

Mussel Ridge News

A free publication of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society

Winter 2025

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CASTLE COMFORT

By Gail Ladd

Two hundred years ago, the peaceful & beautiful village of Owls Head was a serene refuge for seamen returning to their families and homes. In 1824, the changes began. The Owls Head Lighthouse was built, & that same year, the steamer “Maine” started stopping regularly at Owls Head, leaving travelers who often stayed overnight at the Adams House. During the shipbuilding era, which lasted until about 1855, other boarding houses were established for the shipyard workers. At the close of this shipbuilding period, families began picnicking at scenic spots near the Lighthouse. They would bring visiting family & friends, and the word spread! In the 1880’s more boarding houses, & then cottages, were built. The “rusticators” had arrived!

In 1901, the Reverend John Hatch, a Baptist evangelist from Farmington ME, saw a unique opportunity for real estate development in Owls Head. He bought several lots of land in the middle of the village, and sold some of them to families of his acquaintance who were also affiliated with the Baptist Church. He designed his first building from a castle of the Crusades period, naming it Castle Comfort. It truly looked like a castle, with crenellated battlements at the top, such as you would see in fairytale books, & it certainly stood out among the plainer farmhouses & cottages in the area. Rev. Hatch held church services at the Owls Head Chapel. His wife, Emma, sang at these services, accompanying herself on the zither harp. They had no children, but took in their two little orphaned nieces, Eleanor & Etta Creech.



Until 1914, John Hatch continued to promote Castle Comfort and the village of Owls Head. One of his endeavors was Castle Comfort Candy, which he manufactured for several seasons. The candies were nut, cherry, and vanilla creams, packaged in a pretty box with a picture of the Castle on it. Neither the boxes nor the candy recipes have survived, but people were still remembering the delicious candy into the 1960’s.

The Hatch’s niece, Eleanor Creech, met & eventually married a young teacher, Ernest Cummings Marriner, who often visited Castle Comfort in the summers to see her. In 1914 Ernest wrote the verses of “The Song of Owls Head”, which Rev. Hatch printed the next year on his Castle Comfort postcard. Decades later, in 1965, those verses were put to music by the composer Charles M. Clark Jr. and “The Song of Owls Head” was published by the Mussel Ridge Historical Society. To honor the song’s publication, an open house was held for the society on July 17, 1965 at Castle Comfort by the then owner of the cottage, Mrs. Cedric Collins. Present at the open house were Charles Clark, who autographed copies of the song, and Mrs. Wallace Paterson, a niece of John Hatch.

Castle Comfort has changed owners many times since Rev. and Mrs. Hatch lived in Owls Head. It has always been an interesting landmark for the people of Owls Head, including the children. Kay Ross Dodge told me that in the winters of the early 1950’s, she and her friends would slide down the 5 steps of the Comfort Castle’s porch and continue down the hill, almost to the shore!

Castle is presently owned privately as a summer home. Now minus some of its crenellated walls, it still commands a majestic presence on Shell Street in the “Village” of Owls Head.

“Castle Comfort Once Famous for Candy”, *The Courier Gazette*, July 7, 1965, page 8.

Coffin, Edward Wayman. [The Coastal Town of Owls Head, Maine](#). Rockland, Maine: Lakeside Printing Inc., 2004.

Pease, Clemice, “Birth of a Song”, unpublished article, 1965.

Owls Head Cemetery Committee (OHCC)

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OHCC.On.Facebook>

The Cemetery Committee heard that the Town was looking for projects to spend ARPA funds on so we submitted an estimate to replace the Ash Point Cemetery fence along the Ash Point Road. Our proposal was accepted and in the next month or so fencing will be installed by Tom Fence. It will be black aluminum, in the same foot print as the existing side. Speaking of fences, the committee will be installing a simple post and rope fence at the Merriman Cemetery in the near future.

