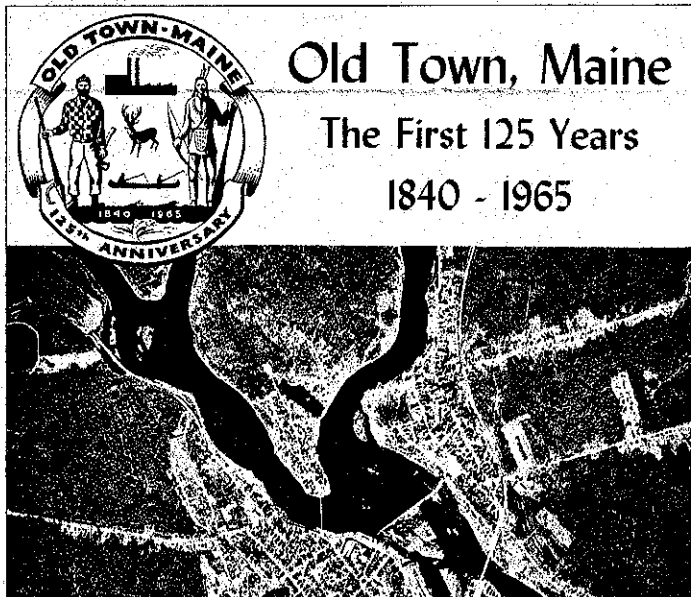


# OLD TOWN MUSEUM

353 Main Street, Old Town, Maine 04468  
Mailing Address: P. O. Box 375  
(207) 827-7256  
www.oldtownmuseum.com

*Established 1976*

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



**Old Town, Maine**  
The First 125 Years  
1840 - 1965

***The City of Old Town is celebrating its 175th Anniversary this year.***

The Museum is planning a special 175th Anniversary program on Sunday, May 31 at the Season Opening of the Museum.

A committee is updating the "Old Town, Maine, The First 125 Years 1840-1965" book and we would appreciate your input. If you have information you think should be included in the history, please contact Old Town's Librarian Cindy Jennings at [cjennings@old-town.org](mailto:cjennings@old-town.org).

The new books with more updated information and pictures will be available at Riverfest 2015 when we celebrate Old Town's Anniversary. Riverfest is Friday and Saturday, September 25 and 26. Plan to be there!

## ***A Look at Old Town's Rail History***

*Reprinted from Old Town, Maine  
The First 125 Years*

The first railroad between Old Town and Bangor was known as the "Old Town Railway Company", and was begun in 1832. This line was later bought up by the "Bangor and Piscataquis Canal and Railroad Company" and the first train ran Thanksgiving Day, November 1836. This was the first completed road in New England, and the second in the United States. The rails were wooden, with an iron rail  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch thick on top. The  
*(Continued on back page)*

### **Museum 2015 Schedule** Sundays at 2 p.m. at the Museum

- May 31 – Season Opening 175th Anniversary Celebration  
Essays, Poems and Music
  - June 14 – Flag Day Program - Museum Chorus
  - July 12 – History of Cyr Bus with Joe and Sue Cyr
  - August 2 – Program presented by Hal Borns
  - September 13 – Eastern Illustrating  
Images - Kevin Johnson, PMM
  - September 20 – Richard Grady Presentation
- The Old Town Museum opens for the Season on Friday, May 29 and will be open each Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. through October 11**  
Check our website at [www.theoldtownmuseum.com](http://www.theoldtownmuseum.com) and see "what's going on at the museum".

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Eisso Atzema, Joe Ayotte, Barbara Connors, Philip Dunn, Richard Eustis, Virginia Fortier, Carol Klitch, Margaret Manzer, Carol May, Michael May, William Osborne, Betsy Paradis, Cassandra Pool, Carolyn Smith

