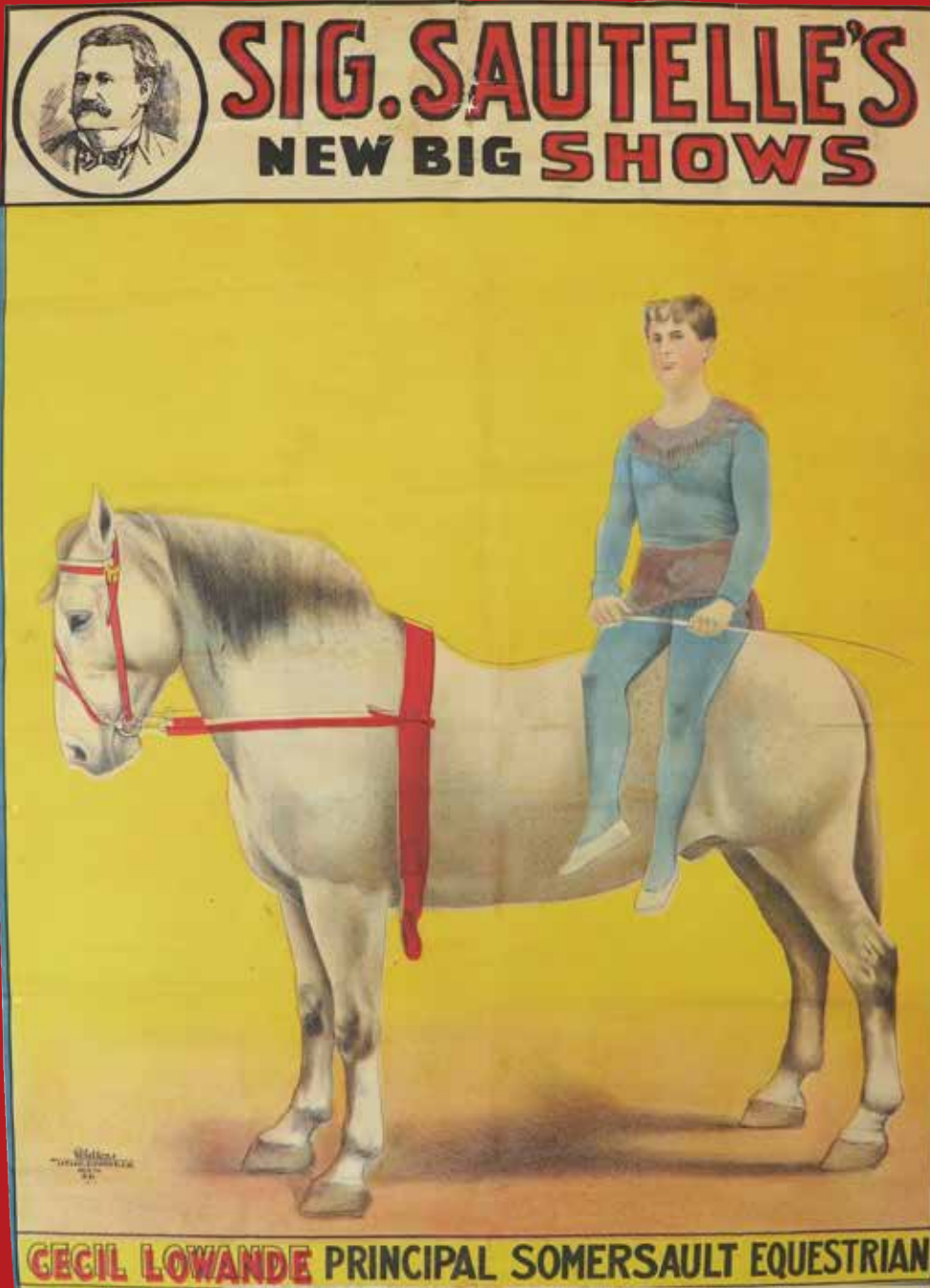




MEMORIES OF MAINE

THE MAGAZINE FOR MAINE HISTORY AND NOSTALGIA



INSIDE

**THE GRANDEST
AND BEST CIRCUS
EVER PRODUCED**

**THOMAS PHAIR,
THE STARCH KING OF
AROOSTOOK COUNTY**

**RACING MOOSE
AT THE CARIBOU
WINTER CARNIVAL**

THE TELOS CUT

**CROSSING THE BORDER
WITH THE
HUMBLE VEGETABLE**

**SILAS W. TABER,
HOULTON
WAGON MAKER**

Sig. Sautelle Circus poster.
Courtesy Cortland County Historical Society,
25 Homer Ave., Cortland, New York.

**AROOSTOOK COUNTY
WINTER 2022**

3

THE GRANDEST AND BEST CIRCUS EVERY PRODUCED

AND THE DEATH OF THE SWORD
SWALLOWER IN BRIDGEWATER, MAINE

by Dena L. Winslow, Ph.D.

5

THOMAS PHAIR

THE STARCH KING OF
AROOSTOOK COUNTY

by Kimberly R. Smith

7

RACING MOOSE AT THE CARIBOU WINTER CARNIVAL

by Camille Smalley

10

THE TELOS CUT

by Elizabeth Bennett

14

CROSSING THE BORDER WITH THE "HUMBLE VEGETABLE"

by Sue Melcher

16

SILAS W. TABER, HOULTON WAGON MAKER

by Lega Medcalf



AROOSTOOK COUNTY EDITION WINTER 2022

207-747-4596

www.memoriesofmainemagazine.com

Memories of Maine

110 Marginal Way, Suite 123, Portland, ME 04101

Publisher & Editor

David Branch, info@memoriesofmaine.net

Layout & Design

Dependable Layout & Design

Joline Violette Edwards, jolinevedwards@gmail.com

Writers:

Elizabeth Bennett

Lega Medcalf

Sue Melcher

Camille Smalley

Kim Smith

Dena Winslow

Contributors:

Peter Baldwin

Sophie Clough

Henry Gartley

David Neikirk

Contributing Organizations:

Aroostook County Historical and
Art Museum

Caribou Public Library

Cortland County Historical Society

Osher Map Library

Presque Isle Historical Society

In collaboration with the hundreds of local historical societies, preservation groups, museums, and the countless enthusiasts of Maine's history and nostalgia, our goal is to provide our readers with interesting articles about the people and places that built and preserve that history.

Memories of Maine Magazine publishes 6 regional issues a year. Each issue is distributed widely throughout its area in restaurants, diners, banks, credit unions, historical societies, libraries, variety and grocery stores, and to each of our advertisers. We encourage you to share our magazine with your family, friends and acquaintances and to support the faithful advertisers who help us to keep your *Memories of Maine* alive.

A one-year subscription (six issues) costs \$30. Two years costs \$50.

Mail check to

110 Marginal Way, Suite 123

Portland, ME 04101

or order online at

memoriesofmainemagazine.com

We also welcome your comments.

© 2022 *Memories of Maine Magazine*

No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the publishers of *Memories of Maine Magazine*.
©2022 *Memories of Maine Magazine*

THE GRANDEST AND BEST CIRCUS EVER PRODUCED

AND THE DEATH OF THE SWORD SWALLOWER IN BRIDGEWATER, MAINE

by Dena L. Winslow, Ph.D.

In the summer of 1903, when Sig. Sautelle's Circus came to Aroostook County, there was great excitement and anticipation. The circus was owned and operated by one of its performers, George Satterly, who changed his name to Signor Sautelle.

Sig. established his circus in the 1880s and became a very wealthy man. His wealth was short lived. His wife died of a stroke in 1902, and ultimately he sold his circus in 1904. He owned 26 flatbed railroad cars used to move his circus from town to town in 1903. Sig. also published a newspaper called *Tent City News*, touting glories of the circus.

In an advertisement from the Presque Isle newspaper, *The Independent*, of July 9, 1903, the schedule for the circus that July can be seen: "Caribou, Saturday, July 4; Fort Fairfield, (Thursday), July 9; Bridgewater, Saturday



Signor Sautelle.

July 11; Ashland, Monday, July 13; Island Falls, Tuesday, July 14; and Dover, Wednesday, July 15. It was an ambitious schedule for the performers and animals involved.

The life of a circus performer was a difficult one with lots of hard work, training, and constantly moving from town to town, setting up the big top and exhibits, then tearing them down and moving on to the next town. The men and women of the circus were a community unto themselves, and most would not have wanted any other life no matter how difficult or how poor the pay was.

One man drawn to Sig.'s circus was N. J. Rogers, whose stage name was William Griffin. Sword swallowing was his talent. No one knows what his full name was, or where he came from. He died on July 13, 1903 as a result of an injury from swallowing swords two days earlier, and he is

SHAW

Financial Services



Asset Management

Financial & Investment Planning

Life, Disability & Long Term Care Insurance

429-9500 • 53 Main Street, Mars Hill
ryan.shaw@pioneer-financial.com

COUNTY
**SUPER
SPUDS**



Processing
Potatoes

Mars Hill (207) 429-9449

buried in Bridgewater, Maine. At the time of his death, he was estimated by Dr. A. E. Schriver, who recorded his death, to be about 45 years old, and identified him as "White."

