

Mussel Ridge News

*A Free Publication of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society
Owls Head, Maine
Fall 2014 ~ Issue 24*



**The Adam's House, Ocean House, or Owls Head Inn
From "Rest Stops in Owl's Head"
Her Inns, Restaurants and Boarding Houses Since 1800
*Compiled by Carol Jean Walker in 1982***

The Ocean House, now the Faunce family's summer home, is situated on Owls Head Harbor near Pete Reed's Wharf. Originally named The Adam's House, this first boarding house in Owls Head began in the early 1800's. Cyrus Eaton wrote in volume 1 of his History of Thomaston, Rockland, and South Thomaston, Maine (p.386) that Joshua Adam's (1769-1829) built the place and was the first innkeeper. After Adam's death, his daughter Lydia and her husband, Captain Thomas McLellan, Jr. ran the house for a few years. About 1837 Padelford and Reed took over the Inn, and it was subsequently owned by such men as Padelford and Paine, S.H. Fuller, Elisha Brown, and Captain Jeremiah Sleeper.

According to Clemice Pease's Ocean House article (scrapbook II) in the spring of 1868 two men from Rhode Island, the Estens, bought the house from Captain Sleeper. The Courier Gazette, on June 19, 1868, reported that the Estens intended to "fit it up immediately as a summer hotel." The Inn was mentioned several times in the newspaper that summer. A July 3, 1868 article advertised the Inn's opening and its owner's plans for the July 4th celebration, referring to the newly owned business as a "summer resort for boarders or for the accommodation of "parties' who wish to order or enjoy a clambake in true Rhode Island style." The article continued promoting the Inn by describing the July 4th Celebration and the Rockland people's plans for attending it. "On Saturday,

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The Mussel Ridge Historical Society is very pleased to announce our 6th Fall Craft Fair will be at the Owl's Head Transportation Museum, (off Rt. 73). The doors open 9 a.m. on Saturday, November 22nd with many new crafters in attendance. Patrons will be able to purchase a bistro and baked food sale for lunch. Mark your calendar. Hope to see you there.

Free admission and handicap parking. Anyone who'd like to donate baked goods or volunteer to help with Friday morning set up and / or Saturday afternoon knock down should call 594-2438.

NEWS FROM ASH POINT 102 YEAR AGO

ASH POINT From the Courier Gazette February 20, 1912

Mr. and Mrs. Angus A. Staples, who were week end guests at Henry Hurd's Lincolnville home, returned home Sunday evening.

Miss Jennie Putnam assisted by her pupils gave a piano recital at the home of George Hurd recently. Proceeds donated to the Baptist Church.

The sidewalk club met with Miss Anna Belle Hurd Thursday of last week.

Miss Marianne Crockett and Miss Lou N. Foster, who were studying music in Boston this winter spent the weekend in Haverhill, Mass. Recently the guests of Miss Crockett's aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. J. Howe and her cousins, Mr. and Mrs. J. Franklin Batchelder.

Harold Burgess of Rockland has been a recent guest at Mrs. Margaret Crockett's

Miss Alice Burpee of Rockland called on friends in this vicinity last week.

Miss Margaret Crockett spent last week in Rockland guest of her aunt, Mrs. Robert A. Webster, Broadway. She was a member of Mrs. Copping's Food Fare chorus.

Miss Anna Belle Hurd is studying music with Mrs. French, Camden.


Mr. and Mrs. George Hurd are guests of Mrs. Hurd's sister, Mrs. Charles Atkins, Camden.

Miss Inez Rackliffe of Seal Harbor is a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Linwood Dyer.

Mrs. Fred Robbins and daughter and Mr. and Mrs. David Crockett were guests at Capt. O.A. Crockett's Sunday.

A large number from here spent the evening at Owl's Head, guests of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Feeney recently. The joke was on the bean pot as our friend always has a supply of first class scallops on hand.

Oh for the days of less complicated news!



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FALL CALENDAR

2nd Thursday of each month, (10a.m.) Mussel Ridge Historical Society holds a monthly business meeting down stairs at the Owl's Head Community Building. Visitors are always welcomed to join us.

November 22, (9am – 2 pm)- Our sixth annual Fall Craft Fair will be held at the Owl's Head Transportation Museum on Rt.73. Fifty crafters will be offering a myriad of items for sale; bistro and baked food sale for lunch; free admission to the fair and the museum's exhibits for the day. Handicap accessible parking.


WANTED !!- M.R.H.S. Is looking for an 18qt. or bigger Nesco type roaster. Thought someone might have one just taking up space. Something we could borrow or buy. Contact: Kay Dodge 596-6879

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Editor's note- The following article was researched and written by Gene Barron who is a life member of M.R.H.S. and frequent contributor to the NEWS. In an effort to conserve space and still print the full scope of the article, we've taken the liberty of abridging some text.

