

by Ernest Brown

B 156

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ROBBINSTON 1786-1980*

The following is a brief history of the Town of Robbinston, Washington County, State of Maine, compiled from town, county, and state records and from information furnished by the Boston Library, the Boston Globe, the Maine State Library, also from newspaper accounts from the Eastport Sentinel, the St. Croix Courier (an early Calais paper), the Calais Advertiser, the Lewiston Journal and from the Hayden Diaries 1821-1867. Also from the University of Maine Studies, Second Series from an International Community on the St. Croix by Harold Davis.

Very important also are the memories of the citizens, young and older, who generously supported the efforts that went into the condensation of this account, whether by phone conversations or personal interviews.

Thanks are extended to Mrs. Myrtle Boyden, Mrs. Sandra Pottle, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Cook, Royden Stanhope, Horace Graham, the selectmen of Robbinston (Robert Johnson, Philip Stanhope and Glen Johnson), Mr. and Mrs. Lester Morrell, Clarence Moholland, Sr., Mrs. Levi Hayden, Elton Brooks, Miss Dorothy Johnson, Mrs. Betsy Fales of Red Beach (Librarian at Washington County Vo-Tech), Mrs. Helen Oliver of the Calais Library, Mrs. Mabel Diffin, Robert Carlow, Phillip Chambers, Mrs. Cleve Maxwell, Valeria Lincoln, Frank Didisheim, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Moholland, and Larry Crooker, and no doubt there were others.

Many accounts were repetitious and some were contradictory, but this is the making of history.

*This section was written by Charlotte and John Brooks of Robbinston.

Robbinston was first settled in October, 1786 by the Honorable Edwin H. Robbins of Milton, Massachusetts. He was a colonel in the Army during the Revolutionary War and received the township #4 as a grant from the State of Massachusetts for one dollar.

From 1604, when DeMonts landed on St. Croix Island there were inhabitants along both sides of the St., Croix. Jacob Boynton lived at Boyden Lake when the town was bought by Robbins and was the first settler. The families of David Somes and Donald MacDonald were probably the next settlers.

Colonel Robbins brought in settlers and named the town Robbinstown, but later it was changed to Robbinston before incorporation.

The first census listed thirteen men and their families, Boyden, Somes, MacDonald, Joseph Porter, Thomas Vose, Samuel Jones, William Bugbee, John Brewer, John Johnson, Job Johnson, Widow Fawcett, Samuel Leshure, Obediah Allen. (Note the name Widow Fawcett).

In 1810 a committee was formed to petition the legislature for incorporation. Those on the committee were: John Brewer, Thomas Vose, John Balkam, Obediah Allen, Abel Brooks, Job Johnson, Thaddeus Sibley, with John Balkam as clerk. On February 18, 1811 plantation #4 became the town of Robbinston.

From sifting through old records it seems that one of the first mill sites was at Mill Cove, a tide mill powered by a dam near the property owned by Mr. and Mrs. Donald Webster. This dam furnished power for a lumber mill, a grist mill, and a card mill for making wool for garments. The man who built and operated this venture was named Joseph Porter, who built the Robbins house, the dam and the mill.

The Robbins place contained 320 acres and extended along the northeasterly side of Mill Cove to Liberty Point. The first school was built at Liberty Point and was of logs. The first teacher was Miss Ruth Jones. This building also served as a meeting house.

The Robbins place was the only piece of property retained by Robbins and bequeathed to his heirs.

Before the blazed trail for a bridle path was built (which later became a road) people traveled along the shore with horses and on the water by canoe.

For years Robbinston was a center of trade for neighboring towns. Shipbuilding and commerce were carried on to such an extent that the waters between Robbinston and St. Andrews were white with shipping. The ports of Europe were markets for ships and lumber.

Lumbering

As lumbering progressed many more mills were built. One was on Western Stream in the gulch near the home of William Jenkins. This mill sawed lathes for building purposes.

Long lumber was sawed at steam mills on the outlets of Western and Goulding Lakes. The lakes were used as mill ponds to float the logs to the mills. Some of the logs can still be seen that have sunk to the bottom of the lakes and have remained there for

more than 100 years. They still appear to be sound. There doesn't seem to be any record of who owned either of these mills.