Cemetery Committee member Heather Almquist is working with the family of Duane Ames to get a military headstone for his gravesite in the Ash Point Cemetery. We will also begin replacing plastic veteran flag holders with conflict-specific aluminum medallions this year. Please be in touch if you know of any veteran buried in town without a headstone or a flag holder/

Lastly, we are hosting a presentation by Midcoast Green Burial on May 21st at 2pm at the Town Office. The public is invited to find out what green burial entails and what options we have locally.



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Garden Snippets

There are so many things to learn about gardening... about soil, sun and shade, about all the different kinds of plants, how to prune shrubs and other plants, about pollinators and creatures who live in their natural habitat that we have helped provide for them. (Mother Nature did most of the work.)

But maybe the most important thing we learn is about faith. Every winter I spend a lot of time looking at seed and plant catalogs. I'm sure you will do as well. The thinking goes somewhat like this... That looks wonderful, I wonder if we could grow it here ... Oh this is brand new ... I've never seen anything like that before... I wonder if we have enough shade (or sun) for these... Well, I've always wanted these and this year I'm going to get some. And so forth.



We may or may not order some or make a note to find some in a garden center. We have faith that spring will come, and we will be gardening again. It always has and presumably always will. So, we wait, more impatiently as winter goes on, and on, and we wonder if the wind is going to kill all the plants that aren't covered with snow or ice, is going to ruin our favorite shrub.

But finally it happens. The snow and ice disappear, the mud drains off somewhat and little green things begin to poke their heads up. The snowdrops and the aconite bloom, the daffodils are almost ready... every-

thing that has been planted on the south side of the house is alive,

well and ready to grow. The faith that kept us going all winter has proven itself to be true... Again.

But that is what faith is, isn't it? The something that keeps us going when things seem impossible. Its what keeps our spirits up when we were looking at catalogs... we knew spring would arrive eventually, even though it seemed so far away then. Faith is what's at work in us when we plant a tree... we may never see it fully mature, but we know it will. Faith is what it is at work in us when we talk about what we will do in the garden next year.

Faith is what has kept us gardening for all these years and probably will keep us at it for many more.

Marty Shaw

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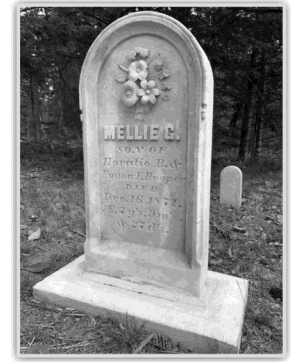
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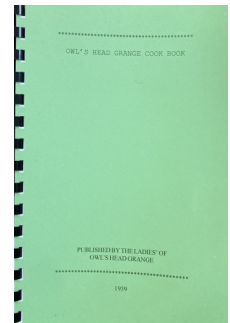
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Cemeteries of Owls Head, Maine
 with genealogical notes
 1791–2023

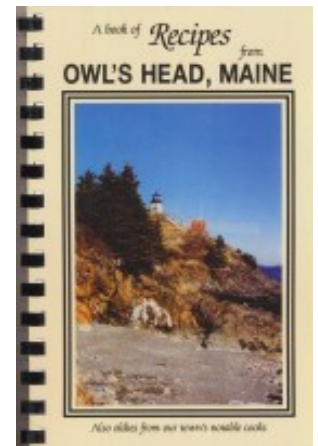


Compiled by Lea Carver
 Edited by Heather Almquist
 Owls Head Cemetery Committee, August 2023

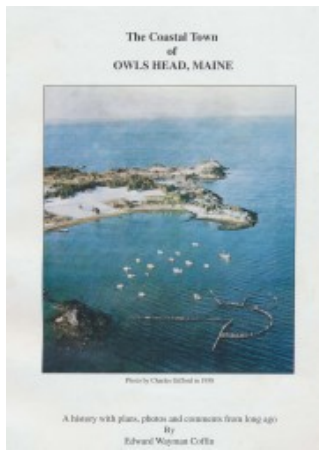
**\$25 - Cemeteries of
 Owls Head by Lea Carver**



