



On the Penobscot

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Orrington Celebrates its Past and Ponders its Future

A Tribute to Orrington as it turns 225 years old

Carol and Tim Small enjoy telling visitors to their antique farmhouse on Betts Road in Orrington that it was built before George Washington was president. And then they watch as confusion spreads across their visitor's face when they tell them the house was actually built in Massachusetts!

Yes, Maine was once part of Massachusetts before it became the 23rd state in the Union as part of the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

This and other facts which are part of Orrington's rich history will be on full display in July as it celebrates its 225th anniversary of incorporation during Old Home Week July 13-21. The Old Home Week theme is "Orrington's Past, Present & Future" and will include a parade, a contest for historic home decorations, and a cannon muster.

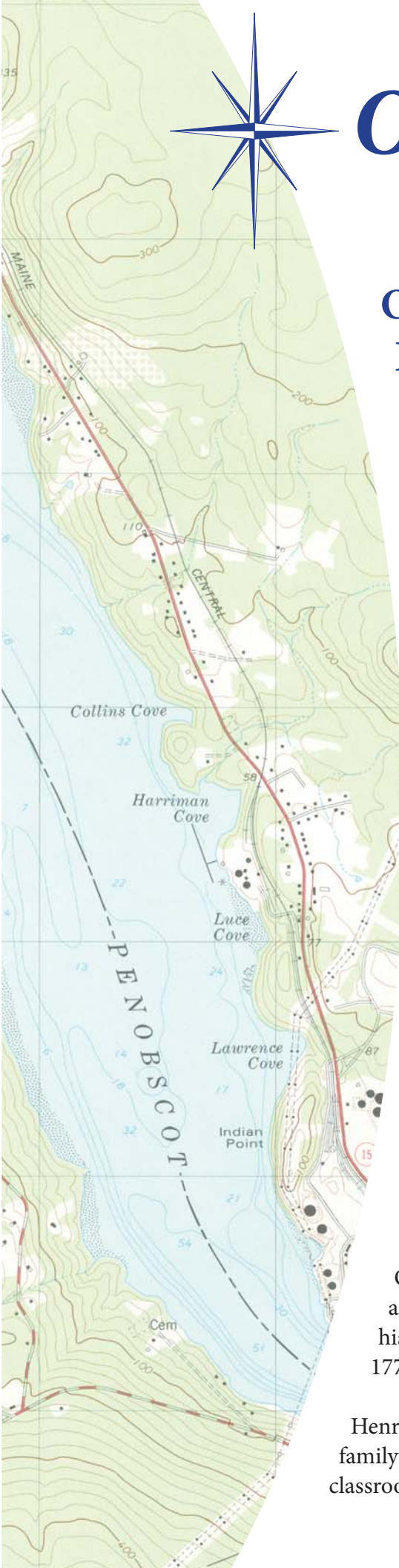
The town's history is woven into the narratives of many of Orrington's families, among them Henry Wiswell, whose barn on the River Road depicts the town's history in a large painted mural. The Wiswells trace their Orrington roots back to 1772, when David and Samuel Wiswell built the sprawling farm.

Henry's cousin, Don Wiswell, lives next door and was also born and raised on the family land in a house built by his grandfather in 1905. His grammar school had two classrooms – one for kindergarten through the fourth grades and the other for fifth



Carol and Tim Small have been restoring this antique farmhouse almost from the day they moved into it 19 years ago after Tim retired from the Bangor Fire Department.

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Orrington Celebrates *Continued*

through eighth grades. “When I graduated from eighth grade in 1950, there were five kids in my graduating class,” Don recalls.

At the age of 85, Henry is still cutting hay and managing the greenhouses that now dot his land. When he finds some spare time and inspiration he adds to his memoir, now 50 pages in length. “I don’t spend as much time on it as I like, but every once in a while I remember something that I want to put down on paper, so I am still adding to it.”

Not far from the Wiswell Farm up the River Road is the Campbell family, which traces its ancestry back eight generations. Three of those generations still live on River Road with Ed Campbell and his wife Blanche on one side of the street and their son Dick Campbell and his three grown sons on the other side of the street.

Dick Campbell, now juggling a legislative career, his home construction business and co-chairmanship duties of the Old Home Week Committee, says it is worth the 160-mile round trip to the state capital to live in Orrington. “This is where I was raised and where I raised my own family and my Mom and Dad are still across the street. People in Orrington live here because they feel that connection to their community, and in our case to our own history,” says Campbell.

