



# Kennebec Current



Discovering, preserving, and disseminating Kennebec County history since 1891

Volume 30 Issue 6

KENNEBEC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

November–December 2020

## Melville Fuller Statue's Fate in County Commissioners' Hands

The period for public comment about the statue of U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Melville Fuller in front of the Kennebec County Courthouse in Augusta lapsed on Dec. 10, and now the county commissioners are expected to decide early in 2021 whether to honor a Maine Supreme Judicial Court request to consider moving the statue off that spot.

Maine's high court justices wrote to the commissioners August 5, citing Fuller's involvement with the U.S. court's now-discredited 1896 *Plessey v. Ferguson* decision. That ruling affirmed the principle of allowing states to enact and enforce "separate but equal" laws that mandated the segregation of Blacks from the rest of the population when using public transportation, schools, recreational facilities, and retail businesses. The court overturned the *Plessey* ruling in 1954 in deciding the *Brown v. Board of Education* case.

The Kennebec Historical Society has taken no position on the statue's placement, but it has many links to the controversy.

First, the society's president, Patsy Crockett, also is the county commissioners' chairwoman.

Second, a society member who took part in a December 1 public hearing on the matter suggested moving the statue to the historical society's property at 107 Winthrop Street — a mere six blocks west of the courthouse. Some other hearing participants backed the idea.

And third, the society's headquarters building was built in the 1830s for Henry Weld Fuller Jr., who was Melville Fuller's uncle.

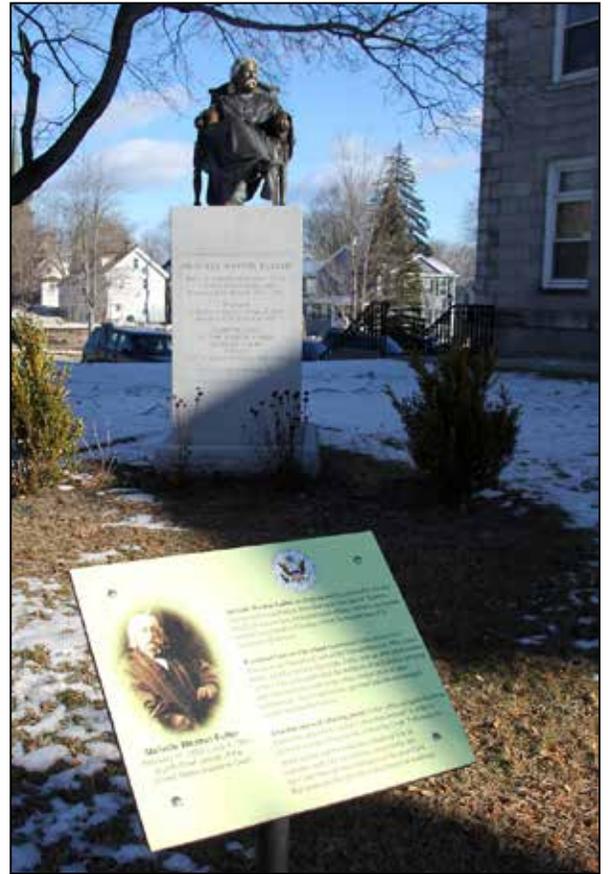
Crockett so far has declined to comment on the matter, citing the need to follow the county's decision-making protocols properly.

Also, by mid-December the society — a private, nonprofit organization — had received neither a formal offer of the statue nor an inquiry from the county or anyone else on that subject. Moreover, the society's board of directors has not taken up the issue at any of its meetings.

The statue was erected in 2013 to honor Melville Fuller because he was born in Augusta and first began to practice law in the city, although he spent the bulk of his career in Chicago until President Grover Cleveland nominated him for the chief justice's position in 1888. The statue's placement caused no uproar at the time. With the advent of Black Lives Matter and similar social movements, however, the Fuller statue, like others around the country, has attracted unprecedented scrutiny.

A small group of protesters gathered on September 12 near the statue, demanding its removal. The Kennebec Journal, Augusta's daily newspaper, has published several letters to the editor and commentaries on both sides of the issue, including one anti-statue missive from a former legislative candidate who owns and lives in Melville Fuller's boyhood home.