A scurvy-ridden voyage aboard the hell ship *Reuce*

The full rigged ship *Reuce* left New York on June 22nd, 1889 bound for San Francisco. She had aboard Captain Adams, his wife and two children, Mate Graham, and Second mate Courage, a cook, steward and twenty odd seamen. The able seamen shipped at \$16 a month and one or two ordinary seamen at \$12 a month.

The *Reuce* had a somewhat long voyage of 154 days, arriving at San Francisco in November, 1889. Upon her arrival the San Francisco's premier newspaper of the time, Daily Alta California, ran a front page story detailing the starvation diet the men were forced to endure. The bad food was served almost from the first day causing the crew to complain bitterly to Captian Adams who gave them no satisfaction. The crew stated that the further along the voyage became, the worse the food became. The food was as follows.

Monday: Breakfast- coffee, sweetened with a spoonful of molasses, putrid beef which had been packed at San Francisco many months before and had been placed in soft-wood barrels causing the contents to stink when opened. To this was added about four ounces of bread which was made by the cook who used salt water to mix the flour, as he kept the fresh water to wash his clothes in.

Dinner- Beef, bread, beans, and water, the latter being portioned out at three tablespoons for each man.
Supper- Beef, bread and tea sweetened with molasses

Tuesday: The same as the day before.

Wednesday: the same with the exception that rice and water was substituted for beans and water.

Thursday: the inevitable beef and bread, with duff for dinner. The duff was made of flour and salt water, and was eaten with a "sauce" compounded of flour, water and molasses.

Friday: beans and pea soup for dinner.

Saturday: Rice and water

Sunday: This was a gala day. The cook, in the fullness of his heart, and no doubt with the Captain's permission, actually served some fresh meat for dinner. But, that it not be too fresh, it was boiled in salt water. It was accompanied by rice soup.

The above diet was kept up for the entire voyage. There were seven casks of San Francisco Beef to be eaten and until that was consumed, nothing else could be had. Captain Adams insisted that 190 pounds of flour should last eleven days. On this amount the entire crew was fed, while in the cabin, Mrs. Adams and children feasted on ginger bread and pastries. When the ship entered the Tropics, only two gallons of water were allowed to each watch of ten men for the twenty-four hours. No vegetables or fruits were seen by the men during the entire voyage.

When *Reuce* arrived at San Francisco the diet and harsh conditions the men had endured became public. There were conflicting reports as to just how many of the crew were incapacitated by the scurvy. Some reports stated that seventeen members were down with the maladay while other reports said only one crewman had escaped the disease. Cuiously, none of the officers were suffering from scurvy nor was the captains' wife or children. Additionally, some of the men had open, festering salt water boils, a very painful condition which would

normally limit a persons ability to perform routine tasks while at sea. But not on the *Reuce*. While off Cape Horn, the men were forced to work through hail, wind, and decks awash with icy water all the while being weak due to the lack of proper sustenance.

The citizenry of San Francisco was outraged at the treatment and condition of the *Reuce's* crewmen, which was somewhat unusual. Ships arriving at San Francisco were frequently in the news for the harsh, oft times brutal treatment. Many lawsuits were filed in Civil Court, usually with verdicts handed down in favor of the ships' officers, not the crew. This time, however, a judgement was awarded the crew in the amount of \$3600.

The *Reuce*, built at Kennebec, [Maine] in 1881 and wrecked on the coast of Japan in 1922, was under the Command of Captain Benjamin Adams for most of her career. In 1890-91 he was again charged with mistreatment of his crew resulting in the death of one man.

WE ARE LOOKING...

Someone with geneology experience to occasionally write a brief column for this newsletter. The articles could discuss subjects such as: where to find free geneology information, how to verify your information, avoiding common pitfalls, starting and maintaining a family tree, preservation of photos or any other subjects the writer would be comfortable sharing with novice geneologists.

The Mussel Ridge NEWS is printed early in February, May, August and November. If this sounds like something you could do, call Tom Christie at 207-594-2438 or Kay Dodge at 596-6879

LET'S GET TOGETHER

Not receiving this newsletter in your e-mail or would you like to sign up? Have you got memorabilia or pictures you'd like to donate? We'll gladly accept them or photograph the article(s) for our archives. Cash contributions to the Mussel Ridge Historical Society are tax deductible and we'll gladly give you a receipt. We also have need of volunteers to help with the our ongoing projects.