The mill at Goulding Lake must have produced a lot of lumber and sawdust, for to quote the late Fred Diffin, "I ran the entire length of the road in my bare feet and ran on nothing by sawdust". That old logging road was approximately 1 1/4 miles. There is still an old root cellar that was rocked up like a well and is as true today as when it was built to serve the cook shack.

There was a lumber mill on Mill Stream, a few yards from the Lake Road. Later there was a mill on Campbell Brook that runs out of Rand Lake. This was located several hundred feet below the outlet and was powered by a water wheel. Laths, shingles, and barrel stock were produced here. George MacDonald and Roland Jolotta built a mill on the land now owned by John Dwelley, Junior, on Route 1.

In the early 1800's a Mr. Thomas Vose and a Mr. Stover had mills at Mill Cove. Other mills erected in town were: one at Mill Cove at the head of the tidewaters that sawed long lumber and was owned by Frank Brooks in the early 1900's and later was moved to Bert Brooks' land on the #3 Road. This land is now owned by Elton Brooks; Roy and William Carlow had two locations on Eastern Stream built before World War I (the last one operated until about 1926) one of which sawed black spruce for airplane timbers used in the war. The spruce was cut on the Goulding land, which is now owned by Cliff Brooks.

A This story was told by Robert Carlow, Roy's son. He said, "You know Father was a little careless of the safety of us kids in the dam – the last one he had on Eastern Stream. The old man sawed long lumber and shingles. The only way he could think of to stop the water was with shingle hair, which he loaded into an old hayrack pulled by oxen. He headed the oxen into the pond and then stopped them. He said, 'Bob, I can't swim a stroke, you'd better take them across and when you get opposite the break, pull the pin on the pole and she'll float to the break. You grab one of the oxen's tails and he will haul you to shore. Well, I couldn't swim much myself but I started them across – one of the oxen tried to climb up on the other one and they damn near drowned themselves, and me too, but they finally started swimming and I pulled the pin. The rack floated up against the break in the dam and sealed it tight.'"

Carlow later built a dam and a mill on a small stream on the home place, which is now owned by Ernest Johnson. This one was closed about 1942 or '43. Later he built one on the Sherman Road that was powered by 3 tractor units. This mill didn't run very long.

H. Burpee operated a lath mill at Mill Cove near the old shipyard and brickyard locations close to the land that Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Johnson own. This was closed around 1920.

Oscar Johnson owned and operated a long lumber mill on his home place from about 1920-1943. This was powered by a tractor.

Harry Teed had a small mill on his property that sawed short lumber, boards and timbers and was gasoline powered. This property is now owned by Walter Brown.

Robert Carlow set up and operated a shingle mill for several years on Woodbine Hill above Mill Cove.

Robert Johnson now owns and operates a long lumber mill which he set up in 1970 on Route 1.

Gary Diffin, who lives on the former Arthur Daggett place, owns and operates a portable mill.

Al Johnson had a long lumber mill at Mill Cove. It was water powered. Dates unknown.

Waltman's Mill was located at the old Seeley Farm near the Charlotte town line and was gasoline powered. Dates unknown. Land now owned by Reid Johnson.

Schools

At one time there were six schools in town; one at Mill Cove, one near Boydens Lake; another was erected on a half-acre lot belonging to the town, across from the Schoolhouse Lane which leads to Trimble Mountain where there were ~~33~~ students, most of them coming from the settlement on Trimble Mountain; the schoolhouse across from the ferry landing is still standing and is owned by Miss Ring and Mrs. Howe; the brick school was later the Hume home which is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jarrold Garriott; the sixth was the West District school, which was moved from Fred Diffin's field to become the Fisher Store, which is now owned by Grady Dwelley.

Today there is one school in use that was built in 1959 and dedicated in 1960. There are three classrooms, a kitchen, office, utility room and rest rooms. It serves children from the kindergarten through the eighth grade. It is located on a ten-acre lot on a hill above Mill Cove donated by the late Thomas Bridges.

Hannibal Hamlin, who was Vice-President under Abraham Lincoln, taught school in Robbinston in 1832-1833. (From the Hayden Diaries).

*Note: The Robbinston Ridge School was accidentally omitted from this report. It was located just above Glen Johnson's house, on the right, above the Steam Mill Road, where the Wrens live now. It is interesting to note that there was a population of between 1400 and 1500 people in Robbinston at that time.