The person who funded the statue, Robert G. Fuller Jr., of Potomac, Maryland, is a collateral descendant of Melville Fuller. Robert Fuller also recently submitted a newspaper column on the subject, saying he and other lawyers in his family long have repudiated the 1896 *Plessey* ruling, and that he intended the statue to serve as a "teachable moment" that would encourage the public to judge his collateral ancestor's career on its entire 22-year span rather than on one bad decision.



**Kennebec County is considering a request to move the Melville W. Fuller statue off the Kennebec County Courthouse lawn.**

Photo by Joseph Owen

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## President's Message



**L**ike any nonprofit, the Kennebec Historical Society is always looking for ways to bring in funds to help keep the lights on, put oil in the furnace, and add to its wonderful collection.

At our October Board of Directors meeting, Joe Owen, our vice president of community relations, had an idea for a fundraiser: We could get some cheese and sell it to members, neighbors, friends, and relatives.

We agreed this was a great idea, but I thought we should add chocolates to our list of items, just in case some didn't like cheese. I called Christopher Hastings Confections in Waterville. Co-owner Nate Towne was helpful, just a delight to work with. It reminded me

that working with local businesses is not only a financial benefit for our community but also makes the project fun to work on.

While I was doing this, Joe was contacting a KHS member Ellen Ryan, a former KHS treasurer who is always ready to help. She met with Joe and me. Once she heard what we had in mind, she was off and running. Ellen did an amazing job organizing the entire fundraiser. She got Rich Eastman to design the sales flyer and the candy company to place the KHS logo on the candy bar wrapping. Ellen also worked with Jean Koons at Kennebec Cheesery, of Sidney, and found the company to be helpful and great to work with.

On December 12, the cheese and chocolate were ready to be distributed, and again Ellen had everything organized. We had wonderful volunteers there to help: Gail Morin, Val Morin, Heidi Munro, Joe Owen, Mary Owen, Paul Riese, and Tracy Weber.

Thank you to everyone for everything that was done to make this fundraiser not only a financial success but also a fun event for all involved.

Please know we miss seeing you all at the annual Christmas tea, but we'll plan for next year. All of us at KHS wish you a happy and safe holiday.

— *Patsy Garside Crockett, president*

## Moira Fuller Fund Sets Records for Income, Number of Donors

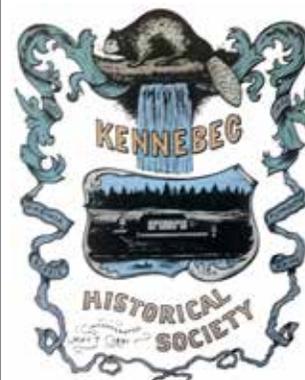
**T**he 13th annual Moira H. Fuller Annual Fund campaign, now drawing to a close, had generated \$63,995 in donations to the fund by December 18 — eclipsing the previous record haul by more than \$2,000.

The Kennebec Historical Society's Development Committee, under the leadership of Chairman Roger Pomerleau, managed to pull off the feat while central Maine, like most of the rest of the world, was reeling from a coronavirus pandemic and an accompanying economic recession.

The campaign also attracted the largest number of donors ever. At last count, the donor total was about 190 individuals, families, and institutions.

The committee still has not achieved its \$70,000 goal for 2020, but some pledges still are being fulfilled, and committee members hope to close whatever gap remains with a final round of canvassing.

The Fuller Fund supplies most of the revenue that the society uses to pay the society's staff and its bills for grounds maintenance, bookkeeping, heat, utilities, supplies, printing, postage, and other services. Contributions to the 2020 campaign are being accepted through the end of the year.



### **KHS Board of Directors**

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William Sprague Jr.

#### **Newsletter Staff**

Rich Eastman/editor

Sally Joy/adviser

#### **Membership Secretary**

Joan Lancaster

#### **Total membership:**

804 on December 12

Life members: 211

The Kennebec Current encourages letters to the editor.

Email letters to

kennhis1891@gmail.com.

All letters are subject to editing for taste, style, and length.

