

2010

## The Moses Greenleaf Primer

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THE  
MOSES GREENLEAF  
PRIMER

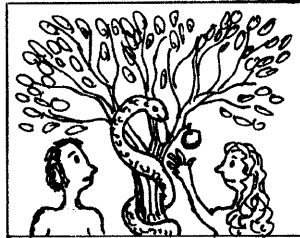


BY HOLLY HURD  
ILLUSTRATED BY LENA CHAMPLIN

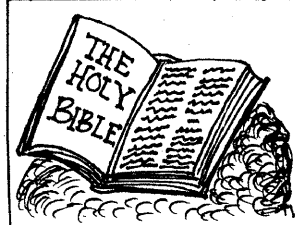


**RE-CREATION OF  
SAMPLE DRAWINGS  
FROM AN 18TH CENTURY  
PRIMER**

In Adam's Fall  
We sinned all.



Thy life to mend  
This **B**ook attend.

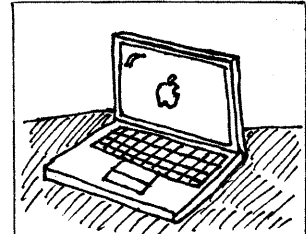


The **C**at doth play  
And after slay.

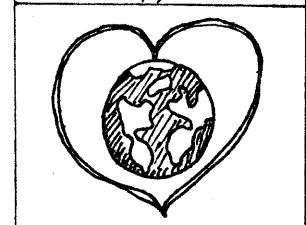


**WHAT A SIMILAR  
PRIMER MIGHT  
LOOK LIKE TODAY**

An **A**pple screen  
Is often seen.



CO<sub>2</sub> is **B**anned  
To save our land.



The new **C**ell phone  
Has a great ring tone.



ON THE LEFT IS A RE-CREATION of drawings from an eighteenth century “primer,” a kind of textbook that was used in early America to teach children their A B Cs and how to read. The first primer was published in America around 1690 and school children, probably even Maine’s first mapmaker Moses Greenleaf, learned from this type of book for more than 200 years. The subject matter at that time was based on stories from the Bible, a reflection of the values and attitudes that were central in a young person’s world in New England generations ago. On the right is an example of what a modern primer might look like today, in the twenty-first century. Because of the widespread use of primers, the term “primer” came to be used for any book that taught basic principles such as this book, *The Moses Greenleaf Primer*, a simple summary of the important things about Moses Greenleaf.

THE  
MOSES GREENLEAF  
PRIMER



BY HOLLY HURD  
ILLUSTRATED BY LENA CHAMPLIN

Osher Library Associates, Occasional Publication No. 4

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# Preface

THIS PRIMER IS AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE to the important events in the life and career of Moses Greenleaf, the first mapmaker of the state of Maine. It focuses on Greenleaf's activities that helped promote settlement of the interior regions of Maine in the early decades of the nineteenth century, a time when Maine land was readily available. The information and some of the illustrations are adapted from the book *Settling the Maine Wilderness: Moses Greenleaf, His Maps, and His Household of Faith, 1777-1834* by Walter Macdougall, published in 2006 by the Osher Library Associates. It is directed at school-age children in grades 4-8, but older and younger students will also find it useful as an overview of Greenleaf's contributions to Maine history. While it was written to supplement the educational materials for *Settling the Maine Wilderness: Moses Greenleaf, Maine's First Mapmaker, Lesson Plans for Middle School* (available online at [www.usm.maine.edu/maps](http://www.usm.maine.edu/maps)), the primer can also stand alone as a student-friendly biography of a notable Mainer.

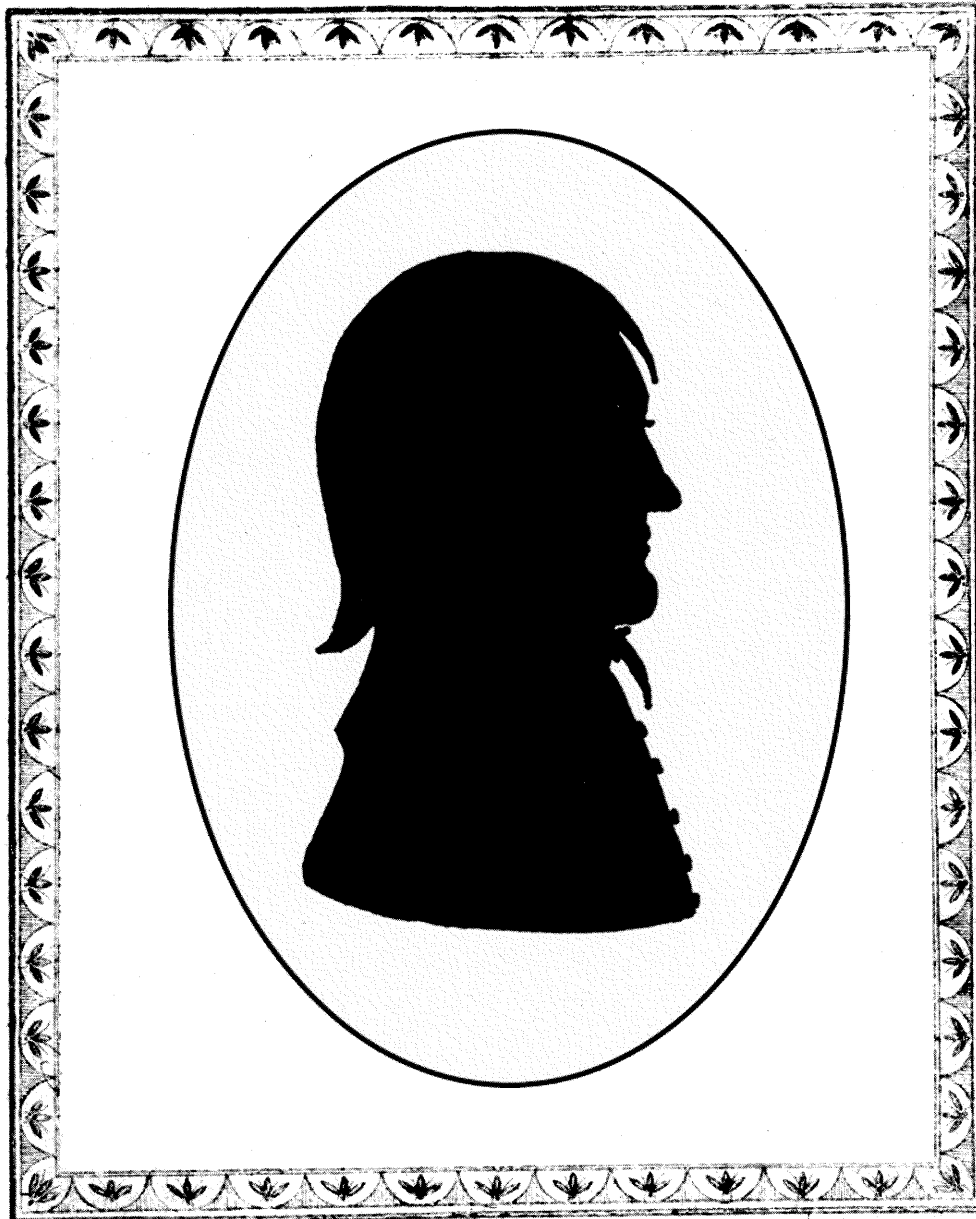
The name of this booklet refers to the historic primer, a kind of textbook that was among the earliest publications in Colonial America. These primers, which originated in fifteenth-century England, were illustrated alphabet books used to teach young children how to read and, at the same time, to impart moral principles. The term "primer" came to be used more broadly to refer to any book that describes basic concepts, hence this primer serves to convey the fundamental ideas about Moses Greenleaf to school children.

The illustrations were drawn by a 15-year-old student, my daughter, Lena Champlin. Lena first learned about Moses Greenleaf when she was in Middle School and was inspired to create these drawings to help other students learn about him as well. Thank you Lena for your lively artistic contributions.

# Acknowledgements

THE PUBLICATION OF THIS PRIMER was made possible by the Osher Library Associates and overseen by Yolanda Theunissen, Curator of the Osher Map Library and Director of the Smith Center for Cartographic Education. For helping to edit and field test the primer, we thank teacher Dixie Hayes and her 2008-2009 fifth-grade students at North Yarmouth Memorial School, and Professors Joel Eastman and Matthew Edney for careful reading of the text. For helpful suggestions and encouragement, special thanks to Walter Macdougall, the one who inspired us all to come to know and appreciate Moses Greenleaf, and planted the desire to share the mapmaker's life with others.

Holly Hurd  
Graduate Research Assistant for OML  
American & New England Studies  
University of Southern Maine



**MOSES GREENLEAF, JR.,** WAS BORN in Newburyport, Massachusetts on October 17, 1777, during the American Revolution. He was the oldest of five children, with three brothers and a sister. In school Moses did very well in writing, reading and especially in mathematics. He had a good memory and was interested in everything around him. He liked geography and statistics and grew up to be Maine's first cartographer or mapmaker. Moses also promoted early settlement of the inland regions of Maine, helping it to become an independent state in 1820. The only image that exists of Moses Greenleaf is a silhouette portrait that was probably made in the early 1800s.

## Greenleaf Genealogy



Edmund  
b. 1600

Stephen  
b. 1628

John  
b. 1662

Daniel  
b. 1690

Jonathan m. Mary Presbury  
b. 1723

Moses m. Lydia Parsons  
b. 1755

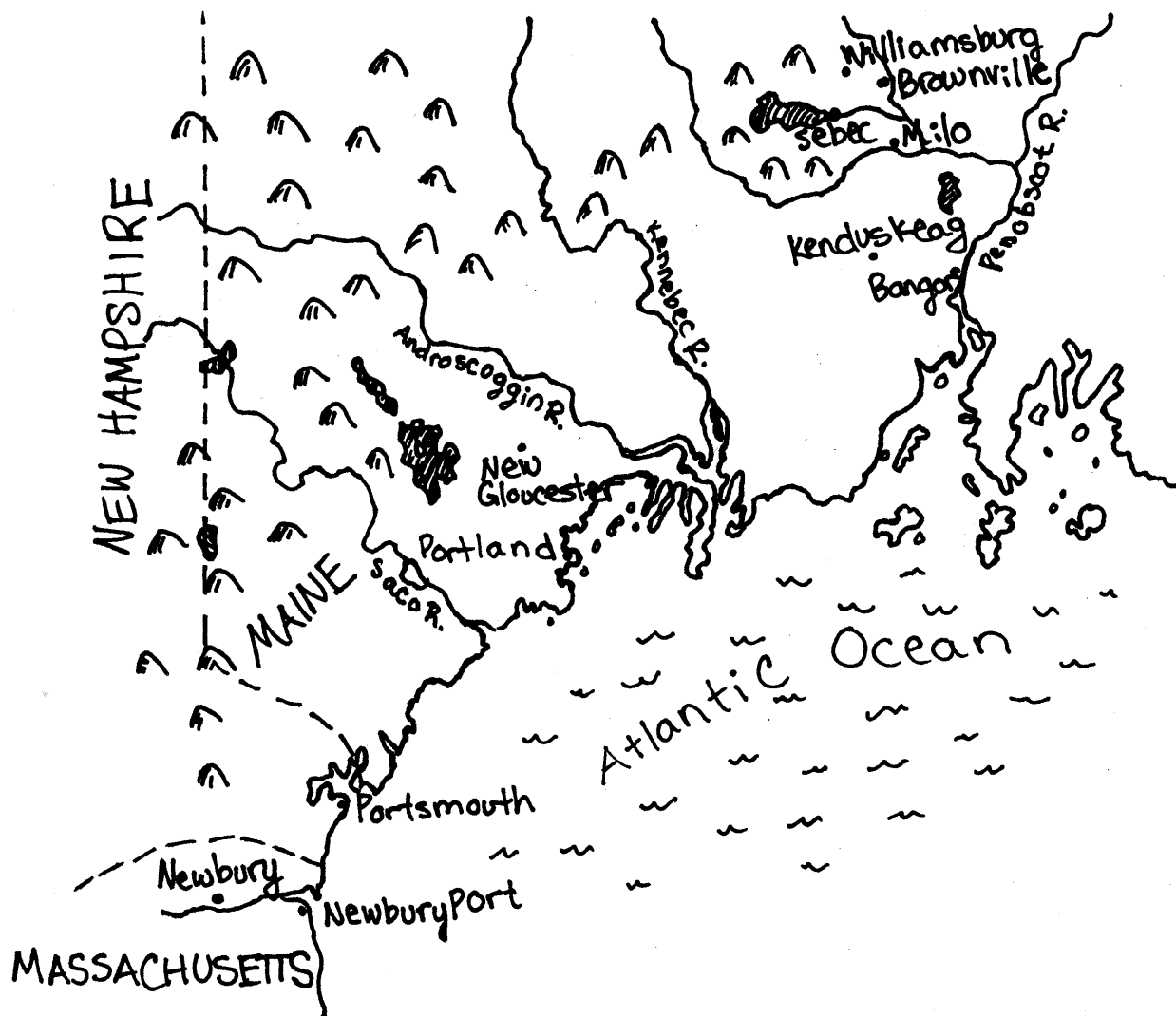
Moses Clarina  
1777-1834 b. 1779

Ebenezer  
b. 1781

Simon  
b. 1783

Jonathan  
b. 1785

IN 1635, MOSES GREENLEAF'S ANCESTORS moved from Ipswich, England to Newbury, Massachusetts. His grandfather Jonathan became a shipbuilder and relocated to Newburyport, nearer the coast. Jonathan and his son Captain Moses both served in the army during the Revolution and also worked together in the family shipyard. Captain Moses and Jonathan taught drafting and ship design to Moses Jr. and his brothers.

