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EVA M. BEAN AND EAST BETHEL ROAD — A FIFTY YEAR PERSPECTIVE —

By Stanley R. Howe

Editor's Note: A version of this essay was delivered during a Society program held on 14 May 2009. It has been edited and expanded for publication in The Courier.

Interest in writing about the local and regional past in the United States extends back to the Puritans, who believed history was important to document God's interventions in people's lives and that His influence was pervasive throughout the world. This view of history was later superseded by a more secular perspective that reflected the influence of the Enlightenment. Between the American Revolution and the Civil War, Americans began to develop a deeper interest in their past. State historical societies began to form in the early 19th century; the Maine Historical Society, for example, was founded in 1822.

Increasingly, the study of history became a common pursuit at all levels of society. State governments responded to this change by requiring the teaching of history in public schools. In addition, a strong sense of nationalism began to pervade the United States during the first half of the 19th century. The most famous nationalist historian of this era was George Bancroft (1800-1891), whose ten volumes of national history, written between 1834 and 1874, eclipsed all other historical writing of the period. Bancroft was an anomaly for this era, however, since he was a professionally trained historian who had received a formal academic background in historicism in Germany that resulted in a Ph.D. degree. His extremely nationalistic history was widely read and dramatically told. Known as the "Father of American History," he celebrated the "common man" and was thoroughly Jacksonian in outlook.

With these developments as a backdrop, it is possible to look at the amateur historians—commonly referred to as "antiquarians"—from this era. These were largely men of leisure, clergymen, literary figures and the like. They were intensely interested in their immediate environs and based their writings on materials that many of them spent a lifetime gathering—namely diaries, letters and other personal documents.

One of the most prominent historians of this sort in Maine was William Willis (1794-1870), of Portland, who is considered by many the most influential historian in the State from the 1830s through the 1860s. He was from a maritime family, a graduate of Phillips Exeter and Harvard.



Eva Marion Bean (1895-1969)

For more than a half century he was a leading citizen of Portland, serving in political capacities, including mayor of the city. He also was president of the Maine Historical Society and edited the first six volumes of its collections. His most significant work was a 900-page history of Portland, which remains authoritative after all these years.

One of Maine's most active historians in the 19th century was William Williamson (1779-1846), acting Governor of the State in 1821, who gathered historical materials from many Maine towns for his two-volume history of the State. It is still an important source today.

In Bethel, credit must be given to Dr. Nathaniel Tuckerman True (1812-1887), who, in the columns of *The Bethel Courier* (1858-1861), collected all kinds of details about the Bethel area, much of which can be found nowhere else today. Dr. True's published remarks from various commemorative gatherings are also useful source materials still consulted today. True's work formed the basis for Dr. William B. Lapham's *History of Bethel* published in 1891. Dr. Lapham added more details and corrected some of True's accounts. Lapham's work appeared in an era when towns or wealthy

patrons hired antiquarians to compile histories of communities that they were not all that familiar with. Lapham had lived in Bethel and Woodstock, but his knowledge of Rumford, Norway and Paris was not so clear.

