

# Kennebec Current

Discovering, preserving, and disseminating Kennebec County history since 1891

Volume 31 Issue 1

KENNEBEC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

January–February 2021

## County Commissioners Decide Unanimously to Move Fuller Statue

The Kennebec County Commissioners voted 3-0 on February 16 to remove a statue of controversial U.S. Chief Justice Melville Weston Fuller from the front lawn of the Kennebec County Courthouse in Augusta.

Chairwoman Patsy Crockett, of Augusta, and Commissioners Nancy Rines, of Gardiner, and George Jabar, of Waterville, all supported the proposal, which originated with a request from the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.

Fuller (1833-1910), an Augusta native who was admitted to the bar in Kennebec County, was chief justice from 1888 until his death at his summer home in Sorrento, Maine. He sided with the majority of the U.S. Supreme Court when it voted 7-1 to uphold institutionalized Southern racial segregation in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which set a template for repression of Black Americans for the next six decades. The court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling overturned *Plessy* and resulted in the eventual integration of races in public facilities.

Kennebec County Administrator Robert Devlin said the county has received dozens of letters from people advocating the statue's removal. Crockett said others have expressed similar opinions by email, Facebook messages, and phone calls.

The commissioners, meeting remotely via Zoom videoconference, did not decide where the statue would go or when it would be moved. Devlin said the logistics involved in acquiring a crane to move the statue and preparing a new site to receive it would require a significant amount of time to carry out.

Some participants in a December 1, 2020, public hearing advocated moving the statue to the nearby headquarters of the Kennebec Historical Society. Nobody has contacted the society office about the idea, however, and the commissioners did not mention it during their February 16 meeting. Crockett is the society's president.

Rines made the motion at the meeting to move the statue. Reading from a lengthy prepared statement before the commissioners voted, Crockett said the statue was installed before she became a commissioner, and the decision to accept it occurred without the court system's backing. "We have just passed a county policy to be sure something like that does not take place again. Now any donation to the county will have a public hearing and everyone will be encouraged to give their opinion on the donation," she said.

She also cited recent published comments by former Maine Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justices Daniel Wathen and Leigh Saufley, who expressed a need to act affirmatively as anti-racists.

"It's not good enough to just say we are against racism," Crockett said. "We each must do our part and take action to stop racism in Maine."

Crockett said that after consulting books about Fuller and reading reports that identified some systemic racism in Maine, she concluded that the statue "does not represent my values."

"I therefore believe that the Melville Weston Fuller statue should be moved to a location more appropriate to serve educational purposes, where the full history of his life can be discussed," she said.

Jabar acknowledged that Melville Fuller's life story abounds with accomplishment. "However," he added, "whether it's perceived or real, he does have some sort of association with racial injustice."

The statue was set up on the courthouse lawn in 2013. Former Winthrop resident Robert G. Fuller Jr., who now lives in Maryland and is a collateral descendant of Melville Fuller, commissioned and funded it.

Crockett thanked Robert Fuller for his many contributions to the community and noted that many letter writers expressed their high regard for him, despite their opposition to the statue.

The county plans to assemble a group of advisers to make recommendations about what to do with the statue.

"We will have a committee named by the next commissioners' meeting, if not sooner," Crockett said.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 2.



The Melville Fuller statue will be moved off the Kennebec County Courthouse lawn.

Photo by Joseph Owen

— by Joseph Owen

## President's Message



**L**ike any family that loses one of its own, all of us at the Kennebec Historical Society have a little less bounce in our step, and yet a smile, when we remember Glenn Adams. Glenn passed away January 1 from heart surgery complications. (see page 5)

Glenn was a co-chairman of the KHS Membership Committee and a member of the Development Committee. As a member of the latter, Glenn was at the Thursday morning committee meeting every week. He was always ready to hit the road to help raise funds.

No matter what the task was, Glenn was always the first to volunteer to help. When we decided we wanted to have an event to honor the 1978 Cony High School championship basketball team, Glenn offered to organize it. Every part, from contacting all the players, families, and coaches to seeing that we had some treats to eat and gifts for the players, was all arranged by Glenn. I remember another fundraising event we had at which Glenn sold raffle tickets and he and wife Betty brought treats for everyone to enjoy.