## Melville Fuller Statue's Fate in County Commissioners' Hands

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Statue of Melville W. Fuller

The plaintiff in the *Plessey v. Ferguson* case was Homer Plessey, a light-skinned shoemaker and “octoroon” — a person of one-eighth Black African descent — who was arrested for occupying a seat on June 7, 1892, on a Louisiana train car that was reserved for whites. Blacks at the time were required to ride in what informally were called “Jim Crow cars,” which usually were far less comfortable and were inferior to the whites-only cars in several other ways. Plessey’s lawyers claimed that the state law on train segregation that he was accused of violating ran afoul of the U.S. Constitution’s Thirteenth Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment.

The defendant was Judge John H. Ferguson, of Louisiana’s state criminal district court, who found Plessey guilty.

Plessey’s action on the train was deliberate. Much as civil rights activist Rosa Parks would do several decades later to protest segregation on municipal buses in Montgomery, Alabama, Plessey and his lawyers were trying to set up a court case that, if successful, could serve as a template for dismantling similar segregation laws nationwide. They expected to lose at the state level and were pinning their hopes on convincing the U.S. Supreme Court. They failed when the court ruled 7-1 against them in 1896.

Civil rights historian Harvey Fireside writes in his 2004 account of the case, *Separate and Unequal: Homer Plessey and the Supreme Court Decision That Legalized Racism*, that the upholding of Plessey’s conviction was “second only to *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) as the most likely candidate for the all-time most shameful chapter in U.S. Supreme Court annals.”

Vanderbilt University law and history professor James W. Ely Jr. takes a more all-encompassing view in his 1995 book *The Chief Justiceship of Melville W. Fuller 1888-1910*, noting that the *Plessey* ruling conformed with prevailing social attitudes, and that Fuller himself was the target of far more criticism for his 1895 opinion for the majority in a ruling that struck down a federal income tax. The Fuller court also played a key role in safeguarding property rights, protecting some rights of defendants in criminal trials, asserting states’ right to limit the amount of time that companies could require their female employees to work (a forerunner of protections for all workers), and holding bank directors more accountable for bank officers’ misdeeds and mismanagement. However, Ely faults the court for failing America’s racial minorities badly. It both failed to overturn segregation laws and overlooked local and state governments’ flouting of the “equal” part of the “separate but equal” doctrine by assigning Blacks to public facilities that were far inferior than those reserved for whites.

“Although the case was a source of later controversy, *Plessey* attracted little notice at the time, ...” Ely writes. “Yet the decision marked an important turning point in race relations. It legitimated segregation laws and opened the door to more intrusive state control of racial minorities. Moreover, *Plessey* signaled the Fuller Court’s abandonment of any efforts to achieve racial equality.”

In later rulings, Ely reports, the court repeatedly upheld Southern states’ efforts to disenfranchise Blacks at the ballot box and segregate them from whites.

The fiery lone dissenter in the *Plessey* case, Associate Justice John Marshall Harlan, grew up in a Kentucky family that had owned slaves. Championing equal rights, Harlan asserted that the post-Civil War amendments rendered the Constitution “colorblind, and [it] neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law.”

“Though it was eloquent,” Ely writes, “Harlan’s dissent was out of harmony with the racial sentiments of the age, and it fell on deaf ears.”

Meanwhile back in the 21st century, according to the letter from Maine’s high court, Maine’s judicial officers overwhelmingly said in survey responses that placement of the Fuller statue on the courthouse lawn “is not consistent with our values, because the association between Chief Justice Fuller and the *Plessey* decision is so profound, and Maine judges do not want to be linked with that association.”

The county commissioners are scheduled to deliberate about the court’s request at (time to be determined this week).

— by Joseph Owen

## The Collections Box

**S**everal years ago, a good friend told me that history is like a jigsaw puzzle and time has scattered the pieces. It is the goal of the Kennebec Historical Society to look for the pieces and find their proper places in the puzzle of the history of Kennebec County.