Shipyards and Brickyards

The following descriptions may be applied to the vessels built in Robbinston. There were at least five shipyards in town and probably more. The first ship was built by Thomas Vose, 1800.

Barque -- a sailing vessel

Brig -- a two-masted --square rigged vessel

Schooner -- a ship with two more more masts, rigged fore and aft

Sloop -- one-masted vessel, rigged fore and aft, with a mainsail and a jib

1853 seems to have been one of the most productive years for shipbuilding in town. Therefore, we give you the following list - all built in Robbinston.

Ship – Red Gauntlet – 1038.25 tonnage
Ship – Virginia – 959.43 tonnage
Ship – Walter Coulton – 863.68 tonnage
Ship – Oswingo – 854.60 tonnage
Ship – Star of Empire – 628.13 tonnage
Ship – Rolling Wave – 506.40 tonnage

Barque – G.W.Hall – 355.61 tonnage
Barque – Spencer Kirby – 330.43 tonnage
Barque – Wavelet – 299.30 tonnage

Brig – G.Spear – 163.9 tonnage
Brig – J.R.Nevins – 162.8 tonnage
Schooner – Knight (?)
One other schooner (?)

From the Eastport Sentinel February 8, 1854

Some of the names associated with the shipbuilding trade were: Brewer, Balkam, Vose, Hayden and Carter, Hunt, Tarbox, Bugbee, Johnson, Cox, and Briggs.

Shipyards were located at Mill Cove, Cox Point, one near the Holmes Factory site, another at Armstrong Point (now a State park and boat landing), and the Brewer yard, property now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Didisheim.

The following account is taken from the Lewiston Journal, February 22, 1911, about Robbinston's 100th anniversary, "John Brewer was a prominent and influential citizen who took great interest in the affairs of the town, and held offices of trust and responsibility. He was appointed postmaster during General George Washington's administration, which office he held for 25 years, and was succeeded by General John Balkam. He was brigadier – general of the militia of Maine and 'went on horseback in uniform with attendants to inspect troops at Ellsworth and Castine'."

The Brewer shipyards were built in the late 1700's and produced more than one hundred ships. Brewer also owned, or had interest in, shipyards on the St. Andrews side of the St. Croix River.

General Brewer's son, John, built what is now known as the Armstrong House. He continued the activities of shipbuilding at the Brewer yards and is said to have sailed in the Brewer ships around the world, including the Orient.

The other shipyards in town produced many fine ships but the history and

ownership of these yards is very vague. The Eastport Sentinel probably had the most accurate records.

Brickyards were located at: Mill Cove, Liberty Point, Sleepy Hollow, on property now owned by John Miner, and at Lamb's Cove, now owned by Robert Johnson. It is said that the Robbinston clay for bricks was as good as any clay found on the East Coast. There was a tannery in town owned by Cyrus Balkam who bought hides and made many items including boots owned by lumbermen.

Smuggling has always been a way of life along the St. Croix – clothing, hardware, food stuffs, liquor, etc., and now drugs.

During the war years around 1812 shipbuilding practically came to a standstill but after the war it came back into full production. The last large vessel to be built here was owned by Mr. Carter of Pembroke and was built at the Holmes Factory site. It burned before launching.

After the Civil War sardine factories became the main industry. Sardine canning in the St. Croix Valley began to taper off during the depression years of the 1930's. The early wages in the factories were \$8 to \$18 per week. Names associated with the industry were Holmes, Wentworth, Hunt, and the Seacoast Canning Co.

Area of the Pines

Colonel Robbins was Speaker of the House in Massachusetts Legislature and Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts. On October 21, 1786 he was granted 17,860 acres and named it Robbinstown. In 1798 he was appointed head of a committee to build the State House in Boston.

Although the various written accounts do not all agree it seems that there was an area where twenty-six large pines were cut on the land easterly of West Maguerrewoc Lake (now called Howard Lake) and near the Calais town line, transported by ox team to the Vose Shipyard at Cox's Point.

A personal recollection of John Brooks says, "More than fifty years ago I was in the 'area of the pines' so indicated on the town map and saw many of the old stumps which were about six feet in diameter. I laid down on several of them and neither my feet nor my head hung over. I walked the old trail over which the trees were hauled which came by the south side of Goulding Lake and out to the Sherman Road".

