

Kennebec Current

"It is our duty to peruse the great volume of Nature which [God] has spread . . . to increase the talent he has given us . . . to investigate the objects about us, to learn their uses, and apply them for the benefit of the community." — Ezekiel Holmes, "Utility of Philosophy to a Nation" (see story below)

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March–April 2024

State Plans Repairs to 'Endangered' Colburn House

A March visit by state officials to the historic Colburn House in Pittston showed the building has deteriorated further since the Maine Preservation organization placed it on its annual Most Endangered Historic Places list last fall.

The state acquired Colburn House in 1974, and the property is managed by the Maine Bureau of Public Lands. Because of its state of disrepair, the house has been closed to the public since 2019. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry has obtained a \$500,000 grant from the National Park Service for critical repairs to the Colburn House State Historic Site.

Maine Preservation, a statewide historic preservation nonprofit, in an October 10, 2023, online post, described the condition of the property that earned its inclusion in the group's Most Endangered Historic Places list: "The house's future is threatened by structural degradation, water infiltration and drainage, and powder post beetles. The combination of constrained budgets, and well-intentioned but piecemeal repairs have compounded to a dire situation. Unsafe conditions, including an unstable foundation, mold growth, and flaking lead paint led the state to end public access to the interior in 2019."

The house was built in 1765 by Maj. Reuben Colburn (1740-1818). During the Revolutionary War, the Colburn property was the launching site for Benedict Arnold's 1775 march to Quebec, an unsuccessful attempt to capture that

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The Maj. Reuben Colburn House, on a state historic site located in Pittston, shows evidence of storm damage in this photo taken in early March of the building's west side, which faces the Kennebec River.

Photo by Gay Grant

Persistence Reveals Father of Maine Agriculture's Mountain Farm



A view from the Mount Pisgah fire tower overlooks some of Ezekiel Holmes' former property.

Photo by Ben Sturtevant



Sturtevant

This story by Winthrop native Ben Sturtevant is the first of two historical articles about 19th-century people who lived on Mount Pisgah. The second will appear in the May-June issue of the *Kennebec Current*.

Treasure hunting in the Maine woods, with its undulating, heavily vegetated landscape, is challenging. It is easier under a gray winter sky with a touch of snow on the ground. Views are clearer without foliage on bushes and hardwood trees.

I discovered this while searching recently for a gem of history on Mount Pisgah in Winthrop – the former farm of Dr. Ezekiel Holmes. Nearly 200 years ago, Holmes, known as the "Father of Maine Agriculture," set up a small farm on the southeast side of the mountain near where Kennebec Land Trust trails bring hikers to Pisgah's 800-foot summit and 60-foot fire tower.

Finding evidence of his farm isn't easy. Visual clues of human activity abound there. Miles of stone walls and faint outlines of old tote roads meander through those woods. Remnants of a pasture can be seen nearby. I was searching for the cellar hole of a farmhouse Holmes built on the land he called "Mount Airy."

Who was Holmes?

Not a household name to most Mainers, Holmes was a key figure in Maine's agricultural history, as his lofty title suggests. Research between my ventures into the Pisgah woods to find the Holmes hole proved his title was well-earned. I dug into the University of Maine's *Ezekiel Holmes*,

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Current Becomes Easier to Navigate, Contact




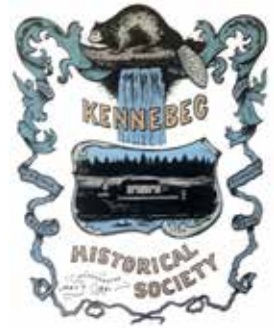
Editor's Note
Joseph Owen

Another issue, another trickle of improvements. In mid-2022, 16 pages became the norm for the size of the *Kennebec Current*. That amount of heft has made finding or noticing specific stories a bit harder. As a result, starting with this issue, we are adding a table of contents to page 2.

Also, we have found that the amount of message traffic related to the *Current* has started to clog up the email accounts of the people and organizations that participate in its production, including that of the Kennebec Historical Society. As a result, we have established a separate email account for our publication. Here it is: KennebecCurrent@gmail.com. We encourage readers

to use that address to communicate with us.

As the *Kennebec Current* continues to develop, we expect that we will need to set up even more email accounts to organize our message traffic better, but for now we are hoping that this baby step will suffice. We look forward to hearing from you. 



Discovering, preserving, and disseminating the history of Kennebec County, Maine, since 1891

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Kennebec Current sponsor

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Kennebec Current

Our 166th Issue

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The *Kennebec Current* encourages letters to the editor. Email letters to KennebecCurrent@gmail.com. All letters are subject to editing for taste, style, and length.

KHS Co-founder Frank T. Noble Was Adventurous Jack-of-all-trades

To say that Frank T. Noble lived life to the fullest would be an understatement. His letters, writings, and innumerable photographs, as well as numerous newspapers articles about him, paint a portrait of a man who was curious, a lifelong learner, not afraid to embark on new ventures, and driven to achieve in both business and life's pleasures.

Frank Treby Noble was born on May 10, 1851, in Augusta, the youngest child of Thomas Chadbourne Noble and Adeline Treby (Johnson) Noble. Thomas Noble was a native of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, born on Noble's Island, home of his father's and uncles' fishing fleet. In 1830, Thomas Noble followed his older brother Moses to Augusta and established a hardware store on the east side, partnering with William Kittridge. Within a few years he became the proprietor of his own store on Water Street, selling a variety of "fancy goods" and other merchandise. After heavy losses in the Great Fire of September 17, 1865, Thomas Noble built the first story of what would become the Noble Block and reopened for business by the end of the year. He closed his store around 1870, then continued working in other ventures until well into his 80s.

Adeline Noble was born in Farmington, a granddaughter of Thomas Johnson, a soldier in the Revolutionary War; her older brother was banker William T. Johnson, who became speaker of the Maine House of Representative and Augusta's mayor.

Frank's two eldest siblings, 15 and 13 years his senior, were accomplished in their respective fields. His sister Hannah Noble was an artist and teacher at Mount Holyoke College for most of her life. In 1861, at the beginning of his senior year at Bowdoin, Frank's oldest brother Joseph Noble enlisted in Company A of the 9th Maine Infantry. He served with distinction, being promoted to lieutenant colonel by the end of his service. He eventually worked at the U.S. Treasury in Washington, D. C., as the assistant chief of the Division of Loans and Currency.