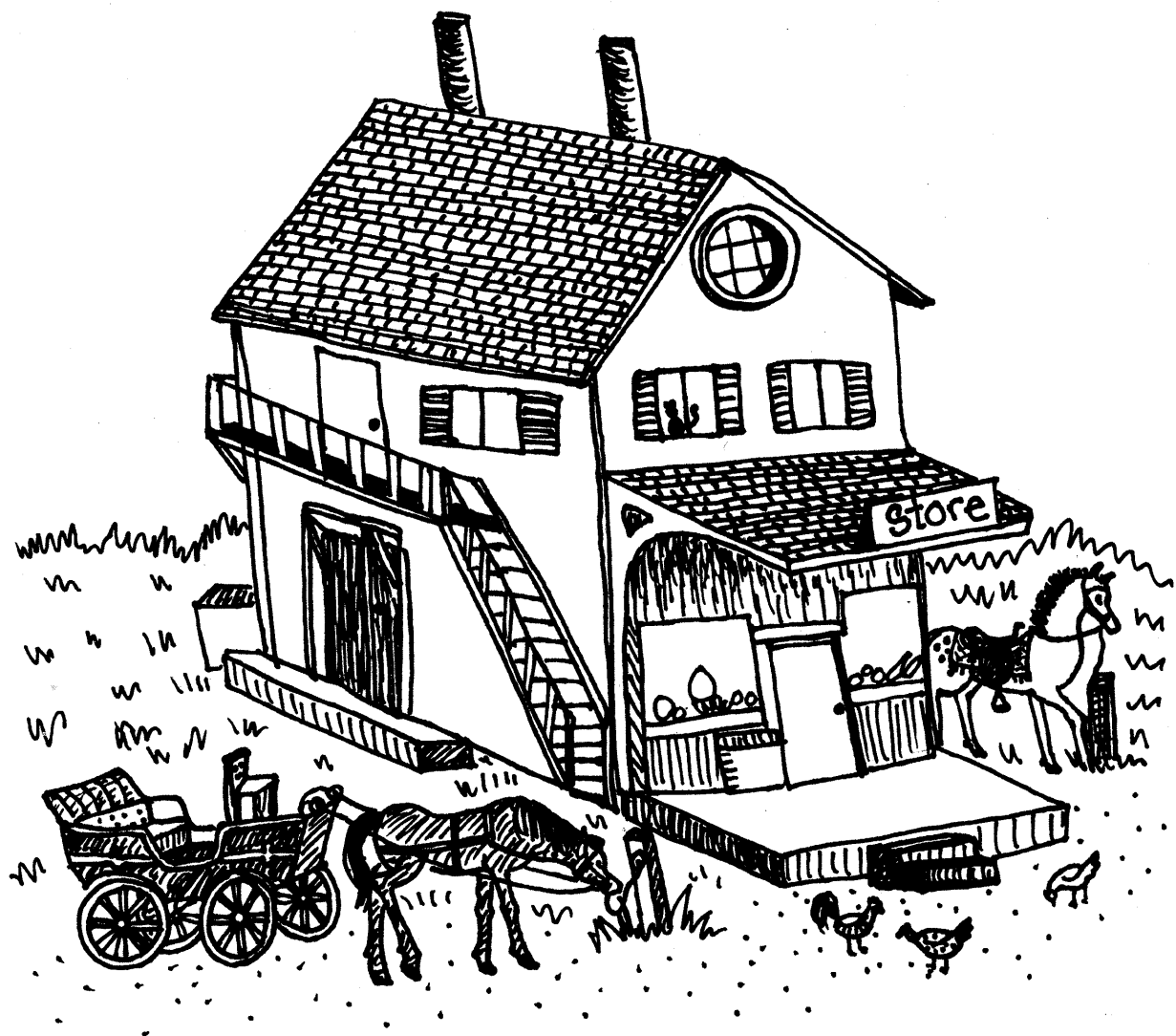


THE GREENLEAF FAMILY SUPPORTED the Federalist Party of George Washington, which was popular in New England after the Revolution. However, as the new Republic grew, the Federalist Party declined, and the Greenleaves became increasingly unhappy with the changing politics, social climate, and growing materialism of Newburyport. In 1790, Captain Moses used the money he had made as a shipbuilder to escape from Newburyport to the tranquility of New Gloucester, Maine. The Greenleaves were among thousands of Massachusetts families who migrated to Maine, then a part of Massachusetts, seeking a new life.

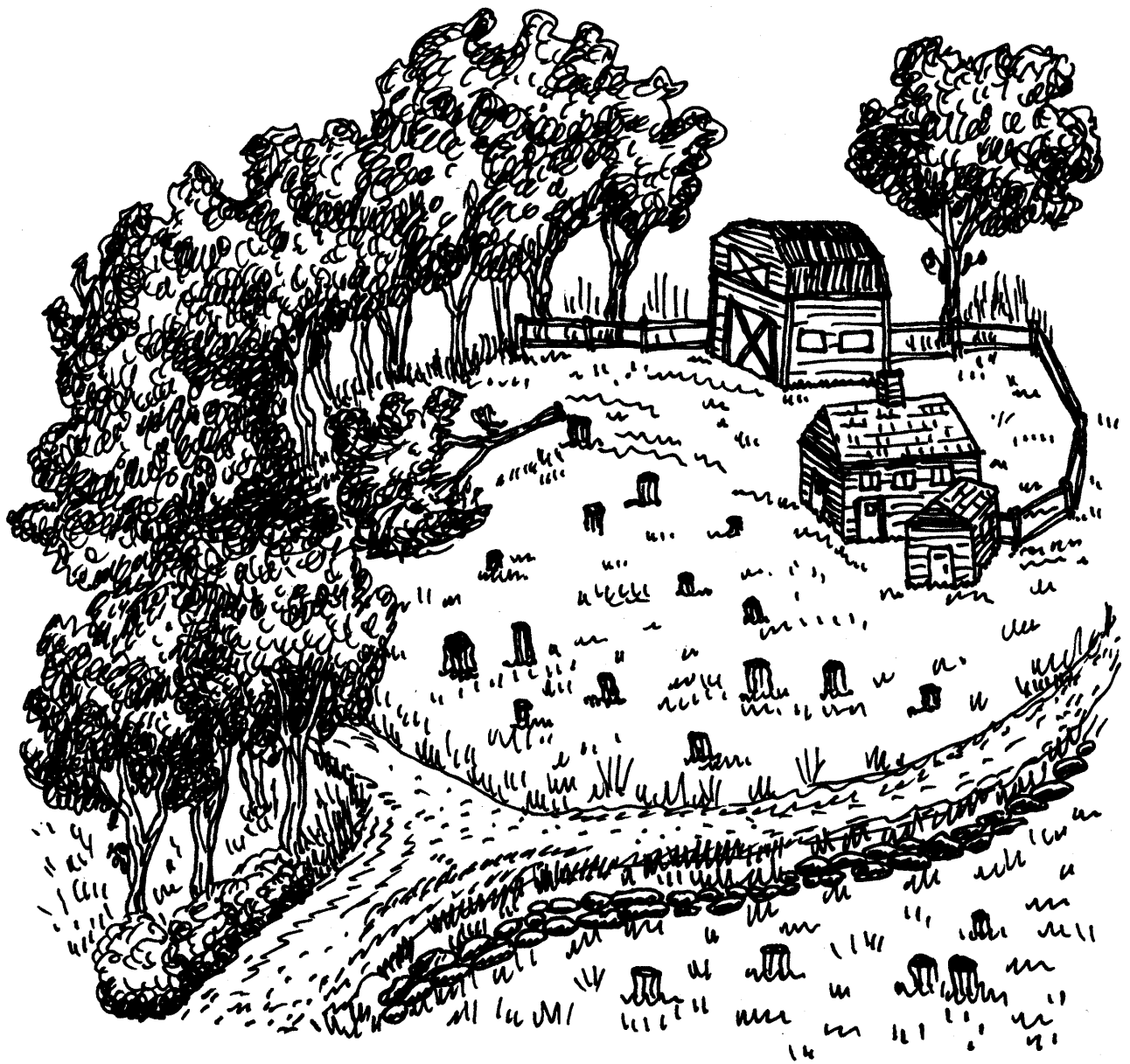




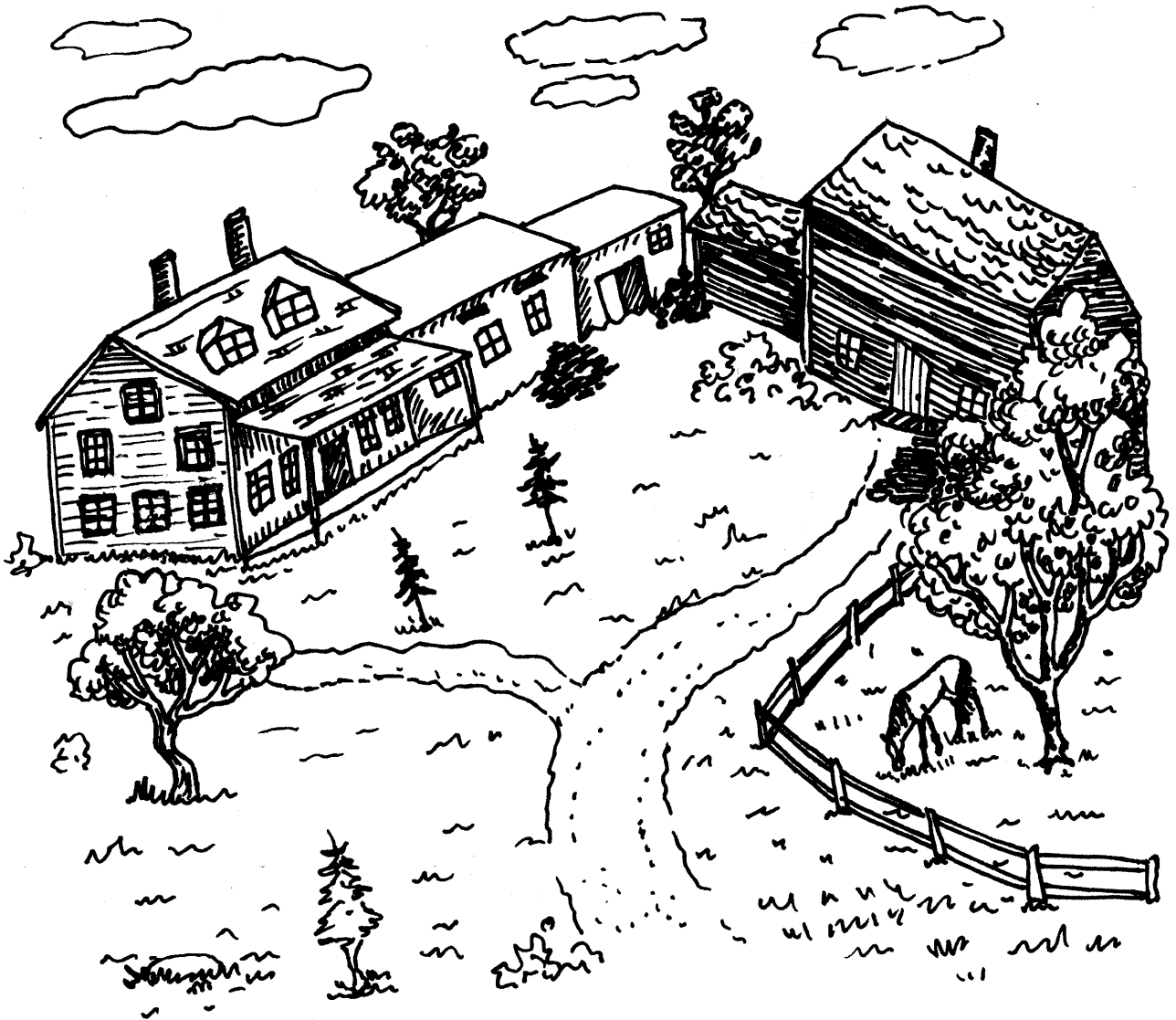
MOSES WAS 13 YEARS OLD when his family moved to New Gloucester, Maine, where his father built a new house on Peacock Hill. It is said that this hill is so named because the Captain raised peacocks. The family also planted an apple orchard. With the help of his wife Lydia and their five children, Captain Moses became a gentlemen farmer. The time young Moses spent on the farm in Maine probably shaped his interest in country living.