These pines were transported by ship to Boston where they were used to support the balconies of the Massachusetts State House, twelve on the front and fourteen on the back. These were presented to the state by Colonel Robbins. Several years later another pine was presented to Massachusetts by the estate of Colonel Robbins (who died December 29, 1829) from which the pine cone on top of the state house was carved. That is still there but the columns which stood for about 150 years were replaced with iron capped with aluminum. The old columns were left on the lawn overnight and disappeared and no one in authority seemed to know where they went.

When the pine columns arrived in Boston they were 25' feet long and 30 inches in diameter. They were trimmed to their exact size by a man named Ephraim Thayer and another man, John Balch, bored a hole the entire length of each column so that air circulation would help to keep them from rotting.

Counterfeiters

Around 1803-1810 counterfeit silver coins were circulated in Robbinston, St. Andrews and surrounding towns, some of U. S., some of English and some of Spanish design. A surveyor, Samuel Jones, was running lines for Mr. Robbins around the lake, now called Moneymaker, and discovered three men who were doing the counterfeiting. He informed on them and as a result, a sheriff's posse investigated.

A deputy named Tileston Downes was shot and killed by Ebenezer Ball who later was caught in Castine and hanged. It is believed by some residents here that another man named John Hall was caught and received a jail sentence, while the third man was reported to have escaped in a row boat he stole from the cove at Brooks Bluff and to have gone to Nova Scotia. This has never been substantiated.

Cemeteries and Burial Sites

Town cemeteries (Plot maps are on the following 5 pages)

Brewer Cemetery - given to the town by General Brewer's family. It is located on the south side of the #3 road on the crest of Picnic Hill – bounded on the west by Hume – south by Moholland and east by Majersky. A Mr. Caler was the first person buried in the Brewer Cemetery and the grave was dug by Archie Johnson, father of Malcolm Johnson.

Ridge Cemetery – south of Ridge Road – bounded on the west by Burke, south by Burke and east by Stanhope and Johnson.

Private Cemeteries

Boyden's – has 11 stones. East of the Lake road about 200 feet. The entrance is about 700 feet in a southerly direction from the intersection of the Ridge Road. One family.

Daggett Cemetery – a private cemetery located on the Ridge Road near Boyden Lake – several hundred feet north of the Valeria Lincoln house. It is said that some of the Seeley family tied up their cows to the stones and as a result there aren't many stones that are upright.

Bohannon Place – private – owned by Johnson – on a knoll about 400 feet north

of the Ridge Road near Lewis Johnson line. Stones mostly covered. Names Laslie and Seeley.

Bush Cemetery – near the Perry line – near the sharp bend in Mill Stream – no markers.

Apt Place – a private cemetery north of the unused portion of #3 road, approximately ¼ mile from the outlet of Western Lake – 3 or more stones – Stanton and Apt – stones are covered now.

Sharman - -has seven or more stones - about 500 feet south of Sherman Hill on land owned by Allen Bearman – seven stones – around 1900 the family name to Sherman – one stone in the name of Sherman.

Stover – about 300 feet north of Ridge Road -- behind William Jenkins home near the gulch of Western Stream – two or more stones.

Gerry – one grave of a baby in field back of the Gerry homestead now owned by Becketts.

Brackett – one grave on land now owned by Lester Morrell and near the line of Bailey.

Job Johnson – a large lot, 50' x 60', with seven or more stones – some of gray slate typical of Boston, some of white marble – situated on the side of the hill behind the old brick house now owned by Andrew Olsson – some of the markers were only initialed – E.D., J.N., A.N.H., and C. H. Risble.

School House Lane site – ½ acre retained by the town for school and cemetery – east of U. S. # 1 and directly across the road from the house owned by Marshall Lucas. Browns, Greenlaws and others buried there. Stones covered.

Old Lamb Place – near bank of river below Robert Johnson's mill. Stones no longer visible.

Smith family – more than six graves on land, formerly of Smith, now of Szatkowski – about 600' from Highway #1 near Maxwell's line on a spruce knoll. Nice family monument. One Veteran's grave, but no marker.

Kerr – on the old Ross place now owned by Horace Graham. John and Margaret Kerr and Ellspy and George Kerr.

