



Sebago
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEBAGO ECHOES

Spring 2020

Volume 21 • Issue 1

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAINE'S BICENTENNIAL
PROCLAMATION RE-ENACTMENT
Monday, March 16 at noon
Potter Gym (Old Town Hall)
All are welcome to attend!

PRESERVING OUR HISTORIC LANDS:
200 YEARS OF WOODS, FARMLAND,
AND WATERWAYS
*A conversation with Ned Allen, John Evans,
Matt Markot, and Others*
Saturday, April 18 at 2:00 pm
Spaulding Memorial Library

MAINE'S FIGHT FOR
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE
with Anne Gass
Saturday, May 16 at 2:00 pm
Spaulding Memorial Library

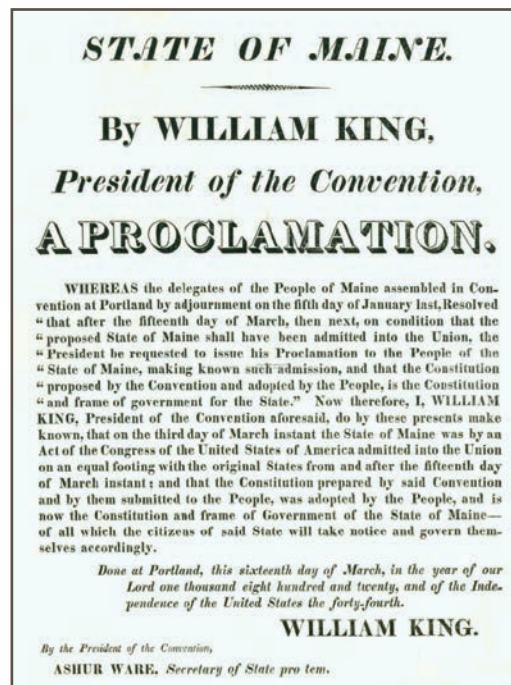
THE HISTORY AND CRAFT OF
WABANAKI BASKETMAKING
with Theresa Secord
Saturday, June 20 at 2:00 pm
Sebago Historical Society Museum

42ND ANNUAL SEBAGO DAYS
July 16 -18
Sebago Elementary School Ground
with Special Bicentennial Exhibit

MUSEUM HOURS

Every Saturday in July and August
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
and by appointment
Sebago Historical Society Museum

MAINE'S BICENTENNIAL: SEBAGO CELEBRATES WITH RE-ENACTMENT OF 1820 PROCLAMATION



Left: William King, president of the convention that drew up a Constitution and proposed statehood for Maine, signed a proclamation announcing that Congress admitted Maine to the Union on March 3, 1820, and that the Constitution, previously adopted by the residents, was now in effect. King read the proclamation aloud to the public in Portland on March 16, 1820.

From March 14th – 16th, there will be celebrations all around the state marking the 200th anniversary of Maine statehood. From community dinners to speeches, music, poems, birthday cake and more, everyone will have a chance to have fun and learn something new about our state and it's 200 years of history.

Please join us for a special event on Monday, March 16 at noon in the Potter Gym. We will host a special reading of 1st Governor William King's original 1820 Proclamation of Statehood.

Everyone is invited to our reenactment, especially all residents of Sebago and Baldwin (Sebago was part of Baldwin in 1820!). The proclamation will be read by former 1st District US Representative Tom Allen (a summer resident of Sebago). Students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 at Sebago Elementary School will attend and assist with the flag raising. There will be photo opportunities, birthday cake, poems, and some short history lessons! Please join with us as we celebrate 200 years of Maine - The way life should be!

THE HISTORY OF MAPLE SUGAR MAKING

The following is adapted from information on the Maine Maple Producers Association website, and from the on-line writings of Sebago resident Allen Crabtree, Maine Farmhouse Journal, www.crabcoll.com



Greene Maple Farm was established in 1837 and located in Sebago. It is now run by the 6th and 7th generations of the Greene Family. Photo by Greene Maple Farm.

March is maple syrup season, so we have been thinking about the history of this special Maine product. Here we share some interesting information we discovered in our research.

The Native Americans of the Northeast, including the Abenaki in Maine, first developed the art of making maple sugar and syrup from the sap of the sugar maple tree. They used maple syrup as an all-purpose seasoning, a staple food, and a primary source of nourishment in the early spring. It was so valuable that it was used in trading or as currency and important festivals celebrated the sugar harvest. When early Colonial settlers moved to forested areas of the Northeast in the 1700s, they adopted existing native practices, and maple syrup and sugar soon became home-grown culinary resources for almost every Maine homestead.

