



# Kennebec Current



125 years of preservation and study of Kennebec County history (1891-2016)

Volume 26 Issue 6

KENNEBEC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

November-December 2016



## KHS Board of Directors

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Kent London

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Joseph Owen/newsletter  
Earle G. Shettleworth Jr.  
William Sprague Jr.

### **Total membership:**

458 on December 16  
Life members: 158

## January Program "Researching the History of Your House"



Did you ever wonder about the history of your house? When was it built and by whom? Did George Washington or Abraham Lincoln sleep there? We will discuss how to use land records and other documents to reconstruct the past of your house and learn about past occupants. Included will be an overview of the registry of deeds and other sources, strategies for identifying and extracting pertinent information and tips for dealing with "stone walls" and other problems.

Our speaker, Richard Bridges, is a Maine native and a graduate of the University of Maine and the Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law. He has been a practicing attorney since 1983, concentrating on real estate and probate law. He also serves as an adjunct instructor at Central Maine Community College and as a research consultant for the Augusta Historic Preservation Commission.

The photograph above is of Mr. Bridges' house, which was built by John C. Tibbetts circa 1863-64. The picture was taken by Mr. Bridges. The house is located at 47 Eastern Avenue in Augusta.

The Kennebec Historical Society January presentation is free and open to the public. It will take place at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 18, in the Community Room at Lithgow Public Library, at 45 Winthrop Street in Augusta.

## Fuller Fund Meets Fundraising Target

The Kennebec Historical Society is close to wrapping up its ninth annual Moira H. Fuller Annual Fund campaign, and the result assures the society that it can do more than just keep the lights on for another year.

The society's Development Committee had collected a total of \$49,940 in contributions to the fund as of December 21, which comfortably surpasses the \$45,000 income from the fund that the Board of Directors had anticipated in its 2016 budget. Also, the committee still expects to collect more than \$2,500 in outstanding pledges to the 2016 campaign, increasing the total to an amount exceeding the committee's own \$50,000 campaign goal.

The Fuller Fund, founded in 2008 and named by the late KHS benefactor Elsie Viles in honor of her friend Moira H. Fuller of Winthrop, provides the bulk of the society's annual income for operating expenses.

## President's Message

Happy holidays!

This past year has been very eventful for the Kennebec Historical Society. We celebrated 125 years. We had a number of jointly sponsored programs, which were well attended. We selected the color scheme for the Fuller House and got it painted. Now on to the shutters and windows.

The membership of the society and I wish to express gratitude to the faithful few who make this organization work. Phyllis vonHerrlich has done a tremendous job in the last two years on maintenance of the building. She oversaw the rebuilding of the porch, worked on finding the appropriate colors for the house, wrote grants for covering the cost of painting, getting quotes, and finally the Fuller House is painted. Bruce and Kathy Kirkham do everything to keep the finances on track, find items of interest for the society, and just generally do what is needed. Thanks go to Ernie and Joan Plummer – Ernie, for trying to “herd cats” and keeping the collection in order; and Joan, for doing the wonderful job of maintaining the membership records. Emily Schroeder, to quote Stefanie Barley, writes “the most interesting minutes” and helped produce great programs. Anne Cough is always on the prowl to get speakers who are knowledgeable in their fields and would be of interest to the membership and guests. Stefanie Barley, Richard Bridges, Nelson Leavitt, Jon Phillips, and John Stewart take the time from their schedules to make certain that the society is well governed. Sally Joy and Joe Owen keep the Kennebec Current interesting and timely. To everyone who is on one of the committees, standing or ad hoc, your efforts are appreciated and stand noted. A special thank-you goes to the Development Committee for raising nearly \$50,000 so far this year to keep it all running. Last but not least, Scott Wood, our assistant and estate manager, keeps the heat on and the air conditioners in order, mails the letters and in general keeps the grease on the bearings.

I want to thank all of you and anyone I have forgotten for your work this year.

— Kent London

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## KHS Kennebec Surname List reaches 45,000 names

Are you looking for details of your Kennebec County ancestor's life that you are unlikely to find on a commercial genealogy site? The Kennebec Historical Society may have some in the written and pictorial records, personal letters, entries in ledgers, purchase receipts, graduation programs, and many more items dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, that are preserved in our archive. The key to them can be found on our website, [www.kennebechistorical.org](http://www.kennebechistorical.org). It is called the Kennebec Surname List and contains over 83,000 citations for 45,000-plus Kennebec County surnames.

