

353 Main Street,
Old Town, Maine 04468
Mailing Address:
P. O. Box 375

OLD TOWN MUSEUM

Established 1976

The Old Town Museum is a volunteer effort dedicated to preserving Old Town's history.

A Walk in the Past – The Old Town Museum

By Pam Dorr

How many of us often stop and wonder what it would be like to go back to “the good old days” once again? According to many items I get on Facebook, those long ago times still evoke memories that are very special to each and every one of us. So maybe we can’t actually go back in time, but we can take a walk in the past by heading to 353 Main Street in Old Town, Maine. Many of you may remember the familiar building as the Saint Mary’s Catholic Church, but since 1976 it has housed the Old Town Museum and some wonderful memories from the City on the Penobscot.

There are so many exhibits it is difficult to know where to begin. There are cases everywhere and they hold items from Old Town’s past. These cases have been moved and labeled to

make it easier to see everything on the tour. You might want to stop and see the items from the lumber industry and the tools used in this trade through the years. You can look at the Sanborn maps that were involved in fire insurance and date back to the mid 1800’s or check out memorabilia from the Fire Department through the years. There are baskets made by the Penobscot Indians and artifacts from their earlier times. Along your tour you can also see items from and the history of many of Old Town’s industries such as the James W. Sewall Co., Butterfield Bottling, Moose River Shoe, etc. You can picture yourself getting a haircut in a barber’s chair from the 1950’s, getting a tooth pulled in an old dentist chair, see yourself in an early kitchen or sitting room, complete with piano and sheet music. There is war memorabilia and uniforms from various time periods, a

200 year old birch bark canoe, and an Old Town canoe from the 1950’s newly painted and refinished. If you still long for the old school days, there are exhibits that take you back to elementary school and OTHS. There is a large doll collection and toys from years gone by. A trip to the museum is truly a walk down Memory Lane.

The museum has not been idle in making improvements throughout the last couple of years. The storage room ceiling has been repaired, the basement has been done over and dehumidifiers and a venting system have been installed. A new staircase now leads to the choir loft and allows for better access to more storage area. Improvements help to keep all the item so generously given to the museum visible for your enjoyment.

If you are planning a visit this summer, the museum is open most weekends from Friday through Sunday, which are program days. Some programs to look forward to in 2019 are a Japanese guitarist, a program in conjunction with the Old Town Library; the Old Town Museum Chorus; Herb Crosby from the Logging Museum; author Jack Cashman; and the Basin Street All Girl Dixieland Band. Other dates have not been confirmed, but Sunday visits are of great interest and fun for all.

Maybe we can’t really go back in time, but a visit to the Old Town Museum can help us to remember Old Town, the way it used to be. I remember when I was a student at OTHS, I wrote a poem for a yearly contest called “Old Town My City.” I don’t remember hardly any of that poem from so many years ago except for one line: “Old Town my City on whose streets I walk today.” I loved walking down those streets and now, when I go to the museum, some of the memories of those good times are waiting there for me and for you.

Program Schedule Summer 2019 Season

June 9 – Old Town Museum Chorus performing 100+ years of American Music.

June 23 – Herb Crosby from the Logging Museum will present a program on the Lombard Steam Log Hauler.

July 14 – Jack Cashman will present a program on Jack’s Five, a New England Semi-Pro Basketball Team with a local connection.

August 4 – Brian Swartz will speak on his book *Maine at War, Vietnam 1, Bradensburg to Sharpsburg*.

August 18 – Jack Cashman, will talk on his book, *An Irish Immigrant Story*.

September 8 – The Old Town Museum Chorus will perform Patriotic Songs for Patriot’s Day.

September 15 – A historical discussion about the Penobscot Chemical Fibre Company led by Rusty Stevens, Arthur Knapp and Mark Parker.

September 22 – Kevin Johnson of the Penobscot Marine Museum will be Exploring the Photography Archives of the Penobscot Marine Museum.

October 6 – 6 Basin Street, All Girl Dixieland Band.

Eastern Trust and Banking Co. Clock Restored

On May 1, 1969 the Eastern Trust and Banking Co. property at the corner of Main and Center Streets in Old Town was sold to First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Old Town. Shortly before or after the sale was completed the iconic clock which had adorned the bank was removed.

No records have been found as to when the clock first appeared on the bank's corner. The property upon which the bank stood was purchased by the bank on April 4, 1913. The heirs of the Folsom estate sold the last remaining part of the Folsom Block to the bank. The sale was negotiated by bank director Herbert H. Gray. Moses Richardson signed the deed over to the bank as the representative of the estate.

The Old Town Enterprise of January 1, 1913 indicates, "The last remaining portion of Folsom Block which housed the Mutty Pharmacy was sold to Eastern Trust and Banking Co." The Enterprise of June 1914 states that "foundation work has begun". The building was completed sometime in late 1914. The Enterprise of December 19, 1914 states, "Everyone admires the new building



of the Eastern Trust and Banking Co. The well-known Folsom-Mutty corner will shine as it never did before when the building is complete and occupied. The inside will be no less attractive as it will house \$750,000 in savings of the prudent people of Old Town, beside the commercial accounts which are enough more to run the deposits up to over one million of dollars. June 8th 1887 is the date the Eastern Trust & Banking Co. opened its doors in Old Town. This is the result of their 27 years of prosperous business."