When it came to raising money to keep the lights on and heat and air conditioning going, Glenn was one of the best. From his many years working at the State House and for The Associated Press, there were not many people in our community he did not know. When he, Joe Owen, and Roger Pomerleau hit the road, we knew they would be back with some new members and would raise some money for our Moria Fuller Fund.

If you missed Glenn doing a Facebook live monthly program for KHS, please go to our Facebook page; scroll down to July 22, 2020, and find the lecture Glenn did about our State House. I think you'll enjoy the program.

During their retirement, Glenn and his wife, Betty, have been volunteers for the American Red Cross, traveling to Texas and Louisiana to help hurricane evacuees.

I had the good fortune to spend time at the Legislature with Glenn when I served as a lobbyist and legislator and was delighted to again have the opportunity to work with him at the Kennebec Historical Society.

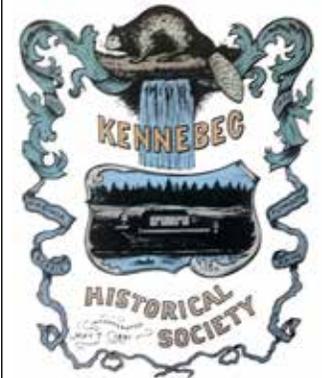
Joe Owen and I were proud to attend Glenn's funeral at the beautiful old St Mary's Church in Augusta. It was a lovely service. Betty and their three children all spoke and had so many wonderful memories. Thank you, Betty, for including us.

Memorial donations have been sent to KHS in Glenn's memory. We thank the family for more than \$1,729 received to date.

We will all miss Glenn, as many others will. We will always remember that smile and his easygoing manner of always being ready to help. May his memory be a blessing.

RIP, Glenn, until we meet again.

— Patsy Garside Crockett, president



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#### **Total membership:**

821 on February 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.

## Nash Fund, Fuller Fund, End 2020 on High Notes

**T**he Kennebec Historical Society's 13th annual Charles Nash Fund appeal, which supports the society's efforts to acquire and preserve material for its collection, raised a better-than-average \$4,490 from a total 80 donors in 2020, according to Executive Director Scott Wood.

The Nash campaign takes place every year in the fall.

The 2020 Moira H. Fuller Annual Fund, the main source of income for the society's operating expenses, finished the year with \$65,270, setting a record both for the amount contributed and for the number of donations received – 197.

## Wayne's Alice in Wonderland Room is Complete

The Mad Hatters Committee is putting the finishing touches on the preservation of a donation by Grace Burleigh of 17 wall panels with scenes from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The art panels needed restoration and were painted in a room in Burleigh's home located in the small, picturesque town of Wayne. In 1932, Alfred T. Merian painted the gypsum wallboards with characters in a style similar to that of John Tenniel, the illustrator of Lewis Carroll's famous book. Soon a goal emerged of saving the unique art panels. After receiving the unanimous support from the board of Cary Memorial Library, the preservation and restoration of the "Alice Room" and the renovation of the Williams House barn project began.

The Wayne Library Association subsequently created the Mad Hatters Committee to coordinate the budgeted \$99,000 project and lead the preservation of the art panels, which were removed and reassembled in the Williams House barn in August 2020. The Williams House, one of the oldest homes in Wayne, was purchased in 2012 by the library, which is across the street. The Williams House has served as a meeting space, a place for exhibitions and lectures, and a venue for book sales and various other fundraising events. Adjacent and attached to the house is a barn that primarily has served as storage space and seemed to be a prime location for the Alice Room. The project also included upgrades in safety, improved weatherproofing, and Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility to the barn.

Conservators removed the panels, which had been nailed in place; stabilized the gypsum boards; and placed them into crates for storage until, one by one, each panel underwent the proper preservation to maintain the pigmentation and prevent further deterioration. The room is nearly identical to the room in Burleigh's house, including the handmade curtains with characters from the book. There is also a small cabinet in the newly constructed room that mirrors a cabinet in Burleigh's home that represented the "rabbit hole" from the popular story.