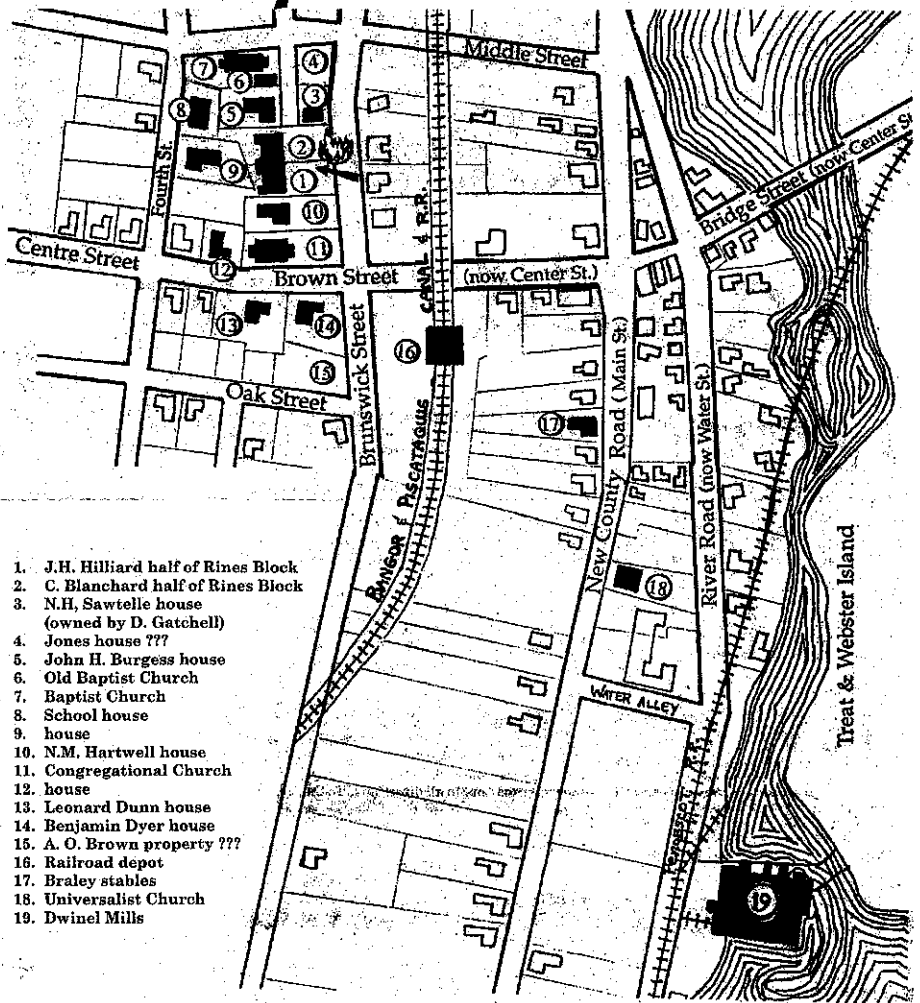
# Lincoln Fire - April 19, 1865

Reprinted from the April 19, 1990  
The Old Town-Orono Times

Newspapers on April 1856 were filled with every conceivable tidbit of President Lincoln's and Secretary of State's deaths. Not yet having the technology to print photographs they used the only method at their disposal to mark this most noteworthy event by edging all newspaper columns in black borders. That one week in April some 125 years ago is certainly one that can be edged in black in the annals of Old Town's history. The news of death in the Nation's capital, Old Town's proclamation of outrage and mourning and the appalling lack of reverence of one woman must have raised emotions high and veiled the town in shock and disbelief. Still all this could not have prepared Old Town for its greatest tragedy yet, the fire of April 19, 1865.

It is interesting to note that some of the very men that had gathered to issue the town's proclamation of grief and to insure that the city properly honored the nation's fallen president were personally visited by the ravages of the great fire. Charles Blanchard and J. H. Hilliard each owned half of the Rines Block that was destroyed and J. H. Burgess also lost his home and furnishings.

The map is an attempt to give the reader a visual account of that fire in 1865.



