier of Yarmouth, said, “I’ve always listened because he’s just such a funny and quirky guy, I love all the nuances he tells you about each song. The show has a very personal feeling.”

Despite the changes in how people now listen to music with Pandora, Spotify, YouTube, Sirius, etc...there is still an audience for live radio. Maine Public estimates that Toby has about 10,000 listeners a week who tune in faithfully every Friday from 2-5 pm. “Toby is one of Maine’s radio pioneers and has contributed mightily to the success of MPBN, first as an employee and later as a volunteer,” Beck said of his old pal. “Toby will always be considered a member of the MPBN family.”

Toby turned 80 in March of 2021. He has no cell phone and no computer. He couldn’t find his own program on the internet if he tried. I conducted my interview with him via landlines. “I’m just lost in time,” he told me with a chuckle. Maine is a better place because of old stalwarts like Toby who refuse to trade the advances of technology for personal connections; where a human voice can reach into your kitchen, your living



Toby with Charles Beck, receiving an award in 2012.

room, or your office and bring you the music of a bygone era. Toby reminds us that although time marches on, we can pause every Friday afternoon to walk gently *Down Memory Lane.*



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“Fly Rod” Crosby of Phillips, Maine for being the first registered Maine Guide, not just the first female guide, the first guide...period. Julia Clukey was inducted in 2018 as an Olympic luger. Janet Mills was recognized in 2019 as the first female governor of Maine.

The 2020 inductees are Leigh Saufley, the first female chief justice in the state, and current Dean of the University of Maine School of Law, and Dr. Joyce Gibson, a lifelong assistant professor at USM and Dean of the Lewiston-Auburn College. University of Maine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy, who nominated Saufley, said, “Leigh has a rich history as a leader who advocates for and contributes to the lives of women and families in Maine and beyond. Her integrity, character, and passion make her an outstanding mentor and role model for us all. It is truly inspiring to see all that she has contributed to the lives of women and girls in Maine, and to public service for the state.” Gibson, in her role as professor and dean, led the effort to recruit and retain female faculty, particularly in the STEM (science, technology,



Mabel Wadsworth, 1990.
Courtesy of Saba's Photography.

engineering, and math) and social science fields. Dannel Malloy, Chancellor of the University of Maine system, says of Gibson, “We are grateful for Dr. Gibson’s contributions to social justice and diversity and the work she has done to develop opportunities for female faculty at the University of Southern Maine, and are incredibly proud to celebrate her induction into the Maine Women’s Hall of Fame.”

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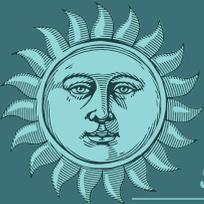


Courtesy of UMA student, Marisha Bernard.

We are blessed to have such a rich and diverse pool of Maine women representing the best of the best of our gender. These women have fought to make our state a

better place to live, work, and play. Their photos are on display at the Bennett D. Katz Library at the University of Maine at Augusta. 🌿

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THE FIRES OF ANSON, MAINE

by Emily Quint, Anson Historical Society, Stewart Public Library

The Town of Anson is comprised of two villages five miles apart. The Kennebec and Carrabassett Rivers were

the original means of transportation and power for the people and businesses in the town. Several dams were created to assure adequate water depth was maintained. In the 1800s, many of the businesses were located in the north village. The south village was primarily residential with only five streets.

The first big fire in North Anson village occurred in October of 1863. The following is from a letter written by Mrs. Sarah Palmer to her son, Gustavus, serving in the Civil War.

Our [North] village has met with a great conflagration. It is all laid desolate from the bridge to the town hall except George Getchell's office. The fire commenced in Jonas Bryant's barn.

