

OLD TOWN MUSEUM

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

Established 1976

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

Museum Enjoys Busy Season

We had a great summer and fall at the museum and I hope you were able to join us for some of our interesting and fun programs. We opened the season on June 5th with a presentation on a native son, artist Bernard Langlais, presented by Paige Doore of Colby College. Bernard's youngest brother, Jim, was in the audience and was able to add much to the discussion. For more on Langlais and the collection at Colby see <https://www.colby.edu/museum/collection/bernard-langlais-collection/>.

Next, we had a musical program of old songs presented by the Museum Chorus, and in early July, Capt. Larry Wade, retired Ship Master at Maine Maritime Academy, gave a presentation on the current status of the maritime industry and how it affects us right here in Old Town, Maine.

Later in July, Bernie LaBree treated us to an illustrated history of LaBree's Bakery, from humble beginnings on French Island, to a worldwide supplier of baked goods. Everyone who attended left with a yummy package of blueberry muffins. Thank you, Bernie. This was followed by an interesting, hands-on program on foraging, presented by Old Town native, educator and conservationist, Ted Manzer.

The Museum Chorus performed once again, on September 11, entertaining us with patriotic songs, and Six Basin Street, the All Women Dixieland Jazz Band, put on another great show in early October. Peter Stowell and Betsy Paradis shared Old Town photos from the soon to be published Images of America book, and we closed out the season with a program sponsored jointly with the Old Town Public Library and held at the library. Rhea Cote Robbins, editor of the new book "Heliotrope: French Heritage Women Create," and three other contributors to the anthology, Kristin Langellier, Barbara Ouellette and Judy Lacadie Hill, shared readings and images from the book with audience members.

We hope you will be able to join us in 2017 when we present another series of historic and musical programs. In the meantime you can follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/Old-Town-Museum-82802006819/) or our website (www.theoldtownmuseum.org).



Bernard Langlais, 1976. Photograph by David Hiser, courtesy of the Colby College Museum of Art.



A scene from LaBree's Bakery in the early years.

Funeral Services in Old Town Maine ~ 1865 -Present

Researched By Mary Gibouleau

Early funerals were held from the family home and church rather than a funeral home, with the minister serving as funeral director. Local carpenters were called upon to make coffins. Wellman Boswell, born in Hartland, Oxford County arrived in Old Town in 1832 at the age of 22 as a carpenter assisting in the building of the Veazie block. Living on Treat and Webster Island, by 1865 he is listed in the New England Business Directories under Coffin Warehouses and Undertakers. Two months before his death he was honored for his 52 years of service to the Baptist Church including being a deacon for many years. I found no record regarding the disposition of his funeral and coffin business after his death in 1895 at the age of 84; he is buried at Forest Hill Cemetery.

Charles E Rackliff (1869 - 1936) was born in Starks, Somerset Co., Maine and established his business in 1890 as a Casket Manufacturer, Undertaker and Practical Embalmer, including all undertaker supplies and was open day and night. His business was located on Bridge Street opposite the Cousins' Hotel. By 1892 he had added making picture frames to his carpentry business; in 1909 he was the Old Town Coroner; and later involved in State politics. In 1894 he acquired the undertaking and furniture business of Mr. W. I. Chase and moved to the Water street location of Mr. Chase. In 1899 Mr. Rackliff went to Puerto Rico to exhume and return the body of Frank Jordan to Old Town. Also in 1899 he sold a one-half interest of his business to Joseph Hincks, a respected clerk at the Eastern Trust Bank, and so became the Rackliff Hincks Company. On April 12, 1902 it was reported that Joseph Hincks purchased the remaining interest from Mr. Rackliff ending his relationship with the company but not with the funeral business.

Joseph L. S. Hincks was born in Bangor in 1871. . An ad from 1902 reads: "I manufacture all the caskets and show the largest variety to be found in the State and at the lowest prices". . The Hincks Company was reputed to have "one of the most finely equipped undertaking establishments in Maine". A fire destroyed buildings on Water Street in 1905, and Mr. Hincks petitioned for a permit to rebuild his funeral building on Water Street. Joseph Hincks died in 1927 of typhoid fever and pneumonia at Old Town and is buried at the Lawndale Cemetery. The Hincks Undertaking and Casket Manufacturing business would later become the Craig Funeral Service and the Jordan Lumber Company Casket Department.

