

Denmark Historical Society

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Summer Memories in Denmark

Maine Summers are magical to all who are lucky enough to experience the beauty, the smells, the garden-fresh foods, and all the activities that abound during our brief warm months. Whether you are lucky enough to experience the full summer here, or just a few short vacation or camp weeks, most people have special memories of their time in Maine. We asked long-time residents of Denmark to share some of their special memories with us. Here are some of the memories Denmark folks shared.

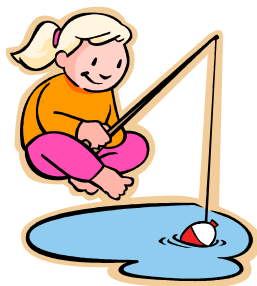
Carol Blake Gable & Donna Monson -- 1963

1963 was the summer of our independence. Donna was twelve and Carol was thirteen. Donna's father gave her permission to buy a leaky old rowboat. Five dollars was the going price. We patched it and painted it red. After we coordinated our times, Donna would walk down South Road to launch her boat. Carol, up on Berry Road, walked over the crossroad and down Bush Row, waiting impatiently on the opposite shore. Donna would row as hard and fast as her thin little arms could handle to pick up Carol. We took turns rowing, practically falling out of the boat as we shifted jobs. Somehow we never got too far. The wind would blow frequent whitecaps, which required more frequent bailing of water. We have never forgotten the thrill of this adventure, being out on that deep cold water in beautiful Granger Pond. Most of all we treasure the memories of our first taste of freedom, being in charge of our own destinies. That special bonding has endured and still flourishes fifty years later. We have plans to be on the Denmark waters again this summer, but instead of in a leaky red rowboat look for us in a sleek pink kayak.

Pat Sanborn Largey – During the 1950 to 1960's Period

I remember often walking with my fishing pole and a can of worms to go fishing from the little stone bridge that led out to the island behind what is now the Denmark Bicentennial Park. I called it the Lily Pond since it always had lots of lily pads and flowers. I caught lots of yellow and white perch, sunfish, and sometimes at night I caught hornpout. My brother, Norman Sanborn, once caught an eel on his line.

In the winter we often skated on the Lily Pond. The older boys would shovel and then sweep it off so that all the children in the neighborhood could skate. (*Summer Memories continued on Page 2*)



Highlight

Open House & Annual Meeting

The Denmark Historical Society (DHS) will hold an August 2012 Open House and Annual Meeting at their newly renovated facility in the lower level of the Denmark Public Library. The date, time, and program will be publicized in the Bridgton News and on the Denmark Town Website

(<http://denmarkmaine.org/>).

DHS members will receive a postcard.

Message From the President

I hope that everyone has survived the recent rains and have not sustained any damage or injury. Also, I would like to inform/remind everyone on how to reach us. We can be reached by calling the library (452-2200) and they will pass the inquiry on to us or you can e-mail me at dbkenison@gmail.com or the Societies e-mail denmarkhistoricalsociety@gmail.com. We will be happy to try and answer your inquiries. Also, we would appreciate hearing from you regarding subjects of interest so we can try and present information on the requested subjects. Thanks and I am sure you will enjoy the newsletter.

Summer Memories in Denmark

(Continued)

Daryl Kenison -- During the 1957 to 1962 Period

One of my fondest memories of my youth was haying on my Grand Uncle's (Ralph Bean) farm in Denmark. All the processes involved with haying on the farm were performed by horses and men, with a few boys thrown in. The process started with the cutting of the hay and the great smell of freshly cut grass. This continued until all the grass was cut or the pitman arm broke or some other break-down brought the process to a halt. After enough grass was cut, the grass was wind rowed with a trip rake to put the cut grass in rows to facilitate the gathering of the hay. After the hay was ready to be gathered, the hay wagon went into action (enter the boys into the process). The two major pitfalls of this process were hay chaff down the back and hidden yellow jackets (these could derail the process for a lengthy time). With the wagon back at the barn, the unloading took place by leading a horse back and forth (my job starting around 8 years old), lifting a hay fork to unload the hay in the barn. The day ended with my favorite part of the haying process.—a trip to the public beach at Moose Pond with a bar of Ivory soap (the one that floats).



