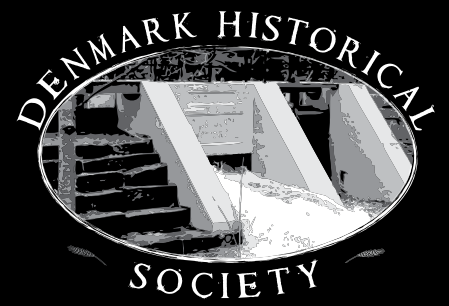


DENMARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

newsletter

SUMMER 2016



View of Denmark village, by Michael Berube.

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November 2015 Denmark lost long-time resident, Percy Lord. Percy grew up and lived his entire life in Denmark. When Percy was young he left school to log in the woods. He became the maintenance director for Camp Blazing Trail. While there he became an expert trip leader, builder of log cabins, repairer of canoes and baker. Once Blazing Trail closed Percy owned and operated an excavation business and was elected Road Commissioner in Denmark. In recent years he and his nephew, Ken Richardson, baked the beans for the Lion's Club suppers each July.

All who have met Percy understood his appreciation for the outdoors. Long after Blazing Trail closed Percy continued as a tester for the Junior Maine Guide program on Swan Island. Percy made many friends within the summer camp community. Below are two excerpts from memories of counselors who worked over the years with Percy in the Junior Maine Guide Program.



*Percy Lord
1927-2015*

☛ continues on page 4



President's Letter

Looking back at the year that has passed since our last newsletter, the Society has been involved with quite a few rewarding projects.

As in the past, Lee Ann and several volunteers worked to organize and protect items in the collection. They have been partnering with Maine Historical Society and eventually scans of our photographs, postcards and documents will be available for viewing on their website. And they are working to inventory Denmark's cemeteries.

The Historical Society hosted a number of events this past year, starting with Jo Radner's performance "Yankee Ingenuity," a collection of interconnected stories of life in this region, during the 1800s and early 1900s.

Later in July we hosted the dedication of the millstone in Bicentennial Park, a generous gift to the Town from Ora Brine and Barbara and Jeff Hollis.

Partnering with the Congregational Church, we co-hosted the Denmark rest stop on the BikeMaine tour in September.

In December, Centennial Hall opened its doors to show off its developing collection of early mill machinery, along with other items of historical interest. Horse drawn sleighs originally belonging to the Lord family received a lot of attention.

Again partnering with the Church, in January we welcomed Ann B. Gass to Centennial Hall. She spoke on her book "Voting Down the Rose," the story of her great grandmother's involvement in the women's suffrage movement in Maine and the nation.

We're looking forward to more events later this year, including a talk by Caroline Grimm, author of historical novels set in this area.

Also of interest, Don and Marion Monson generously donated the hand painted stage curtain, that hung for many years in the Community House, to Centennial Hall. The curtain was carefully removed from the Community House stage, and is now in storage in the Hall. In May it will receive a thorough cleaning and preparation for display by experts from "Curtains Without Borders." On May 21 Chris Hadsel, author of "Suspended Worlds," will give a talk on the curtain and ones like it throughout New England, followed by a public unveiling.

We recently established an Acquisition Fund, that will allow our curator to purchase on short notice items that help tell the story of Denmark.

If you make purchases on the Amazon website, in many cases it is now possible to make them through Amazon Smile, which will donate a small portion of the purchase price to the Historical Society. Thank you to our treasurer, Dan Eaton, whose efforts made this possible.

And thank you to the members of the Board, and all members and sponsors of the Society, whose support makes all of our activities possible.

Terry Rhoads, *President*

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We plan to add content, notifications and updates often. This will allow us to keep up with the changing times and rely less on producing a physical newsletter.

1890 S.A. Woods Planer-Matcher Moved To Centennial Hall



TERRY RHOADS

During the last two weeks of October, a machine of historical interest was moved into the mill museum in Centennial Hall.

The 1890 S.A. Woods planer-matcher (also called a 4-sided planer) was originally purchased for use at the number 5 power site in Bridgton. It was originally water powered, and remained so until sometime after 1920, when the site and machinery were purchased by Harry Bisbee. He converted the mill to electric power.