The 1870 U.S. census lists Frank Noble as a photographer, but he moved on to other work. Around early April 1872 Noble was appointed as a clerk for the U. S. Pension Agency office in Augusta. By September 1873 he was the chief clerk of that office, and in January 1874 he accepted the chief clerkship for a new pension agency office in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

On May 13, 1874, Noble married Emma Jane Trotter, daughter of William Trotter and Margaret Webber, at St. Mark's Episcopal church in Augusta, and they began their married life in Fitchburg. Their first child, William Thomas Noble, was born the following year. By 1879 the family had moved from Fitchburg to Malden, where his daughter Bessie was born that year. Noble continued his employment as a pension and claims agent, working in Boston.

He was an active member of the Malden Gun Club, serving as president more than once and consistently finishing amongst the top contenders in the numerous clay pigeon and glass ball meets and tournaments. In March 1881, the *Daily Kennebec Journal* reported that Noble and his brothers Joseph and Thomas Jr. began publishing a new paper, the *Boston Telegram*, a trade journal devoted to "telegraphic and telephonic" news. A published report said the new business was expected to succeed because of the "push, talent, and journalistic skill" of these men. Unfortunately, according to Norman Wallace Lermond, who was hired as an office boy for the publication, it went bankrupt in less than a year. In the same year, Frank Noble's daughter Emma was born in Augusta.

Always looking for new opportunities, around March 1886, Noble departed for Livingstone, Guatemala, to engage in the import and export business as a member of the firm Van Sicklen & Noble, with his family moving back to Augusta. He eventually left the tropics to escape yellow fever, returning to Augusta and continuing in the import business by the fall of 1887.

In 1889, he opened a general insurance and real estate business on Water Street and ran it until the early 1900s, when he went into business with his son, William T. Noble, in the Collateral Loan Company. They later opened a jewelry business together as F.T. and W.T. Noble.

Frank Noble pursued many interests throughout his life. He continued his love of marksmanship as a member of the Cushnoc Gun Club. He was known for his valuable coin collection of over 10,000 pieces, periodically exhibiting parts of the collection and contributing a number of articles about coins to the *Daily Kennebec Journal*. One unusual collection he had was of English war medals. He also had a large stamp collection. Photography continued to be part of his life; many of his photographs and glass negatives have been passed down in his family. His deep interest in genealogy produced a family history with not just names and dates but stories and anecdotes gleaned from interviews of his parents and other relatives.



Frank Treby Noble

From the KHS collection

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KHS Co-founder Frank Noble

Continued from page 3

Both in Maine and throughout his travels south, Noble collected numerous butterflies, other insects, and birds. He was an avid bird hunter and was noted for his skills as a taxidermist. He developed an extensive collection of birds, nests, and eggs, which was given to the Maine State Museum in 1916. He was a member of the Maine Ornithological Society, contributing articles and serving as associate editor for its journal for several years. Several times the governor appointed him as commissioner for taking birds, their nests, and eggs for scientific purposes.

In February 1891, Noble was one of the original group that organized the Kennebec Natural History and Antiquarian Society – which quickly reduced its name to “Kennebec Historical Society” – and was elected as the secretary and Executive Council member at the society’s first meeting in 1891. He became the group’s president a few years later, and he maintained his membership for several years.

The Nobles lived for many years at 16 Sewall Street in Augusta, and the many pictures of the interior show it to have been decorated with classic Victorian era-details – peacock feathers in large vases, fringed mantel scarves, and velvet upholstery, along with the numerous mounted butterfly collections and stuffed birds. Like his father’s effort before him, Frank Noble’s success and hard work also made it possible for the family to own a cottage, the Anchorage, on Ocean Point, where the family spent many summers. His daughter Charlotte was born in 1897; four years later both of his parents died within seven days of each other at home on Sewall Street.

Noble served his communities through appointments as a justice of the peace in both Fitchburg and Augusta, and he was on a coroner’s jury for a murder investigation.

Perhaps the long wintertime illnesses he endured that were bad enough to be reported in the newspaper made him decide that he’d had enough of the cold winters of Maine. Thus, for nine years beginning in 1907, Frank spent between two and four months in the Caribbean every winter, visiting the various islands of the West Indies, especially Barbados, and the north coast of South America. He continued collecting specimens during these trips, in one case even visiting the *Journal* office with live, glowing “giant electric beetles” that were taken into the darkroom for observation. The paper stated that “Mr. Noble returns in the best of health and well-bronzed by the tropical sun.”

Noble occasionally traveled to southern Florida, and he decided to move to Delray (later known as Delray Beach), Florida, in 1916 – leaving his family behind for unexplained reasons. At his new home, he lived with Ruby Mace, the recently divorced former wife of Frank E. Mace, Maine’s state forest commissioner.

Noble soon purchased property and by 1917 had built his first home in Delray. He quickly jumped into affairs of that community, being involved in organizing the Delray Savings and Loan Association, city planning, and the Delray Tourist Club; and he was elected a city councilman, with many of his activities devoted to the improvement of Delray. Society columns frequently reported that he and Mace, who was regarded as his wife, participated in many social activities in Delray and West Palm Beach.

They left Delray between 1920 and 1922, living for a time in Fort Lauderdale, and upon their return, built a new home on Atlantic Avenue. In 1923, he bought property in Palm Square, an exclusive residential subdivision, selling lots as well as building his own stucco bungalow. He and Mace continued their life among Delray society, spending most summers at various locales up north.

Upon their return trip to Delray Beach in late October 1929, Noble caught a cold which developed into pneumonia, and eight days after their return, he died on November 5, 1929. His death was reported on the front page of the *Delray Beach News*, and also reported in the *Palm Beach Post*. It was stated that Mace was his only survivor. He was buried in Delray Beach Cemetery.

Frank T. Noble lived life on his own terms. Throughout his life he wore many hats successfully, never doing anything by half-measures. He was respected as a successful businessman, an expert in a number of subjects, and served and enriched the communities in which he lived.

The writer, genealogist Deborah Noblesmith, of Saco, is a great-great-granddaughter of Frank T. Noble.



Frank Noble stands in front of his house at 16 Sewall Street in Augusta around 1900.

Photo courtesy of Deborah Noblesmith



Noble’s great-great-grandson Nikko Noble, a KHS member who lives in Falmouth, stands in the same spot on March 3.

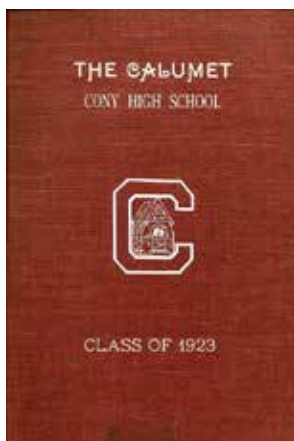
Rich Eastman photo



Where Did You Go to School in Kennebec County?

