



MEMORIES OF MAINE

THE MAGAZINE FOR MAINE HISTORY AND NOSTALGIA

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THE MAGAZINE FOR MAINE HISTORY AND NOSTALGIA

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In collaboration with the hundreds of local historical societies, preservation groups, museums, and the countless enthusiasts of Maine's history and nostalgia, our goal is to provide our readers with interesting articles about the people and places that built and preserve that history.

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APPLES IN MAINE

by John Bunker

Researchers tell us there are 80 million apple trees in Maine. They've got us humans outnumbered by about fifty-eight to one. About one percent of those eighty million are the grafted trees you find in commercial orchards and Mainers' back yards. The other seventy-nine million or so are apple trees that originated from seeds planted by deer and bear and chipmunks and the occasional motorist tossing a core from a car or pickup truck. From seed, every apple tree and its apples will be uniquely different from every other apple that's ever been. Like you and me, each apple seed has a biological mother and father. And just like you and me, every apple tree from seed is a brand new, random, unique genetic combination unlike any that's ever been.

For generations, Maine farmers were planting their orchards with apples from seed. Typically those seedlings produced small bitter apples that were perfect for cider. Now and then, one of these seedlings would prove to have some desirable quality. Maybe the fruit kept all winter in the root cellar, made a great pie, great cider, sauce or butter, cake or bread. These apples were recognized and passed around among neighbors by grafting, the only way you can replicate an apple. A small twig—called a scion—of the mother tree was cut in winter, stored in the root cellar and then spliced onto a host apple tree—called the rootstock—in spring. The result was a clone, a tree identical to the original.

No one knows when grafting began. Perhaps someone noticed how two branches on a tree occasionally fuse together when they are pressed against one another over time. It's a natural graft. Hey, I can do that, someone said. Besides a sharp blade you only need a bit of string or vine to hold it together until the graft takes and a bit of pitch or some other goo to seal it all up. The art of grafting had begun.

And so these special selections from seedlings were

passed around town or the county or the state and occasionally even beyond. Names were attached for convenience, and varieties came into being. By the mid-nineteenth century, thousands of varieties had been selected, named and propagated throughout the country, many of them having originated here in Maine. It was an age of tremendous diversity.

This period of apple discovery reached its peak in the late nineteenth century when as many as 15,000 to 20,000 different apple varieties were being grown in the US. But big change was around the corner. As the nineteenth century wound down, many Mainers were moving off the farm and into the large industrial river towns. Others were leaving the state altogether and heading west to pursue the promise of better soil with fewer rocks. Maine farms and orchards were abandoned. The American thirst for cider and the love affair with local apples began to fade.

It was a perfect storm of sorts. In the early twentieth century Maine suffered from three terrible winters during which millions of apple trees died. Small farm-homestead Maine was transitioning to the commodity-based agricultural model of today. Cooperative extension experts urged orchardists to plant larger orchards of a few varieties. A version of apple genocide followed in which many thousands of old trees were cut down and destroyed. With them went years of family lore along with a vast expanse of genetic diversity.

But all was not lost. Here and there the old orchards survived. While in southern New England, the old orchards were often cut down and paved over, in Maine, many were simply abandoned, put out to pasture you might say. They survived through neglect. The occasional old timer continued to graft the old varieties. Some even collected the local favorites in hopes they wouldn't be

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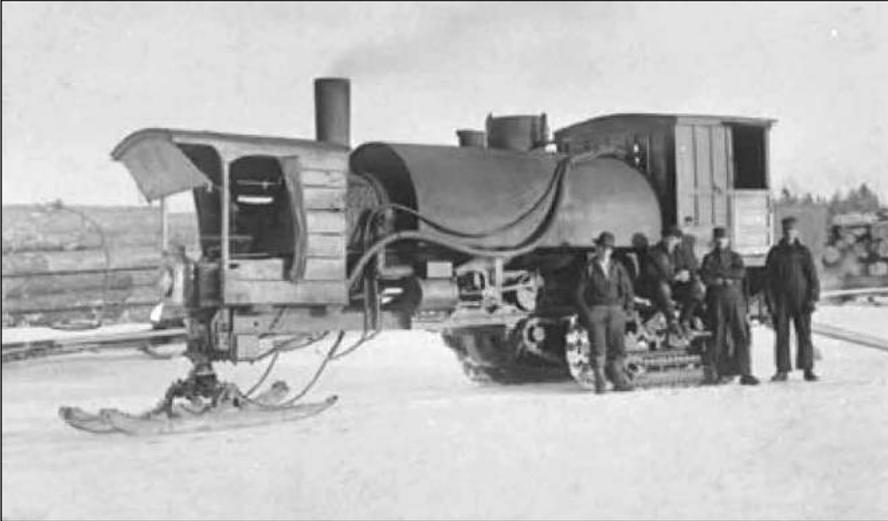
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ALVIN LOMBARD AND HIS LOG HAULER

by Elizabeth Bennett



The Lombard Steam Hauler. Collection of Patten Lumbermen's Museum.



Alvin Lombard.

The first thing young Alvin invented was a saw mill. Born in Springfield, Maine, in 1856, he grew up around the many gears and mechanisms of his father's water-powered saw mill, and so he built one of his own. Alvin's

mill, powered by the farm creek, sawed cucumbers with an old piece of steel from a hoopskirt. Alvin quickly moved on from vegetables to butter, inventing a water-powered butter churn, saving himself from having to perform that arduous chore. Thus began Alvin Lombard's life-long career as an inventor.

Working at his father's sawmill as a boy led him to work at lumber camps deep in the frozen Maine woods. Lumber operations were comprised of many tasks, and young Lombard did them all. He felled trees as a chopper



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and sawyer and built tote roads used to haul logs to the frozen river landings. He unloaded logs from sleds at the landing, jumping clear as they cascaded onto the solid ice. He also worked during the log drives, nimbly hopping across logs as they rushed down flooded spring rivers from northern forests to southern sawmills.

In the early 1880s he went into business for himself: he built his own sawmill, without any blue prints. Lombard's mill was quirky, full of new innovations. One of these was a water wheel governor, which allowed for smooth machine operations despite variable water speeds. Many people had tried before him, unsuccessfully, to build a turbine water wheel control.

This invention was later installed in the Bangor Public Water Works and at Niagara Falls. Lombard took the patent to Boston and started a company. Six years later, he sold the business and moved to Waterville.

In 1896, while still in Boston, Lombard began to experiment with the horseless carriage. His first attempt bore an odd appearance. It had a steam engine with tall buggy-style wheels in the rear, and sleigh runners in the front. Lombard intended to use it in the winter. A smoke



Lombard's steam-powered log hauler. Courtesy Island Falls Historical Society.

stack crowned its center.

On August 29, 1900 Lombard took the second version of his new automobile on a tour of family and friends in Aroostook County. The new model, which looked like a simplified carriage, caused quite a stir. While staying the night at the Windsor Hotel, the hotel manager wouldn't allow Lombard's creation in the stables, for fear it would scare the horses. Instead, it sat

LOMBARD continued on page 14

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FROM FIRST LIGHTS TO SOLAR FARMS

by Sheila D. Grant

Historical photos courtesy of the Milo Historical Society



Lower Main Street, Milo, strung with power lines.



Guests at the Milo House hotel were able to enjoy electric lighting by 1905.

On June 4, 2021, the town of Milo hosted a ribbon cutting for the largest solar farm in the state of Maine. The Town of Three Rivers has come quite a ways since the early days of electricity!

The Piscataquis region as a whole began to see progress with electrical technology in the 1800s. According to the Maine Memory Network website, Maine's very first electric lights were lit on January 5, 1880 at the wood products mill at Greeley's Falls in the tiny Piscataquis County village of Willimantic.

On Thursday, September 10, 1891, *The Piscataquis Observer* reported that the new woolen mill at Sangerville "is to be lighted with electricity. It will also be supplied with automated sprinklers for use in case of fires."

By August, 1896, Buck Bros. Contractors, from Foxcroft, were advertising in *The Piscataquis Observer* for "all kinds of Electrical Work done to order. Isolated Electric Lighting Plants for mills, residences, etc. ELECTRIC BELLS – Door annunciators, burglar and fire alarms. TELEPHONES – Long and short distance, interior instruments – all of the best make. Write for prices."

As in most rural Maine towns, electrical power was slow to arrive and was driven by the needs of industry. Milo, situated at the confluence of the Piscataquis, Pleasant and Sebec rivers, had the advantage of ready hydro power once that technology came along, but first, there was steam.

"In 1901, the American Thread Company built its Mill No. 1 on West Main Street in Milo," said Russell Carey, a Milo native, history teacher at Penquis Valley High School, and member of the Milo Historical Society. "Each

year this mill would turn 10,000 cords of white birch into perfect wooden spools. When the mill closed in 1976, it was the country's last wooden spool factory and in 75 years of operation, it had manufactured 3,750,000,000 flawless wooden spools."

The mill was the first building in Milo to have electricity, Russell said. "When they constructed the mill, it contained its own dynamo. This dynamo, built by the Rollings Company, generated electricity for the mill. Burning scrap wood and sawdust in a boiler created the steam which powered the dynamo. Townspeople would come to see the huge mill buildings and smaller office building illuminated by electric lights. I don't have any proof, but after seeing the mill's electric lights, I would guess people would want electricity in their homes," Russell speculated. "And this pressure would provide the impetus to create Milo's first power company and bring electricity to individual homeowners."

Gwen Bradeen was the curator of the Milo Historical Society for 20 years, and is still a member. Her husband, Paul Bradeen, is treasurer. Now retired, the couple keeps some records at their home because people so often contact them with history questions.

According to those records, a charter was obtained for the Milo Electric Light & Power Company in 1900. The company bought the Benjamin Kittredge Mill in 1903, with the intention of remodeling the sawmill as an electrical station to illuminate the village as soon as poles could be set, wires strung and streetlights installed.

"They installed the lighting plan in the fall and winter and began operating the following March (1904)," said



U.S. Senator Susan Collins cut the ribbon on the \$26 million solar farm in Milo's Eastern Piscataquis Industrial Park on June 4. To her left are John "JB" Oldenburg of the Carlyle Group and Milo resident Ronald Desmarais, who owns part of the solar farm land and helped facilitate meetings between project partners. To the senator's right are Bob Cleaves of Dirigo Solar and Milo Select Board member Paula Copeland. Grant photo.

Gwen. "The circuit carried 1,000 lights."

The charter for the company indicated it was owned by Mr. D'Este of Boston and Mr. Guernsey of Dover. "They sold the stock and privilege to Dr. H.A. Snow and William Owen," she said.

In 1904, the Masons installed electric lights in their second-floor space at Chase Hall. The 1905 *Milo Town Report* includes an account of \$600 for electrical street lighting, Gwen said. From 1904 to 1906, about 75 houses

were built in Milo Junction (now Derby) for railroad workers, and they all had electricity. The Gould house, a hotel in 1905, also had electric lights.

"The company was the Milo Electric Light & Power Company until 1932, when it became the Maine Public Service Company," said Gwen. The annual *Maine Register* last mentions the Maine Public Service Company in 1948. By 1949, the company was part of the Bangor Hydro Electric Company, currently known as Versant Power.

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Milo's 67,000 solar panel array. Photo courtesy of BNRG Maine.



A birds-eye view of Milo's solar farm captured this March by 3Rivers Unmanned Aerial Services.

Now, Milo is the town to watch for alternative energy solutions. The new, \$26 million solar farm features 67,000 fixed-tilt, bifacial solar panels "planted" in the town's Eastern Piscataquis Industrial Park and on an adjacent property. The town of Milo and its taxpayers will benefit through lease payments for the use of the land, as well as a percentage of the money earned through the sale of electricity. The solar farm will power about 3,400 Maine homes annually.