**Owls Head Grange
 Cookbook \$10**



**Recipes of Owl's Head, Maine
 Cookbook \$15**



**\$36 - The Coastal Town of
 Owls Head, ME
 by Edward W. Coffin**



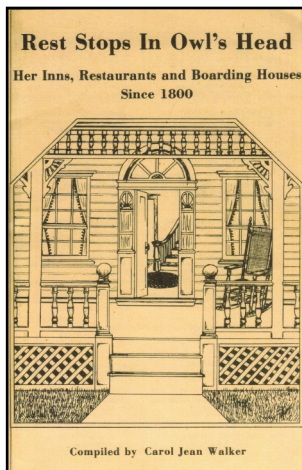
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\$49- 1873 of Owls Head canvas



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 By Carol Walker—\$10**



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Slate Coasters \$7 or 4 for \$25



Monroe Island Shipwreck

Schooner Georgia Went Ashore In Wednesday's Storm and Became Total Loss.

Jan. 13 - 1909

C G

The three-masted schooner Georgia went ashore on the southeast corner of Monroe Island in the blinding snow-storm of Wednesday morning, and seven hours later was a mass of wreckage. Fortunately the vessel struck at low tide and the crew managed to reach shore after a hard and perilous climb up the steep and jagged cliff. They were forced to remain on the island all day and night, but were cared for hospitably by the fishermen who have homes there. Thursday morning the Whitehead Life Saving crew visited the scene of the wreck and took the men around to the Crescent Beach House, which they found a veritable paradise after their rough experience. Fred M. Smith the proprietor, was one of the first men to visit the island after the shipwreck, and his good offices did not cease until he had brought the castaways to the Maine Central depot and seen them depart for St. John, N. B.

The Georgia left St. John N. B. Dec. 29 with a cargo of laths for New York. She then loaded coal at Elizabethport, N. J., for Portland, discharging her cargo at the latter port Monday. Sail was then set for St. John. Off Matinecus at 2 o'clock Wednesday morning she encountered a heavy northeast snowstorm and changed her course for Rockland. At 5 o'clock she misstayed and went onto Monroe Island, as already narrated.

One after another the six members of the crew slid over the bow and landed on the rocky shore. Confronting them was a cliff 50 feet high in some places. It offered their only means of safety and they started to climb it on their hands and knees. The task was rendered doubly difficult by the blinding storm and the numbing cold, but they

reached the bank in safety, carrying with them some of their dunnage. They did not know the island was inhabited until three hours later when they discovered human footprints. Following these they came to a fisherman's hut where they were provided with food and shelter. The captain and mate remained by the vessel, building a fire which attracted the first attention to the wreck. M. T. Jameson & Co. of Owl's Head promptly sent one of their scallop boats to the scene, but the sea was so rough that the occupants could get no nearer the wreck than to read the name; landing was out of the question. The presence of men on the shore indicated the crew's safety.

At noon the schooner began to break up, one of the masts falling onto the island and the others off-shore. Wreckage drifting onto the mainland told the vessel's fate.

The telephone line to Whitehead was having an off-day and Capt. Shea could not be informed of the disaster. When he did learn of it a crew was sent to the wreck with the result already told.

The crew of the schooner Georgia was composed as follows: Isaac H. Smith of New York captain, George E. Smith of Parrisboro, N. S., mate, Fred A. Clapp of Lincoln, cook; B. J. H. Morris of Australia, John Hapgood of St. John and John C. Dahl of South Africa, before the mast.

The schooner was built at Harrington in 1873 and was owned by the Coastwise Transportation Co. of New York, J. Willard Smith of St. John being agent. Nine years ago the craft was thoroughly rebuilt and is estimated to have been worth about \$9000. Capt. Smith was unable to say as to insurance.

The First Mussel Ridge Newsletter—60+ years ago!



