

Kennebec Current

"Life in a small town is like a layer cake. One gets the whole of it: frosted top, lemon filling, and all.
I think Gardiner has a flavor all her own, piquant, nourishing, delicious." —Laura E. Richards, Gardiner author

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January–February 2023

Loss of Gardiner's Iconic "Yellow House" Afflicts Family, City

In the early morning of Christmas Eve, as much of Maine was still without power from a storm, members of the Shaw family barely escaped a fire that destroyed their Gardiner home. By the end of the day, the historic "Yellow House," located on the corner of Dennis and School streets, was a pile of ash, bricks, and shattered glass. It was an incalculable loss for a family that had just lost their husband and father, John D. Shaw Jr., on July 22. It was also the loss of one of Gardiner's most beloved historic homes.

John Shaw was the great-grandson of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Laura E. Richards, and his family had lived in the home since 1989. At the time of the fire, Shaw's eldest son, Samuel, and his wife, Elena, were living in the home, along with John Shaw's widow, Kimberly Bailey Shaw,

who owned the home but was not at home at the time of the fire. According to a Kennebec Journal news report, the State Fire Marshall's Office concluded the fire was caused by a generator being used during the power outage.

File photo by Joseph Owen

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The Yellow House, the former home of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Laura E. Richards, stands at 3 Dennis Street in Gardiner in 2021. A fire destroyed the house in a matter of hours on December 24, 2022.

Colby Men's, Women's Hockey Mark Milestone Anniversaries

This season marks the 100th anniversary of the men's hockey program and the 50th anniversary of the women's program at Colby College in Waterville. Both have been on the leading edge of the sport on a national scale. Colby built one of the first indoor skating rinks in New England in 1955, establishing its Mayflower Hill campus as a destination for players, coaches, and fans from across the region.

In 1973 the college hosted the first intercollegiate women's ice hockey game in the country. Colby teams have won conference titles, and players and coaches have achieved success at the highest levels of competition, including U.S. national and Olympic teams.

"What I love about both of our hockey programs is that they were true national leaders from their inception," said Mike Wisecup, vice president and Harold Alfond director of athletics. "The connection to that rich history is an integral part of the culture of our programs. Our athletes and coaches currently stand on the shoulders of legends in the sport and are responsible for



Colby College men's hockey players mount a furious defense January 21 at the Jack Kelley Rink in Waterville, preventing Williams College from scoring. The Colby Mules won the game, 4-2. The team, which has a record of 10 wins, six losses, and two ties as of January 31, is celebrating the centennial of its founding this season.

Photo by Joseph Owen

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“On This Date” a Valuable Newspaper Feature



President's Message
Jamie Logan

Many history enthusiasts are well aware of the hazards of “falling into a rabbit hole” while doing research or simply perusing books or other sources for interesting information. It’s possible to lose hours – and more – to ferreting out more and more about a topic you’ve just come across that piqued your interest. Like most of you reading this, I know this from personal experience!

One of the most dangerous sources in this way are old newspapers. From the ads to the columns to the community announcements to the big news of the day, these old publications can truly transport you back in time. In doing so, they have plenty of fascinating tidbits to spark new ideas for research, make genealogical connections, or simply make you say, “I didn’t know that!” about an area of your hometown.

The internet has changed the way the world consumes news, but in doing so it has also provided broad public access to the archives of papers across the world. Locally, you may have noticed the *Kennebec Journal* and the *Morning Sentinel* have added a feature titled “On This Date” on their websites. Clicking to read more of the archived article takes you to a page with a scanned version of the article and an invitation to subscribers to dive further into their digital archives, which contain nearly 200 years of newspapers that subscribers can access. Recent headlines featured for “On This Date” vary in time period and topic. Two examples are the 1936 story “Area Farmer Fires at Hen Thief” and the 1953 item “Gov. and Mrs. Burton M. Cross Become 11th First Family of Maine.”

The Maine State Library has the Maine newspaper project; you can learn more about that at digitalmaine.com/newspapers/. The library also announced recently that it is on the lookout for French-language newspapers to preserve and digitize.

Many Maine papers are also available through the Library of Congress’ Chronicling America project, which can be found at: chroniclingamerica.loc.gov.

At the Kennebec Historical Society, we have an excellent collection of area publications – including bound copies of 19th-century *Kennebec Journal* issues. Others in our collection include the *Maine Standard*, the *Capitol Weekly*, and the *Gospel Banner*. Also, newspaper clippings can be found throughout our vertical files, scrapbook collections, and more.

As always, thank you for your support of the Kennebec Historical Society. Enjoy reading this newsletter – and take some time to dive into old newspapers to pass the time this winter.

KHS Welcomes the Following New Members

Charles & Lucia Bakewell —
Charlottesville, Virginia
Thomas Feagin — Hallowell
Michael Friel — Augusta
Robert Gross — Gardiner

Bruce Hutchins — Montville
Robert Kellerman — Augusta
Anna Lyon — Wayne
Lucille Weeks — Augusta

and continues to recognize ...

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Ganneston Construction Corporation

Sponsoring Business Members (\$500+ annual)

J.S. McCarthy Printing
Meadow Park Development
O'Connor GMC



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and disseminating
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Total membership:
613 on January 26
Life members: 244

The Kennebec Current
encourages letters to the editor.
Email letters to
kennhis1891@gmail.com.
All letters are subject to editing
for taste, style, and length.

World War II Leaves Many Personal Traces in KHS Archive

The Kennebec Historical Society is blessed with a variety of materials that can give us a picture of life during World War II. For example, we have Augusta resident Victor McCourtney's draft card. He and his family lived on Arsenal Street for many years. The 1910 Census lists him as a wage earner singing in a choir, at the age of 11! He owned McCourtney's Market from 1922 to 1977 in the same neighborhood. During the war he served as an auxiliary policeman.