European settlers brought something to trade for the knowledge of the native peoples – iron kettles. The Abenaki used to boil the syrup by dropping red-hot stones into thick wooden containers full of sap. Iron kettles made the work of sugar boiling easier and the resulting syrup was cleaner and more consistent. Every spring the kettles bubbled steadily, providing the self-sufficient early New England farmers with an ample supply of home-grown sweetness. Maple syrup was also cheaper and easier to get than cane sugar. Cane sugar had to be imported from the West Indies and was not widely available until the mid 1800s. It was also a product of slave labor. Maple sugar, being made by free men in their own woodlands, was better suited to the Yankee temperament.

The earliest settlers tapped their sugar maples with an axe. When the sap started flowing, it would drip into a hollowed-out piece of pine log, or trough. When the troughs were full, they were dumped into a nearby iron kettle with a fire underneath. A kettle could only handle the sap from one or two dozen maple trees, and the boiling process was slow. Several kettles would be set up in the sugar bush, and fires would keep the sap boiling for the duration of the sugar season – day and night. Around 1800, a new method of tapping began. Small holes were drilled into the trunk of the trees, a wooden spout was inserted and the dripping sap was caught in a bucket. Later, metal spouts with a small hook for the bucket replaced the wooden ones. This method continues to be used today in small scale maple sugaring operations.

The labels on many maple syrup containers today have a nostalgic picture of a team of horses pulling a sled with a large tank, while the farmer wades through the deep spring snows dumping sap buckets into the tank. Though rarely seen today, the horse drawn sled is still used here and there. Tractors and wagons are more commonly used – in places where individual buckets are still the norm. In the second half of the 20th century, plastic tubing started to be used to create a more efficient sap-gathering method. Small diameter tubing is connected directly to the tree and sap flows downhill into a central trunk line. This in turn flows to a central collection tank. In many sugar bushes the lines are left up year-round. Each spring new taps need to be drilled and connected to the tubing, but there is no longer a need to collect sap from each bucket.



Tapping maple trees. Photo by Greene Maple Farm.

Since the 1800's the central point in the sugaring operation has been the sugarhouse. On small family farms this is usually a compact building with an opening above the main roof to allow steam to vent when boiling begins. In the center of the sugarhouse is the evaporator. The frame around the evaporator is lined sides and bottom with bricks. The top is open, and the pans sit here. A fire is built in the grate, and it roars right under the pans. The average ratio of sap to syrup is about 40:1. When the fire is lit under the pans, the sap begins to boil, and steam rises and goes out through the steam vent.

It is a juggling process to keep the fire hot enough to boil the sap without the pans boiling over. Syrup is tested to see if it is done and ready to draw off. The thermometer will be at 70°F above boiling for maple syrup, at 250°F above boiling for sugar-on-snow, and 320°F above boiling for maple sugar. Most maple sap is made into syrup these days. Formerly, most was made into maple sugar for easier storage and shipping.

All pure Maine maple syrup sold commercially is US Grade A quality as defined by Maine law. Maine syrup is further classified by legally defined flavor and color characteristics of light, medium, dark, or extra dark amber. The words "Maine Maple Syrup" may only be used for pure maple syrup that is tapped and processed within the State of Maine.

Even in the early days of maple sugaring, appreciation for this special product went way beyond Maine and the northeast states. Thomas Jefferson tried to establish a "sugar bush" at Monticello, and there were a few attempts to start a maple industry in Europe. But all these attempts failed. The trees grew, but they yielded no sweetness. The sugar in maple sap only appears where warm, sunny days and below-freezing nights follow each other for days on end, as they do in Maine's long, slow spring. So next time you feel like complaining about the slow coming of spring in Maine, remember, it's what gives us Maple Syrup!

SUPPORT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND WIN A CURRIER PRINT



The Sebago Historical Society presents this fine and appropriate stone lithograph illustration of colonial life that we still celebrate today. Donated by Glenn D. Grant, "Maple Sugaring" shows the excitement and much awaited maple syrup and sugar-on-snow by all ages of the community. This is an early work produced by Nathaniel Currier in 1856, prior to becoming a partner with James Ives in 1857.