"Milo is one of the largest solar projects in the state," said Bob Cleaves, co-founder and principal investor at Dirigo Solar. The way the solar project works, Cleaves explained, is, "we will generate power and put that out onto the grid. That power is then consumed locally by Versant Power customers." Solar power is "competitively priced" well below typical rates. But local consumers shouldn't expect to see a significant decrease in their power bills because Maine law requires that the savings generated through less-costly solar energy be spread out to all rate payers rather than those in one geographic area, he said.

A second type of solar project that the company, along

with many other developers, is working on is the smaller community solar project. When these get built, "it's almost like a Sam's Club, because a buyer's club gets formed," said Cleaves. "The economic benefit flows through to the people who are part of that community solar project. These are a recent phenomenon, as a result of changes in the law last year. You are going to be seeing many more of those kinds of projects around Maine."

The Milo project spans about 100 acres, Cleaves said, but a community solar project must be, by definition, much smaller. "The project we just got permitted for in Dexter is roughly 20 acres."

The way a community solar project works is that the developer identifies the land with the necessary electrical infrastructure nearby, and obtains all the necessary permitting. Developers then team up with a financing partner, and sometimes, a marketing partner who helps identify potential residential and small business subscribers.

"Essentially, they are buying a credit that can be applied to their electric bill," Cleaves explained, adding that participants typically see a 10-15 percent reduction on



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The American Thread Company was the first building in Milo to have electricity.

their electric bills.

“I grew up in Maine and I care about the state,” Cleaves said. “I love going into these rural towns that haven’t seen a lot of economic development and are in need of enhancing their tax base. And [solar power] is passive – it doesn’t tax

their schools or emit pollution. It employs people and gives them opportunities that are only going to grow. Our experience in Milo has just been tremendous. We were so well received. It’s been a really positive experience and one that I really value.”

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AN ISOLATED PATROL

The Black Guards of Old Town

by Camille Smalley

Photos courtesy of the Monson Historical Society



Soldiers at Onawa Trestle, Morkill, ca. 1943.

Located in northern New England, Maine remains one of the least diverse states in the country. A 2020 report ranked Maine's diversity rate as 49 out of 50 states, with West Virginia coming up last. White colonists arrived in Maine in the early seventeenth century and interacted aggressively with Maine's Wabanaki tribes. Throughout the

state's history, the Wabanaki were exterminated and pushed northward, many tribal members moving to Canada or existing on small plots of land. White colonists developed large cities and industrial centers in towns like Biddeford, Lewiston, and Bangor. By 1861, Maine answered the Union's call to arms and sent thousands of men to fight in



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the Civil War. As part of the collective “Northern” identity, Maine has enjoyed being labeled as an abolitionist state. However, being anti-slavery did not mean racism and hate were extinct in Maine. After the Emancipation proclamation, many freed slaves struggled to find work, even in the large textile mills of Maine. The attitudes of racism prevented many from finding employment and relocating to the Pine Tree State. Even in the twentieth century, these attitudes continued. During World War II, African American troops, known as “Black Guards” were sent to Old Town. The Black Guards, part of a segregated infantry division, faced racism at the hands of the military. Tasked with defending Maine railways from terrorist threats, these black soldiers received more threats, aggressive comments, and violence from local citizens than from possible terrorists.

World War II became real for Americans on December 7, 1941 with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In September 1940, President Franklin Roosevelt initiated the first peacetime draft law as the conflict in the European theater increased. While Roosevelt allowed African American men to register for the draft, Secretary of War Henry Stimson ensured that the black soldiers remained segregated. There was no need, military leaders felt, to change the current structure regarding “separate but equal” facilities for black and white soldiers.

Black soldiers rallied for their country and signed up for service. Regardless of geographic location, all military bases and training facilities segregated soldiers by the color of their skin. Separate hospitals, bathrooms, barracks, and recreational facilities existed for African Americans. The conditions for African American soldiers were reminiscent of slave housing on Southern plantations – dirt floors, lacking supplies or cleaning products, and subpar plumbing. Black soldiers were not typically trained to be military leaders. Historian Christopher Paul Moore wrote “Black Americans carrying weapons, either as infantry, tank corps, or as pilots, was simply an unthinkable notion...More acceptable to southern politicians and much of the military command was the use of black soldiers in support positions, as noncombatants or laborers.” Many soldiers were relegated to service positions like cooks, mechanics, and supply loaders.



Guard stationed at Onawa Trestle, Morkill, ca. 1942.

These soldiers were called slurs by other white service members, leaders, and locals.

As the war progressed, military leaders feared for the continental United States. In Europe, the Nazi's (among others) attacked railways and disrupted supply chains. States like Maine relied heavily on railway systems to move people and goods from city centers to rural areas and back again; any attack on the rails by Nazi sympathizers or other terrorist groups would spell disaster. Already shaken by the bombing of Pearl Harbor, an attack on American soil may have been too much for the country to bear.

In northern Maine, large rail centers in Old Town provided a gateway to points south. Maine Central Railroad Company and the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company

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both had large railway stations in Old Town. Maine Central Railroad consolidated over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, taking over many small routes, like Dexter, Piscataquis, Kennebec, Farmington, and Leeds, and connecting them to a wider rail network. Maine Central Railroad moved farm products and goods like potatoes, broccoli, milk, shoes, lumber, and paper as well as people. One could hardly travel from Portland to any point north or westward without riding on one of the Maine Central routes.

Maine could not afford for the Maine Central Railroad through Old Town, or the railway itself, to be disrupted. If the track or cars were attacked, Maine would lose precious and already scarce cargo. In 1942, the United States military sent soldiers from the segregated 366th Infantry to defend the bridges, trestles, and general railways in Maine. Unwilling to de-segregate the troops, military leaders prohibited black regiments from joining white troops overseas. Instead, the segregated soldiers spent their time defending domestic interests on American soil.

Along the Maine Central Railroad in Morkill, Maine (70 miles west of Old Town), soldiers patrolled the Onawa Trestle and the train station nearby. Guards were also stationed at the Passadumkeag Bridge near Old Town. In mid-March 1942, fifty guards arrived in Old Town on their way to their stations along the railroad. No doubt the white citizens of Old Town appeared surprised, offended, and many angry at the sight of black soldiers in their white northern Maine town.

Local sportswriter Otis Larrabee penned a short column in the *Penobscot Times* and encouraged locals to keep an open mind, as well as a respectful attitude. He begged people to remember renowned boxer Joe Louis and his military charities and to extend that kindness to the new troops in Old Town. "Sunday morning we received almost a half hundred soldiers ... and to look at those boys here is quite an oddity," Larrabee wrote, "I spoke with one and found him to be of average education." While Larrabee attempted to be kind, he immediately "othered" the soldiers, pointing out their skin color and seemingly surprised that the men



Soldier on guard, Monson, ca. 1942.



Onawa Trestle guards at Morkill, ca. 1942.

had any education. He implored readers to "make them feel at home here in the Canoe City." The soldiers found that most in Old Town had little to no desire to make them comfortable.

The sixteen soldiers stationed in Morkill patrolled the trestle bridge and the station all day and all night. Organized into watches, the men often walked in pairs at their assigned location. Guards changed every twelve hours. The soldiers patrolled across the tracks, the trestle bridge and below. During a patrol, some soldiers found dynamite under the trestle. How it arrived was anyone's guess.

After long hours, the soldiers did not have any creature comforts to fall back on. Proper accommodations were not provided to these men, instead, they were forced to

PATROL continued on page 22

HESELTON HOUSE

by Aimée N. Lanteigne

Photos collections of Skowhegan History House

The town of Skowhegan has long been known for its proximity to the foothills of western Maine. The largest municipality on Route 201 between Canada and the state capital, it has served as a resting spot for many a journey into Maine's remote and distant playgrounds. Snowmobilers, hunters, rafters, anglers, hikers, guides, and sportsmen of all kinds have come to Skowhegan for generations to rest themselves and their horses, purchase



Skowhegan's Municipal Building was constructed on the Heselton House site in 1939 and still stands today.



Upper Kennebec Explorers cigar box.

groceries and supplies, fuel up, and send mail before disappearing into the woods. The Heselton House, and its former incarnations, was a popular stop in town for folks passing through the region.

The Heselton House once sat on the property that

HESELTON HOUSE continued on page 18



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out all night, attracting the locals.

In the summer of 1899, Lombard was riding on a streetcar with E.J. Lawrence of the Newhall & Page lumbering firm. Lawrence encouraged Lombard to invent a mechanical log hauler. The need for one was plain. As logging continued in the Maine Woods, lumbermen were harvesting stands of timber further and further from the rivers. Four horse teams would strain to pull huge sleds of logs and, Lawrence explained, hundreds of his animals

were ruined by the work.

Many inventors had already tried to solve this problem. One log hauler was supposed to leap along like a grasshopper. Another had revolving elephant feet to step over obstacles—but it got stuck in a hole.

Lombard sat down to the drawing board that night. He knew that sleigh runners provided the best snow traction, but these couldn't be motorized. A wheel did not get good traction, because not enough of it touched the ground at once. That was when he realized the spokes prevented a wheel from having more surface touch the ground—they kept the wheel round. He tried imagining a wheel without spokes. It could have a flexible rim, if he made it out of wooden lags—just like a horse treadmill. Once he added a second axel, he knew he had the solution. He had invented

LOMBARD continued on page 16



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lost. Wendall Mosher in Jay, Morris Towle in Winthrop, Earland Goodhue in Sidney and Francis Fenton in Mercer were just a few of the diehards who scoured the countryside looking for the old apple varieties, clipping scions and grafting new trees. They were the baton-passers in a relay race across generations. In this case the baton was a twig from a Baldwin or a Tolman Sweet or a Northern Spy. They took the scion from the past and passed it onto the future. Without them, many of the old varieties would be gone forever.



Sadly, I never did meet Morris Towle, although I did get to meet his wife and daughter. I met Wendall Mosher when he was in his late nineties, by then living with his daughter in Pennsylvania. We spent an hour together examining his nursery trees. He was still grafting. I met Earland and Francis when they were in their spry 80s and got to spend a lot of time with both. Earland was a dairy farmer though apples were his passion. Many readers will remember Francis Fenton of Sandy River Orchard in Mercer. One of the great joys in my life was getting

to spend hundreds of hours with Francis. He had a wry and dry sense of humor, and was as generous a man as ever climbed an apple ladder. Though his commercial orchard was small by modern standards, it featured over sixty varieties, many of them classic historic Maine apples he had tracked down in Somerset and Franklin counties. Francis died in the room in which he had been

born, two months shy of his 100th birthday.

The last of the ancient apple trees of Maine are dying out. Every year we lose more of them. The old timers are mostly gone too. Although they took a lot with them, they also left us many gifts. Because of their dedication, we still have Pumpkin Sweet, Deane, Garden Royal, Golden Ball and many other rare historic apples. These are the ones that make the best pies, the best sauce, and the best

APPLES continued on page 17

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what we now call crawler tracks. The next morning, he presented Lawrence with a wooden model, saying, "There is your log hauler."

Lombard and the Waterville Iron Works built the trial machine, named *Mary Ann*, and on Thanksgiving Day she ran successfully. Lombard then began improving the machine. The horses that originally steered it were replaced with a steering wheel. The upright boiler was laid horizontally, the water tank set over the boiler, and both of these were set over the crawler tracks so that their weight would improve traction. Most importantly, Lombard put in a conventional differential. The log hauler had two separate engines, one for each set of crawler tracks. Lombard had avoided using a differential, but without it, the two engines, in step with each other, caused the log hauler to vibrate violently. As the *Portland Telegraph* described, it would "hop up and down like a hen on a hotplate."

After three years of revisions, the Lombard Log Hauler was born, at thirty-two feet long and twenty tons. It could pull three sleds, each carrying five cords of green wood, plodding along at 4 miles an hour. It did not get tired like horses, so the camp boss could run it both day and night, lighting the way by acetylene headlights. By 1927, the log haulers had improved so much that the logging operation at Cooper Brook could move an average of seven sled loads

in a train, once even pulling seventeen sleds—185 cords of spruce. The crew hauled nearly 30,000 cords of wood over the thirteen miles to Jo Merry Lake that winter, 10,000 more cords than they had hoped. The Lombard log hauler was a giant technological leap for the Maine lumberman.