William E. Craig (about 1874-1942) was born in Carleton, New Brunswick and came to Old Town in 1891 at the age of 17 working in the shoe business, a meat market and then into the manufacture of caskets and undertaking. In 1900 he graduated from New England Institute. He worked for Rackliff and Hincks and in 1908 he purchased the undertaking part of the business

from the Hincks Company .In 1925 he was located at 21 Middle Street and relocated to 24 High Street to the Sawyer property providing a chapel, show rooms, offices and an apartment upstairs. In 1933 he purchased the A. R. Russell Undertaking Business of Orono. By 1937 his ad read: "We place at your disposal our full equipment and up to date furnishings so necessary to the Funeral Service of today. An added feature of our considerate service is the presence of Mrs. Craig as the lady assistant".

In 1939 Craig's Funeral Home advertised ambulance service and for many years funeral homes provided this

service for the city. After years of horse drawn hearses, Mr. Craig had the first automobile hearse in the city. William E Craig died in 1942 and is buried at Lawndale Cemetery, Old Town. Following William E. Craig's death in 1942, his son Alfred, who had assisted him since 1947, promised to continue to serve the community to the same degree provided by his father until 1965 when The Craig Funeral Home and Chapel was purchased by Gerald Meader of Rumford. It was known as the Craig and Meader Funeral Home, Inc. and was managed by Richard Stanley a 32 year associate of Craig's Funeral Home. The Funeral home would again change ownership in 1974 when it was bought by the Baillargeon Funeral Home.

After 1902 Jordan Lumber Company Casket Department became the owner of

the coffin and casket manufacturing business previously owned by Joseph Hincks. In 1909 fire destroyed several Jordan Lumber company buildings. The company rebuilt the casket factory, a fine brick building (still standing as an apartment building) and in 1912 built an adjoining office building (now Dubay's lot) which was recently demolished. Charles Rackliff became the manager of this department representing the Jordan Company. In 1965, the Jordan Lumber Company transferred ownership to the Jordan Casket Company which continued to manufacture caskets until the early 1970's. The last ad published in 1970. During the 70's and 80's the property ownership passed several times, but casket manufacturing ceased.

Paul Baillargeon (1888-1951) founded the Baillargeon Funeral Home in 1919 and operated it until retirement in 1943 when his sons Edgar and Calix who joined the company in 1933 and 1939 respectively took over management. The business which began on Treat and Webster Island in 1919 remained there until 1926 when it relocated to 97 Center Street until 1943, then moving to the Middle Street address. In 1974 the Baillargeon and Craig Meader Fu-

(Continued on back page)

1	Casket & handles	\$ 85.00
1	cut side box	9.00
1	crucifix	3.00
	Embalming body	\$ 15.00
4	Pairs of gloves	\$ 2.00
30	Candles @ 15¢	4.50
	hearse	6.00
	Directing	5.00
		<u>\$ 129.50</u>
Paid in full July 2 1920		
Paul N. Baillargeon		
37 years 7 months 7 days		
Buried June 9 - 1920		

A typical page from the funeral records at the Museum. These records can be viewed by appointment.

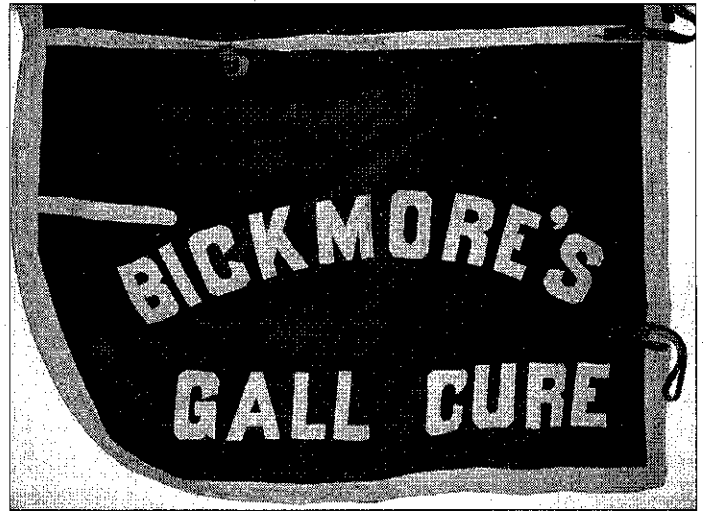
The Bickmore Company ~ Old Town, Maine

Composed by Dick Eustis, 2002
Amended by Carolyn Smith, 2016

Abiel Parker Bickmore (1851-1940) was the creator of "Bickmore Gall Cure," an ointment to treat sores on horses and cattle. The first batches of this salve were cooked in 1884 by Mr. Bickmore's wife on the kitchen stove of their home on Center Street. The medication was apparently well received. Mr. Bickmore found that he could not meet the demand by preparing the mixture at home. It was also clear there was a large market for the "cure" that Mr. Bickmore had created.