"Moving the Alice Room from Grace Burleigh's home to the Cary Memorial Library's Williams House has been a two-year project of many people and many parts. The reward for me was on August 6, 2020, seeing Grace's happiness and joy when she viewed the reinstalled room at the Williams House for the first time," said Cynthia Pelliccia, member of the Mad Hatters Committee, in an email to KHS. "Grace told me that Ed Kallop who had retired to Wayne from New York after a career in museum work and curating art and historical collections had told her that the room should be saved and preserved and encouraged her to save it," added Pelliccia.



The restored White Rabbit panel, shown before installation.



The Alice Room is ready for visitation. Shown are the preserved panels hanging from rods in the Williams House.

Photos by Cynthia Pelliccia

Other challenges the Mad Hatters Committee faced with the ambitious project included crafting the ADA-qualifying entrance. The original door to the room was only 29 inches and could not be enlarged because of the adjacent art panels. They were able to meet the ADA requirements by creating a hinged portion of the trim work leading into the replicated room. Fulfilling all these tasks amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for special hygiene conditions also made the work difficult.

Those involved with the project were overwhelmed by the depth of interest and support for the restoration of the Alice Room. Many within the community knew of the room, and the idea of preserving it for the enjoyment and inspiration of future children and adults only became a reality because of the outpouring of support.

The Alice Room is open for viewing by appointment, mask required, by calling Holly Stevenson at 685-9005 or Cynthia Pelliccia at 685-4235. Programming and rental options for the room are on hold because of COVID concerns.

— by Scott Wood, Executive Director

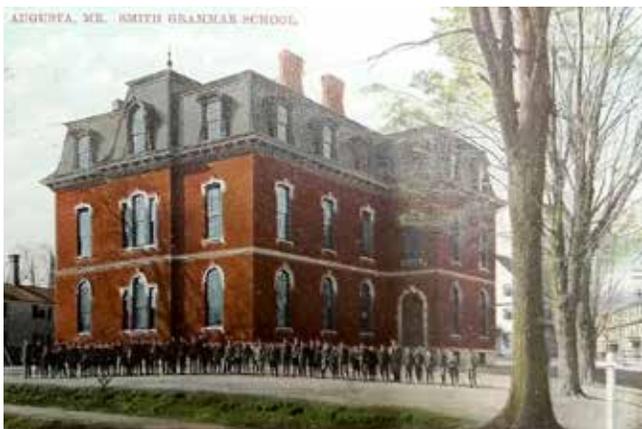
## Off the Shelf

The article that you're reading now could very easily be called "Off the Wall," since it was inspired by a work of art that has been on display in our west parlor for some time. The person depicted is William R. Smith, and we will be restoring his portrait in the very near future.

So, who was William Robinson Smith? He was born February 24, 1813, in Wiscasset to Mary (Robinson) and Dudley Smith. William was the fourth of nine children, and the first to be born in Wiscasset. Mary and Dudley began their family in New Hampshire with the arrival of Jane in 1806, Dudley G. in 1807, and Sarah in 1809. After William came Andrew Jackson (1815), Mary F. (1817), Adeline (1820), Martha F. (1822), and Harriot V. (1825). Dudley the elder was a tailor by trade.

William's working life started early with printing and publishing experience at the *Lincoln Intelligencer* (published 1821-1836). At the age of 20 he moved on to the *The Age*, the leading Democratic newspaper in Augusta, where he established a partnership with George Robinson. If George and William were related, it was not a close connection on the family tree. George studied law under Reuel Williams and edited the *Augusta Courier*. He died at 27 of consumption. In the meantime, William married Sarah B. Cochrane in December 1842. The marriage produced four children: William F. (1844), George R. (1846), Helen "Nellie" (1857) and Catherine (1860).

William sold the paper in 1844 and continued in the mercantile business for the next six years until he became register of probate in 1850. Other milestones include a cashier appointment at the State Bank in Augusta (1854), treasurer of Augusta Savings Bank (1857-1891), and a concurrent post at First National Bank (1864-1868).