Stanton "Chick" Weed, of Waterville, a 1930 Colby College graduate, enlisted August 11, 1943, and within a year was wounded by shell fragments and developed pneumonia. He returned to serve the county and state as clerk of courts until 1971, and director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles for 28 years, retiring in 1967.

The society recently was given an extraordinary collection of about 130 letters written by Donald B. Grant, of Randolph, addressed to his mother, Inez, and daughter Odessa, starting in 1942. He was in India when hospitalized for heat exhaustion. He died in 1944 and is buried in Randolph with his parents.

Scrapbooks are another great resource, an open window into the lives of those who painstakingly clipped, gathered and glued mementos, articles, and photos to fill empty pages. Linwood Webber collected photographs of his experiences while stationed in Germany, including fellow soldiers and views in both Germany and France. Among the family papers of Joyce (Wixson) Knight is a scrapbook dedicated to the war; the Scott family, of Augusta, had the same idea.

If you're interested in Augusta's French Canadian community during that time, check out Diane Arbour's donation to the society. Another outstanding example was compiled by Arlene Gagnon, who saved articles about local servicepeople, along with

A daily *Kennebec Journal* newspaper clipping describes the wounding of an Augusta resident in World War II.

From the KHS collection

some national war news. The great feature of this is that all names have been indexed and entered into our database by volunteer Doreen Harvey, making it very easy to find "your" person!

Taking a look at area high school yearbooks can be eye-opening. This page (at right) from the 1944 Coniad, from Augusta's Cony High School, shows some seniors already in uniform.

In sum, World War II had a profound effect on all our lives, whether we served in the military or not, or even if we were part of generations to follow. Feel free to contact us to see what we have in our collections.

Until next time!



The Collections Box
Emily Schroeder



Four male members of the Cony High School senior class appear in military uniforms on this page in the 1944 Coniad yearbook, a clear indication that World War II is well underway.

From the KHS collection

— Emily A. Schroeder, KHS archivist and
Collections Committee co-chair



Gardiner's Iconic "Yellow House"

Continued from page 1

The six-bedroom Federal-style house, built in 1814 by John Haseltine, was brown when Laura Richards and her husband, Henry, moved into the home in 1878, according to *An Architectural and Historical Survey of the Gardiner Area*, a 1984 book by The Friends of Gardiner group.

They painted it yellow and dubbed it the "Yellow House." Henry Richards (1848-1949) was a descendant of the city's founder, Sylvester Gardiner, (1708-1786), and had left his architectural practice in Boston to return to his native city to run his family's paper mill in South Gardiner. The Richards couple raised six children in the house and added a four-bedroom addition with a piazza in 1904 to accommodate their growing family.

At a roll-top desk in the north parlor, "LER," Laura Elizabeth (Howe) Richards (1850-1943), wrote 90 books. They include biographies of her famous parents, Samuel Gridley Howe, (1801-1876), founder of the Perkins School for the Blind; and Julia Ward Howe, (1819-1910) a national leader in the women's movement, and most famously the author of the lyrics to the Civil War anthem "Battle Hymn of the Republic." It was the biography of her mother that garnered Laura Richards and her sister Maud Howe Elliott the first Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1917.

"The Yellow House was publicly historic, nationally significant, and thankfully well documented," said Dawn Thistle, Gardiner Public Library's acting director and archivist. "We mourn its loss to posterity and preservation, but above all, the devastating loss to the Shaw family."



Famed disability rights advocate Helen Keller, who lost her sight and hearing as a young child, greets writer Laura E. Richards on March 18, 1939, at the Yellow House, Richards' home in Gardiner. Between them is a bust of Richards' father, Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, who founded the Perkins School for the Blind in Boston.

Kennebec Journal file photo



Rubble and ashes are all that remain of the Yellow House in Gardiner on December 25, 2022, after a fire destroyed the house the previous day.

Photo by Joseph Owen

Thistle noted the significant figures who had visited the house, including Hellen Keller and Gardiner's other Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Edwin Arlington Robinson, (1869-1935), whose early efforts to write poetry were encouraged and supported by Laura Richards and her family.

"We are lucky to still have LER's 'Home Logs' in which she chronicled more than 50 years of life in the Yellow House," Thistle said. "These are housed at Gardiner Public Library, and there are documents at Maine Historical Society and Harvard University. The physical absence of the house is heartbreaking."

Kate Carnes, a neighbor and friend of the Shaw family, said, "The family is doing as well as can be expected" and that Sam Shaw is recovering well from the burns he suffered trying to extinguish the fire. She also observed that the community feels a deep sense of loss for the Shaw family, but also for the loss of their iconic house.

"We're all grieving this on all levels, for the family, for the history," she said. "You know how much life has gone on there for generations."

— by Gay Grant

Editor's Note: Grant, of South Gardiner, is the author of Destination Unknown: An Evacuee's Story, about a girl sent away to live with strangers during World War II to protect her from the German bombings of her hometown; and two books about the late-19th- and early 20th-century photographs by South Gardiner resident Herman Bryant.



Maine Armed Forces Museum Thriving in Its New, Larger Home



This painting by Col. John Sapp, a co-founder of the Maine Armed Forces Museum, was part of a mural at the museum's old location that was cut into pieces and moved to its new site.

Photos by Jamie Logan

the other artwork of his throughout the museum, originally was painted on the wall of the museum's previous location. To be moved into the new space, the artwork had to be cut from the walls. It's now shown as standing displays throughout the exhibit area.

