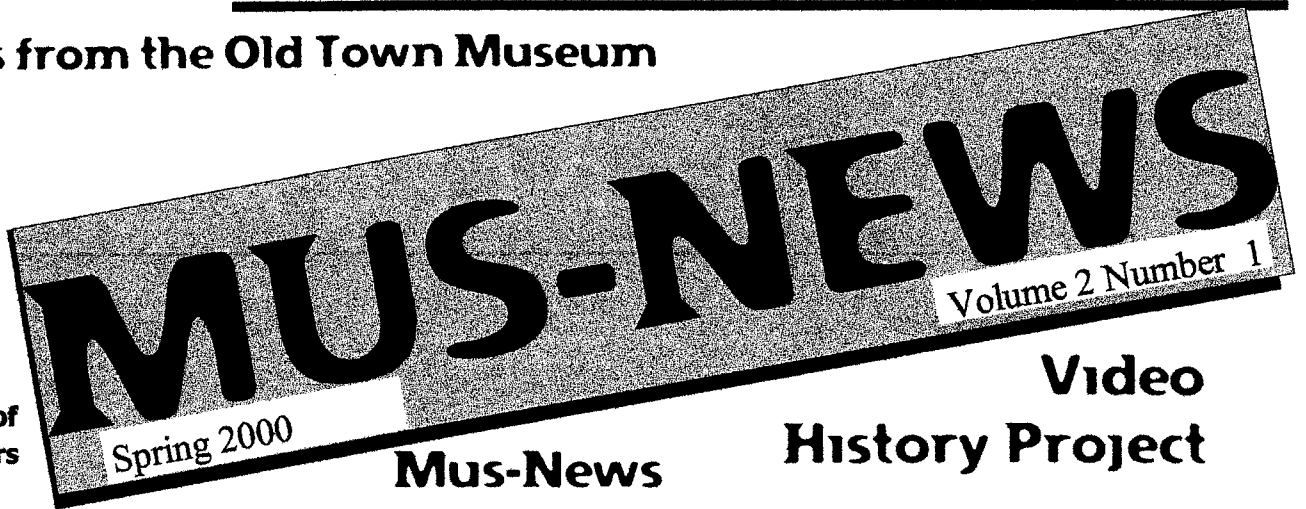


News from the Old Town Museum



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- President
Barbara Csavinszky
827-6785
- Vice President
Richard Eustis
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- Secretary
Sue Gleason
866-2434
- Treasurer
William Osborne
827-7245
- Members
- Charles Buck
866-4393
- Beverly Clarke
827-2650
- Barbara Connors
827-3654
- Virginia Fortier
827-3472
- Harold Lacadie
827-4691
- Margaret Manzer
827-3847
- Howard Merrill
827-2649
- Cora Paradis
827-4120
- Charles Stevens
827-3230
- Florence Wheeler
827-5586
- Harriet Woodsum
827-2953

Mus-News to expand

The Mus-News made its first appearance last year as a two-page newsletter. Reports indicate the newsletter was well received so it is being continued. However, this year it is being expanded to a four-page publication.

One of the things you will find new this year is a section devoted to "Historical Moments" in the history of the Old Town Area. The area has a very colorful history but one that may not be well known by many people living in the area today.

We hope the readers will find this section on our history both interesting and informative. We also hope this interest will cause you will find time to visit the Old Town Museum to learn more about the area's history. The Directors of the Museum have worked many hours to provide exhibits covering a wide range of subjects that you should find interesting. To help you better understand some of the material, the Museum has available an audio tape explaining the exhibits.

Video History Project

The Old Town Museum is proceeding with the Video History Project that was mentioned in one of last year's Newsletters. During the Winter, Virginia Fortier and Barbara Csavinszky met with Jamie Meirara of the University of Maine's Anthropology Department. Prof. Meirara has agreed to undertake the project and will do the interviews and video taping. Meirara was provided with a listing of possible interviewees that was identified last year. He intends to contact all of them and then go to their homes to do the actual interview. He also intends to do some research on the Old Town Area to get a better idea of the types of information that should be recorded through the video history project.