A decade ago we started an indexing project when we found that Joseph Beck's 1962 publication, *Historical Notes on Augusta, Maine*, did not have a name index. For this one book, we indexed about 1,200 unique surnames. That index has grown to over 45,000 unique names, up 6,000 from the 39,000 we had last year.

This accomplishment is all due to the efforts of Richard Coffin, Holland Corson, Ben Doty, Alex Hastings, Bruce and Kathy Kirkham, Rita Paré, Ernie Plummer, Phyllis vonHerrlich, Connor Wagner, and Charity Williams.

Here is what entries look like, including a name, a locator key, and a title:

Durwarsh, Frank	1999.0228.0001	Village School District Census 1893
Durwarsh, Mary	1999.0228.0001	Village School District Census 1893
Durwarsh, Nellie	1999.0228.0001	Village School District Census 1893
Duson, Jill	2013.0043.0152	Zonta Board of Directors Meeting Minutes 1983 09
Dustin, Charles	1992.0014.0001	Augusta Park Racing Schedule, August 15-17, 1894
Dutton, Ephraim	1891.0020.0001	City of Augusta 1817 Tax Assessor's Book

Just bring the list for your ancestor to the society and we will provide the item for your review. If you can't come to the society, let us know; we can provide copies of many of the items.

In the process of cataloging, we have also indexed over 1,100 places and 2,100 organizations about which we can help you find information. Ask about them.

## February Program “Forts Along the Kennebec”

From 1676 until the early 18th century, much of Maine, including the Kennebec River region, was abandoned by the English due to a series of Colonial-era Indian wars. In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht afforded a sufficient promise of peace for settlers to return to the frontier of Maine. The lands along the Kennebec were owned by various groups of proprietors who wished to sell these lands to settlers. To secure the frontier and, more importantly, to make the settlers feel secure, four forts were built along the Kennebec between 1720 and 1754. This talk will discuss the history and archaeology of these forts.

Leon “Lee” Cranmer, our speaker, is an historical archaeologist who retired in August 2010 from the staff of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from Stockton University, and a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology and a Master of Arts in history/historical archaeology from the University of Maine. Mr. Cranmer has worked in archaeology in Maine for almost 30 years and has conducted archaeology for the state of Maine for well over 20 years. Prior to that, he spent two seasons in England doing archaeology. He has written one book and numerous articles on Maine historical archaeology and is currently working on another book on Fort Halifax, a French and Indian War period fort in Winslow. He has excavated hundreds of Maine sites for which he has written or co-authored site reports. Prior to his archaeology career, Mr. Cranmer spent seven years in the Navy and is a Vietnam veteran. He lives in Somerville with his wife, Liz.

This Kennebec Historical Society presentation is free and open to the public and will take place at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 15, at a location yet to be announced.



## Knit With a Purpose – Your Help is Requested

As the winter weather is now upon us, we’d really appreciate those who knit helping us provide hats, mittens and scarves for school boys and girls. Please consider joining the Kennebec Historical Society’s “Knit With a Purpose” group. We will also be knitting lap blankets and shawls for our community’s seniors.

We usually meet at the society once a month to knit, exchange patterns, collect the knitted items, socialize, and share refreshments. If you are not able to attend the meetings, you can knit at home and drop off finished items the society on Wednesdays.

The number of knitted items we delivered to Central Maine Power and the Women, Infants and Children program for distribution last year was much appreciated.

If you are willing to help with this winter project, please contact me, Kathy Kirkham at 623-0417 or email me, [hoosiersinmaine@aol.com](mailto:hoosiersinmaine@aol.com).

I look forward to hearing from you.