Raffle tickets may be purchased for \$1 each or six for \$5 by contacting contact@sebagohistoricalsociety.org. The winner will be drawn on Maine Maple Sunday.

FLAVORS OF THE SEASON

Enjoy some old-fashioned recipes that include our favorite flavor of this season - maple syrup!

SUGAR-ON-SNOW OR "LEATHER APRONS"

From the Maine Maple Producers Association

In the old days, when syrup making was a community affair, children and adults alike enjoyed the taffy-like candy made by pouring hot Maine maple syrup onto well-packed snow. This first treat of the maple season should always be accompanied by plain doughnuts and sour pickles, which provide a necessary contrast to the sweetness of the maple.

Heat the desired amount of syrup to 22 degrees above the boiling point of water. Without stirring, pour immediately to form a thin coating onto packed snow or shaved ice. Wind the taffy onto forks for eating — it's too soft to pick up. A quart of syrup is sufficient for 12 to 16 people, depending on how many of them are under 10 years old!



BAKED BEANS BY JUNE GYGER

From the Sebago Historical Society Cookbook

Soak 3 cups of beans (soldier, yellow eye, or pea) in large kettle filled with cold water and 1/2 tsp. soda. Slowly bring beans to boil. Beans are done when skins split from blowing on them. In a bean pot (2 quart) place 1 medium onion and fill 1/2 full with beans. Over beans sprinkle 1/2 cup sugar, piece of cubed salt pork, salt, and pepper. Add remainder of beans. Sprinkle 1/4 cup sugar, salt, pepper, 1/2 tsp. dry mustard, salt pork (cubed) and pour 1/2 cup maple syrup over beans. Add water until you can see it. Bake at 250 degrees for 4 hours. Note -- this recipe requires quite a lot of salt so taste during baking and season to taste. Also, homemade syrup is better.

MAINE'S ORIGINAL STATE FLAG MAKES A COMEBACK, LANDS IN SEBAGO!



The following is adapted from an article in the Bangor Daily News by Troy R. Bennett, Feb. 13, 2018.

In 1901, Maine adopted its very first official state flag. It featured a White Pine tree and a blue North Star set on a plain, buff background. The banner was unique, unlike any other flag in the world. Seven years later, in 1909, the legislature replaced it with a generic design very similar to that of other state flags. The 1909 flag is still flying at the State House in Augusta. The original, more distinctive, 1901 Pine Tree flag was never used again for formal state occasions. But it's making a comeback! The Portland-based Maine Flag Company likes seeing the original 1901 banner on flagpoles again. Bethany Field, who owns the company, has been hand-making the classic Pine Tree flags and can barely keep up with orders. She prefers the original design because it's simple and meaningful. "It's two or three basic colors. It's not complicated," she said. "It's recognizable and it's relatable to the people who fly it."

Experts in the study of flags agree; the old pine tree flag is distinctive and memorable, easy to spot at a distance and is so simple a child can remember it and draw it. In contrast, today's official Maine flag, like many other state flags, is based on a complex state seal with multiple elements. A sailor and farmer stand on either side of a moose lying under a pine tree within a crest. The North Star is above with Maine's motto: Dirigo (Latin for "I lead."). Below is a banner saying "Maine." Flag expert David Martucci states that this pattern is typical of many state flags. There's nothing wrong with this design, but it's just not distinctive, as the 1901 pine tree flag was.

There is an interesting reason behind the simplicity of the original 1901 Pine Tree flag. Apparently the design came through the Maine State Legislature from marine committees. Seafarers, sailors, and fishermen wanted a flag that could be recognized at a distance. The star and pine tree design fit the bill. The design also contained no words, which meant the flag could be read from either side.

But by 1909 many state legislators were Civil War veterans, and according to Martucci, they wanted a state flag that resembled battle flags from the war. Most Union flags, were blue, making them distinguishable from the red Confederate flags. So today's official blue flag with the intricate state seal was adopted.

Martucci tried but failed to get the 1901 Pine Tree flag reinstated through legislation in 1991 and 1997. Today, there are only two known original period copies of the tree and star design. Given the lack of original copies, the Maine Flag Company hopes its new version will catch on. The company also produces custom yacht club burgee flags and Maine merchant marine flags. Maine is one of only two states with a separate marine flag. It was adopted in 1939. It shows the same pine tree with an anchor wrapped around it. Above is the word "Dirigo" and below is "Maine." There is no movement in the state Legislature to bring back the old-style flag, but that may simply be because not enough people have seen it. "I think it would be great if Maine adopted the 1901 flag again," Field said, "because it speaks to Maine."