Percy Lord -- 1981

Percy Lord says preparing for and doing the Bean Hole Supper as a fund raiser for the Lions Club was his "summer event" for around 30 years. His nephew, Ken Richardson, now does it, having learned the recipe from Percy. [Editor's note: The Lions Club Bean Hole Supper was Percy Lord's idea, was first held in 1981 and raised \$500. Obviously a wonderful idea. During his active career as a Lion, Percy Lord was given a Melvin Jones Award—the highest award Lions Clubs can bestow on their members.]

Pam Pingree Hale— 1960s

I was born and raised here. I have many memories. For me it was the safety we had as kids. We could walk or ride our bikes to the Village Store to get real penny candy, or to the beach. We would climb Picket Hill almost every weekend. Spend all day at the baseball field or the Town Hall. No one ever hurt us or scared us. Our parents never knew exactly where we were, but they could find us when they wanted to. Just be home in time for dinner.

We did not have cell phones, ipads, ipods, computers or laptops. Every kid didn't own a car either. All the kids in town were friends with each other. They all played together in town. There were always kids around every day. Almost all kids went to Sunday school. Sunday afternoon was for family and big family dinners together. All kids had chores, if your friends were waiting on you, they would help do the chores.

I can't remember the name of the building across from Don and Marion Monson, but we use to have Saturday night suppers there. I loved living in Denmark and I was glad I raised my son there too.

Helen Bean Kenison -- 1932

My favorite memories as a girl is going to the Corn shop (at the foot of Main hill in Denmark) to watch my Grandmother (Cora Bean) feed corn into the husking machine. I remember all the ladies wore long dresses and aprons. Today it would be slacks or shorts and tank tops.



JoAnne Robbins Harbourt – During the 1952 to 1956 Period

I have only lived in Denmark (year-round) for nine years, but my father's family (Wentworth) has inhabited Denmark since it's earliest days. My Dad's grandfather (Alvin Scott Wentworth) owned what is now "The Farm" on Route 117. In my childhood, the home had passed to Alvin's daughter (my great aunt) Cora B. Wentworth Hall. We would visit my Aunt Cora and Uncle Cliff at the farm. I loved those visits for many reasons. They maintained a large summer garden in the field in front of the house and Aunt Cora was a great cook. I loved to help her pick the corn and vegetables she would prepare. Uncle Cliff had a large St. Bernard Dog that would lead their cows around on a rope—my sister, brother, and I thought it was great sport. I loved the hikes down to Moose Pond and picking blueberries along the way.

Paula Blake Spruill – Late 60s to early 1970s

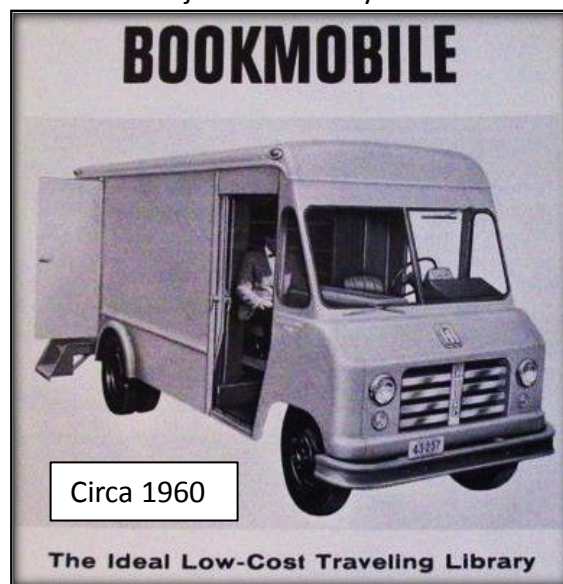
What else does a young girl need besides a hammock, mystery stories, and a glass of lemonade? My favorite summertime memories center around our monthly visits to the Bookmobile. I was always so excited to head for the Village Store and find the Bookmobile parked nearby. I don't remember the limit to the amount we could check out each month but I do know I took as many as allowed. I was always proud to carry my bookmobile card in my pocket on the day of the visit.