1. J.H. Hilliard half of Rines Block
2. C. Blanchard half of Rines Block
3. N.H. Sawtelle house (owned by D. Gatchell)
4. Jones house ???
5. John H. Burgess house
6. Old Baptist Church
7. Baptist Church
8. School house
9. house
10. N.M. Hartwell house
11. Congregational Church
12. house
13. Leonard Dunn house
14. Benjamin Dyer house
15. A. O. Brown property ???
16. Railroad depot
17. Braley stables
18. Universalist Church
19. Dwineel Mills

## Old Town Fire

Reprinted from the Whig & Courier, Bangor - April 19, 1865

Oldtown - During the high wind, a fire broke out in the "Rines Block," and swept through the village with irresistible fury. In the rear of the Rines Block, a house owned by J.H. Hilliard and a school house were destroyed. North of the Rines Block the flames spread to the house owned and occupied by Capt. J.H. Burgess thence to the Baptist chapel (old), the Baptist meeting house and the dwelling houses of N.H. Sawtelle (owned by David Gatchell), and Mr. Jones. South of the Block, the flames spread to the residence of N.M. Hartwell, thence to the Congregational Church, then to a house in rear owned by William Cole, and the two houses directly opposite the church owned by Leonard E. Dunn and Benjamin Dwyer and thence to a house owned by Albert O. Brown. The old Railroad Depot and out buildings, together with one car were also consumed. The valuable block of mills (situated a quarter of a mile away from the immediate region of the fire) owned by Rufus Dwineel were also destroyed, having caught from sparks conveyed there by high wind.

There were three fire engines present from Oldtown, Orono and Stillwater. They did good service saving many buildings. That they did not accomplish more is due to the high wind and the combustible character of the buildings on fire. There was also lack of hose. It is claimed that 20 feet more of hose would have saved the Baptist Church.

The Rines Block was a fine large structure situated on high ground. This fact in connection with the high wind prevailing will account for the rapid spread of the flames. It is asserted, that if the wind had not changed when the conflagration was at its height, the principal part of the town would have been destroyed.

This is the most destructive fire that ever took place in Oldtown. By it some seventeen families are made homeless and at a loss of \$62,000. So rapid was the progress of the flames that a large amount of furniture was destroyed.

To read more about Old Town's "Lincoln Fire" visit the Old Town Public Library's website, and click on Digital Archives to find digitized copies of most issues of The Old Town Enterprise, The Penobscot Times and The Old Town-Orono Times.

# Become a member of the Museum

The mission of the Old Town Museum is to collect, preserve and display objects and information related to the heritage of the Old Town area and its residents; and to create interest in this heritage through programs, exhibits, education and other methods.

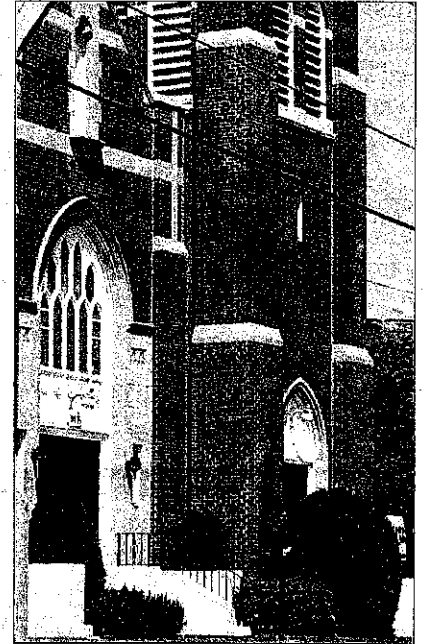
Membership in the Museum is an ideal way for not only the readers of this Newsletter but also others in the area to support this Mission. The Museum does not charge admission and most of the educational and historical programs are offered as a service to the community, so Membership Dues and Donations are the two major sources of income for the Museum.

The Old Town Museum is one of the few locations in the area where it is possible to observe the tools, equipment, and household items that were very familiar to our grandparents and great grandparents. The Museum is also a place where one may view Old Town's past through photographs, artifacts and writings, which illustrate the businesses, industries and activities of earlier generations in this area. The Old Town area played a very significant part in the development of the Penobscot River Valley.

Many have forgotten this history, but you will find reminders of that important era in the displays and collections available at the Museum. This is a place where visitors are able to refresh old memories or perhaps educate younger generations about what life was like in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

We encourage any of you who are not yet members, to join the Museum Family at the appropriate level (See the Membership Form below). If you elect to become a "Life Member", you will become a museum member for life, and your "Life Membership Dues" will be placed into our Museum Endowment Fund, so that the income generated from these dues will continue to provide financial support for the operation of the Museum for many future years.

