

The University of Maine DigitalCommons@UMaine

Maine Town Documents

Maine Government Documents

2006

History and Archaeology

Cushing (Me.)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/towndocs>

Repository Citation

Cushing (Me.), "History and Archaeology" (2006). *Maine Town Documents*. 290.
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/towndocs/290>

This History is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine Town Documents by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

[Goals and Recommendations on page 6]

SUMMARY

Native Americans have occupied the Cushing Peninsula for thousands of years. In 1635 the first Europeans settled along the coast and began felling trees, fishing, farming, and fur trading. Early attempts at “industry” in Cushing did not take root -- an ice business, gristmills at Beaver Dam Brook, a small clam cannery. As a result, the Town has remained basically rural and residential. At one time the Town had three churches and several small stores with their own post offices. Fales General Store has been the unofficial center for seven generations.

Distant from other areas of trade, earlier citizens relied on themselves and their neighbors. Farming under less than ideal conditions, they tended to vote against costly “growth or improvements.” An independent and fiscally conservative attitude persists to this day.

Many current residents trace their families back to Cushing’s early days, and feel strong ties to Cushing’s history.

Resources that may qualify for protection include prehistoric sites, historic sites, early buildings, and ancient cemeteries.

State and Federal Laws support historic preservation. The Cushing Historical Society, founded in 1969, has been an active resource for preservation. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) is available to assist owners with the protection of Town heritage and the identification of historic features at sites proposed for development.

HISTORY

Key historical events of the past 400 years are briefly described here. Sources cited at the end of this section provide detailed information on Cushing’s history. The timeline includes census population for some years as reference. See the Population section for complete statistics.

- 1605 King inscription on stone -- during Weymouth expedition (Davis Cove).
- 1635 First settlers: 2 families listed as living on St. Georges River. Richard Foxwell, a trader, located on west side at Sequid Point (Pleasant Point). May be considered first Cushing farm, probably located at Burying Point on the Crocker property. Excavation under the direction of Dr. Alerick Falkner in 1997 and 1998 on the Crocker property revealed a foundation and recovered many artifacts regarded as confirming a date of approx. 1635.
- 1730+ Samuel Waldo assumed control of a cartel of merchants who claimed a million acres including the St. Georges valley. Population 96.
- 1738 Residents petitioned Waldo for protection from Indian attack.
- 1740 Richard Falley, great grandfather of Grover Cleveland, was born in Cushing. He was taken prisoner by Indians during French & Indian wars, adopted by the Chief, and taken to Montreal. He later fought at Bunker Hill. Falley home cellar hole is still visible on present day Kalloch property, North Cushing.

- 1740 Captain Thomas Henderson commanded blockhouse and garrison at Fort Lucy. (vicinity of Theodore, Spear, and Crocker properties).
- 1741 Benjamin Burton and family (arrived from Wales in 1736) settled in "the lower town."
- 1741 Waldo had Cushing area and two other areas surveyed into settlers' lots.
- 1742 Settlers on both sides of river asked permission to become an incorporated township.
- 1745 Benjamin Burton commanded a blockhouse in Thomaston, up-river from the bridge.
- 1750 Petition submitted to Massachusetts Lt. Governor by Capt. Burton and others requesting further protection from the Indians.
- 1752 Settlers and Indians signed treaty at the Thomaston fort.
- 1752 Samuel Waldo traveled through Scotland and Ireland recruiting settlers.
- 1758 Thomas Carney, who served at Burton's Blockhouse, and his wife Nellie lived near the shore on the former Rev. Frank Wheelock's property. A cellar hole, still visible, is documented as having been theirs.
- 1759 Samuel Waldo died. Penobscot Indians defeated. Forts needed less manpower. People lived along the shore, as the river was the main means of travel. Trails were blazed through the woods. First homes were log cabins on the shore. As land was cleared, people moved further from the shore. Eventually houses were stick-built.
- 176- Capt. Thomas Henderson's widow, Mary, has license to sell liquor, probably at a tavern at the former Fort Lucy (presumed to be on Pleasant Point).
- 1771 100 acres (at Davis Point) purchased from Waldo's heirs by Richard Adams.
- 1775 First meeting of the Committee of Safety and Correspondence held at the home of Micah Packard (now owned by Barry and Dianne Smith).
- 1775 Maine sent its first detachment of men to Boston to battle for independence on April 21. The first naval battle fought by the United States occurred at Machias.
- 1776 Falmouth (now Portland) was shelled and burned by British navy.
- 1776 Eleazer Gay bought acreage on Burton's Island (now Gay's Island).
- 1789 Capt. Samuel Hathorn built Hathorn-Olson house, the first stick-framed house on Hathorn's Point.
- 1789 Cushing Incorporated – included all of St. George peninsula. The first road was approved from Thomaston to Mosqeeter Harbor. Those unable to support themselves were "warned out of town." First Town meeting held. Each poll tax payer was required to work three days on the Town road. Estates paid one day's labor for every 75 pounds evaluation. Census figures showed population of 942. Probably the Town was divided into four districts, two on each side of River – perhaps including parts of today's Warren, Waldoboro and Thomaston.
- 1792 The Town voted to keep a ferry at Joseph Robinson's (St. George side, probably at the "Narrows," opposite present-day property of Gerald Smith, Saltwater Farm Lane).