A postcard from approximately 1910 shows Smith Grammar School in Augusta.

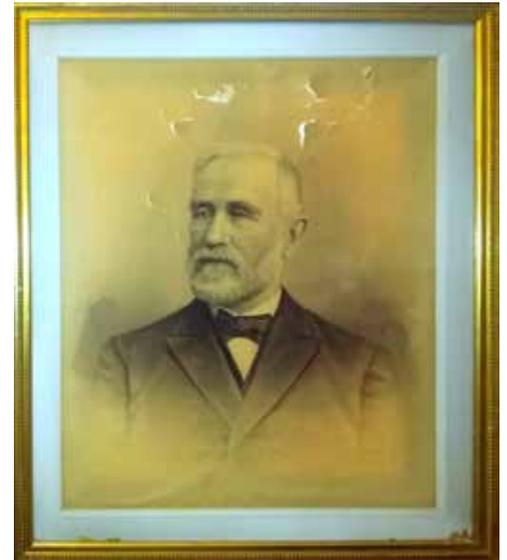
Photo in KHS Collection

Jane Howard in 1869. The oldest philanthropic organization in Augusta, it disbanded in 2010. KHS has its records.

William Robinson Smith passed away in Augusta on January 12, 1894. The writer of his obituary in the *Maine Farmer* called him "... a strong, public spirited, philanthropic and valuable citizen, esteemed and honored by the community." He rests in Forest Grove Cemetery with his wife, four children, and his parents.

For more on Smith and/or Howard, feel free to ask me for copies of Anthony Douin's Antiquarian Notebook articles, "A Newspaperman by Birth and Instinct" (*Capital Weekly*, October 4, 2007) and "Jane Howard: Augusta's First Lady of Compassion" (*Capital Weekly*, March 30, 2000).

Until next time!



This portrait of William R. Smith hangs in the west parlor of the KHS headquarters.

Photo by Rich Eastman

Smith reached beyond business, having a genuine concern for the welfare of those around him. He was affiliated with the Odd Fellows, Forest Grove Cemetery, and Lithgow Public Library, and he contributed to the building of the Universalist church on Winthrop Street. He was instrumental in the formation of the Village School District. Smith School, which stood on the corner of Bridge and State streets until 1972, was named in his honor. He was also interested in the Cony Female Academy, founded in 1816 by Daniel Cony for orphans and girls under 16. It survives today as Cony High School.

Another affiliation was the Female Benevolent Society, originally formed in 1827 of 83 single and married women. According to Charles Nash, "the object of the society was to make and loan gratuitously various articles of clothing to the sick poor and to give the same to the needy. ..." It was renamed the Howard Benevolent Society following the death of its prime organizer,

## KHS Mourns Loss of Membership Co-chairman Glenn Adams



**I**t is with great sadness that the Kennebec Historical Society learned of the death on January 1 of one of its more active volunteers, Glenn J. Adams Jr.

Adams, 70, of Augusta, died of complications resulting from heart surgery at Maine Medical Center.

As co-chairman of the KHS Membership Committee, he led a effort to grow the society and arranged, in observance of Maine's statehood bicentennial in 2020, for complimentary memberships for all state legislators and Gov. Janet Mills. Also, as a Development Committee member, Adams helped raise money for the society's expenses and recorded the committee's meetings.

In addition, he organized a 40-year reunion of Cony High School's 1978 New England Championship varsity basketball team in 2018 at KHS headquarters; he gave the first monthly online KHS lecture, presented last July 22 on the society's Facebook page; he was a frequent helper at the society's live monthly lectures until the coronavirus forced their suspension last winter; and he wrote several news articles for the *Kennebec Current*, the society's bimonthly newsletter.

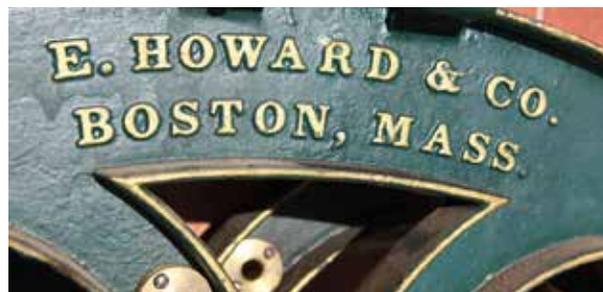
A native of Woodbury, New Jersey, and a University of Maine graduate, Adams retired after 32 years as an Associated Press reporter at the State House in Augusta. An AP story about Adams' career appeared in the January 3 editions of the *Kennebec Journal* and the *Morning Sentinel*.