— Bruce Kirkham, former Collections Committee chairman



We in the Collections Committee continue to marvel at the variety of items we receive with regularity. This phenomenon may be explained, in part, by the fact that more time is being spent at home to stay safe. Our friends are clearing out and looking for a place to give their treasures to. We've been tagged, and we're "it"!

There's not enough room here to list everything we've received recently, but some of the highlights include an 1824 hymnal entitled "The Temple Harmony," attributed to Japheth Coombs Washburn. Many of these hymns are named for Kennebec County towns. Another valuable acquisition was three more diaries of Norman L. Bassett, Augusta attorney, dated 1916, 1919, and 1923. They will join their 1914 "brother." We also deeply appreciate the hundreds of newspaper clippings that came in. Our last intern spent her time indexing one collection from the 1990s that featured births, marriages, and deaths. We now have files on the Colonial Theater, recent area events, and the 1952 windstorm on Maranacook Lake (anyone remember that?).

The Kennebec Journal office is moving, and they thought of us! Among the additions: a framed copy of the first issue of the KJ, dated January 8, 1825; a variety of special editions, some 1970s aerial photos of Augusta, and a number of books we can add to our library. We also purchased a 1795 original copy of "The History of the District of Maine" by James Sullivan, which was once part of KHS co-founder Charles Nash's personal library.

Out thanks to the Pejepscot History Center in Brunswick for sending us a beautiful marriage certificate for Fred Lewis Weeks and Annie Mae Weston, of Gardiner, whose nuptials occurred on January 7, 1895. This gift also included photographs of these folks, an autograph book, and postcards.

Earle G. Shettleworth Jr., Maine's state historian, has given us a most intriguing hide-covered box with the label: "C. & D. Ranlet Saddlers — Harness: Cap and Trunk Makers — Chaise trimmed, & c." James North's *History of Augusta* names "Charles Randlet" and "Daniel Randlet" as members of the Augusta Light Infantry, formed in 1806 by legislative resolve in consideration of the wars in Europe and a possible call to arms for the U.S. The 1817 Augusta tax assessor's books records Daniel Ranlet as owning a house, a shop, and a barn along with 22 cows and eight swine. The question remains: Just what animal's hide covers this box?

I'll close with a delightful mustache cup and saucer, done in pink, sporting an image of Cony High School. The base of the cup links this item to C.H. Blackington. C. Hart Blackington was the proprietor of a store called "The Bazaar," from about 1892 to 1898. An ad in an 1897-98 city directory stated he was a "dealer in Crockery, Glassware, Tinware, Woodenware, Cutlery, lamps, dolls, toys, etc." His store was located at 217 Water St., the Daniel Woodward building, the present site of State Lunch. The society also has a program from memorial services held at the Universalist Church in Augusta on May 24, 1896, naming Mr. Blackington as a tenor.

That's about all for now. Stay safe and well, and enjoy the holidays. Better days are coming!



Victorian marriage certificate of Fred Weeks and Annie Mae Weston, of Gardiner.

Photo courtesy of KHS staff

— Emily A. Schroeder, for the Collections Committee

## Lombard Log Hauler Moves to Waterville’s Redington Museum

*Reprinted with permission from the August 13 edition of the Morning Sentinel.*

**T**he historic Lombard log hauler is in a new home on the grounds of the Waterville Historical Society’s Redington Museum on Silver Street after spending decades in a low-visibility spot off Front Street downtown.

The log hauler, invented by Alvin O. Lombard, of Waterville, was patented in 1901 and revolutionized the way the lumbering industry operated in Maine. Its concept of using a caterpillar tread, or continuous track for vehicle propulsion, was later used on army tanks in World War I, as well as for agricultural tractors and construction equipment after the war.

The Lombard Traction Engine Co., located near where Huhtamaki is now on College Avenue, manufactured 83 log haulers. According to the Maine Forest & Logging Museum website, they were constructed between 1900 and 1917 and most were used in Maine and New Hampshire, though several were shipped to some western states, as well as to Canada.

“Lombard licensed his patented track design to the Phoenix Company in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, which produced additional Phoenix log haulers,” the site says. “Many Lombard steam log haulers were recycled for scrap iron during World War II, and only 6 of the original 83 machines are known to still exist. Only 3 of these are in running condition.”