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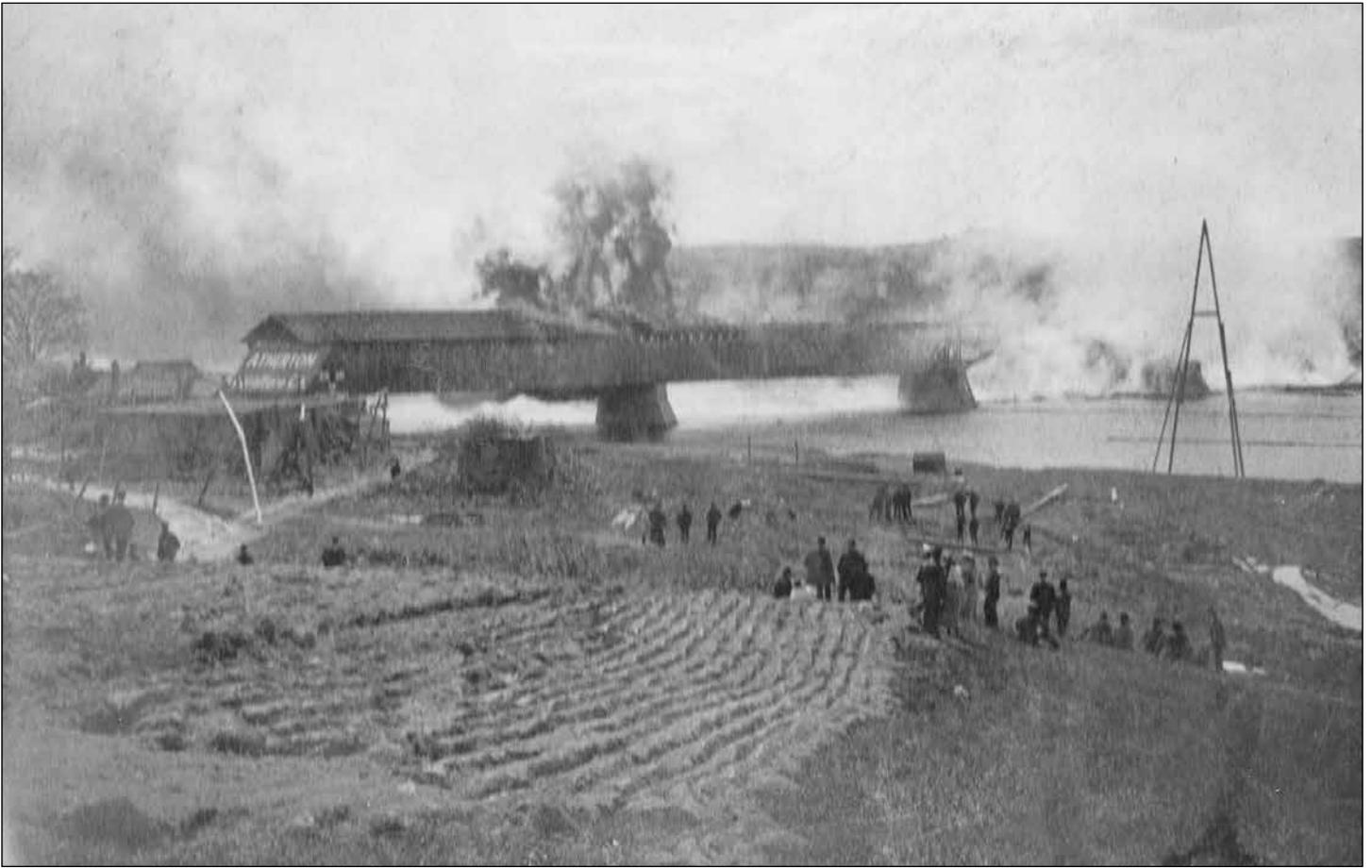
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While residents watch from a plowed field, the wooden covered Anson-Madison railroad bridge burned on May 30, 1906. An iron bridge replaced it on the same piers. Note the Atherton Furniture Co. sign.

Three dwelling houses, viz., Mr. Collins', Doctor Bryant's, and Oscar Allbee's, and all the stores on that side of the street. The fire broke out between ten and eleven [at night]. There was \$2,000 or \$3,000 worth of wool burned belonging to Gray, Caswell, and Joe Merry. The stores were mostly cleared, but the goods were damaged and many of them stolen. It was said most all of the factory sheeting was stolen. The entire east side of Main Street from Central Hall to the bridge were destroyed. They thought one while that the other side of the street must go, and cleared Paine's house and store and Eugene Collin's shop, and the tavern was covered with wet cloths and so were the other buildings, but there was no wind; so they saved them, but they are damaged and their goods are injured very much. Theodore Steward's shop was cleared of all but the safe. The jewelry in the safe was all melted!