The first Mussel Ridge Day started with open house and tea at the private summer home of Mrs. Grace Faunce of Boston, a summer resident of Owls Head. This was the original home and later hotel of Joshua Adams called Head. This was the original home and later hotel of Joshua Adams called Head. This was the original home and later hotel of Joshua Adams called Head. By 1870 it had changed hands and owners and was called the Ocean House. During the early 1900's it was given the name called the Owls Head Inn. In the afternoon guided tours were taken to the Owls Head Light, followed by a lobster supper at Owls Head Central School where a fine "Keepsake and Heirloom" exhibit was displayed. The guest speaker was the Historian of the Searsport Museum, Mr. Robert Applebee, who chose for his subject "Shipbuilding of the Mussel Ridge Area." Everyone seemed delighted with the result of our day and it was voted to have it annually and place a historic marker every year.

MUSSEL RIDGE DAY 1962

Our second Mussel Ridge Day honored the past light keepers of Owls Head Light and a bronze marker was placed in the entrance of the 137 year old light tower. Mrs. Catherine Norton and Mrs. Catherine Libby, dau. of former keepers unveiled the plaque with ceremonies held at the keeper's house, with Albert MacPhail as M. C. Dr. Robert M. York, Maine State Historian was guest speaker and many representatives from the U. S. Coast Guard, Gov. Reed, Maine Maritime and state and local patriotic organizations were present as well as a descendant of Nathaniel Merryman who first sold the land.

The plaque read as follows: Owls Head Light — Land purchased from heirs Nathaniel Merryman Nov. 24, 1824. Contractors, Jeremiah Berry, Robert Foster, Ballard Green. Beacon installed, Winslow Lewis. First Lightkeeper, Isaac Stearns. First lighted, September 10, 1825.

A lobster luncheon was served at the Owls Head Central School followed by guided tours of the coastal area ending with tea at famous "Montpelier". An Ol' Timers' Baked Bean Supper and Heirloom Exhibit was held at the Wessaweskeag Grange at South Thomaston. A series of historical sketches by our historian were published about the Light, the Merryman family, the Simpson house and a panorama and story of South Thomaston preceded Mussel Ridge Day of 1962.

Mussel Ridge Day Termed Success

Good weather helped bring out a large number of people to the third annual Mussel Ridge Day event which saluted the Villages of St. George. At least 400 people turned out for ceremonies and the luncheon and more than 100 went on a guided tour.

It marked the beginning for what is hoped to be one of the state's most scenic little parks, Fort St. Georges. Although the park itself was not opened it was dedicated Saturday morning.

Two Revolutionary Soldiers' graves were marked in the Old Parish Cemetery, Sergeant Ephraim Wiley and Joseph Robinson, 3rd. The ceremony was directed by Mrs. Clemice Pease, State Historian Maine DAR and Howard Lowell of St. George and Homer Robinson of Rockland representing SAR. Kinney-Melquist American Legion Post of Tenants Harbor in St. George furnished the color guard and firing squad for both ceremonies.

Many distinguished guests were present from the Maine State Park Commission and Historic sites committee as well as local dignitaries. Writer and lecturer Edward Rowe Snow of Marshfield, Mass., was principal speaker. Lawrence Stuart, parks director, had been slated to speak but was called away.

Among highlights of the day were the church service at the Wileys Corner Baptist Church where the adult choir was dressed in colonial costumes, the dedication of a boulder at the entrance to the park, exhibits of family heirlooms and the tour.

The inscription on the boulder is as follows: "Fort St. Georges Land conveyed to the United States of America by Joseph Robinson, 3rd, Sept. 22, 1808. Fort erected July 1809 under Capt. Thomas Vose, captured by Marines of HMS Bulwark June 22, 1814. The site became a state memorial, Dec. 4, 1923. Dedicated Mussel Ridge Historical Society July 13, 1963."

Albert J. Smalley, Jr., of St. George was chairman of the St. George aspect of the celebration. Mrs. Samuel J. Pease of Owls Head was program chairman. Mrs. Smalley was in charge of the heirloom exhibit and Mrs. Ralph Colby of Spruce Head was chairman of transportation. Miss Beryl Borgerson of Owls Head was ticket chairman and Mrs. Telesforo Casanova of Owls Head was in charge of the guest book. Mrs. Frank Ross of Owls Head is membership chairman.