Upon his death, William joined the ranks of a very elite few. In spite of the dangerous nature of the circus life, surprisingly few accidents occurred. According to Wikipedia, only 29 sword swallower deaths have been recorded, and not all of those are attributed the act. The *Janesville Daily Gazette* (Janesville, Wisconsin) July 20, 1903 reads:

"Sword Swallower Dies."

"Bridgewater, Me." July 20 – Bill Griffin, a sword swallower, died here from injuries received while doing his turn in the side show of a circus which showed here. Griffin was using a long knife when his foot slipped and the knife pierced his windpipe. He died after intense suffering."

This was not Griffin's first injury from his chosen profession. It was reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on July 1, 1889:

"Stuck in his Throat."

"A Sword Swallower Gets into Serious Trouble."

"William Griffin, who for the last eighteen years has been eking out a precarious existence as a sword swallower, very nearly came to grief yesterday afternoon out on the beach near the Cliff House. He had been amusing people all the morning, and at about 2:30 o'clock had three swords down his throat, the largest measuring twenty-eight inches, when he commenced to cough, and when he

withdrew them they were covered with blood. The exhibition stopped immediately, and Griffin started to crawl back to his room on Howard, near Sixth. There he became very sick, and about 9 o'clock last night he was brought to the receiving hospital for treatment. Dr. Enright examined the man and found that his throat was ulcerated, and that the sword had lacerated it. He was given medicine and sent back home."



The *Santa Cruz Sentinel* of the following day also ran the story:

"A Sword Swallower's Feat."

"William Griffin, who follows the profession of sword-swallowing for a living, came to grief at his last performance, and had to be taken to the Receiving Hospital for relief. Griffin has an abnormal breadth of throat, combined with an exceedingly elongated person, and the feats he is in the habit of performing are astonishing by reason of the length and sharpness of the knives and swords that he uses. On Saturday night he surpassed himself by swallowing a sword at least three feet long, with the result that he injured some internal organ, and yesterday hemorrhage resulted which nearly finished his career as a freak. The amount of blood which was discharged from his stomach so weakened him that when taken to the hospital he fainted away, and was with great difficulty revived. He was relieved by the Hospital Surgeon. Griffin formerly resided in Santa Cruz."



Indeed, being a "freak" and eking out a living swallowing swords must not have been all that lucrative. Two years after he injured himself with the three-foot long extra sharp sword, he was arrested in Colton, California as reported in the *San Bernadino Daily Courier*

CIRCUS continued on page 23

SCOVIL

Building Supply, Inc.

Dalton Scovil, Prop.

425-3192 ext. 201

5 Libby Road, Blaine, Maine

**"See Us First or
We Both
Lose Money"**



SCOVIL APARTMENTS

Presque Isle, Fort Fairfield, Mars Hill, Bridgewater, Blaine

P.O. Box 220, Blaine, Maine 04734

Phone the office for information

425-3192 ext.203

THOMAS PHAIR

THE STARCH KING OF AROOSTOOK COUNTY

by Kimberly R. Smith, Presque Isle Historical Society

In 1857, the Phair family (father James Phair II, mother Hannah Murphy Phair and their six children including Thomas) moved to Presque Isle from Whitehall, New York. At the time, Thomas was seven years of age.

Thomas Phair went on to become a prominent man in early Presque Isle being a successful business man, philanthropist, activist, and politician. Phair's business actually earned him the nickname, "The Starch King of Aroostook County." He maintained an office in what is now Wilder's Jewelry store on Main Street.

During the Industrial Revolution and in the latter part of the 19th century, clothing was now being mass produced. As a result, the need for starch grew.

Starch is a bi-product of potatoes; and potatoes were and still are the primary agricultural crop in northern Maine. Starch factories sprang up in two regions of Maine, one near Skowhegan, and one in Aroostook County. The starch was sold to factories in Central Maine and around the country. Starch was used in the fabric mills on thread and yarns.

The firm of Johnson & Phair got into the starch business and soon became the largest manufacturers in the County with a monopoly in Northern Aroostook.

The first starch factory in the County was built in Caribou in 1871, and the second in Presque Isle in 1874 by a Mr. Wheeler who eventually sold out to Johnson & Phair.

In 1889, the firm of Johnson & Phair was dissolved with the assets of the firm being passed on to the junior partner, Thomas H. Phair. The beginning of prosperity for local potato farmers came when they began raising potatoes for the starch factories. Prior to that, farmers had to dump produce that was considered unfit for the general market.

Phair eventually owned 20 starch factories in Aroostook County with plants in Presque Isle, Mapleton, Washburn, Caribou, New Sweden, and Fort Fairfield.

The Presque Isle factory operated six days a week from September 1 to July 1 and could produce ten tons of starch daily; an amazing number when you consider one bushel of potatoes produces one pound of starch. At the time, Aroostook County



Thomas Phair.

UNDERWOOD ELECTRIC, INC.

Locally Owned & Operated
Established 1981 • Fully Insured

Residential • Commercial • Industrial Wiring

764-0040 • uei@underwoodelectric.co • 655 Mapleton Rd., Mapleton, ME



McCluskey's RV Center

Northern Maine's Largest, Oldest, and Only Full Line RV Dealer

Sierra | Cruise Lite | Coachmen | Salem | Cardinal | Sabre | Vibe | Impression

207-762-1721 www.McCluskeys.com 29 Houlton Road, Presque Isle

HAINES MANUFACTURING CO., INC.

Potato Grading & Packaging Equipment



243 Main Street
Presque Isle, Maine

762-1411



ONE OF MANY -- In 1965 the Presque Isle Starch Company was still in operation. A number of starch factories operated throughout the county for a period of time, utilizing the poorer

grade of potatoes. Today the only operation in the area using potatoes for the production of starch is the Colby Co-op plant in Caribou.

Old newspaper article about the starch factory.

produced 90% of the potatoes in the state. In 1876, 1480 tons of starch was produced in Aroostook County, 2000 in 1878, and 3400 by 1881. Ironically, the railroad which arrived in 1881, paved the way for Aroostook County to become the leader in the starch industry, but it also led to the decline of the starch industry. Once it was discovered that Aroostook County potatoes were excellent for table use, the railroad opened up shipping of potatoes to the Boston market.

Thomas Phair served

two terms in the Maine House of Representatives, 1883 to 1884, and 1885 to 1886; and one term in the Maine State Senate, 1887 to 1888.

PHAIR continued on page 22



Since 1935

Aroostook's Finest Supermarket

797 Main Street, Presque Isle, ME 04769 • 207-769-2181



Celebrating over 40 years of serving Maine

**INSURANCE • FINANCIAL SERVICES
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

207.764.5639

34 North St., Suite 1, Presque Isle, ME 04769

Also serving you from Bangor.

www.BarresiBenefits.com



**Celebrating over
50 years of business**
Est. 1971

34 Main St.
Van Buren



TULSA INC

Convenience Store
Quality Gasoline and Heating Fuels

868-5702
www.tulsainc.com

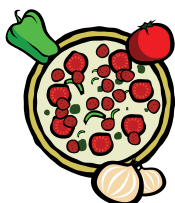


Presque Isle
"The Original of Orono"
North Street Plaza

207-764-0367

Fax 207-764-0407

Dine In / Take Out / Delivery



**ENGINEERED
WOODS**

EASTON, MAINE

207-488-2051

www.huberwood.com

RACING MOOSE AT THE CARIBOU WINTER CARNIVAL

by Camille Smalley

Caribou, Maine is over 350 miles from the Maine border with New Hampshire, more than a four-hour drive from Portland and the second largest town in Aroostook County.

Caribou receives the brunt of Maine's harsh winter weather, stacking up in feet of snow and sheets of ice. Winter days in Caribou average about 20 degrees while nights dip down to 2 degrees. To celebrate the winter season, Caribou hosted an annual Winter Carnival every February. One of the main events of the Aroostook Sportsmen's Show was the Bangor to Caribou Ski Marathon—a distance of 170 miles. In 1942, a new showstopper grabbed the attention of the carnival goers. A pair of trained racing moose, owned by Albert Vaillancourt of Chelmsford, Ontario, dazzled the crowds as they pulled a sulky and a sleigh, to the delight of the onlookers.

A farmer, Vaillancourt spent most of his days outside. Located across Lake Huron, Chelmsford's winter months are similar to Maine—cold, frosty, and snowy. On his farm in Greater Sudbury, Vaillancourt saw many

deer around his crops and eventually befriended a fawn. He named the young buck "Patou" or Baby Peter. Peter was never too far from Vaillancourt. According to the *Sudbury Star* in 1941, he had quite a sweet tooth.