WHEN MOSES TURNED 21, he opened a general store in the village of New Gloucester. He kept store for a few years, but this business was difficult because his customers were farmers who only had money to pay him when they sold their crops. Some never paid Moses, leaving him in debt. He tried moving his storekeeping business to different locations in Maine—first to Poland, then Kenduskeag, and finally to Bangor—but these ventures never succeeded. Even so, Moses met many interesting people in his stores, including several explorers, surveyors, and others interested in the unsettled lands of northern Maine.

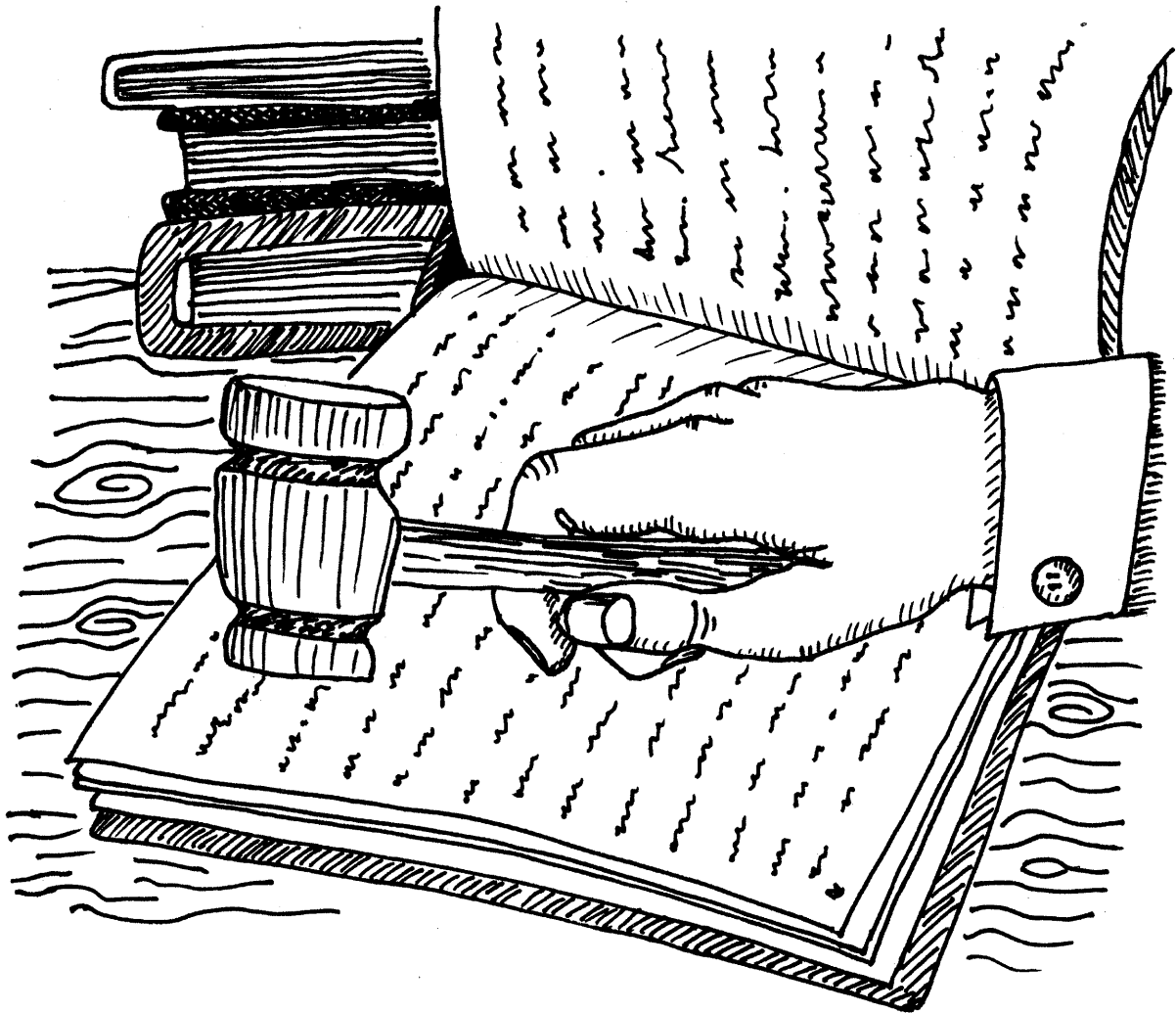


**MOSES FINALLY GAVE UP** storekeeping after he married Persis Poor in 1805. He had accumulated a debt of \$10,000 and needed a job that would support his new family. Because of his interest in settling the Maine wilderness, he agreed to become the land agent for the emerging town of Williamsburg, located north of the Piscataquis River in Piscataquis County. William Dodd, a Boston merchant, had purchased the township with the hope of becoming wealthy. Moses became Dodd's resident agent to oversee the sale of land and development of the town. He was responsible for surveying the township, clearing land, building roads, and attracting settlers. He also purchased one-quarter of the land in the town as an investment for his family.

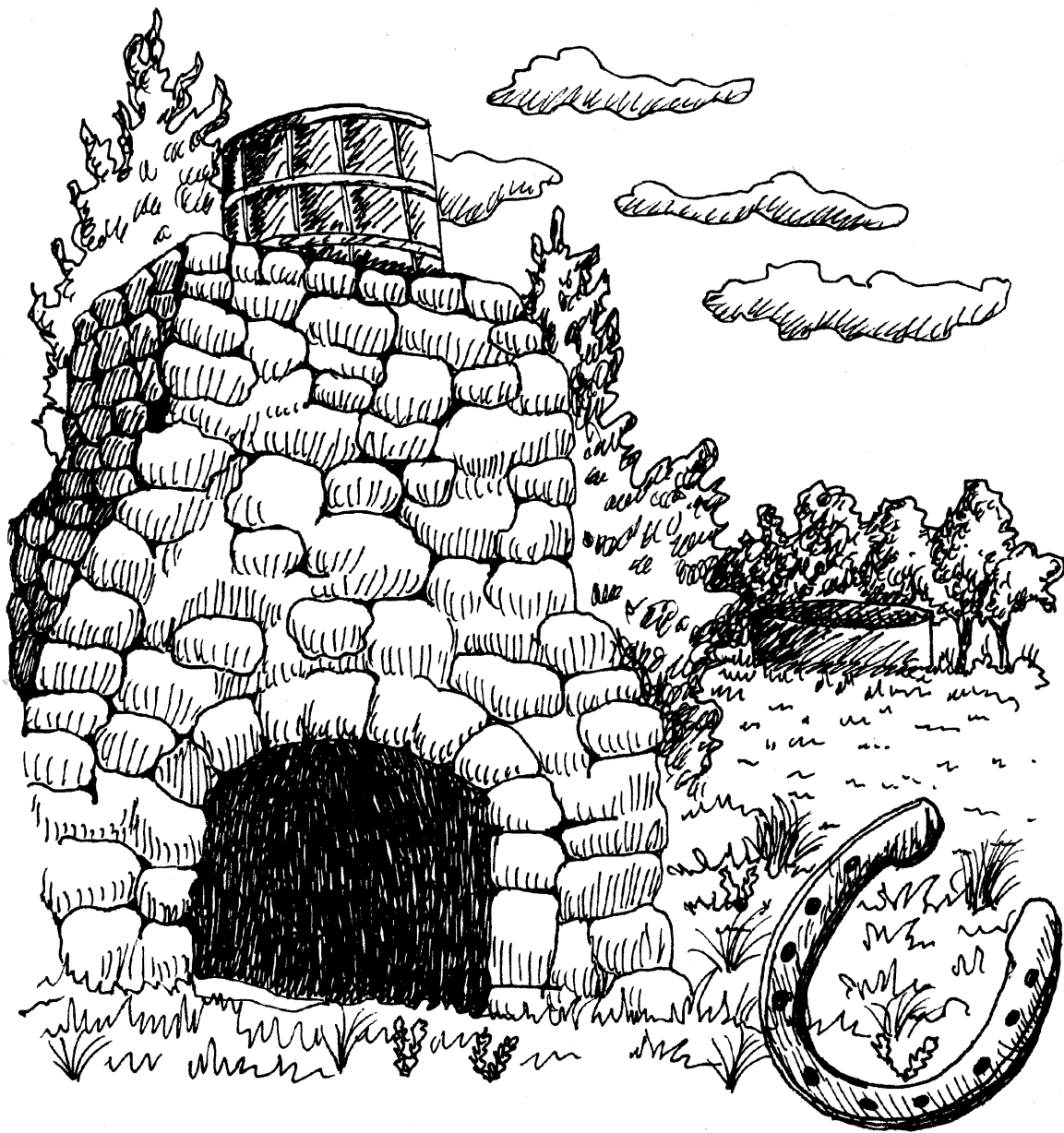


IN DECEMBER OF 1810, Moses and Persis moved with their two young children to Williamsburg. Moses worked for the next year building a home in the southwestern area of the new township. Two years later he built a house on the southeastern edge of town where he lived for the rest of his life. This new house near Brownville was advantageously located on the main road to the north, and Moses and his family grew and prospered there. Known as Greenleaf Hill, the homestead expanded over time to include a larger house, a barn, and orchards. The original home is still standing today in Williamsburg Township north of the town of Milo, Maine.