Did you know that the Kennebec Historical Society has in its collection nearly 730 school yearbooks? Well, we do, and we welcome additions to fill our gaps. Any school in the county should be represented, not just high schools. Yearbooks illustrate such a pivotal period in a student's life – physical, academic, and social growth; membership in clubs and societies; and achievements. As photographs became more prevalent and popular, one could expect even some embarrassing moments in print.

One of the first “yearbooks” was created in ancient Athens; it was a marble slab listing military cadets. Our collection goes back only to the 1880s, but it remains a constant point of interest. We all like to see who graduated when, what they looked like and what they did while in school. As time goes on, buildings “matured” too and “retired” in favor of more modern facilities.



Cony High School's yearbook for 1923 was called *The Calumet*.

From the KHS collection

It's also interesting to note the variety of titles given by each school. There were some changes, too; Cony had its “class book” until 1920. In 1921 the yearbook was titled *Calumet*. The following year it became *Periscope*. Some time between 1923 and 1926 it was renamed the *Coniad*. (By the way, Winslow High School currently has the *Periscope*.) The *Kents Hill Breeze* at some point became the *Polaris*; we have 1924, 1925, and 1927 editions of this book under the former title. The earliest *Polaris* we have is from 1962. Oak Grove Seminary and Oak Grove School published *Oak Leaves*; our earliest edition is that of 1919. This turned into the *Oval* by 1971, the change undoubtedly reflecting the new status of the school as co-educational.

Oakland High School produced the *Messalonskee Ripple*; we have 1919 and 1923. By 1927, the school's name changed to Williams. The last *Ripple* in our collection is from 1956. We have a gap until 1977, and the name changed to *Talon* and *Eagle Talon*. In 1956 the *Eagle* was the school's newspaper, so perhaps the staff was thinking that the yearbook absorbed some of the functions of the paper – just a guess, of course. Another tidbit: The 1977 edition includes mention of the annual Ripple Dipple show. (If anyone knows more about this, please get in touch!)

The possible significance of the yearbook titles may be derived from dictionary definitions. For these, I consulted my 1999 *Encarta World English Dictionary*. Colby has its *Oracle*, a word meaning source of knowledge, wisdom, or prophecy. The *Nautilus* from Waterville High School could refer to the sea creature with the coiled shell, which it outgrows; or perhaps it's a nod to the submarine in Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, a classic novel. Erskine's *Pinnacle* could symbolize the highest or topmost point. Maranacook Community School's *Concord* suggests peaceful coexistence or agreement – perhaps referring to the combination of the middle and high schools? The *Genesis* of Oak Hill High School – a school in the Androscoggin County town of Wales whose student body includes residents of Litchfield, in Kennebec County – has a name signifying coming into being, or creation. Winslow High School's *Periscope* alludes to the use of lenses, prisms, and mirrors to see objects not in the direct line of sight; how about using one's gifts to form the future?

We have eight editions of Monmouth Academy's *Amaracus*. That word, from Greek mythology, is the name of a young Cypriot boy who was transformed into a marjoram plant, associated with Aphrodite. (I'm not sure about this one; I've asked the school about its origin but have no answer yet.)

Perhaps this review brings back some experiences with your yearbook(s). Were you on the staff? I have fond memories of roaming my high school halls with a twin lens reflex camera, trying to get candid shots of my fellow students. One jumped into a trash can, and another pretended to be a mad scientist. This year I'll be enjoying my 50th class reunion.

Here's a challenge for you: Our executive director, Scott Wood, graduated from an area high school. If you can name the year, he'll give you a whole box of leftover books from our recent book sale!

Until next time!



The Archivist's Pen
Emily Schroeder



The Colby College yearbook for 1895 was called the *Colby Oracle*, which has maintained the same name to this day.

From the KHS collection

Land Deeds Serve as Valuable Genealogy Tool



Perhaps one of the most underestimated tools in a genealogist's arsenal is the use of land records at a county registry of deeds.

We are fortunate that in Kennebec County, that office is at 77 Winthrop Street in Augusta, three blocks east of the Kennebec Historical Society. The registry is

open Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Its office houses records of land transactions from 1799 to the present. Kennebec records also are available online at <https://kennebec.gov/deeds>.

Land transaction records from 1760 to 1799 in what now is Kennebec County are at the Lincoln County Registry of Deeds in Wiscasset. Records from before 1760 are in the York registry in Alfred.

Land records often state who owned the property before the seller did. In some cases, records show that the land had belonged to the owner's father, grandparent, or father-in-law, thereby revealing a wife's maiden name. Many of these land transfers were within families, so the records sometimes reveal many of a landowner's family members. In one case, a client of mine was able to find his entire line with one land deed. His great-grandfather's father was unknown, but the mother of his ancestor had been identified. The great-grandfather's identity was found in a land deed for a man whom a town had sued for having fathered a child out of wedlock. The woman named therein was this client's ancestor. In the 1850s, Maine's bastardy laws required remuneration for the support given by the town.

Got some puzzles of your own? Please join us by submitting your genealogy queries about some of those difficult "walls" you may have run into, or questions regarding personal stories of your ancestors that others in the KHS membership might be able to help answer. If you have any queries to submit, please keep them relevant to Kennebec County and as brief as possible. Submit them with your name and the method by which you wish to be contacted. We will publish your queries in upcoming issues. Feel free to submit as many queries as you wish. Total queries for any one issue will be limited to space available, and leftover queries will run in a future issue.

You may submit your queries by mail to Your Kennebec Roots, c/o Kennebec Historical Society, P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04332-5582; or email them to Rich Eastman at reastman1952@gmail.com.

PEASLEE/PEASLEY: Martin Peaslee was born in 1816 and married twice; Mary Ann Currier on October 30, 1842, in Old Town, and Mariah Linn or Lyon on August 15, 1863, according to Augusta vital records, in Augusta. (FamilySearch has the second marriage taking place on August 31, 1863, in Portland). Children by his first wife: Frank Wilbur Peaslee (1846-1865), who died in the Civil War; and Charles Fremont Peaslee (1856-1896). The 1850 Census states he resided in Vassalboro. Martin, Mary Ann, and Charles were active members of the First Christian Church (aka Christian Union Church) in Augusta from 1873 to 1876. Martin and Mary Ann are buried in the Riverside Cemetery in Augusta. Two researchers – who apparently don't know each other – are seeking parents of Martin Peaslee (Peasley). Email Emily Schroeder at buffywg@yahoo.com.