Vaillancourt moved on to domesticating larger animals—moose. The two moose, named Moose and Silver, lived on the farm after Vaillancourt obtained them in 1940. According to an issue of the Caribou Carnival Courier, Vaillancourt rescued both animals as calves; one from a bear attack and the other from a neighbor's fence. However, the *Sudbury Star* from January 1941 tells a slightly different version of the same story. Moose was born in Foy Township, Ontario, about 6 hours from Sudbury. A large, hungry black bear attacked the two-day old Moose. A local animal


COUNTY ABATEMENT

ASBESTOS LEAD

CARIBOU / BANGOR INC. 498-2709


ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

clinton@countyabatement.com • 529 Main Street, Caribou, ME 04736




Serving Aroostook County for over 30 years

CQP Office Solutions



Leading Innovation >>>

- > Copiers
- > Scanners
- > Fax Machines



EMBROIDERY
BUSINESS FORMS
ENVELOPES
LETTERHEAD
SCREENPRINTING
OFFICE SUPPLIES
PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS

56 Sweden Street, P.O. Box 621, Caribou, ME 04736
(207) 498-3093 | 1-800-201-3632 | Fax: (207) 498-6385 | www.countyqwikprint.com

C&J Service Center



24-Hour Towing • Major & Minor Repairs
Gas & Groceries • Cold Beer
328-7645 • 800-564-5724
Corner of Sawyer Rd. & Access Highway, Caribou



Mike's Quik Stop & Deli

907 Presque Isle Road, Route 1, Caribou, ME • 207-498-3790
(1/4 mile south of Caribou Inn & Convention Center)
Snowmobile Access off ITS 83



LOTTERY • GROCERIES • FULL SERVICE DELI
Senior citizens receive 3¢ off per gallon. All major credit cards accepted.
2 GREAT LOCATIONS ... AT YOUR SERVICE!

First Choice Market & Deli

(formerly Ouellette's Variety)
342 Sweden Street, Caribou, ME • 207-496-0400
ATV & Snowmobile Access off ITS 83 to Spur Trail





Creating Healthier Communities



@carymedicalcenter

800-858-2279 • 498-3111
www.carymedicalcenter.org
163 Van Buren Road • Caribou, ME 04736

Cary is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Team of Trained Moose
Attraction at Caribou Winter Carnival
and AROOSTOOK SPORTSMEN'S SHOW,
FEBRUARY 19-21, '42



Handbill showing a team of trained moose scheduled to be shown at the 1942 Caribou Winter Carnival.

trapper, Joe Nadon, came upon the bear holding the calf underwater with his teeth. During his attempt to get away, Moose lost an ear. Nadon rescued the calf from the vicious bear. The article did not elaborate, but perhaps Nadon earned himself a bear skin rug that day. The relationship between the two men is unknown but Vaillancourt then purchased the calf from Nadon, which he affectionately called “Moosie.”

The second calf, Silver, also had a rather challenging start to life. At only a few days old, she found herself stuck in a fence in the neighboring town of Larchwood. A local farmer saw the calf and rescued her from the fence. Having heard of Vaillancourt obtaining his first moose, the farmer sold Vaillancourt the young female as a companion for Moose. With two moose roughly the same age, Vaillancourt set to work training the pair.

Diligently, Vaillancourt tamed and trained Silver and Moosie. Slowly, they became accustomed to pulling a sulky and a sleigh. Over time, Vaillancourt trained the moose to race. Vaillancourt would take the pair across Canada and challenge anyone with a team of horses and take off to the nearest track for a feat. According to historian Richard Brown, “he would win quite a few times because moose are very quick and they were able

to run with great speed.” In 1941, the team toured across Eastern Canada and made appearances at local events. On November 22, 1941, Vaillancourt’s moose pulled a sulky with an advertisement for British American Autolene Oil at the Annual Children’s Aid Society Carnival & Motorshow at Davison’s Garage. Three months later, the Vaillancourt Racing Team traveled over a thousand miles and headlined at the Caribou Winter Carnival.

The Carnival was a highly anticipated annual event. It took place in February, during the darkest and shortest days of winter. The Carnival featured a variety of winter sports including hockey, curling, and skiing. A parade proceeded through town, complete with local animals. Attendees skated on the Aroostook River—a perfect time for boys and girls to mingle under watchful eyes. The carnival also featured local exhibitions. Professor Clarence Aldous of the University of Maine displayed his extensive research on stream pollution at the 1939 Winter Carnival. Other carnival events included dog sled races, shooting competitions and of course, horse races. It is likely the Vaillancourt team participated in the horse races set up on an ice track along the Aroostook River. Caribou featured an oval track near

the river, complete with stables.

While training and domesticating a moose was not generally common, it was not entirely unheard of either. In the mid nineteenth century, Phillip Sellick trapped and domesticated moose outside of Moncton, New Brunswick. Sellick's moose were young, only two or three years old. After trapping them he would later domesticate them as draft animals. Much larger than horses, moose can plow through far more snow—but they are harder to maneuver and wild. In 1900, a New Brunswick man named John Connell saved a young moose during the cold Canadian winter. He came across the moose in the forest and brought the calf back to his horse barn. Connell, who lived near Miramichi, New Brunswick, named his moose, "Tommy" and trained him like a horse. "He taught it how to go into a harness so it could pull a sled or a sleigh," Historian Greg Donovan explained to CBC news, "He was also able to put a saddle on it ... and he could actually ride the moose around. He actually rode the moose into town." Connell became known as the "Miramichi Moose Man."

In 1904, the government of Newfoundland wanted to introduce moose to the island. They contacted the Moose Man to strategize how to do so. Connell then trapped several moose and put them on a train to Howley, Newfoundland. According to an article from CBC news, there are over 117,000 moose in Newfoundland today.

People in Miramichi regarded Tommy the Moose as

AROOSTOOK REPUBLICAN AND NEWS, FEBRUARY 22, 1978, PAGE 12A



TAME MOOSE -- The 1942 Caribou Winter Carnival featured a team of moose trained by Albert Vaillancourt of Chelmsford, Ont., Canada to pull a sulky and a sleigh. An issue of the February 1942 Caribou Carnival Courier tells how Vaillancourt rescued both moose as calves. One was too weak to resist the attack of a large black bear and

the other had become entangled in a neighbor's fence. After a long period of taming and training, Vaillancourt appeared with the moose team all over Canada and traveled over a thousand miles to bring them to Caribou. (Photo courtesy of Mina Braley of Castle Hill)

Winter Carnival then and now

CARIBOU -- As Winter Carnival activities concluded in Caribou last week and began in surrounding communities, vivid memories of past winter carnivals surfaced in the minds of people who lived here in the 1930's.

"It was a regular wonderland," said Roy Snowman, recalling decorations at the armory which included waterfalls and many heads of moose and deer.

"It was a big thing," he continued. "People came from all over and there always was some unusual treat." One year a pair of moose was hitched to a sulky. Buffalo were featured once and a steam railroad ran up and down Sweden Street.

The American Legion started the carnival, Snowman said, and the Sportsmen's Banquet, now sponsored by the Lions Club, was part of the three-day celebration. Game wardens were honored, as they are today, and officials from the Fish and Game Department came from Augusta.

Philip Soucia, whose father, Henry Soucia, was a conductor on the steam railroad, recalled expert marksmen who demonstrated their skill with rifles and bows and arrows. He also remembers dog teams and reindeer making appearances at carnival events.

When asked about snow sculptures, Snowman described ice castles and he remembers a ski jump on South Main Street, snowshoe races and skating competition. "Sam Albair was a great skater," Snowman recalled. Horse races were held on the pond and biscuits were baked in reflector ovens, he said.

What happened to the winter carnival of the 1930's?

"I don't know," Snowman responded. "War and hard times contributed to the decline, I guess."

According to Soucia "A certain group of people who believed in Winter Carnival kept it going from year to year. As they died, so did it."

somewhat of a local celebrity. Connell took Tommy into town fairly regularly, and townsfolk grew accustomed to seeing Tommy in place of a horse. Unfortunately for Tommy, his story does not have a happy ending. Connell's brother was hunting one afternoon and spotted Tommy across the pasture. It didn't occur to him that the moose on the property was Connell's tame moose, and he shot Tommy.

The Caribou Winter Carnival continued to entertain year after year. While many Maine towns hosted a winter carnival, Caribou's event was the best attended. In 1950, *Pine Cone Magazine* noted that Caribou's Winter Carnival was the most popular event of the winter. ❧

THE TELOS CUT

by Elizabeth Bennett

In the 1840s, the need to drive logs down the Penobscot River and into Bangor was so strong it motivated wheeling and dealing, sparked violence, pushed innovation, and ultimately turned a river around.

In the 1840s, Bangor was the lumber capital of the U.S. Twenty years later, by the Civil War, it was the lumber capital of the world. Maine, with her virgin stands of majestic white pine, tall and straight for ship masts, had developed a booming industry, and much of it was floated down the Penobscot River to Bangor.

On the Penobscot, a lumberman could fetch a good price for his hard work—better than anywhere else. Thoreau tells us that, even as early as 1837, there were “two hundred and fifty sawmills on the Penobscot and its tributaries.”

Sadly, not all of Maine’s waterways emptied out through the Penobscot into Bangor. The rivers of the northern forests flowed into the St. John River, which wound along Maine’s northern boundary with Canada and then east and south to the Atlantic at the Bay of Fundy in New Brunswick. Lumber sold here was at a lower price than lumber on the Penobscot.

When the U.S. and the British crown finally settled the contentious northern boundary, New Brunswick decided to tax the lumber that came down the St. John. This wasn’t a problem for Canadian lumbermen—the British government gave a rebate on lumber chopped in their provinces. It was a problem, however, for Maine lumbermen.

