

OLD TOWN MUSEUM

353 Main Street, Old Town, Maine 04468

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 375

(207) 827-7256

Established 1976

www.theoldtownmuseum.org

JANUARY 2021

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

75 Years Ago – From The Penobscot Times, Friday, May 30, 1947

Herbert Gray, Industrial, Civic Leader, Dies at 93

Herbert Gray, 93, retired mill owner, former mayor and prominent citizen died at his home, 50 High Street, Saturday morning after a short illness. A lifelong resident of this city, Mr. Gray was born in Old Town, March 26, 1854, the son of Alexander and Mary (Baston) Gray, he had observed his 93rd birthday anniversary this spring, and was believed to be the oldest resident of Old Town.

From early youth, Mr. Gray was associated with his brother in various business enterprises. First manufacturing valises in Old Town in 1876 in a building on Shirley Street. About this time he became associated with the Old Town Woolen Company, later acquiring the ownership and operating it for a period of nearly 50 years.

After a few years, during which Mr. Gray participated in founding the Bickmore Company, Mr. Gray and his associates started the Old Town Canoe Company which he conducted for a number of years until the pressure of other business necessitated his withdrawal.

Mr. Gray will be remembered in all parts of the state as well as outside the state for his activities, especially in the woolen trade. He was well known in and around Boston.

Herbert Gray was the last surviving charter member of Tarratine Lodge, I.O.O.F., of Old Town and the last surviving honorary member of Myrtle Rebekah Lodge. He was one of the first men in the city to help organize the Antituberculosis Association, now a permanent



health organization in the city. He was a charter Member of the Old Town Commercial Club and remained a member until the organization was dissolved.

Mr. Gray was Mayor of Old Town for two full terms, 1894 and 1895. His interest and influence in civic affairs was maintained through almost his entire lifetime.

The Herbert Gray School was named in his honor.

He is survived by one son, Maurice H. Gray of Old Town; two daughters, Mrs. Harry W. Porter of Old Town and Mrs. Donald R. Aldworth of Garden City, N.Y.; and five grandchildren.

The remains were brought to Craig's Funeral Home and then transferred to his late home at 50 High Street, where

funeral services were held Monday afternoon, with the Rev. Edward M. Keazirian of the United Baptist Church officiating.

City Hall offices and local stores closed during the funeral hour as an act of respect. Members of the Bickmore Company and the Eastern Trust Company employees of Bangor attended as well as officers and heads of other organizations.

Bearers were Hollis Phelps, Edgar F. Cousins, William Dow, Oliver Bickmore, Joseph Danforth and Ballard Keith. Interment was in the family lot in Lawndale Cemetery with committal services conducted by Mr. Keazirian at the cemetery.)

MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eisso Atzema, Joe Ayotte, Barbara Connors, Pamela Dorr, Robert Dorr, Philip Dunn, Margaret (Peggy) Manzer, Carol May, Cassandra Pool, Bill Osborne, Carolyn Smith, Robert Stanley, David Wight

The girl who loved the movies – *Janice Alice Curran*

By William Osborne

Janice Alice Curran was born February 10, 1910 on Water Street in Old Town. She was the third child born to James Edward and Nellie Rice Curran. The family lived in a rental unit at the time and Edward, as he was called, worked as a carpenter. Edward's father, John F. Curran purchased a large rambling farm house in Greatworks from Frederick and Flora Purdy in 1894. Edward inherited the property when John passed away sometime after 1920. The U.S. Census of 1920 shows Edward and his family living at the home on Main St. in Greatworks.

Recently the current owner of the home at 829 Main Street, Lewis P. Crosby, donated a large journal found in the barn attached to the home. The journal contains no name as to what company the sales recorded in it belonged to, but it does list sales to many familiar Old Town companies and individuals. The notations run from 1910 through 1914 and show sales of office supplies and printed materials to names like Carleton Canoe Co., Alexander Fraser, H.M. Burnham, Ballard's Golden Oil, Bickmore Gall Cure Co., J.W. Sewall, T.M. Chapman, and many more.

Somehow the journal came into the possession of young Janice Curran. Janice used the large book as a scrapbook, pasting and pinning numerous newspaper clippings to its pages. She was obviously very fond of her mother as many poems and verses to "Mother" are included in the pages. Living just across Main Street from the young Penobscot Chemical Fiber Co, Janice took advantage of the recreational offerings of the company. She made many trips to the skating rink the company provided for area children. There are several PCF Athletics Association tags in the journal. Janice was also a member of the Girl Scouts and received the American Girl magazine. She kept her ticket to the Girl Scout Bazaar held Friday evening, March 6, 1925, at Helen Hunt Auditorium. admission 20 cents, in her scrapbook. There are also several programs for plays sponsored by the PCFAA and American Legion in the early 1920's. She also kept the program of Graduation Exercises from 1919 in which her sister Jessie and brother Laurence are listed.