The planer survived a fire at the mill in 1953, and may have been converted to diesel power at that time. Harry Bisbee died in 1959, and the planer apparently sat unused until 1972, when it was purchased by Gordon Brill and his partner, Elden Beane.

The planer was moved to the saw mill at Brill Lumber Co. on rt. 117, north of Bridgton, where it was powered by a large gas motor. It was operated for many

years by Gordon, and later by his son Scott.

It took some work to get the planer ready for the move, including partial disassembly, and rolling it by hand out of the shed where it was located. Scott Brill loaded it onto the Brill Lumber Co. boom truck, and then delivered it to the front of Centennial Hall.

There it got a good wash down, probably the first in its life. Removing the accumulated gummy sawdust revealed the original dark green paint, with red highlights.

It was then moved into the Hall, by a combination of hand and tractor power. Thanks to Joe Wist, Nick Rehmert, and Scott Brill.

The planer joins a collection of other early mill machinery, illustrating water-powered technology from the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was operational before the move, but will receive a thorough cosmetic and mechanical going-over. ❄

➤ continued from page 1

Memories from John 'Moose' Curtis, Director of the Junior Maine Guide Program, and Camp Winona alumnus

I first met Percy in the mid-70's through our work with the Maine Summer Camps' Junior Maine Guide Program. I was the rookie that was asked to work at the Maine Summer Camps' week long Trip leaders Campcraft Conference that was designed to train camp counselors to become trip leaders. The conference was held at Camp Blazing Trail, a girls' camp in Denmark.

At Camp Blazing Trail, Percy was the quiet individual who seemed to work in the background of the training, but I soon learned that this was "Percy's camp." Whenever any of the staff had a question, Percy had an answer. He went overboard helping the staff out, and never wanted credit for what he did. Being the youngster on the staff, I stayed on the edges, and watched and listened. I learned that Percy had built some of the log cabins at Blazing Trail, built their wood canvas canoes and made all the paddles that the camp used. Here was a remarkable man with exceptional skills, but he did not want any credit for all that he had done.

We learned so much from Percy by sitting around the campfire at night. All we had to do was to ask the right question, and we could get him to talk about his past experiences. We learned about his early years working in lumber camps, his knowledge of working with draft horses, his numerous trips with the girls from Blazing Trail, moose hunting trips to Newfoundland, and his recent work on a backhoe or working with the roads in Denmark. His task of clearing land on Loon Lake (located in the West Branch Region of the North Maine Woods) and building a large log cabin there interested us all. More times than not, Percy had a photo in the truck that showed us his experiences. (One of my favorites is

seeing Percy on his bulldozer after the famous ice storm driving down Route 117 in Denmark pushing branches out of the road.)

Needless to say Percy was a remarkable individual. He inspired so many folks, and educated us a great deal. Those who had the opportunity to work with Percy learned a great deal from him. On one of my last visits to Percy's home to spend some time with him, Percy commented, "I miss not being able to get out into the woods."

From Bruce McDonald, current Maine Guide and former JMG trip leader & counselor at Camp Winona:

"When you walked in the woods with Percy, he would see things you would barely noticed. He'd point out a deer or a Canadian Jay or a Bald Eagle long before you would usually see them. It also seemed like he could find a perfect piece of wood for his wood pile any place you went and in spots you wouldn't have thought to look. I was once looking for firewood for him and seeking standing dry timber as I had been taught without much success. He went over to a live Red Oak and found a giant branch that had gone dead long ago and was aged just right to make (the fire for) the legendary biscuits that he kept us fed.

I often sought to test candidates with Percy or to run any errand with him. True to form, he didn't talk much, but, if you paid attention, you always learned something and had a good time. Watching him with kids was great. He made them all feel comfortable.

I remember his stories about patching wood canvas canoes in the old days, using the shirt tail of the offending canoeist and some spruce gum, as well as stories about log drives and Camp Blazing Trail."