Today, in recognition of the 120 year-old design of the original Maine state flag, and in recognition of the state Bicentennial, the Sebago Historical Society is pleased to announce that they are donating Maine State Pine Tree flags to Sebago Elementary School, to the Town of Sebago, and to the Spaulding Memorial Library. A Pine Tree flag will also fly on the Sebago Historical Society building during open hours.

SEBAGO ECHOES CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you to the following members for their contribution researching and writing the articles for the Spring 2020 issue:

Donelle Allen	Ann Burns
Margaret Allen	Susan Gassett
Sherrill Brown	Nancy Sosman

The Greene Family

Editor: Sarah Bianculli

To make suggestions for future stories, please email
contact@sebagohistoricalsociety.org

ART AND HISTORY: THE SEBAGO MURAL PROJECT

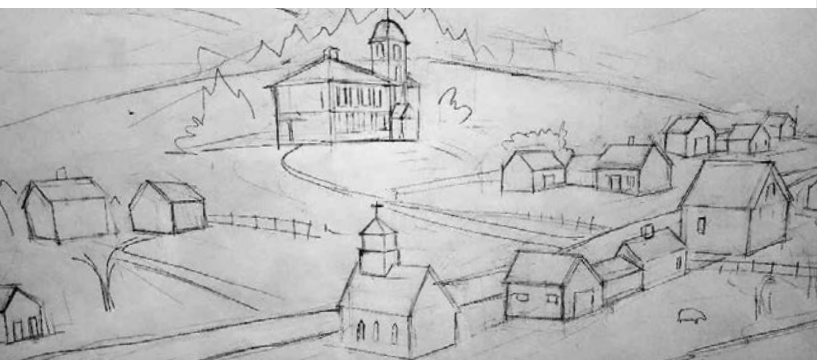


Farm scene by Jonathan D. Poor (1807 - 1845). Dr. James Norton House, East Baldwin, Maine, 1840. Photo by the Rufus Porter Museum.

You may have noticed many towns and cities are creating murals in public spaces to celebrate some aspect of their history or community culture. Sebago has a special claim to mural painting, as the artist Jonathan Poor was born in Sebago in 1807. He became a prolific muralist painter both as an apprentice to his more famous uncle, Rufus Porter, as well as in his own right.

Given this background, representatives from the Sebago Historical Society have been meeting with the Sebago Artists Group to design a public mural celebrating Sebago history and Maine's 200th birthday. The mural, to be painted in the Jonathan Poor/Rufus Porter style, will cover one wall in the town office and will feature Potter Academy and the Mud City neighborhood. Sketches and plans are coming together with the goal to complete the mural in mid-June and have a public celebration and unveiling July 4, 2020.

Interested persons will have an opportunity to help with the painting! Follow our facebook page for updates.



Initial sketch of the Sebago mural by artist Wendy Newcomb

ICE HARVESTING IN SEBAGO

The following is adapted from "Ice: A Maine Commodity," by Richard Judd, Maine History Online and The Sebago Historical Society's 2018 Calendar, Neighborhoods of Sebago.

Until the late 1860s, ice was largely a luxury item, used for cooling drinks. When Americans added more dairy and fresh produce to their diets, ice-boxes became a standard feature in the middle-class home, and markets expanded rapidly.

At its heyday from 1870 - 1890, Maine was at the forefront of the ice harvesting industry. Maine's deep lakes, broad rivers, and cold winters produced a pure, crystal-blue product that set the standard for quality nationwide.

In Sebago, Stacy's Store at Mud City, The Gregorys and Elmer Shaw of North Sebago, and Harry Fitch of East Sebago sold ice. Many local residents harvested their own ice and stored them in personal ice houses.

Home refrigerators brought an end to ice exports from Maine in the 1920s, although harvesting continued locally.



Will Nason of Sebago with his sons Charlie and Roy.



A team cutting ice including Will Nason, Walter Bacheldor, Uncle Hant (JH) Bacheldor, and Charlie Nason.

LOOKING BACK: SEBAGO'S BICENTENNIAL HOMES

In honor of Maine's bicentennial, The Echoes will take a look back at some of Sebago's venerable homes that were standing when Maine became a state in 1820, and are still standing today.