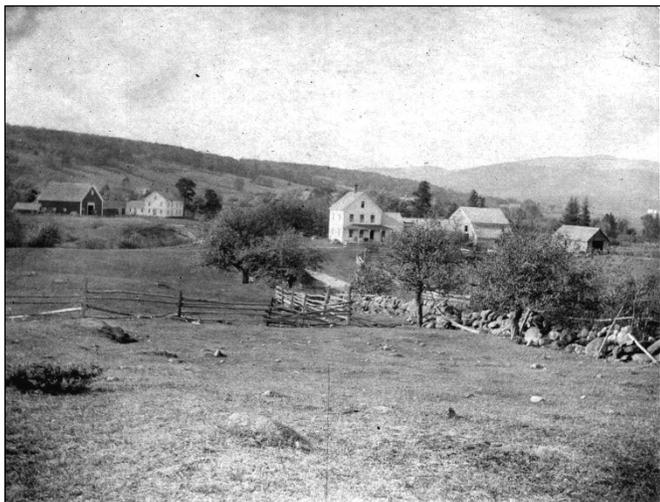
Lapham's five histories of Oxford County towns, a record never surpassed, epitomizes the strengths and weaknesses of the antiquarian approach. Like Williamson, Lapham collected much historical data that might have been otherwise lost, but he did so without a discerning eye as to the relative importance of his information. He also colored his history with his own distinctive viewpoint, judging historical figures as to whether or not they agreed with his strong temperance views. About Israel Kimball, Jr., for example, he wrote the following glowing tribute: "It is always pleasant to speak of such a man as Israel Kimball, Jr., because pleasant things can be said of him without fear of adverse comment and without exposing the writer to the charge of favoritism. Such men as he are the salt of the earth, and the world is better that they have lived. He was honest, industrious, frugal and thrifty. He had an abundance of charity, but he bestowed it with discrimination and judgment. He despised shams in whatever form they were presented. He excelled in everything he undertook and as farming was his chief employment, he was one of the very best in town. He studied it in all its branches, and sought for the best results in which he generally succeeded. Inheriting the broad intervals of his father at Middle Intervale, he kept the farm in the highest state of cultivation. He was a man whom everybody respected, and in whose integrity everyone had the fullest confidence. He never sought office much preferring to devote his whole time to the care of his farm, but he was often elected on the Board of Selectmen and urged to serve. In this position, he always acquitted him with honor and to the entire satisfaction of the people of the town. In the neighborhood and town, he was peaceable and a peacemaker; in his family he was kind and indulgent, and to visitors or strangers within his gates, he was courteous and hospitable. I speak from knowledge, having spent many pleasant hours beneath his roof-tree. His wife Sarah (Webber) Kimball, was a most excellent woman, a model Christian mother, and an ornament to her sex. The lives of this couple were a constant inspiration to the people of the town, leading them onward to higher attainment in all that pertains to domestic and country life."

As one can readily observe, the Kimballs neared perfection in Lapham's eyes. However, to local resident Consider Cole, he was not so complimentary: "Consider Cole was a Greenwood man, but he was often at Bethel Hill, and when there, provided he had the means to gratify his insatiable appetite for drink, he was sure to become intoxicated. On one occasion, he crept into the school house which stood near Robertson's shop, intending to spend the night there. It was a bitter cold night, and seeing him enter I followed him. He was camped upon the floor, and when I entered, he lifted his head, and resting it upon his hand, his elbow on

the floor, he peered into my face and said, 'are you the school committee? If you be, won't you have glass set in the windows to keep out the wind?' I took him to the tavern where he had obtained his drink, and by a little coaxing and a few threats of prosecution, induced the landlord to take care of him for the night. At another time, I found him late at night in a horse-shed, upon the ground, in a drunken stupor. It was a bitter night and the glittering stars looked coldly down upon the snow-clad earth. We raised him up, and each taking arm, walked him off toward warmer quarters. As we were going along, he turned upon me, and having some idea where he might be going or ought to go, with a drunken leer, he enquired, 'be you the devil?' Our interference on this occasion doubtless saved his life, for he could not have outlived that frigid night. Consider enlisted and went to the war and never returned, which was perhaps just as well. He could not resist an appetite long indulged and which was hereditary. His father, lying before an open fire in a drunken sleep, was roasted alive, and the whole family were slaves to the intoxicating cup. Consider and his brother did not marry, and the family has become extinct." Such was the judgment of a temperance-minded historian! Although Lapham's writing style was often awkward and his organizational abilities in need of improvement, his writings are still the only source available for particular information.

By the late 19th century, with the founding the American Historical Association (1884) and the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (1907), historical writing became increasingly professionalized. The MVHA later became the Organization of American Historians; it and the AHA are among the leading organizations for American professional historians today. As well, of particular importance to those in public history are the American Association for State and Local History, founded in 1940, and the National Council on Public History, which came into being in 1980.

With this background in mind, we turn our attention to local historian Eva Marion Bean, whose book, *East Bethel Road*, was published exactly fifty years ago. Eva was born in East Bethel on July 11, 1895, the daughter of Eugene Sue and Ella Brown Bean, at the house built by Asa Kimball in the 1790s. After attending local schools, she graduated from Gould Academy in 1913 and Colby College four years later. In 1922, she received her R.N. from Presbyterian Hospital in New York. Following her training as a nurse, she went to Paris, France, where she taught nursing. Returning to Maine, she settled in Portland, where she was supervisor of nurses at what is now the Maine Medical Center. Her next position was as a private nurse and governess for the J. M. Andrews family of Akron, Ohio; Mr. Andrews was the owner of the Quaker Oats Company. With the onset of rheumatoid arthritis in the 1930s, which meant that every day was full of constant pain, Eva was forced to retire from regular employment in 1934. Fortunately, a disability insurance allowed her to devote the remainder of her life to historical research and writing.