There were drawbacks, though. The initial cost was \$5,000, (about \$160,000 today). Also, the log hauler required better maintained roads. These roads had to be coated in ice. Tight curves needed to be widened. Hills had to be shaved down to a 5% grade, and they had to be constantly strewn with hay, to increase friction and decrease the danger of sleds jack-knifing. The sleds needed to be stronger, because of the strain of starting and stopping. And like any machine, log haulers required repairs. These were often done in the presence of huge bonfires, to thaw out frozen parts and repairmen.

Other things the log hauler required were an engineer, a conductor, and a steersman. The engineer threw wood into the firebox and ran the engine. The conductor was in charge of the sled train. The steersman was the highest paid of the three, for one reason: Lombard log haulers did not have brakes. This was not an oversight; brakes would have only caused downhill jack-knife disasters. And while the engineer and conductor could jump, the steersman sat in a small cab that inhibited a leap, so it was either wrestle that large, iron steering wheel or hit a tree. However, as the smoke stack belched sparks, the cab prevented some of them from landing on the steersman's many woolen, flammable layers.

Drawbacks and dangers notwithstanding, Lombard was wildly successful. In 1908 he built a plant in Waterville, and sold 83 log haulers by 1917. At this point, Lombard

LOMBARD continued on next page

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A younger generation of fruit explorers has also picked up the torch and is continuing the search for the old apples. In 2012, the Maine Heritage Orchard was founded in Unity to provide a secure location for historic Maine apples and pears. Now “MHO” has become home for three hundred and fifty full size “standard” trees that should make good climbing and picking for the next century or so.

We’ve been making more discoveries every year. Although the old trees are mostly gone, there are still varieties we’ve yet to find. They are still tucked behind old barns, along old stone walls, sometimes looking out from an overgrown hillside pasture. You’ll know them when you see them. They look really old. They are nearly always hollow. They’ve typically shed large limbs over the decades. Sometimes they’ve uprooted, and lay on the ground forming new trunks from what were once branches. They have been through it all; from the test winters of the last century, to droughts, bugs, disease and sometimes decades of neglect. Still they have hung in there. These are rugged old trees.

Each has a history and a story behind it. They come from that time when apples were coveted for their multitude of uses. If you want to make the best pie, skip the grocery store. Go find an old Duchess tree, Red Astrachan, Spice Sweet or Northern Spy.

It’s a race against time. The trees will often live to be one hundred years old, sometimes one hundred and fifty, and on the rare occasion two hundred. One hundred and fifty takes us back to 1870, the waning years of that period of extraordinary orchard diversity. If we’re going to save the old apples, the time is now.

Recently we have been collaborating with scientists at Washington State University. We send them foliage from the old trees we find and they do what’s called a DNA profile. If there’s a match, they can identify our discovery. But when the results come back as no match then we know we’re onto something. We have something rare that they have never seen. We may have found one of those lost Mainers like the Sarah apple from Wilton, the Bethel Belle from Bethel or the Chamberlain Sweet from Newport.

These old apples may also hold a key to the agriculture of the future. The modern dessert apples originate—as you might suspect—from a dangerously small genetic pool. The old varieties may be essential for the breeding programs of the apples of tomorrow.

How can you help? Apple season is here. If you know of an ancient apple tree, be in touch. Don’t assume that what you happen to see is nothing special. You just might be

wrong. Maybe that tree makes the best baked apples ever, has a long and touching story behind it and possesses some genetic key to the apple trees of tomorrow. We want to hear from you. Contact us. We make house calls.

John Bunker is an apple historian, gardener and orchardist. In 1984 he started the cooperative mail-order nursery Fedco Trees. In 2012 he founded the Maine Heritage Orchard in Unity Maine. His recent book, *Apples and the Art of Detection* recounts his forty years of tracking down, identifying and preserving rare apples. He lives with Cammy Watts on Superchilly Farm in Palermo Maine. To contact John or to learn more about John and Cammy’s activities, go to outonalimbapples.com. 🍏

LOMBARD continued from previous page

stopped making new steam machines and introduced his two gasoline tractors, the Lombard Standard 6 and the Lombard Big 6. These caught on immediately.

His last version of the log hauler was a diesel tractor in 1934. By this time, though, the heavy machinery existed to build roads quickly and cheaply. Lumber began moving over the public roads instead of floating downriver, and the log hauler became a thing of the past. Lombard retired to his home in Waterville, a quiet and modest man, who would rather talk about his dogs, cats, and horses, than his accomplishments. He put a tiny machine shop in his home, and tinkered away at the problems of the day until he passed away on February 21, 1937.

Though it was the most lucrative, Lombard never considered his log hauler to be his greatest invention. He felt that his water wheel governor was his greatest because it had done the most good. Nonetheless, it was the log hauler that made Lombard famous. Most of these machines lay at rest in the woods after their retirement. A few have become monuments at places like the Patten Lumbermen’s Museum, the Maine Forest and Logging Museum in Bradley, and the Maine State Museum, but the crawler tracks live on, driving tanks and construction vehicles everywhere. 🍏

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Heselton House, circa 1900.

HESELTON HOUSE continued from page 13

currently is home to the Skowhegan Municipal Building on Water Street. The Kennebec Proprietors, in an attempt to colonize and settle the “District of Maine” in the eighteenth century, sold various tracts of land to prospective settlers. Joseph Russell purchased the land the Heselton House would eventually come to stand on. Joseph sold this property to Ichabod Russell on March 22, 1828 for fifty dollars. Ichabod set up a tavern on the site and was the first innkeeper of the property.

He tended the inn and watched over the comings and goings of folks in and out of town for over seven years. In April, 1835, he sold the tavern to Philomela Stoddard and Simon Marston for \$1600, thirty times more than what he paid for it! Stoddard was Marston’s mother-in-law; when she passed away, the inn was transferred to her daughter, Ann. Two short years later, in 1837, the Marstons sold a half interest in the property to Osgood Sawyer, their neighbor. Sawyer turned around and sold a quarter interest to his brother-in-law, Samuel Soule.



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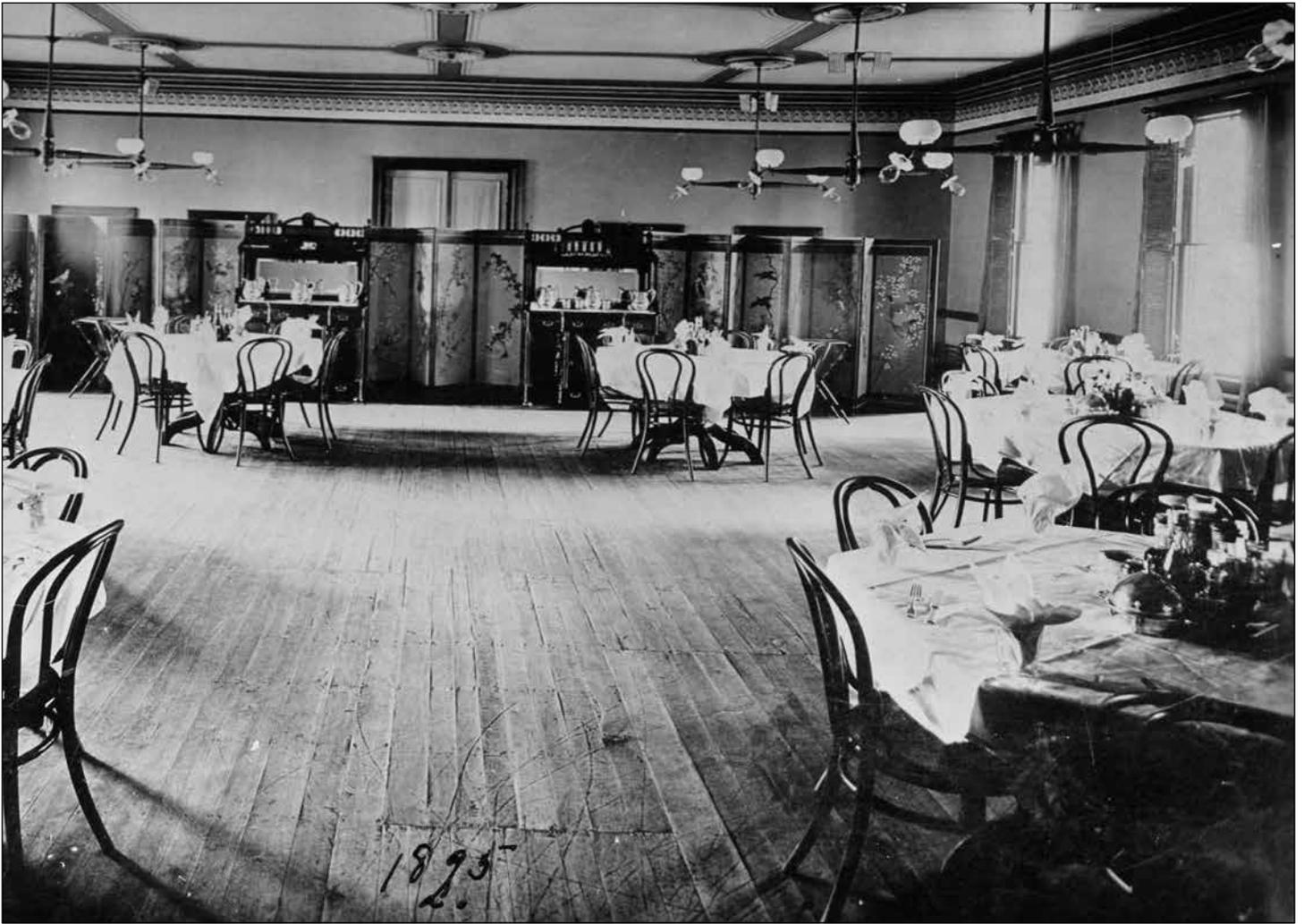
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The Heselton House was one of Skowhegan's finest hotels with a fine dining room known all over Central Maine.

The three families owned the whole of the property together, but Marston continued to run the tavern. In October 1844, Marston, Sawyer, and Soule deeded the inn and the property to Maximillian Webb of The Forks. Webb ran the inn briefly then moved to Michigan. He sold the tavern to Nathan Adams and Winthrop Eldridge in 1851. A single man, Adams became the caretaker of the property. His niece was Mrs. Eldridge. Within months, the property changed hands again. Adams and Eldridge

sold it to Silas Turner and James Watson Hill. The inn was now advertised by Turner and Hill as the Skowhegan State Tavern. It would become the headquarters for multiple stagecoach routes in and out of town. The name evolved into Turner and Hill's Hotel, but when Turner became the sole owner in 1860, it became known simply as the Turner House.

Silas Turner was an experienced innkeeper. Hailing from the Turner Farm in Norridgewock just above

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Beech Hill Road, he had been running the Norridgewock House in the village. He rebuilt and enlarged the hotel in Skowhegan. It earned the reputation of being a comfortable and well run hotel. Turner's ownership of the inn coincided with the onset of the American Civil War. Captain Stephen Fletcher's company lived in the hotel briefly and drilled in the front yard before moving on to the state capital.

As the Civil War drew to a close, the inn changed hands once again. Eliza H.W. Turner, her daughter, Mary, and her son-in-law Leander Wade, deeded the tavern to Helen Hill. William and Solon Hapgood served as landlords of the hotel under Hill's ownership. In 1869, James and Helen Hill deeded it to Thomas Hussey and Jane Hight, who in turn sold the inn once more to William Gilman Heselton, in 1870. Heselton was born in Belgrade on December 11, 1822. He married Elizabeth Baker of Moscow in 1844. The couple had nine children. Heselton ran a sawmill in North Anson for years before coming to Skowhegan to take over the Elm House and then eventually the Turner House. Heselton built an addition on the west side of the inn and dubbed it Heselton Hall. It would play host to many dances, balls, festivals, and theatrical performances over the years. The first ball was held there in 1875. All five of Heselton's sons would work for the hotel at some point in their lives. The bottom floor of the building served as a small store.

