

Mussel Ridge News

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MAY DAY

May Day is celebrated in many countries as a Spring Festival, marking the revival of life after the bleak winter. Some references suggest the celebrations go back to the Druids while others believe they began in Egypt or India. Regardless of origin, May Day festivities through the ages have universally included public music, dancing, flowers and romantic spectacles.

In many European countries May Day was a time for courting. Young Czechoslovakians skulked about the night placing a May Pole before their sweetheart's front door while Swiss lads secretly laid a May pine near the window of a perspective mate for her to guess who left it. German boys being more industrious, and possibly hoping for a permanent relationship, literally planted a tree under their Frauleins window. But, in France, May Day was a religious day celebrated in honor of the Virgin Mary with young girls enshrined as May queen to lead a procession of worshippers to the church.

In medieval English villages, May 1 became a favorite holiday where people decorated their homes and churches with fresh Spring flowers. They sang cheerful tunes and exchanged small gifts of friendship. Some towns "planted" a Maypole that people could dance around while inter-lacing gaily colored streamers. King and Queen of May were chosen to preside over the day's events.

The Puritans took issue with May Day festivities and never celebrated it while living in England, but the isolation of the American colonies provided a good reason to celebrate the return of Spring with dancing, songs and wreaths of wild flowers for their homes and churches. Eventually, this led to making little baskets from paper, or other natural materials, and filling them with wild flowers to hang on a friend's door.

May Day in America has continued to be a day for children to celebrate Spring. Kay Ross Dodge recalls she and her daughters made baskets from Dixie Cups with braided strips of crepe paper for a handle. The sides of the basket were adorned with flowers fashioned from crepe paper or construction paper. Linda Bray Christie tells of making little May baskets shaped similar to a clam roller out of scraps of pretty wall paper. She says her sister, Elizabeth Mitchell, made larger cone shaped baskets. Both had long ribbon streamers attached to the handle and corners of the baskets which were usually filled with penny candy and hung on a friend's door. Traditionally, if the recipient was a boy, he was expected to chase the girl and give her a kiss. Wouldn't it be interesting to know if any long lived marriages were fostered by the gift of a May basket.

Fortunately for us Cara Knight, a long time fan of the Mussel Ridge NEWS, has shared with us easy to follow instructions for our readers to make beautiful May baskets, too.



*Timberhill School celebrates May Day
Ann Walker, __, Linda Dyer, Susan Oakes, Raymond Epps, Carl Woodman*

How to Make a May Day Basket



“May Day” was always celebrated with my Grandmother Athleen M. Pease. The anticipation of Spring around the corner represented new life and new beginnings. A visit to Long Cove for the weekend was always an adventure and in April we would make May baskets for upcoming May Day. I’m so happy and thankful for this tradition she passed on to me.

What you’ll need:

Newspaper
Tissue paper
Package short common pins
Scissors
Scotch tape

Steps

- 1) Take one sheet of newspaper, lay it flat. Choosing length wise, start in the corner rolling tightly with your fingers. It may take a couple of tries to get it nice and tight. Tape the end so it’s smooth, this is the stem.
- 2) Take 1st piece of tissue paper and cover the stem by rolling. Tape end so it’s smooth. Trim each end and then using the scissors, fold each end into it itself.
- 3) Take two pieces of tissue paper, choosing different prints for contrast, place them one on top of the other, and fold

diagonally corner to corner, this should be square shape. Next take the scissors and cut off the extra paper toward the rectangular end even with the folded edge. It should look like a perfect right triangle folded. It gives you a folded long side and the two open. Save the extra piece you cut off for embellishments a little later.

- 4) Take the scissors and trim a tiny hole in the middle of the folded long side just large enough to pass the stem trough. (Be careful when you unfold, it will be twice as big) Push the stem through until 3-4 inches is poking from the flat folded side, this is the bottom. Pin both sides to the stem, top, middle, and bottom. Hold tightly when you pin or the stem will roll.

Next, fold the tissue paper again and pin on both sides of the stem, you will now have four sections. Repeat again the folding and pinning one more time and you will have eight sections.

- 5) Now take the extra tissue paper that you held aside. One piece on top of the other and fold several times length wise, then take your scissors and make your fringe.
- 6) Unfold and cut into sections, (you can choose two or three pieces) Place fringe on the bottom of the stem and top of stem using tape and pins, you can add extra embellishments if you wish. For example, you can also cut long strips and crinkle them in your hand to add volume.
- 7) Finish the May Basket by tying a string on the top of the stem. I do this by threading a needle and feeding it through the paper. Twine works the best. Don’t forget adding candy or tea bags in the sectioned pouches.

HAPPY MAY DAY!

by Cara Kiight

Grange Hall/ Old School House Update

The Mussel Ridge Historical Society is continuing our efforts on the Grange Hall, doing the necessary work that will expect will lead to a full preservation program. This building is a complicated one with at least three major additions made since it was originally built as a school in the 1830’s, each with different materials used as a foundation.