A "Kimball Neighborhood," East Bethel

As longtime secretary of the Gould Academy Alumni Association, Eva worked on assembling materials about the Academy's past with great dedication and enthusiasm, and her efforts were later incorporated into the history completed by Francis Parkman in 1976.

In 1959, she published *East Bethel Road*, a model of local history and a genuine "labor of love." Her stated purpose for writing the book was to raise funds to build a fence around Bartlett Cemetery in East Bethel, one of the town's oldest burial sites, but also one of its most neglected. After the publication of this book, her next goal was the founding of the Bethel Historical Society in 1966, an organization in which she served as the first secretary and "leading spirit." It was a tough struggle for the nascent organization to survive, but Eva kept it going, thanks to her strong will and commanding presence. She died in her sleep on October 18, 1969; at the time of her death, she was also working on a history of Oxford County.

Since Eva had been a nurse with a sound medical background, it is perhaps not surprising that she left her body to science. Her remains were later cremated and her ashes scattered, according to her instructions, in Bartlett Cemetery (although her "official" marker is on the family lot in the East Bethel Cemetery). In 1984, at the urging of Robert D. Hastings, a plaque in her honor was placed in Bartlett Cemetery during a special observance that also included a reception at the East Bethel Church.

Eva was remembered by former Ambassador to Norway and Bethel native Margaret Joy Tibbetts as one of "those friends whom we miss more each day." Ms. Tibbetts continued, "She had a splendid and admirable character with a warm, generous, and open spirit. She was positive and strong minded, but she was always kind and always just. Her sense of humor was constant and her wit was sharp and never malicious." To her longtime friend Edward H. Hastings, Eva "was a living symbol of courage in the face of adversity." He added, "Somehow, each year, which brought

a decrease in physical stamina, served only to sharpen her wit and increase her zest for life." Barbara Hastings Honkala recalled Eva's strong influence on her life, particularly for encouraging her love of historical research and bird watching. "I might never have gone to college, if Eva had not approached my uncertainties with the attitude that continuing my education was something that there should be no question about in my mind," she remembered.

Only three hundred fifty copies of *East Bethel Road* were printed and the original retail price was \$12.50 per copy. Later, Eva raised the figure to \$15. After the initial surge, sales were slow and it took nearly ten years for the book to sell out, the last one selling not long before she died.

In conceiving *East Bethel Road*, Eva may have been influenced by Martha Fifield Wilkins (1879-1963), who had earlier researched Sunday River valley home sites and, in 1947, donated to the Bethel Library much genealogical information on families connected with that area. In any event, Eva wrote the manuscript for the book in her own distinctive hand and, from there, Carl Brown and his sons at Citizen Printers in Bethel transformed it into print.

East Bethel Road was intended to be a sequel to Lapham's *History of Bethel*, with a focus on the eastern portion of the town in what had once been known as the "East Parish." The book contained house site histories and considerable genealogical data on families with some connection to East Bethel. Also included in the book were aspects of Gould Academy and church history, a chapter titled "Odds and Ends," a section with dates and events, cemetery records and veterans' listings, and "Additions and Corrections" at the end of the volume.

Eva's writing style was direct and unadorned. She spent countless hours reading 19th and 20th century newspapers, as well as considerable effort examining deed and probate records. While she had many photographs that might have been placed in the book, only eighteen made the final cut. This limited number was likely dictated by cost concerns.

The "profits" from *East Bethel Road* were placed in a special fund held by the Town of Bethel to fence in Bartlett Cemetery so that cows could no longer roam freely through it. However, it was not until 1976 that a fence was installed by a youth group led by Donald Feeney with Robert D. Hastings helping with his tractor to string the page wire fence, which was stapled to cedar posts. This fence worked for a time, but it was always a struggle to keep the gate closed. Constant vigilance was necessary to make certain the cows did not enter and rub on the stones, pushing them over or breaking them off at ground level.

By the late 1970s, after the Dr. Moses Mason House opened as the headquarters of the Bethel Historical Society, it became obvious that *East Bethel Road* had become a much-sought after book, with some collectors offering as much as \$500 for a copy—a price that far exceeded most out-of-print Maine books, especially ones published in the last twenty or so years.

It soon became clear that a new edition of this book needed to be produced. The copyright was then owned by two of Eva's nephews and their heirs, who, when approached, graciously transferred the copyright to the Bethel Historical Society.