Thus, in 1892, the Bickmore Company was incorporated with Abiel P. Bickmore, George A. Gray, Herbert Gray and George Richardson as stockholders. Mr. Bickmore was identified as the Business Manager at the time of the incorporation. A slogan, "Be sure to work the horse" and the trademark depicting a working horse were adopted at this time. The horse appearing in the trademark was a real horse, familiar to many in the Old Town area as the dapple-gray, known as "Old Doc," used by the Penobscot Chemical Fibre Company to haul raw materials from one section of the plant to another. A relief of this horse can still be seen over the entrance to Bickmore Manor, a senior citizen housing unit on Main Street opposite the museum. This building was originally constructed by the company in 1906 to house their office and manufacturing facility.

In the early years, The Bickmore Company broadened its production line beyond the "Bickmore Gall Cure" (or Bickmore Ointment as it was known in other countries) to include a veterinary, two "Bickmore X.Y.Z. Ointment," "Bickmore Morticians Powder," and "Bickmore Shaving Cream." Advertising for their product was begun by Herbert Gray, who traveled throughout the East Coast states and the Midwest as early as 1892. They were advertised using two teams of horses drawing well-decorated wagons that toured New York and Indiana. With the success of this venture the number of teams were increased to nine by 1910 and was now able to cover a much larger area of the East Coast and Midwest. However, changes in modes of transportation gradually reduced the number of teams to six by 1914



This Bickmore Gall Cure horse blanket can be viewed at the Old Town Museum.

and by 1918, four trucks replaced all the horse teams.

Foreign sales of Bickmore products began early in the company's history. Markets in Canada, Great Britain and Australia were established in the late nineteenth century and in 1902 sales were expanded into Austria, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. At one time the Bickmore Company maintained offices in London, Madrid, Buenos Aires and Mexico City. To support their expanding foreign sales the Bickmore Company had manufacturing facilities in France and Canada.

The Bickmore Company continued to expand its line of products in the 1920's to include shaving cream, toothpaste, cold cream, disappearing cream, "Pom-gloss," and "X.Y.Z. Skin Ointment." They also continued with their original product, "Gall Salve" and a product known as "Healing Powder for Horses."

Over time, customer demands changed as did the products. By the 1950's, many personal products had disappeared although they continued making "Gall Salve," "Healing Powder," "X.Y.Z. Ointment" and "Morticians Powder." They had also added a new product, "Bickmore Fly Salve." As late as 1960, the Company was cited in The Penobscot Times as one of Old Town's "Widely-Known Industries" as an international business making veterinary medicines and exports to Europe, South America and Australia as well as an insect repellent, deodorant powder and other products.

Time overtook this firm that had its beginning developing a salve used as a treatment for workhorses' injuries. The declining use of horses and the growth of major consumer products firms were changes the company could not combat. The building faced foreclosure and the business sold in 1964. Today, the Bickmore Company building is our only local reminder of this industry. However, the company's name continues and its products are still sold, by the Bickmore Company of Whitmore Lake, Michigan, near Detroit.

Funeral Services in Old Town Maine ~ 1865 -Present

(Continued from page 2)

neral Homes consolidated as the Baillargeon Funeral Home at 109 Middle Street under the ownership of Edgar and Calix Baillargeon with Dick Stanley of Craig remaining on staff. In 1976 Dominick Susi was employed by Baillargeon and in 1977 he purchased the Baillargeon Funeral Home assets and continued to operate the business until 1991 when John Birmingham purchased it and began the Birmingham Funeral Home Service. Baillargeon involvement ended on February 11, 1981 when Calix announced that he was no longer working at the Baillargeon Funeral Home.

Everett Nealey was born in 1891 in Bangor, the son of a prominent doctor by the same name. He was in the Ambulance Corp of the US Army during WW I. Returning at the age of 17, he worked for 25 years with the Penobscot Chemical Company in Old Town before opening his funeral home. After graduating from the McAllister School of Embalming and Plastic Surgery he opened his own funeral home about 1935 at 51 Brunswick Street. He employed Rudolph St. Louis a fellow graduate in 1936. After his death in 1952 there are no more ads for the Funeral Home which presumably closed at his death in 1952.