Like many wooden buildings in the nineteenth century, the Heselton House caught fire and burned to the ground on May 28, 1881. The fire was the worst in Skowhegan history. Destroyed in the blaze were the Turner House, Heselton Hall, the Osgood

Sawyer house, Charles' Fairbrother's livery stable, Joe Cayouette's blacksmith shop, and Peter Hurd's stage driver business, including his horses. The total loss was estimated at \$75,000. Guests had to abandon the house as the flames ravaged their lodgings. Frank Heselton took them in across the street and vowed to rebuild the hotel in a month! He bought two lots on either side of the damaged property from the Coburns and the Tuttlés, and bought the tavern lot from his father. Though it took longer than a month, he kept his word and opened a new public house shortly before the New Year. It was designed by George A. Bernard and boasted forty-four guest rooms, a bar, a meeting room, a parlor, pool room, a large dining room and a smaller, more private dining room. It was the site of many a wild evening, especially when the Upper Kennebec Explorers' Association came to town. One particular banquet, held in February 1893, hosted some sixty land owners, explorers, and lumber operators. It was decorated in proper Maine backwoods fashion. The porch held stuffed deer and caribou, while the indoors was mottled all over with squirrels, porcupines, wolves, wildcats, foxes, sables, and mink. Dinner that evening included loin of elk from Russia. All the decorations were put on display at the World's Fair that year as a representation of the great state of Maine. I can imagine being a fly on the wall at that winter banquet at the Heselton House. I'm sure the cigar smoke would have hid my presence well amidst the roaring laughter, testosterone-laden tales, and nips of gin.

Frank's brothers, Edwin and William, took over the inn from 1888. When Edwin passed away in 1895, William Chandler took over the management of the house. In 1898, William Heselton took over, and the following year, Alphonso Heselton took the reins. The Heselton House property was sold by William and his wife, Elizabeth, in 1901 to Richard W. Brown. At this point, Brown had one of the ells detached from the house. It was moved to lower Water Street and became a private dwelling. Another ell was also detached and moved to a lot near the railroad station on Court Street. It was converted into the Maine Central Hotel. This hotel was purchased by L.T. Audet from Fred Towle in 1930. It was remodeled and updated so that tourists could stay there in the summer, and locals who wished to close down their big homes in town for the winter could still stay in the community until the summer heat returned. The name was changed to the Milburn Hotel and eventually to the Midtown Hotel. The main structure known as the Heselton House caught fire again in December 1905. The fire was not discovered until late at night. The guests escaped, but not easily, and most of their belongings were lost. When the embers finally died

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down, the hotel was nothing but smoke and ash.

In July 1906, the Heselon property was sold to the town of Skowhegan for \$10,000 by owner Leslie R. Brown. The town's Municipal Building was constructed on the site in 1939 and still stands today, although in the

1940s it was known as the Opera House. Where traveling salesmen once slept, anglers told stories about "the one that got away," and debutantes sashayed across the dance floor, twenty-first century Skowhegan residents now register their vehicles and pay their sewer bills. 🦋

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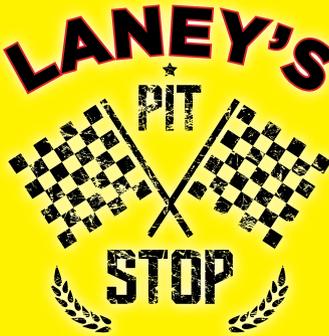
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use empty railcars as barracks, a mess hall, and recreational spaces. Good rest proved hard to come by as the soldiers bedded down in old boxcars. Likely a lack of rest resulted in the death of one guard, as an oncoming train struck him in the leg, and he bled to death. The boxcars were stifling in the summer and frigid in the winter. Even a mundane trip into Old Town held the potential for violence and aggression, even when purchasing a couple gallons of milk.

The *Penobscot Times* reflected the attitudes of many locals who sought to have the black guards removed. Despite their role in the safety and security of the state, many Old Town residents could not cope with having black soldiers in their midst. John “Jimmy” Coghill, the editor of the *Penobscot Times*, circulated a petition in early 1942 to have the guards removed. Coghill used his position, and platform, to actively espouse his deeply held racist beliefs. In June 1942, Coghill authored an editorial titled *Equality Breeds Familiarity*, disparaging the idea that African Americans could ever be on equal footing with whites, morally, socially, or otherwise. Coghill believed that black soldiers should remain “with their own kind” and implied that blacks are more akin to animals than people. Echoing recent Maine leadership, Coghill stated that if a black soldier attended a dance with a white girl, then the girl would clearly be taken advantage of. Coghill had no regard for the soldiers, only that they remove themselves from his Maine town.

On June 5, 1942, Reverend Raymond Baughan of the Universalist Church in Orono responded to Coghill’s editorial, asking “Question! Are you disguising your own racial prejudice with a protest against immorality?” Coghill, like many racists of the period, defended his belief by stating separation of the races was merely a matter of morality – that black morality was somehow different. Playing on racial stereotypes, many tried to use the idea of African American men as predatory. Baughan also asked Coghill if his editorial would have been written if the soldiers would have been white. If the soldiers that arrived in Maine in 1942 had been white, there would have likely been a column written that celebrated how brave the soldiers were to protect Maine, as

opposed to many degrading editorials.

Coghill was certainly not the only individual that published his thoughts. In March of 1944, Evan C. Geroux expressed his support of Coghill’s editorials and desire to remove the guards. A native of Old Town, Geroux joined the Marine Corps in 1942 and was stationed in the Pacific. He participated in the invasion of Guam in July 1944. *A Convenient Soldier: The Black Guards of Maine* exhibit curator Asata Radcliffe writes that Geroux’s letter is evidence of racism as he “openly expressed congratulations to Coghill for leveraging his power” as editor to facilitate, or attempt to facilitate, the removal of the guards. Coghill even wrote to Maine Senator and former Governor Ralph Brewster to send white soldiers to Maine. Brewster, openly associated with the Ku Klux Klan, most likely would have agreed with Coghill, even if he was not able to replace the guards.

Many of these African American soldiers hailed from the South and grew up experiencing hateful acts performed by the Ku Klux Klan and others. The Klan was noted as a terrorist organization in headlines as they wreaked havoc across the United States. Some guards likely thought by signing up for service, they would evade some of the vitriol and fight for their country. Unfortunately, they were subjected to more racism in a different region of the United States.

While some Mainers believe that racism does not exist in Maine, it’s simply not true. The Ku Klux Klan had thousands of followers in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Klan held rallies in Maine towns from north to south. As recently as 2017, Klan fliers papered neighborhoods in Freeport. Maine’s history of racism runs long and deep, neither starting nor ending with the Black Guards. After the guards returned home in 1945, they experienced more of the same – segregation and hate. These men sacrificed themselves to protect their country from within, and many are scarcely remembered for doing so. The military de-segregated in 1948, although, full integration did not occur until the Korean War. The battle for Civil Rights and equality continues today. We remember and thank the Black Guards for their service in the face of hate and terrorists, as they patrolled to keep Maine safe. 🦋

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As rural as Maine is, and being so far from most other states in the country, aviation transportation is a huge blessing, if not a necessity, to many citizens and vacationers alike. Maine is home to 35 airports, one of which is located in the capital city of Augusta. Working in close conjunction with the airport is Maine Instrument Flight. Founded

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Shirley and Bill.

in 1946 by William L. Perry, it is the region's oldest continuously operating flight school. And 2021 happens to mark its 75th anniversary!

Recently, I was privileged to take a tour of their facilities, led by the founder's son, William H. "Bill" Perry. I was at once amazed and impressed with the immaculate condition of the hangars and maintenance facilities, Bill's unassuming, yet professional demeanor, and the realization of just how



Maine Instrument Flight School office and general hangar.

critical air transportation is to the state of Maine. From medical appointments in The County (Aroostook), business travel, commercial passenger service and pleasure flights, Maine Instrument Flight does it all.

Bill's father founded the school upon returning home from serving in World War II. He instructed military and airline pilots in instrument training. Basically, this means he trained pilots to be able to fly an aircraft without the benefit of good visibility, teaching them to rely largely on their skills, knowledge of flying, and the instrument panel to fly and, more importantly, to land a plane. After living and working

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in Vermont and Ohio, William settled his family in Chelsea, Maine. In 1946 he applied for a loan from the First National Granite Bank of Hallowell to be able to start a flight school. Despite the loan officer's misgivings, Perry received the money and with only two planes, one mechanic, and an unheated building, he was off and flying! Seventy-five years later, that loan officer would be impressed to see the success the business has enjoyed.

Initially, charter flights were limited; the main focus of the school was on flight instruction and training veterans to become pilots using their GI bills. The school was located right next to the old military barracks in Augusta. In 1956, the first "T" hangar was built in order to accommodate privately owned airplanes.

The following year, while still in high school, Bill earned his Commercial Pilot and Flight Instructor ratings and became a part-time instructor and pilot. He would join the company full time in 1976. His sister, Shirley, joined a few years earlier as an office manager. Maine Instrument Flight School added storage hangers in the 80s. William was dubbed Mr. Aviation in the state of Maine. As a Federal Aviation Administration Flight Examiner he tested a multitude of students, and issued hundreds of pilot licenses. To avoid anyone ever doubting that his son actually earned it, William sent Bill to Portland for his flight exams with the federal government. Ever service-oriented, William became a Maine State Representative, a selectman in Chelsea, and a member of the Maine Aeronautics Commission.

When William passed away in 1993, Bill and Shirley took over the family business and still run it to this day. Bill at eighty years old is as active and involved with the business as ever. In fact, he has no immediate plans to retire. Bill was born in 1940 in Chelsea. He was holding the controls of a plane in the sky as a youngster before his feet could even reach the pedals. He was a three-sport athlete at Cony High School and graduated in 1958. After graduating from Maine Maritime Academy in 1962, he was commissioned into the United States Army and served ten years for Uncle Sam. He married Kitty Dunn the year he graduated from MMA and

together they raised five children. Bill was very active in the lives of his children and his community, even as he worked to grow his father's business. He coached youth sports, served on school boards, and was president of the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce. He spearheaded the growth of the CARA Sports Complex in Augusta and served as

Chair of the General Gifts Committee/Augusta for the Harold Alfond Cancer Center Capital Campaign. He earned a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce in 2012. The flight school's current success stems from his, and Shirley's, leadership.

Bill has expanded the school's offerings but, perhaps, the greatest collaboration the school enjoys is its partnership with the University of Maine at Augusta in creating and offering a Bachelor of Science degree in aviation, the only program of its kind in the state and one of only two in New England. Students enrolled

in UMA's program walk away with a Commercial Pilot certificate with Instrument and Flight Instructor Ratings. The four year program tallies in at approximately \$120,000-\$150,000, and there is financial aid available. MIF is creating a specified student lounge area for students to relax, grab a snack, or study in between classes. By the end of the four year program, students will have put in at least 300 hours of flight time. The school is partnered with Cape Air and JetBlue. Upon graduation from the aviation program, students work towards earning hours to become a flight instructor. Nine of the current instructors at MIF graduated from this program. After they achieve instructor level they can fly for Cape Air. The goal is that their work for Cape Air will in turn earn them enough flight hours to move on and work for JetBlue as a commercial pilot where they can earn six figures right out of the gate. There are roughly forty students at any given time enrolled in the aviation program through UMA/MIF. In addition, there are some thirty other students, including veterans enrolled in the FAA Part 141 program. Many of the pilots who have flown you and your luggage around the



William L. Perry.

FLIGHT continued on page 43

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THE MCFADDEN FAMILY ON MERRYMEETING BAY, 1718-2021

by Bradford A. McFadden, Orr's Island, ME USA

A little background

I was born and raised in Maine, as were my parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. My paternal great-grandfather, Nelson McFadden, grew up in Topsham, Maine. As a youngster, he was fascinated by stories about his ancestor, Andrew McFadden, one of the first to bring his family from County Derry, North of Ireland to settle on Merrymeeting Bay in the early 1700s. The Bay is an unusual confluence of six rivers in mid-coast Maine that mingle and then flow to the Atlantic Ocean through the mouth of the Kennebec River. To navigate from the mouth of the Kennebec upriver past Georgetown and Bath and into the Bay is a challenging trip even today.

