

# MUS-NEWS

Volume 7 Number 1  
Summer 2005

**Board of Directors**

President  
Barbara Csavinszky  
827-6785

Vice President  
Carol May  
827-8739

Secretary  
Barbara Conners  
827-3654

Treasurer  
William Osborne  
827-7245

Members  
Charles Buck  
866-4393  
Beverly Clarke  
827-2650  
Richard Eustis  
827-2238  
Virginia Fortier  
827-3472  
Sue Gleason  
866-2434  
Harold Lacadie  
827-4691  
Margaret Manzer  
827-3847  
Howard Merrill  
827-2649  
Betsy Paradis  
827-3045  
Kenneth Sirois  
827-4833  
Marlene Wight  
827-3608

**Operations Manager**

Joe Ayotte  
827-5667

## VIDEO TAPE PRO-

On May 22, 2005, nearly 200 people were in attendance at the new Old Town Elementary School Auditorium for the first public presentation of the historical video, "In Their Own Words". This video, approximately 30 minutes in length, consists of 11 of Old Town's most prominent long-term residents telling about some of their memories of growing up in Old Town. The interviews shown on the video are only a small portion of the nearly 22 hours of actual taped interviews.

The stories told by those by the individuals have been woven into an oral history that is supported by still photos, film clips and music that will help the viewer better understand not only the background but also the implications of some of the stories.

Those featured in the video are: Beverly Spencer, Anna Griffith, Ken Dewitt, Herbert Sargent, Joe Sewall, Ruth Gray, Ruth Littlefield, Eugene Paradis, Howard Merrill, Ted Mitchell, and Benoit Bouchard.

The video is available in both DVD and video tape at a cost of \$15.00 tax included, if picked up at the Museum or \$17.00 if mailed. Orders should be sent to Barbara Csavinszky; 15 Sewall Drive; Old Town, ME 04401

## SUNDAY 2:00 PM PROGRAMS

Most Sunday's during the summer, the Old Town Museum provides an entertaining program where there is no admission charge. Several programs have already occurred but many more are scheduled.

The following is a schedule for the balance of the summer:

- July 31** - Native American Lore  
Jackie Currey and Friends
- August 14** - Zachary  
Famous Juggler
- August 21** - Dr. Douglas Sewall  
Wonders of Companion Dogs
- August 28** - Fashion Show  
Featuring clothes from the Museum's collection
- September 4** - Museum Closed for  
Labor Day weekend
- September 11** - Six Basin Street Band  
and the Sweet Adelines
- September 18** - Second Annual Follies  
Music of the 1920's era
- October 9** - The Famous Y-Players

We hope you will plan on attending one of these programs. Before or after the program, take a look around and view some of the historical exhibits. See what the area was like in earlier years.

## A MOMENT IN OUR HISTORY - DO YOU REMEMBER THE TROLLEY?

Do you remember the electric trolley line that served Old Town for about 50 years? Many of our long-time Old Town or Orono residents may have memories of this street railway service as ran until December 1945.

In an earlier issue of this newsletter, we reminded our readers that Old Town was the northern terminus of the first railroad in New England and the second railroad built in the United States. We can say the same about the trolley line. It was a part of the first successful electric street railway built in New England and the second built in the US, the first successful city-wide system being built in Richmond, Virginia in 1888. The Bangor Street Railway was chartered in 1888 and it drew its power from a steam-fired electric generating station owned by the Bangor Electric Light and Power Co. located at the corner of Cross & Columbia Streets in downtown Bangor. This steam-fired plant had difficulty generating enough electricity so that the trolley cars could climb the hills in Bangor.

The original franchise granted by the city of Bangor to the Bangor Street Railway contained some interesting requirements; the speed was limited to 6 MPH and if turning a corner at a street intersection, the speed could not exceed what the speed would have been if the trolley was drawn by a horse. The franchise also indicated that ladies and children were not allowed to enter or leave the trolley car if the car was in motion.