Trimble Mountain – probably burial ground for Nash, Trimble, Hayman, Campbell and others. No stones visible. Several people remember seeing stones but cannot agree on location. Probably location near fork of roads on the south slope of this mountain.

Lowe Cemetery – about 30' x 35' – at least 10 graves- some stones still standing. It is approximately 900 feet east of U. S. Highway #1 – about 60 feet south of a small brook on the property now owned by Henry Roxbee.

Ira Boyden Cemetery – on the north side of the Lake Road, about 60 paces west of the Mill Stream Bridge. There are at least 36 graves and 22 stones are still upright.

MacShay Cemetery - a family cemetery which is about 1 1/2 miles north of the old Seeley place and near the Charlotte town line. It is east of the Suddy Place on Suddy's Lake in Charlotte. There are no stones showing.

It is still legal to bury in family plots but there are restrictions as to distances to wells, etc. There is also a state statute which requires a legal document, registered at the Registry of Deeds, if a plot is to remain a family burial ground, in case of property transfer.

There are private cemeteries mentioned in the Hayden Diaries (which are in the Calais Library) which cannot be found. Names mentioned were Vose and Harvell. No doubt there were other private burial grounds that have no records.

Quarry

Mr. Percy Bryne came from Scotland to Canada and then to Robbinston. In 1810 he built the Bryne home and in 1811 he built the Harvell home. According to Ed Lewis who lives in the Bryne property there is a location at the edge of the bluff near the river where someone started a stone quarry.

Then and Now

The population of Robbinston reached nearly 1400 between 1850 and 1900 with six schools in the town.

The 1970 census listed 396 – a low - but in 1980 the population increased to 446 (unofficially).

In 1875 tax records list the property of George Johnson – 40 acre Homestead and lot, 41 acre #7 Reed lot – tax \$4.46.

1893 – Town Valuation - \$105,669. Raised by taxation \$144 plus \$750 for schools.

1979 – Town Valuation - \$6,089,950. Taxes raised \$26,832.95 municipal appropriation- Raised for schools - \$63,996.84.

High school students are tuitioned to Calais School System at a cost of over \$1400 each.

Fire Department

In 1940 \$25 was allotted at the regular town meeting to purchase fire fighting equipment which consisted of shovels, grub hoes, etc. At the 1941 meeting the voters approved an act authorizing the selectmen to organize a Volunteer Fire Department to be a unit of public service, specifications and qualifications to be established according to the Statutes of the State of Maine.

Land for the Fire Hall was donated by Mrs. Bessie Lincoln on June 3, 1947, Register of Deeds in Machias Book 479, page 122.

The Fire Hall was built by the members and others in 1949 and 1950. Part of the chief's report in the town report follows: "I wish to express my thanks to the citizens and the Volunteer Firemen for donations of logs and rocks and trucks to do the hauling and labor on the Fire Hall". Signed: Herman Trimble, Chief.

Herman Trimble remained Chief until 1975. Stanley Morrell was Chief until December 6, 1976, when Marshall Hennequin became Chief.

From a meager beginning with very little equipment and a small truck with two 55 gallon drums for water, they now have a good building, many pieces of life saving equipment, including 1 oxygen unit, 2 breathing units with spare tanks, and men to operate the same, 3 – 500 watt floodlights, one trauma kit for first aid, 2 – 500 gallons per minute portable pumps, 1 – 3000 watt generator, a ventilating fan, 1100' of 1 ½" hose, 1600' of 2 ½" hose, with Maximum high pressure pump and equipment and 14 trained men as regulars. It is rated Class 9E by the New England Regional Office of Insurance Services Offices – a nationwide evaluation group. This has resulted in a lowering of insurance rates to commercial and residential properties.

Grange

About 1906 a Grange was formed reaching a membership of 150 with Maurice A. Gates as Worth Master. Also formed was The Order of Red Men with 90 members and the Order of Forresters with 78 and all of these organizations owned their own halls.

The only one left is the Grange, which built a new hall and dedicated it May 12, 1952, with John Brooks as Master. The present membership is about 45 and Nancy Austin is Master.

In 1958 the Grange appointed a committee of John Brooks, George Freeman, and Lewis Johnson to find a lot on Boyden's Lake where a public boat landing and picnic

area could be built. In 1959 the lot had been found and the town paid for the lot and appointed the same committee as a town recreation committee to build the project.