On August 9, 1913 at about 3:00 a.m. a fire began at the three-story, wooden structure Somerset Hotel, built about 1834, and wiped out all business and public buildings on both sides of Main Street in the north village except the Grange and churches. Twenty-three business blocks and a dozen homes were completely destroyed; brick and wooden buildings, 2-4 stories high, hosting businesses on the first and second floors and residents on the upper floors. The flames whipped down the west side of Main Street from building to building and up lower Elm Street on the north

side. Wind fanned the flames to the east side of Main Street and south side of Elm Street. With no firefighting equipment, calls were made to surrounding towns but it was four hours before the Waterville fire steamer answered and by then all was destroyed. It's reported the next day people were wandering around in a daze; it was too much to comprehend that an entire village could be destroyed so quickly.

All the bricks that could be salvaged were used in the reconstruction, but not all of the lost businesses were rebuilt. The difference in the brickwork can be seen on those buildings today.

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The east side of Main Street, north village, before 1913. X marks the white wooden Central Hall where town meetings and many large group gatherings were held. This is today the lawn of the Methodist Church. Note the granite hitching posts and wooden sidewalks in front of all the businesses. The small wooden structure at the bottom is a well house.

In 1916, because of the devastating fires, the North Anson Improvement Society was formed which, among other improvements, began bringing water via 14-inch wooden pipes from Hancock Pond to the village. Along Main Street, those wooden pipes were 8 inches and along the side streets they were 6 inches. This was the forerunner to the Anson Water District, which today is part of the Anson-Madison Water District. The society was also instrumental in obtaining North Anson's first fire-fighting equipment.

Fortunately, no large scale fires destroyed the south

village. Many other smaller fires have occurred in both villages.

South Village: On January 14, 1917, the Anson Town Hall on Wilson Street burned. R.E. Gould's store in the south village burned in February 1928; the only survivors were a few cases of food, his gladiolus bulbs and the contents of the safe. In December 1930, the Maine Canning Co. burned; this was originally built as a roller skating rink in about 1882. In October 1936, Anson Trotting Park grand stand, consisting of grand stand, a judges' stand and dining hall, and another small building, were all destroyed. This was the outdoor place for large public gatherings, like on the Fourth of July. Kennebec Wood Products Company plant and equipment were completely lost in a night time fire in December 1943.

North Village: During the summer of 1926, the wooden covered Patterson Bridge, which had been closed to the public, burned. The bridge spanned 330 feet over the Kennebec River. On a Sunday morning in May 1928, the historic Moore farmhouse "Onemore" and barn located about a mile south of the north village, owned by Mr. &

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ANSON FIRES continued on page 34

THE BUXTON CURE-ALL

Abbot's Rheumatic Restorative

by Camille Smalley

Photos courtesy of the Abbot Historical Society

In the late nineteenth century, patent medicines exploded onto the health scene with wild claims about curative powers. These over-the-counter cure-alls claimed to cure everything from dyspepsia to skin ailments, rheumatism to menstrual cramps. Many large companies developed cure-alls, but equally, some smaller entrepreneurs did as well. In Abbot, David Horace Buxton created his own medicinal cocktail, the Buxton Cure-All. Initially, Buxton sold his cure-all from his storefront in Abbot. Later, horse-drawn carts distributed the glass bottles with orange labels across the country, and made the Buxton Cure-All a household name.

Born in Corinna in 1858 to James Buxton and Julia Gilman, D.H. Buxton moved to Abbot at the young age of eleven. In 1870, Abbot proved to be a bustling village brimming with economic activity. Two railroad stations connected Abbot to nearby Bangor, connecting passengers and freight with larger cities and towns. As the economic and employment opportunities grew, so did the village's population. Many of Abbot's citizens traveled to the nearby town of Guilford for their store bought goods. Buxton saw this economic gap as his first possible business venture.

At the age of fourteen, Buxton opened his mercantile business. On January 6, 1872, the first general store opened in Abbot, operated by a young and fresh-faced fourteen-year-old D.H. Buxton. The store sold a variety of goods, from groceries to clothing. At D.H. Buxton, a customer

could enjoy a cold soda, pick up a new pair of boots, buy some ice and post a letter—all in one trip. Buxton also managed the town's icehouse. Cut from local ponds, Buxton stored ice under sawdust to keep it frozen. The store shared a building with the town's hotel, which Buxton also managed. In 1906, a fire ravaged the original building. When rebuilt, the new general store featured rooms above which served a variety of purposes including a Grange Hall. In addition to the store, Buxton also served as the Abbot Postmaster General.



