



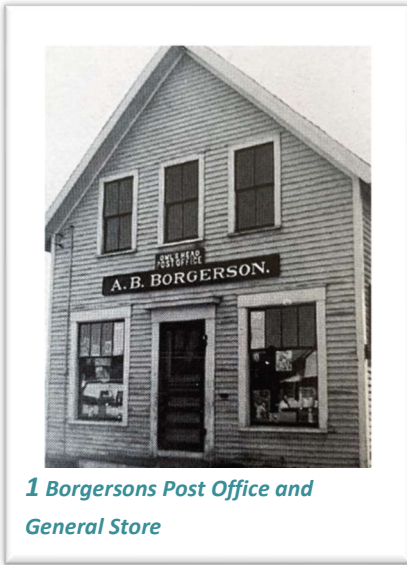
Mussel Ridge News

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Postal History of Owls Head by Gail Ladd

Mail service in Maine started very slowly - it was truly “snail mail”! In the early 1700’s, a letter written by a son in Boston to his mother in Maine announcing the birth of a new grandchild would likely not arrive until the baby was several

weeks old! According to an old article copied from the Lewiston Journal, in 1703 a man was hired to carry letters once every two weeks from Castine to Wiscasset. He walked the entire distance! The next year, postmasters were appointed, and mail was sent once a week by carriers on horseback. Later in the 18th century, “mail stages” (stagecoaches) carried letters marked “way,” meaning they were picked up on the way between the larger post offices. Early postmasters were paid an annual “emolument” per year, based on a percentage of the amount of postage handled. In 1795, the Thomaston postmaster was paid \$10.77; Waldoboro paid their Postmaster \$5.08! Envelopes weren’t used until 1850. Before that, the letters were folded and sealed with wax. Because there were few post offices, writers would not include the state name in their addresses, assuming that the town name would suffice.



1 *Borgersons Post Office and
General Store*

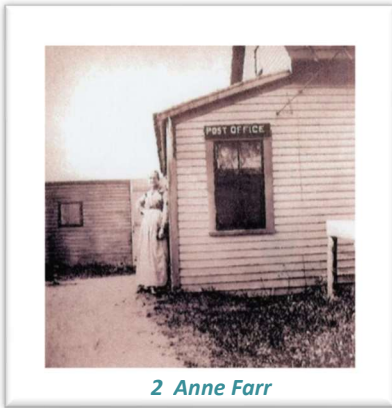
The history of the Owls Head postal service is complex and at times a bit odd and funny! Edna Ross Wotton, in her unpublished history of Owls Head, wrote that mail carriers, chosen by competitive bid, brought the mail from the Rockland Post Office

to Owls Head and Ash Point. They also transported passengers, who paid a slight fee. The early post offices in Owls Head were located in people’s homes and/or general stores. According to Cyrus Eaton, the first Owls Head post office was located in the Joshua Adams’ home at Owls Head Harbor for just four months, from May to December of 1838, with H. Paddleford as postmaster. It was re-established in July 1854, with Elisha Brown, who at that point owned the house, as postmaster. This first post office has had quite a history! In 1860, it was sold to Captain Jeremiah Sleeper, who raised the roof of the third floor for a dance hall. By 1888, the house had become an inn, known as the Ocean House, and later renamed the Owls Head Inn. The house, now privately owned, still stands proudly today, overlooking the harbor.

In 1856, the next post office was located at the store and home of Samuel Coombs, across the road from the Adams House. On April 30, 1856, this building and all its contents burned to the ground, with only \$10 in stamps remaining. The unfortunate Mr. Coombs and his business partner, Isaac Tollman of South Thomaston, also lost all the land they owned in Owls Head, as they were not able to repay a substantial amount of money they owed. A funny story about Coombs is related by Edna Ross Wotton. Mud season was a time of struggle for rural mail carriers, including Mr. Coombs, who served for a time as stage driver and carrier of mail from Rockland to South Thomaston. During an especially difficult mud season, he hitched his white horse to a punt, with the horse signifying the sail of the boat and an American flag at the bow. He stowed his mail bag amidships and sat in the stern with an oar for a tiller and drove from South Thomaston to the Rockland post office, with a crowd of people cheering him on! The following day, Coombs was presented with a silk hat and a pair of driving gloves by the Judge of the Supreme Judicial Court.

The next known post office was located in 1859, at the farmhouse of George St. Clair on Broad Cove, off North Shore Drive. He and his wife kept a little mailbox, the first in Owls Head, in their front hall, and people would come by to pick up their mail. Their house still stands on North Shore Drive, but the whereabouts of the mailbox is unknown. Lewis Arey became postmaster in 1862, holding the post office in his store for a time until it was discontinued because of the Civil War. After an interval of 22 years, another post office was established in Owls Head in June 1884, at the home of Anne

Farr on South Shore Drive ². The barn next to their home stabled the horses used by her husband, Chandler Farr, who was the stage driver.



