

A-C.H.S.

Alexander-Crawford Historical Society
May/June 1984 Washington Cty. Me. Issue 36

Reflections + Recollections

by Grace Ober, Woodland

Looking over a post card collection and finding one labeled "The Trains at Ayers Junction", prompted me to get in touch with Gladys Bridges of Charlotte. Here are some of her recollections:

First of all, Ayers Junction was originally called Eastport Junction. It was where the trains for Pembroke, Perry, and Eastport left the main line of the Washington County n/k/a. The Maine Central Railroad, Washington, Co. Division. The early spelling was Ayer's Junction.

Gladys thinks that some of the land in the right of way may have belonged to the Ayer family, as Myron Ayer had a stand near there. Harry Corthell, whose wife was Gussie Ayer, built a big store with living quarters above and a summer house beside it, close to the tracks.

The post office, then Charlotte and located in Uncle Edwin's home and store at Blanchard's Corners, was moved to this location and re-named Ayers, Maine. Old Timers still used the old name of Charlotte as they do now, only now Pembroke is the postal name.

Gladys and her parents often took Sunday afternoon drives in the top buggy along the roads of Charlotte. On one Sunday trip they went down to the area where they viewed the right-of-way for the coming Washington County Railroad.

please turn to page 3



-RALPH AYER-

C A L E N D A R

Sat. May 19: CHOCOLATE
CAKE WALK 7 p.m. at the
Crawford Town Hall. pg. 12

Tues. June 19th: HOW OUR
ANCESTORS DRESSED. Members
are urged to dress color-
fully for this 10 a.m.
meeting at Pocomoonshine
Lake, and take an settlers'
dish for tasting at noon.



HAMPDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULES ANNUAL WORKSHOP

Our Bangor area representative Marjorie Quigg will be representing us at the 5th semi-annual workshop for local historical societies on May 12th. Your president attended the Oct. 1983 session with Marjorie and had a marvelous time. Richard Newcomb, Hampden vice president, receives our A-CHS newsletters as a member, and plans to bring TWO CHOCOLATE CAKES to our Saturday, May 19 Cakewalk. (We hope we can get him to announce our door prize that colorful, fun evening.)

A-CHS Newsletter was first published in May 1980. It started out as a one-page monthly. By 1981 we were running a two-page monthly. In September of that year we went to four pages. In March 1982 we became a 10-page bi-monthly newsletter. By January 1983 we were running to 14 pages. Our present status quo, 14 to 16 pages.

A-CHS SUBSCRIBING MEMBERSHIP: Individual \$3.00; Family \$5.00; and Supporting memberships anything over. All A-CHS members receive the six annual newsletters, and are welcome to attend all of our meetings and activities. MEMBERSHIP: RR #1, Box 1616, Alexander, Me. 04694

Canadian-American Historians Holding Conference, June 23, at Border

The Sunrise Research Institute, Inc., and the Charlotte County Historical Society, Inc. (New Brunswick, Canada) plan a joint international Canadian-American local history conference SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1984. The morning meeting, 9 a.m. EST (10 a.m. Atlantic time) to Noon EST (1 p.m. Atlantic) will be at the Parish Center in St. Stephen, N.B. Registration is \$2.50 for the morning, payable to Charlotte County Historical Society, Inc., which is arranging the program.

The afternoon meeting, 1 p.m. EST (2 p.m. Atlantic Canada) to 4 p.m. EST (5 p.m. Atlantic) is to be at Calais Memorial High School on River Road. Registration is \$2.50 to pay for the rent and the custodian. Professor John Graham Reid, director of Canadian Studies at Mt. Allison University, Sackville, N.B., has agreed to speak on "Champlain and Canada." Professor George W. Thurston of the University of Maine at Machias history department will speak on "Champlain in Maine." The meeting marks the 175th year since Calais became incorporated as a city (1809), the 200th anniversary of St. Stephen, the New Brunswick Bicentennial year and the 380th year since Champlain landed on St. Croix Island (now Maine.) Many local historical societies will be represented and will display materials from 3:30 to 4 as the program ends.

- John Bodger -

Membership

Individual \$3.00
Family 5.00
Supporting,
anything over.

A-CHS MEMBERSHIP
RR #1 Box 1616
Alexander, Me.
04694

Six newsletters
are mailed to
our members (free)
yearly - back
copies available
are \$1.00 (to
non-members
\$1.50.) postpaid.

Gladys said that Father's graphic account had her afraid that the train itself would come barrelling out of the woods on the straight-away and sweep them away. She adds, "I was very young at the time." Later, when all the tracks had been laid and the trains were running down to Pembroke, Perry and Eastport - and to and from Bangor to Calais - her father took her down to the Junction on an errand, and to see the trains.

The trains from the West (Bangor) and the one ready for Eastport, were blocking the road - so they hitched the horse to the post by Harry Corthell's, and crossed via the car steps to the station platform. Gladys was afraid that the train would start up while she was crossing, and that she would end up in Calais without her beloved father.

In the Maine Central Album I found a picture of the 'Trains at Ayers Junction', circa the '50's. A far cry from the earlier scene. The engines are diesels minus the brass bell, the tall smokestack at the front, and the steam belching out around the cowcatcher and the front wheels. Gone also was the large station building with its semaphores, it's waiting room with benches and the iron coal pot-bellied stove. Instead, a very small wooden shack-type building barely as wide as the sign which adorned it was long. A Junction to NOWHERE, now.....IT WAS QUITE A FEAT to build railroads expecially through wooded areas. The machinery we accept as a natural part of construction was not available. Instead of huge dump trucks, there were the one or two horse dump carts -- a body balanced on an axle supporting two huge cart wheels. Dirt was loaded by shovel by hand and dumped by removing the tail gate and then a peg or lever released the body and a neat conical pile of dirt, or whatever, landed on the ground. I remember also the large scoops, horse drawn guided by man used in excavating for roads and cellars.

TRAINS IN CHARLOTTE were also a source of entertainment as well as a means of transportation. Guests at Jesse Sprague's summer hotel near the Intervale (pronounced 'interval') would sit on the veranda, and looking through the large windows installed by Jesse in the large barn, watch the trains make their way along the lake (Pennaquan). Obliging train crews have been known to make an unauthorized stop for the convenience of passengers arriving or departing from the hotel. *(please turn to page 4)*