D.H. Buxton

In 1890, Buxton married Carrie Louise Bradman, and the couple's daughter, Hope, was born the following year. Buxton also entrenched himself in various civic organizations. At the age of 27, he served as the youngest Worshipful Master of Mount Kineo Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in Guilford. Buxton also founded the Juanita Lodge of the Knights of Pythias, and he was an active member of the Knights Templar, and Anah Shrine in Bangor.

While in his 30s, Buxton suffered from severe rheumatism. He likely experienced a variety of symptoms including painful joints and swelling. In the nineteenth century, the term "rheumatism" was used to describe chronic or repetitive aches and pains. Physicians observed varying degrees of rheumatism, from just pain to deformed joints and nodules as with rheumatoid arthritis. For Buxton,

BUXTON CURE-ALL continued on page 34



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The east side Main Street, North Anson, after 1913. The sidewalks are now concrete and there are no hitching posts. The brick building contains both old bricks rescued from the fire and new bricks. Note the burned out brick building walls at the far left.

ANSON FIRES continued from page 32

Mrs. George Clark, burned. Hoses were laid from the nearest hydrant at the top of Bunker Hill to the farm. The Anson Academy classroom building burned in December 1946, and was quickly rebuilt with much assistance from the community. On the evening of December 20, 2008, the Northern Star Masonic Lodge building, housing Masons and Eastern Star organizations on the upper level and a thrift shop on the ground floor, went up in flames. Both the Academy and Masonic fires were fought in near-zero weather.

Today our volunteer fire department fights fires, assists other towns fighting fires, and assists with accidents. Much training is required of today's firefighters. We thank them for preserving our homes, belongings and community. 🐝



The north side of Elm Street, adjacent to the west side of Main Street, North Anson before 1911. After the 1913 fire, these buildings were not rebuilt. Hitching posts are visible. The tall white flagpole, donated by Judge Simmons, was taken down in the 1911 cyclone that came through the village.

BUXTON CURE-ALL continued from page 33

getting out of bed in the morning, especially in the cold Maine winter, likely proved especially painful. For a busy man, the pain that inhibited his movement also inhibited his business—preventing Buxton from leaving his house to tend to his store. According to the Buxton Cure-All leaflet, Buxton was treated with the best prescriptions by “several of the most skilled physicians.” However, Buxton’s condition continued to plague him.

Unlike general rheumatic sufferers, Buxton was a druggist, and ran an apothecary in his general store. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a variety of

cure-all medicines were available which Buxton probably sold at his store. None of the available medicines provided Buxton with any relief. After a “thorough study” of the disease, Buxton tried his hand at creating a cure. Having a broad knowledge of general remedies, Buxton mixed different treatments together in the search for the ideal potion.

In 1892, Buxton developed his own cure-all, and founded the Buxton Medical Company. During patient trials he noted the cure-all provided relief for many people. Carrie and Hope helped him by brewing, bottling, and shipping

BUXTON CURE-ALL continued on page 36

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BUXTON CURE-ALL continued from page 34

the product. Like many potions of the period, Buxton's claimed to cure a variety of ailments, not just rheumatism. The bottle and leaflet claimed the product would heal any pain "within five minutes." Consumers could also expect relief from "Cramps, Colic, Colds, Cough, Sprains, Burns, Toothache, Headache, and Neuralgia." Nearly all cure-all medications of the nineteenth and twentieth century contained a high percentage of alcohol. Some featured ingredients mixed in, including more addictive substances like cocaine, powdered opium, and morphine.