He participated recently with his wife, Betty, in American Red Cross disaster mitigation efforts in Louisiana and Texas; was a former member of the Cony All Sports Boosters, which raises money to support athletes at Augusta's high school; enjoyed downhill and cross-country skiing in many Maine locations, including trails he maintained behind his house; was an ardent traveler and travel writer, having roamed widely around the United States and elsewhere; and was a motorcyclist, novelist, and artist.

"Glenn was a true professional, always had a smile, a kind word and was always willing to help with any task that needed to be completed," President Patsy Garside Crockett wrote in reaction to the news of Adams' death. "Glenn will be missed by all of us at KHS and by so many in this community."

## Readfield Timepiece Off the Clock for Now

**A**s part of an effort to upgrade the Readfield Union Meeting House, the group that owns it arranged in January to have its clock repaired. The overall restoration project was described in a story in the November-December *Kennebec Current*.



A detail photo of the Readfield Union Meeting House tower clock's frame.

Photo by David Graf

Judith Andrews, an employee of David W. Graf Tower Clock Restoration & Repair, of Kittery, lowers a clock hammer January 7 from the bell tower of the Readfield Union Meeting House. The clock mechanism is being repaired. The clock was installed in 1930 as the gift of Readfield resident and businessman Leon O. Tebbetts, according to John Perry, a Readfield Union Meeting House board member.

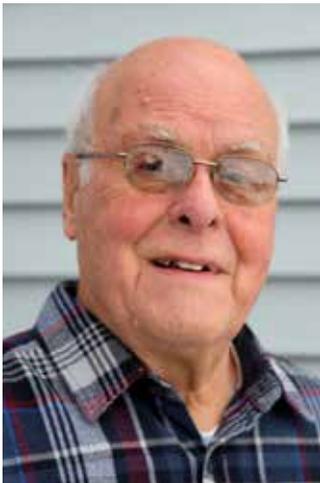
Photo by Joseph Owen



One of three wooden dials from the Readfield Union Meeting House tower clock, having been removed from the tower during the clock's repair, rests against a railing at the next-door Capt. John Smith House, the meeting house's vestry, on Church Road in Readfield. A woodworking shop is making reproductions of the badly deteriorated dials, using one of the old ones as a model.

Photo by Joseph Owen

## Winthrop Man Researching Town's French-Canadian Families



Winthrop resident Robert Pelletier describes his "pandemic project."

Photo by Joseph Owen

**W**inthrop resident Robert Pelletier is on a quest to document the history of an ethnic minority that is not usually the first group that springs to mind when one thinks of that lake-studded town: French Canadians.

As Canadian immigrants settled decades ago by the tens of thousands in many parts of Maine, their numerous churches, social clubs, and other institutions often made their presence obvious. That was less so in Winthrop, however, where no buildings or monuments attest to their presence.

The town's website refers to French heritage only in passing, saying that American Indian groups lived in the area "until they and the French were driven out by the English settlers." Also, a French flag files at the town's Glenside Cemetery, but that is a tribute to soldiers from Winthrop who fought in France during World War I, not to French Canadians.

The few French Canadians who migrated from Quebec to Winthrop took jobs at Winthrop's Carleton Woolen Mill, according to Pelletier, a retired teacher, school administrator, and real estate broker who traces his own French-Canadian roots to the 1641 emigration of his ancestors Guillaume Pelletier and Michelle Mabile from Tourouvre, France, to what is now the province of Quebec. He is an Auburn native, but he has lived in Winthrop for 60 years.

"What I'm trying to do is find the history of French families who are here now who were here in 1890," Pelletier said. "The large majority, if not all, came from Canada right to here. ... They worked in the mill."