Stay warm and keep knitting,

— *Kathy Kirkham*

## In Memoriam

**Clarence F. McKay Sr.**, 94, of Gardiner, a longtime occasional historical resource for the Kennebec Historical Society and one of its newest members, died December 14. Mr. McKay was an Army veteran of World War II's Pacific Theater, a former Kennebec Journal chief photographer, press secretary for Gov. Burton Cross, an administrator in a variety of state agencies, and a director of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland's communications office for 16 years until his retirement in 1984. He also was a former chairman of Gardiner's Historic Preservation Commission and its Downtown Revitalization Committee. Mr. McKay and his wife, Irene, who died in 2015, are survived by 15 children and several dozen grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

## Responses from Readers

**Board member Anne Cough wrote**, regarding the photo on page 5 of our September-October issue (and below at left) with the text "...truck and workers are assembled outside a shoe box factory":

"The name of the company is the 'Standard Box Company' and they were on Water Street in Hallowell. Oscar Childs was the manager. This is from the *Maine Register*, for 1919-1920 – page 618. Oscar lived on Wilder Street in Hallowell and is buried in the Village Cemetery.

"I hope this helps!"



**KHS Member and State Historian Earle Shettleworth wrote** to tell us that the "unidentified building" photograph on page 5 of the September-October 2016 Kennebec Current newsletter, shown here at right, "is the Candage Store on the main street of Seal Harbor, Maine. This building is still standing."

Apparently the note on the back of the picture ("my friends, Water Street, Augusta") was not what it appeared to be.

K. H. S. Inc.  
Augusta, Me

Nov. 9, 2016

I really enjoy  
The Kennebec Current, having been  
a native Mainer and full time  
resident for over 86 years. Especially  
enjoy stories and mention of people,  
places etc. that I knew. My parents  
were both born in Hollowell. I grew  
up beside the cemetery in E. Wintthrop  
which was then Augusta State District  
property. Alley Jenks arrived for  
most cemetery services or burials -  
always walking so I observed him  
for several years. I was sorry  
to read of the death of Holly Wick  
Domine at her young age. She  
and her mother were friends for many  
years of my older sister Virginia  
Jones. At 90+ I no longer return  
to Maine but enjoy reading all your  
news.  
Sincerely,  
Anis R. Nettlett

From Florida, our **cataloging associate and society member Richard Coffin** wrote regarding the article "Salmon on the Fourth":

"Augusta resident Marjorie Standish used to contribute recipes to the Gannett Newspapers, including the KJ. In 1973, the Maine Sunday Telegram copyrighted her book, *Keep Cooking – The Maine Way*. On page 31 (which Mr. Coffin scanned and attached) are her notably relevant entries. As a former gardener myself, I feel sure that one could take *considerable pride* (as Marjorie indicated) if they had produced green peas from their own garden in time to accompany their highly-prized salmon dinner *by the Fourth of July!* Since we had our 'Victory Gardens' (to help with the war effort), everyone who managed a vegetable garden in those days may have known of this competition. Both my parents and grandparents contributed to this memorable Fourth effort! 'Bragging rights' among serious, dedicated gardeners, after all, is its own reward!"

We are delighted when our readers take the time to write or call in response to things they enjoy, are able to help identify, or about which they have information to add. Keep those letters coming!

## The Kennebec Historical Society Welcomes the Following New Members

Diana Allen – Litchfield  
Heather Lyon – Oakland  
Ian and Rachael Magill – Augusta

### and continues to recognize our

**Sustaining Business Member**  
Kennebec Savings Bank, Augusta

### and our

**Sponsoring Business Member**  
Pine State Trading Company, Gardiner

## The Collections Box

In recent years, recognizing the importance of the common folk, historians broadened their traditional focus from princes and prelates to paupers and pots and pans, from the rulers to the ruled. Thus although we are always eager to add to our collections papers associated with persons whose names are familiar, we also seek to record those people whose existence otherwise would be lost. Among materials recently donated and purchased are examples of both.

One donor gave us inscribed copies of works by Maine author Brenda Shaw together with 32 photos and letters. Another donor presented us with 49 letters and other material associated with Bob Elliot, of “Bob and Ray” radio fame.

In March 1885, Emery O. Bean, in Readfield, wrote to the postmaster general, urging the appointment of Orlando Currier as postmaster in Hallowell. In the same letter, Kennebec County commissioners and S.S. Browne, chairman of the Democratic State Committee, supported the replacement. Also, an unsigned section addressed to President Grover Cleveland gave further support to Currier and requests the removal of the current Hallowell postmaster, J.B. Thomas. Finally, D.H. Thing also asks that Thomas be removed because he holds “the people of Maine in bondage to James. G. Blaine.”