2 Anne Farr

I should mention that it was during this year, 1884, that a post office was established at Ash Point. Four postmasters served there until August 1944, when the post office was discontinued.

Jonas Brown became Owls Head's postmaster in 1906, working in what is now the Owls Head General Store ³. In 1912, the next post office, under postmaster Ira Feeney, was located at the M.T. Jameson Store, on the corner of Main Street and Lighthouse Road. Rodney Feyler fulfilled his duties at the same location, from 1920 to 1922. Edith Young took over for just a year, holding post office hours in her home

across from the library.

Allan and Bertha Borgerson assumed charge of the post office in 1923, first at the Jonas Brown site, then briefly at the Jameson Store, finally settling in at the present post office building. The Borgersons had a general store there as well which, according to their niece, Kay Ross Dodge, was a gathering place for people to socialize and exchange news as they shopped and picked up their mail. Together, Allan and Bertha operated the post office for forty years until their

retirements in 1963. Kay Dodge shared a memory. As a tiny girl, probably three years old, she "helped" her aunt at the post office, sitting at a window on the counter and selling people their stamps!



From 1963 until 2013, the present Owls Head Post Office was overseen by sixteen postmasters, acting postmasters, or officers-in-charge. On May 4, 2013, it was converted to a remotely-managed post office, under the direction of Rockland's postmaster; it remains so today, with part-time special clerk Larry Lentz at the helm.

STORY OF THE OWLS HEAD POST OFFICE

Our post office started out as a building on Dix Island that housed men working in the granite quarries. After the quarries closed, the lumber salvaged from the bunkhouse was ferried to its present location in Owls Head, where it was used by Lester Snow to erect a building next to his house. Lester sold the building to Bernette Bain, and it became known as the Bain Building.

The Bain Building served many purposes in the Village before it became the Post Office. At one point, it housed a lending library. It became a meeting and recreation room for young people, and dances were held on the second floor. It served as temporary shelter for new families who arrived here around 1908.

In 1927, the Bain Building was sold to Allan and Bertha Borgerson, and became the A.B. Borgerson General Store, as well as the Owls Head Post Office. Together, Allan and Bertha served 40 years with the United States Postal Service.

Eventually, Mrs. Margaret Barnes, daughter of Allan and Bertha Borgerson, owned the building, and she leased it to the Post Office Department until she sold it a few years before she passed away in 2013.

The present owner, an artist and art teacher, continues to lease the post office to the postal service. The second floor of the building has been converted to a rental vacation home. The owner has also created a beautiful garden, which was featured on the "Gardens in the Watershed Tour" of the Georges River Land Trust in 2018.

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<https://carolynsshadegardens.com>

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Cooks Corner

From our cookbook – which we sell – *“Recipes of Owls Head, Maine”*

FRESH STRAWBERRY PIE

6¾ Tbsp. cornstarch	1½ qt. fresh berries
1½ c. sugar	(strawberries, raspberries,
1 c. cold water (if strawberries	blueberries)
are frozen, 1½ c. if fresh	Your favorite baked pie shell
berries)	

In saucepan, mix cornstarch, sugar, and water, added slowly. Stir till mixed. Bring to boiling point, stirring constantly. Hull, wash, and drain berries. Add about 1/3 of berries to cornstarch mixture and cook until mixture is clear, continuing to stir. When mixture takes on a beautiful pink color, allow to cool. Slice remaining berries and pour into cooled berry mixture; stir in berries. Turn into baked pie shell. Chill. Serve with whipped topping.

Carolyn Philbrook

**Mussel Ridge Historical Society
Volunteer – Membership - Donation Form**

Date _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____ Town _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Our newsletter is sent to everyone on our email list and we don't share addresses with anyone.

___ I Would Like TO HELP Preserve the History of Owl's Head in the Following Ways

___ Develop programs ___ Help with fundraising ___ Help on restoring the Homestead

___ Bring food for events or sales ___ Help with events

___ Staff the Homestead ___ I have pictures that could be scanned

___ Research. I am particularly interested in the following areas _____

Have talent/service I could donate _____

___ I would like to help in another way. (Please tell us how) _____

___ I have historical items I might like to donate or loan

___ I am joining the MRHS at the Following Level & My Check is Attached

___ 1 Year Regular (\$10) ___ One Year Family (\$30) ___ 1 Year Sustainer(\$100) ___ 1 Year Benefactor (\$500)

___ 1 Year Business Sustainer (\$250) ___ 1 Year Business Benefactor (\$750)

___ I am making a Tax Deductible Donation to the MRHS for _____ & My Check is Attached

I Would Like the Funds to go to the Following Area

___ General Operations ___ Mussel Ridge Learning Center

___ Old Homestead ___ As the MRHS thinks is best

Signature of Person Accepting the Form _____

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Garden Snippets by Marty Shaw

I am sure I have told you about the garden in South Thomaston that I work on with four other women. It started life as a Memorial Garden, at the People's United Methodist Church, a long time ago. People donated plants for it in memory of a loved one who had passed. It was a lovely garden and meaningful, for a long time. But fewer and fewer people would work on it and it began to look rather ratty. And then it was uninviting, so the situation just grew worse.