My sister Heidi and I created our own library in a hallway closet. We spent many a rainy day playing “library”. We organized our books and even put library cards in them. Most sunny summer days I could be found in our green hammock with my face buried in a good book. I loved Agatha Christie mysteries and even joined a Nancy Drew book club.

I read through my stack of books quite fast and was always eager to make a return trip to the bookmobile in a few weeks. The Bookmobile helped instill a love of reading that has been with me ever since. I now enjoy sharing my love of reading with a roomful of second graders that I teach.

Gail Blake Small – During the 1960s Period

Fond memories of growing up on the Blake Farm on Berry Road in Denmark are sledding on runner sleds with my siblings and cousins on Pingrees’ hill and the Crossroad when they were dirt roads, playing school with our best friends, the Monson girls, at our house or theirs, over the Denmark Village Store, badminton, croquet, and softball games, singing in the church choir when our Mom was the organist, the scent of lilacs and new mown hay in the summer as we slept on our front porch, finding the Big Dipper in the night sky with our Dad, and delivering milk with my Dad one summer to help buy a new bicycle. We were fortunate to have a mom who read to us and one of my favorite memories is the Bookmobile. Since the town of Denmark did not have a library in the 1960’s, we looked forward to the Bookmobile coming to town once a month. My brother and sisters and I would each sign out a huge stack of books to read. Then we would read them and look forward to the next month. All of us are now avid readers and many of us are teachers; I believe our love of books and reading started with our Bookmobile childhood experience in Denmark.



Herbert Payne– During the 1940s and 1950s

Herbert recalls lots of good times from his Denmark childhood days; fishing, swimming, sledding, and small town fun. Most Denmark roads were not paved and many were not cleared in the winter. In the 1940s and ‘50s all the land between Barry Road and Bush Row Road was open fields planted with potatoes, corn, and other vegetables. “You could see forever and a kid could go anywhere,” Herbert remembers fondly.

In Memoriam Edith Marion Blake Sawyer: December 5, 1917 – March 18, 2012

Edith Sawyer was born and raised in Denmark, the youngest of three daughters, to Ellis and Susan Rowe Blake. She attended Denmark Schools, married Bert Sawyer, and remained an active resident of Denmark. “Edie” worked with the Moir Company and took great pride in her work. She was a member of the Eastern Star and the Rebekahs, loved genealogy, and kept wonderful notebooks of her family and her life in Denmark. She was a keen observer of people and her environment. Edie loved to tell stories and share her memories with family and friends. She loved history and was a supporter of both the Denmark Public Library and the DHS. Edie also loved her home, and thanks to the help and support of caring friends and neighbors, she was able to live independently for most of her life. She moved to the Casco Inn in 2010, where on April 24, 2010, Denmark’s Selectmen presented her with the Boston Post Cane to honor her record as Denmark’s oldest resident.