From this point, the Society proceeded to plan an update. Three residents of East Bethel—Agnes Haines, Mildred Jackson and Nancy Mercer—played leading roles in gathering and recording information, with myself as the general editor. It was then manually typed, corrected and retyped, a long process that would have been infinitely easier with today's computer technology. Finally, the book was ready for the printer, and the Society received a \$10,000 grant to help with publication expenses. In addition, a special, pre-publication price was offered, which raised enough money, along with the grant, to cover all publication costs. It was determined to retain the original book text and to add over three hundred page of supplemental material regarding changes in the residence and family data.

For the dust jacket, an 1880 watercolor landscape by local artists Susie Kimball was used; this work depicted East Bethel Road (now "Intervale Road") in the foreground looking east towards the Brick End House built by Dr. Timothy Carter in 1816. A photo of Eva Bean standing near Amos Hastings' monument at Woodland Cemetery was included in the front of the new edition. Margaret Tibbetts, then Society Board of Trustees chair, wrote an introduction and I, as editor, composed a reflective piece about changes in East Bethel since the years of my childhood there in the 1950s. The second edition appeared in 1984.

For professional historians used to analyzing lots of details to develop distinctive patterns and trends, local and regional history can be of enormous value. To those interested in national and even international influences and how they affect the local scene, it is perhaps useful to cite John Quincy Adams' observation: "Posterity delights in details." *East Bethel Road* abounds in details and is the delight of many who still find useful information in this "labor of love" left to posterity by Eva Marion Bean.

From the Editor . . .

This issue marks *The Courier's* new role as the "History Journal" of the Bethel Historical Society. To this end, *The Courier* will no longer contain news about the Society but, instead, will feature historical articles and images, transcriptions of documents, book reviews, and editor's commentary. In addition, *The Courier* will now be mailed to *members only*, as well as to selected libraries. The Society's quarterly newsletter, *The Broad Street Herald*, will now assume the *Courier's* former role of keeping our members and friends informed of Society activities and developments. There will be two combined issues of *The Courier* published for Volume 33 (2009). Volume 34 (2010) will likely consist of two issues

produced in a slightly smaller, "journal" format, but with more pages/content. Once again, I invite you to let me know what subjects and themes you would like to see covered in this publication, and whether you might like to contribute an article, historical image, or book review.

— Stanley R. Howe

THE ROBERTSONS OF "ROBINSON HILL"

By Randall H. Bennett

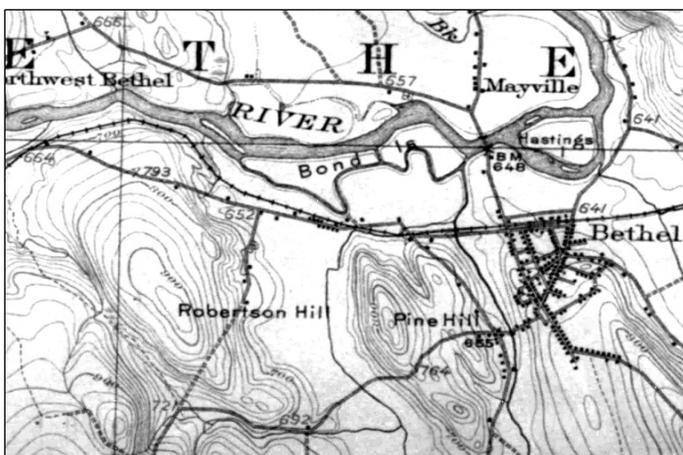
The origins of Bethel's early placenames, and the meaning(s) they convey, have long been a popular subject of discussion among scholars and family historians, and many of these researchers have utilized the Bethel Historical Society's extensive archival and library collections in their quest for answers. As they soon discover, the search for certain derivations can be both entertaining and frustrating. While some placenames have faded entirely from use, others have been supplanted by new designations, as population centers have shifted and older generations disappeared. Multiple names for the same location (for instance, Mt. Will Cemetery or York Cemetery), and similar names applied to more than one locality (Chapman Hill and Chapman Street) add to the confusion. As well, misunderstanding over the exact spelling and/or pronunciation of a handful of local placenames has led to changes that have found their way into common usage and—unfortunately—onto modern maps.

Take, for example, the name of Bethel's nineteenth century designed burial ground on Routes 5/35, just a few miles south of Bethel Hill village. Incorporated before the Civil War as "Woodland Cemetery," it is frequently (and assertively) referred to as "Woodlawn Cemetery," a widespread designation for many New England graveyards (including one in the nearby town of Andover). Thanks to a bronze plaque recently mounted on the façade of the Gothic Revival receiving vault at Woodland Cemetery, the correct name is prominently displayed for all who visit.