The situation was ripe for a little Yankee ingenuity. It was common knowledge that Telos Lake, the headwaters of the Allagash River and part of the St. John watershed, was just a mile off from Webster Lake, part of the Penobscot watershed. From Telos to Webster was an ancient ravine, once a stream bed that flowed downhill the whole way.

So in 1838, three Bangor lumbermen, Amos Roberts, Major Hastings Strickland, and his brother Samuel

Strickland, petitioned the Maine legislature for a charter, or an act of incorporation, to build a cut between the two lakes. This project seemed of obvious interest to the state, because a cut like this would open up a large tract of white pine to the Maine lumber market and whisk it away from New Brunswick. Surprisingly, the state declined.

Undaunted, the men took another route: they decided to purchase the land. In 1840, T6 R11 was an undeveloped square of raw, wild land. It was owned jointly by the states of Maine and Massachusetts, Maine

having only broken off from Massachusetts twenty years earlier. Within its boundaries lay the mile between Telos Lake and Webster Lake.

However, when the men tried to buy from the land agents, they sparked a bidding war. It was Lewis Hancock who clawed his way to the top, with a hefty bid of \$35,000. Here begins some tricky business, because really, Hancock was a business



partner of Roberts and the Stricklands. Hancock paid \$7,000 up front, given to him by his three business associates, and gave his personal notes for the rest. Then, as a slight-of-hand, he quitclaimed to Roberts and the Stricklands, bestowing the land, but retaining the debt. However, Hancock was broke. He was incapable of paying the debt, and his partners refused to pay it either.

Even with creatively discounted land though, the men were about to make a shaky investment. For one, T6 R11 had the mile between Telos and Webster, but it did not include the place on Chamberlain Lake where a dam would have to be built to supply water to the cut. That land still belonged to the state. Also, the men did not have the legal right from the state to build the cut on their own land. The land agents sold T6 R11 with a clause in the contract that reserved the state’s right to build a cut or to buy one made by private owners, paying the builder only the cost of construction. The land agent said that this meant the owners could build the cut, only

if they had permission from the state.

Roberts and the Strickland brothers decided to build anyway. In March and April of 1841, Hastings Strickland hired Shepard Boody, an explorer, and highly knowledgeable surveyor, capable of surviving in the Maine wilderness. Together, they built a dam on Telos Lake. It



appears, though, that they were hesitant to build the other dam at Chamberlain Lake dam on state owned land, but it was unavoidable. Once the Chamberlain Lake dam was built, the waters rose 11 feet and overflowed down the natural ravine. Their logs sailed into Webster Brook and onto the Penobscot. They charged their lumbermen 50 cents per thousand board feet.

In the fall of 1841 and into the winter, Strickland and a crew of men cut trees between Telos and Webster and dug out the Telos Cut. That spring in 1842, Roberts and the Strickland brothers allowed more lumber to go through the improved cut, again charging 50 cents per thousand board feet.

Frustratingly though, the Chamberlain dam blew in the spring of 1843. It took some of the shoreline with it, and the replacement dam had to be longer and more expensive than the first. However, the second dam wasn't tall enough.

A few years later, a wealthy Massachusetts lumberman, David Pingree, began buying Maine land. Rumor had it that he owned 25 townships in the Maine woods. Pingree bought six territories near Roberts, including the one with the Chamberlain dam. Pingree replaced the useless dam and drove lumber down the Telos cut, paying the same 50 cents per board feet toll. Somehow, however, Roberts, now the sole owner of T6 R11, began to sense trouble over the tolls. He offloaded the property to Rufus Dwinel.

Unlike Roberts, Dwinel was not shy about trouble—and trouble came immediately. Most of the lumber headed down Dwinel's cut was harvested by lumbermen working on Pingree's land. As Dwinel tried to arrange matters before the spring lumber drive, all of Pingree's men refused to pay Dwinel's

introductory rate of two shillings (33 1/3 cents). They said it was too high and that Dwinel should get the legislature to assign the toll. Dwinel suspected that Pingree's lumbermen intended to run their harvest through the cut without paying, and that Pingree had put them up to it.

THOREAU TELLS US THAT, EVEN AS EARLY AS 1837, THERE WERE "TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY SAWMILLS ON THE PENOBSCOT AND ITS TRIBUTARIES."
.....

But Dwinel wasn't going down without a fight. When Pingree's loggers made it to the cut, Dwinel had entirely blocked it off with a boom, a string of linked logs used for corralling floating lumber, doubled over six or eight times. Dwinel would not let them through without paying

the two-shilling toll. Dwinel had hired fifty to one hundred men, some of them straight from prison, armed with butcher's knives. Lumberman Samuel Hunt said, "I had rather face a piked hand-spike than such knives." The other lumbermen must have agreed, because they all coughed up the toll before moving down the Penobscot. This was called the Telos War.

Though Pingree had lost the first battle, he won the war. In 1846, Pingree's loggers petitioned the state legislature to give them permission to build a sluiceway from Telos Lake to Webster Lake and charge 10 cents per thousand board feet. This slick move would have



ROZCO REMODELING

Certified Weatherization | Carpentry
Camp & Log Cabin Maintenance

20 Cemetery Hill Road, New Canada, ME 04743 | (207) 834-2633 (207) 316-6403

FRANK ROSSIGNOL



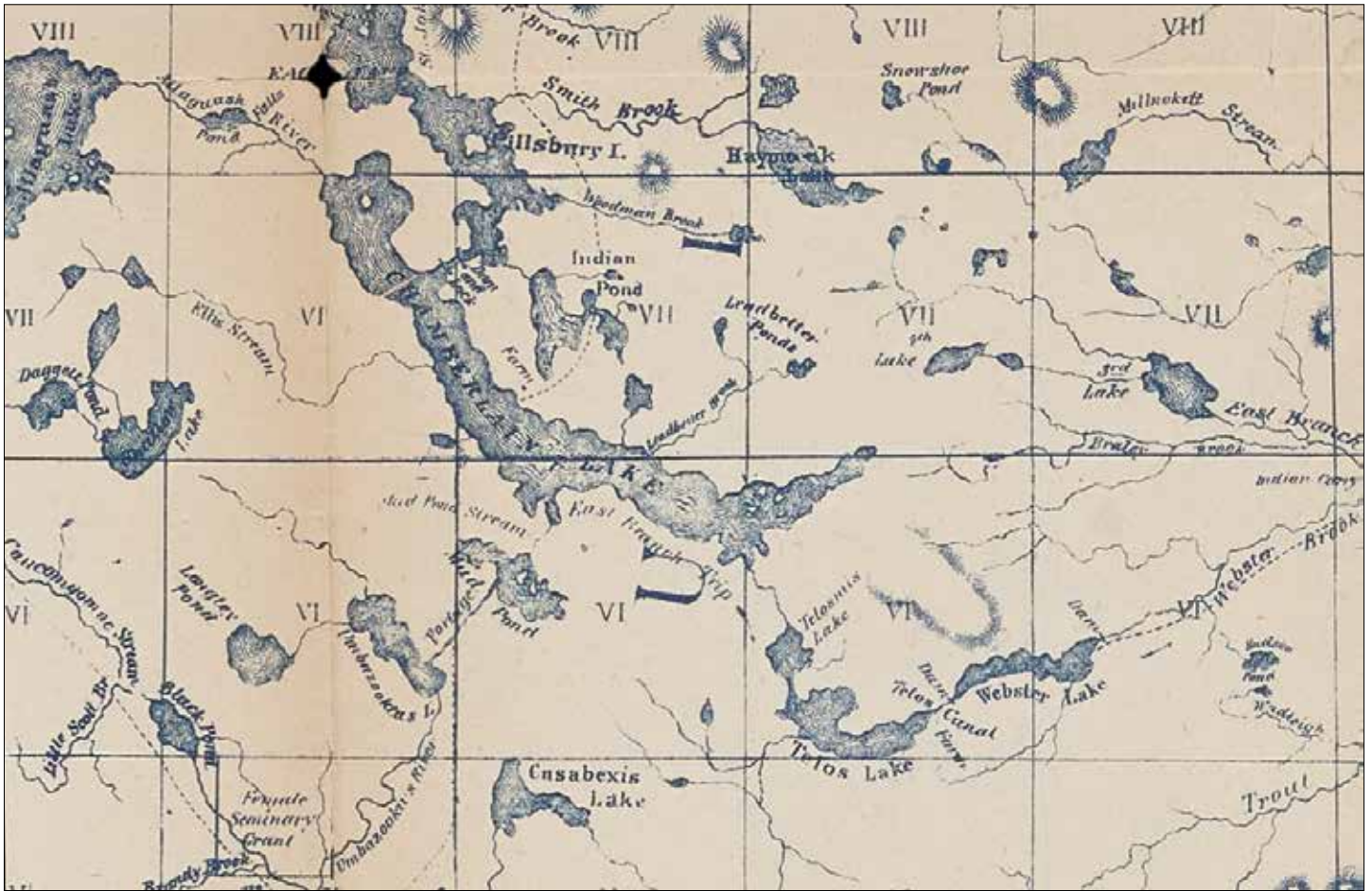
8 East Main St., Fort Kent, Maine 04743
sjvalleyrealty.com

**Real Estate
Rentals
Management**

*Michael Albert
Broker/Owner*







SJVRx
St John Valley Pharmacy

Charles J. Ouellette, Rph - ASCP
Phone: (207) 834-2880
Fax: (207) 834-2882
Email: couellette@sjvr.com

www.sjvr.com

EVERYDAY DISCOUNTS

Convenient Hours & Location
182 Market Street - Fort Kent, Maine 04743

Front Door
PHARMACY DELIVERY

WE DELIVER RIGHT TO YOUR FRONT DOOR! CALL TODAY!

healthyrewards

J.R.S. FIREWOOD

SEASONED WOOD — WOODLOT HARVESTING
Cut to any length up to full tree

Office: 834-4139 Cell: 436-0841

LONG LAKE LODGE

Hunting Fishing Boating Snowmobiling
RENTALS

543-6390

YEAR-ROUND RENTALS
Enjoy outdoor fun all year long.
Newly-renovated rustic cabins with
all the comforts of home.