Perhaps the most telling items included in Janice's scrapbook are the large number of upcoming movie attraction flyers from the 1920s. The flyers date from 1921 to 1926 and announce some of the early classics of the motion picture industry. The flyers were pressed between the pages of her journal for almost a hundred years. There are eleven from the New Central Theater, which was located on Water Street where the American Legion building is today. There are fifteen from the Strand Theater, which was located on Main Street



Janice A. Curran

Old Town High School Graduation 1928

where Walgreen's is today. Some of the classic movies are "It's the Old Army Game" with W.C. Fields, "Kid Boots" with Eddie Cantor and Clara Bow, "The Deadwood Coach" with Tom Mix, and "The Son of the Sheik" with Rudolph Valentino. One can just imagine this young girl rushing to get to the trolley stop on Portland Street to catch the return run to downtown Old Town in time to get her ticket. We will plan an exhibit around these wonderful and colorful movie flyers for next season.

But enough about the movies, what about Janice! Well, Janice went on to attend Greatworks elemen

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CURRAN, JANICE ALICE—"Styx"

**Class Basketball (3) (4) ; Girls' Basketball (3) (4) ;
Captain Girls' Basketball (4) ; Music (2).**

A "Great Works" and a Commercial girl.

**Janice seems to have a sudden interest in Forestry.
The question is, is it forestry, or the shekels, or is it
just a part of Senior Commercial work?**

*From the Old Town
High School
Class of 1928
Yearbook.*

tary, Helen Hunt Jr. High and Old Town High School. Ironically, she graduated with my mother in the Class of 1928. She was a "Commercial" student and worked in a forestry related work study field, possibly at the PCF. She was on the girls' basketball team her Junior and Senior years and captain her senior year. Janice's Sachem listing gives her the nickname "Styx". Oddly that same nickname was used for Raymond Curran, Athletic Director and Coach at the high school. No relationship between Janice and Raymond could be found.

Following her graduation, Janice made the giant leap from Greatworks, Maine to New York City, New York. The U.S. Census of 1930 lists her address as Bellevue Hospital and her occupation as "student nurse". In 1930 she is listed as a nurse at Bellevue. During her time at Bellevue she met a young doctor by the name of John

T.P. Cudmore. Janice and John were married on February 12, 1941 at the "Little Church Around the Corner", in NYC. The Cudmores continued their affiliation with Bellevue Hospital for a number of years. Janice co-founded the Emergency Room Nurses of Bellevue Hospital. In the late 1950's the Cudmores moved to San Diego, California. Dr. Cudmore co-founded the San Diego Tumor Institute of Oncologists and became president of the American Cancer Society, California Division. They continued in their positions for many years. Janice passed away on July 29, 1987 at age 77. Dr. Cudmore passed away July 21, 2001 at 90.

And so the little girl from Greatworks who loved the movies went on to have a long and distinguished medical career.

We Are At Work . .

We are working diligently to get the Museum ready to open when things are safe again. It is our hope that will happen soon. Meanwhile, we want you to know that we have been working on new exhibits and several interior improvements. On the inside we have added storage space upstairs and stairs to reach it, a functional and fully equipped kitchen, and have redone the office to make it more of an office and less of a kitchen.

Jeanna Tuell, principal of the Old Town Elementary School offered the clock case from the Helen Hent School and we readily accepted. It is pictured here.

We are happy to report that the granite signs from Herbert Gray School were moved to the Museum with the help of Old Town Public Works. They are now on the south side of the building; we will eventually relocate them to a more advantageous position.

With the closing of the Old Town office of The Penobscot Times, the collection of bound and unbound copies of the Times dated from 1888 have been relocated to the Museum.



CAN YOU HELP US FIND THE OWNER?

We have found two very nice ladies rings in the bathroom, next to the lavatory at the Old Town Museum. These rings were found shortly after a program performed by the ladies from Six Basin Street. Anyone who thinks they are able to connect these rings with their owner is welcome to contact the Museum at 827-7256.

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We Always Appreciate Your Contribution to the Museum

Dear Friend of the Old Town Museum,

What an unsettling year we have all had! Like most volunteer organizations, the Museum was closed to the public last season and there was no summer program. Donations, however, continued to come in and the Museum acquired a number of important items, including a full set of bound copies of The Penobscot Times coming from the (former) offices of the newspaper. We also acquired the case of the clock that was used at the Helen Hunt school and the granite markers from the Herbert Gray School.

There was plenty of remodeling activity as well. Bill Osborne and Phil Dunn did a great job at overseeing the creation of a kitchen space in the back room and redoing the office space. They also consolidated the new archival storage space along the balcony of the church building and its adjacent rooms and had the new stairs to this space varnished. Partly because of all these construction activities, a professional cleaning of the whole Museum is probably next on the list before we reopen

for another year.

We hope that we can count on your support to help alleviate the costs of these and other projects. Please consider making a donation. The suggested membership levels are as follows: Individual - \$30, Family - \$50, Senior - \$20, Life - \$400, and Group or Business - \$175. Donations may be made at any amount you wish.

We always greatly appreciate your generous contributions and hope that you will donate again. Please make checks payable to the Old Town Museum (see above for the full address). We are a 501(c)3 organization and will gladly send a receipt to you for tax purposes.

If you have any questions about the Museum, please feel free to contact one of our board of directors, send us an email, visit our website, or go to our Face Book page (Old Town Museum).

Sincerely,
Eisso J. Atzema (President)

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 ☐