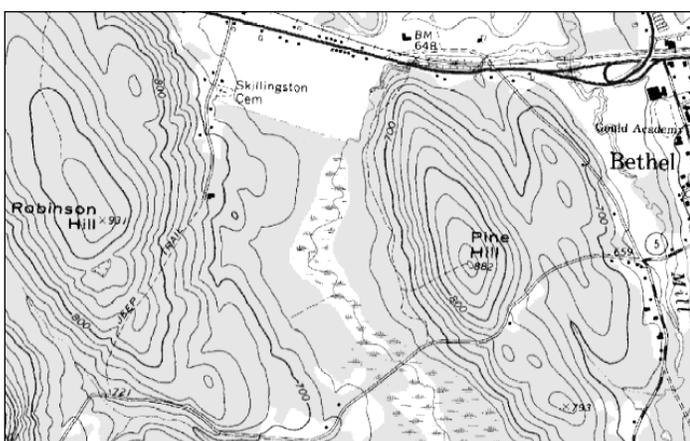
A second, and perhaps more significant, case of this type of "placename transformation" has to do with a well-known feature of the local landscape situated two miles west of Bethel Hill village. Labeled incorrectly as "Robinson Hill" on contemporary maps—both online and in print—this low mountain over which Route 2 passes is, in point of fact, "Robertson Hill," and received its name for Samuel Robertson (1784-1847), who purchased and occupied the hilltop farm there originally cleared by Bethel's first blacksmith, Oliver Fenno. Samuel Robertson's son, Sylvester Robertson (1815-1905), grew up on his father's farm and by the mid-19th century was one of the town's most successful cabinet-makers. Speaking of the younger Robertson in his 1891 *History of Bethel*, Dr. William B. Lapham remarked, "He has always lived here, and is as well posted on Bethel and the

Bethel people of his time, as any one in town. . . . Many apprentices have learned the cabinet-maker's art in his little shop, and if they did not learn it thoroughly it was their own fault."

Census and cemetery records confirm that "Robertson" retained its place as a well-known Bethel surname until around World War II. Since that time, the gradual disappearance of the name in the community, combined with the more omnipresent (and easier to say) surname Robinson, has resulted in the near-universal tagging of this geographic location as "Robinson Hill." However, one can hope that the publication of this article may once again turn the tide so that, in the not-too-distant future, the name "Robertson Hill" will reappear in its rightful place on maps of the town of Bethel, Maine.



U.S. Geological Survey map, Maine (Oxford County), Bethel Quadrangle, April 1914 edition, showing (correctly) "Robertson Hill" (center left)



U.S. Geological Survey map, Maine (Oxford County), Bethel Quadrangle, 1970 edition, with Robertson Hill identified as "Robinson Hill" (far left)

Many articles from back issues of *The Courier* are available on the Society's website: www.bethelhistorical.org.

THE DIARY OF EDGAR HARVEY POWERS

(continued from the last issue)



1864

July 4 – Milton Roberts come [*sic*] up here and wanted us to help get Masons [*sic*] sheep. We got them up. Theresa come [*sic*] down today. I went over to Unckle [*sic*] Williams [*sic*] and got thirty dollars. He would not take any note. James and Cyrus, Milton and I got up the sheep. Joshua staid with Pat last night. July 5 – Have been hoeing corn today. Mr. Perham stopped here for dinner. He is buying wool. He is paying ninety cents. Went down to get George Smith to come up with his compass and go through on the line and stake it out. Cooler than it has been. Mr. Smith come [*sic*] up and staked out the line today. It rained a little. The circle met at Unckle [*sic*] Orsons [*sic*] this afternoon. I have got a boil on my thigh. It pains me bad. Went down to the Post Office. Expected a letter from [Attorney] Hammons but did not get any. July 7 – Went up to Bethel Hill to get some papers of [Attorney] Hammons. Bought a grindstone of Philbrooke. Paid \$6.50. Took Mrs. Williams [*sic*] horse and got a cask of lime. James notified Ors. and I to meet next Monday to assign our shares to build; so I cannot move my fence over until tomorrow. July 8 – Augustine and Matilda was [*sic*] down today. He helped me hoe corn on the island. Went down to the Point [Rumford] and got a scythe. Saw Gale Howe. He has talked with Knapp about Ors building the fence. I guess he will build it. A very warm day. July 9 – Finished hoeing the corn today. Went up to Newry. Old Unckle [*sic*] Black died tonight at twenty-five minutes of five. I was there when he died. Stopped to Edwins [*sic*] to supper. Got started to go over to Cooper Beans [*sic*] to get a churn but could not get across the river. July 10 – Called to see Lucelia Brown. Went to Sabbath school. Went down to Joseph Staples to sing. John Smith is up from Portland. Ellen Bessey was there to sing. She is at work for Lawson Smith and a very pretty appearing girl she is. July 11 – The fence viewers come [*sic*] on this morning and made out the assignment. Mowed hay this forenoon. This afternoon went down to get a negative taken for some photographs. Carried the notices and assignment down and got them recorded. Old Black was buried today at one o'clock. July 12 – Have been mowing on the Gideon piece. Got one load of hay. I am sick tonight. Have vomited three times. July 13 – Have been mowing on the island. Got one load of hay. July 14 – Have been mowing on the island. Got two loads of hay. Went to the Point and got a scythe for Pat. Went up to Newry tonight and staid to Edwins [*sic*]. Saw Roscoe G. Lane down to Gale Howes [*sic*]. Warm and dry. July 15 – Have been mowing out before the house. Got one load of hay. Roscoe G. Lane come [*sic*] here today. We had a shower today. Julia & Letitia L. Foster called up here tonight. I lent Letitia a book and I went down and got six magazines of