In 1889, the Old Town Street Railway was chartered with some

well known names serving as the incorporators; Joseph Smith, James Wentworth, Flavious Beal, Albert Brown, James Sewell, William Pearson and William Engel. The Old Town, Orono and Veazie Railroad was chartered in February 1891 to connect the Old Town Street Railway with the Bangor Street Railway. To provide for this growing need for electricity to power the street railways, a new hydroelectric generating station was open in Veazie in 1891 by the Bangor Light & Power Company. Although there were numerous entities with different names, they all operated under the management of the Public Works Company. Over time, the Public Works Company actually acquired many of these firms. These included the Bangor Electric Light & Power Company, Bangor Street Railway, Old Town Electric Light & Power Company, the Bangor, Orono & Old Town Railway, the Bangor & Northern Railway, and the Bangor, Hampden & Winterport Railway. It should be noted that the names of some of these companies had changed since their original chartering.

Operations from Bangor to Old Town began in July 1895, about 110 years ago. The primary power for the line came from the Veazie power station but there was a large storage battery bank located in Old Town to help service the line. The battery bank was powered from the Milford generating station. Reports to the City Electrician in Old Town in 1895-96 indicated some concerns about the support of the electrical trolley cable as some of the "span wires" holding the trolley cable were attached to buildings or trees.

The route to Old Town started in Bangor, came through the Veazie village to Orono, and then followed College Avenue (past the

University) to Stillwater Avenue, followed Stillwater Ave to Main Street and then south along Main Street. The line was extended to Jameson Street in Great Works after approval had been granted to cross the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad tracks. However, the run from the "Old Town stop" to Great Works was not always made resulting in many complaints. If the trolley was late arriving in Old Town, it made up some lost time by not continuing on to Great Works.

In addition to the complaints about the problems with service to Great Works, there were also complaints about comfort of the cars on the long run from Bangor to Old Town. Initially, these cars had a single set of wheels on the front and rear rather than the more comfortable "double-trucks" which had 2 sets of wheels front and rear. The last trolley car into Old Town at night was kept in a "car barn" in Old Town to serve as the first run to Bangor in the morning. Legend has it that the complaints about comfort were so bad that a group of University student blew up the trolley car and car barn with dynamite, late one night in hopes that that it would bring about more comfortable service. It is not clear if this was the cause but the company did purchase double-truck cars for the Old Town line.

The General Electric Company was a major owner of the firms owned or managed by the Public Works Company as they had accepted stock in the various companies as a part of the payment for equipment they had sold to the street railways and power companies. As these companies were in poor financial condition, GE brought in John Graham to serve as President and Treasurer of the

Continued on next page

Public Works Company. Mr. Graham had extensive experience in improving electric street railways and electric power companies and he applied this expertise to the Public Works Company. Within a relatively short period of time, he had the entire system reorganized, operating on schedule, making a profit and operating with better equipment. He had also expanded Riverside Park in Hampden, owned by the street railway, as a way of increasing the number of passengers using the trolley cars.

In addition to being able to go to Old Town or Hampden from Bangor on the electric street railway, there was also a line that extended through Glenburn, Kenduskeag, Corinth to Charleston and a line extending to Brewer. In 1901, there were 4 trips per day to Charleston for 6 days a week and 6 trips per day on Sunday. This is perhaps an indication of the use of the trolley for Sunday trips to Riverside Park in Hampden.

By 1914, the on-time service on the Old Town line was on 30 minute intervals from 5:30 am until 8:30 pm and beginning at 9:00 pm was hourly until 11:00 pm going north from Bangor. The southbound run was on 30 minute intervals beginning at 5:45 am until 8:45 pm and then switched to hourly until 11:15 pm. The last car into Old Town at night became the first car in the morning for the trip to Bangor. The run from Bangor to Old Town was divided into three 5-cent zones with the fare based on where one entered and exited the car.

Also in 1914, the Old Town line became the first line in the system to be equipped with automatic "block signals" that signaled a car in the block ahead. This improved both the safety and operation of the line.

In June 1918, freight and ex-

press service was added to the Old Town line with one daily freight/express service round trip from Bangor. A spur was also added at the University Heating Plant for coal delivery.

In early 1920, the "Blizzard of the Century" hit the area, One trolley motorman reported that he was able to make it into Old Town but could not return to Bangor for 10 days because of the snow. The University of Maine declared a "Holiday" with all "able-bodied male students" helping to dig out the trolley line.