Rich Eastman

Current FOLLOWUP

Winslow genealogy group still recovering from flood

The Taconnett Falls Genealogical Society's library in Winslow is still working on putting its Lithgow Street headquarters back in order after Kennebec River flooding in December filled the cellar, disabled the heating system, and forced its utilities to be shut off (*Kennebec Current*, January-February 2024).

Society President Fred Clark said in a March 8 email that electrical power has been restored and the cellar is dry but still needs cleaning. He said he is working on the boiler, and that when that task is complete, he will be able to turn on the water again and refill the heating system.

Grant helping Arnold Expedition group create permanent bateau display

The Pittston-based Arnold Expedition Historical Society has received a \$5,000 Americana Corner grant to fund the construction of a 22-foot replica bateau resembling the flat-bottom riverboats that Col. Benedict Arnold took upriver on his way to attack Quebec in 1775. The grant also will cover the cost of installing interpretive signs and upgrading an existing pavilion at the Colburn House State Historic Site in Pittston, according to a March 8 news release from the society.

The bateau display will explain Arnold's march to Quebec during the American Revolution and the role of Reuben Colburn, the Pittston shipbuilder who built 220 bateaux for the expedition. The society also is expected to host commemorations of the expedition's 250th anniversary in 2025 (*Kennebec Current*, January-February 2024).

Colburn House

Continued from page 1



Gaps and cracks abound among the clapboards on the west side of the Maj. Reuben Colburn House in Pittston.

Photo by Gay Grant

fortified settlement from the British. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004 and was listed in 1996 as part of the Arnold Trail to Quebec Historic District. The 2022 federal grant (*Kennebec Current*, September-October 2022) is part of national efforts to mark the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.

Jim Brett, spokesperson for the Bureau of Public Lands, said in an email that the project is being reviewed with the National Park Service. “As a first step,” he wrote, “they have initiated a Tribal Consultation, a comment period for the Tribes who have historically lived in the Pittston area.”

Brett said that the department is working with an archeologist and an engineering and architectural firm to study the site and make recommendations. Work would include a new foundation, roof, siding, and mold abatement. The department also is exploring additional funding for the project. Asked about the timing of the work, he cautioned, “We would not want to create false expectations by forecasting a re-open date or timeframe.”

Leaders of the Arnold Expedition Historical Society, headquartered at Colburn House, hope to host celebrations next year to mark the 250th anniversary of the Arnold Expedition (*Kennebec Current*, January-February 2024). On March 1, Steve Warren, the society's vice president, walked the site with Gary Best, Southern Region state historic park manager; David Roderigues, director of real property management; and Matt McGuire, all of the land bureau.

During the site walk, Warren said, the group noticed further damage to the siding around the front door on the river side of the house that could allow water to enter the building. That will require immediate attention, he added. Still, Warren was overall encouraged by the meeting. Though the department did not commit to a firm timetable, he remains hopeful the work can begin late this summer and be completed in time for the celebrations.

Warren said the federal grant will cover work only on the main house. Volunteers from his society have been working on the grounds, and they have made exterior repairs to the barn and the carriage house. Since the house is a historic structure, Warren said, work on that building must be done under state auspices. Repairs to outbuildings do not have the same requirements.

Arnold society volunteers also plan upgrades to a picnic pavilion on the waterfront where they plan to exhibit replicas of the flat-bottomed boats that Colburn built for the Arnold Expedition. The society and the land agency also plan to engage archival experts to securely store historic artifacts that have been displayed in the house before construction begins.

“We will be focusing next on upgrading the picnic pavilion on the waterfront to be a bateau exhibit area. We hope to have this function as a central focal point of the 250th celebration next year. We would like to have it ready to host school field trips by the end of this school year. Next year we hope to have reenactments of the Arnold Expedition and bateau building presentations for public engagement,” Warren said in an email.

Warren said during the recent site visit, Best expressed gratitude for the work and advocacy done by the society volunteers. The organization has operated under a now-expired long-term lease with the land bureau, so a new agreement will need to be negotiated. This will enable the nonprofit organization to raise money for other necessary restoration and preservation efforts, he said.

Richmond historical researcher John “Jay” Robbins Jr., who has been involved with preservation efforts at the Colburn House since 1985, said archeological assessments there could be extensive. When work was done on parts of the foundation about 30 years ago, he said, the soil that was removed was “teeming with artifacts,” including clay pipes, glass and ceramic shards, and other items.

Dan Warren Jr., of Pittston, a descendant of Reuben Coburn's father, Jeremiah, said the home left the Colburn family in the early 1940s, and though it has enjoyed periods of care, it has suffered more years of neglect. He was the resident caretaker and a tour guide at the Colburn House for many years. “I loved every moment of my time there, met some wonderful relatives and many enthusiastic, historically minded people,” he said.



The writer, Gay Grant, of Gardiner, is the author of the 2022 book Around the Kennebec Valley: the Herman Bryant Collection.

Gift of Wilderness: A Brief History of China’s Thurston Park

Everett Thurston peered out from his house on a mild Saturday night in mid-October. In the dimming light he spotted “two fellas” leading a calf from his barn.

The 72-year-old farmer, who lived alone, resided in what was known as the Yorktown area of China, in the northeast corner of this Kennebec County town. Thurston didn’t dare leave the house to confront the calf-rustling thieves. Instead, the next morning he asked a deputy sheriff in China to investigate.

Thurston’s barn door had been forced open. Police found the spot nearby where the stolen calf had been butchered and loaded onto a truck. Investigators questioned a man living at a rented room in Belfast, who admitted he had been to the Thurston farm the night before, while also implicating his brother and a Searsport man whose shed contained part of the butchered calf. The meat was returned to Thurston.

That story was reported in the *Kennebec Journal* on October 17, 1950, offering a glimpse into life at the forested farmland more than 70 years ago. That very land is now part of what makes up the present-day Thurston Park, which encompasses 387 acres of town-owned forest with a number of trails and historic sites open to the public.

There are over two miles of multi-use trails (Old Yorktown Road, Trail #1, and Trail #2) allowing use of snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles, and 2.5 miles of foot trails (Esler Trail, Rufus Jones Trail, Partridge Trail, Moose Trail, Deer Trail, and Monument Trail) that interconnect and form loops.