her. Rock [Roscoe G. Lane] went down to Deacons [sic]. July 16 – Have been mowing out before the house. Got two loads of hay. Roscoe G. Lane took the colt & gig and went up Edwins [sic]. John B. Smith drowned up to Howards [sic] Pond this afternoon. He was swimming with George Holt. July 17 – Roscoe got back this morning. Julia Stearns come [sic] home today; she is to work for Hiram Howe. Went to Sabbath school. Rode down to village with B. B. Willis. Philantha and Abby Barker called up tonight. Letitia L. Foster called and gave me a ride. July 18 – Got one load of hay. A. K. Knapp come [sic] up and wanted me to be one of the bearers at John Smiths [sic] funeral. There was six of us. Mr. Elliott preached the funeral sermon. Text Matt, 14 Chap. 12 Verse. Stopped to Mr. Hoyts [sic] to tea. Went over to Mr. Wardwells [sic] and bought a wagon. Paid \$80.00. July 19 – Mowed this morning till about ten of the clock. July 20 – Finished mowing out before the house. Got one load of hay. Mowed one load of hay on the island. Elizabeth Roberts called tonight. It is very dry. The corn before the house is suffering badly for the want of rain. July 21 – Have been mowing on the island. Got two loads of hay. Aunt Julia has been here visiting this afternoon. Mother went down to the Point [Rumford] this forenoon with Selina Williams. It is very dry and this afternoon has been quite windy. July 23 – Have been mowing on the island. Got four loads of hay. Did not get the last one till after dark. Bro. Lufkin borrowed my gig to go out to his brothers. He and his wife stay to Uncle [sic] Orsons [sic] tonight. Eugenia L. D. Roberts called and stopped two or three hours. July 24 – Went to hear Bro. Lufkin. Text: 2 Corinthians 5 Chapter 1 Verse. Mother and I called down to George E. Smiths [sic]. They are fine folks. Went up to prayer meeting. Called to Mr. Straws [sic]. Very hot and dry. Wrote to Mary E. Lampher and Lauriston Powers. July 25 – Have been mowing down under the hill. Went down to the Point [Rumford] to get something to put on Mothers [sic] back, but the doctor was gone. Got the grist. Looks some like rain. Mother hurt her back last Friday lifting a pail of water, and last night she hurt it again. July 26 – Went out to Milton Plantation to get a girl, but could not. Mothers [sic] back is no better. Went up to Newry and got Diantha Powers. It rained some this morning. Saw Betsey Ellen Smith today. Charles has got home from Gorham. He is about sick. July 27 – Have been mowing on the island. Got two loads of hay. Roscoe come [sic] over tonight, but went down further. Mrs. James Roberts called up to see Mother tonight. I had hard work to get them together to introduce them. It has been a fine hay-day. July 28 – Have been mowing on the island. Got two loads of hay. Edwin and Theresa was [sic] down today. Mary E. Smith come [sic] down with them. Letitia called up today. She brought some tame cherries to Mother. I have worked like thunder today and am somewhat tired tonight. July 29 – Cloudy, but not much rain. Mowed the creek above the bridge. Went over back of the mountain after the colt. Uncle [sic] Orsons [sic] folks and Selina Williams went over

