



Hampden Historical Society

Newsletter – Summer 2020

Update From the Board

As you know, the Board of Directors made the decision to remain closed to the public for the 2020 season as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board is continuing to meet monthly to reevaluate its decision, and to date, continues to believe that remaining closed is best.

A few volunteers, taking necessary precautions, such as wearing face masks and practicing social distancing, have been working on and off to catch up with paperwork and collections that have come in over the past couple of years when we were closed because of construction. We are also doing our best to address requests for information that come in to us via email, Facebook and through telephone messages.

In addition, the Board is continuing to submit grant applications to help defray ongoing costs for operations as well as funds for a new roof for the Carriage House. Unfortunately, maintenance and upkeep projects don't stop needing attention regardless of all that is going on in the world.

We would be remiss if we did not thank those who have continued to donate to HHS over the past months. Your financial support is deeply appreciated. And while it is always difficult to ask for more, we encourage folks to consider a donation to HHS to help us through this difficult time.

Please know that we appreciate everyone's support and understanding. We wish you and your loved ones good health. Please be safe and we will see you soon!

Annual Christmas Bazaar

The Board has not yet made a decision regarding its annual Christmas Bazaar in November. At this point, our fingers are crossed that we will be able to hold it but only time will tell. We encourage you to continue making the beautiful crafts and goods that are so popular with our guests. It is by far the Society's largest fundraiser of the year and without it we will have to tighten our belts even more in order to cover our ongoing expenses.

Hampden Neighborhood Food Cupboard

The Hampden Historical Society has been a July sponsor of the Hampden Neighborhood Food Cupboard for several years. However, because of COVID-19, the church that houses the food cupboard has been closed, but the cupboard is still in operation. As a result, volunteers have asked for monetary donations in order to buy the necessary items from local stores or Good Shepherd. The food cupboard has great volunteers who shop around for the best deals on items they cannot purchase from Good Shepherd. If you haven't yet thought of making a donation, we are certain it would be much appreciated. You may donate by sending a check to: Hampden Neighborhood Food Cupboard
P.O. Box 9, Hampden, ME 04444



A summer stroll – Hampden upper corner

Maine Breaks Up With Massachusetts – But Mr. Kinsley Votes Nay!

Well, boys and girls, it's time to commemorate our state's 200th birthday. Most of the events planned by various organizations (including HHS) to celebrate this milestone have been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we can still remember in our own way what the creation of the 23rd state meant to the people in the upper right corner of the U.S.

“Maine” as a named area came into being circa 1639. With the break-up of the Plymouth Company in 1635, its extensive domain was divided up into provinces. Four of these were in Maine and for the first time some fairly definite boundaries were set. The St. Croix River was fixed as the eastern line and the Piscataqua as the western line. These remain today, but a great deal of fighting and loss of life occurred over the land that now comprises Hancock and Washington counties and a part of Penobscot County. No attempt was made at this time to determine the northern border but the southeastern border was easily determined by the Atlantic Ocean. Then in 1652, due to a period of neglect by England and some troublesome relations with the French, Maine passed under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts and became one of its counties under the name of Yorkshire, with a right to representation in the general assembly of the colony. At this time two towns had been incorporated in southern Maine, Kittery in 1647 and York in 1652.

Events went rather smoothly with this new arrangement between Maine and Massachusetts and the population increased; many new towns were incorporated and a sense of prosperity ensued. But as often happens when a population of people become confident, unrest with their governing bodies can occur. The clouds of revolution came over the American Colonies and on July 4, 1776, the start of a long struggle began. Maine sent a considerable number of men to join the army and prepared at the very beginning to assume its share of the burdens of war. Maine was first invaded in 1775 when a small British fleet appeared in Portland Harbor and bombarded the town. Portland was left in ruins and ashes.

Hampden, first incorporated in 1774 as a plantation called “Wheelersborough,” was merely a small frontier settlement until after the Revolutionary War. Most of its men were involved in trying to survive in the wilderness, and were not available to join the fight. Captain John Crosby (later General) is known to have taken part in the Revolution and others from Hampden were Daniel Neal, Amos Doane, Calvin Snow, Ebenezer Crosby, and Colonel Gabriel Johonnet (others claim that Col. Johonnet, who was an officer on General Washington's staff, did not come to Hampden until after the Revolution.) The British, however brought the war to Hampden shores in 1779, while chasing the fleeing American fleet up the Penobscot River, following the ill-fated Penobscot Expedition fiasco. Two vessels, the *Vengeance*, 24 guns, and the *General Putnam*, 22 guns, were burned in the river at Hampden by either their crews or the British.