The park is accessible from Old Yorktown Road, a dirt road off Dutton Road/Libby Hill Road that starts in Albion. The dirt road eventually crosses back into China near Yorktown Brook, where there are a pair of designated parking areas before and after the brook crossing. The brook runs southwest, eventually forming a pond along the western border. The park boundaries run alongside Albion to the north and Palermo to the east. A monument stone from about 1838 marks the spot where the three towns’ borders converge.

Among the points of interest is the old cellar hole of Thurston’s farmhouse, located in the southwest corner of the park; as well as additional cellar holes, the Talbot Cemetery, waterfalls, and dams.

How the park came to be is a story decades in the making, with roots stretching back to its namesake.

Gifts of land

Just over eight years after that calf-theft incident, Everett Thurston decided to give his farmland to the town of China. That real estate transfer was reported in the *Kennebec Journal* on January 18, 1958, stating simply: “Everett Thurston to Inhabitants of the Town of China, land.” A 1970s-era map of the park indicates that Thurston had deeded 173 acres to the town.

“Oral tradition has it that he was expressing appreciation for past welfare assistance,” states the *Bicentennial History of China, Maine*, written by Mary M. Grow in 1974. “Thurston had acquired the property in 1904 from John E. Thurston, ‘for a family arrangement,’ with Everett to provide John a home, kindness and respect, the ‘necessary comforts of life,’ and ‘a good and respectable burial’ after his death.”

Everett Thurston died on October 22, 1959, at the age of 79. His *Kennebec Journal* obituary said he died at a rest home in China after a long illness. It said he was born in China on April 7, 1880, the son of John and Alsade Bessey Thurston. At the time of his death, he had four daughters living in Augusta.

The 173 acres Thurston donated to the town would become the largest of four land parcels to eventually encompass



A sign crowned with snow in December marks the north entrance to China’s Thurston Park, which is off Old Yorktown Road.

Photo by Scott Monroe

the park land, according to a July 1983 story Grow wrote for the *Kennebec Journal*. Those parcels were:

- 50 acres from Henry Talbot, in 1879, on what was then Greenfield Road, from South China to Albion. In June 1879, a selectman acting on behalf of the town paid \$7.61 in back taxes owed by Talbot to acquire the land and buildings on it.
- Unspecified acreage from C.S. Dolly, in 1922. In February that year, another selectman similarly acquired the land for \$7.26 in taxes, interest and charges.
- Unspecified acreage from William S. Flood, in 1958. In March of that year, China residents paid \$9.59 worth of back taxes to acquire the land.
- Everett Thurston's deeded gift to the town, of 173 acres, in 1958.

Those land parcels apparently remained largely undeveloped in the ensuing years. It would be many years after Thurston's death that town residents decided to establish the beginnings of a town park.

'For their enjoyment'

In July 1974, the China Select Board asked voters to approve a recreation area; voters did so at the March 1975 annual Town Meeting, adopting a measure to make the land "a recreation area to be used by the public for their enjoyment." Voters further instructed a town recreation committee to "supervise the use of the park ... and to develop the area in furtherance of conservation and recreational activities" under the direction of the Select Board, according to Grow's reporting.

In the late 1970s, the town authorized selective timber cutting on the land, netting about \$7,500 for the recreation committee. In 1980, Boy Scouts planted 1,000 white pine seedlings in the park. Scouts continued to be involved with projects on the land over the years, including formation of trails and building fencing around old cellar holes. Also in 1980, recreation committee members announced in the annual town report that "activities such as snowmobiling, camping, hiking and picnicking have been approved for local residents."

Even so, town officials and residents often talked about selling the land. As early as the 1980s, news stories quote some town officials as saying they'd rather the town sell off the land and instead buy a "more accessible piece of land" either near China Lake or somewhere more central in town. The push to develop the park with recreation trails has taken hold in earnest only over the past decade.

Park development


In March 2010, Grow wrote that the newly-created Thurston Park study committee "recommended improving the road that enters the park from the south, off Mann Road, and creating a parking area near the south boundary for initial access. The road across the park is to be made passable for four-wheel-drive vehicles, for fire safety. Access from the north would be assessed later." The committee was formed to oversee the land and creation of a trail network.

In recent years, the town has allocated thousands of dollars in revenue from tax-increment financing funding to the committee, which oversaw spending the money on park improvements. That funding has paid for trail development, road culverts, new signs, improved road access, and more.

The development of multi-use and foot trails over the past decade has transformed the park into a regional attraction for hikers, dog-walkers, horseback riders, bicyclists, snowshoers, snowmobilers, and ATV riders. Its longest foot trail, the Rufus Jones Trail, runs along the shores of the pond formed and swampland created by the Yorktown Brook. The trail's namesake was a Quaker educator and author of many books on education, philosophy and religion, whose historic birthplace is in South China.

Running through the heart of the park is Old Yorktown Road, a wide gravel trail that connects the north and south ends of the park and leads to a picnic area and connects to other trails. The forestland boasts a variety of trees – white and red spruce, balsam fir, northern white cedar, tamarack, white pine, sugar maple, basswood, yellow birch, black and white ash, aspens, and others – and abundant wildlife such as songbirds, goshawks, owls, beavers, porcupines, moose, and deer.

This past December, a new storage building was constructed at the picnic area, near the Chamberlain cellar hole, so Thurston Park Committee members can store equipment on the site and better take care of the land. On December 30, committee members and residents spent the morning clearing nearly all trails of storm debris and fallen trees.

The committee is also focused on improving signage and access to the park, and preserving the land so that future generations can enjoy it – just as Thurston intended with his landmark gift to China. 

The author, Scott Monroe, is a member of the Thurston Park Committee. Readers who would like to become involved with the committee or share photos, videos, or stories of times spent at Thurston Park may email him at scottmonroe44@gmail.com.

Ezekiel Holmes' Farm

Continued from page 1

Father of Maine Agriculture, a biography by Clarence A. Day. I also consulted *Anthropology Toward History: Culture and Work in a 19th Century Maine Town*, by Richard Horwitz, a book recommended by my former Winthrop High School history teacher David Cook, who is also Winthrop's town historian.

Holmes (1801-1865) was born in Kingston, Massachusetts. Records indicate he descended from a family that arrived in America in the 1600s along with other Pilgrims from England. His family was in the smelting business and was somewhat successful. He attended Brown University, where he studied natural sciences and botany, graduating in 1821. From there, he made his way to Maine, where he had relatives in Oxford County. He entered Bowdoin College to study medicine. His Bowdoin classmates included future President Franklin Pierce, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

He finished his studies in 1824, becoming Ezekiel Holmes, M.D., but did not pursue a career in medicine for long. Botany, chemistry, and geology were his passions. He decided to pursue a different career to focus on those sciences, signing on as tutor at the newly formed Gardiner Lyceum. The lyceum was an innovative school for the times.