One of the first figures museum visitors will see is likely a familiar one – Brig. Gen. Joshua Chamberlain. On display by the front doors is a small model of the eight-foot-tall Chamberlain statue that stands in Brunswick. Immediately around the corner is a poignant memorial display and a “missing man” table, both solemn reminders of the cost of war.

From there, visitors will see a weaponry display that is similar to the one in the old location, though much larger and with an arrangement that better lends itself to swapping out display items.

In the center of the museum are tall glass-and-wood cases organized by conflict. Many items of interest are on display in these, far too many to describe in detail, but one that stands out is a pistol inscribed with Chamberlain's initials. Another is a Civil War-era sword that was later used by Gov. Kenneth M. Curtis to cut Maine's sesquicentennial cake in 1970. An unopened can of biscuits dating to World War II helps teach about meal rations for soldiers. These exhibits – along with all of the others in the museum – are about more than the surface meaning of the artifacts, though. Peter Ogden, chairman of the historical society's board, said that it's the stories of the people who owned or have a connection to these artifacts that matter.

“The important part to me is telling more of the story. It's not just a pistol; there's more to it,” he said. “We try to tell the story of all Maine veterans.”

Ogden, a veteran himself who served for over a decade as the director of Maine's Bureau of Veterans' Services, has been involved with the museum since 1988. Though an engineer by trade, he has found a passion for museum and historical work. He and other volunteers are working on making the best use of the new location, including by adding a library to make the museum's 4,000 books, pamphlets, and manuals better available to researchers.

Ogden took existing bookcases from the old location, and he and his wife, Mary-Lou, refurbished them to create a distinct library area. The large cases are now filled with volumes of military-related writing. They also serve as an exhibit space for helmets and drums.

Other volunteers are working to log books in so the collection's titles can be listed on the museum's website for researchers to browse.

In 2017 it was expected that the Maine Armed Forces Museum would have to close when the Maine National Guard headquarters moved a few miles north in Augusta from Camp Keyes to Camp Chamberlain.

Instead, the thousands of artifacts and books in the ever-growing collection of the Maine Military Historical Society were able to find a home next door – and in a bigger space. With its new space at Camp Keyes, the museum gained an additional 1,000 square feet of space, bringing it close to 5,000 square feet. The new building has higher ceilings, along with the previously lacking visitor amenities of restrooms and drinking fountains.

The volunteer-run museum has been located at Camp Keyes since it opened in 1988. In 2013 it was designated as Maine's official state military history museum, and in 2019 it opened in the new, larger space.

As visitors walk in, they are greeted by a mural done by Col. John Sapp, a founding member of the museum. This mural, like



Two more sections of Sapp's mural serve as markers designating different parts of the museum.

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Organizers Launch Final Fundraising Push for Gardiner Fountain

Reprinted with permission from the November 14, 2022 edition of the Kennebec Journal.

About \$150,000 has been raised so far to fund repairs to the historic fountain, erected as a monument to Gardiner native Gideon S. Palmer, a volunteer regimental surgeon in the Civil War.

As fundraising to restore the historic fountain at Gardiner Common nears its end, organizers are hoping people will be willing to give a little more. The goal is to have enough money to replace the fountain's pump, sump, wiring and concrete basin, which have existed for decades longer than "The Lady and the Birds," the statue that was installed at the fountain's center in 1977.

"Frankly, if you ask people to estimate a fountain repair, they go, 'What?'" said Robert Abbey, who has been leading efforts to bring the fountain back to regular use.

The estimate for completing the work has been a moving target in the months since fundraising began in earnest, and the total cost is not likely to be known until the bidding process expected in early 2023 is complete.

For now, the expected cost is about \$150,000, an amount that has already been raised through a combination of private donations from Gardiner companies and residents and from grants, including a \$25,000 award earlier this year from the Davis Family Foundation, based in Yarmouth. Organizers are looking to raise an additional sum to cover inflation-related cost increases and seed a maintenance fund for the fountain's future care.

"We're very comfortable where the fundraising is, but we also know that if we have any funds residually, we'll dedicate that to keeping (the fountain) going," Abbey said.

Abbey and others are hoping to capitalize on Giving Tuesday — the Tuesday after Thanksgiving that is dedicated to supporting local initiatives and nonprofit organizations — to cap their efforts.

"People love that fountain," Gardiner Mayor Patricia Hart said. "It's just so pretty, and it just makes that park very special. Very few communities have a fountain on a common like that. It's a very peaceful feature."

Early on, the Gardiner Rotary Club had agreed to take on the fundraising. At the time, Rusty Greenleaf was wrapping up his term as Rotary president, and he continues to be involved.

Early estimates pegged the cost at between \$75,000 and \$100,000, Greenleaf said.

Peter and Sandra Prescott and Team EJP have issued a donation match challenge to double the impact of donations of any size made as the fundraising efforts conclude.

Organizers are also offering premiums for larger gifts. Those who give \$250 or more are to receive a commemorative coin, with an image of the fountain on one side and the Gardiner Common gazebo on the other side. Those who give \$2,000 are to receive an 8-by-10-inch print of a Ken Carlson watercolor of "The Lady and the Birds," made by graphic artist Alan Claude, whose gallery is on Water Street. Donors of \$2,500 or more are to receive the print framed by Claude.

The current fountain is the result of a public art initiative tied to the U.S. bicentennial. Gardiner was one of three cities to be awarded a Maine State Commission on the Arts grant to contract for a contemporary, freestanding work of art to be installed at a publicly accessible and visible site.

After a search, Gardiner's Bicentennial Committee settled on "The Lady and the Birds," by Norman Therrien, of Boothbay Harbor. It replaced the cone of rocks that replaced the original fountain, a depiction of Neptune, the Roman god of the sea, holding a trident. The metal fountain, along with cannons on display at Gardiner Common, were donated during World War II to the war effort.