Buxton's Cure-All provided a pamphlet noted as a "Message of Health to all Rheumatic Sufferers." The pamphlet contained words of support, dosage suggestions, and rave reviews of the cure-all's restorative powers. Sometimes referred to as the "Specific," it also boasted the



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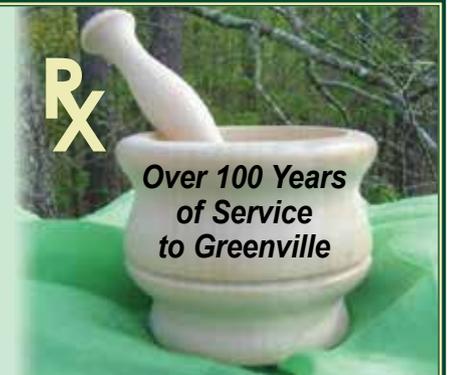
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Buxton Rheumatic Cure Co., Abbot, ca. 1900.

ability to regulate digestion, inferring indigestion was an indirect cause of rheumatism. The pamphlet also stated that if the medicine caused one to become constipated, they should take one of the pills included with the medicine and that in time, the cure-all “will regulate the bowels without the use of the pills.” The recommended dosage was a “dessertspoonful.” The pamphlet noted consumers should not feel “alarmed if your mouth has a bitter taste; that means it’s working!” In the late nineteenth century, it was believed that the worse the medicine tasted, the better it worked.

People from across Maine provided testimonials to the effectiveness of Buxton’s Cure-All. “I was taken with a

severe attack of rheumatism in my hips and legs and was so lame that it was hard to get around,” writes H.A. Elliot from Guilford. After taking one bottle of the cure-all, Elliot received some relief and proceeded to take six more for complete relief. Willis Osgood, of Blue Hill, took Buxton’s on the advice of a friend who suffered from rheumatism. Osgood took a bottle and a half, as well as several of the pills that came with it, and was cured. It completely cured Mrs. Smith of Trenton. She stated she had been cured from fifteen years of her rheumatism after taking Buxton’s Cure-All. Mrs. Smith suffered from what she described as “inflammatory rheumatism,” and was cured after one bottle taken in 1898. In the past fifteen years, she has

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consumed twelve bottles, which has kept her rheumatism at bay. George Fogg from Albany, New York, also enjoyed the curative powers of the “Specific,” claiming it cured him where doctors and hospitals could not.

After some local success, marketing began in the form of a horse-drawn carriage driven by Everett Hescoc of Waterville. Hescoc sold Buxton’s Cure-All to apothecaries and general stores across Maine. Massachusetts sign painter and summer resident, A.M. McKusick took over the wagon after making Maine



his permanent home. An artist by trade, he added flare and designs to the advertisement-on-wheels. The wagon featured a tall arch with “Buxton’s Cure-All” and “Buxton’s Rheumatic Cure-All” painted on the side. He also added scroll accents and an image of the archangel Gabriel blowing his horn. The horse that pulled the cart also wore fabric drape that read “Buxton’s Cures Rheumatism.”

After gaining popularity in Maine, demand for the cure-all spread across the United States. Buxton utilized the rail line to Bangor to ship his product to larger markets in Boston and New York, as well as westward to Chicago and California.

It is estimated that Buxton made \$500 weekly from the venture, and later, garnered much more. He was approached multiple times by various medicinal companies to sell his recipe and label, however, he declined to do so every time.

In the early twentieth century, there were few restrictions on the sale of over-the-counter cure-all medications. Buxton could sell his product, complete with claims of curing rheumatism without any repercussions. While the ingredients have never been revealed, it is likely the primary

ingredient of Buxton’s Cure-All was alcohol, as the over-the-counter medicines peaked during Prohibition. Many people purchased medicinal compounds such as Buxton’s to drink in place of spirits, which were largely unavailable for purchase.

In 1935, the Federal Trade Commission investigated Buxton’s Cure-All. The Commission found Buxton’s claims about the healing powers of his potion were “incorrect, exaggerated, and misleading.” Per the investigation, the Commission concluded that it could not

effectively cure rheumatism, lumbago, arthritis, or sciatica. It could only manage symptoms of gout, general aches and pains, headaches, and fever reduction. The Commission ordered Buxton to strike any and all language surrounding the cure-all’s ability to cure or treat any condition. As part of the stipulation, if Buxton ever resumed making such claims, the Commission could use those claims as evidence against him should a legal complaint ever be made.

As more regulations were applied to over-the-counter medications, cure-alls ceased to exist. These medications were slowly replaced by the common pain medications we are familiar with today.