BABB HOUSE - ELM COTTAGE - TWIN HEARTS FARM - C. 1817



Captain Babb built this home in 1817 on what was then Ridge Road, now Hancock Pond Road. It served as a family home. It was later operated as a boarding house by James Calvin Babb, and became known as Elm Cottage. The home is now the Twin Hearts Farm Bed and Breakfast, owned by Joanne Chessey and Steve Ristich.

PIKE FARM - WOODSIDE FARM - C. 1820



In 1812 Oliver Pike felled the trees to build a log cabin on "Pike's Peak," now Allen Road, before building the Federalist style home around 1820. In 1923 Neal and Margaret Stevens Allen purchased the homestead and named it Woodside Farm. It is now owned by their grandson, Richard and his wife Margaret Allen.

HILL HOUSE - C. 1810



Daniel and Polly Lakin Hill married in 1799 and built their home around 1810. Both of them were original settlers, moving to the area in the 1790s, when it was still Flintstown, Massachusetts. Daniel was one of the voters who approved the Maine Constitution in the 1819 vote. The home is now owned by Nancy Sosman.

REMEMBERING TED GREENE



Thank you to the Greene Family for providing the photos of Ted Greene at the Fryeburg Fair and in the family's sugar house, as well as the following excerpt from Ted's obituary.

Ted Greene grew up on the family farm at Mac's Corner, attending Sebago schools, graduating from Potter Academy and the University of Maine Orono School of Agriculture.

In 1964 Ted and his father built their sugar house on the family property in Sebago, where he and Loretta began Greene Maple Farm. As a 5th generation sugar maker Ted strived to promote the art of making maple syrup and shared his knowledge with all who visited, including thousands of school children over the years.

In the early 80s a Portland Press Herald Reporter wrote an article mistakenly suggesting free pancakes were served to visitors on Sundays. The following Sunday as the yard filled with visitors, Loretta set to work hastily preparing pancakes for dozens of sweet teeth. At a Maine Maple Producers board meeting shortly after, Ted tossed out the idea of a special "Maple Day" on a Sunday in March. After being bounced around the room for a bit, "Maine Maple Sunday" was born.

As a lifelong visitor of Fryeburg Fair, Ted would visit the farm museum. He suggested to the museum curator that perhaps he could bring a display of his maple equipment and talk about maple syrup. The fair readily agreed. For over 35 years Ted and Loretta welcomed thousands of visitors who came back each year to see what was new.

Ted belonged to many organizations throughout his life, including the Sebago Historical Society, which he joined upon the society's reorganization in 1993. He was elected to the office of Historian, becoming the "go to" person for information on historical artifacts, locations and events. The Historical Society is immensely grateful for Ted's contributions to our community and saddened by his untimely passing. We will continue to honor his presence in our work.

JACK BARNES POETRY PROJECT

As we continue to share with the community the poetry of the late Jack Barnes (1927 – 2018), longtime resident of Sebago and Hiram, here are two of our springtime favorites! Jack loved the outdoors in all seasons; in his poems the spring season often represents a time of possibilities, rebirth and new growth, a period of transition between the cold desolation of winter and the warm fruitfulness of summer.

ON SEEING THE FIRST LARK

I saw the first lark of spring,
I paused to hear it sing,
But it only sat and gazed
Across a field of snow
To where the cedars grow.
I, like the first lark of spring,
Am without a song to sing;
I too must stand on frozen ground.



REBIRTH

From down the distant pine-clad hill
A warm and gentle March breeze floats
Over dunes of crystal snow
And deep beneath layers of ice
The liquid voice long silenced by the cold
Utters the first message of spring.



SEBAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY MISSION

To encourage and promote an interest and appreciation of the history of the Town of Sebago through the collection, research, and preservation of such information, materials, or items and to develop educational programs of historical or genealogical importance relating to Sebago's history.

PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP TODAY

2020 MEMBERSHIP FORM - PLEASE PRINT & MAIL

Name (s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City/Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Your contact information is used only to inform you of upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, membership offers via our quarterly newsletter and e-newsletter.

Please make checks payable to Sebago Historical Society and mail to:

Sebago Historical Society

PO Box 59

Sebago, Maine 04029

Membership Level

____ Individual: \$10

____ Family: \$15

____ Student: free

Gifts & Donations

____ Monetary Donation: \$ ____

____ Gift Donation

Please describe & we will be in contact:



Sebago
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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