With the help of the local people, truck owners, business men and men from Pembroke, the landing was finished in October, 1959, and has been used summer and winter ever since.

This was the first public landing to be built in Washington County. Later Robbinston built landings on Western and Goulding Lakes and this started a trend in the county. Today the county has at least 40 – some of which are on the salt water – including Armstrong's Point in Robbinston, built jointly with the State Parks and Recreation Department, which financed the greater part of the cost. It was completed and hot-topped in 1974.

The beauty of the St. Croix Valley attracts many visitors, and although the fish in the bay are not as abundant as when the town was first settled, the number of sports types of boats are increasing each year.

Churches

The Methodist Society had been formed by the date of the town's incorporation and Reverend Duncan McColl, of St. Stephen, was preaching whenever possible in the St., Croix Valley from 1786 – 1811. On October 4, 1836, the trustees of the South Robbinston parish purchased from Benjamin Pettegrove the land on the Ridge where the present church stands. One record places the date of the building of the church at around 1865 and another at 1885.

The Episcopalians first held services in the Mansion House. The Grace Episcopal Church was built in 1882 by Reverend Peter Steenstra and many dedicated men from Robbinston, Red Beach, and Perry. The first service was held the first Sunday in October of 1882. The land was bought for \$75 and a dozen or so men got together \$500 to start the building and acquired a mortgage for the balance. The chapel has been closed for many years but is kept in good repair by Robert Brackett. The Reverend Fred Steenstra died in 1935 and since that time there have been only occasional services by a visiting rector.

In 1811, a Congregational Church was formed with a membership of six. A small church was built across from the Cox property. Later a church was built on the property formerly owned by John N.M. Brewer and after about seventy years of service it burned and was rebuilt in 1910. Many people young and old from as far away as Calais donated money and time to help rebuild the old church. \$3000 was donated by the children of a former pastor, Reverend D. Sewell, thus the church received the name Sewell Memorial Church. Services were held until September 3, 1968. The last minister was the Reverend Roland Chaffey. The church has been kept in good repair with the latest work being the repair of the stained glass window by Frank Myers. The church is now being rented to the Reorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints.

On the shore near the Thomas Cleland property stood a beautiful little Catholic Chapel which was active for many years. It was torn down around 1935.

A Historical Sketch of the Memorial Site

Address delivered on the occasion of the dedication of World War I and II Memorial at Robbinston, Maine, Sunday, July 14, 1946.

By Ernest C. Brown
Master, Local Grange, No. 443
P. of H.

We have met on this occasion to dedicate a monument in memory of the veterans of World Wars I and II. It is fitting and proper that this tablet be erected on this most historic spot in this town of Robbinston. It was on this very spot that the militia was trained under Governor Strong and General Dearborn to resist the British raids in 1812. It was later discovered that the British were interested only in taking the islands of Passamaquoddy Bay. Eastport being an island was captured; but Robbinston, being on the mainland, was not molested. However, the British cruiser "Spartan" was sent up to Robbinston and here captured an American vessel with a prize cargo valued at \$15,000. Very soon after this preparations for resistance were begun. Barracks were erected back of the church that stood here, fortifications were built, and the field was used as a training ground for soldiers from this and other sections of the state. On July 11, 1814 a detachment of British soldiers came to Robbinston from Eastport.- then known as Fort Sullivan - and arranged with the American officer in charge there to evacuate Robbinston. Great was the rejoicing when a truce was agreed upon and war was avoided after nearly two years of preparation. Had it not been for this truce signed in 1814 between the British and the Americans, Robbinston would have had a place in history as the scene of a battle. "War was averted by a hair's breadth" were the words of General Brewer.