That original fountain was given to the city by Susan Palmer in 1896 in memory of her husband, Gideon S. Palmer, a Gardiner native. After a life marked by public service in Maine, Palmer enlisted as a volunteer regimental surgeon in the



Jeff Wells walks his dog November 14 past "The Lady and the Birds" statue and the fountain named in honor of Gardiner native Gideon S. Palmer, a Civil War regimental surgeon and, later, director of Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, D.C., at Gardiner Common. By mid-November, organizers had raised about \$150,000 needed to restore the monument.

Photo by Andy Molloy



A man sits at the base of the Gardiner Common's original Palmer Fountain, which depicted Neptune, Roman god of the sea, holding a trident in this early-20th-century postcard scene.

From the KHS collection

Army of the Potomac during the Civil War.

Palmer served on the staff of Gen. Oliver O. Howard, a native of Leeds, who later asked Palmer to serve on the faculty of Howard University, the private, historically Black research university that was founded in 1867. Palmer served as faculty dean there for many years.

Before his death in 1891, Palmer was also the surgeon in charge of the Freedmen's Hospital in Washington, D.C., which provided medical care to formerly enslaved people and was the teaching hospital for the Howard University Medical School.

In recent years, the fountain's operation has been intermittent, and volunteers have worked out a schedule to clear the basin of debris and for other maintenance. The city's Fountain Committee is now working with Tom Farmer, the landscape architect behind the recent redesign of Gardiner's McKay Park, to develop a recommendation, including costs.

"We want to keep the fountain as original as we can," Greenleaf said.

"We want people to be able to come and sit, but some people want a wooden bench and some people want a granite bench."

The project is expected to be completed by next summer.

For those interested in giving, Gardiner Main Street has a link on its website — www.gardinermainstreet.org/fountain — for online donations, although the fundraising figures are not updated. Checks, payable to City of Gardiner, may be dropped off at Gardiner City Hall, 6 Church St., or mailed to the Gardiner Rotary Club, P.O. Box 365, Gardiner, ME 04345



— by Jessica Lowell

Maine Armed Forces Museum Thriving

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Military uniforms from various periods in American history line a wall at the Maine Armed Forces Museum in Augusta.

Photos by Jamie Logan

New exhibits also include a Gold Star Mothers display, a tabletop model of the Battle of Antietam, and a case with items from the Maine State Guard. A bell from the USS *Bryant* stands near the uniform exhibit, and Ogden expresses hope to one day turn the area around the bell into a Navy-specific display.

Racks and cases of uniforms have been added and women's uniforms are prominently on display. Along the wall, visitors can see a kind of evolution of the uniform – including boots and flak jackets – as the military has changed designs and technology over the years. When schoolchildren visit, they are invited to try on some elements of the uniforms.

Even with the expanded space, the historical society still has thousands of items in storage. Many other items are on loan to other institutions such as the Maine State Museum. The veterans center at Togus, Camp Chamberlain, and the

state's veterans' cemeteries display items from the collection.

Many of the artifacts have been donated by veterans themselves or their families. Others took a more circuitous route. For example, a 1914 Hotchkiss machine gun that was found under a house in Camden made its way to the Maine Military Historical Society only after stops with the state police and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Other projects in the works at the museum include updating brochures, creating a self-guided tour booklet, adding LED lights to the display cases, adding technology for programs, and continuing to work toward museum accreditation.

Located at the top of Winthrop Street in Augusta and outside the Camp Keyes gates, the museum is easily accessible by the public. It's open the first Sunday of every month or by appointment. Most Wednesdays, you'll find volunteers working at the museum. The board is looking for members – particularly people who have served in the Air Force or the Navy, to make sure there is comprehensive representation of the branches of military service.

There's no admission fee to the museum, though donations are welcome. Memberships to support the museum are also available. For more information or to contact the Maine Military Historical Society and Maine Armed Forces Museum, visit <https://www.mainemilmuseum.org/contact/> or call (207) 626-4468.



— by Jamie Logan

Couple Spark Revival of 86-year-old Tourist Route



A sign shows drivers where to turn in Belgrade to follow the Pine Tree Trail to the north, toward Oakand.

Photos by Joseph Owen

Drivers in several Kennebec County communities might have noticed something new along the side of the road in recent months: small rectangular green-and-white signs denoting something called the “Pine Tree Trail.”

Maine Department of Transportation workers have been erecting the signs along a route that stretches hundreds of miles from Portland to Fort Kent in an effort to draw recreational travelers away from the interstate highway system and into towns and cities that they might not see otherwise.

In Kennebec County, the trail coincides entirely with Route 11. It leads northeastbound drivers through Monmouth, Winthrop, Manchester, and Augusta, running jointly with U.S. Route 202 through those places; then to Sidney, Belgrade, Oakland, and Waterville. The

trail slips briefly into Fairfield, then returns to Kennebec County for a jaunt across Benton and Clinton before exiting for the final time into Burnham, which is in Waldo County.

Probably none of this would have come to the public’s attention if not for the perseverance of chain saw artist Nathan Nipula, who was combing the woods and fields 11 years ago in northern Maine’s tiny Molunkus Township in search of scrap metal to sell. Nipula discovered an old, nearly illegible road sign buried in leaves and dirt near a stone wall. He took it home as a souvenir.

“He found the sign here on my family’s homestead,” Nipula’s fiancée, Roberta McKay, said in a telephone interview, adding that they began investigating the sign’s origin eight years later by calling various state agencies.