With that in mind, we made the decision last year to have a professional building assessment done by an expert in dealing with historical buildings. We requested proposals from several such individuals, reviewed the responses and selected a contractor. Three visits have been made by the engineer and we have received and reviewed a draft assessment. We expect to get the revised draft soon and that there will be some initial work this summer. This is likely to be a long project and we will keep you updated on its progress and how you might be able to help.

TOWNFOLKS- We Need Your Help!

It's been said many times, "This history is your history", and now we urgently need your stories. Perhaps some feel they have nothing of interest to contribute. Rest assured, if you've remembered it over the years, no story or anecdote is an insignificant event in your life. The NEWS thrives on those seemingly bland moments from the daily grind.

Remember that first job? The one that paid real cash? **Irving Smith** says he picked cucumbers until his hands became sore and bled from the spines on those cukes. But, the pain was easier to bear every time he donned that brand new Mickey Mouse sweatshirt he'd saved up for. Then, he picked more cucumbers and beans to purchase a tent. Before his passing, **Lester Emery** spoke of driving cows from Owl's Head village to pasture on South Shore Drive on his way to school and drove them back to their barn in the afternoon.

A first impression of someone in town always makes a good story. So does your first real love as in the case of a young Rockland High School girl who walked to Owl's Head village one afternoon "just to check out where "you know who" lived". Whether you have memories from your childhood chores as **Catherine Curtis** recalls of hauling milk on a sled from Walker's farm to her home on Dublin Road, or if your thoughts are of riding a makeshift school bus with wooden benches for seats as **Joyce Ross** did, we want to record these times in our newsletter. Give us a call at 207-594-2438.

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny compared to what lies within us." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

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OUR SUMMER & FALL CALENDER

2nd Wednesday of each month, (7pm), Mussel Ridge Historical Society holds our monthly meeting at the Owl's Head Community Building, (down stairs). Visitors are always welcomed to drop in.

Memorial Weekend (May 24)- Owl's Head Lighthouse and gift shop will open week-ends & Wednesdays, hosted by Friends of Rockland Breakwater Light.

May 18- (2-4 p.m.) "Celebration of Owl's Head Schools & Ice Cream Social" to be held at the Owl's Head Central School. Everyone is invited. Attendees are asked to bring photos, memorabilia and stories from your favorite school years.

June 10- M.R.H.S. will hold a baked food sale at the Primary Election polls at the Owl's Head Community Building. Time will be 8 am til food is gone. Anyone wishing to donate food can drop it off at the election polls downstairs after 8am .

July, Aug. & Sept. (Wednesday 2 to 4 p.m.)- The Old Homestead, Ash Point Drive will be open for public tours. Mussel Ridge Historical Society members and volunteers will be on hand to answer your questions.

July 20, (noon - 3 p.m.)- community picnic on the grounds of the Old Homestead, Ash Point Drive. Long forgotten crafts, games, music and friendships will be revisited. Grilled hot dogs with all the fix'ns and hand cranked ice cream will be provided along with refreshing lemon-aide. Attendees are asked to bring a family sized salad or dessert to share and a lawn chair if you have room in your car.

August, November & February (about the 10th)- next edition of Mussel Ridge NEWS should be on the shelves. M.R.H.S. invites your inquires, research topics, stories, photos, or recipes.

October 11, 12, 13 (Columbus Day)- Last chance to visit the Owl's Head Lighthouse until next Spring.

November 4- M.R.H. S .will hold a baked food sale at the election polls at the Owl's Head Community Building. Anyone wishing to donate food should drop it off at the polls downstairs.

November 22, (9a.m - 2p.m.)- our Fall Craft Fair will be held at Owl's Head Transportation Museum on Rt.73. Handicap accessible parking near the entrance; fifty crafters with a myriad of articles for sale; bistro and baked food sale for lunch; free admission to the Museum's exhibits for the day.



This little poem was found in *More Cones From the Pines of Maine*
by Daphne Winslow Merrill, 1965

OWL'S HEAD

The fishing village rests serene abreast the coast of Maine
in calm, unhurried atmosphere and leads a life that's sane.

Within its harbor bob the boats, alert to man's command
and pulley lines to draw them in lie stretched along the sand.

The fish nets and the lobster traps adorn the shoreline scene
and multi-colored painted buoys festoon hill and ravine.

And everybody says "Hello" and knows his neighbor's name.
No matter how the world may change may Owls Head stay the same!

“THE KIDS ARE COMING!”

Way back in 1976, the Christie clan, twenty of us from all over the Eastern United States, gathered at our parents' home for a long overdue family reunion. As a special treat, Mom had prepared a batch of “dripless popcicles” for the kids, but they quickly became a hit with everyone who had ever been a kid. On our last evening together, most of us were on the front steps slurping batch #10 of the popcicles and reminiscing of tricks we'd played on each other. It was suggested, just for old times sake, we try to zing Dad, who was the most unflappable Father we knew. When he finally came out to join us, it went something like, “Dad, we've been talking and decided we're all going to stay for another week.” His response, “Suits me just fine”, was exactly what we had expected. Then the zinger, “...and, we thought you should be the one to tell Mom.”, which promptly elicited, “NO SIR! You do THAT yourself!”