This town came into being, like so many others in Maine, through land grants. After the Revolutionary period the United States was bankrupt and unable to pay all of the soldiers for the time served in the army from 1775 to 1781. Accordingly land grants were used to pay off many of the officers. This town was given to Colonel Robbins of Milton, Massachusetts. It was later known as Township No. 4. His deed reads - 'One dollar and other valuable considerations for services rendered during the Revolutionary period'. He purchased the town in 1786 and it was incorporated in 1811 under the laws of the State of Massachusetts. There is no record of how long Colonel Robbins stayed here but it is known that he stayed just long enough to dispose of his holdings. Then he went back to Massachusetts. For a short period the town was called Robbinstown, but before its incorporation, it was changed to Robbinston. Colonel Robbins was not a

benefactor in any sense of the word, but – knowingly or unknowingly – he left us a heritage in that he sold his holdings to Americans of Anglo – Saxon descent. Many of them were builders, traders, farmers, and lumbermen. All were workers. Shipbuilding and brick - making flourished for many years. There are two brick houses still standing in the town that were made with bricks manufactured in Robbinston well over 100 years ago.

It was in the latter part of the Eighteenth century that a certain legislator named Cabot arose in Massachusetts Assembly and asked to be heard. His request being granted, he proceeded to talk for over two hours. He requested – yes, almost demanded – that the northeastern section of Massachusetts be separated from the western section; that it be divided from the populous and industrial part and made into a separate state. In describing the northeastern section of the state – which is now Maine – he said (among other things) “It is a vast wilderness, a primitive forest. It is larger than all the other New England States combined. There is much wasteland. It is filled with lakes and rivers, ponds and bogs, hills and mountains and is too cold for much vegetation. It is frozen over from early fall until late spring; and, worst of all, it is inhabited only by wild Indians”. His arguments prevailed years later and the northeastern section of Massachusetts became Maine in 1820 with the “wild Indians” thrown in, if there ever were any. Other legislators had different ideas as to why this section should become a separate state, and history records that it was to offset the slave state of Missouri. Today the northeastern section of Massachusetts – once listed as a vast wilderness of little consequence – has become the vacation state of the nation.

Someone has said that anything worth having is worth fighting for. That must be true when it comes to our form of government – Democracy – because we have been fighting for it since the Mayflower first set sail for these shores. History records that we fought for it under the first president of these United States, George Washington, and we have been fighting for it ever since. We fought a Civil War to protect and maintain Democracy in the Lincoln Administration. History relates that we wanted to show the rest of the world that we practice what we preach. Then later it was the Spanish American War, and we left our shores to uphold our form of government – Democracy. In 1917 we entered World War I and we were told – and history records – that we were fighting “to make the world safe for Democracy”. We sent our boys and girls three thousand miles across the Atlantic Ocean to protect our form of government. Twenty years later World War II broke out and we not only sent our boys and girls three thousand miles across the Atlantic but we sent them seven thousand miles across the Pacific to protect, maintain, and preserve our form of government – Democracy.

“Life is the mirror of slave and king
‘Tis just what we are and do;
Then give to others the best you have,
And the best will come back to you.”

Friends, I believe these boys and girls whose names appear on this Memorial Tablet gave the best they had; and today we honor them. Their names are indelibly engraved on this bronze tablet and will be there years and years after we who have erected it have crumbled to dust.

And, now I have the honor to present it to the Town of Robbinston on behalf of the Grange.

Ernest C. Brown

The Memorial Site was a joint effort of the Grange and the members of the local churches.

Ernest Brown was Representative to the Legislature for six years, and owned and operated Brooks Bluff Cottages.

Our People

Most small towns in Maine have their fair share of civic – minded people who feel obligated to devoting a part of their lives to their community.

From the time of incorporation the names of Brewer, Balkam, Vose, Cox, Gates, Poore, Hume, and many others appear in the records and the last few decades have found the tradition of dedication has been carried on by such people as: Herman Trimble, who was instrumental in forming the fire department and who served as chief for more than 30 years; Marcellus MacDonald, served on the school committee for more than 30 years and the fire department since its beginning and is still serving; Clarence Moholland, Sr. served on the fire department for many years and on various town office positions for 35 years, 17 of which he served as chairman of the board of selectmen; and there are others who have served 20 – 30 years on the fire department; and certainly the churches never could have operated without the dedication of many women who gave of their time and effort.

Each and every person who has lived in the town has contributed in his own way, or her own way, to the history of the town, but space does not permit the listing of them all.

The Great Outdoors

Our beautiful scenery cannot be surpassed. Our lakes contain various species of fish; trout, small mouth bass, pickerel and salmon. The forests are still productive for the trappers, hunters, and bird – watchers.

Forest products are still important to the economy of the area and as to the future – who can predict?