One person they contacted was Matt Dunlap, who then was Maine’s secretary of state. After doing research in the Law and Legislative Reference Library in Augusta, Dunlap determined that the Maine Legislature had approved the Pine Tree Trail in 1937 as an economic measure designed to spread the state’s tourism income into less-visited areas. About 500 signs went up at the time, McKay said.

Dunlap, now the state’s auditor, noted in a phone interview that people used to take long car trips and would stay at road houses for two or three days, so establishing the trail provided a way to link many of those places together. However, the trail signs and the public’s awareness of the trail faded away – no surprise, perhaps, given the gasoline rationing and other distractions of World War II, which for Americans began in 1941, just four years after the trail was established. Later, Dunlap said, the construction of the Maine Turnpike – which was extended to Augusta in 1955 – displaced some of the trail.

Learning about this forgotten bit of history inspired Nipula and McKay to see what they could do to revive it. They hoped to find a sponsor for a bill that would re-establish the trail, but the chaos that the coronavirus imposed on the Legislature’s schedule prevented that from happening. No matter; the 1937 act remains valid after all these years. Funding was a bigger problem, however. The Department of Transportation made it clear that it had no money in its budget for road signs. As a result, the couple conducted an independent, private fundraising campaign among friends, almost all of them in northern Maine. Anyone who donated \$1,000 or more earned the right to call themselves a “trailblazer.”



A new Pine Tree Trail sign appears in front of the Maine State Grange headquarters at 146 State Street in Augusta. The building was once the family home of Henry Sewall, a major general of the Maine militia’s 8th Division. A rectangular Kennebec Historical Society plaque linking the building to Sewall appears below the portico’s right set of columns.

Nipula and McKay raised enough money to pay for 134 signs, which cost \$300 apiece. They held a celebration in the summer of 2022 and gave Dunlap one of the signs to thank him for his assistance. They also hope to obtain funding for 120 to 125 more.

Hannah Collins, deputy director of the Maine Office of Tourism, said in an email message that one of her agency's main goals is "to spread visitors around the state to discover more of Maine's hidden gems and rural landscapes, so we partnered with the Maine DOT to support the installation of the signs." They began popping up along the southern and central part of the route last fall. The rest are expected to be installed this spring, Collins said.

"Once complete, the Maine Office of Tourism will begin to incorporate the revitalized Pine Tree Trail into



Three church buildings stand side-by-side on Church Street in Oakland, which is also part of the Pine Tree Trail.



The Maine State House forms a backdrop for one of the new Pine Tree Trail signs, at left, on Memorial Circle in Augusta.

its marketing campaigns and promotions, and highlight all there is to see and do along the entire route," she wrote.

In Kennebec County, the trail offers travelers views of pastoral beauty, stately architecture, and iconic small-town life. It also displays decaying housing, haphazard retail development, and road configurations that often leave alienating scars in the communities through which they pass. It's all part of the tableau of life off the expressways.

McKay, who holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Maine and has a background in public relations, said many road maps from the period just after the trail was established label the section of U.S. Route 1 between Kittery and Portland as the Pine Tree Trail as well, but she knows of no law that authorized the inclusion of that stretch of highway. Even so, she would like to see it added so that the trail could lay claim to both the northern and the southern extremities of the state.

She also hopes that communities along the entire trail will use it to showcase what they offer to visitors, either by developing relevant online content or advertising their location on the trail.

On paper, the trail project is a business enterprise. Its evolving website (<https://www.pinetreetrail.com>) offers replica Pine Tree Trail signs and coffee mugs and clothing bearing the trail logo for sale. But Nipula and McKay also are offering the logo for nonprofits to use under a license agreement, and those organizations are entitled to keep the money they raise. In any case, their work seems more like a labor of love.

"Right now, we're probably about \$30,000 in the hole, putting our own money into it," McKay said.

Dunlap praised Nipula and McKee for their efforts.

"They've brought back a piece of Americana," he said, likening the Pine Tree Trail to the fabled U.S. Route 66. He added later, "I think this is a reminder that we all used to live a somewhat different life, and it's still right there in front of us."



— by Joseph Owen

Colby Hockey Milestone Anniversaries



This photo shows the Colby women's ice hockey team during the inaugural 1972-73 season, 50 years ago. On February 17, 1973, Colby hosted the first intercollegiate women's hockey game in the nation.

Photo courtesy of Colby College

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maintaining the feared reputation that our alumni built."

On December 3, 2022, the college honored some of those legends and the legacies they helped build during the Winter Sports Celebration, a gathering at Colby's Harold Alfond Athletics and Recreation Center. As part of the celebration, Colby unveiled a new mural on the walls of the O'Neil | O'Donnell Forum that tells in photos and text the history of the men's and women's hockey programs. Holley Tyng, head coach of women's hockey, said celebrating the men's and women's programs together reinforces the longevity and breadth of their collective accomplishments, as well as the importance of tradition and the relationships among generations of athletes, coaches, and supporters.

"The hockey world is so small, especially the women's hockey world. Growing up, I was definitely aware of the history and the storied traditions of women's hockey at Colby," Tyng said. "When I took this job, one of my goals was to honor the tradition of this program as a women's hockey powerhouse."

After making history by hosting the first intercollegiate women's hockey game on February 17, 1973, the women's program has maintained on-ice excellence, winning national and international tournaments and a conference championship in 2008 while placing women on top national teams.

Among the program's pioneers is Sue Yovic Hoeller, whose energy and commitment spearheaded the team's beginning in the early 1970s. Another is Lee Johnson, who set scoring records and earned national recognition when Colby women went undefeated in 1976-77 and won the title at the Invitational Women's Hockey Tournament in Montreal.