Gramma's Dripless Popcicle Recipe

(They taste best on a hot summer evening with friends and family gathered around)

1 pkg. Jello (any flavor) 1 pkg. Kool Aide (same flavor)
1 cup sugar Ice water Approx. fifteen 3 oz. Dixie Cups & popcicle sticks

Mix Jello & Kool Aide ingredients together, add sugar then add 2 cups hot water; mix until dissolved

Add 2 cups ice cold water and mix thoroughly. Pour into Dixie cups and freeze

When partially frozen (about 2 hours) insert sticks. Makes about fifteen in the 3oz cups

KUDOS

Today the Mussel Ridge Historical Society recognizes all those volunteers who have given their energy and time to our various projects over the years. Men, women, boys and girls have cheerfully pitched in at picnics and suppers assisting with everything from tent raising to grilling hot dogs and then helped clean up afterwards. Countless cooks have prepared and donated food for our events.

The local contractors, too, have been generous when asked to repair our buildings while others mowed our lawn or planted flowers around our buildings. On one occasion, we were cutting brush around an old school when a fellow stopped and offered to park his flatbed trailer on the site saying if we loaded the cuttings, he'd haul them to the dump.

Sometimes the smallest kindness can mean a lot. The neighbors to our historic sites have been faithful sentinels watching over our buildings, as in the case of a motorist who called to tell us the lights were on in the Grange Hall. And there was the lady who called just a few hours before the Fall Craft Fair was to get underway saying she'd recently moved into town and wondered if we needed any help.

If we tried to mention every kind act or deed on our behalf, we would no doubt omit someone, so we simply offer our heartfelt, “Thanks. We couldn't have done it without you”.

From “Rest Stops in Owl's Head” Her Inns, Restaurants and Boarding Houses Since 1800 *Compiled by Carol Jean Walker in 1982*

Trail's End

Trail's End was owned and operated by Captain and Mrs. “Ote” and Sadie Lewis for about ten years. 1936-1947. It still stands at the very end of Ash Point Drive, thus appropriately named “trails end.” Don Lewis grandson of Ote and Sadie, lives in Thomaston and remembers the restaurant. He said it “was a pretty popular place. Cars used to park all the way up the hill. Evidently this Inn took over the Wellesley's and Otis Villa's popularity since its starting date was just a few years after the two earlier houses had closed to the public.



The dining room could hold 50 to 60 diners and the Lewises did take in boarders, but there were only two guest rooms. The menu consisted mainly of seafood and offered a “shore dinner” that in the first years cost 90 cents. By the last years the price had risen to \$1.15. Don remembered, “There were steamed clams, boiled lobster, fried fish, lobster stew, seafood newburg, biscuits, all the coffee you wanted and homemade pie.” The workers were mostly family members, Don recalled. “there was the great-grandmother Richardson, my grandmother Sadie, my mother Ruth, and an Indian woman who washed dishes.”

Trail's End in the Winter circa 1940

OWL'S HEAD. 3/2/1886 CG

Owing to the severity of the weather our milk man did not go his rounds Saturday night—result, crying babies and fretting mothers.

Sch. J. W. Brown, Capt. Rodney Arey, is due here.

Mrs. Dorcas Bridges has moved into Miss Sarah Maddocks house.

Fred Smith of Ash Point has bought Chas. Dyer's field and pasture. He will clear up the intervals, part of the pasture, and get it into grass.

Allison Maddocks has just returned from a two weeks visit in Camden and Lincolnville.... Miss Lillian Magee is attending Commercial College, Rockland.

The Owl's Head Baptist Chapel Society have received their chapel plans, executed by Fassett & Thompson of Portland and they will begin work on the foundation this spring.

NORTH HAVEN.

The mussel business is booming.

Miss Ida Dyer is spending a few weeks at Vinalhaven.

The body of Levi Dyer, of Palermo, was brought here Tuesday for interment.

Capt. Frank Quinn and wife of Eagle Isle, and Agnes Sweetland of Camden, are visiting J. T. Coombs.

OWL'S HEAD.

Bible meeting at Mrs. L. G. Perry's tonight. CG March 1886

Sch. Nantalius, Tolman, hauled out of winter quarters Saturday and sch. Fleetwing yesterday.

Chas. E. Dyer, Will Wade and Lincoln Speed have gone in the sch. Wm. Rice. Chas. G. Dyer will go in sch. Fleetwing.

Sch. John W. Brown sailed from here yesterday morning. Capt. Arey is taking her back to Portland, having only borrowed her for the winter.

A meeting of the South Thomaston Baptist church is called Wednesday, P. M. 17th at the old church. All interested are requested to be present.

Capt. Henry Perry, Freeman L. Perry and Frank Farr, will go after their respective vessels Thursday. Palpit harbor has sheltered them this winter.

The Ladies Aid Society served baked beans and brown bread, with all the etcetras for 35 cts. a couple at Ocean House Hall last Wednesday night, ice cream followed. About forty square meals were eaten. Mary B. Grant entertained the company with select readings.

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