The immigrants generally lived in a neighborhood just south of the former Main Street post office, he said. They lived on Clark, Mechanic, and Morton streets. Their family names include Audette, Bruneau, Carrier, Deblois, Dostie, Drapeau, Heon, Lacroix, LaVallee, and others.

Pelletier, 85, said he hopes to divide the families into two groups – those who are descended from French Canada's pioneer generation, and those whose ancestors went from France to Canada later. He hopes to trace each family's origin in France, voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, residence in Canada, and immigration to the United States.

He said he has been working on the research for several years, but the coronavirus crisis has prompted him to work harder. "I call it my pandemic project," he said, adding that he hopes to finish by the time the virus outbreak has been conquered. "I keep getting sidetracked because I find interesting side stories."

When the project is complete, Pelletier hopes to give a presentation to the Winthrop Maine Historical Society, of which he is a member, and to give the society a copy of the data he has collected. He also is a Kennebec Historical Society member.

Anyone who has information to add to Pelletier's research can call him at (207) 377-8158 or email him at [rgpell@roadrunner.com](mailto:rgpell@roadrunner.com)

— by Joseph Owen

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## The Kennebec Historical Society Welcomes the Following New Members

Johnny Brooks — Monmouth  
 Stephen Doak — Augusta  
 Janet & Ross Doerr — Augusta  
 Zelmon Fuller — Bradenton, Florida  
 Gay & Ron Gant — South Gardiner  
 Marjorie Gordon — Mount Vernon  
 Sandra Gould — Fayette  
 Susanne LaRue — West Gardiner

Frederick Michaud — Readfield  
 Bob & Susan Moore — South China  
 Kevin O'Brien — Augusta  
 Scott & Ashley Roby — Aliso Viejo, California  
 Donald Sprague — Augusta  
 Mark Swoboda — Eddington  
 Angie Tarbox — Winthrop

*and continues to recognize ...*

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

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 O'Connor GMC

## Fayette's Starling Hall Slowly Reclaiming Its Former Grandeur

What's the difference between a word meaning having a solid reputation and a word meaning a small songbird that sometimes mimics the sounds of car alarms and human speech?

Well, one is “sterling” and the other is “starling” – and both of them once were used to refer to today's town of Fayette.

Early documents dealing with Fayette's incorporation as a town in 1795 call the settlement “Sterling Plantation,” as do several other sources. However, historian George Underwood's chapter on Fayette in the 1892 *Illustrated History of Kennebec County, Maine*, refers to the town's earlier name as “Starling,” and other writers use that spelling as well.

Of the two versions, today only “Starling” survives – in the name of Starling Hall, a former Grange hall erected as a 40-foot-by-24-foot wooden structure in 1878 and enlarged in 1900 on what is now Route 17.

The building was the center of the community's social life for more than a century. Then, after the dissolution of the Grange, it fell into disrepair. The town took possession of it, and a nonprofit organization – Friends of Starling Hall – was formed to raise money for rehabilitating it. Fundraising efforts have included community suppers, auctions, and yard sales, according to Joe Young, a former selectman and retired state employee who worked as systems administrator for the Maine Office of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and is now the Friends of Starling Hall president. The group also has obtained some grants, and it obtains other income from membership dues.

Ames Associates, a Bangor architectural and engineering firm, gauged in a 2015 study that the building needed \$650,000 worth of improvements, including an elevator, roof repairs, and building code compliance, Young said, adding that the cost estimate has increased since then.

“By the time we're done, it's going to cost close to a million bucks,” Young said.

At the start of the rehabilitation effort in 2015, the Friends of Starling Hall anticipated that the project would take 10 years. Young said he's not confident that it will be done by 2025.

According to an annual report Young just completed, the project has consumed about \$208,000, of which nearly two-thirds was spent in just the last two years. It also has benefited from donation of free labor from many of the nonprofit group's 30 to 40 members.

The building once stood just a few feet from the north side of Route 17, the state highway that roughly bisects Fayette from southeast to northwest. In 2018, it was moved back 30 feet onto a new foundation.

“It was a hazard to open the door and walk on the street, basically,” Young said, citing the reason for the move.