In 1994 Meaghan Sittler led Colby to the finals of the All-American Women's Ice Hockey Tournament and earned ECAC Rookie of the Year honors. She was named ECAC Co-Player of the Year twice and is still Colby's all-time leading scorer. Sittler and Barb Gordon were among four college players chosen for the 1995 U.S. women's national team.

Reagan Carey, class of 2001, also succeeded on a national scale, serving as director of women's hockey for USA Hockey from 2010 to 2018 and helping to lead Team USA to Olympic Gold in 2018.

Among the pioneering women hockey coaches is Laura Halldorson. She ran the program from 1989 to 1996, invigorating the team, the league, and the sport as a whole. She served as president of the American Women's Hockey Coaches Association and as assistant coach for the U.S. women's hockey national team development camp.

The winning continues under Tyng. The 2019-20 team achieved a Top 10 national ranking for the first time, and Tyng was named NESCAC coach of the year. "We've had some good success these last couple of years with a lot of hard work and a lot of recruiting," she said.



Jack Kelley, shown in 1960, coached the Colby men's hockey team from 1955 to 1962 and is a member of the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame.

Photo courtesy of Colby College

The women had the spotlight to themselves on January 28, when 75 players from the past 50 years gathered on campus during alumni weekend.

Blaise MacDonald, the Jack Kelley head coach for Colby Men's Hockey, said the lasting success of the men's program dates to its roots a century ago, when the Waterville community, with its strong French-Canadian influence, began its earnest support of the hockey team. The Colby men's ice hockey team played its first varsity game January 20, 1922, defeating the Waterville Athletic Association 4-3. On February 11 that year, Colby beat Bowdoin 2-1, beginning what continues to be an intense rivalry between the schools.

"The people in the town embraced hockey," said MacDonald, who has coached at Colby for a decade. "Colby hockey became part of the fabric of Waterville."



Players pose for a photo during the early days of the Colby women's hockey program. Over 50 years, the program has maintained on-ice excellence, winning national titles and international tournaments.

Photo courtesy Colby College



Colby student Grenville Bruce Eastman Vale, shown on January 28, 1922, was elected captain of the inaugural Colby hockey squad that year. Grenville, a Toronto native living in Glen Cove, New York, first played hockey on a Barrie, Ontario, grammar school team.

Portland Sunday Telegram file photo

The relationship flourished with the confluence of two monumental figures in Colby history, Harold Alfond and Jack Kelley. Alfond, founder of the Dexter Shoe Company, made the first of many gifts to Colby in 1955, allowing the college to build a modern indoor rink as a way to lure Kelley to Mayflower Hill and elevate the program. Kelley delivered, leading the Mules from 1955 to 1962 and packing Alfond Rink weekend after weekend with wildly enthusiastic fans.

"Alfond Rink was one of only a handful of indoor rinks in the Northeast when it opened. That allowed Jack Kelley to bring in some really high-end college players, and that's what started everything," MacDonald said. "And now ... we have this amazing new facility and rink funded by the Alfond Foundation that keeps up the standard of excellence."

In 1961-62 Colby men's hockey finished first in the ECAC regular season, and Kelley won the National Coach of the Year honor. He left Colby to become head coach at Boston University, his alma mater, and later head coach and general manager of the New England Whalers. He returned to Colby for one season in 1976-77 and earned his 300th career win that season. He was inducted into the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame in 1993 and died in 2020 at age 93.

Colby's all-time winningest coach is Jim Tortorella, who won 230 games over 16 seasons. Under Tortorella, the 1995-96 team reached the NCAA Division III tournament for the first time. The following year, the Mules won the ECAC title, defeating Bowdoin 3-2 behind goaltender and tournament MVP Jason Cherella.

MacDonald has kept the winning tradition going. The 2018 team enjoyed perhaps the finest season for a Colby men's team when it won the NESCAC title and advanced to the NCAA Frozen Four. MacDonald, who coached at

the University of Massachusetts-Lowell and Niagara University before joining Colby in 2012, won his 300th career game during the season and the Coach of the Year honor from the American Hockey Coaches Association and the New England Hockey Writers. He notched his 100th win for Colby on November 26, 2022.

Reflecting on the history of Colby coaching, MacDonald pays homage to "decades of high-quality people and success in any way you want to define it. We can never forget where we came from."

— by Bob Keyes

Keyes became the director of Colby College's Office of Communications a year ago after 20 years as a Portland Press Herald feature writer. This story first appeared December 1, 2022, on the Colby College website. It has been updated and abridged for the Kennebec Current.



South China Windows Shed Light on Church, Ex-pastor's Work



Answer to Keyhole #4

Q: What is this?

A: A series of stained-glass windows in the South China Community Church building

Q: Where is it?

A: Village Street in South China

Q: What's historic about it?

A: The windows commemorate the work of a former pastor, the Rev. James Ferrone.

Church members David and Janet Preston commissioned the windows in 2011 to commemorate the years of service of the Rev. James Ferrone (1944-2022).

The series is a stylized representation of important times in the life of Christ – the mystery of the star appearing at his birth, his ministry among the people, his suffering before his death, and his resurrection. Biblical details shown in the images include the star, the boat he used to cross the Sea of Galilee, the bread and the wine of the Last Supper, and the linen in his empty tomb.

“The glass itself was used to enhance the scenes. Textured and patterned glass highlight the natural materials used to construct structures: stables, houses, and tomb. Bright colors sing when the sun strikes the glass from the outside. The depth of hills and



One of the church windows depicts the appearance of a bright star at the birth of Jesus Christ.

the glory of the sky are

shown in shades of color. All the people in the scenes are deliberately simplified in feature while being given clothing in the bright colors of the sky,” Maxwell said in an email note describing his technique. He added, “These simple pieces seek to demonstrate the glory of God using the natural light outside that shines through them.”