—See Bill or Jean—
www.longlakecamps.net
111 Sinclair Rd. Sinclair, ME

Hebert Rexall Pharmacy
(207) 868-2242
hebertsrx@gmail.com
Where Patients Come First

Dispill Adherence Packaging delivered to your door.

Ph: 207-868-2242
Fax: 207-868-2156
31 Maine Street
Van Buren, ME 04785

Professional Pharmacy Services

Sylvio Paradis & Son
AUTO PARTS

Engine Machine Shop • Auto & Truck Repair

24-Hr. Wrecker Service
Axalta Automotive Refinish Products
Gates Hydraulic Hose & Fittings

Gary Paradis, Owner
207-543-7722 or 543-7828
288 US Rte. 1, Main St., Frenchville, ME 04745

AAA

AERA
AUTOMOTIVE REFINISH ASSOCIATION


Auto Value
Parts Stores

effectively taken the cut from Dwinel and transferred it to the lumbermen, without any compensation to Dwinel. An extensive hearing before the Committee on Interior Waters followed. Boody, Roberts, Hastings Strickland, the land agents, and many lumbermen were called to testify over the course of several days. The state offered Dwinel a compromise. He got to keep his cut, if the toll was reduced to 24 cents per board feet. Dwinel conceded defeat.

Lumbermen spent the next century looking for other ways to send more of the timber on the Allagash River down the Penobscot. More dams were built. Steamboats

ferried logs between lakes. So much water was driven away from the Allagash and St. John Rivers that twice

infuriated northern lumbermen with their logs sitting on rocks in dry river beds dynamited dams. In one instance, when the dam was destroyed, the St. John River in Grand Falls, Canada, 165 miles away, rose three feet. Eventually the

machinery to build a tramway and a railroad was hauled into the trackless wilderness, assembled, and tended, allowing the lumber to be transported to the Penobscot waters by rail. Moving the lumber by rail was derailed when logging trucks came into use. Maine loggers, you might say, have always been able to get lumber to the Penobscot by hook or by crook. 

IN ONE INSTANCE, WHEN THE DAM WAS DESTROYED, THE ST. JOHN RIVER IN GRAND FALLS, CANADA, 165 MILES AWAY, ROSE THREE FEET.
.....

**Celebrating over
50 years of business**
Est. 1971

34 Main St.
Van Buren



TULSA INC

Convenience Store
Quality Gasoline and Heating Fuels

868-5702
www.tulsainc.com



DESJARDINS LOGGING

General Trucking
Wood Contractor

James Desjardins 207-834-5189 Soldier Pond, ME

Robert Pelletier
Building Contractor



Office 207.834.2052 • Cell 207.249.2584
P.O. Box 363, Fort Kent, ME 04743 • bobbell363@gmail.com

BOUCHARD FAMILY FARMS French Acadian Buckwheat



PLOYES

No Eggs • No Milk
No Sugar • No Oil
Fat Free &
Cholesterol Free

Like us on facebook Bouchard's Country Store 834-3237 www.ployes.com

UNITED INSURANCE
A Commitment to Community & Compassion

Local and independent.
Coverage you can count on.

Custom solutions in

- Personal Insurance
- Business Insurance
- Employee Benefits

UNITEDINSURANCE.net

Bangor
207-385-2077

Fort Fairfield
207-472-3651

Fort Kent
207-834-3181

Madawaska
207-728-6366

Presque Isle
207-764-6161

Van Buren
207-868-2771



Providing a professional image to help your business grow.

Print and Digital Graphics
Brochures
Logos
Calendars
Greeting Cards
Business Cards
Catalogs
Books
Magazines and Newspapers

Newsletters
Advertisements
Mailers and Post Cards
Flyers, Handouts
Sell Sheets
Trade Show Catalogs
Decals and Stickers
Invitations
Letterhead and Envelopes

Menus and Table Tents
Posters
Programs and Playbills

DEPENDABLE
Layout & Design

207.318.2042
jolinedwards@gmail.com

CROSSING THE BORDER WITH THE “HUMBLE VEGETABLE”

by Sue Melcher

Needhams, latkes, babka, poutine, baked potatoes, mashed potatoes, french fries, potato chips, potato sticks, hash browns, tater tots, potato salad... it's difficult to find a more versatile, acquiescent food than the potato, which, in many recipe books, is referred to as the “humble vegetable.”

In the 1940s, Maine was the top national producer of this modest tuber; in 1960 when John Steinbeck drove Rocinante through Maine, traveling with his poodle Charley, he “saw mountains of potatoes—oceans—more potatoes than you would think the world's population could consume in one hundred years.” In the 1970s, roughly 1300 Maine potato farmers grew over 140,000 acres of potatoes.

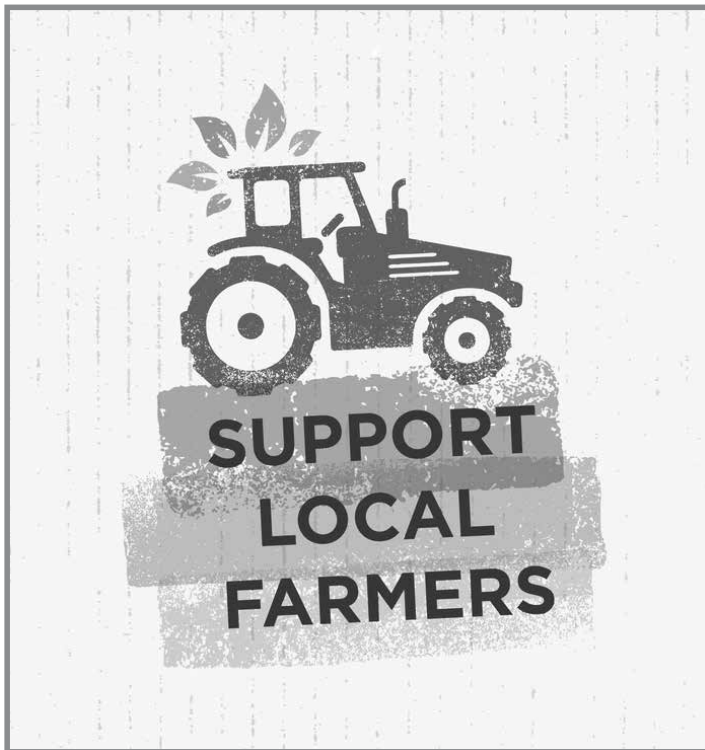


Despite the fact that the late 1970s ushered in automated potato harvesting technology, production decreased. By the year 2013, Maine potato production ranked ninth in the nation, raised on 53,000 acres of land, and approximately 100 farms. What happened in the 40 years in between is a story fraught with international friction, political equivocation, the

vicissitudes of the potato market, the mercurial nature of the Canadian dollar, and, depending upon who's telling the story, either a mild protest by potato farmers or a “bloodbath” threatening to turn into a shootout, where not just a few potatoes, but a few heads would be rolling.

In the late 1970s, trucks laden with small, round, white potatoes surged across our State's northern borders and into Maine, heading for Northeast markets. Meanwhile, Maine farmers, according to many versions of the story, were stuck with storage sheds full of potatoes, unable to sell them at competitive prices. Maine farmers accused the Canadians of “dumping” their potatoes on the market, and blamed the Canadian government for subsidizing potato growers. Several key factors played a role: an exchange rate amenable to Canadian growers, successive years of bounteous bumper crops, and different industry standards that required Canadian potatoes to be of uniform size and appearance. Additionally, from Maine to New York, many customers felt the quality of the foreign potatoes to be superior. The end result was that the Maine potato industry was dwindling while the Canadian potato growers were thriving.

By 1980, Maine farmers were ready to take action. According to the *Bangor Daily News*, the Maine potato industry had lost between 35 and 45 million dollars in the past two years, and growers blamed the Canadians for usurping their share of the market. The farmers



appealed to the federal government to ban imports, and to create a “diversion program,” whereby the government purchases crops for its own use. When it appeared that the Department of Agriculture would not take steps to assist farmers, they decided to make a louder and more forceful statement.