- 1800 Support of public school refused -- until required by a Massachusetts grand jury.
- 1807 Voted to build a Meeting House.
- 1816 Maine seceded from Massachusetts.
- 1820 Population 600. Maine was admitted to the Union.
- 1843 "Back Road" (present Route 97) was approved after ten contentious years.
- 1848 The District Court forced building a bridge to Friendship on Salt Pond Road. Cushing had successfully avoided this for 28 years, not wanting to spend \$300. As a result of stalling, the cost rose to \$350.
- 1850 Population 807. The peak population for the next 130 years. "Back Lots" were being sold and occupied. During the mid to late 1800's many roads were built.
- 1851 "Back Road" (now route 97) was finally built.
- 1870 Population 704. During the late 1800's the spruce budworm wiped out the forests and with it a source of income.
- 1900 Population 604. Canneries began closing.
- 1930 Population 350. Great Depression times -- the lowest population since 1850.
- 1980 Population 795. First subdivision or development was begun at Pine Ridge.
- 1985 Population 820. "Subdivision" on "Back Road" (Rte 97) was begun.
- 1990+ Population 988. Developments like Newfoundland Drive, Ryan's Lane, Woody Lane, and Raccoon Road began to occur.
- 2000 Population 1322. Plans for Developments at Far Meadow, Hornbarn Hill, and Gaunt Neck were announced.
- 2005 Population 1503-1718 (estimated). Several subdivisions were on the horizon.

(Information from Ruth Aiken's *Records of the Lower St. Georges and Cushing, Maine, 1605-1897* & Bradley Beckett's *Settlers and Soldiers of Cushing Maine before 1760, and Their Descendants Today*. C. Knowles, 5/5/96. Other research by J. Carr.)

Library Sources:

- 1) *A Brief History of Cushing Maine*, Cushing Historical Society pamphlet, by Chris Schmidt, 1997
- 2) *The Cultural Landscape of Cushing, 1789 – 1997*, Bradley Beckett, 1997. Quotidian Publishers, 1998.
- 3) *Annals of Warren*, Eaton, Cyrus, Masters and Livermore, 1887
- 4) *Soldiers and Sailors of the Plantation of Lower St. Georges, Maine in the Revolution*, Frank Burton Miller, 1931, Rockland, Maine.
- 5) *Settlers and Soldiers of Cushing Maine Before 1760 and Their Descendants Today*, Bradley A. Beckett, Courier-Gazette, 1986
- 6) *Notes on the Early Settlers of Cushing, Friendship and St. George on the Lower St. Georges River*, Elizabeth Freeman Reed, Boothbay Harbor Historical Society

PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) has identified 48 prehistoric archaeological sites in Cushing. Most are “shell middens,” or garbage mounds, located along the shoreline of tidal waters.

Archaeologists have surveyed about half the shoreline and found that 30 sites may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. MHPC may ask owners of significant sites for permission to nominate them to the Register and to donate preservation easements if they so desire. National Register listing extends protection of Federal legislation against actions by Federal agencies. The combination of National Register listing, preservation easements, and posting against disturbance extends the protection of State Antiquities Legislation to archeological sites.

One of the purposes of Shoreland Zoning is “to protect archaeological and historic resources.”

MHPC recommends further systematic professional surveying along the shore of Fresh Pond and the St. George River from Broad Cove northward, and increasing work with local land trusts and landowners to provide physical and legal protection for the sites.