In 1925, The Bangor Railroad & Electric Company became the Bangor Hydro-Electric Company. Many years earlier, Mr. Graham had indicated that the success of the Bangor Railway & Electric Company would depend much more on the sale of electricity than on operating a rail line.

Service on the entire Bangor-area trolley system ended in December 1945. It had been the first electric street railway in Maine when it began operations. When it ceased operation, there were only two others left in Maine, a short line from Sanford to Springvale in southern Maine and the Aroostook Valley line in Presque Isle that was used only to transport school children.

Does this bring back any old memories?

The Old Town Museum has on display, models of 2 of the cars that were used by the Old Town Street Railway about 1890.

\*\*\*\*\*

## MUSEUM DISPLAYS REORGANIZED

If you have not visited the Museum recently, you will find the display area completely reorganized and expanded. Under the leadership of Harold Lacadie, Museum

Exhibits Committee Chair, the entire exhibit area has been rearranged and some new material is on display. The rearranging is still a "work in progress" but much has been accomplished. The Committee is still in the process of developing some new exhibits. A portion of the area is now subdivided into "rooms" where one can begin to get the flavor of what a home might look before we had all of today's conveniences.

\*\*\*\*\*

## MUSEUM HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING

On February 28, 2005, The Old Town Museum held its Annual Membership Meeting at which time new Directors were elected for 3-year terms. Those elected were Barbara Conners, Harold Lacadie, Marlene Wight, Howard Merrill and Betsy Paradis. The Treasurer, William Osborne, reported that the Museum had operated in the "black" for the previous year.

Following the Annual Membership Meeting, the Museum Board met to transact the necessary business including the election of officers. Those elected to serve in 2005 were: Barbara Czavinszky, President; Carol May, Vice President; William Osborne, Treasurer; and Barbara Conners, Secretary. Later Barbara Csvanszky appointed the 2005 Committee Chairs as follows:

Endowment Fund - Dick Eustis  
Exhibits - Harold Lacadie  
Programs - Peggy Manzer  
Publicity - Barbara Conners  
Newsletter - Dick Eustis  
Ways & Means - Beverly Clarke

The Board adopted an schedule of days the Museum would be open, adopted an annual budget and considered other issues relating to the Museum operation.

# MEMBERSHIP/DONATION DRIVE

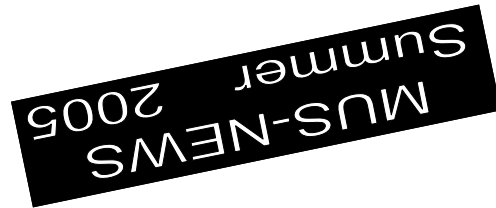
Membership in the Old Town Museum or financial donations are ways which anyone can help in preserving the history of the Old Town area. Dues and donations are a substantial help in the funding of the Museum operations. Remember, the Museum does not charge an admissions fee. Your Membership payment or your donation is greatly appreciated.

We hope the readers of this issue of Mus-News will continue their support of the Old Town Museum. The Museum is the place where the history of the area is displayed for your viewing. A place to visit to bring back old memories and a place to show your children (or grandchildren) how things were in earlier times.

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.

If you would like to donate to the Museum or become a member of the Museum, please complete and mail the form at the bottom of this page.

TO:



THE OLD TOWN MUSEUM  
PO BOX 375  
OLD TOWN, ME 04468

## Old Town Museum; PO Box 375; Old Town, ME 04468

Membership or Donation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SuNL05

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership or Donation  
(Circle appropriate item and if Donation, fill in amount)

Individual	\$20	Senior	\$10
Family	\$30	Life	\$250
Group or Business	\$100	Donation:	\$ _____

1976 – 2005  
29 years of Service  
To Old Town and the  
Surrounding  
Communities

353 Main St



Membership entitles you to voting rights at the Annual Meeting. Donations are "Tax-deductible" to the extent provided by the applicable regulations. The Old Town Museum is a 501(c)3 organization.

If you would like to be a Museum Volunteer, please check here \_\_\_\_\_ and provide your telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_