According to Henry Kingsbury and Simeon Deyo's 1892 *Illustrated History of Kennebec County, Maine*, the lyceum was the first technical institute in the United States. It was established in 1822 through the efforts of Benjamin Hale. Courses in civil architecture, navigation, chemistry and agriculture were available there. The school's existence depended upon fees, gifts, and grants from the Maine Legislature. The school was created "for the purpose of giving to farmers and mechanics such a scientific education as would enable them to become skillful in their professions."

It didn't last long. Funding was always a problem. Lack of land and investment in facilities limited the lyceum's ability to become a successful working educational farm. By 1828, Holmes had his fill of it and began his exit strategy. By 1831, the lyceum closed after the Legislature voted to defund it.

From the lyceum, Holmes' career took a dizzying path with stops in the fields of farming, publishing and journalism, politics, economic development, natural sciences research, and even sales and marketing. None of these activities proved prosperous. A farming venture in Starks left him in debt. A brief summary of a few of his many notable accomplishments after leaving the lyceum:

- Holmes served seven terms in the Legislature, including four consecutive terms in the House and two in the Senate. He ran for governor twice unsuccessfully.
- He helped establish *The Maine Farmer* newspaper and served as editor under several different publishers, including the first publisher of the *Kennebec Journal*.
- He spent time in Aroostook County, where he delved into economic development, particularly lobbying for infrastructure improvements. His research helped the area become an agricultural area and potato-growing powerhouse.
- He sold innovative farming equipment, including a mechanical thresher and hay rake, and not so innovative patent medicines.

All the while, Holmes continued his work in agronomy research on topics including soil studies, livestock, and crops. It is difficult to summarize his contributions to Maine agriculture because they are so vast. His scientific background, teaching ability, oratorical skills, and political connections were key to setting Maine's agricultural policies and establishing the University of Maine, in Orono, initially called the Maine State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts. Holmes died in 1865, before UMaine really took off. Holmes Hall, the university's first chemistry department building, is named after him.

Mount Pisgah farm

Throughout most of these activities, Winthrop was his home and base of operations. At some point, Holmes purchased a farm and land on Mount Pisgah a few hundred feet below the summit on the southeast ridge. Details of this transaction and amount of land under his control are fuzzy. I browsed the Kennebec County Registry of Deeds, but finding maps and descriptions of the property were a greater undertaking than I was able to achieve.

One thing is clear. The farm was unsuccessful. It ended up in the hands of his son, Patrick. Holmes was derisively called a "book farmer" by his neighboring farm owners, meaning he was great at sharing best practices with others but was unable to implement them successfully himself atop Pisgah. Eventually, these same farmers grew to respect him and were appreciative of his information.

The Kennebec Land Trust's map of the Pisgah trails mentions Holmes and his mountainside farm, but it doesn't show

its exact location, which I knew to be on land my family once owned. It took me two tries to find it. A first attempt ended in failure because my memory played tricks on me.

When I was around 10 or 11, our family hiked up the mountain to find the cellar hole. We lived at the foot of the mountain in Winthrop from the late 1960s in the summer and eventually year-round into the 1980s. We regularly hiked up in summer to pick wild blueberries. On one of these excursions, I recall, my father, an English teacher, was determined to find the hole and educate his offspring on some Maine history. After walking through puckerbrush for what felt like hours, we found it. I don't remember much about it or being impressed. At that point in life, I preferred to be on flat ground playing wiffle ball with friends.



The writer's dog, Hank, looks at the cellar hole of Ezekiel Holmes' house recently on Mount Pisgah in Winthrop.

Photo by Ben Sturtevant

When I returned to the mountain a few months ago, I thought my search would be easy. I remembered where we had entered the woods from an old meadow owned by our neighbor 40 years earlier, and I took a similar route; but the landscape had changed tremendously. What had been an open cow pasture was now completely overgrown. The neighboring woods on the other side of the boundary stone wall were now thinner than what I remembered. Larger trees outcompeted smaller species for light and dominated the forest here now. Recent windstorms had damaged some of the older trees, and the path I was certain would lead me to the cellar hole was littered with blowdowns. I found what appeared to be organized slabs of granite in a grassy area, but I couldn't be sure the arrangement was man-made. I thrashed around in the woods for about a half hour and took a few notes and photos of the area, but it was clear I had not found my treasure.

My second try was a success. Consultation with my friend Theresa Kerchner, the land trust's executive director, set me on the correct path. She knew where the hole was. We had planned to hike together before the snow buried the site, but we were unable to synch up our schedules. Instead, she provided the GPS coordinates of the location. I was on my own but confident I'd be able to find it with the aid of technology (my iPhone) and a bit of snow on the ground to add contrast to the forest background. GPS isn't always accurate – especially in a heavily forested area with a dying phone battery and spotty cellphone coverage. I was able to keep the phone alive long enough so that my dog, Hank, and I finally stumbled upon a chunk of the foundation on the side of a small hill next to an ancient and mostly overgrown tote road and stone wall.

I looked around and tried to imagine what the land looked like 170 years ago.

Were any trees from that era still alive? Doubtful.

Were the stone walls built or maintained by Holmes or another farmer during “sheep fever,” when Merino wool sheep, brought over from Spain and Portugal in the early 1800s, grazed by the hundreds of thousands all over northern New England, still there? Likely.

One feature, the pasture he might have used for nourishing Jersey dairy cows, is still somewhat intact. Saplings on their way to maturity have taken over most of it, but traces of it are still obvious.

The pasture was used as late as the 1970s by a few local dairy farms. I remember the pasture still being visible from North Monmouth. We sometimes could see Holstein cows grazing there while driving up the Mount Pisgah road to our home. I also remember dodging cow patties during hikes through the pasture for family picnics and blueberry picking.

And with that memory and a successful find, Hank and I headed back to the trailhead, both satisfied.



The writer, Benjamin Sturtevant, lives in Hallowell.

In the next issue, Winthrop Town Historian David Cook writes about farmer-historian Andrew W. Tinkham and his Mount Pisgah neighbors of the late 1700s and early to mid-1800s.