On March 27th, 1980, in nine border towns, including Fort Fairfield, Houlton, and Presque Isle, between 250 and 300 farmers dumped thousands of pounds of potatoes and used their trucks and large farm equipment to block the roads. State police made two arrests, and used force to attempt to intimidate the farmers. One farmer was maced, and another clubbed, according to reports. After two days of protest, rerouted traffic, national attention, the assembling of a state police riot team, and lots of mashed potatoes, Vice President Mondale, according to a presidential memorandum, “promised to set up a task force to study the problem,” after determining that “state officials were either unable or unwilling to intervene to end the protest.”

If the farmers stage a low-key demonstration—merely dumping the potatoes and milling about—there may be no overt threat to either federal officers or to federal land or property at the border crossings themselves. In 1980, some potatoes apparently did roll under the canopies of the Customs Service sheds, but they were removed without incident. The demonstration could escalate, however, to the point where a mob threatens harm to Border Patrol or Customs Service agents and federal facilities. In 1980, for example, a state police officer inflicted a serious head wound on a farmer.

— MEMORANDUM OPINION FOR THE COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT, December 23, 1981

At least one person benefited from the protest—Canadian resident Mrs. Medely Hartley, who appears in a photo of the Fort Fairfield protest site. Apparently, the farmers gave her some potatoes, and helped her bag them up.

As a result of the protest, Maine’s Department of Agriculture implemented mandates that would require inspectors, inspection fees, and permits for all potatoes entering the state, with the intent that people would be stationed at the borders to check all incoming

truckloads of potatoes. However, these regulations violated the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, and in December, the Justice Department sued in federal court to have the regulations struck down. On December 8, Judge Edward T. Gignoux, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of Maine, denied the federal government’s request for a temporary restraining order, which would have prevented border inspections of potato trucks from taking place. Gignoux apparently felt that a restraining order was not an effective way of insuring that concerned Mainers would behave. A few weeks later, he threatened the state of Maine, the governor, attorney general and the state Department of Agriculture with a court injunction unless they withdrew the regulations.

A year later, Maine farmers had not seen improvements, and the *Bangor Daily News* reported in March of 1981 that the “threat of farmers armed with pesticide sprayers and bulldozers taking over the border” was very real. Quoting farmer Herschfield Smith, who, along with others, blamed Governor Joseph Brennan for ignoring the issue, the *Bangor Daily News* reported: “..the next time farmers go to the

POTATOES continued on page 19

Wayne's
BODY SHOP & SERVICE CENTER
Body Work & Auto Repair
Mon-Fri 7am-5pm • Sat 7am-2pm
868-4069 • 385-9067
Cell 498-0836
17 Main Street, Van Buren, ME

Since 1989




Giberson-Dorsey
FUNERAL HOME
Aaron M. Giberson, Director
Funeral Planning & Pre-Planning
Burial Services
Cremation Services
Grief & Healing Help
Step-by-Step Guidance


144 Main Street, Fort Fairfield, ME
472-4731
gibersondorseyfuneralhome.com

SILAS W. TABER, HOULTON WAGON MAKER


by Lega Medcalf

Photos courtesy of the Aroostook County Historical and Art Museum



Mechanic Street in Houlton was once home to premier wagon and carriage maker, Silas W. Taber, born in Houlton in 1847. He was a blacksmith by trade and in 1847 opened his downtown three-story manufacturing business. A blacksmith shop was on the ground floor,

woodworking was on the second floor, with a paint shop on the top floor. Known for his reliable work, an article written about his business stated that "all work



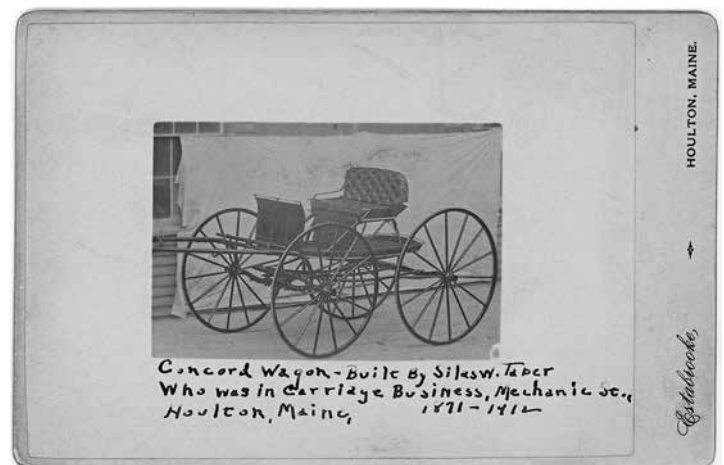
NICKERSON CONSTRUCTION INC.

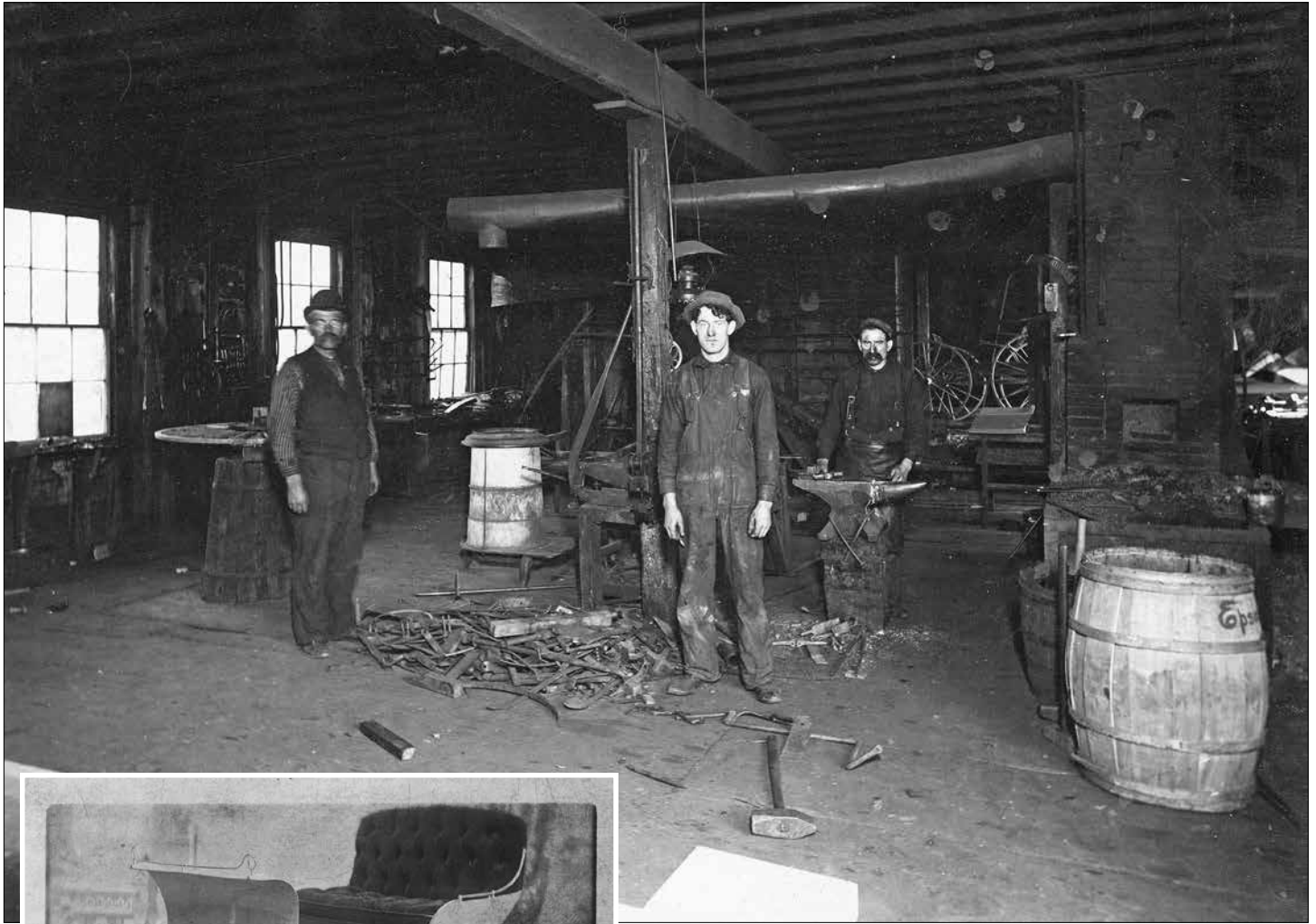
Excavation • Septic Systems • Road Repair
Grading • Trucking • Gravel • Stone • Loam

Serving Aroostook County since 1965

207-532-9391

1391 County Road, New Limerick, ME





Workers at Taber's shop on Mechanic Street in Houlton.



entrusted to him may be safely depended upon to prove just as represented, the practice of covering up defective

work with handsome paint not being allowed at this establishment." Taber also provided repairs for older vehicles, and manufactured goods that ranged from horseshoes to agricultural tools.

Silas Taber built wagons and carriages which utilized his invention of a gear assembly (1903 patent #719531) with a "drop axle" construction. The drop axle was supported by a truss and king-pin steering brace. This resulted in a lower center of gravity which allowed

DERINGER®
Managing Logistics • Maximizing Opportunity

A.N. Deringer, Inc.