At war's end in 1781, Maine was still a part of Massachusetts and that arrangement would continue for another 40 years. But Maine was growing; the federal census of 1790 showed the population had reached 95,540. With the situation regarding native Americans cleared away there had been a steady influx of people attracted by the lure of the many available acres of fine farm land and the great tracts of lumber which Maine afforded.

In May of 1790 the plantation of Wheelersborough sent a petition to the Massachusetts General Court asking for the lots that had been assigned them. The inhabitants eventually received their titles, but had to pay for their land, which they thought was to be free. For those settled before Jan.1, 1784, the price was very low - \$6.50 for a 100 acre lot, which amounted to six and one-half cents per acre. For those who came between that date and January 1, 1794, the price was 50 cents an acre. There were approximately 156 settlers who arrived prior to 1784 and qualified for the lower price.

In 1794, January, another petition was sent to the court from Wheelersborough requesting that the town now be incorporated under the name of “Olive.” However, the next month, February, another petition was sent with the name “Olive” deleted and the name “Hampden” inserted. No one has a good explanation as to why there was a change of name but we have been named for a

distinguished English patriot, John Hampden. He was a leader of the opposition to King Charles I of England. Hampden was the 87th town to be incorporated in Maine. At the time it was in Hancock County and 22 years later gained its position in Penobscot County.

By 1810 there were 178 incorporated towns, a really remarkable growth since the close of the Revolutionary War. But as the population grew so did the discontent with the state of Massachusetts. A common complaint was the distance Mainers had to travel to reach the General Court of Boston. A further irritant was the fact that Maine towns were under-represented in the Massachusetts Legislature. The price of Maine lumber was less on the market than that from Massachusetts and the cost of raising farm animals, especially sheep, was greater in Maine, yet the tax on the animals was the same.

Now comes the War of 1812 caused in part when Britain interfered with our sailing ships off the U.S. Coast. In April, 1814, British forces attacked Eastport, and in August they occupied Castine and Belfast and sailed up the Penobscot for Bangor with an invasion force of 10 ships and 3,000 troops. They had received information that the U.S. Adams, rated at 18 guns, was lying in anchor in Hampden. The few vessels of the American Navy had done so much damage to British ships that the capture of even one American vessel would be considered a success. Well, we know how this engagement ends: the local militias gathered at Hampden and reached a reluctant decision to defend Bangor, despite being out numbered and being armed with pitchforks and barn shovels. After waiting through a cold and foggy night, the Americans encountered the advancing regulars as they crossed Reeds Brook and came up Academy Hill. The locals, after firing a few shots, broke ranks and retreated homeward. Once again eastern Maine was under foreign (British) control.

The Battle of Hampden was a shock to those who assumed – since New England bankers had lent the British funds to pursue the war – that the region would be spared. Governor Strong of Massachusetts called a special session of the General Court, but Federalist legislators refused to liberate Maine, leaving the undertaking to the federal government. There was even a plan to annex eastern Maine to

Canada as a way of appeasing the British. But, if the Battle of Hampden accomplished one thing it was to emphasize the lack of support from the state of Massachusetts and was perhaps a turning point for Maine citizens seeking statehood. Vigorous campaigning began in 1815 and over the next four years, Maine passed several referendums supporting statehood, but none of them persuaded the Massachusetts General Court to take action.

In the summer of 1819, the Maine voters called overwhelmingly for statehood and Massachusetts could no longer ignore the issue. Delegates gathered in Portland in October to frame a constitution for their new state. Mr. Simeon Stetson of Hampden was one of the framers of Maine's constitution. He was described as “a man of large affairs, carrying on an extensive mercantile business and also farming on a large scale. He was prominent in town affairs and a member of Gov. Lincoln's Executive Committee in 1828. He died in Hampden in 1936.”

William King (who would become Maine's first governor) and statehood's greatest advocate made revisions to the Constitution that he hoped would be agreeable to both sides. Finally on July 28, 1819, Maine voters overwhelmingly supported separation. The delegates wrote a constitution, far more democratic and egalitarian than any other in New England, which was overwhelmingly approved. Under ordinary conditions, Maine would have been admitted to the Union immediately, but statehood was complicated by a national debate over extending slavery into the western territories as they became states. By 1818, the Senate was evenly divided between slave-holding and free states. Admission of Maine, obviously as a free state, would upset this critical balance.