When we took on the project of renewing the garden a few years ago, we decided not to have it a Memorial Garden. We would concentrate on improving the land it was on, and growing as many natives as we could, in order to increase the wildlife that should have been there all the time—birds, butterflies, and all kinds of insect pollinators. So that is what we did.

Because of financial limitations, we did invite folks to give us plants for the garden, but we told them what we wanted. We made a list of the plants we thought would do well and people could donate a plant of whatever was on the list.



That worked quite well, but as you can guess, it became a Memorial garden for us; Marcia donated this aster; Betty gave us that catmint; Ann gave us the hydrangea; Michelle gave us the hosta---and so forth. So, for us it is a memorial garden and we will think of these people when we work around the plants they donated. And it occurred to me that ALL our gardens are memorial gardens to some degree; we all have plants that friends shared with us or gave to us because they didn't thrive in their yard and maybe they would in ours. Or maybe we have the offspring of a plant our grandmother had (my grandmother gave me the children of some cowslips she brought from England—I am so glad they aren't invasive, and I hope it wasn't illegal then to do that!)

Maybe that's really one of the reasons that we garden at all—it keeps us in touch with the people we love and have loved, even if they are no longer with us.



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of Ash Point, Maine
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Cemeteries of Owls Head, Maine
by Lea Carver



\$25 - Cemeteries of Owls Head
by Lea Carver



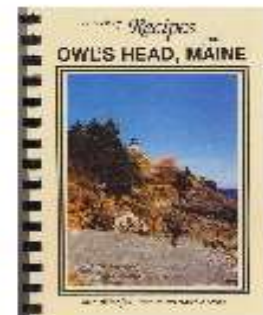
\$49- 1873 of Owls Head canvas chart 16" x 20"



Owls Head Grange Cookbook \$10



Ash Point, ME 1930s
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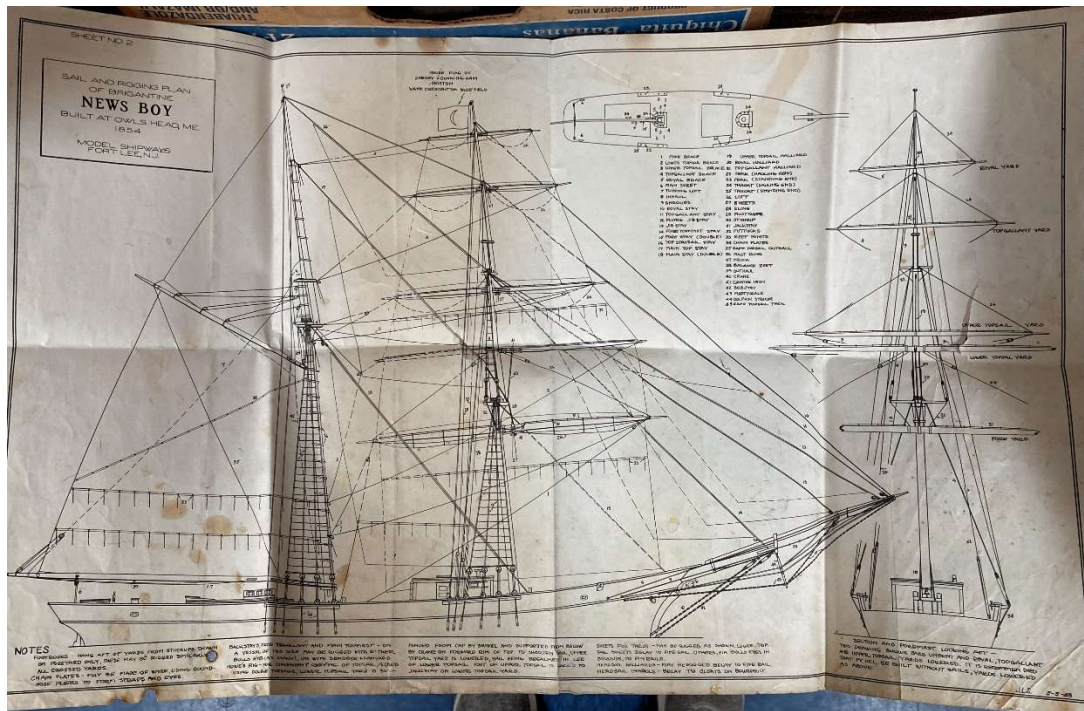
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The Brigantine News Boy



"The brigantine *News Boy* was designed by Dennison J. Lawlor of Chelsea, MA (designer of the very successful pilot schooners *Dancing Feather*, *Hesper*, and *Phantom*) for owners Dabney & Cunningham of Boston. *News Boy* was built at the Joshua C. Adams and Elisha Brown shipyard in Owl's Head, ME where she was launched in June, 1854. She had a length of 111 feet, beam of 27 feet, depth of 12 feet, and tonnage of 290 tons. While described as a brigantine, the rig is more accurately described as a hermaphrodite brig because there were no square sails on the main mast.