Contact Tom Christie 207-594-2438 OR Kay Dodge- 207-596-6879 or Carolyn Philbrook at ballyhacme@gmail.com



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FROM THE DUSTY GARDENER'S NOTEBOOK

Thanks to the Owl's Head Garden Club and several individual's efforts, the town's flowers and shrubs were spectacular this year. We heard many positive comments from our visitors; some confessed they'll be stealing your ideas for their own town's gardens.

Lay a ring of sea kelp around your Rhubarb patch now to guarantee a good crop next year. The kelp will decay, even though it's covered with snow, providing a slow release of nutrients into the soil. Also toss a few mothballs under your low hanging shrubs to prevent any mice from wintering there.

Speaking of pests, believe it or not, Knox County is noted for it's infestation of deer ticks. Several cases of Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis and Babesiosis have been reported locally. Whenever going near tall grass, it's a good idea to tuck your trouser legs into the top of your stockings and generously spray the rest of yourself with an insect repellent. A hot shower after your outing is an added protection from the little rascals.

The woods and fields are inviting this time of year, but there are a few simple courtesies that will make your outings much more enjoyable and ensure you'll be in the woods another day.

- Make sure you can be seen by any hunters that might be in the woods with you. A hat and jacket of flourecent orange is the prescribed color.
- permissison to cut boughs, berries or firewood on land that does not belong to you. All Maine real estate is owned by someone and the penalties for such activities can be severe!
- sure to close any gates that you pass through and carry your litter home. Good hikin

Owls Head in 1767

The Wessaweskeag stream was at this time as it had been in earlier periods much frequented by the Penobscot and other eastern Indians who in their passage down the Penobscot bay to their fishing and fowling stations among the islands and more western shores often made it a part of their trail to save passing around Owl's Head Landing at the Head of the Bay a short portage would carry them to this stream from which the Lower trail probably extended to Cutler's Cove in St George as a branch of it did to the Bay in Thomaston Their power was indeed broken but they were still numerous and continued to visit the Wessaweskeag in great numbers for many years but exciting less and less alarm among the settlers The banks of this stream and much of the adjacent region were at this time covered with a magnificent growth of pines whose age judging from the younger specimens left and more recently examined must have ranged from 300 years downwards In the first lumbering operations the rule was to cut no trunks so small that two men standing on opposite sides and extending their arms could completely encircle and most of these when sawed into boards were perfectly free from knots larger than a man's thumb would cover When the lands became divested of these larger trees the rule was to cut none smaller than what would fill the arms of one man only This pine growth ancient and noble as it was had however been preceded it was thought by one of a different kind for the ground was strewn with huge trunks of poplars 3 or 4 feet in diameter covered with moss but still undecayed and partly imbedded in mould It is not



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known whether these shorter lived trees had been simultaneously prostrated by some tempest or intermingled at first with the pines had successively died and given room to a race more aspiring and of greater longevity

This magnificent forest though of different and varying kinds of timber extended along the shore of Owl's Head Bay and inland as far as the mountains It entirely covered the present city of Rockland except a few insignificant inroads made by lumbering parties from George's River These occasionally came over when that river was frozen and got out a sloop load of wood staves or timber on the sea borders to be sent to Boston for early supplies of provisions before the rivers broke up Among these John Lermond of the Upper Town now Warren came over to the Cove between Jameson's and Ulmer's Points built a camp and with the occasional aid of his two brothers got out a cargo of oak staves and pine lumber there Not intending to settle he put up no buildings but the harbor was long afterwards known as Lermond's Cove rather than by that of its Indian name of Catawamtog Stephen Peabody from Middleton Mass came to Owl's Head at the same time Snow did to the Gig a name into which Wessaweskeag was soon abbreviated He purchased from some former squatter a possessory title to 600 acres of land and attempted to get a living partly by his trade and partly by farming He was a blacksmith the first in the place other than the armorers or gunsmiths at the Fort But lacking energy and perseverance he got in debt was harassed with lawsuits became discouraged removed and set up his trade near Oyster River in Warren.

*from History of Thomaston, Rockland, and South Thomaston, Maine: From ..., Volume 1
By Cyrus Eaton*

The King's Broad Arrow



Acting as dominion over the forests of "New England", the King assumed ownership of the best of the Eastern White Pine trees and appointed a legion of Surveyors of Pines and Timber to survey the forestland "within 10 miles of broadarrow any navigable waterway" and mark all suitable trees with "The King's Broad Arrow", a series of three hatchet slashes. This was the symbol commonly used to signify ownership of property or goods by the Crown, in this case to be owned and used solely by the Royal Navy. Any tree of a diameter of twenty-four inches and greater at twelve inches from the ground, with "a yard of height for each inch of diameter at the butt" was blazed with the broad arrow. Violation by the colonists of this rule would be assessed a fine of £100.