The hauler could pull up to 300 tons of logs and did the work of 50 horses. The log hauler on display in Waterville was discovered in the 1970s in the woods near Churchill Dam by Fred Prescott, Waterville’s code enforcement officer at the time, and pilot Kenneth Ireland while they were on a fishing trip and saw it from the air, according to Morning Sentinel newspaper accounts.

The Breton family, of Vassalboro, restored the engine. In 1981 the machine was moved from Vassalboro to Front Street, near the Ticonic Bridge spanning the Kennebec River between Waterville and Winslow.

But over the years, it became increasingly invisible, as trees and brush grew around it, traffic in the area increased in both volume and speed, and it was difficult for people to access it.

City Manager Michael Roy said Wednesday that talks had been in the works for about a year to find a suitable location for the log hauler. The Waterville Historical Society approached the city about moving it to the museum grounds at 62 B Silver St., and Roy said he thought it was a great idea. It was moved last month.

“I think the public works crew did a great job preparing the site and helping to coordinate the whole move,” Roy said. “It really looks nice where it is. We’re thankful that the historical society has made a place for it. I think it was a good example of cooperation all the way around.”

At the museum on August 13, museum curator and caretaker Bryan Finnemore said he is delighted the log hauler is there. A steady stream of people have been driving it to see it, he said. “I think it is the best place for it,” Finnemore said. “You couldn’t see it when it was by the bridge. There were not a lot of places to pull over and get out of your car and look at it. Here, we can take care of it, and people will be able to enjoy it for years.”

The museum itself is an historic house built in 1814. The museum is closed during the coronavirus pandemic, but Finnemore said the closure has allowed him and his wife, Bonny, to do a lot of spiffing up and he expects it will reopen in the spring of next year.

Meanwhile, the Northern New England Section of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers years ago designated the Lombard Steam Hauler as a National Historic Mechanical Engineers Landmark.

Lombard, who also invented a bark stripper, knot separator, pulp crusher and a steam-driven automobile, was born in Springfield, Maine, in 1856. He moved to Waterville in 1895 and later lived in the historic Lombard House on Elm Street.

Built in 1908, the house remained in the Lombard family until 1964 and was remodeled into apartments in the 1940s.



**This Lombard log hauler has a new home in Waterville.**

Photo courtesy of centralmaine.com

## \$722,000 Drive Aims to Upgrade Readfield Union Meeting House

**M**aine's second-oldest brick church building is the intended beneficiary of a \$722,000 fundraising effort in Readfield.

The nonprofit Readfield Union Meeting House Company launched the three-year pledge campaign in mid-December to finance reconstruction of and repairs to parts of the Readfield Union Meeting House, which the group owns, according to board member Marius Péladeau.

The planned work includes replacement of the steeple's spire, which blew down in a storm in 1916; putting the steeple clock back in order; and restoration of eaves, soffits, and other parts of the building. It also includes upgrading the vestry next door, which the nonprofit also owns.

Readfield residents Richard Mace, Jere Page, and Francis Hunt built the meeting house in 1828 without assistance from an architect, Péladeau said. However, Hunt was a professional brick maker, the group had traveled outside the area, and they had access to architects' renderings of such buildings.



An example of trompe-l'oeil art adorns a wall of the meeting house.

"They had seen the Federal style elsewhere," said Péladeau, a former museum director, museum consultant, and journalist who has lived in Readfield since 1972. "They knew what they were doing."

Prussian artist Charles Schumacher added trompe-l'oeil ("trick the eye") paintings to the interior in 1868. They are the building's best-known feature. In a certain light, they look so realistic that, according to Péladeau, one newly arrived summer visitor told the minister she wanted to buy a vase of flowers to place on a shelf in what she thought was a three-dimensional biblical plaque on the front wall. The minister, rather than telling her the entire wall decoration was a flat optical illusion, suggested she measure the shelf before buying the flowers.