These two excerpts are from longer profiles which can be found in the DHS archive. ❄

What is the Junior Maine Guide program? How did it get its start?

The JMG program was just a glimmer of an idea in 1936. Phil Cobb, Emily Welch, Halsey Gulick, Pierson Curtis and A. MacDonald Murphy met at Camp Wabunaki, along the shores of Hancock Pond, to form a committee to organize plans for the promotion of an outdoors program.

The directors of Winona/Wyonegonic, Wabunaki and the Luther-Gulick camps promoted the outdoors



program with other Maine summer camps. Former Senator Marion Martin sponsored a bill with the Maine State Legislature in 1937 to officially create the Junior Maine Guide program.

Emily Welch, Phil Cobb, Roland Cobb, and Eugenia Parker, director of Camp Blazing Trail, continued to promote the JMG program through the years, as it became more popular with summer campers in Maine.

This outdoor certification program remains popular at the many Maine summer camps which offer an outdoor orienteering program. <http://juniormaineguides.org>.



Community House Curtain

The stage curtain from the former Community House was successfully moved to Centennial Hall on Wednesday morning, September 23rd.

Chris Hadsel and staff from Curtains Without Borders inspected the curtain on Monday. They



provided some very helpful advice on safely removing the curtain from its installation on the Community House stage, and provided some material for protecting it during the move.

On Wednesday, Nick Rehmert and crew took a break from painting at the Centennial Hall complex. They are used to working on irreplaceable historic items, but the curtain was potentially a challenge due to its awkward size and fragile nature.

The trickiest part was disconnecting the upper edge of the curtain, where it was attached to the framing above the stage. Large screws holding clamping boards to the framing had to be cut through, which required operating a Sawzall in close proximity to the curtain. But all went well, with no damage.

The curtain is now stored in Centennial Hall, rolled up and protected. On May 20 and 21 Chris will return to do cleaning and repair of minor, pre-existing, damage on the curtain. She will also prepare the curtain for its new location, on a downstairs wall in the Hall.

Thank you to Donald and Marion Monson for donating the curtain from the Community House stage to Centennial Hall. And thank you to Chris Hadsel from Curtains Without Borders (<http://www.curtainswithoutborders.org/>) and to Nick Rehmert and his crew for their efforts to move the curtain. ❄



Dedication Ceremony for Millstone

On Sunday, July 27th the dedication ceremony of Ora Keller Brine's Millstone gifted to the people of Denmark was held at Bicentennial Park. Jeffrey and Barbara Hollis and Fritz Von Ulmer and Brian Grennan celebrated with Denmark's townspeople and Ora's Wyonegonic family at the millstone's new home. After the ceremony celebrants enjoyed refreshments at Centennial Hall.

The millstone that was located in front of Ora's home on West Main Street – across from Denmark Arts Center – is now located in Bicentennial Park, across the street from Centennial Hall.

In the fall of 2014 Fritz Von Ulmer and Brian Grennan approached Jeffrey & Barbara Hollis to ask if Ora would be interested in donating the millstone to the townspeople of Denmark. At town meeting it was voted to accept ownership of the millstone.

Denmark Historical Society, along with financial assistance from Terry & Carol Rhoads and Fritz & Brian and others, paid for the removal of the stone from Ora's home and the move to its new home in Bicentennial Park.

We know that the millstone resided for many years in the Keller's backyard. In 1979 Ora had the stone moved to the front of her home. It is one of a matched pair of stones. The other stone of the pair set flat on the ground for many years in front of the Nell Berry home. The home's new owner, Linda Softley, sold the stone and it was removed from Denmark.

Where did the pair of stones come from? A very good question! Ora is now unable to relay to us the history of the two stones. We do know that the pair of millstones were used in one of the 2 mills located on Moose Pond. Do you know which mill the stones were located? ❄

Summer & autumn 2015 friends and members of Denmark Historical Society began photographing gravestones in a few of Denmark's oldest cemeteries. July 22nd John Patrick led the youth group to both Fessenden & Fessenden Ingalls Cemeteries atop Fessenden Hill. Members of the youth group inventoried and photographed the gravestones.