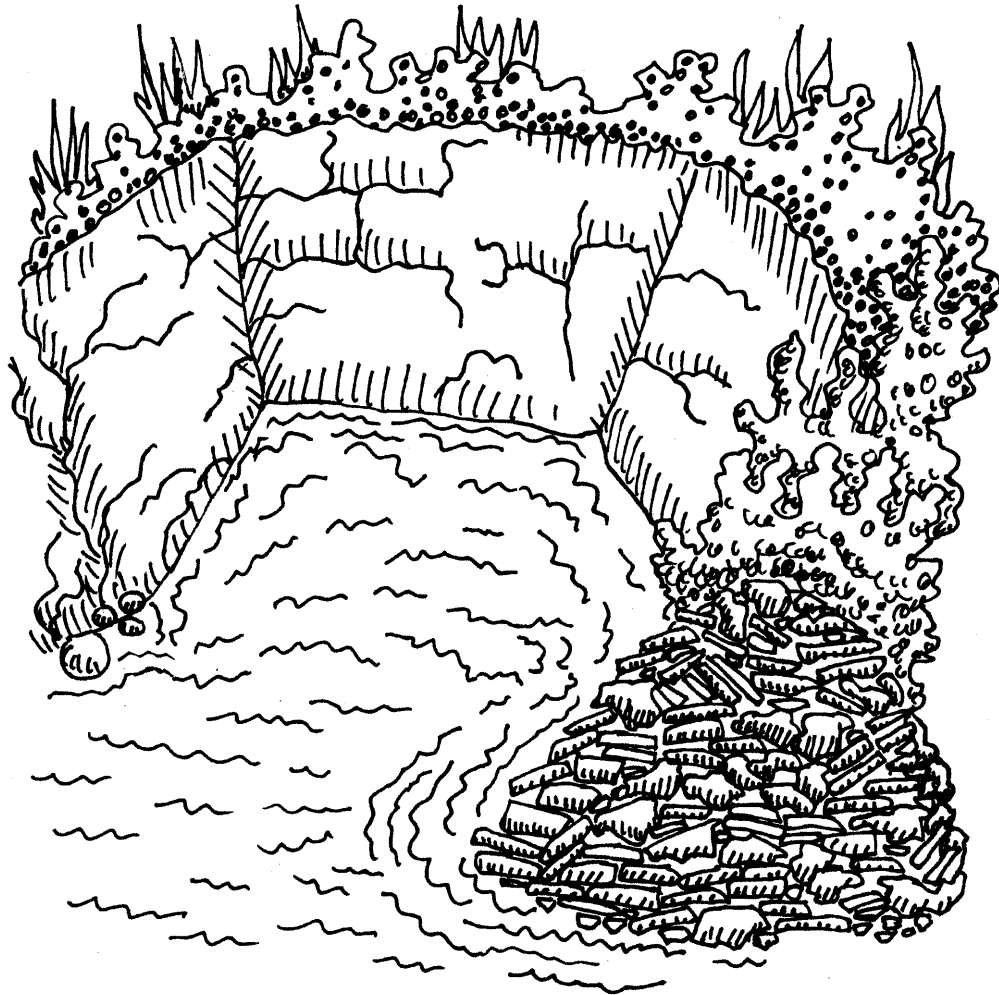




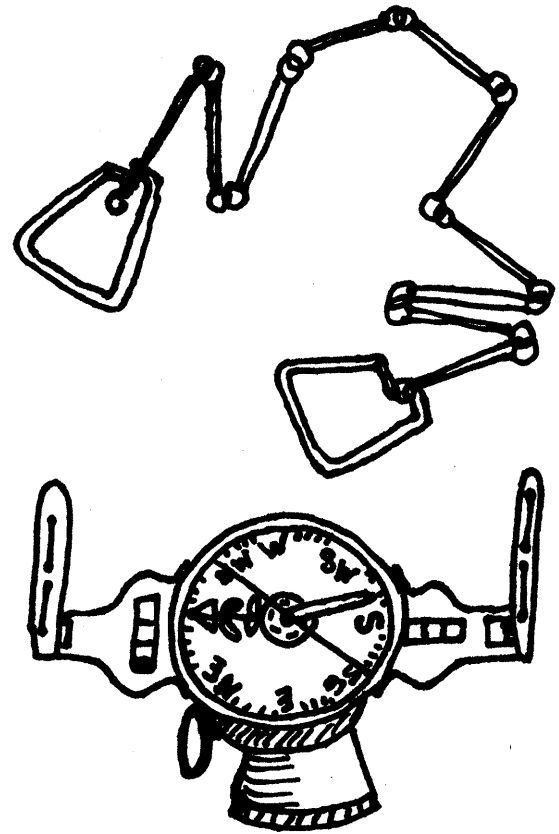
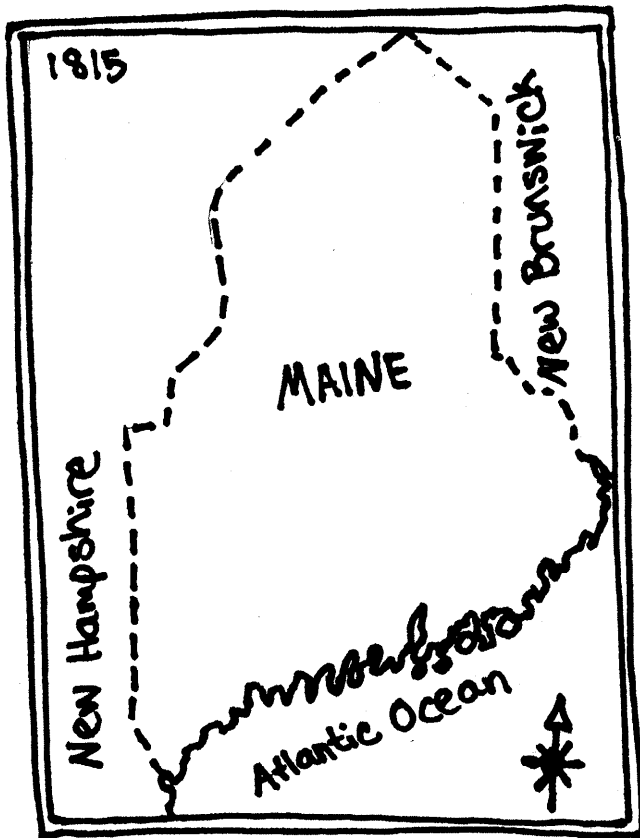
AFTER THE WAR OF 1812, many New Englanders moved westward into the fertile Ohio River Valley, which reduced sales of land in Maine. Interest in Maine land had already started to decline by the time Moses moved to Williamsburg and diminished even more after the particularly harsh weather of 1816, a year so memorable that it was known as “Eighteen Hundred and Froze to Death” and “The Year Without a Summer.” Because the position of resident land agent could not support his family, Moses took on additional jobs. He was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1812 and later served as a judge in other courts. As Justice, Moses handled legal matters such as certifying deeds, drawing up bonds, and witnessing the signing of documents.



**MOSES EXPLORED THE WILDERNESS** regions of Maine looking for materials that could be used to develop industry in these inland areas. Around 1815 he investigated iron ore deposits on Ore Mountain just north of Williamsburg. He collected samples, melted the ore, and forged a horseshoe to prove to legislators that the deposits were valuable so they would support the growth of an iron industry at the site. Moses lobbied for the building of roads and railroads to Ore Mountain and his efforts eventually led to the development of the Katahdin Iron works, which operated from 1841 until 1890.

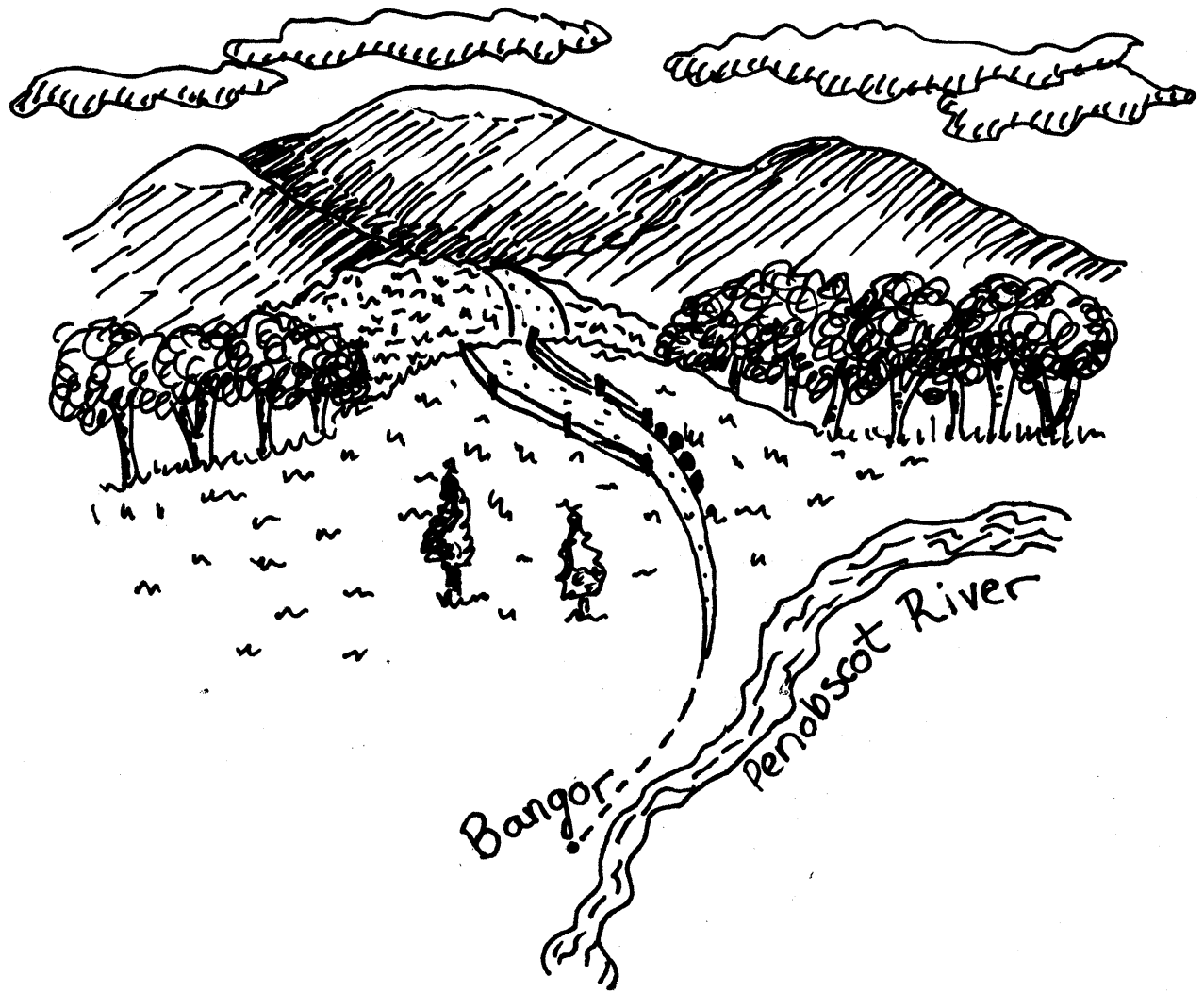


AN OUTCROPPING OF SLATE had been discovered near Greenleaf Hill by 1815. Slate is a dark-gray rock that breaks into thin, flat slabs. It was used for floors, walkways, roofing tiles, and gravestones as well as for blackboards and writing slates in schools. In the 1820s, Moses and his brother Eben spent several years exploring the area for opportunities to mine the slate. They collected samples, experimented with splitting and dressing the stone, and talked to a professional quarryman to determine if a mine could be developed there. Despite their efforts, it was not until after Moses' death in 1834 that a large and successful slate quarry was opened south of the Greenleaf homestead. After the Civil War the quarry was operated by Adam Merrill, a relative of Moses', who hired a colony of former African American slaves to work there. One of the workers had learned to read from a primer when he was a slave in the South, so he taught others to read, write, and figure while they were living in Williamsburg. The men often wore pencils behind their ears as they worked in the quarry to show pride in their newfound skills.