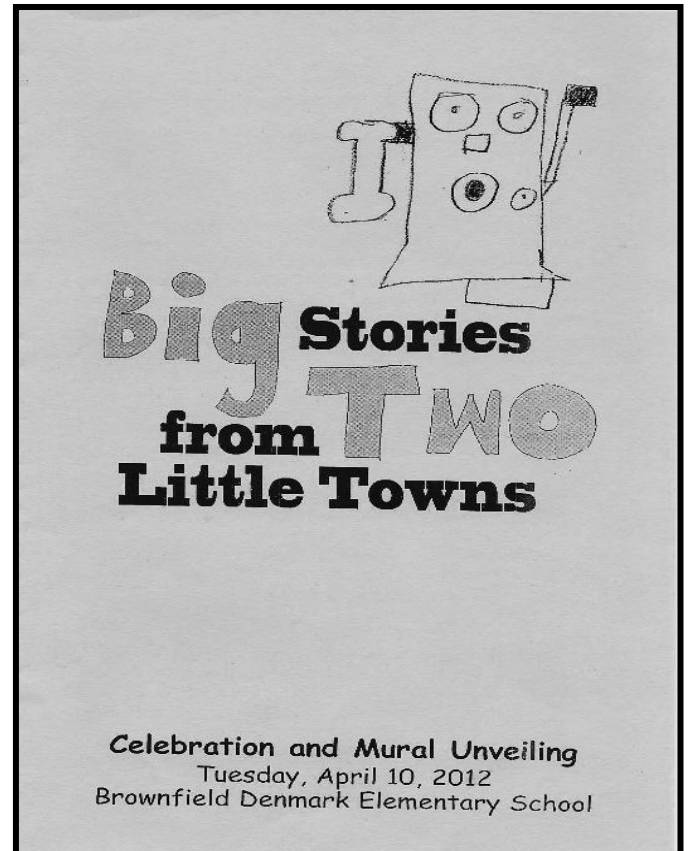
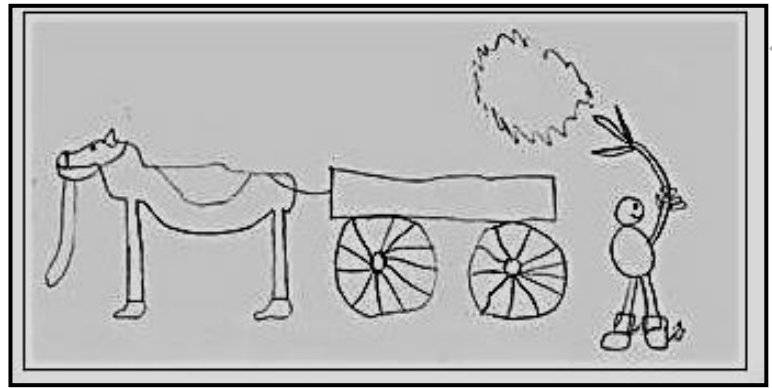


Edith with her great niece, Marj Burgess, and daughter, Maria

Big Stories from Two Little Towns

In our March 2012 newsletter we reported on the *Local Stories Project* underway with the third grade students at the Brownfield Denmark Elementary School. Local Stories is an innovative integrated arts project for rural elementary schools that combines local history research and community collaboration to develop both a permanent in-school mural and a lively theater performance. The project was a resounding success, capped with a wonderful performance by the students who depicted historic events, such as the 1947 Brownfield fire, logging and farming during horse and buggy days, and Moose Pond log runs, complete with dynamited log jams.

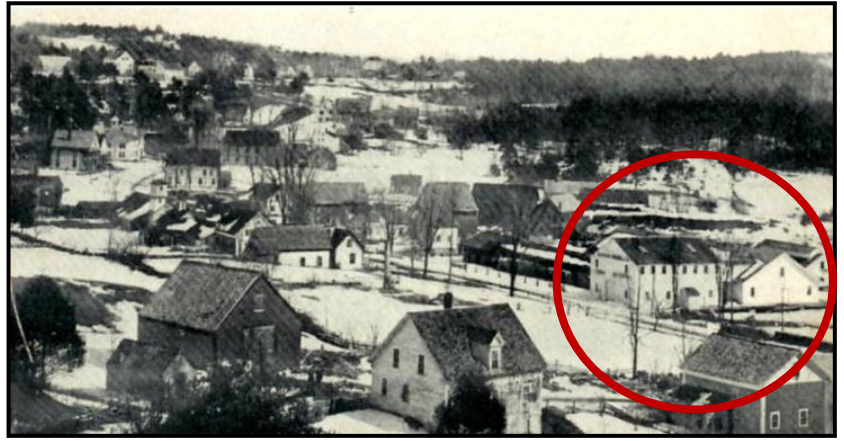
Students learned about the history of both Denmark and Brownfield by interviewing local elders, recording facts, studying artifacts, making sketches, and visiting historical sites. Denmark elders Edmund Pingree and Percy Lord were interviewed by the students. The student's questions were lively and thoughtful as both men discussed their experiences in the mills, farms and logging camps of an earlier Denmark. Mr. Pingree celebrated his 90th birthday with the class.