We were blessed with a warm summer and autumn and DHS volunteers, Jolene Snow and Lee Ann Shand, continued to photograph more of the older cemeteries around Denmark from August through November.

The town of Denmark mows each cemetery monthly when warm weather begins through to autumn. This year the town crew did upkeep work to Holt, Head, Pingree Berry and School House Cemeteries.

While we are hard at work inventorying graves in the cemeteries we noticed in our older cemeteries that stones are deteriorating. Not only are stones collapsing and breaking, but the writing is disappearing and stones are becoming unreadable.

At this time Denmark does not have a volunteer network which repairs fallen stones and cleans them with Maine Old Cemetery Association standards. ❄



John Patrick & the youth group inventoried Fessenden Ingalls Cemetery.

AMAZON SMILE

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Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Perleys Mills

In December of 2013, Loon Echo Land Trust purchased the 1,600 acre property from K&W Timberlands. In January 2015, the Town of Sebago took ownership of 130 acres of land on Swamp Road in the southern portion of the Perley Mills property. In April 2015, the Town of Denmark took ownership of the remaining acres in Bridgton and Denmark. LELT reserved perpetual conservation easements on both properties to ensure the properties remains undeveloped and available to the public for a variety of recreational uses including snowmobiling and hunting.

The Community Forest conserves significant wildlife habitat and recreational features, including multiple ponds, brooks, and large wetlands. Pickerel Pond, the jewel of the property located in the heart of the Denmark parcel, is used by the public for fishing, swimming and boating with small boats. It also has significant recreational resources, with three miles of the historical Narrow Gauge Trail which now serves as a state snowmobile trail and part of a regional ATV network. Public use of the land will include snowmobiling, ATV riding, hunting, fishing, boating, swimming, walking, bicycling, cross-country skiing and horseback riding, offering a major public benefit and economic asset to the region.

Information from Loon Echo Land Trust and Northern Forest Center. www.loonechlandtrust.org ❄️



The Community Forest includes the site of the Perley's Mills Station.



COMING EVENTS AT CENTENNIAL HALL

- May 20, 1:00 to 5:00 pm & May 21, 9:00 to 5:00 pm- volunteers are invited to assist Chris Hadsel in the restoration of the Community House curtain.
- May 21, 7:00 pm- talk by Chris Hadsel on historic theater curtains of northern New England, and public unveiling of the Community House Curtain
- June 7, 5:00 pm- annual meeting of the Denmark Historical Society
- July 31, 2:00 pm- Celebrate Phebe Beach's Birthday with Caroline Grimm. Caroline will talk about her research & series of books "Voices of Pondicherry" Sponsored by Ace Insurance Co.

DENMARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

- August 3, 7:00 pm Archive Night
- August 10, 7:00 pm Archive Night
- Check out our scrapbooks. Research your family tree.
- See the calendar at <https://denmarkhistoricalsociety.com/> for more information about each event.

IN MEMORIAM

We wish to honor the loss of our family, friends and neighbors in 2015:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Jens R. Hansen Sr. | Augustus 'Gus' T. |
| Joseph Guidi Sr. | Espeaignette |
| Beverly H. Ramsden | Mary Kathy Sanborn |
| Doris M. Osgood | Stasia Renski Stearns |
| Margaret A. Pelton | Elizabeth 'Betsy' McDermith |
| Trafton 'Skip' Westleigh | Arlene M. Keresztessy |
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| Phyllis R. Forman | Ruth P. Linnell |
| Marvis Grace Batchelder | Florence K. Doe |
| Sylvia A. Eaton | Eleanor A. Young |
| Nancy Masterton | Basil C. Tasker Jr. |
| Pamela J. Allen | Robert P. Doyle |

B&M had a factory in Denmark many years ago. In your basement would you have the shipping crates used to pack the cans; cans & labels from the factory? Would you know of the labels or cans the vegetables was sold under? Do you know the staff who worked in the factory? Do you have recollections of the factory and its workers?



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The Wentworth house, on East Main St.

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