The meeting house, second in age only to St. Patrick's in Damariscotta Mills among Maine's brick church buildings, got its start as a multi-denominational building. Methodists and Universalists used it most, and sometimes Baptists and Congregationalists did as well. By the mid-20th century, however, it had fallen into disuse. The current nonprofit organization formed in 1952 and hosted concerts, lectures, elementary school graduations, weddings, and other events there, taking advantage of the building's good acoustics.

The group faded away eventually but was revived in 2009. Its mission is to preserve the church building, which can accommodate at least 300 people, and the vestry for the community's benefit, according to John Perry, who also is a board member and former president.

Since 2016, the organization has directed a floor stabilization project, a repair of the organ, conservation of the main building's trompe-l'oeil murals, installation of a new electrical system, and construction of a bathroom that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Some of the work to be funded by the new campaign is expected to begin this summer.

The meeting house is on the National Register of Historic Places. Maine Preservation, a statewide nonprofit, included it on the group's annual list of the state's most endangered historic properties in 2019, but it acknowledged that steps are being taken to save the building.

More information about the restoration project is available on the Readfield Union Meeting House website at <https://unionmeetinghouse.org>.



The 1828 Union Meeting House in Readfield will be the beneficiary of a \$722,000 fundraising effort.

Photos by Joseph Owen



John Perry, left, and Marius Péladeau, board members for the Readfield Union Meeting House Company.

— by Joseph Owen

## KHS Receives Kennebec Journal Photo Negative Archive

The Kennebec Journal has given the Kennebec Historical Society about two dozen boxes of the newspaper's photo negatives, photos stored on compact disks, and other news records. Managing Editor Scott Monroe and one of the paper's photographers, Joe Phelan, helped shuttle the items to the society's Augusta headquarters on December 15.

The dates of images in the archive range from the 1970s to the first few years of the 21st century. They were shot by nearly a dozen of the newspaper's staff photographers. The newspaper was disposing of the negatives because it plans to vacate its offices at 36 Anthony Avenue and has no place to store them in the Augusta area. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, most of the paper's news staff members are working from home.

The last time the newspaper made such a donation to the society, it consisted of 8,677 items, most of them photo prints. The KJ donated them in 2011 because it was moving out of its old headquarters on Western Avenue in Augusta and would not have space for them on Anthony Avenue. Society interns and volunteers spent nearly five years placing the items in acid-free storage containers, cataloging them, and matching them up with news stories when possible, aided by two grants.

The society's Collections Committee expects to plan a similar absorption of the latest acquisition. The new donation takes up about the same amount of space as the 2011 gift, but it undoubtedly contains far more images, given that a photo negative usually takes up far less space than a photo print. Prospective volunteers who would like to work on the project are encouraged to call KHS Archivist Emily Schroeder at 622-7718.



KHS Archivist Emily Schroeder and Kennebec Journal staff photographer Joe Phelan supervise the acquisition of the KJ's photo negative archive.

Photo by Joseph Owen

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## The Kennebec Historical Society Welcomes the Following New Members

Bill & Peg Acheson — Gardiner	Karen Heck — Waterville	Jane & Chris Moore — Belgrade
Gerard Boyle — China Village	Heather & Jeff Johnson — Skowhegan	Joan & Tim Morin — Whitefield
Cameron Brown — Vassalboro	Birdie Newman Katz — Augusta	Cynthia Pelliccia — Wayne
Mark & Ann Byron — Hallowell	Lajoie Bros. Inc. — Augusta	The Row House — Hallowell
Sylvie Charron & John Joseph — Hallowell	Howard & Brenda Lake — Readfield	Anthony Saucier — San Francisco, California
Robert Datz — West Brookfield, Massachusetts	Fernand Laroche & Rae Ann French — Monmouth	Winthrop Commerce Center, LLC. — Winthrop
Sue & Jerry Doughty — Winthrop	Donna & Arthur Lerman — Venice, Florida	Amanda Zack — Lisbon Falls
Patrick & Vicki Gabrion — Hallowell	Maine Instrument Flight — Augusta	