At some time after the iconic clock was removed from the corner of the bank building one face of the clock was donated to the Old Town Museum. The rest of the clock was sold to an antique dealer and disappeared from Old Town forever. Recently, Bill Osborne, a member of the Board of Director decided the clock face needed to be cleaned and presented in a better setting in the Museum. The project started out as a simple cleaning of the stained glass, but soon turned into a much larger project. A new high torque motor was purchased for the clock, and a light box was built to house the clock face. The clock now keeps perfect time, lights up, and chimes again just as it did over 50 years ago before it was taken down. Please stop by and see this piece of Old Town's history restored to working order.

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The Museum Opens for the Season In June. We will be open Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. Stop in and see our new enhanced displays!!

A Look Back at Jack's Five

By Jack Cashman

In 1951 the University of Maine men's basketball team had its most successful season with 19 wins against only 4 losses. The team was led by two Old Town natives, Don Sturgeon and Skip Chappelle. This same pair had led Old Town High School to a state championship in basketball four years earlier. Chappelle achieved the status of first team little All American for his play in 61, his junior year at UMaine. Both Surgeon and Chappelle were friends of Old Town restaurant owner, Jack Cashman. Cashman had formed a semi pro basketball team in Franklin, New Hampshire in the late forties and the wealth of talent on the Maine team inspired him to form another semi pro team in Old Town.

Jack's Five – The name Jack's Five came from Cashman's recruiting efforts that put together the best starting five that had ever graced the basketball courts in Maine. He started with Don Sturgeon and team captain, Skip Chappelle. Then they recruited UMaine teammate Larry Shiner, a 6'5" high scoring forward who had set the record for shooting percentage at Maine. Then he brought in Jack Scott, a 6'1" guard who led Ellsworth High School to two state championships and was the only high school basketball player from Maine to be selected first team all New England twice. Many Maine fans considered Scott to be the best basketball player ever to play in Maine.



Jack's Five, New England Semi-Pro Basketball, 1963

The final piece fell into place when Cashman recruited 6'10" center Bob McCully, a three year starter at St. Bonaventure and a second round NBA draft pick. McCully was doing graduate work in engineering at UMaine. He was the perfect complement to the other four starters.

Cashman filled out the bench with more UMaine starters -- Wayne Champion from Milo, Dick Sturgeon (Don's brother) from Old Town, Leroy Patterson and Ted Leadbetter from Bangor, and Ned Robertson from Brewer. Collectively they formed the best semi pro team, not only in Maine, but for a two year run in all of New England.

To fully understand the importance of semi pro basketball in 1963 you need to understand how different things were at that time. There was no ESPN. There were three television stations and sporting events were not televised very often., There were only nine MBA teams and their games were seldom on television. Many college players who would have played in the NBA if the league had as many teams as it has today, turned to semi pro basketball in order to continue playing at a high level. Many of Jack's players would fall into that category.

Maine had a long history in competition among town basketball teams. What made Jack's Five different was

that they not only played the best teams in Maine, they took on all comers from all over New England and New York state. The Marco Polo team from Connecticut had long been considered the best semi pro team in New England. Jack's Five played them and beat them. In their first year they won twenty-one out of twenty-two games. Over the two years, 1963 and 1964, they lost a total of four games while playing the best competition in the Northeast. A case could be easily made that the only team in New England better than Jack's Five over that two year period was the world championship Boston Celtics.

At the close of the two year period, Bob McCully moved out of the area, Don Sturgeon's cranky back caused him to stop playing, and the work schedules of virtually all the team members made it more difficult to commit to a schedule. Still, Jack put games together over the next three or four winters, including games against teams including Celtics players after the close of the NBA season. Over those years, Jack's Five was responsible for bringing great basketball to the Bangor area. Fans got to see Celtic stars like K.C. Jones, Satch Sanders, Wayne Embree, Larry Siegfried, Don Nelson and Paul Silas, as well as Jimmie Walker and other NBA players. A true gift to basketball fans in the area.

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The 2018 Old Town Museum Fund Drive

The Old Town Museum depends upon the support of its members and donors for its continued success. Our current membership levels are Life (\$400), Family (\$50), Individual (\$30) and Senior (\$20), but donations of any amount are received with gratitude and used efficiently to maintain our exhibits and collections and provide public programming to educate the public on the area's history.

This past fund-raising effort has yielded over \$10,000.00 from the following donors. Some are local, some past residents who have moved away, while others are descendants of former area families. Still others are new to the Old Town area and have developed an interest in its past. To these constant supporters of our museum, we offer a heartfelt, "Thank you!" Your gifts will make possible our continuing improvements to our exhibit areas and programs.

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Established 1976

Individual \$30	Senior \$20
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Membership entitles you to voting rights at the Annual Meeting.

The Old Town Museum is a 501(c)(3) organization.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Museum, please check here