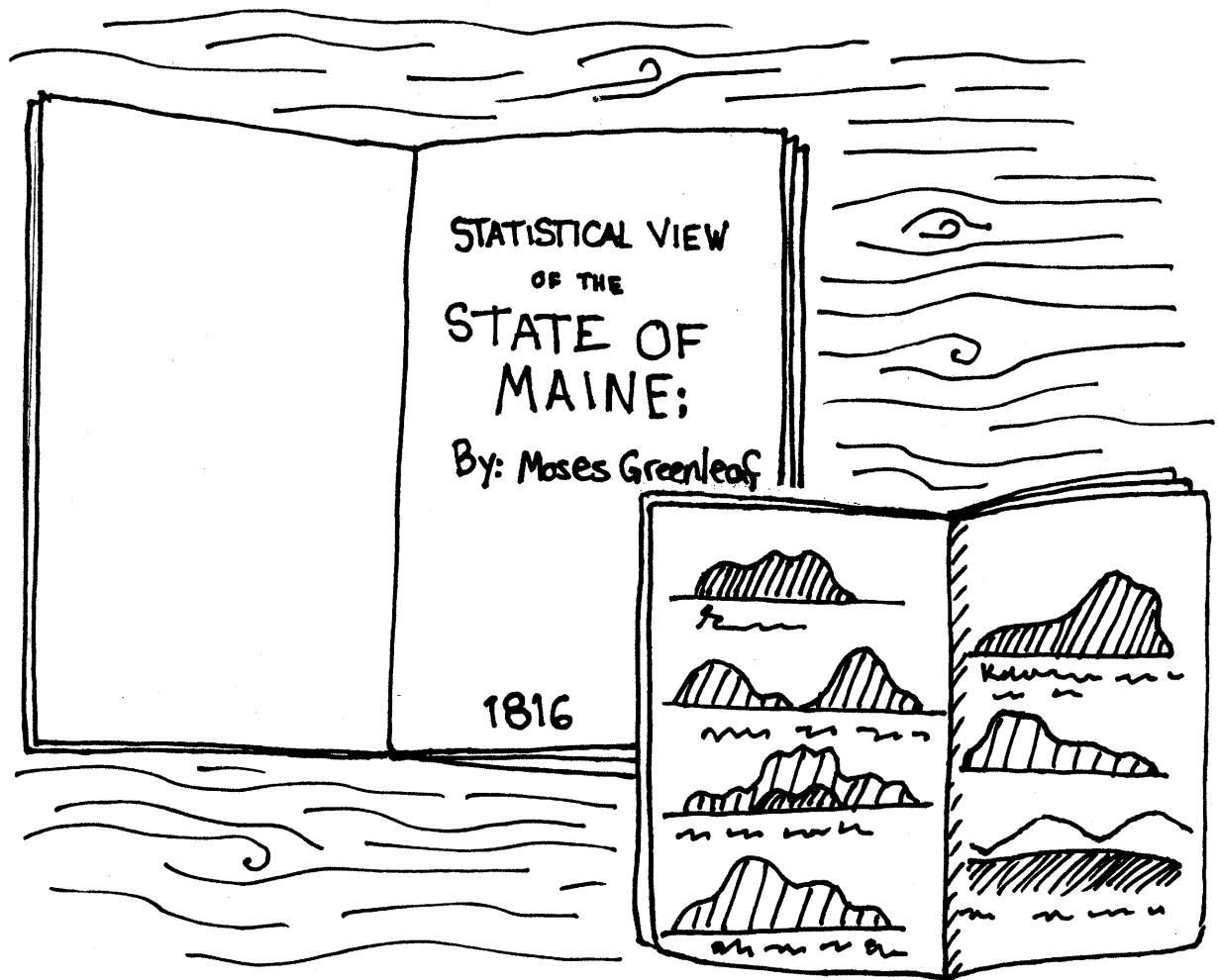


MOSES GREENLEAF PUBLISHED his first map of the District of Maine in 1815. Its purpose was to provide the Massachusetts government with the information it needed to implement policies that would promote Maine settlement. With his brother Eben, Moses explored and surveyed some of the interior regions of Maine using a surveyor's chain to measure distance and a compass to determine direction. He used their data and as well as information collected by other surveyors to create his map, entitled *Map of the District of Maine from the Latest and Best Authorities*, which he dedicated "To the Honorable The Legislature of The State of Massachusetts."

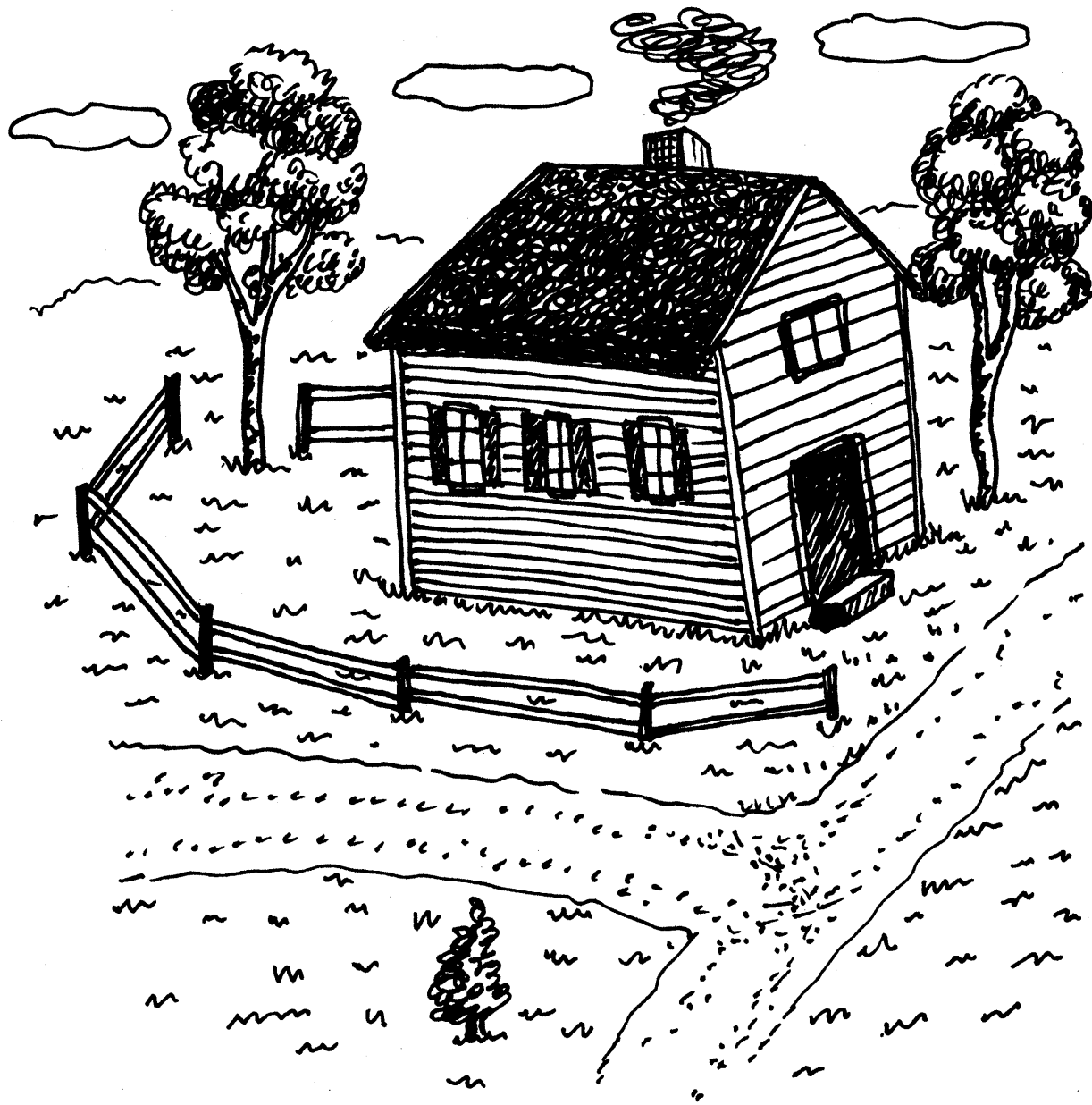




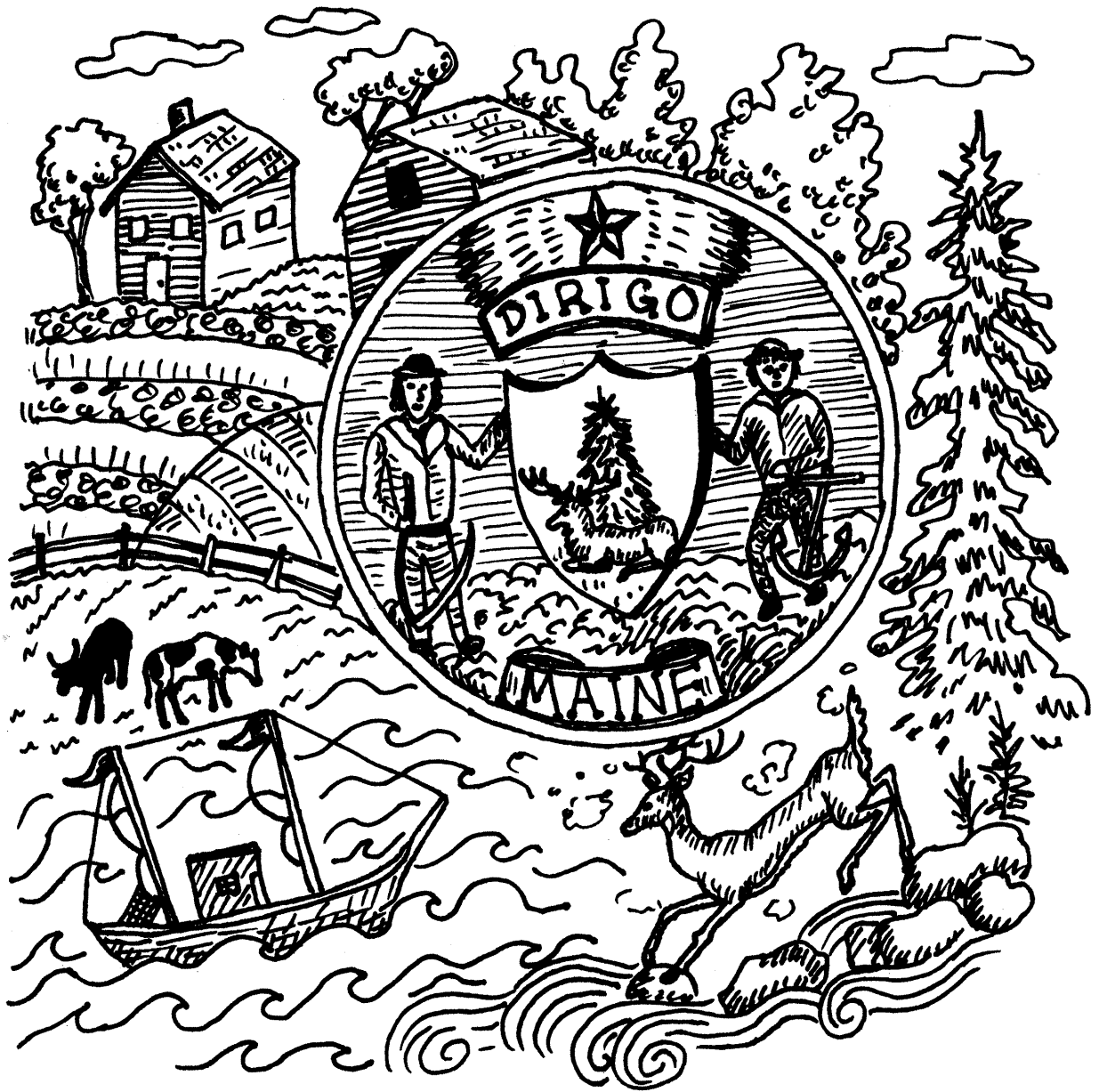
**MOSES** CONSTANTLY ENCOURAGED the state government to develop better means of transportation. In 1816 he helped to construct the first road extending from Bangor to the most northerly townships above Williamsburg. This road was an important connection between the interior of Maine and the Penobscot River, a major waterway to the coast. Roads allowed the transportation of people and products, even though land travel was much more difficult than by water at this time.



AS PART OF THEIR EXPLORATIONS, Moses and Eben collected information on the climate, population, and resources of Maine. A book of Eben's field sketches shown here is at the Maine State Library. In 1816 Moses published the information he had gathered in a book, entitled *A Statistical View of the District of Maine; More Especially with Reference to the Value and Importance of Its Interior*. On the title page is his motto, "Salus publica mea merces" meaning "the public welfare is my reward," a principle by which he lived.