there raspberrying today. Got started to go over to Uncle [sic] Peters [sic], but did not. Called into the Deacons [sic] July 30 – Have been mowing on the side bank of the Gideon piece. Got three loads of hay. Went up to Newry and staid to Charles all night. He and I went up to Augustines [sic]. Got the yoke he borrowed but did not get the staple and the ring. Went home with Stella York from Charles. July 31 – Theresa and I went up to Gusts [sic] this morning. Called in to see Sister White. She is gaining. Went to the Sabbath school. Gave Elizabeth Roberts a ride. We went down as far as Ellis river bridge. Enjoyed myself well. Called in to the Deacons [sic]. Sophia Bean has got home from Lewiston. August 1 – Mowed down by the brook and on the island. Got three loads of hay. Mr. Williams helped me today. I carried him home tonight. Diantha Powers rode up with me. We stopped and went into the grave yard. It has been very hot, not hardly a breath of air stirring. August 2 – Finished mowing hay today. Some rainy. Mr. William helped me this forenoon. Went down to mill. Got ½ lb. tea, 1 lb. starch and 1 box of blacking of Hutchings. Took Fosters [sic] horse up from the village for G. Howe. Met Ellen Bessey in the road. Rainy tonight. August 3 – Cloudy with some rain. Carried Diantha Powers home today. Paid \$1.25. Charles and Sarahette come [sic] down with me. Went over and got a plow point of Mr. Foster. Paid 65 cts. Went up to Uncle [sic] Williams [sic] and left the colt and went over to Uncle [sic] Peters [sic] and staid all night. August 4 – Come [sic] over from Uncle [sic] Peters [sic] this morning. Let Uncle [sic] Wm. leave a counterfeit ten dollar bill that he let me have July 4. Sold the lambs for \$3.50 each. Carried Chas. home to night. Two fellows stay here tonight, from Standish. Rainy today. August 5 – Those fellows took the lambs away today. I let them have ten. James G. Roberts carried a load of lambs over to Beans [sic] Corner [East Bethel] for them. Got two loads of hay. Mr. Williams helped me in afternoon. Carried Sarahette up to Newry. Theresa come [sic] down with me. August 6 – Theresa rode up with Mr. Eames. Carried two pigs over to Uncle [sic] Peter. He was not at home, so I did not get the pay for them. Roscoe was there. He come [sic] over with me as far as the Colonels [sic]. We come round by the Point [Rumford]. Found Ceylon Russell here when I got home. August 7 – Ceylon went away from here this morning. Went over back of the mountain after the colts, but did not find them. Called into B. B. Willis. Mother and I rode down to George E. Smiths [sic]. Went to a lecture by Rev. Mr. Walcott down to schoolhouse. August 8 – Roscoe G. Lane staid with me last night, and went over the river this morning. Went upon the mountain to salt the colts. Got three loads of hay, which finished our haying for this year. Gardner Roberts helped me. We have cut about twenty tons of hay this year. Have got 30 loads and about two tons more than last yr. August 9 – Mother and I went up to Therasas [sic] & took dinner. Then we went up to Augustines [sic] and stopped till after supper. Went over to see Betsey Ellen Smith. Had a pleasant call. Mother stopped

to Edwins [*sic*] tonight. She is going to stop up there two or three days.

(to be concluded in the next issue)

BOOK NOTE

Historic Photos of Maine. Text and photos by Frances Pollitt. (Nashville, TN: Turner Publishing Company, 2008. Pp. 206. Cloth. \$39.95)

The theme of this engaging book is the insights it provides into the worlds of work and leisure that Mainers have lived through for many years. Here we are exposed to cold winters and hot summers—special times on the coast or in the mountains. Subjects range from Civil War soldiers, to significant fires, to building demolitions, to camping scenes and sports teams, to boat launchings and logging operations. All of this and more are included in this book of black and white photos assembled from the lenses of a wide variety of photographers from the Civil War to the late twentieth century. Assembled by Frances Pollitt, who works at the Maine Historical Society for the Maine Memory Network, the book will be of interest to anyone intrigued with life in Maine in its many manifestations. Organized in four sections, “Land and People (1865-1890),” “The Maine Attraction (1890-1919),” “Between the Wars (1920-1930),” and “Living in Maine (1940-1980),” there is a brief introduction at the beginning of the each section, which provides some context and rationale for inclusion. Captions are often detailed, but sometimes more information might have strengthened understanding of just what is going on in the photo, most of which came from the Maine Historical Society’s collection. Despite this observation, the book provides a rich variety of images, documenting the “Maine experience” in all its diversity and breadth of interest for those who appreciate vintage photos.