Artist, Laurie Downey worked with Bobbi Johnson, 3rd grade teacher, and Kathy Banks, art teacher, to help the students conduct the necessary research and create the final mural. The mural will be hung as a permanent installation in the hallways of the school. The creation and presentation of the theater performance was led by movement specialist, Gretchen Berg. The school auditorium was full on April 10th and no one left disappointed. The mural drawings are wonderful and the performance was delightful. The students outdid themselves. This project was made possible by generous grants from the Maine Community Foundation and the Davis Foundation, as well as the ongoing support of the Denmark Arts Center. Both the Brownfield and the Denmark Historical Societies were essential partners in this project.

Business in Denmark: Then and Now

Canning companies, or Maine Corn Shops, as they were known in Maine, were a labor intensive operation that provided jobs in many Maine towns for dozens of people. In the early days Maine Corn Shops, like the Burnham & Morrill Packing Company in Denmark (circled), processed and canned all the corn from the surrounding area. The 'area' included the corn that a farmer could bring into the plant by ox cart



in one day and still get him home by milking time. Also, B&M operated an ox and cart that would go up to the landing on Moose Pond and get produce from the farmers around the lake who would



bring it down the lake by boat. The B&M plant was located near the corner of West Main Street and Mill Road, behind what is now the vacant *Back Burner Restaurant* building. Denmark's Corn Plant began processing corn in 1881 and was destroyed by fire on October 27, 1936. During the 55 years of its existence, the B&M Packing Plant

provided summer employment for scores of Denmark residents, and winter employment for those who made the cans to hold the corn and the wooden boxes to ship them in.. One of the mills along Moose Brook manufactured wooden corn boxes for 25 years. Maine processed corn had a reputation for high quality. Corn harvesters in other parts of the country would harvest their entire field crop at the point when the majority of the corn was ripe. In Maine, farmers harvested only corn that was 'up,' (had reached



its peak of ripeness). This corn dribbled into the plant and was canned—farmer's were paid for the quality of their corn, not the quantity. What a concept! During the last half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, there were 121 Corn Shops in Maine that canned high quality sweet corn for the nation. This higher quality of corn was its downfall. Maine corn plants required a larger workforce and by 1935 they

already were competing with more efficient mechanized plants in other parts of the country.

Calendar of Events

- Monday, June 11, 2012 – 7:00 PM: Business Meeting
- Monday, July 9, 2012 – 7:00 PM: Work Shop Meeting
- Monday, August 13, 2012 – 7:00 PM: Business Meeting

Denmark Doings

200 Years Ago - 1812

In 1812, the Incorporated town of Denmark turned five years old and was likely as embroiled in the politics of the day as were larger and more centralized communities in the District of Maine. The first Maine newspaper, *Falmouth Gazette*, had been established in 1785 solely to promote separation from Massachusetts. As the War of 1812 gathered momentum, even inland villages like Denmark who were very dependent on sea merchants for the import of goods and the export of their products felt the economic pinch. The Jefferson Embargo caused a scarcity of goods, high inflation and loss of income to all Mainers. The lack of help or protection from Massachusetts further fanned Maine's desire for independence from Massachusetts, which occurred in 1820.

150 Years Ago - 1862

Civil War Applesauce Cookies*

2 1/4 cups [sugar](#)
1 1/3 cups [shortening](#)
3 [eggs](#)
2 teaspoons [vanilla](#)
1 cup [applesauce](#)
6 cups [flour](#)
1 teaspoon [baking soda](#)
2 teaspoons [baking powder](#)
2 teaspoons [nutmeg](#)
1 teaspoon [salt](#)

Directions: Cream together shortening, sugar, eggs and vanilla, add applesauce and mix well. Add sifted dry ingredients and blend well. Drop by heaping tablespoons on greased cookie sheets. Flatten and sprinkle with sugar or just flatten, and after cooling frost with an applesauce glaze. Bake at 375 degrees for 10-12 minutes. They Do Not Brown! Applesauce Glaze: mix 4 tablespoons of applesauce with about one cup powdered sugar. Brush glaze on cookies.

*Served at the DHS Civil War Seminar in October 2011.

100 Years Ago - 1912

A copy on an advertisement tucked between the pages of the 1912-1913 Annual Report of the Town of Denmark.

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F. W. SANBORN, Norway, Me.