The bulk of the restoration has yet to occur, however.

“It is interesting to note that the work completed in large part, does not address much of the original concerns regarding the building's deficiencies in meeting existing building and life safety codes,” Young wrote in his annual report. The nonprofit and the town hope to fix a deteriorated sill this winter, then work to get the electricity turned on. The goal of the next big fundraising drive will be the installation of a heating system. “The rotting sill is probably the biggest thing that we've found that we weren't expecting,” Young said in a telephone interview.

The group is doing what it can to promote outside awareness of its efforts. Starling Hall was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2016. The Friends of Starling Hall also has established a website and a Facebook page. A video about Starling Hall is available for viewing on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Vg8tHz7I6w&sns=em>.

Although most of its task list still awaits completion, the Friends group is counting on the town's commitment, successful fundraising efforts, and the aforementioned public exposure to carry the project across the finish line.

If that happens, Starling Hall once again should have a sterling reputation.



Starling Hall, once a meeting spot for the Fayette Grange, now is town property. The Friends of Starling Hall, a local nonprofit group, so far has raised enough money to pay for repairs costing about \$208,000 that have been carried out over the last several years.

Photo by Joseph Owen

## Treasure Trove of Augusta Photos Available in KHS Archive

A long-forgotten memento of the Great Depression era — photos of all taxable properties in Augusta — is preserved at the Kennebec Historical Society.

The photos were taken as part of a Works Progress Administration program to keep people working and productive all over the United States. The images, mainly of houses but also a number of schools, were used for municipal tax assessment purposes.

The WPA was launched by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935 to help bring the nation through the darkest period of the Depression by employing people in a wide range of public works. Those included construction of public buildings and roads. Tens of thousands of women were trained for domestic employment. The WPA also included arts, drama, media, and literary projects. One program involved photographing every taxable building in a number of cities.

Through its eight years, the program, later renamed the Works Progress Administration, put more than 8 million people to work.

For a number of years, the Augusta photos were stored in the former City Hall building, now used for senior citizens' housing, in downtown Augusta. Several rolls of films, contact sheets, and articles from the *Kennebec Journal* describing the photo project were found in cardboard boxes in the early 1990s, according to Ernie Plummer, a former KHS president and archivist.

The collection went to KHS and the negatives were given to the Maine Historical Preservation Commission.

It's not entirely clear in which year the photos were taken. There are also questions about the accuracy of street addresses recorded with the photos, Plummer said. That led to some sleuthing by Plummer and interns.

As for the dates, "they originally said 1938, but on inspection it became clear that not all were taken in 1938." One clue appeared on the picture of the old Colonial Theatre on Water Street, now under renovation. The marquee advertised the movie "Rebecca," but that Alfred Hitchcock thriller didn't come out until 1940.

As for the street addresses, KHS volunteers, led by Plummer, over the years went to many of the addresses, especially in the historic district, and spoke to residents to double-check their accuracy.

"The RFD pictures were taken mostly in the winter, and the photos appeared mostly taken from a car," Plummer said, adding that each photographer clearly worked with one or two other people. ("RFD" is an old postal acronym for "Rural Free Delivery" zones.)

In the years after the pictures were discovered, Plummer led the work to scan all of the contact prints. Each image on each contact sheet is of a resolution high enough to be reprinted as 8-by-10-inch prints.

"I scanned all of those and reprinted them and made that set available to researchers," Plummer said. Originals were placed in the KHS archives. Images were also scanned onto discs, leaving the society with three copies of each image.

In the 1990s, KHS worked with Maine Preservation to photograph every old house — then defined as 50 years or older — in the city.

WPA work in Maine also included construction of buildings at Acadia National Park and creating surveys in more than 500 cemeteries in the state. Photos of those projects are stored in the Maine State Archives. Dozens of other projects were undertaken by other New Deal agencies.

Cities and historical organizations elsewhere have taken similar steps with their WPA photos. In Springfield, Massachusetts, for example, the project involved photographing every building in the city in 1938 and 1939. The Preservation Trust has taken on an effort to scan the images digitally, and the black-and-white images can be seen online.