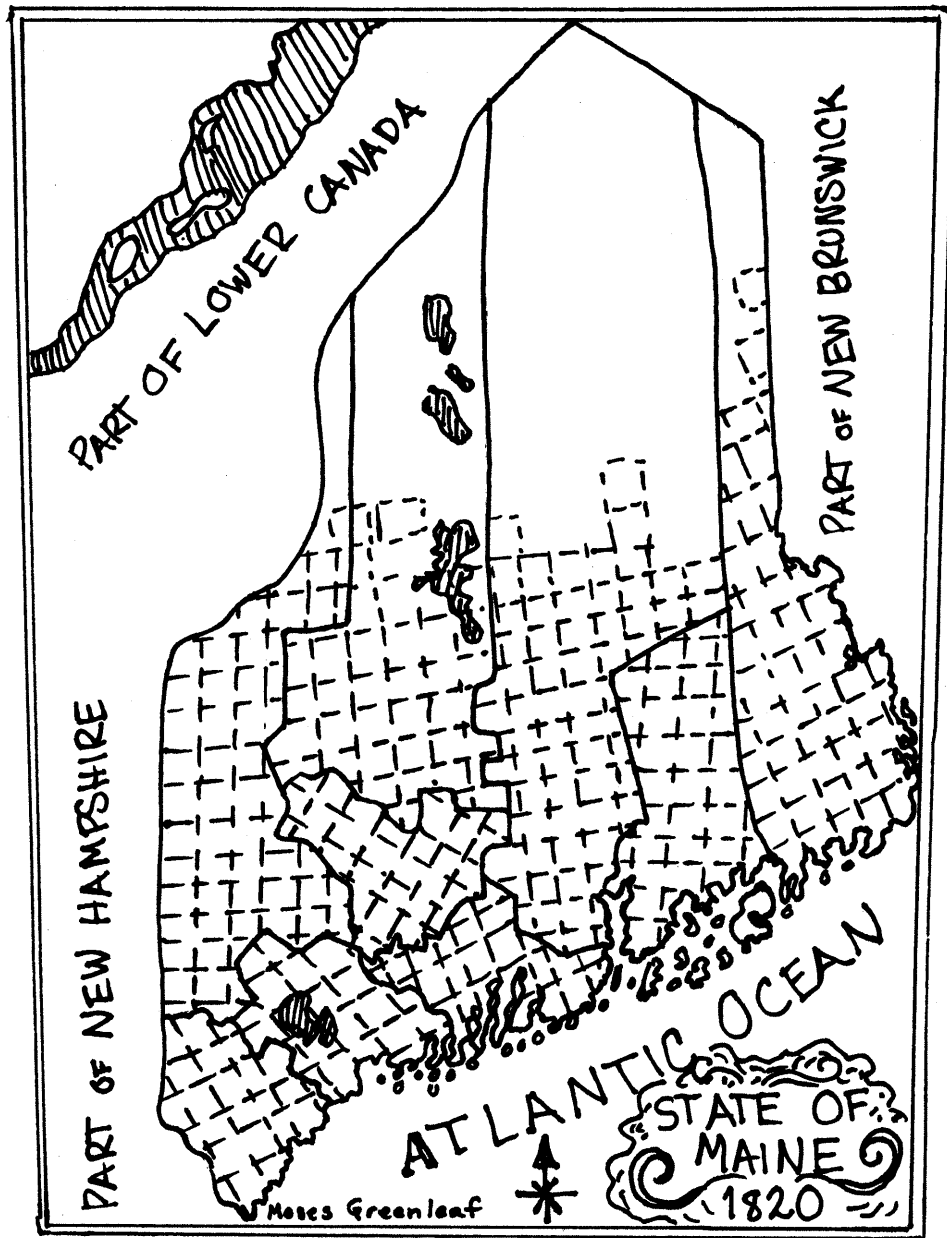


IN 1819, WILLIAM DODD PROVIDED the money to finance two one-room schoolhouses in Williamsburg, and they were built the following year. One was located on the western side of town, most likely on the road that extended north from Sebec, and the other was built on the eastern side of town at the intersection of the road leading north past Greenleaf Hill and the road to Brownville. This schoolhouse occasionally also served as a place for religious services and town meetings.



WILLIAMSBURG BECAME A TOWN IN 1820, the same year that Maine became a state. Some community members, including Moses Greenleaf's wife and daughters, signed a covenant to form a Congregational Church that same year. Although Moses did not join the church, perhaps because he was an Episcopalian, he gave the address and closing prayer at the founding ceremony held in his home.

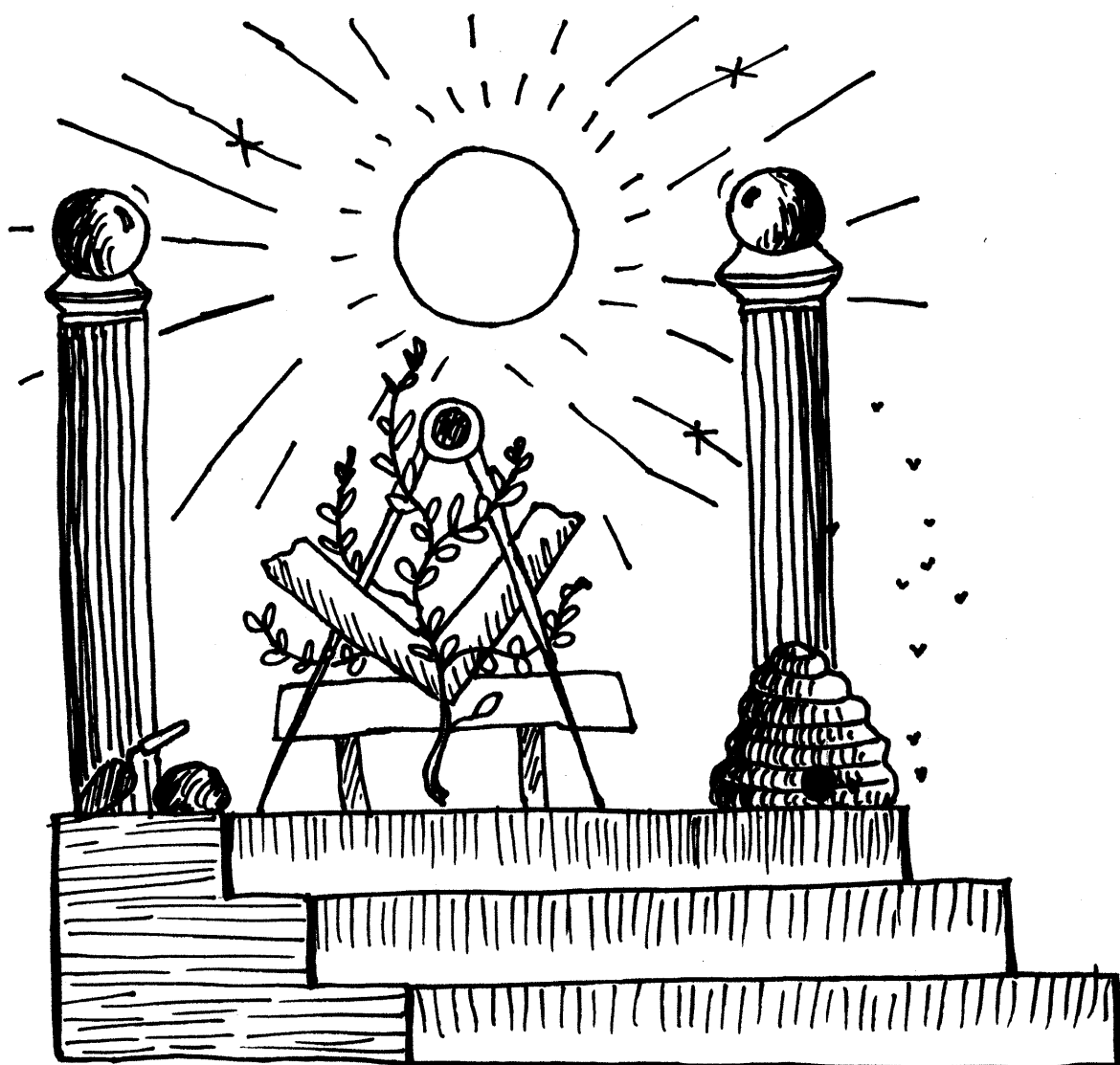




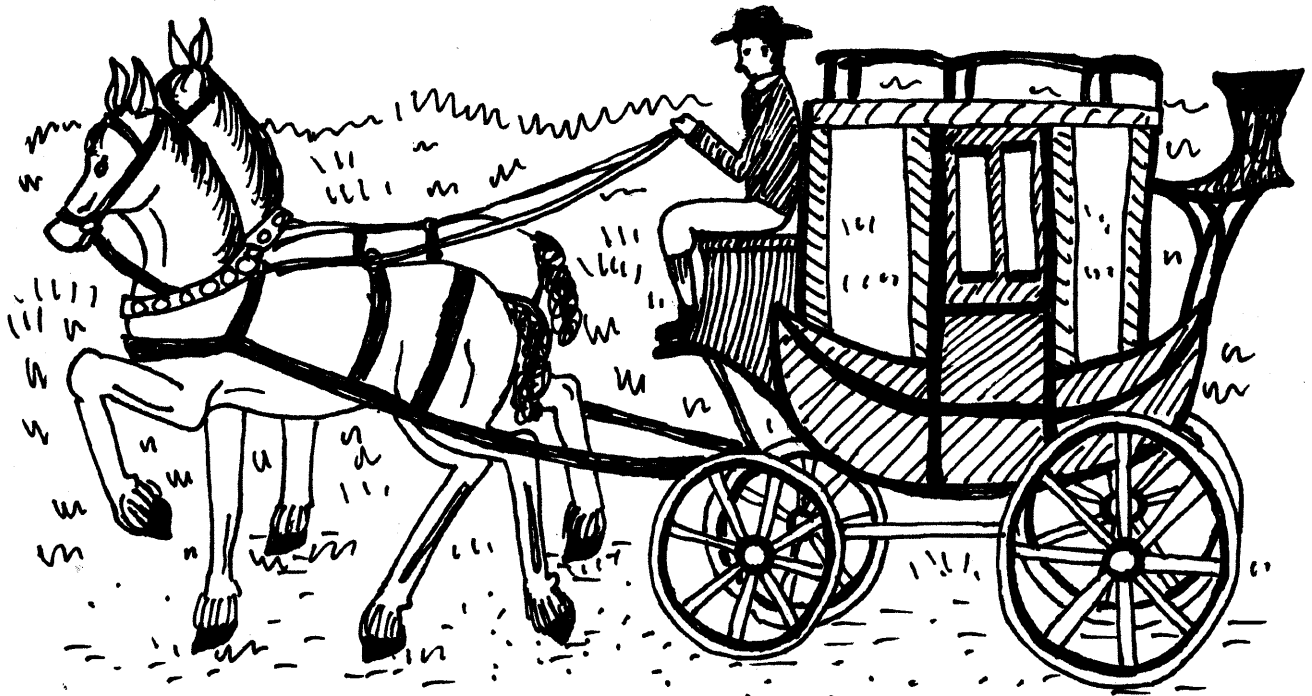
IN 1820, MAINE BECAME independent from Massachusetts. When the legislation passed making Maine a state, Moses published an updated edition of his 1815 map. This was the first map published of the State of Maine, and Moses Greenleaf became Maine's first mapmaker. It was sold to Maine residents and others who were interested in buying land in the new state.



POSTAL SERVICE CAME TO WILLIAMSBURG in 1821 when Samuel Stickney began carrying mail between his home in Brownville (just east of Williamsburg) and Bangor. Stickney was strong and sometimes walked this 45-mile route carrying parcels on his back. On one of his trips the mail carrier startled a napping bear. When the bear reared up on its hind legs, Stickney escaped by hitting it with a sack of potatoes that he was carrying.