Among documents recording the less famous are an 1842 letter from the Hallowell overseer of the poor to the overseer of the poor in Readfield, stating that Miss Sarah Waterhouse, daughter of Isaac Waterhouse, of Readfield, pauper, is now chargeable to Hallowell. On January 29, 1846, Branden L. Wood in Augusta submits a hospital bill for James Wyman to the selectmen of Readfield. A document of indenture between the town of Windsor and James Linn for care of Elsa Trask from April 1, 1831, to April 1, 1832, states that Linn will clothe, feed, and provide suitable housing in exchange for her labor for that year.

And then between the notable and the unknown, in 1849 Daniel Chelsey, of Readfield, wrote to tell Elias Luke, in Wilton, that Luke is appointed administrator of the estate of O. Fuller. Gordon and Henry Stationery, of Readfield, wrote to Messers J.W. Penney about the pumps, heaters and injectors in Penney’s catalog. Lot Morrill, in Augusta, gave his opinion on a bill to A.P. Gould, in Thomaston. Daniel Pike, in Augusta, informed the assessor in Farmington of the residents of Farmington who held stock in the Freeman Bank. W.M. Vaughn, in Hallowell, listed the residents of Readfield who held stock in the Northern Bank.

Authors, politicians, paupers, and the middle class: Our collection tries to represent them all.

For the Collections Committee  
— *Bruce Kirkham*

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## Intern Positions Open for the Summer of 2017

Are you a student or do you know a student who will be looking for employment during the summer of 2017? Do you have an interest in history, library science, or computer science? Would you like a hands-on experience with an historical society?

For the fifth year, the Kennebec Historical Society has established two paid summer internships for the summer of 2017. The positions will be for 12 hours per week for 10 weeks. Training and supervision will be provided by the library/archive staff. Successful candidates will be pursuing college level studies in history or library science, will show excellent attention to detail in their work, and will be competent in the use of Microsoft Office tools. An application can be forwarded by e-mail to [kennhis1891@gmail.com](mailto:kennhis1891@gmail.com) and should include a brief description of your current course of study, available dates, and a short curriculum vitae that includes grade-point average and academic references.

A job description for this position is available on our website, [www.kennebechistorical.org](http://www.kennebechistorical.org), home page at the Summer Intern Job Description link. The decision on offers will be made in March.



**Holland Corson**  
2016 summer intern

## Long Term Financial Planning

The society has begun a process to plan our financial road ahead. Our goal is a long-term financial plan that will provide an approach to:

- Stable financial resources to cover our normal operating expenses
- Resources to maintain and improve 107 Winthrop Street
- Capital resources to meet requirements for growth
- An aggressive grant funding program to meet our stated mission.

An important element in this plan is to address the need for a professional staff to augment our volunteer staff and provide for the future viability of the society and its collections.

At this point four people are involved: Stefanie Barley, Nina Mendall, Ernie Plummer and Joe Owen. A fifth member has been identified and will likely join us in January.