The *News Boy* was engaged in the triangular trade: carrying lumber and manufactured goods from New England to the Mediterranean; transporting wine, oil, and fruits to the West Indies; and returning to New England with rum, molasses, and sugar. The *Monthly Nautical Magazine* said "having a reputation for speed, by wringing reluctant laurels from her competitors who have chanced to fall in company with her at sea....she does her designers no discredit...her log will speak for itself." *Model Ship World*

"There is a good chance in our history of Owl's Head that Elisha Brown's contribution to ship building would have been forgotten, except for the one vessel he built in 1854 for the Boston firm Dabney and Cunningham, the Brigantine *News Boy*.

The unusually sharp hull vessel of two masts designed by Dennison and Lawlor of Boston, was most likely influenced by a new design trend then in vogue. Maritime merchants were ordering new vessels with a radical hull form called a "Clipper" that would produce fast passages between ports.

In 1853, Rockland launched the famous clipper *Red Jacket*, a three masted ship that set a record-smashing run from New York to Liverpool dock to dock in thirteen days, one hour and twenty five minutes. Such runs made merchants willing to finance the building of this new hull form, in vessels like the *News Boy*, which could render higher speeds under sail.

The *News Boy's* first offshore voyage was to the Western Islands (Azores) and upon her return she was sold for a price of \$20,000, the same amount it cost to build her. American Lloyds of 1865, a shipping directory, list the *News Boy* as being renamed, *Evarista* of Fayal with Captain Sousa in command." *Coastal Town of Owl's Head, Maine* by Edward W. Coffin.

A LIST OF POSTMASTERS IN OWLS HEAD MAINE

NAME TITLE DATE APT. LOCATION

H. Paddleford postmaster 5 to 12/1838 Adams home
Elisha Brown postmaster 7/5/1854 Adams home
Samuel Coombs postmaster 1856 Coomb's home & store
Henry Pillsbury postmaster 3/15/1858 ?
George St. Clair postmaster 1/27/1859 His home, Broad Cove
Lewis Arey postmaster 5/15/1862 His store
Ann Farr postmaster 6/20/1884 Her home, So. Shore Dr.
Jonas A. Brown Postmaster 12/10/1906 Bldg. now O. H. Gen. Store
Ira Feeney Postmaster 10/21/1912 Jameson Store
Rodney Feyler Postmaster 3/31/1920 Jameson Store
Edith Young Acting Postmaster 2/10/1922 Her home, across from library
Allan Borgerson Postmaster 5/29/1923 Bldg. now O.H. Gen. Store
Bertha Borgerson Assumed charge 3/30/1943 Borgerson Gen. Store,
confirmed 2/2/44 now the present P.O.
James Kirk Acting P.M. 4/12/63 Owls Head P.O.
Emilio Hary Acting P.M., 7/30/64 Owls Head P.O.
confirmed 4/15/65
Flora Hary Acting, 6/30/72 Owls Head P.O.
Confirmed 2/17/73
Richard Parker Officer-in-charge 7/16/76 Owls Head P.O.
Ernest Harrington Postmaster 4/23/77 Owls Head P.O.
Ann Roy Officer-in-charge 10/31/79 Owls Head P.O.
Anthony Payson Officer-in-charge 1/02/80 Owls Head P.O.
Richard Parker Postmaster 4/05/80 Owls Head P.O.
Ruth Leonard Officer-in-charge 11/25/80 Owls Head P.O.
Robert Carleton Postmaster 4/4/81 Owls Head P.O.
Marilyn Hillman Officer-in-charge 10/02/92 Owls Head P.O.
Clifton H. Power Postmaster 2/05/94 Owls Head P.O.
Kathy Arey Postmaster 4/02/05 Owls Head P.O.
Deborah Landre Officer-in-charge 5/1/07 Owls Head P.O.
Clifford Meservey Postmaster 2/16/08 Owls Head P.O.
Marilyn Winter Officer-in-charge 7/29/11 Owls Head P.O.
Converted to a Remotely Managed Post Office under the direction
of the postmaster of the Rockland Post Office on May 4, 2013.