HISTORIC ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

MHPC has identified 27 historic archaeological sites

1. Thomas King inscription, English Petroglyph, 17th Century
2. Fort Lucia, English Fort, 18th Century
3. Richard Foxwell Trading House, English/French Trading Post, 17th Century
4. Benjamin Burton Garrison, English Garrison House, 18th-19th Centuries
5. Rev. Robert Rutherford House, Anglo-American Domestic, 18th Century
6. Farmstead, American Farmstead, Unknown Century
7. “Indian Chimney,” American Kiln, 19th Century
8. Cushing Inscription, European Petroglyph, Unknown Century
9. Davis “Quartz” Mine, American Mine, 19th Century
10. “Quartz” Mine, American Mine, 19th Century
11. “The True Republican,” American Wreck, 19th Century
12. A. Alan House, American Domestic, 19th Century
13. Burying Ground Point, Anglo-American Cemetery, 18th-19th Century
14. Molloy Foundation, American Unidentified Structure, 18th-19th Century
15. Lohr Cellar, Unidentified Domestic, 18th-19th Century
16. Saquid Point, Native American Camp, Pre-Colonial, 19th-20th Century
17. Hyler-Jameson Cemetery, American Cemetery, 19th Century
18. Jeffrey Theodore “Cottage,” American Domestic Summer Hse. 19th-20th Century
19. “Secret Tunnel,” Unidentified, Unidentified Structure, Unknown Century
20. McCobb’s Narrows Breastworks, American Battery, 18th-19th Century
21. Gowing Lot Cellar, American Domestic, 18th-19th Century
22. Olson House Cemetery, American Cemetery, 19th-20th Century
22. Old Settler’s Burying Ground, American Cemetery/Church Lot, 18th-19th Century
23. Eaton’s Cellar, European Cellar, 17th-18th Century
24. Pleasant Point Midden, European/Aboriginal Midden, Pre-Colonial, 17th Century
25. William Young Homestead, 18th –19th Century
26. Beckett’s Mill, 19th Century

MHPC recommends further surveying of sites relating to the earliest Euro-American settlement along the Meduncook River and later inland sites.

HISTORIC PLACES AND BUILDINGS

Three historic places are listed on the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP)

1. Burton, Benjamin, Garrison Site; Period of Significance: 1750-1799; Historic Function: Defense, Domestic;
2. King, Thomas, Inscription; Period of Significance: 1600-1649; Historic Function: Marker; Period of Significance: 1600-1649;
3. Olson House; Period of Significance: 1925-1949 and 1950-1974, Historic Person: Andrew Wyeth, and family; Historic Function: Domestic.

MHPC also recommends further surveying of historic above-ground resources in order to identify properties that may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The most likely and visible are:

1. South Cushing Baptist Church, circa 1854
2. A.S. Fales General Store, 1890
3. Acorn Grange #418, 1910
4. Broad Cove Community Church, 1855
5. Town Meeting House

Union Church, on River Road in “North” Cushing, was converted to a private home. Historic buildings are not currently protected by existing land use regulations.

(Additional information from *Beside the St. Georges*, Luthera Burton Dawson, 2004. Church sketch on page 142.)

Rehabilitation Grants; Tax Incentives

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program provides tax credits in return for private investment to rehabilitate certified historic structures.

CEMETERIES AND BURIAL PLOTS

Cemeteries are a cultural resource providing insight into the history of our community. There are 22 known cemeteries and burial sites in Cushing. Pleasant View Cemetery, owned by the Town, currently has lots available. The Norton Cemetery, operated by a private association, is full. The rest are Ancient Cemeteries, under the care of the Town Cemetery Board. In 2001, it also became responsible for the operation of the Pleasant View Cemetery.

Brasier Plot	Burton Cemetery	Burying Point	Collamore Grave
Curtis Plot	Davis Cemetery	Freeman Grave	Hathorn Cemetery
Hylers Cove	Hylers/Jamison	Kelleran Yard	More Plot
Norton	Old John Robinson	Old Meetinghouse	Orff Cemetery
Pleasant View	Robinson Yard	Seavy/Kerby	Stone Family Plot
	Teel Plot	Trefethern Grave	

For an index of Cushing cemeteries with their locations and the burials in them, see <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/me/knox/cushcem08.html>.

Survey

Eighty-three percent of survey responders found protecting all historic sites “very important” or “important.” Fifty-nine percent wanted to protect all historic sites by ordinance. The same percentage found protecting cemeteries “very important” or “important.”

GOAL

To preserve important historic and archaeological resources from destruction or development impacts that could threaten these resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

**Responsibility for implementing recommendations is shown below them.
“Short term” is within three years, “Long Term” within ten years.**

- o To identify all historical buildings and sites, initiate a thorough survey.
By Cushing Historical Society
Short term & ongoing

- o For permanent legal protection of important sites, make nominations to all appropriate agencies.
By Cushing Historical Society, property owners
Short term & ongoing

- o To assure appropriate review of important sites, make referral of applications to the Maine Historical Preservation Commission a standard procedure.
By Planning Board
Short term