These videos should provide a special type of history of the Old Town Area as they will be first-person accounts of memories of earlier years. The first interview has been completed and is reported to be very successful.

If anyone would like to have their memories of Old Town recorded, please contact Virginia Fortier.

A Moment in our History

Today, many of us take the location of a major employer of area residents for granted. The University of Maine is so closely integrated into the areas activities, it is hard to believe Orono was not the first location considered.

Background information for the following article was taken from *History of the Maine State College and the University of Maine* written by Merritt Caldwell Fernald, LL.D. and published by the University of Maine in 1916. In the Introduction written by Dr. Robert Judson Aley, President of the University of Maine, he states of Dr. Fernald, "But as he was the only man who knew the institution from its opening in 1868 to the close of 1915, it was felt that he must be induced to undertake the writing of the history".

The story begins in 1862 when President Abraham Lincoln signs into law, legislation proposed by the Hon. Justin S. Morrill, Representative from Vermont. This law provided for the "liberal and practical education of the industrial class". The funding to be provided for this to the states from the sale of 30,000 acres of Federal land for each Senator and Representative if the State voted to accept the terms of the law. The funding from the sale of land could not be used to purchase or construct facilities. Maine having two Senators and five Rep-

resentatives at that time, received the proceeds from the sale of 210,000 acres.

Maine accepted the terms of the new law in March 1863 but moved slowly on implementation. Approximately a year later, the Governor appointed a three person commission to study the many issues and report back to the Legislature. This commission recommended to the Legislature in 1865 that the new college be connected to Bowdoin College. The report was referred to the Joint Committee on Agriculture where the Committee heard strong objection from the State Board of Agriculture. This opposition was supported by the leading agriculturists in the State. The Legislature eventually voted to have an totally independent institution with a Board of Trustees, one member from each county.

The Board investigated sites in Togas, Topsham, Fairfield, Orrington and Orono. Board members from the western part of the State had a strong preference for Topsham. At a Board Meeting in September 1865, a motion to locate the institution in Topsham lost by a vote of six to five. In January 1866, the Board voted to locate in Orono by a vote of eight to seven. Some of the most prominent members of the Board still believed the Topsham location was better. This resulted in considerable lack of harmony on the Board and to its eventual disintergration. Finally in January 1867, the Board petitioned the Legislature to reduce the

size of the Board to not more than seven members and not less than five members with the new Trustees to be selected for qualifications not for geographical representation. The Legislature acted promptly and the a new seven member Board was appointed. New Trustees included George P Sewall of Old Town and Nathaniel Wilson of Orono.

Immediately following the vote of the Trustees in January 1866, to locate the new college in Orono, the towns of Old Town and Orono jointly appropriated \$11,000 to purchase the Frost and White Farms located in Orono. These farms consisted of 370 acres of land and two sets of farm building, not in good repair. In April 1866, the towns donated this land to the State as the site of the new college but to protect their investment, the deed included a "reversion clause" indicating if the properties were not used for the new college, the property would revert to the town of Orono. Later, the City of Bangor contributed \$14,000 to aid the new college.

The first building for the new college was constructed in 1867-68. This was a 3-story wood frame building located on the site of the current Wingate Hall. The building originally named White Hall, was later renamed to Wingate Hall, burned in 1890.

In September 1868, the first class of twelve men was admitted after passing the required examinations. Later in the fall, one more joined the first class.

Board of Directors - Annual Meeting

The Board of Directors of the Old Town Museum held their Annual Meeting on Feb. 21, 2000. As all business was not completed on that date, the meeting was continued to March 14, 2000 at which time all actions required by the by-laws to be handled at the Annual Meeting were completed.

Treasurer William Osborne reported that income for FY1999 had totaled \$32,723.65 and expenses had totaled \$32,914.92 resulting in a small loss of \$191.27. Income from donations and memberships were up from previous years. Expenses for maintenance and repairs had exceeded the budgeted amount. It was also noted that the Museum had suffered some smoke damage due to the malfunction of the oil burner. All cleanup costs associated with this damage were covered by the Museum's insurance.