While researching his ancestral roots, Nelson discovered a legal deposition dictated in 1766 by Andrew's widow, Jane. From her vivid description of their home setting, he suspected that the original homestead had been situated on the crest of a small hill on a point overlooking the bay. In 1950, when Nelson was 71, he had the opportunity to purchase a 148-acre parcel of land in Bowdoinham that included the area where the homestead might have been built.

When my great-grandfather died in 1972, the land was deeded to my grandfather, Danforth McFadden. He was an avid hunter and built a small two-room hunting camp for family and friends as the wild rice on the shore was a great feeding ground for migratory ducks and geese. My grandfather, Danforth, bequeathed a portion of the property to my father, my brother and myself upon his death. My family continues to enjoy this incredible spot today.

Andrew and Jane

Andrew McFadden was my 7th great-grandfather and his birth year has been recorded as 1675 in the Scottish Highlands (some records indicate his birthplace as Inverness, but other sources show the McFadden clan was a sept of Clan McLean from the Isle of Mull). I do not know much about his youth except he emigrated from Scotland to Garvagh, Co. Derry, Ireland in 1693 and married Mercy Mallory. They had four sons born between 1695 and 1701—William, Thomas, John, and James—before Mercy died in 1702. In 1704 Andrew married Jane Lindsey and they had a son, Andrew, in 1715. In June 1718, records indicate the entire family left County Derry to come to the New World with their

Presbyterian minister, James Woodside, aboard the ship *McCallum*.

The *McCallum* was prevented from putting into port in Boston as planned and continued sailing down east toward land owned by the Pejepscot Proprietors in the Eastern Country (present day New Hampshire and Maine) near the mouth of the Kennebec River, the northeastern boundary between French and English territories.

On September 8th, after several weeks traveling by water, Andrew and Jane McFadden made their way to their new homesite. "They found a suitable spot that gave them a clear view of the Bay, and what seemed to be fertile ground."

Jane's Deposition

In 1766 there were legal disputes about local land boundaries and Col. David Dunning deposed several settlers from the north of Ireland who came to the New World at the same time as Andrew McFadden including his wife, Jane; his son, Andrew; and fellow passenger on the *McCallum*, John McPhetre. Jane's deposition in the public record was so descriptive that it gave Nelson the impetus to purchase the Center's Point property almost 200 years later.

In Jane's deposition of June 19th 1766, at the age of 82, she stated:

"She and her husband removed from the town of Garvaugh in the County of Derry in Ireland, to Boston and from Boston to Merrymeeting Bay, and set down on a piece of land there. This land was a point of land laying between the Cathance River and the Abaggadasset River opposite and a little to the Northward of Brick Island, and this point was said called Cathance Point by everybody of that day."

She said, "As my husband was clearing away the trees to Merrymeeting Bay, he said it was a very pleasant place and he thought it was like a place called Summersett, on the Ban Water in Ireland, where they had lived. And that they would give their new home the name Summersett after that in Ireland, which they did."

Thanks to the generosity of new friends in Northern Ireland, I have had the good fortune to travel to the Bann River at Somersett Park near Garvagh. I absolutely could see how Merrymeeting Bay in Maine would have reminded them of Ireland – we share the same types of

deciduous and coniferous trees, and similar climates with temperatures moderated by bodies of water.

Jane's deposition also mentioned, "At the time there was no one living on the Kennebec north of Arrowsic Island excepting our family and two others." Andrew and Jane added two more children to their family: a daughter, Summersett, and a son, Daniel.

On or about August 14, 1722, the Norridgewock Indians attacked the settlements of the Pejepscot Proprietors. These included, but weren't limited to the Cork Settlement in Dresden, Somerset on Merrymeeting Bay, and Small Point in Phippsburg. Although suffering significant damage, the nearby towns of Topsham and Brunswick survived the attacks.

Andrew and Jane may have been forewarned of the attacks, or because of the location of their home, they would have been able to see smoke or hear gunfire from the Norridgewock approach up the Bay. They abandoned their home and fled in their canoe with their children and little more than the clothes on their backs. In Jane's deposition she also stated that "as they pulled hard to get to a communal Blockhouse for safety, they watched as the Indians set fire to their Log Cabin." Andrew and Jane spent a little less than four years on the bay before retreating to Arrowsic Island where they lived the remainder of their lives.

Fast forward almost 300 years

In late summer of 2012, John Mann, a land surveyor from Freeport, Maine, contacted me about the possibility of conducting an archeological dig on the McFadden property on the Bay. He, too, had discovered Jane's deposition while researching his own family's history and that of other families who emigrated from Northern Ireland to the new world, specifically Maine. He was hoping to make our State more aware of how the Ulster-Scots played a part in and influenced Maine's history. He was already working with Pamela Crane, an archeologist from Freeport and they were keen to see if they could excavate and examine any remnants of an Ulster-Scot dwelling that dated to the period of 1718 – 1730. I agreed on one condition: even though I knew nothing about archeology, I wanted to be an integral partner in this dig. The first week of November 2012, Pam, John, and I excavated our first square meter unit on my property. We sifted every spoonful of soil, documenting the location of rocks, roots, and artifacts including nails, window glass

and bits of brick and wood.

On the third day of digging, we uncovered a burnt timber in the unit. This provided reasonable proof that there had been a fire here many years ago and this location could be the site of my family's first home. In the spring of 2013, with the help of many interested, dedicated volunteers from the Maine Ulster Scots Project (MUSP) and St. Andrew's Society of Maine, the Somerset dig began in earnest and countless hours of scraping, digging, measuring, lugging, sifting, washing, drying and labeling commenced.

Some of my favorite moments

After finding dozens of nails and bits of clay pipes, in 2013 I uncovered the most intact clay pipe artifact I had ever found. The bowl was almost complete with a significant portion of the stem. Even though clay pipe pieces were as plentiful as present-day cigarette butts, finding this pipe was really emotional for me -- as I held it for a couple of minutes, I couldn't help but think that possibly Andrew had set this pipe down, or thrown it in the haste of the Indian attack, only to have it picked up by me almost 300 years later.

In 2015 we found six pieces of a cast iron kettle which is not dissimilar to kettles from the same time period on display at The Hezlett House which was built in 1690 (National Trust, Articlave, Co. Derry, NI). We also discovered a large pottery shard in a nearby unit. More digging revealed a larger cluster of shards amongst a large area of brick rubble. We found hundreds of pieces to be cleaned and grouped. My wife and I spent the better part of one winter attempting to piece it back together. It was like solving a 3D puzzle without a picture (or all of the pieces!) of the finished product. Pam's research determined that this vessel is a piece of North Devon pottery measuring about 13" high which was glazed inside for storing liquids.

Each summer I have been privileged to share progress on the dig at the St. Andrews Society of Maine annual Maine Highland Games and Scottish Festival. In August

MCFADDEN continued on page 31

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AUNT VERLIE

A Most Beloved Westport Island Resident, 1891-1992

by Lega Medcalf

Photos courtesy of the Westport Island History Committee

Westport Island, located off Maine's coast, is surrounded by the Sheepscot River to the east and the Back River to the west. It had been home to Verlie Colby Greenleaf, affectionately known as "Aunt Verlie," for a little over 100 years when she passed away in 1992.

Verlie was one of 6 children born to Charles E. and Annie Colby. Her father was a farmer and carpenter who owned a portable saw mill. The mill was hauled around on skids with a team of horses. Verlie remembered that her father "used to make things for us – cradles for our dolls and blocks. Each one of us had over a hundred different-sized blocks in all shapes and dimensions. He sanded them and painted them: 200 red ones, 200 white ones, 200 blue ones. We spent hours with them. We'd get down on the floor and we'd set them all up in all kinds of shapes, touch the first one and watch them all go down. That was one thing. And he made us game boards. He made us a Parcheesi board so we could play Parcheesi. Oh he used to make all kinds of things for us. We had fun."

Access to transportation was very limited when Verlie was born in 1881. The doctor who attended to her home delivery was brought over from Wiscasset in a rowboat during a snowstorm, which, according to Verlie, other than walking, was the usual mode of transportation. A toll bridge was built between the island and Woolwich in 1857 but seasonal ice jams made it too costly to maintain and it was abandoned. Although the island had a post office, it was easier for her father, and occasionally her mother, to row to Wiscasset for mail; and to buy groceries. It wasn't until 1972 that a bridge was built connecting the island to Wiscasset.

When Verlie was eight years old, the Westport-

Wiscasset ferry route was established. The ferry was pulled across the river by a wire cable. *The cable was attached to iron posts on each side of the river. On the one side of the scow were wheels on rails called "gins" which the cable went through. First it was pulled by hand. Then they used a motor boat to push it across. They did not make regular trips. The boat was kept on the Westport side – [the] ferryman lived there also. When you got to the landing you blew your horn. He would take you across. Blow your horn if you were on the Wiscasset side and he would come and get you.*



Verlie Colby Greenleaf.

The home Verlie grew up in was built by her paternal grandfather. Her father renovated the house by securing the foundation, and adding bay windows and an ell. The nicest room in the house was the parlor that saw little use.

Verlie loved to learn, and she started school when she was only three. The school house was visible from her home. The teacher, Josie Fowle, made the long walk to school, often times stopping to rest at the Colby

homestead before continuing on with Verlie's older brother and sister. "Every morning, I guess, she stopped to mama's. She was pretty tired when she got up there and stopped in at mama's, and then she'd walk up with Ernest and my sister, Nettie. Well, mama said I started crying. I wanted to go to school. I was only three but I wanted to go to school with them. I didn't want to stay home. Mama said, 'She'll just be a nuisance.' Well, at last, oh, I must have cried so hard every morning, Josie said, 'Let her go.' Mama said, 'If she isn't good, send her home.' But I didn't. I don't remember that first day of school but I went to school all the good weather until I was seven, and when I was seven, I went the whole school year."

Westport had a thriving recreational scene with concerts, dances, and ice cream socials. Camp Molly Hall

was a popular dance hall from the 1890s through 1912. The hall was named after a Native American Penobscot woman called Mary Pelagie whose nickname was Molly Molasses. According to legend, in the 1840s, she showed the islanders how to cook a Penobscot clambake.

VERLIE LOVED TO LEARN, AND SHE STARTED SCHOOL WHEN SHE WAS ONLY THREE.

.....

It was at one of the weekly dances at Camp Molly Hall that Verlie met her future husband, Frederick Greenleaf. ...*"I don't remember the first time [I met my husband Fred]. Most likely it might have been to a dance. ...we had that dance hall up at the North end, up Camp Molly. [It was] right on the tip so they could come from Edgecomb or Wiscasset or wherever by boat... We ran dances from the Fourth of July to Labor Day."* The Greenleaf family was musically inclined with Fred playing the fiddle, a grandson the guitar, and Verlie on the piano. They played at Camp Molly Hall, and at many other town functions. Verlie even played piano for a celebration on her 100th birthday.



The Westport-Wiscasset ferry was pulled across the river by a wire cable.

AUNT VERLIE continued on page 33

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by Sheila D. Grant



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Beedy, 20 years ago, probably thinking about trees!

Elizabeth “Beedy” Parker doesn’t pay much attention to her own accomplishments and accolades. She thought being asked for an interview was, “a surprising request. Not sure where I fit in with ‘Memories of Maine,’ being from away, and a checkered ‘career’ as an environmental

activist,” she said. “I am indeed old, though I don’t feel a part of history yet!” Beedy has lived in Maine since 1975.

Beedy is so focused on what *needs* to get done next that she rarely gives thought to what has *already* been accomplished. In 2018, the *Camden*

BEEDY continued on page 36

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Excavation site.