John Birmingham had been associated with the Kiley Funeral Home of Brewer. In 1982 the Kiley-Birmingham Funeral Home at 259 So. Main Street was established. The Birmingham Funeral Home was established in 1991 at the same site. Although the management of the Birmingham Funeral Home changed when it became a member of the Dignity Memorial national chain of funeral homes the name has remained the same. Currently this is the only Funeral Home presence in Old Town. However many people use services of Funeral Homes in Bangor, Brewer and Orono as well as direct cremation businesses.

The family owned Brookings Smith Funeral Home located in Bangor expanded to Old Town in 2001 after making renovations to the former Indian Art store at 228 Main Street, now the Penobscot County Credit Union building. After a four year presence Brookings Smith left Old Town having establishments in Orono and Bangor to meet their need.

Any corrections or additions are welcome. Primary source was the The Penobscot Times and previous newspapers.

The Old Town Museum holds funeral records from the 1920's to the 1990's and are available by appointment.

THANK YOU Donors and Members

Thanks!

For Your Support

This Newsletter provides the Museum Board with an opportunity to express our "Thanks" and appreciation to all of those that provide the funding that make the operation of the Old Town Museum possible. The Old Town Museum exists as the result of active volunteers and all of the expenses are paid by the funds generated from our Annual Donation Drive, our Membership campaign and the small number of sales from our Museum Gift Shop along with a few fund raising activities; we do not receive any funding from the City of Old Town. This means that everything the Museum does is supported by your donations.

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

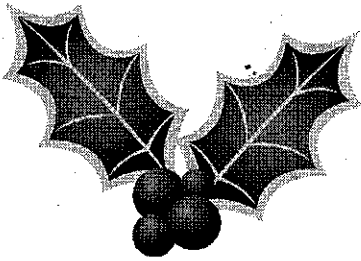
Group or Business \$175

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



OLD TOWN MUSEUM

Established 1976

December 13, 2016

Dear Museum Friends,

Our 2016 season has ended. Our committees are all looking forward to the 2017 season; making plans for programs and exhibits while continuing to process our collections and donations.

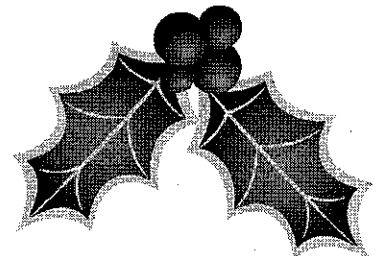
As you know, for the past year and a half, Peter Stowell has been searching for images in the museum collection, gathering photos from community members and museum friends and scanning them with the intention of publishing a book of Old Town photos and history. He has been doing research in old books and newspapers and talking to people, gathering the information needed to write interesting and informative captions for those photos and has organized them all by subject. We are very excited about the February release of "Images of America – Old Town," the result of all of Peter's hard work. I've seen a preview, and I assure you, it will bring back many memories for those of you who grew up in the Old Town area and an education for those of you from away.

We are grateful to all of you who have helped in some way with this project. Now we need more help. It will soon be time for the museum to purchase copies of the book to sell at the museum and at other venues and events in the community. If we receive enough money in donations to purchase the books, all proceeds from sales can be added to our treasury. These funds will allow us to provide a safe environment for all of the wonderful artifacts, documents and photos housed in our beautiful old church, maintain that church and open the doors to community members and visitors so they can learn about the history of Old Town through our displays and programs.

As always, in addition to your financial assistance, we also need active and interested museum members, volunteers to serve as board members and on committees and we need help staffing the museum during open hours in the summer and fall. I hope we will be able to count on you to assist and support the museum in any or all of these ways. You will find more about our activities in this newsletter, as well as information about how you can become a member and/or make a tax-deductible donation.

Happy Holidays to you all. We look forward to hearing from you.

Betsy Huyett Paradis
President
Old Town Museum



MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eisso Atzema, Sarah Averill, Joe Ayotte, Barbara Connors, Philip Dunn, Carol Klitch, Virginia Fortier, Margaret (Peggy) Manzer, Carol May, Michael May, Linda McLeod, Betsy Paradis, Cassandra Pool, Carolyn Smith, David Wight