When Sue and Joe Pate left Bangor nearly 30 years ago, they searched up and down the Penobscot River from Eddington south to Bucksport, across to Prospect and up to Hampden looking for the

perfect quiet location. “We finally found our place at the bottom of Hatfield Road in Orrington. We took a year to renovate and rebuild the former Union Ice Company building,” says Sue, also a co-chair on the Old Home Week Committee.

In 1882, Union Ice Company was the largest of the ice companies located in Orrington and flourished until



(above) The familiar mural depicting Orrington history on the Wiswell barn stands behind cousins, Henry and Don Wiswell who are joined by Don’s wife Felicia.

(below) Three generations of Campbells with their Orrington family tree behind them. Seated, left to right, Ed, Blanche, Dick, Chad and (standing) Colin Campbell.



the early 1900s when refrigeration was invented. The Pate's home was the ice company office and a boarding house for the workers who would return home to Bangor on weekends.

“What was appealing to us when we moved here was the natural beauty,” says Sue. “We are close enough to town for all the conveniences of the city, yet far enough away to enjoy all that the great outdoors has to offer... boating, kayaking, swimming, fishing, hunting, skiing, skating, etc. The Penobscot River is a big part of our lives.”

The Future

Even as it celebrates its past, Orrington residents are very focused on the future. The Smalls worry about their daughter's job prospects with so few employment opportunities. Campbell believes his sons' futures are tied to the town's ongoing efforts to develop its local business park and eventually develop the HoltraChem site which the town owns.

Town meeting voters in June took another step toward developing the business park near Brewer Lake with the approval of an expanded Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, which they hope will make development of the park easier in order to generate tax revenues for the town.

Wiswell, who serves on an economic advisory committee to town selectmen, says it is time the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Mallinckrodt US LLC came to an agreement on how to complete the environmental remediation of the HoltraChem site, a mostly wooded 240-acre site on the Penobscot River. “It's time to get that resolved so that we can move forward,” said Wiswell.

Mallinckrodt US LLC has assumed responsibility for the environmental remediation of the former chemical plant and has made significant progress (see related story on site progress). In 2010, town selectmen and voters supported Mallinckrodt's plan for completing the site cleanup. Mallinckrodt has agreed to financially support the town's redevelopment efforts of the site and to establish a fund that would support long-term environmental monitoring once the cleanup is completed.

The sense of urgency for local economic development was expressed in the recent town meeting in a written description of the need for the expanded TIF district, which stated that “there is a need to promote economic development, to provide additional employment opportunities, to improve and broaden the tax base, and to improve the general economy of the Town and the surrounding region.”

“We are fortunate to have some wonderful parcels of land that can be developed for incredible business opportunities,” says Sue Pate. “Orrington is fortunate to have not only highway and rail systems, but all deep water access and close proximity to an international airport. The income derived from ice harvesting may be gone, but the future holds great promise for creative and prosperous industry.”

For more information about Old Home Week events, go to orrington.govoffice.com



The Old Home Week Committee meets to finalize details for the gala celebration of the town's 225th birthday. Left to right, Heather and Keith Bowden, Sue Pate, Pat Gero, Marsha Wilson and Dick Campbell.

Next Phase of Demolition Work Set For HoltraChem Site

The next phase of demolition and dismantling work at the HoltraChem site is underway and expected to be completed before winter pending final approval from the Maine DEP.

During the course of six phases of demolition and dismantling, site engineers and work crews have removed the majority of site structures that once populated the former chemical plant which was closed in 2000.

Mallinckrodt US LLC, which is managing site cleanup and environmental remediation of the HoltraChem site, has conducted a methodical demolition process by first removing any contaminants from building materials and then recycling whatever materials it can. To date, Mallinckrodt has recycled nearly 2,000 tons of brass, titanium, nickel, copper, aluminum and steel with scrap steel accounting for three-quarters of the total amount.

This demolition phase will dramatically alter the site's appearance, particularly when the single largest site structure – the former sodium chlorate plant - is demolished. The sodium chlorate building alone is 28,000 square feet and estimated to contain more than 1,000 tons of scrap material.

Demolition is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year at which time there will be just three buildings remaining on the site, including the new groundwater treatment plant, the former administration building and a shop building where heavy equipment can be stored during the environmental remediation phase.

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