MCFADDEN continued from page 27

2018, we welcomed a group of international scholars and symposium participants to the site to share the beauty and mystery of this little archeological dig.* In five years we had located the boundaries of a cellar hole, possible



Clay pipe artifact uncovered by B. McFadden.

byre for livestock, brick remnants of a possible chimney and thousands of artifacts (window glass, nails, clay pipe pieces, pieces of crockery and cookware). We did not

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A portion of the pottery fragments.



Reassembled pottery fragments.

locate a definitive hearth or front entrance or foundation.

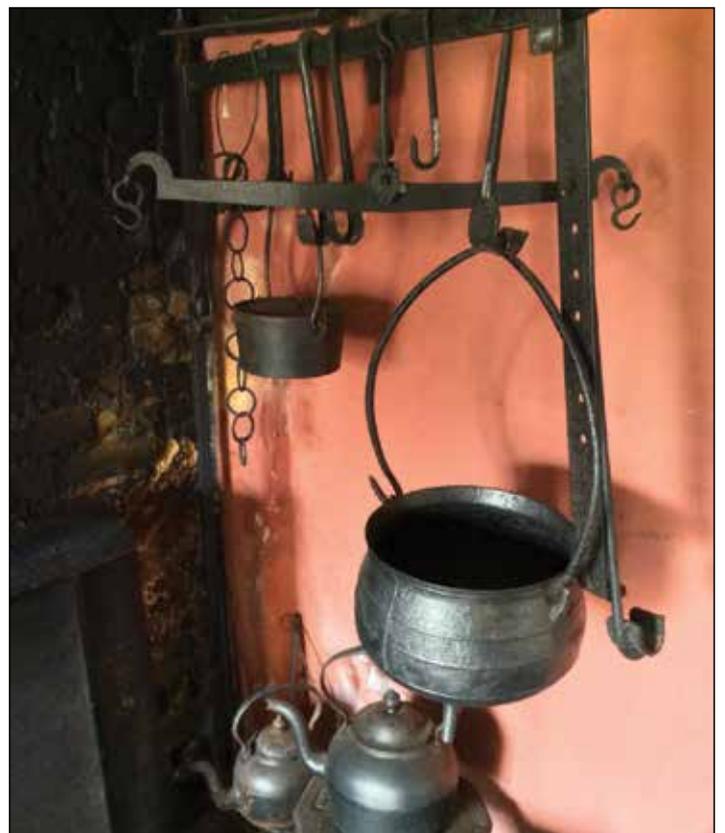
Future Plans

As I write this, I wonder if we have gleaned all of the information we can from the site at this time? Brown tail moth infestations along with COVID-19 restrictions and new research projects for the volunteers have made it challenging to continue. Perhaps it is wise to leave further excavations to generations to come...

I came across a Google Earth aerial image of Somerset on Merrymeeting Bay at low tide. It has the appearance of a family tree, rooted across the Bay, down the Kennebec. Since 2012 when I became involved in this archeological dig, I have truly become a branch of this "tree." To own a pristine piece of the property where your ancestors built their first homestead in a new world three hundred years ago is an incredible honor.

My McFadden family story is personal to me. But I believe many Maine families have a parallel story about their ancestors overcoming great struggles and adversity to arrive and survive in this rugged state: a testament to their strength, courage, and work ethic. I encourage you to learn about their lives as much as you can – just dig in!

*International Symposium "1718 – 2018 Reflections on 300 Years of the Scots Irish of Maine," Bowdoin College, August 2018



Kettle, Hezlett House, NI.



School.

AUNT VERLIE continued from page 29

The family's workload changed with the season. In addition to the income the portable saw mill provided, summers were a busy time with the focus on farming and selling produce. Fred sold vegetables, chickens, eggs, and berries on Squirrel Island while Verlie drove the Model A truck to Alna to sell produce. During the colder months, Fred hauled lumber and firewood with his team of horses.

Verlie remembered a day in 1948 when William Post, who worked on the family farm, landed his Piper Cub in a field adjacent to the main road. His was the first plane to land on the island and the next morning he delighted Verlie and the rest of the town by treating them to an aerial performance. It is perhaps this event that stirred Verlie's lifelong fascination with flying. She flew with her grandson in his biplane well into her 80s.

Verlie shared the island legend concerning Marie Antoinette and Captain Clough, the owner of a ship named *Sally*. Although there is no supporting evidence to confirm this story, it is said that while working in France in 1793, Clough heard the queen's life was in danger and

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The Colby family with Verlie at far left.

he hatched a plan to smuggle her out of France to his hometown of Westport. However, his plan fell through for some unknown reason, and she was executed before he could help her escape. Captain

Clough was in possession of some of her furniture and personal items and these were brought to his home in Westport. In 1838, the new owners of the “Marie Antoinette House” had it moved to Edgecomb. Verlie’s dismay over this event was evident during her interview, *“And then they went and took our Marie Antoinette house away from us, you see. They put that on a scow and paddled it across the river. It was up at Clough’s Point. Captain Clough was going from here to France... Well, he got acquainted somehow with this Marie Antoinette. He built this house for her and the last trip he went over there to get her, it leaked out what she was doing and they beheaded her. Edgecomb wanted the house. It really belongs on Westport. It’s really ours, our history, because Clough didn’t belong in Edgecomb; he belonged on Westport.”*

Verlie Greenleaf was very involved with her community. She was one of the founding members of

the school board and was Westport’s tax collector and treasurer for 47 years, retiring at age 87. During WWII, Verlie was a member of the Civil Defense Corps, and trained in first aid. She was a member of an island bowling team into her late 80s and continued driving until age 90.

For all her accomplishments, her family was most important to her. After Fred passed away in

1944, Verlie took turns spending her nights with her children in their homes. She only stayed in her home if her grandchildren or great-grandchildren slept over. Her great granddaughter, Dedee, now lives in Verlie’s house and remembers in the winter she and her siblings built forts in the living room with sheets, towels, and blankets. In the summer, those same items were used to make outdoor teepees.

Verlie was the oldest island resident when she passed away in 1992. She is buried at the Greenleaf family cemetery on Westport Island. She dedicated herself to her community because she loved her island and she enjoyed her life there to its fullest. 🦋

SHE DEDICATED HERSELF TO HER COMMUNITY BECAUSE SHE LOVED HER ISLAND AND SHE ENJOYED HER LIFE THERE TO ITS FULLEST.
.....

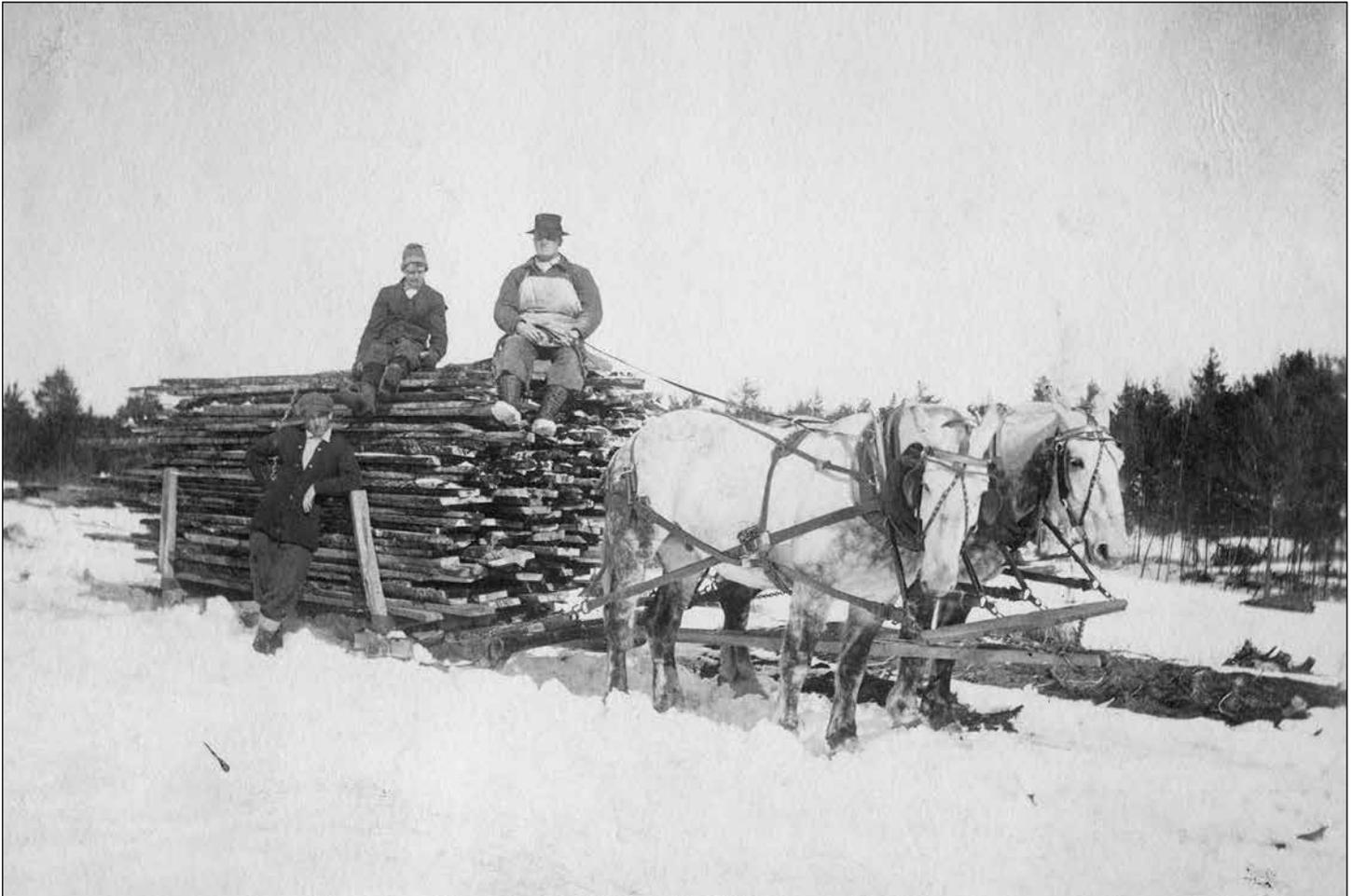


Photo from the Colby-Greenleaf Collection.

Annual Report was dedicated to Beedy. Select Board member Alison McKellar, who drafted the dedication, credited Beedy with being an early and active member of the Knox County chapter of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, discovering a local variety of kale, helping to save the historic building that houses the town's Post Office, helping establish community gardens, helping to plant shade trees along Camden's downtown streets, and authoring a natural history of the area, among other things.

In 1996, Camden's Arbor Day celebration honored Beedy for nursing a collection of resistant elms that were planted out in roadside locations in Knox, Waldo and Lincoln counties. In 1987, Beedy and Jeanne Hollingsworth received the Natural Resources Council of Maine Conservation Award for their work on pesticides, establishing the MOGFA No-Spray Registry to protect landowners from spray drift.

"Beedy has been a tireless advocate for the environment in all that she does, quietly transforming her historic village home into a natural sanctuary and a hub of civic engagement," wrote McKellar. "Even the home itself, and the small parcel of land surrounding it, have lessons to teach, reflecting a lifetime of conscious choices aimed at reducing waste, preserving history, and nurturing the plant and animal life that surrounds us.

"Beedy continues to be tireless in her advocacy for the voiceless; whether speaking on behalf of the trees at the Mountain View Cemetery or political prisoners on the other side of the planet, her soft-spoken and peaceful approach have earned her the respect and admiration of the entire community," McKellar continued. "We are grateful to Beedy Parker for her many years of gracious and generous service to the plant, animal and human residents of the town of Camden."

Similar to her beloved seeds that waft here, there and everywhere, Beedy Parker traveled far and wide before taking root in Camden.

"My mother was British, my father American, and I was born right before the war in Denmark. But we managed to get to the United States during the war," said Beedy. "I lived in Argentina from ages 6 to 12, then Antwerp, briefly in Canada, and then in the United States for college. Then, I lived in Peru, Argentina and Spain, all before I was 24."