*and continues to recognize ...*

### Sustaining Business Members (\$1,000+ annual)

G & E Roofing  
Kennebec Savings Bank  
Meadow Park Development

### Sponsoring Business Members (\$500+ annual)

J. S. McCarthy Printing  
O'Connor GMC

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## ✧ In Memoriam ✧

**Peter Golden**, 70, of Oakland, a longtime Kennebec Historical Society member, died December 12 at Northern Light Inland Hospital in Waterville after a brief illness. A Gardiner native and Gardiner Area High School and Dartmouth College graduate, he worked 30 years for the Social Security Administration. He enjoyed genealogy, golf, singing with Sacred Harp groups, and visiting Civil War battlefields. In addition to KHS, he belonged to the Taconnett Falls Chapter of the Maine Genealogy Society and the Palermo Historical Society. His survivors include wife Noreen, two sons, and three grandchildren

## Sale of Cheese, Chocolates Nets KHS about \$400



Kennebec Historical Society volunteer Val Morin gives fellow volunteer Tracy Weber her bag of cheese and chocolates December 12 during fundraising the effort's distribution day at the society's headquarters in Augusta.

Photo by Joseph Owen

A fundraising drive involving the sale of cheese and chocolates provided a net income of about \$400 for the Kennebec Historical Society in December.

The event, organized on short notice after President Patsy Crockett asked the KHS board of Directors for fundraising ideas at a recent board meeting, was intended to add money to the society's building maintenance reserve account.

Ellen Ryan, of Augusta, organized the sale. Board member Rich Eastman drafted the order form. Volunteers Gail Morin, Val Morin, Heide Munro, Mary Owen, Paul Riese, and Tracy Weber organized and labeled the purchase bags or distributed them. The Kennebec Journal and Morning Sentinel newspapers published order forms as advertisements to boost the effort.

The chocolates were purchased wholesale from Christopher Hastings Confections, on Common Street in Waterville; the cheese, from Kennebec Cheesery, on Pond Road in Sidney.

## CARES Act Provides Added Boost to Donors in 2020

Kennebec Historical Society supporters can make the most of their giving using the federal pandemic relief (CARES) act at a time it means the most. Last March, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, was signed into law to help combat the far-reaching impacts of COVID-19. The CARES Act may provide increased tax incentives for charitable giving for some donors, but these benefits apply only in the 2020 tax year, so you must act by Dec. 31.

First, donors who itemize can deduct cash contributions to Kennebec Historical Society and most other public charities to offset up to 100 percent of their income. Ordinarily, this income tax charitable deduction for cash gifts is limited to 60% of income. The 100 percent limit allows especially generous donors to reduce their 2020 federal income tax to zero. Existing carry-over rules still apply, so those who are even more generous can carry forward unused cash contribution deductions for up to five years. This makes it easier for our most generous supporters to make a gift of a lifetime to KHS.

If you don't itemize, you can take the standard deduction *and* reduce your taxable income by up to \$300 for gifts of cash to public charities by using an "above the line" adjustment.

Here are a few questions and answers regarding the CARES Act and giving:

- Can a donor age 70½ or older still make a gift to KHS from an IRA?

Most required minimum distributions (RMDs) from retirement plans have been eliminated for 2020; however, donors age 70½ or older can still make a qualified charitable distribution (QCD, or IRA charitable rollover) of up to \$100,000 to KHS from their IRA. While the benefit of using a QCD to satisfy an RMD does not apply for 2020, a QCD remains a great way to make tax-advantageous gifts, especially if the donor doesn't itemize deductions.

- Does the CARES Act have any impact on corporate giving?

Yes. The CARES Act increases the cap on how much corporations may deduct for charitable gifts from 10 percent of taxable income to 25 percent.

- Does the CARES Act apply to any gifts other than "cash"?

The increased limits are applicable only to cash donations. Contributions of any kind of property, including marketable securities, real assets or otherwise, do not qualify.

- Who should KHS supporters contact if they have questions?

We advise donors to check with their tax advisor to learn more about how the CARES Act may specifically apply to their tax situation. We are here to help shape a charitable gift plan that suits a donor's needs and allows them to keep supporting our important work. Our executive director, Scott Wood, can be called at 622-7718.

Thanks again for your generous support of Kennebec Historical Society as we draw closer to reaching our 2020 Moira Fuller Fund goal to continue day-to-day operations. We still need \$6,005 to reach our goal of \$70,000.