DESCENDENTS — Unveiling a boulder at the entrance to Fort St. George are two descendants of men closely associated with the fort. In the foreground is Winslow Robinson with Claude Wiley, Sr., at right in the American Legion uniform. Several whose ancestors were involved in the history of the fort attended Mussel Ridge Day Saturday.

**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

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____ 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

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____ Old Homestead ____ As the MRHS thinks is best

Signature of Person Accepting the Form _____

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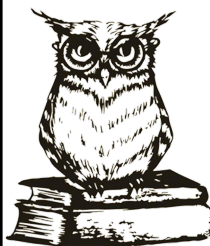
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***Friday May 2nd - 6pm - 8 pm
Owls Head Community Building
Donations accepted***

A New Shop with an Old Name Worthy of Remembrance

By Andrea Greenwood

I don't know about you, but for me at this time of year, there is really nothing better than sitting with a hot cup of coffee and a few sweet treats while contemplating the remarkable achievements of unsung women, accompanied by a little mystery. Lucky for me, a new shop on South Main Street in Rockland provided the opportunity for all of the above, combined.

Perhaps you noticed that the Flint Block, on Main Street across from Harbor Park, had been closed and undergoing renovations last year. It's the building where Rock City Coffee had its roastery, and in January 2025, the glaziers and electricians and floor refinishers and everyone else went away, and a small sign appeared. "Olive Rose" is a lovely, peaceful, and charming spot. There are cases of beautiful handmade chocolates—caramels and truffles, bark, toffee, and chocolate-covered every-kind-of-snack you can imagine: grahams, pretzels, Ritz, Oreos, marshmallows, even whole s'mores! The very kind and friendly staff also serve coffee, tea, lattes, chai, and hot chocolate. There always seems to be cool French jazz or something equally evocative playing at just the right level, and there are little quirky touches I love—a stone mermaid in one window, a vintage typewriter on the counter, local pottery, old gleaming oak display cases.

But this article is not really an ad for Olive Rose. It's a dive into the *name*. When the sign appeared outside 252 Main Street, I went home to look it up, so I would know what kind of store it was and when it was open. According to the website, the store was named for the first woman elected to public office in the United States: Olive Rose was elected Recorder of Deeds for the town of Warren, Maine in 1853, by a vote of 73 to 4.

Lee, the proprietor of Olive Rose, explained that she was looking for something unique to the town where she started her business and learned this fun election fact. The boat that Lee built at the Apprenticeshop is named for Olive as well. I love this story—the boat-building, the chocolate, but also this cool hidden history of a woman elected to public office. And, since about three generations passed between 1853 and when women were first allowed to vote, I had my doubts. But in Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage's first volume of *The History of Woman Suffrage*, there is this:

The Maine Age, a leading democratic newspaper, speaking of the election of Miss Rose to the office Register of Deeds in that State looks into the future and....:

What follows is a report of men fuming about women's rights and a dire prediction about the direction of the country, but not much in the way of detail about Olive Rose. in *Her Hat was in the Ring*, a project working to identify women who ran for elective office in the United States between 1850 and 1920, I found that

Olive Rose was elected Register of Deeds in 1853 by the men of Lincoln County (later Knox). In the town of Warren, Rose received 73 votes, and her opponent, Mr Sylvester, received only 4. This was considered a sign of the town's regard for "female rights." She served in the office until 1857, when her brother was elected. Rose had served as an assistant to the previous Register before her election in 1853. As Recorder she earned between \$300 and \$400 annually. She was almost certainly the first woman elected in the state of Maine, and perhaps in the United States.

This history is based upon Eaton's *History of Thomaston, Rockland and South Thomaston* and the *Annals of the Town of Warren*, and in checking these sources, I was unable to glean more. Who was this Olive Rose? What did she do after her stint in office? Why did her brother usurp this position?