Beedy's second husband had summered in Maine with his grandparents on Deer Isle. "We were in the Midwest. He was teaching at the University of Illinois. When the first oil shock came in the mid-1970s, he just felt really worried about it, so we became back-to-the-landers, right in town.

"A maritime venture was our excuse for coming to Camden, which didn't work out, but he said he really wanted to be near hills and the sea. He was kind of appalled by the agriculture we saw around us [in the Midwest], so we were glad to come here, whatever the excuse!"

The couple intentionally purchased a place in town, however, to cut down on the need for automobile travel. "He loved the town, and we wanted to live in town so we wouldn't be tied to driving," said Beedy, who became used to bicycle travel as a teenager in Europe and still travels by bicycle or on foot as often as possible, though she's "really pushing it" at age 81. "We already realized that cars were a big problem – and of course, it's only gotten worse. I feel very lucky that Camden is a walking town. Most towns, except bigger cities, are not."

Beedy became well-known for wresting crops out of her small, in-town plot of land while also encouraging gardens throughout the downtown. The couple had three children, and then one additional child came to live with them for a year. "There was not much money, and I was going to garden away – I had started a bit in Illinois with almost no space. What I did was really fun. I begged back gardens from people who had gradually been giving them up," she said. "Everyone had had backyard vegetable gardens [in the past] so there were gardens available for the begging!"

At one time, Beedy had five gardens scattered around town. She also used a couple of spots in a community garden that members of her local Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association had started. "That lasted until just a very few years ago, but I didn't continue with the community garden beyond 10 or 15 years," she said. "I would bicycle from one garden to the other with a fork attached to the bike. We didn't have drought much back then. Climate change is taking a toll on growing food – I think all the farmers do recognize that, but I'm not sure many [other] people realize it."

When the kids grew up and went off to college, "I cut back and maybe had two gardens, and now I have just the one, which I cut in half," said Beedy. "Three summers of drought have really damaged the soil so now I've got to bring it back with town water, which doesn't seem right at all!"

All the rain in late July had made her garden "really happy right now, but it still hasn't gotten all of the organisms back."

Beedy also discovered an edible, winter-hardy plant now known as Beedy's Camden Kale. "Really, that came to me," she said modestly. "It appeared at the bottom of this garden for several years and I had never eaten it, didn't know anything about it. I thought it was a perennial

BEN AMES FICTIONAL FRATERNITY VILLAGE

by Camille Smalley

The small towns of Maine, its textile mills and summer colonies provide authors with ideas for a variety of characters, as each writer tries to capture the quintessential Mainer. Before Steven King wrote about vampires in the fictional Maine town of Jerusalem's Lot, or Anita Shreve's summer people sunbathed on a Biddeford beach, author Ben Ames Williams penned stories set in the fictional town of Fraternity Village. A longstanding author with over 400 works, Ben Williams' work adds to the litany of authors whose love of Maine lives on in the written word.

Williams' life began on March 7, 1889, in Macon, Mississippi to parents Daniel Webster Williams and Sarah Marshall Ames. Williams was the first of four children, two of whom died in early childhood. Daniel Webster, a native of Ohio, married Sarah Marshall Ames of Mississippi, the daughter of a local judge and the great-niece of Confederate General Joseph Longstreet. Shortly after Ben was born, the Williams family moved north to Jackson County, Ohio. A writer, Daniel purchased the *Jackson Standard Journal* in 1889, a semi-weekly volume that chronicled the news of Jackson County. He owned the newspaper for over thirty years. As a mother, Sarah took to reading to the children, fostering an interest and a deep love of fiction. By high school, Williams assisted his father in the newspaper business after school, and all day on Saturday. His tasks included mundane chores like washing and sweeping the floors, as well as feeding the printer and setting the type.

At the age of fourteen, Williams moved to West Newton, Massachusetts to attend the Allen School, also known as the West Newton English and Classical School. Founded in 1854, the Allen School featured an unusually racially diverse and co-educational student body. As a

student, Williams attended lectures and dances with his fellow students. However, his time at the Allen school was cut short. In 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Daniel Webster Williams as the American Consul in Cardiff, Wales. The Williams family moved across the pond and took up residence for a year in Wales. While there, Ben studied Latin under the direction of a tutor. The family returned to the United States the following year. Fifteen-year-old Ben Williams then found himself spending a summer in the Pine Tree State. Daniel and Sarah sent Ben to a boys' camp. Ben enjoyed nature and spent his summer hunting and fishing. After the summer ended, in 1906, he attended Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Ben Williams graduated in 1910 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. In January of 1910, as Williams prepared for his final examinations, an elite boys' school in Connecticut offered him a position as an English teacher. Unsure if the educational path was right for him, he wrote to his father for career advice. "I telegraphed Father. 'Have been offered a teaching job. Shall I accept?' My handwriting has always been difficult and as delivered to Father, the telegraph read: 'Have been offered a job traveling. Shall I accept?' Father told me years afterward that if the telegram had read 'teaching' he would have

BEN AMES continued on page 39

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Uncle Sam and Mother Earth

Reflections on the Environmental Movements and the Role of Governance

Maine has played a big part in developing our nation's environmental laws, led by Senator Edmund Muskie's central role in designing the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act in the 1970s, and Senator George Mitchell's later success on the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

These contributions are discussed in a new book on the environment called *Uncle Sam and Mother Earth: Reflections on the Environmental Movement and the Role of Governance* by Maine author Jake Plante.

Plante chronicles the rise of the modern environmental movement over six decades through the eyes of Teddy Roosevelt, Rachel Carson, Lady Bird Johnson, Bill Ruckelshaus, Al Gore, Bill McKibben and others. Some of these individuals, like Edmund Muskie, made their impact inside government, but several, including Carson and Gore, are best known for their work outside of government or after they left government. That said, they all share something as effective environmental actors: a clear understanding of government and how it manages environmental policy.

The author also examines the role that Maine citizens have played in the climate debate. For example, he cites the David and Goliath battle that began in 2014 between a handful of concerned citizens in South Portland and Big Oil over its proposal to transport Alberta tar sands through a network of pipelines to South Portland harbor. After six years of litigation, the courts recently ruled in favor of South Portland and its home rule jurisdiction, thereby ending the pipeline project. This story of local triumph goes along with an earlier protest action in 1977: the Seabrook nuclear power plant occupation in New Hampshire. Plante describes the protest, his arrest and detainment with 1,413 other people, and what the event has meant to commercial nuclear power.

In chapters dedicated to laws on environmental impact studies, clean air,

endangered species, energy, and National Park noise limits, the author draws on his 30 years of Washington environmental experience to offer a behind-the-scenes look at how federal agencies interpret their environmental mission and convert science and analysis into policy. There is also a chapter on climate change, which includes an interview with Dr. David Emerson of Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences on the subject of ocean acidification.

Entertaining, revealing, and forward-looking, the book speaks to what people can do to protect the environment. Beyond reducing our individual footprints, including diet and responsible investing, the take-home message is that we can no longer afford to be bystanders in the public arena. It's going to take more people who care about the environment and understand the government to speak up.

For readers, the book breaks literary ground with the intermittent use of composite characters and fictional dialogue that reflects the actual discussions that went on inside the government. It is a technique that helps the author cut to the chase, clarify issues, and provide readers with a more entertaining narrative.

With its serious questions and unique qualities, *Uncle Sam and Mother Earth* may change the way you perceive environmental protection and perhaps government in general.

The book can be obtained from Maine Authors Publishing in Thomaston or through Amazon.com.



BEEDY continued from page 36

because I was so ignorant! I was such an untidy gardener that I think I just didn't notice that it seeds in the second year.

"It kept coming back, so we ate some and it was really good! I started saving the seeds and sending little packets to friends," she recalled. "I was still thinking it was a perennial, so it basically blessed me and hung on. It's possible the seeds came in on some broccoli seed or something."

Beedy's Camden Kale caught on and was even sold by FEDCO, a cooperative seed and garden supply company in Clinton. "They haven't had it for several years. I've been giving it to people who are growing it in greenhouses. I don't follow it. I wrote a natural history and I



BEEDY continued on page 40

Beedy, today, still thinking about trees!

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told me to take the job, but he had no desire to see me be a traveling man,” Ben noted in his unpublished autobiography. The transcription mistake proved beneficial to Williams, as he embarked on his own literary journey instead of grading papers.

From February through June of 1910, Ben took up residence at the *Jackson Standard Journal*. Williams filled the role as temporary editor and served as “the entire editorial staff.” Daniel Williams relied on his son to keep the newspaper printing while he served in the Ohio Senate that spring. After graduating from Dartmouth, Ben moved to Boston. During the summer, he eagerly pounded the pavement in search of a job. Williams was finally hired as a reporter, making fifteen dollars per week.

Not too long after, Williams found himself sharing an apartment with Peter Webb Elliot, a fellow reporter for the *Boston Traveler*. Instead of going out in the evenings, Williams purchased a typewriter and sought to teach himself how to write fiction. He began churning out short stories. He sent them repeatedly to various editors, only to have each volume rejected. However, Williams remained undeterred. He studied various authors like Kipling, Balzac, and Stevenson. He spent night after night, honing and developing his craft.

Two years later, Williams married Florence Talpey, a Wellesley College graduate. Although York, Maine was her hometown, Florence was born in Tienstin, China. Her father captained a clipper ship that carried cargo between China and England. By the time she was 13, she had sailed around the globe eight times. Florence Talpey came from a long line of seafaring Mainers, and not surprisingly, the newlyweds spent many of their vacations in Maine. The pair married on September 4, 1912 and honeymooned on one of Maine’s islands. The couple settled in Newtonville, and later, Chestnut Hill. After their wedding, Ben continued to write fiction well into the evenings. Florence supported his endeavor, steadfast in her belief that her husband would one day achieve his dream of being published.

After numerous rejections, and several hundred pages of re-writes, Ben William’s fiction finally appeared in

print. *Smith’s Magazine*, edited by Charles A. MacLean, published his first short story, *Wings of Lias*, in 1915. MacLean would go on to publish four more of Ben’s stories that year. For his first foray into published fiction, Ben earned \$245. Not a bad sum for moonlighting in the evenings. However, in early January 1916, he decided he would start the year fresh and destroyed “all but three of eighty-five stories he had on hand.” More editors began to take note, and the demand for his work increased.

Despite the increasing popularity, Ben remained a steadfast family man. He and Florence had three children;

Penelope, Roger, and Ben Jr. Together, the family spent the warm summer days in Maine. They often visited Kenneth Roberts, a fastidious researcher and Maine author, and his family in Kennebunkport. But the family’s true summer calling was two hours north of Kennebunkport, in the town of Searsmont. Ben first came to Searsmont in 1918. The forests and rivers around the small town offered excellent hunting and plentiful fishing.

At the age of 29, Ben Williams was ramping up his short story production. An outdoor adventure in the great Maine woods, and a new friend, would prove to be the balm his creativity needed. That friend was A.L. “Bert” McCorrison.

A local farmer, Bert lived at Hardscrabble Farm. Quite different from Bostonians and other city folk that Williams knew, Bert did not worship material items. He found pleasures in everyday life and sought the simpler things.

The friendship blossomed, and the pair became lifelong friends. Author Paul Chase described the pair as “steadfast hunting and fishing partners.” Chase explains that Williams learned “the talents of this simple but perceptive New England farmer.” Bert actively recorded the events of his life. When separated, the pair wrote long letters to each other. Ben discovered the joy in writing stemmed from inside, from the pleasure of living.

Inspired by his experiences in Searsmont, Ben created a new series of stories set in the fictional town of Fraternity Village (Searsmont), and featuring Chet McAusland, a character entirely based on Bert McCorrison. Based on real-life events, the fictional tales chronicled changes in



Ben Ames Williams.

don't really follow that, either. I am fertile ground, but I don't maintain things very well," she quipped.