The controversy could be settled by the famous law known as the Missouri Compromise, with Maine being admitted as free state and at the same time Missouri as a slave state. Maine's Congressional delegation was in a moral bind, since statehood for Maine meant slavery in Missouri. All seven Maine representatives (which included Mr. Martin Kinsley of Hampden) were decidedly against slavery and declined the compromise. Mr. Kinsley was one of our first representatives to the U.S. Congress in 1819 and 1820. Kinsley lived in Hampden from 1797 to 1834. His former home is

now the well-known “home” for the Historical Society. Here is a letter written by Kinsley dated “Washington, March 9, 1820” on the subject of slavery, it reveals the depth of his feelings on the practice:

“Ardently as I have always wished for the independence of Maine, I have never voted for it, and never would at the price of extending slavery into the intermediate Region of the South and West. I hate and abhor slavery in all its shapes and forms. But that any of our good, honest, Republicans in New England, with all our boasted principles of Liberty, and equality, should indirectly aid, assist, or even countenance this abominable traffic in human flesh, is truly astonishing! I thank Heaven, that I can wash my hands of this foul stain! But the Dye is cast, Slavery is now as permanently established in this Country as Freedom is: Yes, even by our own Constitution.”

A conference committee of House and Senate supporters crafted an amended version of the Compromise and this won approval in Congress (without Maine's support). Maine became the nation's 23rd state on March 23, 1820. Interestingly when it came to the final vote there was a split in the Maine delegation, with two members voting for the compromise and five against. Kinsley was among those voting “Nay.” His group of five could not bring themselves to vote in another slave state. They prepared an address published in the *Portland Gazette* condemning the Compromise and calling it “a scheme to perpetuate the power of the Southern slavocracy well into the future.” The people of Maine they presumed supported their decision to resist this effort.

The people and papers of Maine, contrary to what one might think, were behind the dissenters. The *Portland Gazette* was filled with torrents of abuse aimed at the two defenders. They were charged with having “leagued themselves with southern slave drivers.” However, Mainers are forgiving and most of the group of seven were returned to either state or federal offices in the next election. Mr. Kinsley, however, was an unsuccessful candidate for reelection in 1820 to the seventeenth Congress; he retired to Hampden in the new **state of Maine!**

It is important to note that slavery was known in Maine as early as 1663, however, it was not a common practice. In Maine it was confined to a small segment of society and served as a symbol of high status. Slavery was made illegal in Maine by the Massachusetts Supreme Court in 1783. Ironically one of the last vestiges of slavery in Maine occurred in 1820, just as we attained statehood on the coattails of Missouri. The town of Gardner claimed that it need not provide town assistance to a Harriet Stockbridge because her grandfather, Isaac “Hazard” Stockbridge had been a slave. The court upheld the town's claim.

So boys and girls, let's see what was happening in Hampden in 1820. In that year the population of Hampden was 1,478 souls, the largest town in Penobscot County. It beat out Bangor which boasted only 1,221 and Orrington with 1,049. Every other town in Penobscot County had less than 1,000 people, most had less than 500. New York was America's largest city with a population of 124,000; Philadelphia was second with 113,000.

There was no real public transportation in 1820. A railroad line had been built in Massachusetts in 1814, but no passengers were carried until 1826. The trolley car did not appear in Hampden until 1896. And the nights must have been pretty dark as there were no street lights until 1908 and no electric lights in the Town Hall until 1909.

Sailing ships were being built at most towns along the Penobscot. Hampden had three boatyards at one time and in 1820 launched two schooners (the pick-up trucks of the Penobscot). The schooner *Mary*, 58 x 54 x 18 x 7, was built by John Crosby and Elias Dudley; the mariner was Cyrenius Brown. The schooner *Malinda*, 37 x 45 x 16 x 6, was built by Daniel Emory and Simeon Stetson, the mariner unknown.

Maine was now on its own and the young state, including Hampden, enjoyed some productive years.