The Board approved a budget for FY2000 showing Income of \$34,500.92 and Expense of \$34,435.84. This budget included a special "Cook Book" fund raising project headed by Peggy Manzer. The Board agreed it should continue holding a "Yard Sale" on the day of "Riverfest" as a part of the fund raising activities. There was some discussion of a need to look at additional ways to increase the Museum's Revenue as it was anticipated some major repairs would be needed within a few years. One item briefly discussed was the selling

of Old Town postcards through EBAY. There was also brief discussion about to possibility of establishing some "planned giving" vehicles as a way of creating an endowment fund for the museum.

Virginia Fortier reported progress was being made on the "Millenium Truck". This truck is intended to be a mobile museum of the history of the Penobscot County area. Virginia also reported on the progress of the video history project(see separate article on Page 1).

The Board decided to delay the purchase of additional wall display cases but did agree to purchase additional cassette players to provide a narrated tour of the museum exhibits.

It was reported that Barbara Connors was completing the paperwork for new DOT signs to provide direction to the Museum. It was also noted that Bill Osborne and Ken Sirois had completed the installation of a new sign in front of the museum.

Barbara Csavinszky reported new tapestry afghans had arrived and would be sold for \$50.00.

The Nominating Committee presented the following slate of officers for FY2000:

President: Barbara Csavinszky
V. Pres: Richard Eustis
Secretary: Sue Gleason
Treasurer: William Osborne
Executive Directorship:

William Osborne

Virginia Fortier

Harold Lacadie

This slate was unanimously ap-

proved by the Board.

The Operating Schedule for FY2000 was approved. This schedule provided for the opening of the Museum on April 28, 2000 on a two day per week schedule. The Opening Reception would be held on Sunday June 4, 2000 and this would be the beginning of the five day per week schedule which would continue through the end of October. The first two weeks of November would see the schedule reduced to Friday and Sunday with the final open date of Sunday November 12, 2000.

The Board agreed it should continue holding special programs as a way of attracting people to visit the Museum. Some program topics were suggested but nothing was finalized.

The Exhibit Committee will be setting up some new exhibits for this year. This should become an easier task as a large portion of the museum accessions have now been entered into a computerized listing.

How Times have Changed

When the first class entered the University of Maine in September 1868, there was Free Tuition for Maine Residents. Out-of State students paid \$12 per term. Room was rent-free and students paid \$3.00 per week for meals. They also paid \$0.50 per week for washing and fuel.

Students who worked on the University farm were paid at the rate of \$0.25 for three hours work.

History for the Viewing

The Old Town Museum has a wide range of exhibits to tempt all interests. How much do you know of the logging industry in the area or where the booms were located. Do you even know what a boom was and why they were used? How about early pictures Main Street or other buildings of interest? What were some of the early industries in the community? How many railroads served the City and where were they located? What about athletic teams in earlier years?

The Museum's Exhibit Committee has tried to

find items to exhibit that will bring back old memories or to help you understand life in the Old Town area at an earlier time. This is our own community's history.

Last year several "first-time" visitors remarked they had no idea of the size or extent of the Museum exhibits. Even if you visited the Museum last year, you will find many new exhibits this year. Why not take a few minutes and visit the one place in the area where local history can be viewed. There is no admission charge and there is always someone in attendance that can help direct you to specific exhibits.

The Old Town Museum
PO Box 375
Old Town, ME 04468



TO:

Membership Drive

Last year the Museum saw an increase in the number of Members as well as an increase in the amount of private donations to the Museum. This was a substantial help in the funding of the Museum operations. We hope the readers of this issue of Mus-News will continue their support of the Old Town Museum. This is the place where the history of the area is displayed for your viewing. A place to visit to bring back old memories or to show your children how things were in earlier times.

The membership drive is underway. We hope to increase the number of members over last year.

Membership dues are as follows:

Individual:	\$20
Family:	\$30
Senior:	\$10
Life Member:	\$250
Group/Business	\$100

Membership payments should be sent to: Old Town Museum; PO Box 375; Old Town, ME 04468.

Remember, donations of any amount to the Museum may qualify for a tax-deduction in accord with IRS Regulations. Donations should be sent to the same address as dues.