Unique Outhouse Stands in Shadow of Historic Jesse Lee Church

The tiny building shown with the “History Through a Keyhole” question in the January-February *Kennebec Current* stands next to the Jesse Lee Methodist Meeting House in Readfield. The historic church was built as a place to pray and reflect, but the congregation realized it also needed a place for a different kind of contemplation; so it built an outhouse, complete with its own steeple. This whimsical structure stands in the shadow of the meeting house, the origin of which dates to the waning years of the 18th century.



History Through
a Keyhole #11

When the Methodist Conference was held in Lynn, New York, on August 1, 1793, a missionary was assigned to the District of Maine – then part of Massachusetts – to explore and identify where best to establish the first circuit. The appointee was a 35-year-old Methodist missionary from Virginia named Jesse Lee (1758-1816), who had already been an itinerant minister for nine years. The indefatigable Lee had traveled via horseback on long, circuitous routes from Virginia to the Carolinas, northward toward New York, and many points in between. It is said that Lee was six feet, six inches tall and so large in stature and weight that he traveled with two horses in order to provide them alternately with time to rest.



The Jesse Lee Methodist Meeting House stands on Route 17 in East Readfield. The outhouse that imitates the church's architectural style is in the background at left.

Dale Potter Clark photo

Lee wrote, “After viewing the country, I thought the most proper place to form a circuit would be on the west side of the Kennebec River.” His recommendation became official in late October and the Conference named it the “Readfield circuit.” It extended from Hallowell on the Kennebec to the Sandy River to include the towns of Hallowell, Farmington, New Sharon, Mount Vernon, Winthrop, Monmouth, and of course, Readfield. Other towns were added later.

During his first visit to Readfield, in October 1793, Lee preached at the home of Nathaniel Whittier (1743-1798), who had homesteaded there with his parents and two of his brothers nearly 30 years prior. There, Lee met an enthusiastic group of followers and he encouraged them to build a Methodist meeting house. Their plan had been to construct a town house atop East Readfield Hill, on a five-acre lot owned by the town; but that never materialized. Instead, they made a new plan, to erect a Methodist meeting house. The 40-by-50-foot structure was raised at a bee in the spring of 1794.

Answer to Keyhole #11

Q: What is this?

A: An outhouse

Q: Where is it?

A: Beside and behind the Jesse Lee Methodist Meeting House on Route 17 in Readfield

Q: What's historic about it?

A: Nothing, except that its form mimics that of the church next door, which is considered to be Maine's oldest Methodist meeting house



By the time Lee returned that September, it was nearly completed. “Through my influence,” he wrote, “the people began the house last summer and now it is nearly ready to preach in. It is the first Methodist meeting house ever built in Maine.” On Sunday, September 14, 1794, Lee administered the Lord’s Supper to about eight persons in Readfield, the first administered by the Methodists in the District of Maine. He wrote in his journal with satisfaction, “We had a happy time together.” On June 21, 1795, the Rev. Lee returned to Readfield to preach the dedicatory sermon in the new Methodist Meeting House, which years later was named in his honor.

Three years had passed when on August 29, 1798, hundreds of the faithful gathered in Readfield for the first Methodist Conference ever held in Maine. Bishop Francis Asbury recounted that “Hundreds flocked to the small village ... from all directions from a distance of many miles. ... (They) were so crowded in the galleries that were not finished, that some of the joists gave way, and frightened the people very much for a few minutes, and some were slightly hurt.”

The Jesse Lee Meeting House has gone through two major changes since 1795. In 1825, 50 yoke of oxen dragged it from farther up Plains Road to its present location at the corner of that road and Route 17. At that time a porch was added to hold a vestibule and stairs that led from the two exterior doors to a landing and galleries above. New pews replaced the old square pews, which were moved to the galleries where Sunday school classes were held. The second renovation took place in 1857, when extensive repairs were made. The porch and galleries were removed, the building lowered five feet and turned from east to south, and a belfry and spire were added. Its appearance remains the same to this day.

In 1800 Lee returned to Readfield one last time, to dedicate a new Methodist meeting house on Kents Hill. Over the next decade he continued his steadfast dedication to the Methodist faith wherever he was led to or assigned, including to a penitentiary near Richmond, Virginia. From 1809 to 1814 he served as chaplain for the U.S. House of Representatives; and from 1814 to 1815, for the U.S. Senate. He died quietly in Baltimore, Maryland, on September 12, 1816, at age 58.

Today the Jesse Lee Methodist Meeting House is the oldest Methodist church building in the New England Methodist Conference still in continuous use as a church building. It has been recognized by the New England Methodist Conference as a Methodist Historic Site and in 1984 it was placed on the National Historic Register. Summer Sunday services are held there in addition to sunrise services on Easter morning and on the evenings before Thanksgiving and Christmas. 🐾

The author of this story, Dale Potter-Clark, is a founding member of the Readfield Historical Society and sits on its board of directors. She is a Readfield historian who organizes history walks in that town and has authored three books about Readfield’s history and its former residents, in addition to a historical novel about the Underground Railroad.

History Through a Keyhole — Puzzle 12

Kennebec Historical Society member Richard Hook, of Readfield, was the only person to answer the Keyhole #11 questions in our January-February issue, but he did so comprehensively and accurately, even supplying a photo of the building – an outhouse – standing next to the much larger Jesse Lee Methodist Meeting House. We congratulate him.

The photo at right, showing a tower, is the latest clue. It is easily visible from a public road in Kennebec County. Readers who can identify it are asked to contact the *Current* and tell the editor three things: what the object is, where it is, and what the historic significance of the property is.

Answers may be sent by email to KennebecCurrent@gmail.com or by postal mail to Kennebec Historical Society, P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04332.

The winner, to be selected randomly from all correct answers submitted, will be awarded a year’s membership in KHS for the respondent or a friend or relative. If nobody meets that threshold, the editor reserves the right to make the award to a respondent who provides a partial correct answer.

The full answer and more information about the subject will be provided in the May-June issue of the *Kennebec Current*. Answers are due by April 30. Good luck. 🐾



The Rev. Jesse Lee
Drawing courtesy of
Readfield Historical Society



Retrospective Book Commemorates Albion's 200th Birthday

Current BOOKSHELF



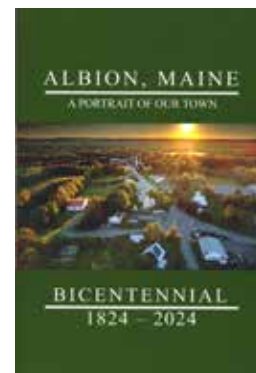
As part of Albion's 2024 bicentennial celebration, the town organized a Bicentennial Book Committee whose end product is *Albion, Maine: A Portrait of Our Town*. With photos, biographical sketches, and information about public services and

famous sites, it provides a nostalgic and informative look at Albion's first 200 years. At 136 pages, it's not a dense historical work, but an accessible repository of information.