50 Years Ago - 1962

From the 1962 Town of Denmark Annual Report:

Art. 21. To see what sum the town will vote to raise and appropriate to be set aside in a general fund to purchase a suitable truck to replace the old fire truck. (Budget Committee recommends \$400)

From the 2012 Town of Denmark Annual Report:

"We are proud to announce that our Town Manager has gotten the [Fire] department a federal grant for over \$200,000.00 for a new tanker truck."

2012: History Under Development

Several days before this past Memorial Day, I was driving up Berry Road toward the village and came upon two Denmark fellas placing American flags on veteran's graves in the Pingree-Berry Cemetery. It brought tears to my eyes and I was once again reminded of what a great community Denmark is. The practice of decorating soldiers' graves with flowers is an ancient custom. Memorial Day in the U.S. had its beginnings as *Decoration Day* and did not officially become *Memorial Day* until 1967. It is customary that flags are placed on soldier's graves in all National cemeteries, but the custom is not always carried out in municipal and private cemeteries. I am reminded once again that history is not just what happened years ago, but what is happening in our lives and community every day. The history of Denmark is made everyday by the way our Denmark residents respect and care for one-another, carry out its daily responsibilities, and honor those who serve and have served its citizens. Denmark has a right to be proud of its history; both the past—and the history under development.

Special Appreciation to the Denmark Lions Club



The Denmark Historical Society is grateful to the Lions Club for its support. Funds earned at the Denmark Lions Club's *Western Maine BBQ Festival* enabled the Lions to help many Denmark organizations with very generous donations this year. Among its many needs, the DHS will now be able to have the wiring and lighting in its



collection room upgraded, and it will begin to replace its cardboard boxes with real archival storage materials. If you have not yet signed up as a volunteer for this

year's WMBBQ festival, please go to their website: westernmainebbqfestival.com and sign up.

Volunteers Needed: August 3,4,5 & 6

The Denmark Library Stone Mystery Solved

Recall from previous DHS Newsletter editions we had conflicting reports as to the identity and history surrounding the stone buried beyond the Library parking lot. Over the years the stone had become buried, and we did not know what the surface looked like. The snows have melted and the stone revealed; and as Percy Lord reported, it is indeed a well cover stone. Percy set the stone behind the library, soon after the library was built. The well cover stone originally came from the "Bean Place," located on Bull Ring Road. The Lord family has been an important part of the library from its beginning. Percy's brother-in-law, Jack Bempkins, donated the land for the library and Pat Lord (now deceased) was its librarian for a quite a while.

Cabins to Castles has relocated the well stone cover to the back entrance of the library leading into the DHS Display Room. A plaque explaining the history and Percy Lord as the donor will be added to the stone. It is now an important and "understood" historical feature of the library and the DHS.



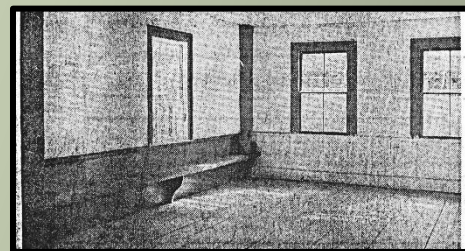
The House on the Hill

The Elias Berry house on Fessenden Hill Road is reported to have been built around 1792. It is a Federal style house and the first two-story house built in Denmark. As with all old houses that have been well-built and well-loved, Elias Berry's house has had several owners and many former lives.



Elias Berry was born in Middletown, Massachusetts in 1767. He married Jane Stiles in Middletown, and was among the first wave of settlers to arrive in Denmark around 1888. The house served as the family home, and at some point became a stagecoach stop on the Brownfield and Bridgton stage line. As late as 1966 the second floor had a dance hall. When the dance hall first appeared is unclear, but it was reportedly used for community dances on Saturday nights.

A jail cell was later added to a corner of the dance hall and the house served as the Town jail and



House of Corrections. Around 1870 the house was converted to the Town Farm for the poor and the center chimney was reduced. In 1966, the McKay family purchased the house for a summer residence and restored much of the house with meticulous care. Today, the house has yet another owner, but the beauty of this majestic house on the hill belies its 220 years of history.



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