Even if you decide against membership at this time, we would encourage you to visit the Old Town Museum this summer and see the exhibits our volunteers have created for your enjoyment and enlightenment. We work hard to accomplish our mission, and we are sure you will enjoy the results of that work. You might even find a photo or an item on display that reminds you of an event you've experienced or a story you have heard from your own family members. We hope to see you there, and thank you for your support.



**Old Town Museum, P.O. Box 375, Old Town, ME 04468**

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State and Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## OLD TOWN MUSEUM

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

*Established 1976*

Individual \$30	Senior \$20
Family \$50	Life \$400
Group or Business \$175	Donation: \$ _____

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

# More About the "Old" Veazie Railroad

(Continued from page 1)

first engines, the "Pioneer" and the "No. 6" were built in England, and had wooden wheels. There were no cabs attached to the engines. The passenger cars, wooden, were made in Cambridge, Mass. The passengers were locked in. Fare to Bangor was 25 cents

The road from Bangor came through Stillwater, crossed the river at the upper end of the town near the old steam mill (later the Cement Pipe and Block Company), passed near the present Lawndale Cemetery, crossed Stillwater Avenue onto what is now Perkins Avenue, passed near the present residence of Donald McKay, cutting across to what is now Center Street. The depot was in the field back of the Helen Hunt School. This was the end of the road at first, but when the name was changed to the "Bangor, Old Town and Milford Railroad" the line was extended and passed between the Folsom Estate and the C. H. Gray residence on Center Street, going to the wharf at "Indian Landing." General Samuel Veazie obtained the franchise in 1854, built a bridge to Milford and continued to operate the road until 1869 -- hence the name "Old Veazie Railroad" by which it is known today. The European and North American Railroad the rails. The last run on this road was made in June 1870

The Penobscot River Railroad Company was chartered in 1836, with plans for a road from Bucksport to Milford, with river crossings at Bangor, Orono, Great Works and Old Town, but the road was never built. The Bangor & Orono Railroad Company, was incorporated in 1847 and was extended in 1850 to include Old Town, Milford and Bradley, and the name changed to the Penobscot Railroad Company. Its bridge across the river at Old Town was demolished by ice in the spring of 1856.

The European and North American Railway Company was chartered in 1850, and in 1869, bought the franchise of the Penobscot Railroad. The road was completed in Old Town in 1868 and to Mattawamkeag

in 1869. Extensive repair and construction shops were built in Old Town, which burned in 1876, and new shops were built in Mattawamkeag.

The Old Town and Lincoln Railroad Company was incorporated in 1852, planning a line from Old Town to Mattawamkeag, but the franchise was later transferred to the European & North American Railway.

The Aroostook Railroad Company, chartered in 1858, planned to extend the existing railroad from Old Town to Aroostook county, but its franchise too went to the European & North American Railway.

In 1873, as a result of the panic of this year, the European and North American Railroad Company failed and the entire company was taken over in 1882, by the Maine Central, leasing it for 999 years.

The Bangor and Piscataquis, incorporated in 1861, was granted a franchise in 1864 to build from Old Town to Moosehead Lake. Tracks were completed from Old Town to Dover in 1869 and connected at Old Town with the European and North American.

The Bangor and Aroostook took over this line in 1893 and operated until June 10, 1933, when the run from Bangor to South LaGrange was discontinued. Up to this time the "B & A" had been using the Maine Central tracks from Bangor to Old Town, and from Old Town to South LaGrange, their own, but with the discontinuance of the route, due to the dropping off of shipments in the lumber and pulp businesses, and also to competition with trucks, the "B & A" tracks were eventually torn up (1933).

By 1895, Old Town was served by two railroads, the Bangor and Aroostook and the Maine Central, and 18 passenger trains left Old Town each day.

In 1965, rail traffic in Old Town was limited to switcher service for freight, operated six days a week by the Maine Central Railroad between Old Town and Bangor, where trains are formed.