For most people, it probably won't be a sit-down-and-read-it-through kind of book, but rather a reference to flip through for specific information or to pass the time by learning some fun facts about the town and its people. Longtime residents or those whose families have been around for at least a while will enjoy recognizing the teachers, unsung heroes, and others whose stories are included in the book. Readers can also turn to it for current information, such as when churches hold services and what businesses are operating in town.

Town statistics are in the back of the book, with charts and graphs visualizing data such as births and deaths over time.

Albion, Maine: A Portrait of Our Town can be purchased at the Albion Town Office for \$15, or prospective buyers can contact the town by email at tclerkal@townofalbionmaine.com about ordering one.



Book cover courtesy of town of Albion

– by Jamie Logan

Around Kennebec County

AUGUSTA

Cemetery historian and author Ron Romano is scheduled to present a lecture April 20 titled "Understanding Symbolism on Maine's Early Gravestones" at **Lithgow Public Library**, which is sponsoring the event. The lecture begins at 10 a.m. The library is at 45 Winthrop Street in Augusta.

CHINA

The **China Historical Society** is sponsoring "Winters of Yore," a conversation on recollections of China's villages at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 17, at China Baptist Church. The program will be moderated by Ron Morrell. Refreshments will be served.

READFIELD

The **Readfield Historical Society** is hosting a lecture March 24 about the Bean family, late-18th-century and 19th-century landowners who were farmers, manufacturers, and town officials during that time. Most of the Beans lived on or near Thundercastle Road. Their visible legacy today includes dams, and building foundations. The lecture, by society Historian Dale Potter Clark, is scheduled for 2 to 3:30 p.m. at Gile Hall, 8 Old Kents Hill Road. The society also will host "Readfield in the Good Old Days," a panel discussion organized by Ed Dodge and moderated by Clark, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. March 30, also at Gile Hall.



West Gardiner Historical Society members gather on February 21 at the Kennebec Historical Society's Henry Weld Fuller Jr. House in Augusta. The visitors toured the second-floor climate-controlled archive because they hope to install such a feature in their own new building, which their town erected recently on Spears Corner Road in West Gardiner. From left are Earle McCormick, Darlene McCormick, Dwight Littlefield, Audrey Littlefield, Greg Couture, society President Debra Couture, Erin Small, and Joan Anastasio.

Photo by Joseph Owen

WINTHROP

The **Winthrop Maine Historical Society** is hosting local folk singer Rob Roberts from 11 a.m. to noon, March 16 at the Winthrop History and Heritage Center for a concert of Irish songs. The concert is free and open to the public. The center is at 107 Main Street in Winthrop. For details, call (207) 395-5199.

❖ In Memoriam ❖

Wendell R. Davidson, 83, of Brunswick, died January 15 after a brief illness. He owned Meadow Park Development, an Augusta real estate management company that often has supported the Kennebec Historical Society's fundraising campaigns. Survivors of Davidson, a former Hallowell resident, include four children and eight grandchildren.

Upcoming Programs

April: “Plain Madeleine: Mrs. John Jacob Astor in Bar Harbor”



Cover image
courtesy of the author

The story of Madeleine and Col. John Jacob Astor is very much part of the story of Bar Harbor. The relatively poor Madeleine Force met Astor, the third-richest man in the United States, in Bar Harbor in 1910. A vicious scandal after their wedding caused the newlyweds to board the *Titanic* to return to America; the ensuing tragedy of the ship's sinking would claim the life of the colonel.

Madeleine Astor returned to Bar Harbor after the disaster, where all eyes were on her, and where she was triumphant in claiming the role of social leader. In 1916, she remarried in the center of Bar Harbor, and gave up everything Astor.

A new book by Mac Smith, the Kennebec Historical Society lecturer for April, follows the 17 years of Madeleine Astor's second marriage, and then her scandalous third marriage. In her 40s, she married a penniless young boxer, and her name was erased from the social register after that. She died a lonely figure in her 40s.

Smith documents Madeleine's life in Bar Harbor and the Astor presence on Bar Harbor through Colonel Astor's family and the Kane family – Astor cousins who were prominent there. It puts Madeleine Astor's story in the context of Bar Harbor's Golden Age. In telling her story, the story of a changing Bar Harbor is also revealed.

A Navy veteran of the 1991 Persian Gulf War and former reporter for *The Bar Harbor Times*, Smith lives in Stockton Springs, in the village of Sandy Point. He is the author of several books of Maine history, including *Mainers on the Titanic*, *Peyton Place Comes Home to Maine*, *Siege at the Statehouse*, and *Disaster at the Bar Harbor Ferry*.

Smith's presentation, co-sponsored by the Maine State Library, is free to the public (with donations gladly accepted) and scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 17, at the Maine State Library's temporary location, 242 State Street in Augusta. If you have any questions about the program, please call Scott Wood, KHS executive director, at 622-7718.



Mac Smith, author and
KHS speaker

May: “Mysteries, Mistakes, and Surprises: Adventures in Maine Genealogy”

King Philip, the *Mayflower*, child-bearing, genealogists, extra-marital affairs, birth and death records, cousins, George Washington, gravestones, granite, and Henry David Thoreau are all on the agenda for the Kennebec Historical Society's monthly lecture in May.

The speaker, Belfast resident Dana Murch, will talk about those topics and others in describing the mysteries, mistakes, and surprises he has found while doing genealogical research on the Murch family of Maine.

Murch was born in Caribou and grew up in Clinton. He retired in 2011 after a career as the dams and hydropower regulatory specialist at the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and has been happily

doing genealogy ever since. He is a 13th-generation Mainer and multiple Mayflower descendant and has published books on his maternal and paternal ancestries. He is currently researching and writing the definitive history and genealogy of the entire Murch family of Maine.

The Kennebec Historical Society's May presentation is free to the public (donations are gladly accepted) and is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 15, at the Augusta City Center, located at 16 Cony Street in Augusta. If you have any questions about the program, please call Scott Wood, executive director, at 622-7718.



Dana Murch, KHS speaker



The Murch family house and barn on Vinalhaven Island is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Photo courtesy of National Park Service

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

Society's email address: kennhis1891@gmail.com

Telephone: (207) 622-7718

Website: www.kennebechistorical.org

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