48 Customs Loop • Houlton, Maine 04730

U.S. Customs Brokers

Warehouse & Distribution • Freight Forwarding

207-532-9431 • 1-800-448-8108 • www.anderinger.com

York's
of Houlton

1-800-427-9675

315 North St., Houlton

www.YorksofHoulton.com

- New cars and trucks from Toyota & Ford
- Quality used cars and trucks – all makes & models
- Guaranteed in-house financing through Fresh Start Finance Co.
- Full-service Tire & Auto Center
- Modern Auto Body Repair Shop

**"YOU DESERVE
THE BEST!"**



horses to pull a wagon more efficiently and made the freight bed lower in height and easier to load, a feature, obviously, very popular with farmers. An advertisement for the McCluskey Brothers hardware store, which

TABER continued on page 20

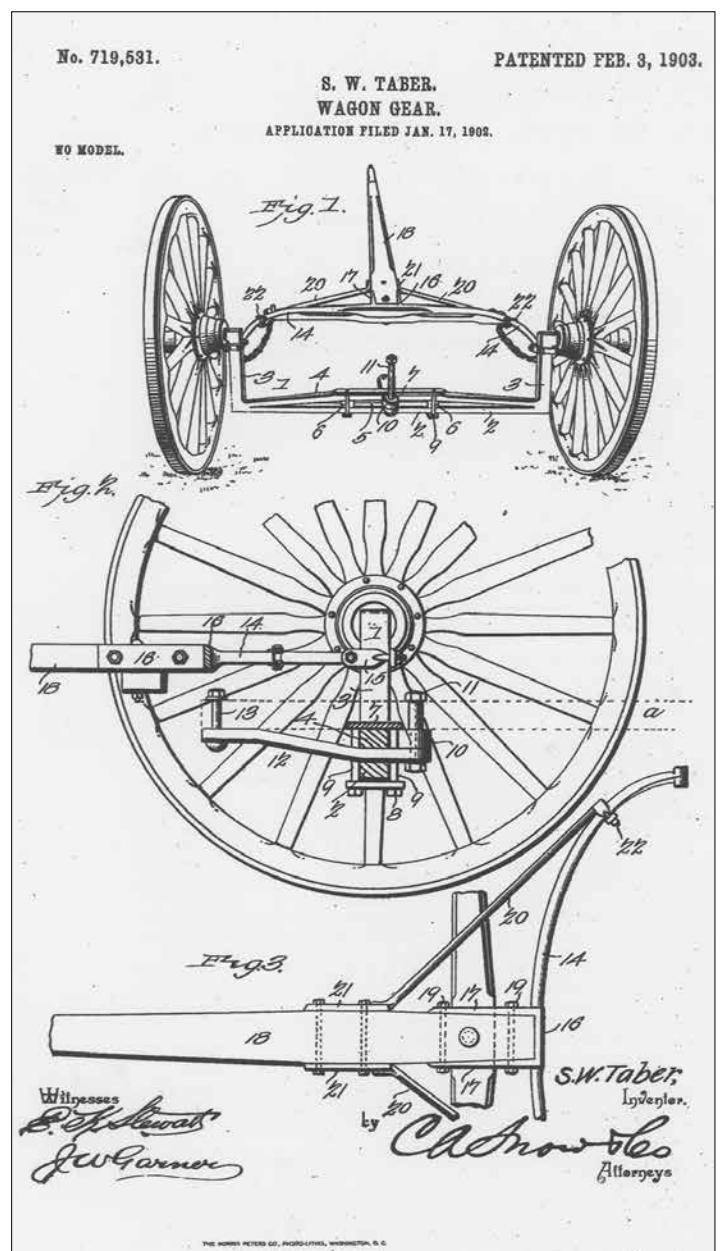
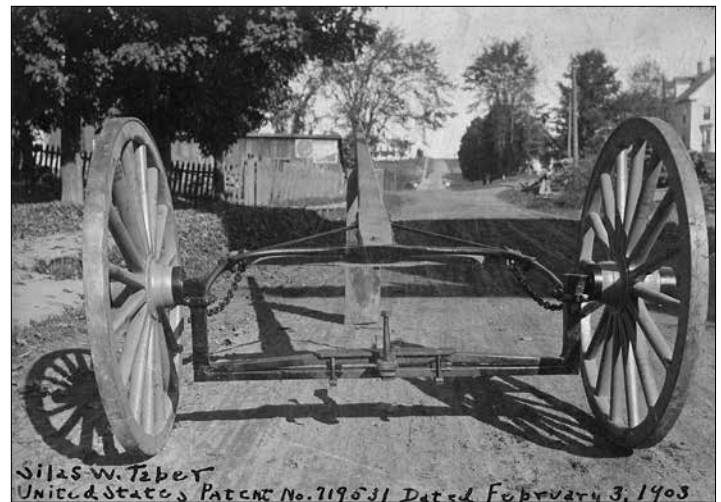
CLP COLIN BARTLETT & SONS, INC.
LOGGING CONTRACTOR
 Firewood / Excavation
 Septic Systems / Gravel

 Rt. 1, Orient, ME 04471
 (207) 532-2214
 Cell (207) 694-2376 • Garage (207) 532-2450

Jerry's
 **Food Store**
 Route 2, Island Falls, Maine 463-2828
 Full line of Groceries • Produce • In-Store Bakery • Cold Beverages
 Beer & Wine • Frozen Foods • Ice • Ice Cream • Film
 Fresh Meat & Fish • Live Lobsters (seasonal) • Live Bait • Fishing Supplies
 Agency Liquor Store • Hardware Supplies
 ~ Check Our Weekly Flyer for Great Buys Throughout the Store ~
 OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK: Mon-Wed 7am-6pm • Thurs-Sat 7am-7pm • Sun 9am-5pm

J. McLAUGHLIN
Construction, LLC
 EXCAVATING CONTRACTORS
 20 Years Experience
 Excellence at the Ground Level
 174 Bangor Street, Houlton, Maine
 www.jmclaughlinconstruction.com
 207-532-6335 cell 207-694-2546


Family Store
 Mon-Fri 8am-4pm, Sat 8am-2pm
 65 Main Street, Houlton • 521-0230
 Clothing
 Housewares
 Brick-a-Brac
 Almost Everything and Anything
SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES!
 Sunday School at 9:45am and Worship at 11am
 12 Court St., Houlton
 532-2322



border it's going to take the National Guard to drag them away...there'll be 20 ton bulldozers with scarifiers on back (sprayers with high pressure hoses), skidders, tractors, trailers...the Maine farmer is better equipped than the National Guard when it comes to heavy equipment."

Canadian officials worried that Maine farmers were "unwittingly starting a trade war," which they feared would spread to growers of apples and onions. In 1983, the state of Maine took its grievances to the U.S. International Trade Commission, which ruled



that the decrease in sales of Maine-grown potatoes had not been the result of the influx of Canadian potatoes. Meanwhile, on the west coast, British Columbia growers had filed an identical complaint against U.S. growers of russet potatoes.

The manager of the New Brunswick Potato Agency, Desmond Morley, blamed Maine growers for the mounting trade tensions, noting that the "prevailing Canadian attitude was "if they want to play games, we'll show them what dumping really is."

Maine politicians claimed that the British Columbia lawsuit was specifically designed to "split U.S. industry" and increase "east-west differences."

When the U.S. International Trade Commission reported its findings, Maine growers were more than disappointed. The Commission found no evidence that the Canadian market disrupted Maine potato sales, and that the imports did not qualify as "dumping." Maine was unwilling to concede however, and in 1985, a lawsuit was brought to the U.S. Court of International Trade, with the Maine Potato Council, as plaintiff, and the United States as defendant. The results were equally discouraging for the Mainers, and the war waged on into the 1990s, with Maine farm acreage continuing to decline, and potato farmers feeling squeezed by Canadian imports.

Today, despite decades of devastating loss of market share, the potato crop remains one of Maine's top industries, supplying the east coast with an ample supply of the humble root crop. While Canada still continues to import their small, round, white potatoes, Maine holds firm, proudly producing potatoes of excellent quality; 45 percent of its potatoes converted to french fries; 25 percent becoming potato chips, and 25 percent used as seed potatoes for the northeastern market. The rest are sold as plain old potatoes, which people bring home to fry, mash, grate or bake. 🥔





TEL 207-325-4723 • FAX 325-3482 • CELL 227-5676
51 Access Hwy, Limestone, Maine



Size : } 2 In front axle { Roller Bearing
 } 2 1-4 hind axle {

What a Taber Wagon Will Do !

75 Barrels Potatoes
 hauled by one pair of
 Horses 3 miles to mar-
 ket on a road with a
 number of heavy
 grades. Sept. 15, 1909

McCluskey Bros. Hardware Co.