Bob Hawes

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HHS Received a Treasured Gift

HHS recently received a beautiful gift. Our deepest thanks go to Nancy Hennessey and Toni Philbrick for their generosity. The hooked rug, designed and made by Toni Philbrick, presents a montage of historic structures in Hampden circa 1900. The rug is on display in the new Archive Office for all to enjoy (*once we are back open, of course.*)



Left to Right: Town Hall, Old Burying Ground, Hampden Academy, Eastern Star Grange #1, Kinsley House, Hannibal Hamlin Law Office, Hampden Highlands Post Office/McKinley School, Harmony Hall.
Bottom Center is Entrance to Dorothea Dix Park

Happy Birthday Maine!

It seems appropriate that we should celebrate the 200th birthday of our great state with a poem, written and published in 1926, that speaks to the love that we all have for our home state.

***MAINE** by Hester Barbour Newey
Hampden Highlands, Maine as published in 1926*

I have come back to you,
O dear old State of Maine.
And there's a glad singing
In my heart again.
The splendor of your hills
And dreamy dells.
I love your rocks, and
Pebbles, and sea shells,
Your jewelled waves
As, breaking on the shore,
They sing to me
Forevermore.
Your crystal vapor
As it rises o'er the land
And sweet bird voices seem
To understand
My thoughts, and sing to me of
Sky of azure hue.
'Tis home to me,
Home of glorious dreams come true.
Scented by lofty pine,
There's none on earth
So dear to me
As Maine, my State of birth.

Interested in Researching Hampden? Your Hampden Home? Your Genealogy? Old Maps?

HHS is home to a wealth of information, and volunteers in our Archive are more than willing to help you find information that we may have available. While we gladly provide this important service to you at no cost, we do charge for any photocopies of materials in order to recoup some of the cost for supplies. The policy for document photocopy fees was reviewed and reauthorized by the Board of Directors at a recent meeting. Following, for your information, is the policy.

Document Photocopy Policy

- \$1.00 per page for photocopies (*whether in person or mailed*)

- Minimum additional postage fee of \$1.00 will be charged for any items mailed

- HHS members will be charged same as above for items copied for personal use/research

- No fee will be charged for students K – University

Note: Copies done for the benefit of HHS will not incur fees.

All fees for photocopying will be used for Archive general operations.



4th of July 1899 celebration for dedication of Dorothea Dix Park

You Knew You Grew up in Hampden When...

You knew you grew up in Hampden, Maine when is a Facebook group site that is based very much on You knew you grew up in Bangor, Maine when or You knew you grew up in Brewer, Maine when. If you have an interest in our town you will love this site. Go to Facebook, then to groups and type in "You knew you grew up in Hampden, Maine when. You will be asked to join 520 other members already on this site. Once approved, you can reminisce about everything Hampden old and new.

Created April 14, 2017 by Jim and Patsy Husson, there are now over 1,000 posts. You can see everything from old historical pictures of Hampden, old school classroom pictures, yearbook pictures, updates on construction going on in town, fun facts about Hampden, photos of teachers and scroll through the old posts. It will give you hours of enjoyment.



A summertime family gathering at the Kinsley House

From Our Kitchen to Yours

We know you will enjoy this one!

Cornbread Chicken Pot Pie

Step 1:

1½ – 2 cups of diced chicken cooked

1 can whole kernel corn drained

1 small can peas drained

1 can of cream of chicken soup, undiluted

Mix these ingredients together and pour into a deep

dish pie plate or casserole dish

Step 2:

1 package of Jiffy cornbread mix

1 egg

½ to ¾ cup of milk until batter is cake-like

Pour this mixture over the meat mixture

Cook at 400 degrees for 30 – 35 minutes or until

cornbread is golden brown and the mixture is hot.

NOTE: You can use other canned vegetables in place of corn and/or peas if desired.



Summertime haying in Hampden



Entrance to Riverside Park



Swimming at Clark's bungalow
at the end of Cottage Street

Hours of Operation (effective 2020)

The Kinsley House Museum and Archive are currently closed to the public due to COVID-19. Please feel free to leave us a voice message at 862-2027, email us at hampdenhistorical@gmail.com or contact us through our website at:

hampdenhistoricalsociety.org

or via Facebook if we may be of assistance at this time.

Change of Address

Please let us know when any of your contact information has changed. This includes email addresses, telephone number/s and mailing addresses. It is important to us that we keep you apprised of all that is happening at HHS. You are important to us and we thank you for your help.

HHS Contact Information

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