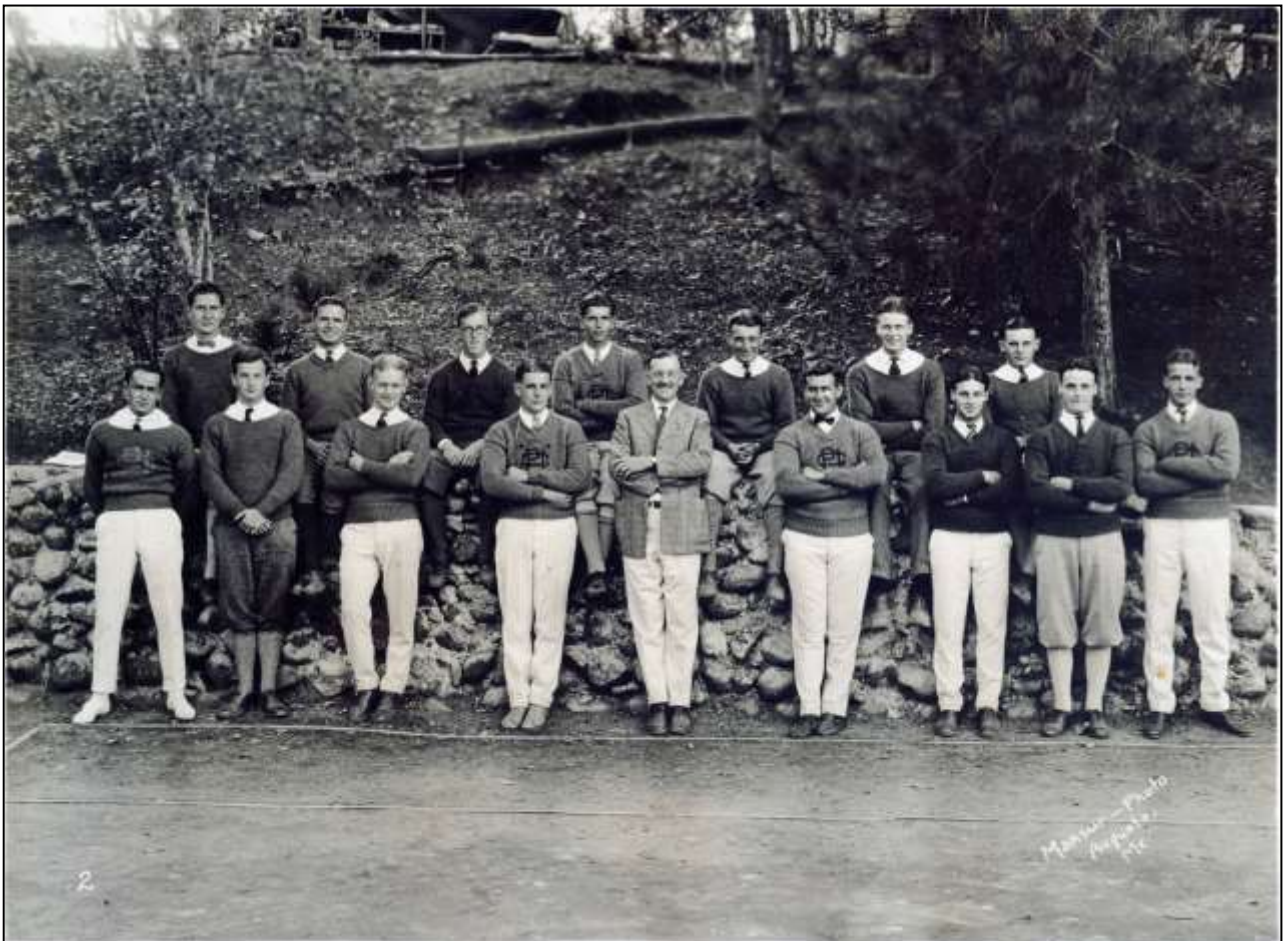
Our approach is to explore as many possibilities as possible. We are thus using the first half of our six-month charter to gather every approach we can identify. This includes our own ideas as well as those published on the Web and elsewhere. We will heartily welcome any ideas anyone has for making money to support these goals. Talk to one of us about what we are thinking.

Once we've gathered them, we will then begin an evaluation process that will allow us to recommend approaches for implementation by the board.

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## Know What School These Men are From?

This group of "Sweater Men" from a school whose letters were CPI was photographed by the Mansur studio in Augusta. Does anyone recognize the school? The setting is near a lake. (2016.0131.0001)



Kennebec Historical Society, Inc.  
PO Box 5582  
Augusta, ME 04332-5582  
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**KENNEBEC HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. – Application for Membership**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Business \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Type: New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Category: Individual (annual) – \$20 \_\_\_\_\_

Family (annual) – \$30 \_\_\_\_\_

Senior (60+) (annual) – \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Senior Family (annual) – \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Student (full-time) (annual) – \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

Life (1 person) – \$200 \_\_\_\_\_ Life (Family) – \$300 \_\_\_\_\_

Business (annual, fewer than 25 employees) – \$75 \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate (annual, 25 employees or more) – \$125 \_\_\_\_\_

Nonprofit group (annual) – \$35 \_\_\_\_\_

Donation (optional): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift membership, given by: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please send to Kennebec Historical Society, P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04332-5582.)

***This line and below for society use only:*** Date received: \_\_\_\_\_

Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

file 2.8.2

**Reading Room hours** are by appointment in January and February. Regular reading room hours will resume in March.

**Mailing address:** P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04332-5582

**E-mail address:** [kennhis1891@gmail.com](mailto:kennhis1891@gmail.com)

**Telephone:** (207) 622-7718

**Web site:** [www.kennebechistorical.org](http://www.kennebechistorical.org)