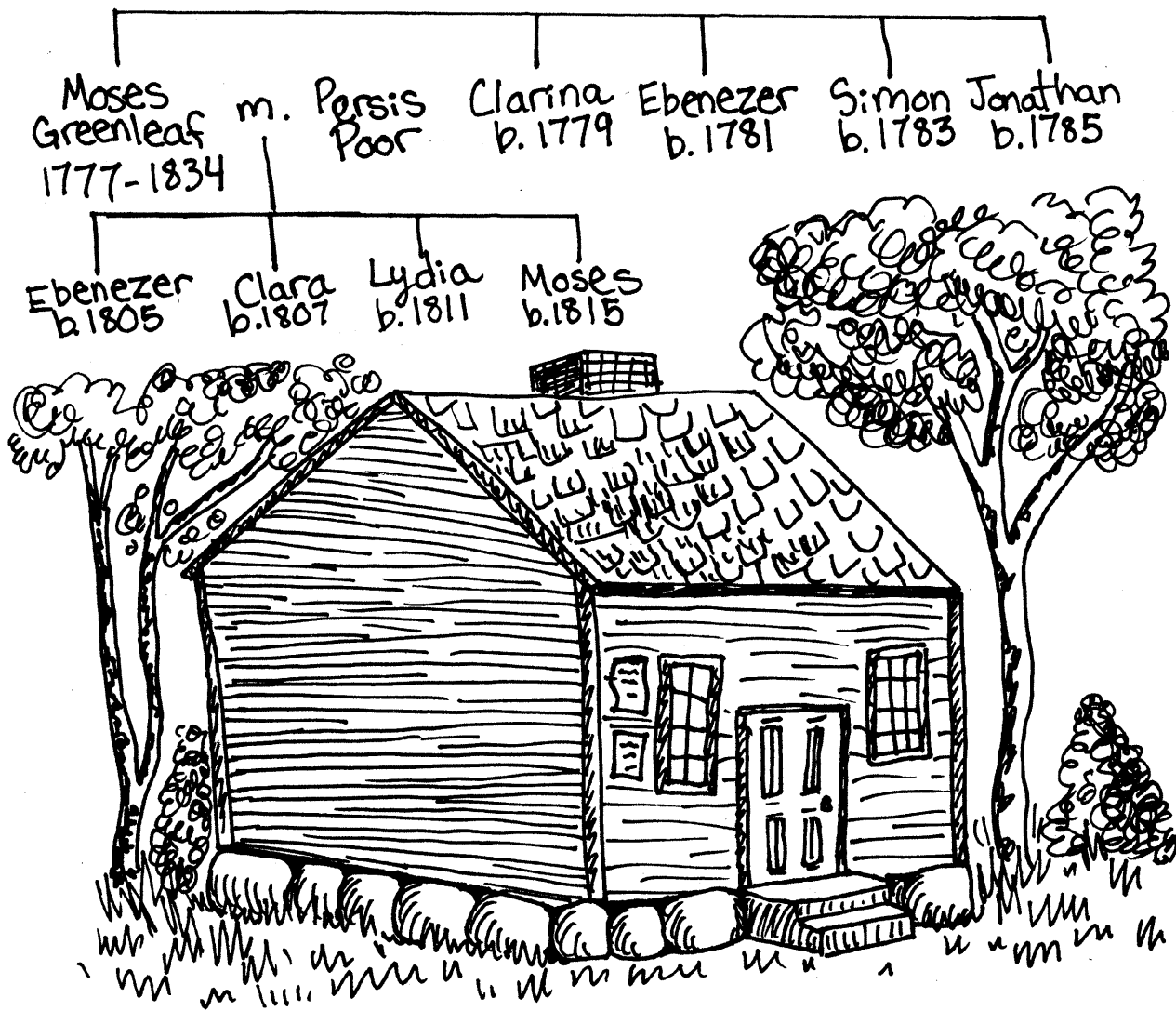


THE PISCATAQUIS LODGE, No. 44, was formed in 1822. It was a fraternal organization of Freemasons, a group with its roots in the traditions of the early stonemasons of Europe. Many of America's forefathers, including George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, were Freemasons. Moses Greenleaf was elected Master, and his brother Eben Secretary of Piscataquis No. 44. The organization originally met at a lodge in Sebec, the town southwest of Williamsburg. The Masonic Fraternity stands for many of the principles which Greenleaf firmly supported, such as character, justice, caring for others, civic responsibility, and keeping one's word.

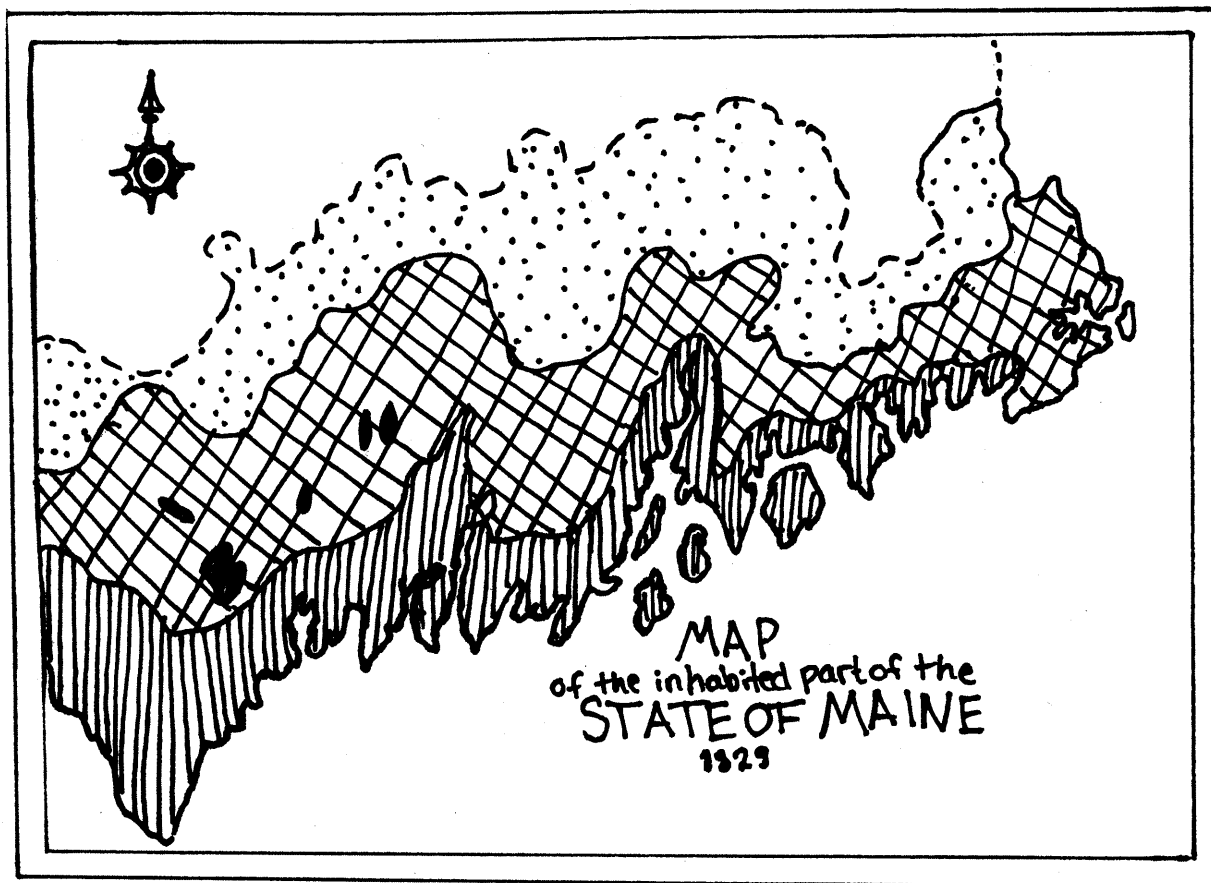


IN 1825 THE BANGOR & PISCATAQUIS STAGE began transporting both people and mail to and from Williamsburg. The stagecoach carried up to 12 passengers, but traveled at only 4 miles an hour. This is about as fast as people could walk! Only leather windows protected the travelers from the heat and dust of summer or the cold winds of winter, as they were jolted along on rough roads with their shifting parcels.