Despite the declining use of Buxton’s Cure-All, D.H. Buxton kept himself busy with his general store. He operated the store until his death in 1941 at the age of 83. His daughter, Hope, took over the store and served as postmaster general in her father’s stead. Carrie Buxton died in 1947, followed a year later by Hope. While the Buxton Cure-All may not have really cured all, it provided D.H. Buxton with a small fortune. The Cure-All, among Buxton’s other enterprises, is an example of how a nineteenth-century Maine entrepreneur made waves nationwide. 🌿

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Huston house on fire. Flying embers set houses on fire all over town.



The Bisbee home on Water Street, which was located across the street from where the fire started.



The Captain Post house on Water Street.

DAMARISCOTTA continued from page 22

spread to the garage. In a short time the fire consumed the walls of the wooden structure and tore into the roof. Within minutes, the entire garage was engulfed in flames. The heat of the fire created an updraft of air, blowing hot embers out over the eastern section of the village. The Damariscotta Fire Department called out to neighboring towns for help.

The flying embers landed on the roof of the Lincoln

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Fire hoses lying across the intersection of Main Street and Bristol Road, by the Baptist Church.

County News building located next to the garage. From there the fire spread to the Squire Hall house. The flames then jumped across the street setting the home and barn of Hirm Bisbee ablaze. As the fire grew, more flying embers spread throughout the town setting down on the Captain Post home, just south of the garage. I was a young boy at that time but still remember that day very well. 🍷

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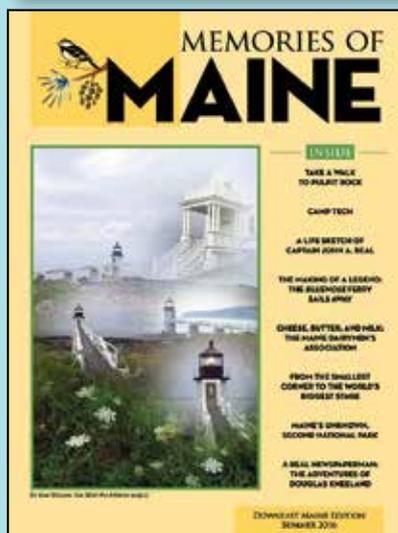
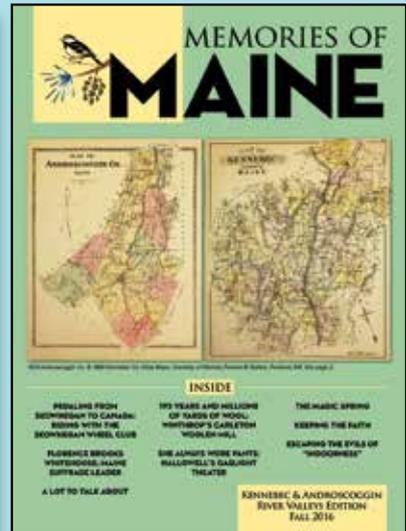
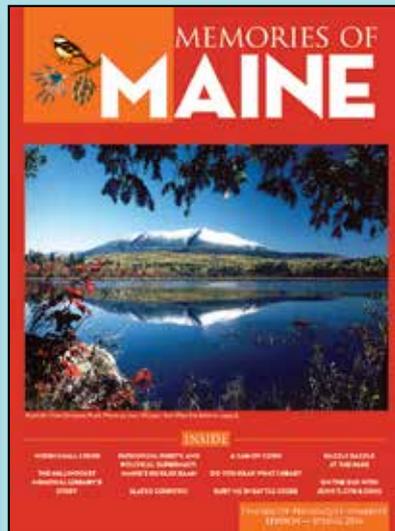
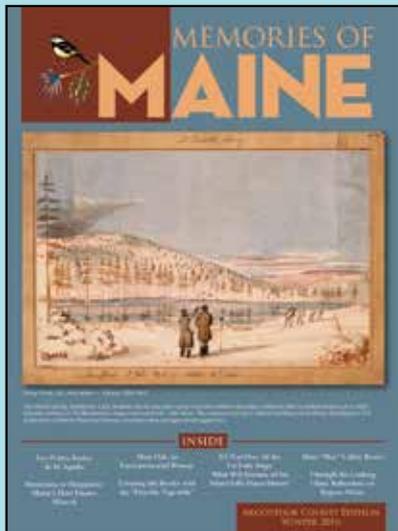
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