— by Glenn Adams

## Upcoming Facebook Programs

### January: “Find a Way or Make One: New Perspectives on Peary’s North Pole Quest”



Archaeologists investigate a Peary-related site at Cape Sheridan on Canada’s Ellesmere Island.

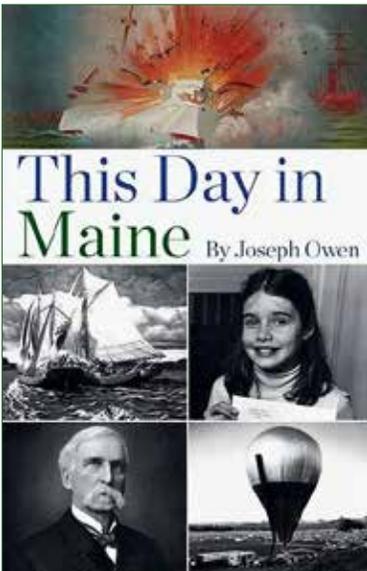
Photograph courtesy of Cape Sheridan Archaeology Project

For over a decade, staff members at Bowdoin College’s Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum and Arctic Studies Center have studied original journals, artifacts, and photographs related to Robert Peary’s efforts to be the first person to reach the North Pole. They have visited museums and archives, traveled to sites in Maine and the Canadian Maritimes with connections to the expeditions, and contacted descendants of expedition members. In addition, Arctic archaeologists Genevieve LeMoine and Susan A. Kaplan traveled to the edge of the Polar Sea to investigate one of Peary’s camps. In this illustrated lecture, Kaplan will discuss new insights they have reached about how Peary worked and the interpersonal dynamics on his last two expeditions. Also, she will explain ways in which the Arctic of today differs from the Arctic of Peary’s time.

KHS speaker Kaplan, an Arctic anthropologist and archaeologist, is a professor of anthropology and director of the museum at Bowdoin. She has studied some of the ways Inuit have responded to environmental change and contact with the West, as well as the history of Arctic exploration.

To view this presentation, head to the KHS Facebook page at 6:30 p.m. January 20, and the video will air live. Due to copyright concerns, the January presentation will not be available for future viewing. If you have a question, please submit it in the comments during the live video presentation. Here is the link to the KHS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/KHS1891>. If you have any questions about the program, please call Scott Wood, executive director, at 622-7718.

### February: “This Day in Maine”



Cover from *This Day in Maine*, by Joseph Owen.

Photo courtesy of the author

*This Day in Maine* features more than 600 news items plucked from the history of the Pine Tree State. Since achieving statehood in 1820, Maine has developed into a vacationland of lobsters and lighthouses set against breathtaking vistas and endless natural beauty. Author Joseph Owen highlights defining moments in Maine’s lucrative 200-year history such as wars, fires, storms, and pandemics; but he also shines a spotlight on powerful politicians, brilliant inventors, successful athletes, and even a few entrepreneurs. Maine is a small state, but many people have helped shaped its identity including Joshua Chamberlain and his heroics at Little Round Top during the Civil War, and young Samantha Smith and her peacekeeping efforts during the Cold War. *This Day in Maine* chronicles day-by-day, from January 1 to December 31, the highlights and lowlights, the famous and infamous, and the big and small of everyday life in Maine.

Owen, our KHS speaker, earned a bachelor’s degree in English from St. Anselm College in New Hampshire and is a former journalist who worked as both an editor and reporter for more than forty years in both America and foreign countries. During his career, he covered major world events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Persian Gulf War, ultimately filing news reports from twenty countries. Owen is a former president and current board member of the Kennebec Historical Society. He and his wife, Mary, a former psychiatric nurse, have three children and five grandchildren and live in Augusta.

To view this presentation, head to the KHS Facebook page at 6:30 p.m. February 17, and the video will air live. It will also be available to watch later, if you prefer. If you have a question, please submit it in the comments during the live video presentation. Here is the link to the KHS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/KHS1891>. If you have any questions about the program, please call Scott Wood, executive director, at 622-7718.

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