Sole Agents, Houlton, Maine

For Sale by

TABER continued from page 18

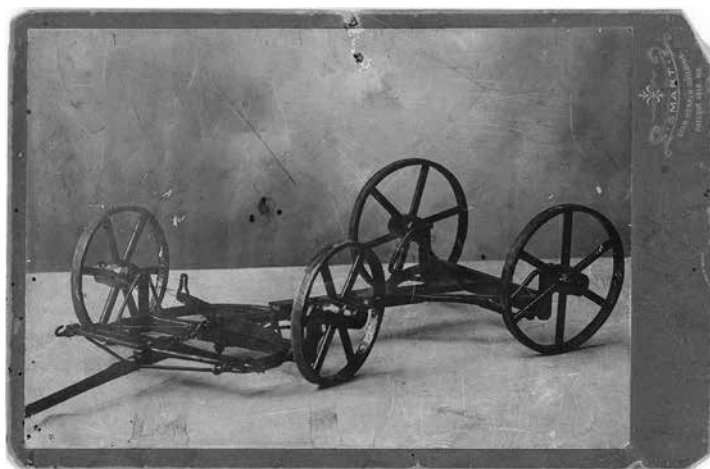
was the sole agent for the Taber Wagon in Houlton, stated the wagon could transport 75 barrels of potatoes weighing over 6 tons. While known primarily for his farm wagons, Taber also built pungs (work sleds), sleds, and coaches. Wagons built for public transportation included simple buckboards to the more elegant and comfortable Concord coaches. One such buckboard, built for the McCluskey Brothers Livery Stables, was used to transport people from the train station to a hotel. This would not have been an easy ride because these wagons had no springs between the wagon's body and its axles and instead relied on flexible floorboards. On rough terrain, the floors of these wagons flexed and bucked, hence the origin of the wagon's name.

On the other hand, Concord coaches had suspension systems that made the ride more comfortable with beautifully upholstered seating created under the direction of Taber's brother. These superior quality coaches were expensive, and could be built with enclosed interiors to shield passengers from inclement weather.

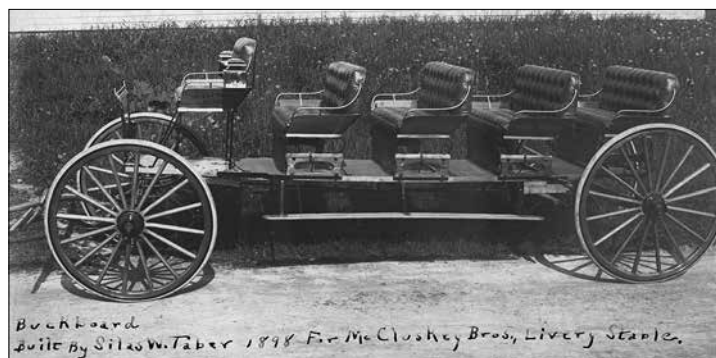
When Silas Taber died, at the age of 67, in 1912, farmers and the general public had started to shift their attention away from horse drawn carriages to motorized vehicles. When Silas passed away, his entire business was closed down.

Some of his wagons are still around today, and are very collectable.

For more information about Silas Taber, be sure to visit the Aroostook County Historical and Art Museum website at www.houltonmuseum.org. 🦋



A model of the drop-axle roller bearing Taber Wagon.



Buckboard
 built by Silas W. Taber 1898 For McCluskey Bros, Livery Stable.

ATTENTION all Mainers and history buffs...

Memories of Maine Magazine is the magazine for you!
Published 6 times a year, each issue covers a different region of
the great State of Maine. Full of stories about Maine people and
Maine places, and written by Maine people.

For only \$30, you can have it mailed to your home or office...
6 times throughout the year!
Only \$50 for a two-year subscription!

“I gave it as a gift to my parents and they read it from front to back
and save all their issues. When my older brother came to visit them, he
took their past issues. Now he has his own subscription.”

– Joline Edwards

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone: _____

Send this form and payment to:
Memories of Maine Magazine
110 Marginal Way, Suite 123
Portland, ME 04101

Subscriptions may also be placed online at our website
www.memoriesofmainemagazine.com

Or give us a call at 747-4596.



Thomas Phair's Bellstead, c. 1910.

PHAIR continued from page 6

It was partly through his generosity that the City of Presque Isle has the Mark & Emily Turner Memorial Library today. A group of interested citizens formed the Presque Isle Library Association in 1874. However, there was no permanent site for the collection, so the books “traveled” from business to business around town where each business owner became the temporary librarian. In 1907, the citizens of Presque Isle voted to build a library.

The Andrew Carnegie Foundation was contacted for assistance in the actual construction. Carnegie grants were “challenge” grants. Andrew Carnegie had made his fortune in the steel industry and vowed to donate most of his wealth before his death. His favorite cause was to donate money to cities and towns throughout the country to build libraries. During his lifetime, he helped establish over 2,500 libraries and gave away \$350 million.

In order to obtain the funding, the town had to provide the building site and annually provide 10% of the construction cost to support the operation of the library. Phair then purchased the lot on the corner of Second and State Streets from the Dudley heirs for \$1,000 and donated the land to build the library.

The Aroostook Anti-Tuberculosis Association was incorporated on May 11, 1914. This organization was

established to control and supervise tuberculosis. The first president of the Association was Thomas H. Phair.

Phair passed away on May 18, 1916 at the age of 66. His grand home on Main Street in Presque Isle, built in 1895, is located where the Social Security Administration office is located today. After Phair passed away, the house was eventually sold to the telephone company and used to house out-of-town operators. As many may remember, American Telephone & Telegraph was often called “Ma Bell,” and the house eventually became known as the “Bellstead.”

The carriage house for the Bellstead still stands today. It serves as an apartment building, and is located on Chapman Street directly behind Eagle Hill Stamps and Coins.

Thomas Phair, his son Charles, his brother James, and his nephew Philip all had a significant impact on this small, rural community. James served in the Civil War mustering out as a 2nd Lieutenant, owned a hotel in town, served as a fire warden and deputy sheriff, and was the village's first official postmaster. In 1935, Charles wrote a book on salmon fishing, which is to this day considered one of the best on the topic. Philip served the community as a prominent attorney.

As is typical in this area, a street in town is named after the family to commemorate their contributions. 🦋

of February 1, 1890:

“A man named Griffin, belonging to a traveling circus combination, was arrested yesterday, at Colton, on a message from the Chief of Police, of Los Angeles, being wanted in that city on a charge of petit larceny. Griffin is a sword-swallower and is accompanied by a small boy who, he claims, is his son. An officer will arrive from Los Angeles this morning to return him to that city.”

Nothing else is known about N. J. Rogers, alias William Griffin. He apparently died two days after he was injured in the circus show held on Saturday, July 11, 1903. He lies buried in Bridgewater, a casualty of a freak accident that claimed his life while he was performing for the “grandest and best circus ever produced.”

What of the circus performances? There seems to have been a wide variation in how the Aroostook County audiences received the shows. *The Independent* of July 16, 1903 gave several reports from various places. Page 1 of the issue indicated, *“A large number of our citizens attended Sautelle’s circus at Bridgewater, Saturday.”* Ashland news in that issue gave the names of those who attended, *“Joe Robinson and Miss Nelson of Presque Isle were among those who attended the circus.”* And, *“W. J. Ervin and Miss Essie Kirstead drove from Presque Isle, Monday, to attend the circus.”*

The circus show at Ashland, held on Monday, July 13th, the day the sword swallower died in Bridgewater, was also described in *The Independent*:

“Sig. Sautelle’s circus exhibited here Monday afternoon and evening. A large crowd was in attendance and pronounced it a fair show. Of course, to some of the youngsters who saw a circus for the first time, it was simply grand. An excursion train ran from Fort Kent, which greatly increased the crowd. The quiet and order which prevailed during the entire day, was a credit to the town of Ashland.”

Interestingly, at Ashland, *The Independent* reported, *“Services were held in the Congregationalist church Sunday morning, and in the evening Rev. McIlenny preached in one of the circus tents to a large and appreciative audience.”*

Not all of the reviews reported in *The Independent* on July 16 were flattering. The folks in Green Ridge had this to say:

“Quite a number from this place attended the circus at Caribou, Saturday, and all who we have heard mention it, pronounced it a fraud.”

Folks in North Maysville (now the northernmost part of Presque Isle), had this to say:

“Several from this place attended the Sautelle circus at Caribou, which proved to be the greatest fake and biggest pack of thieves that ever struck this part of the country.”

Reports of the Sautelle Circus from other town newspapers are similarly divided as to the quality of the “Grandest and Best Circus Ever Produced.” However, when the circus left town, they left someone

behind in Bridgewater; someone whose story deserves to be told—N. J. Rogers, aka, William Griffin, sword-swallower. 🦋



NOT ALL OF THE REVIEWS
REPORTED IN *The Independent*
ON JULY 16 WERE FLATTERING.
.....

Vintage Maine Images

Discover 21,000+ historical images
from 600+ towns in Maine & New England



#1274 Abraham Bogdanove paints
Maine Island from Monhegan Island, 1935



www.VintageMaineImages.com

Vintage Maine Images is a website of the Maine Historical Society. www.MaineHistory.org

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

MAINE HISTORY

delivered to
YOUR mailbox



MEMORIES OF MAINE

*THE MAGAZINE FOR
MAINE HISTORY
AND NOSTALGIA*

Published 6 times a year,
each issue covers a
different region of the
great State of Maine.

SUBSCRIPTION COST:

\$30 for one year
\$50 for two years

MAIL CHECK TO:

Memories of Maine Magazine,
110 Marginal Way, Suite 123, Port-
land, ME 04101

or **SUBSCRIBE ONLINE** at memoriesofmainemagazine.com



Makes a Great Gift!