— S. R. Howe

JOHN HOWELL CROSBY (1867-1936)

By Donald G. Bennett

Editor’s note: This is the second “Grandfather’s Theme” to be published in The Courier since the request for such manuscripts went out to former Gould Academy students, who, in the middle of the twentieth century, were required to complete brief biographies of an older relative in David Thompson’s senior English class. This essay was originally written in 1952 and has been lightly edited for inclusion here.

The sun had already made the day pleasantly warm. After a long, cold winter the snow had vanished, bringing the newly reborn, waxy green leaves out on the trees and shrubs. This was the first spring that I had lived in Bethel; things seemed



J. Howell Crosby in 1909. Courtesy of Donald G. Bennett

to start growing awfully slow.

About ten o’clock on that May 30th morning, Mother and I drove over to Riverside Cemetery with some potted geraniums. In the cemetery, surrounded by towering pines, were a few people setting out plants around their family monuments, trying to beautify that pretty little spot next to the river.

I took the carton of plants from the back seat of the car and followed my mother through the yard to a small lot just a short way in from the riverbank. We stopped in front of a medium sized stone of beautifully polished granite that had inscribed on its face one word: “Crosby.”

My grandfather had been dead for almost ten years. I had never known the man; he died when I was not yet two, but his spirit and influence in our family made things seem as though he had never been far away.

He had lived the last four years of his life at his beautiful old homestead in Sunday River, backed up against the mountains and walled in with the elms and pines, listening to the merry gurgle of Barker Brook running through its rocky bed a few yards from the house and to the “orchestras” of birds in the morning and evening. Here he was able to relax, getting out with all of his old friends who lived in the valley.

John Howell Crosby was descended from Simon Crosby who had married Ann Brigham in 1634. They emigrated from England to Cambridge in 1635, with their eight week

old son, Thomas. Simon was a freeman. He was selectman in 1636, 1638 and died in September 1639 when only 31 years old. Some sources infer that he had a considerable estate. His wife Ann remarried and lived to age 69.

Turning back now through my grandfather's sixty-nine years to the time of his birth, there can be found carpetbaggers infiltrating the "broken" Confederate States, while in the Capital, President Andrew Johnson was slowly being stripped of his executive powers by a stern, "radical," Republican Congress.

The consequences of the War Between the States—confusion and inflation—did not penetrate very deeply into the sleepy little towns of New England. These municipal entities had not experienced much growth except in population; life was carried on in about the same manner that it had been before the Revolution. They mourned the loss of their loved ones in the Great War, but only a few politicians were concerned with the national crisis.

In the village centers were the usual shops, bakeries, livery stables and post offices, while outside the sleepy beauty of the village greens were sprinkled many small farms, some being market gardens. It was on one of these little farms in Belmont, Massachusetts, that my grandfather was born on 30 December 1867, the son of John Spencer Crosby, a descendant of Dr. Samuel Crosby, a Revolutionary War surgeon. The baby was named John Howell. When Howell was a year old, his father bought another farm in Arlington, the neighboring town, sold the one in Belmont, and moved

his family—Sarah, his wife, Helen, their daughter, and Howell, the younger son—to their new home.

John's farm, newly named Crosby Farm, grew under his strenuous efforts, coming, in the next fifty years, to be regarded as the best market garden in Arlington, his being the first to raise hot-house vegetables.

From the time that Howell could walk, he would tag behind his father day after day, helping wherever he was able and learning more about the management of the farm with the passage of time. Because he grew up on a farm, Howell's interests, during his early life, turned chiefly to nature—collecting birds and birds' eggs. He used to listen for hours to the stories that his mother would tell him of her childhood. She used to tell him about an old woman that had lived in Arlington Center, when she was a little girl. Sarah often went to see this old friend of hers when she had any spare time and listen to her stories of the American Revolution. The old lady had lived in Arlington all of her life, her stories being just about the common occurrences that took place in the town during the years. She would tell Sarah about being awakened one morning by the steady "clump, clump, clump" made by the British soldiers marching by their house on the cobblestone pavement as they made their way thru the early morning fog toward Concord. The family didn't dare to move or show themselves, but they crept to the window, peering over the sill to watch the Red Coats marching by.

(to be concluded in the next issue)



Bethel Historical Society

P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012

207-824-2908 • 800-824-2910

info@bethelhistorical.org

www.bethelhistorical.org

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