Beedy was an early member of the local MOFGA chapter. "When we started going, it was in a church basement in Thomaston, I think, and then a Rockland church basement," she said. "It was very active. We had monthly meetings for years, with great, well-publicized programs. (I just wrote a piece about it for MOFGA that went through a couple of years of the programs we offered. It petered out in the early 2000s. We were already down to meeting in people's houses. It became too much work and people couldn't manage the time. But, it was wonderful, she recalled, while it lasted. Recently, we tried a local gardeners' Zoom, but I don't know if that will persist next winter, and we usually stop for the summer anyway. It was very active."

Beedy has also been involved in the Common Ground Fair for many years. "We started going when the kids were still young and I remember setting up displays about solar drying or something like that," she said. When Fair organizers and MOFGA seemed to be drifting apart, Beedy started a MOFGA display tent, "all about what MOFGA was doing so that people at the Fair would know," she said, noting that the Fair is an important fundraiser for the volunteer organization. "I think it's pretty important. And I had a section at the back about what we were trying to do at the state level."

Yes, Beedy has advocated for the environment in Augusta, as well, most recently last March when she testified before the state legislature. "I'm not very good at it, but I've kept at it and so have people with better legal minds," she said.

But back to the Common Ground Fair... "We had an altercation between, well, really only one person, who was attempting to get rid of the social action tents that some thought were offensive, but I thought they were really important," recalled Beedy, noting that the social justice tents stayed put.

So she started the Children's Garden Parade at the Fair, to bind the Fair together under the banner "We All Belong in the Garden." "It got really popular. That's still going," she said. "My daughter and granddaughter run it now, but I do help out. They do a great job!"

Quick to point to Marsha Smith as the driving force behind Citizens for a Green Camden, a group working to educate folks on the dangers of lawn chemicals and associated runoff. "I send them stuff when I see something online that they ought to know about," she said.

Up until two years ago, Beedy was still helping out with a community garden that she helped establish. Originally,

it was the giant back garden that fed the elder's home. Then the produce also got shared with the local food pantry. But regular labor to keep the garden going was sometimes hard to find. "So we turned it into a community garden," she said. Beedy has also taught and promoted composting, and was a founding member of the town's first recycling and waste-reduction committee.

"I have participated in the annual MOFGA gardening teaching push, which they do all around the state, usually in April, but I haven't done that for several years," she said. "But what I really loved doing was that we started teaching composting in the late 90s. I was part of [UMaine Cooperative] Extension for two or three years, mostly as a volunteer, and worked on teaching materials for kids for nature study. They do [UMaine 4-H] Tanglewood Camp. And Extension started a master composter program, both large-scale and small-scale.

"Locally, I did start a dump group that went on for a long time," Beedy said. "We met at the dump and started recycling going there and a swap shop, and then decided we wanted compost teaching so we got together with Extension. We taught that outdoors for several years, spring and fall, and then at the high school, where we started having garden programs. Then it was Adult Ed, which I did with another friend for years, at night – we were like Mutt and Jeff with our posters and books and a video show, and then a question-and-answer period. It was a really rich program and people came from all different levels of experience. I miss it, but you've got to stop at some point. I could do it now with another partner, a younger person," she said, to do all the lugging of materials that's involved.

"I have a passion for trees – I can sort of *feel* them when they are very big," said Beedy. "I loved climbing trees! When I lived in Argentina, it was very hot in the summer and we didn't have A/C and I just got a feeling for trees and their shade. All the elms came down right before we got here, so the Garden Club stepped in and decided to form a tree committee to arrange for planting trees every year. As soon as I caught a break, I jumped into that."

The town's elm trees succumbed to disease decades ago. But, thanks to local efforts soliciting space from downtown landowners, "we were keeping this canopy going," she said. "I think we plant about 20 trees a year on the street. If you go door to door where there's spaces, a lot of people do want a tree. Some people worry that, 'it's' going to fall on my house,' but I tell them, 'But, you won't be alive then!'"

Beedy also hand-wrote and illustrated *A Natural History of Camden and Rockport*, which was published by the Camden-Rockport Historical Society in 1984. "I gave some to schools and it was in bookstores.

"I have a son-in-law who does nature guides, so he

and my granddaughter sort of take care of that now,” she said. “They do a good job, and it’s on his website. I really have not made sure it’s in bookstores. It was hand-lettered because I don’t type well, but my grandchildren digitized it and gave a digital font.”

The environment isn’t the only thing Beedy helped protect around Camden. She helped save the historic Post Office building from demolition, too. “In the 90s, I was walking down the street and ran into somebody sort of prominent and they said, ‘We can’t let them do this to our Post Office.’ They [the USPS] were trying to sell their buildings and contract out, usually out of town. We had this imposing Post Office building. It’s really central and we need our bank and our Post Office and Town Office in town,” she said, “to keep services centralized and the downtown walkable. We do have Route 1 running through the middle, but you can get across the road, so it’s okay. We didn’t want to lose that, so Chris and Rosalee Glass put together a really good committee. I don’t know that we actually succeeded by ourselves, though,” she qualified. “Somebody we knew also knew Barbara Bush, and I think that’s what did it!”

Beedy also belonged to the Peace and Justice group in Rockland, “and I always tried to get them to pay attention to the environment. I belonged to Amnesty International too – I had loved being in other countries and getting a sense of the people,” she said.

Beedy said she gets furious about ways that agricultural systems in other countries are undermined. “I became aware of it through Food First.” That organization speaks out frequently about ways the United States undermines local people in other countries,” she said, “and, because of my international background, I feel responsible. My father worked for Cargill.”

Beedy would love to do as much as she can for as long as she can, but said that these days, “I’m kind of busy with my body, which is failing in various ways. I gave up my car, because I don’t really like cars. I’d like to live the rest of my life without having to take care of a car. Now I depend on people for rides!”

The lack of public transit is another issue Beedy

has tackled over the years. “I was on the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee for our area for four years or something like that, but you try to work on local public transit systems and it gets undermined immediately,” she said. “They do have transit for the elderly. I am making use of that now. It’s wasteful, in terms of energy, but it’s kind, because they are kindly picking up people who don’t have cars and need to get to the doctor, and they are nice people, incredibly considerate.”

Still, there could be so much more, she said. “I really feel there should be frequent busses along Route 1. My late husband was very alert to climate change. I think we learned about it before we moved to Maine and we thought it would be addressed. We were wrong.”

Beedy always thought she would someday illustrate children’s books, “but I never went on with it,” she said. “I studied anthropology in college, which was very useful. I’m kind of nerdy about people! And I like making things, sewing. I want to make a quilt of my husband’s ties. I want to do a tree program. I want to make a book of just collected environmental stories that are mythical, traditional or classical – I’ll just ‘steal’ them and put them together in a book if I have time! I made a list a long time ago of the stories, including Biblical stories and Aesop’s Fables.”

It wasn’t easy to catch up with Beedy for an interview because she had “a crazed three weeks ahead.” May we all, at age 81, have a crazed three weeks ahead of us, Beedy! 🌿

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the small towns of northern New England. Farms shrank in size as people flocked to the city to find higher paying work. Cost of living continued to climb while local farm products could not compete with the large-scale farming in other parts of the United States. People left small towns like Fraternity Village for more employment opportunities in larger cities.

Ben penned the first Fraternity Village story in 1919, a year after meeting McCarrison. He continued writing the stories until 1940 – 125 short stories in all. The *Saturday Evening Post* picked up the stories and ran all 125 editions. The unique focus on characters created a rich town filled with unique people. Each week, the reader felt as though they were checking in with their friends from Maine. Some editors criticized the stories as having too little plot and too much character. However, readers did not seem to share the same opinion. Ben Williams would go on to write several novels set in Fraternity Village.

Ben's friendship with Bert remained close until McCarrison's death in 1931. Williams cherished and kept

the letters that Bert had written to him. In a memorial to his friend, Ben published the letters unedited, and titled them "Letters from Fraternity." Upon his death, Bert bequeathed Hardscrabble Farm to Williams. The farm became Ben's home base for writing for three-fourths of the year for the better part of two decades.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Ben Williams turned more to novel writing. Like his short stories, his novels focused heavily on character. His 1944 novel *Leave Her to*

Heaven became a 1945 smash film with the same name. One of his most famous works, *The Strange Woman* (1941) takes place in Bangor, Maine between the War of 1812 and the end of the Civil War.

Ben also enjoyed curling. On February 4, 1953, Williams participated in a curling competition in Boston at the Brookline Country Club. Sadly, after the competition concluded, Williams suffered a fatal heart

attack. Williams opted to be buried in Maine, the place that soothed his soul. The world of Fraternity Village forever exists in literary history, along with the words of Bert McCarrison. Although born in Mississippi, and raised in Ohio, the soul of Ben Williams sings on a farm in Searsmont, Maine.



Playbill for *After His Own Heart*, 1919.

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In essence, there are three avenues to earn your pilot's license through Maine Instrument Flight: the GI program for veterans, average citizens interested in becoming pilots, and through the UMA program. According to Bill, there are varying requirements for earning different licenses. Students start with the private pilot license which takes about 40-60 hours to complete. It is perhaps the most important license, but not the most difficult, says Bill. To earn your instrument ratings takes another 40-60 hours. To achieve a commercial license requires a four-phase program that takes about two years and roughly 120-150 flight hours. The next step is earning a flight instructor rating. The multi engine rating comes next and takes an additional fifteen hours. The cost to earn your private pilot license is about \$17,000. Bill has seen students as young as sixteen, and the oldest student he's had was in his 70s. Twenty percent of MIF's students are female.

Summer happens to be the busiest time of year for Bill and his twenty-nine employees. Kids are being flown in from all around the country to spend a few weeks at one of Maine's iconic summer camps. Well-heeled rusticators with summer homes on one of Maine's many seasonal islands pay top dollar to spend their weekends in vacationland. These charter flights can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$25,000. The MIF fleet includes six charter planes and fourteen training planes. The "Queen of the Fleet" according to Bill, is a 7-passenger, 2-crew F90A Beech King Air. Bill says it makes multiple flights to Islesboro, home of many clients, on a weekly basis. MIF is open seven days a week, year-round except for Christmas and Thanksgiving. They fly politicians around the state, including the governor. Some days there may be as many as eight to ten jets coming in a day including the Gulfstream 5. Some of these flights are transcontinental.

Maintenance is a big part of the business. "If you can't fix them, you can't fly them," quipped Bill. MIF maintains

its' own planes and twenty-seven other planes that are currently stored on site. It wouldn't be a bad idea to reach out to Bill if you are an A & P mechanic looking to work for a great company!

"On-demand travel" is the name of the game at MIF. As one of their brochures states, "travel on your schedule 24/7, for business or pleasure, and save valuable time...direct to thousands of destinations in the US or Canada. Every seat is a window seat, and your bags arrive with you!" Chief Flight Instructor Paul McKeown says, "We're one of the oldest flight schools in the country. This is the same company, the same family, that's been teaching people how to fly for over 70 years. That's pretty impressive."

The school is so much more than meets the eye. According to a 2016 *Mainebiz* article, "Maine Instrument Flight plays an integral role in providing essential services that include fuel sales, flight instruction, aircraft rental and sales, storage for private and corporate aircraft, major airframe maintenance and repair, a pilot rest area, catering, and even a conference room for corporate meetings."

Maine's 35 airports have a whopping \$2.94 billion impact on the state's economy. As of 2015 those 35 airports transported 2.27 million people, 28,164 tons of freight, and provided either directly or indirectly some 26,657 jobs. That makes the work Maine Instrument Flight does even more important, and in today's "covid vernacular" extremely essential.

The pandemic stole so much from so many in 2020, including Maine Instrument Flight School. With the near daily changes in flight requirements, the 75th anniversary of the school snuck up on Bill and his employees and they were left with no time to plan the celebration they had hoped. The 70th anniversary celebration, in 2016, included a performance by all six of Bill's granddaughters singing *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B*. That ceremony also witnessed the christening of the maintenance hangar as the William L. Perry Maintenance Facility...a fitting tribute to what would have been his 100th birthday.

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