The Revolutionary War was about many things, and Eastern White Pine weighed heavy on the minds and hearts of the colonists desire for independence. Some historians believe that denial of use of these trees was at least as instrumental as taxation of tea in bringing about the American Revolution. In fact, the Eastern White Pine was the emblem emblazoned on the first colonial flag.

Owls Head Inn continued from page 1

the 4th there is to be a grand clambake affording an excellent opportunity for spending the day in an agreeable manner which will be embraced by a large party from the city."

Because Owls Head had become such a popular place, the Estens' business thrived. As a result, in 1873, they added dormer windows to the third floor to make more rooms for their guests. In 1892, 24 successful years after they opened the House, the Esten's decided to sell it.

Richard Rawson, also of Rhode Island, became the new owner and employed David L. Fuller as proprietor for at least one summer in the early 1900s. A Courier Gazette article from that era (Leather scrapbook) announcing the Ocean House's summer opening, described the establishment as "one of the finest places on Maine's coast for a fish dinner" and boasted of the cool breezes, the gorgeous view, the fishing and bathing opportunities as well as the availability of Mr. Fuller's "famous fast yacht, Couch." What prospective tourist could possibly resist this write up from the same article?



... the Boston boats pass daily, while innumerable craft of all kinds passing to and fro form a panoramic sea-picture ever changing and even new... It is no exaggeration to say that no place in this part of Maine has such a combination of sea shore scenery, natural advantages and delightful surroundings for a day's or a month's outing as is to be found at the Ocean House.

Rawson bequeathed the Ocean House and the land to Horatio Goulding, who in 1920 sold the parcel to John S. Kempton and Mary V. Truscott (Kempton's sister). Under

Mrs. Kempton's and then Mrs. Truscott's management, the Owl's Head Inn, as the Ocean House was renamed, continued to flourish.

Two residents of Owl's Head, Mary Foster Dyer and Nellie Reed, worked at the Inn. They both spoke fondly of their employment. Mary Foster Dyer spent her first summer at the Inn in 1933 helping in the kitchen and doing chambermaid work. The next summer she was "promoted" to waitress.

Her busy day began at 7:30 when she served breakfast to the Inn's guests. After this she helped cut vegetables for lunch, served lunch, then took a break from 2:00 until 4:00 or 5:00, when she returned to set up for the evening meal. The tables were covered with white tablecloths and at each place setting were individual finger bowls. After serving dinner, Mary headed home, usually around 8:00 or 9:00. She was paid \$3.00 a week _ tips included__ for this seven-day-a-week summer job.

Mary remembers that the menu featured, naturally enough, seafood. The full course Shore Dinner was a specialty of the Inn, and for \$1.50 a diner could enjoy lobster stew or clam chowder, fried fish, garden vegetables, sliced cucumbers and tomatoes, hot boiled lobster, and blueberry or apple pie. Ruefully, Mary remembers those blueberry pies. "We were allowed to eat our meals at the Inn during our spare minutes, but of course we were only allowed certain foods." She and the other workers were lucky enough to eat the blueberry pies. But these pies were not the freshly baked, flaky-crust delicacies served to the guests. "Our pies were soaked."

Mary explained, "After a blueberry pie had set for a day or two, the crust become soggy. There is nothing wrong with mushy crusts except they were never served to a paying customer. So we got to eat them." Mary said those pies were great for a while, but that after a whole summer of soggy blueberry pies, it was one long time before she ever ate any blueberry anything!

Nellie Reed, 79, another Owl's Header who worked at the Inn, began her employment in 1921 when she was 18. "Mrs Truscott asked my father if I'd come to work for them and he said, "no ... she can't even wash dishes!" That was almost true __ Mother did everything. I could have wrung his neck though!" To prove her father wrong, Nellie washed dishes all that summer. And for the next 18 years she continued working at the Inn, waitressing, keeping house, and eventually becoming cook.

Nellie said the Inn was quite popular. Guests traveled there from all over the eastern United States to enjoy a room with a view and three meals a day for \$.50/week. At one time, Nellie chuckled, "The Inn had thirteen bedrooms and only one bathroom." Her eyes twinkled, "oh yes, did they have chamber mugs!"

In 1937 the Faunce family bought the Inn and closed it to the public. They kept Nellie as the cook, however, as they had many summer visitors. "Sometimes as many as thirty," said Nellie. The Faunces renovated the old building: Nellie mentioned that they added five bathrooms! Although Nellie no longer works at the old Inn, the Faunce family still owns the house.