Finally, at the Maine Historical Society, I was able to find a reference to Olive, although they have her mixed up with her mother, also named Olive Rose. The senior Olive was married to the Honorable Dr. Daniel Rose, a figure who is much easier to find information about. Rose migrated from Connecticut to Alna in the late 18th century and began practicing medicine. He married Olive Peasley, and the couple moved to Boothbay, where he served as the community's physician. He also was very active politically, and as Maine separated from Massachusetts and began setting up its state government, Rose became a member of the State Senate. He served as the president in 1822 and 1823, which led him to become the fourth governor of Maine, a position he held for a grand total of three days. He was filling an unexpired term in January of 1822, before the new (elected) Governor was sworn in.

In 1823, the family, which by then included six children, among them an 11-year-old Olive, moved from Boothbay to Thomaston. A seventh and final child, Martha, would be born the following year. The reason for the family's move was that statehood necessitated the establishment of a prison, rather than sending convicts down to Castle Island in Boston Harbor. Thomaston, as the midpoint between York and Eastport, was chosen as the site for Maine's first prison, and Rose was chosen as its first warden. In 1830, he purchased a home on East Main Street, a 1793 sea captain's house and tavern that had burned and been rebuilt. It is still called the Dr. Daniel Rose House.

It's hard to learn much about Olive's life. We know she spent her early childhood in Boothbay. When she was tiny, her father was away for a long period of time, serving as an engineer during the War of 1812. As a teenager, she lived in two different houses in Thomaston, the daughter of a prominent figure. Daniel Rose was, in addition to being the prison warden (and architect), a doctor, a justice of the peace, a former senator, and a land agent. He also had gruesome ideas about how to rehabilitate prisoners that give cause for wondering what he was like at home. Daniel Rose died in 1833, when Olive was 21. Likely she remained at home with her mother and helped raise her little sister Martha, who was only nine. There were four other children between the girls and one older brother. The senior Olive Rose died a dozen years later, in 1845.

The achievements of Olive Rose that we know about came after her parents had passed away. First she was assistant to the registrar of deeds for the county, and then, in 1853, she was elected to the position herself. She held the position for four years. Why did she run, and who was the Mr. Sylvester she trounced so decisively? How did she come to hold this position 75 years before women even had the right to vote? And why did Olive give up the position? She was succeeded by her brother Edwin, one year her senior. Was there a family fight, or a family plan to keep it all amongst themselves? Edwin Rose was also the postmaster in Thomaston, which is where the Rose family all lived. Olive Rose won an election in Warren because it was, at that time, the Lincoln County seat, and Thomaston and Warren had yet to be reassigned to Knox County.

We have the bare outlines of the life of Olive Rose, but still the mystery prevails. How did she spend the nearly two decades between when she relinquished her position and when her bones were laid in the ground? She died, unmarried, on April 11, 1875, and is buried alongside her parents and many other family members in the Thomaston Village cemetery. The building that houses the business named after her was being erected as she was laid to rest.

¹.See Chapter 8, Massachusetts, under the subheading "Rights and Prospects."

²The prison Rose designed was unique in the country, consisting of 50 solitary confinement units that were actually underground pits. He strictly enforced silence among prisoners and believed in both hard labor and corporal punishment: "No mode of punishment...is so well adapted to... reforming a criminal as close confinement in a silent, solitary cell designed for grief and penitence, in which he is cut off from all hope of relief for the term of his sentence.... He shall be favored with (just enough) light from the firmament so as to enable the reading of the New Testament, which shall be given as his sole companion. Therein his vices shall become personified, and appear... as co-tenants of his dismal cell. The spectres will surround and overwhelm him with horror and remorse." from Negley K Tweeters "Early Days of the Maine State Prison at Thomaston" *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, vol. 38, no.2, July/August 1947, pp 104-118.

Owls Head, Maine Cookbook

PINWHEEL MEATLOAF

1/2 c. chopped onion
2 Tbsp. fat
2 lb. ground beef
1 tsp. salt

1 c. soft bread crumbs
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 c. milk

Mix preceding ingredients well, then roll out mixture between 2 sheets of waxed paper. Remove top sheet and spread layer with your favorite bread stuffing. Roll firmly as for jelly roll. Bake about 1 hour and 15 minutes in a 325° oven.

From the files of Myrtle Curtis



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