If the windows had been installed in the early 20th century, they might have attracted more attention than they do now, because Village Street also was Route 3 in those days. However, that busy Augusta-to-Belfast highway was relocated a few hundred yards to the south more than 50 years ago. Village Street still gets a fair amount of through traffic, often from drivers who want to avoid traffic lights at the adjacent intersection with Route 32; but it's quiet enough to allow a casual driver to stop and admire Maxwell's artistry.

— by Bob Bennett

History and art often overlap, and the four impressive stained-glass windows along the front wall of the South China Community Church are excellent examples of that.

Located on the north side of Village Street in South China and created by retired teacher Ron Maxwell, who lives a short distance away, these works depict scenes in the life of Jesus Christ. They also represent the work of a former pastor at the church and the artist's desire to preserve his memory and enhance that history and the building's appearance.

The church structure was built in 1884, a successor to several other versions. Over the years it has hosted various religious groups, including Baptists and Quakers.



History Through
a Keyhole #4



The South China Community Church stands on Village Street in South China.

Photos by Bob Bennett

History Through a Keyhole - Puzzle 5

Nobody submitted guesses about which item was depicted in the November-December issue of the *Kennebec Current*. That makes three puzzles in a row with no responses. Either we aren't striking a chord with readers on this puzzle fiasco, or the objects are too obscure, despite being visible from a public thoroughfare. However, much as Persian Emperor Xerxes I ordered his troops to punish the sea by flogging it in the fifth century B.C. because a storm had destroyed his pontoon bridge over the Dardanelles, we prefer to misplace the blame for our failure. Perhaps we will flog our computers.



Meanwhile, here's the next clue. The image above is part of a tablet attached to a large stone alongside a road in Kennebec County. It is plainly visible from the street. Readers who can identify it are asked to contact the *Current* and tell the editor three things: what the object is, where it is, and what its historic significance is.

Answers may be sent by email to kennhis1891@gmail.com or by postal mail to Kennebec Historical Society, P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04332. The winner, to be selected randomly from all correct answers submitted, will be awarded a year's membership in KHS for the respondent or a friend or relative. If nobody meets that threshold, the editor reserves the right to make the award to a respondent who provides a partial correct answer. The full answer and more information about the subject will be provided in the next issue of the *Kennebec Current*. Answers are due by March 31. Good luck.

Around Kennebec County

Readfield Historical Society annual meeting, 1 p.m., March 18, Gile Hall, 8 Old Kents Hill Road, free and open to the public. Livermore resident Willi Irish, ex-director of historical interpretation at the Norlands Living History Center, will appear in character as Mercy Lovejoy, town pauper in Readfield. Irish has decades of experience in historical interpretation as the widow Clara Howard, 1853 schoolteacher, and 18th- and 19th-century women.

The **Winthrop Maine Historical Society** has received a grant from Bangor Savings Bank and a gift from a donor who asked not to be identified that will enable to establish an online video conferencing system. The society is expected to use the system for the first time in February for regular meetings, and it will be used again in April when the society hosts its first speaker of the year.

Fuller Fund Campaign Sets Record for Third Straight Year

The Kennebec Historical Society's 15th Moira H. Fuller Annual Fund campaign amassed \$89,697 in 2022, eclipsing the 2021 total of \$72,852 by more than 23 percent. The result means that the society has raised record-setting amounts for the fund for three consecutive years.

The society's Development Committee, which runs the campaign, benefited in 2022 from an offer from longtime KHS supporter Robert G. Fuller Jr. to match individual donors' campaign gifts other than those from businesses, foundations, and members of his own family. The annual fund was named in 2008 after Fuller's wife in accordance with the wishes of another major KHS supporter, the late Augusta philanthropist Elsie Viles.

The total number of donations to the 2022 campaign was 177, trailing only the record 197 donations received in both 2020 and 2021.

Proceeds from the Fuller Fund campaign, conducted annually since 2008, are used to finance day-to-day expenses at the society's headquarters at 107 Winthrop Street in Augusta, including payroll, heat, utilities, bookkeeping, groundskeeping, printing, postage, and office supplies. In 2022, donations to the campaign represented nearly three-quarters of the society's income.

Also, the society's 15th annual Charles Nash Fund fall campaign, which helps pay for acquiring and preserving historical items for the society's collection, received a total of \$4,800, which is the third-largest annual total that campaign has received. The only years in which KHS received more for the Nash fund were 2021, when it reached a record \$6,610; and 2018, when it was \$4,822. The total number of donors to the 2022 Nash campaign was 64.

The Nash fund is named for Charles E. Nash, a publisher, historian, and Augusta mayor who was one of the Kennebec Historical Society's founders.



KHS Winter Book Sale Spectacular

The Kennebec Historical Society has benefited from numerous donations of used books, and it plans to host a rare indoor book sale at the society's headquarters throughout February during its open hours – 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday. To make room for incoming 2023 donations, KHS is clearing out its current inventory of thousands of used books and DVDs, many of which are in pristine, like-new condition.

The society hosted two outdoor book sales in 2022, one in June and another one in September. After the June sale, several large book donations further plumped up the society's stock. Despite selling a fair number of books in September, the society barely made a dent in the overflowing inventory.

Traditionally, after a one-day book sale, KHS would have volunteers deliver the remaining books to Goodwill. This allowed room for incoming donations that would then supply the next book sale. The society's executive director, Scott Wood, realized that not everyone would be able to attend the one-day book sale and said he saw potential in keeping the leftovers, as many were in good condition. He thought he might be able to squeeze a few more dollars out of them.