In Louisiana, photographers recorded thousands of images of WPA projects in New Orleans and other locations. The WPA's Historical Records Survey created thousands of records across the country, which assist genealogical and historical researchers today.

Reproductions of the Augusta images are available at the Kennebec Historical Society's headquarters.



The Colonial Theater on Water Street in Augusta, as it looked about 1940.

Photo from the KHS WPA collection

## Upcoming Facebook Programs

### March: “Maine’s Big Trees”



Jan Santerre with a former state and national champion yellow birch in Deer Isle.

Photograph courtesy of Jan Santerre

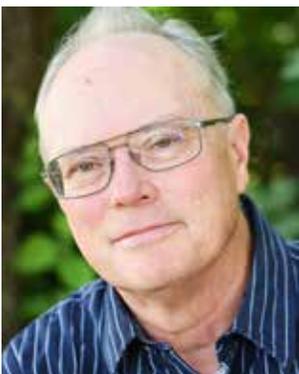
Since 1968, the Maine Forest Service has compiled a list of the largest-known specimens of native and naturalized trees in Maine. The 2020 Register contains 146 trees, representing 138 species. Of these, the Maine Forest Service has several existing, and a few more nominations to the National Register of Champion Trees. The Eastern white pine located in Morrill was a national champion but lost its status when a portion of the crown was removed following a 2018 windstorm. The new state champion Eastern white pine, in Sumner, has been nominated to take its place. The national champion black spruce in Brooklin, yellow birch in Wayne, and common buckthorn in Portland are defending their national ranks. New potential champions include a mountain paper birch in Bethel, eastern hophornbeam in Paris, and a striped maple in Bristol. State champion big trees capture our imagination for their size and strength; however, there is more to a champion than just its size — they are symbols of all the good work trees do for the quality of the environment and our quality of life. This talk

will highlight how to measure champion trees, along with stories of some of the champions.

Our KHS speaker is Jan Santerre, the Project Canopy director for the Maine Forest Service, where she focuses on all aspects of program management. Project Canopy is a federally funded program in support of urban forestry programming in Maine’s municipalities. She works with cities and towns statewide, providing grant funds to support street and shade tree planting and assistance and training in various topics related to shade tree management and forestry in general to municipal staff members, commissions, and volunteers. Jan has managed the Maine Register of Big Trees for the forest service for over 20 years, has a B.S. in forestry from the University of Vermont, and is a native of Dover-Foxcroft.

To view this presentation, head to the KHS Facebook page at 6:30 p.m. March 17, and the video will air live. It will also be available to watch later. 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.

### April: “First Franco: Albert Beliveau in Law, Politics and Love”



April KHS speaker Douglas Rooks

Photo courtesy of the author

Join former Maine Chief Justice Dan Wathen; Severin Beliveau, partner in Preti Flaherty and former legislator and gubernatorial candidate; and author Douglas Rooks for an exploration of “*First Franco: Albert Beliveau in Law, Politics and Love*.”

Rooks will read passages about Gov. Ed Muskie’s dramatic and surprising decision concerning Albert Beliveau’s attempt in 1956 to become the first Franco-American chief justice, and its aftermath 14 years later. Rooks is the author of two previous books, *Statesman: George Mitchell and the Art of the Possible* (Down East Books, 2016) and *Rise, Decline and Renewal: The Democratic Party in Maine* (Hamilton Books, 2018.)

This account of the life of one of Maine’s most prominent 20th-century Franco-Americans includes themes of enduring and contemporary interest, including discrimination against the state’s largest ethnic and religious demographic, immigration restrictions, World War I, and the pandemic of 1918.

Albert Beliveau, who grew up poor in Lewiston and Rumford, surmounted many obstacles to graduate first in his law school class. He played pioneering roles as a county attorney, congressional nominee, and Maine Superior Court and Supreme Court Justice. This new biography is a fitting accompaniment to the pandemic-delayed celebration of Maine’s bicentennial.

To view this presentation, head to the KHS Facebook page at 6:30 p.m. April 21, and the video will air live. It will also be available to watch later. 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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