"I've got to realize that KHS is not a used-book store. We simply do not have the space. It's just so hard to get rid of high-quality books," Wood said. He jokingly added, "We have so many books that if we stacked them back-to-back, we could probably reach the moon!" Visitors to the society who have seen the inventory would probably agree that the pile could reach, if not the moon, at least the peak of the building's roof.

Shoppers looking for some winter reading material or early holiday gifts are asked to come in the front door of the society's headquarters, the Henry Weld Fuller Jr. House, at 107 Winthrop Street in Augusta, and browse through an organized maze of used books. There will be tables of books in every room on the first floor. All books and DVDs cost only \$1 each, and all proceeds will go toward covering the society's operating costs. During the sale's final days, no reasonable offer will be refused and there will be extraordinary deals.

Wood promised to dispose of the leftover books after the February sale so that KHS would have a fresh inventory of books for the June sale. Readers who have questions about the winter book sale may call Wood at (207) 622-7718. 🐼



Boxes of used books cover tables in late January at the Kennebec Historical Society's headquarters in Augusta. The society has reduced prices on the books in an effort to make room for new arrivals.

Photo by Scott Wood

Letter TO THE Editor

I truly enjoyed reading the November-December issue of the *Kennebec Current*, especially about the Hallowell Cemetery monuments, Samantha Smith and was not aware [of the dissolution] of the Saint Agnes Circle of the Daughters of Isabella – how sad is this after so many years (1945). I trust that the friendships among those who are still active will continue along the way. Thank you for the programs and speakers that present very interesting topics. I

am also glad that you have book sales every once in a while.

Happy New Year and much success to you in this coming year.

Priscille Michaud, Augusta

* In Memoriam *

Jane Harvey, 90, a longtime Hallowell resident and a Kennebec Historical Society life member, died December 21 in Augusta. A New York City native and 1950 graduate of Augusta's Cony High School, she earned a bachelor's degree in home economics from the University of Maine, in Orono, and a master's degree in education from the University of New Hampshire. She developed and ran Augusta's early childhood program, then became a family educator working for the University of Maine's Cooperative Extension in Androscoggin and Sagadahoc counties, becoming its statewide child care coordinator in 1987. She served a wide variety of state, local, educational and church groups and was honored as Hallowell's Outstanding Citizen in 2004. Her husband of 63 years, Harmon Harvey, also a KHS life member, died 27 days before his wife's death. Their survivors include six children, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Upcoming Programs

February: “1923 Augusta Winter Carnival”

“**I** William the Conqueror of Ice and Snow, the King of the Augusta Winter Carnival for 1923, defender of all Winter Sports, do proclaim, that the Keeper of the Snows and the Winds grant my subjects clement weather and fair skies for their holiday.”

With those words, printed in full-page advertisements in several Maine newspapers, William H. Gannett, Augusta businessman and publisher, announced the Second Annual State of Maine Winter Carnival.

Gannett traveled to Switzerland to see how the Swiss celebrated winter. He came back with ideas and excitement. Gannett hosted a winter carnival that demonstrated to the world that Maine was the place for winter sports.

In observance of the 100th anniversary of Maine’s biggest and most elaborate winter carnival, the Kennebec Historical Society’s speaker for February, Glenn Parkinson, will review photos, program books, and newspaper articles to tell its story.

Parkinson is the author of *First Tracks: Stories from Maine’s Skiing Heritage*. He is also the Maine Ski and Snowboard Museum historian.

Gannett closed his proclamation by writing, “In exercise of the power invested in me, that the nations of the world may know that Maine’s Kingdom of Ice and Snow can outdo Switzerland as a setting for Winter Sports – I make this proclamation.”

The program can be watched on Facebook live at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 15, 2023. It also will be archived on the society’s Facebook page for those who want to watch it later. For more information, call Scott Wood, the society’s executive director, at 622-7718.



William Howard Gannett appears dressed in his King Winter costume, which won him first prize at a winter carnival in Switzerland. He attended that event to gather ideas for his own winter carnival in Augusta.

Photo courtesy of Maine Historical Society

March: “The Pirates of New England”



This portrait of pirate Edward Low hangs in the National Maritime Museum in London.

Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

What do you think of when you hear the word “pirates”? Most people think of sparkling blue Caribbean waters, but New England has a rich and fascinating connection to these “brethren of the coast.” Seth Goldstein, the Kennebec Historical Society’s presenter for April, will tell stories of pirates throughout the region. Some of these instances of piracy even took place right in Maine’s front yard, on Casco Bay. Prepare yourself to be introduced to a rogue’s gallery of sea raiders with connections to New England including Dixie Bull, Edward Low, and “Black” Sam Bellamy.

Goldstein grew up on Cape Cod, where he developed a passion for maritime history. He is the educational coordinator for the Atlantic Black Project, a grass-roots nonprofit that examines Maine and New England’s marginalized history and the region’s complicity with the economics of enslavement. He is the director of the Cushing’s Point Museum at Bug Light Park and is the South Portland Historical Society’s director of development.

The presentation can be watched on Facebook live at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 15. It also will be archived on the society’s Facebook page for those who want to watch it later. For more information, call Scott Wood, the society’s executive director, at 622-7718.

The Kennebec Historical Society expects to resume offering in-person presentations in April.

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Life (1 person) – \$250 ____ Life Family (2 people) – \$375 ____

Business (annual, fewer than 25 employees) – \$100 ____ Corporate (annual, 25 employees or more) – \$150 ____

Nonprofit group (annual) – \$50 ____ Donation (optional): \$ _____

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(Please send to Kennebec Historical Society, P.O. Box 5582, Augusta, ME 04332-5582.)

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file 2.8.2

Business hours: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday or by appointment. Appointments are highly encouraged. Call first.

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E-mail address: kennhis1891@gmail.com

Telephone: (207) 622-7718

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