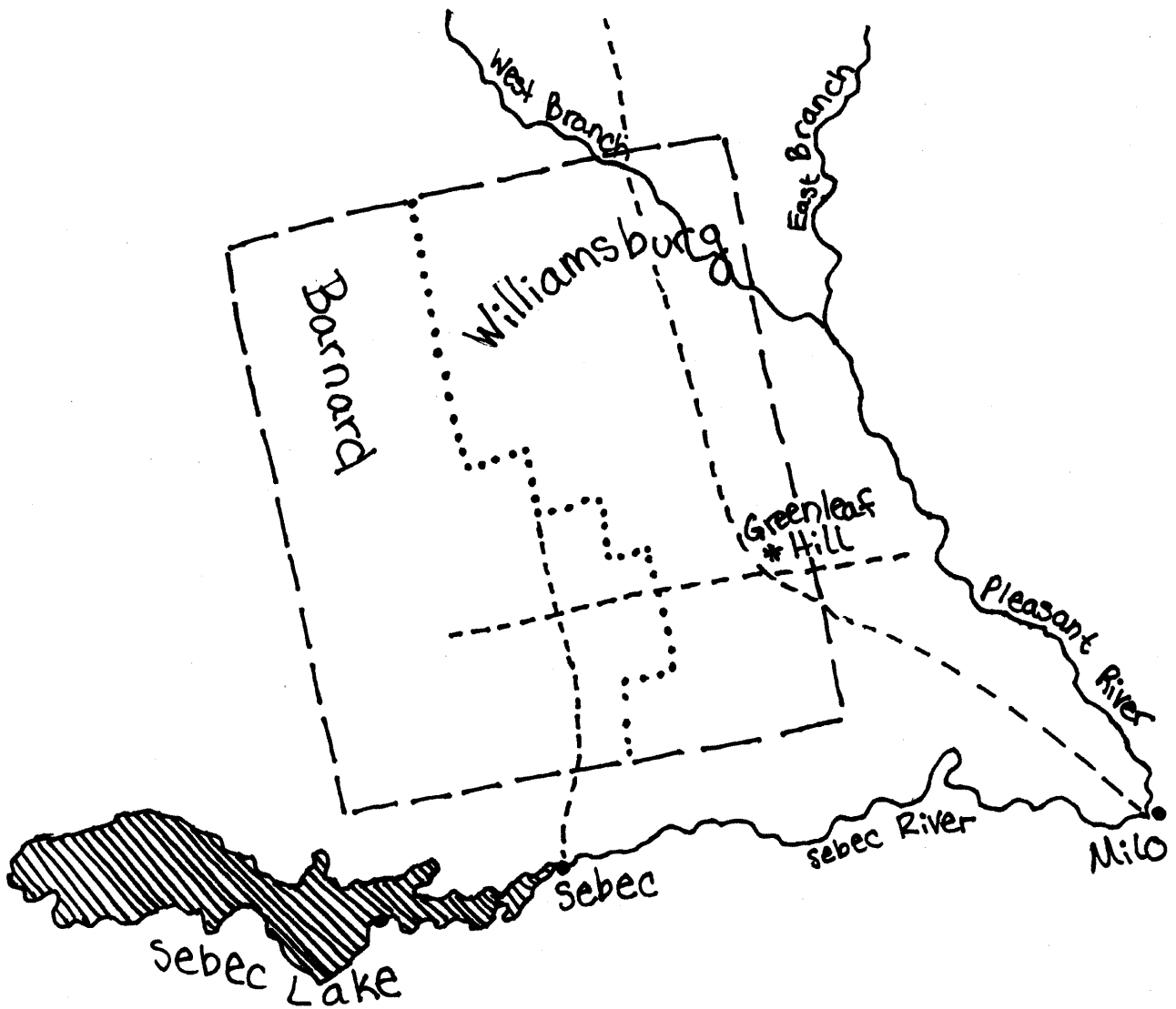




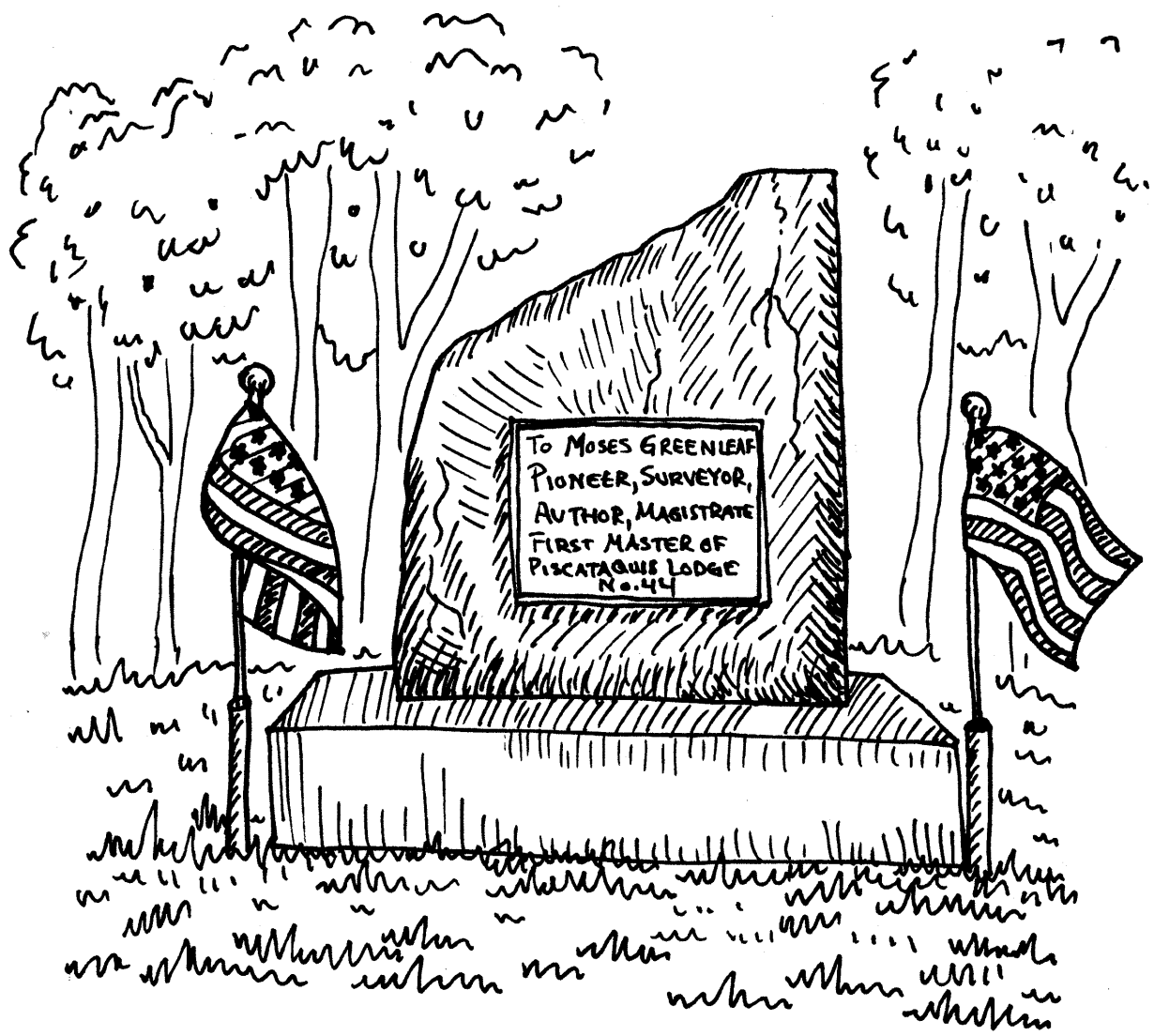
MOSES' BROTHER EBEN, MOTHER LYDIA, sister Clarina, and her children all eventually moved to Williamsburg. His family's presence helped further Moses' vision of a "Household of Faith" in which family and friends live and work peacefully together for the common good of the community. This idea was embodied in the Old Town House that once stood near the road in the field behind the Greenleaf home. Beginning in the 1820s, this building was used as a town meeting house, a Congregational Church, and even a schoolhouse. There are no known photographs of the Old Town House, and it is no longer standing, but a pile of rocks marks its foundation. This drawing is based on a description by a town resident who remembered what it looked like.



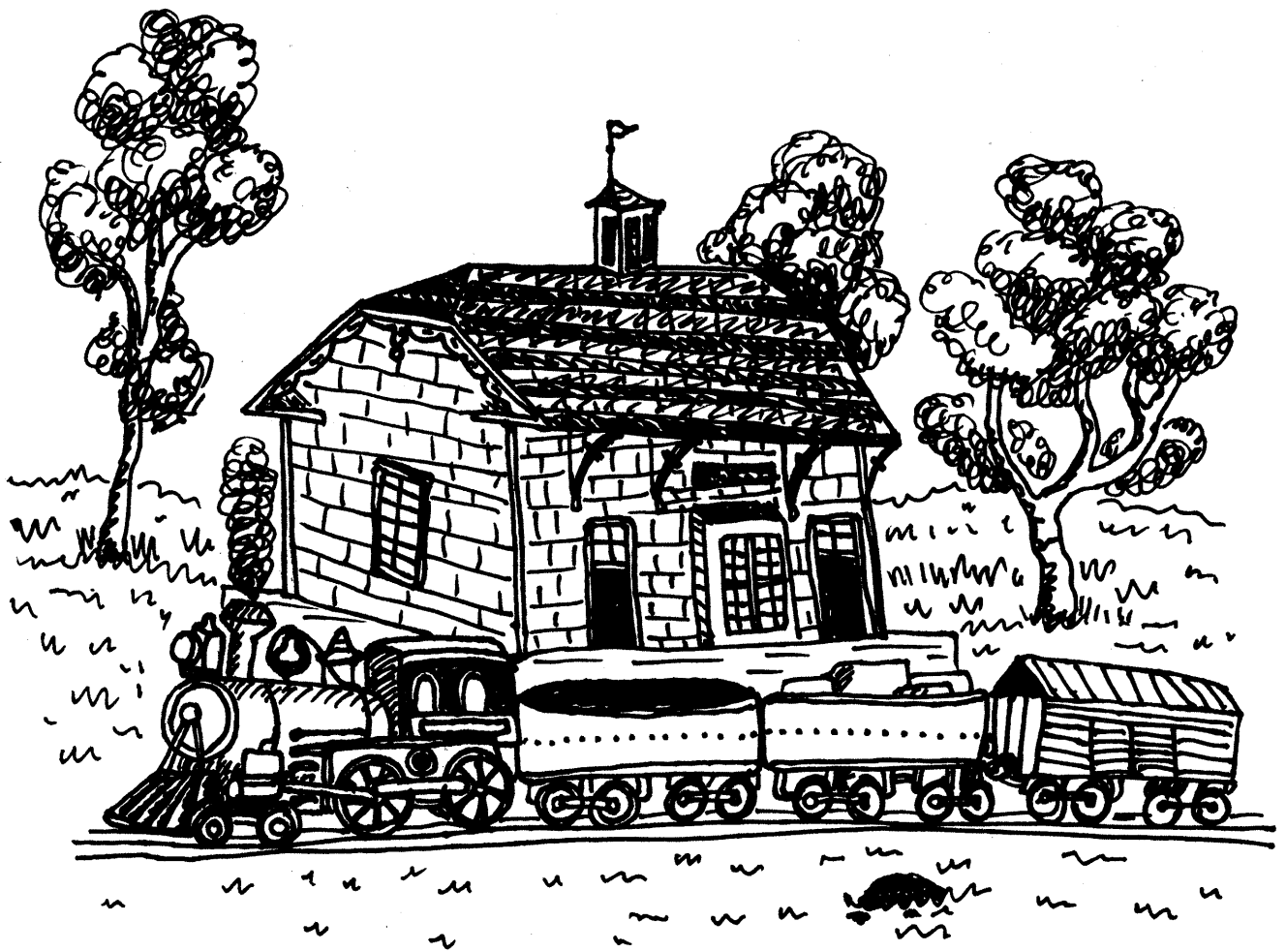
IN 1829, MOSES PUBLISHED his most important work, *A Survey of the State of Maine in Reference to Its Geographical Features, Statistics and Political Economy*. This book was three times the length of his earlier *Statistical View* and had almost three times the number of data tables. The same year Moses also published an atlas, which included seven maps of Maine as well as important information on climate and the placement of the boundary between Maine and Canada. These publications helped provide the public with information about the State of Maine, encouraging further growth and development.



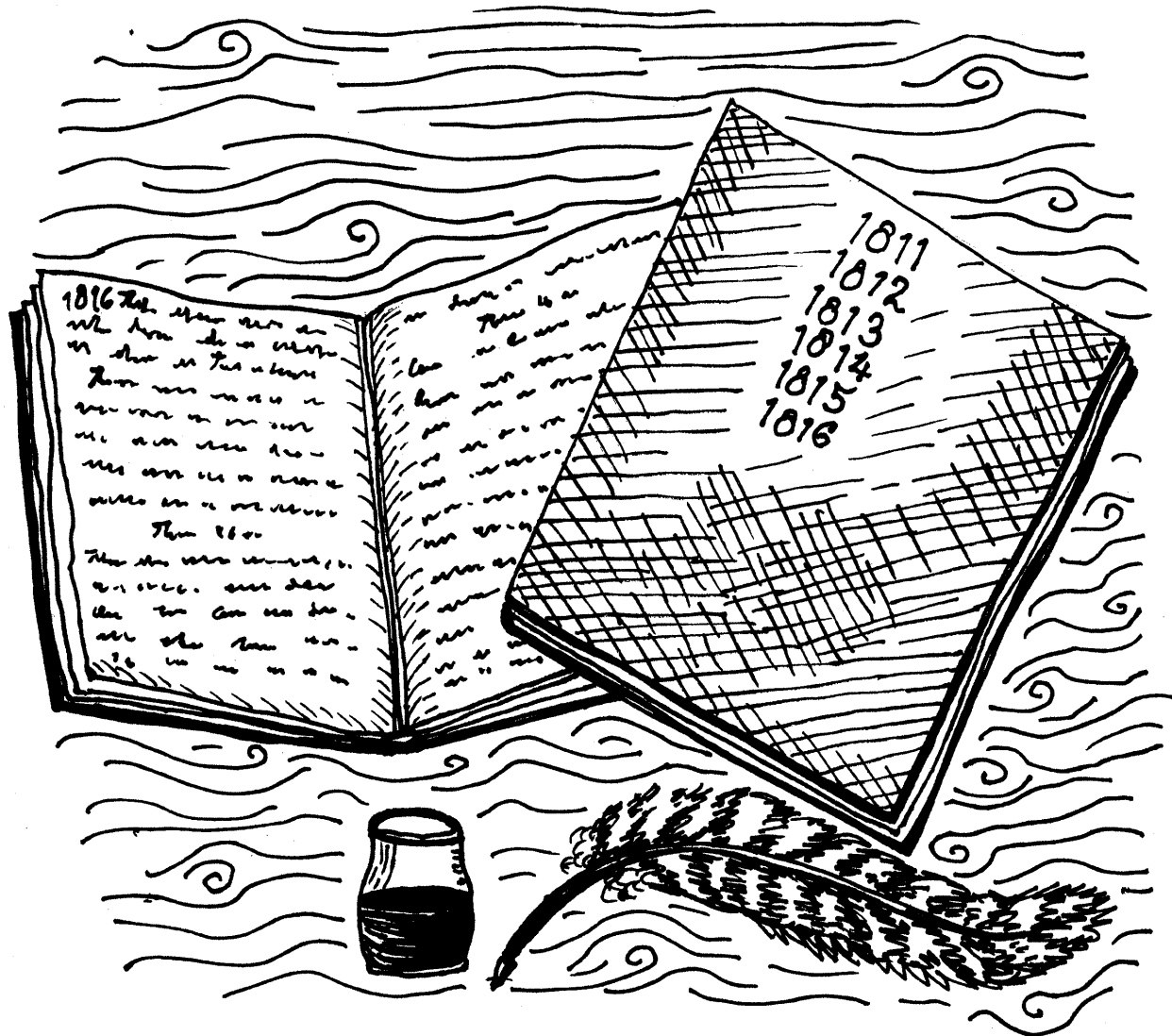
IN 1833, WILLIAMSBURG WAS DIVIDED into two separate towns due to differences in geography and the needs of the people living there. The eastern half of the town retained the name of Williamsburg while the western part became the town of Barnard. This division reduced the original Williamsburg population by half. As disappointing as this division was, Moses had always advocated the need to be aware of the realities of life in a small community. He realized that under the circumstances this separation was necessary.



MOSES CONTRACTED TYPHOID FEVER around 1833 while on a surveying trip. Until an effective vaccine was developed in 1897, thousands died annually of this disease in the United States. Although Moses survived the illness, his health was destroyed. On March 20, 1834, at the age of 56, he died of an acute bacterial infection. To honor his memory, the Freemasons erected this monument in 1947 at the intersection of the roads below Greenleaf Hill where a community schoolhouse once stood. The inscription reads: "To Moses Greenleaf, Pioneer, Surveyor, Author, Magistrate, First Master of Piscataquis Lodge, No. 44."

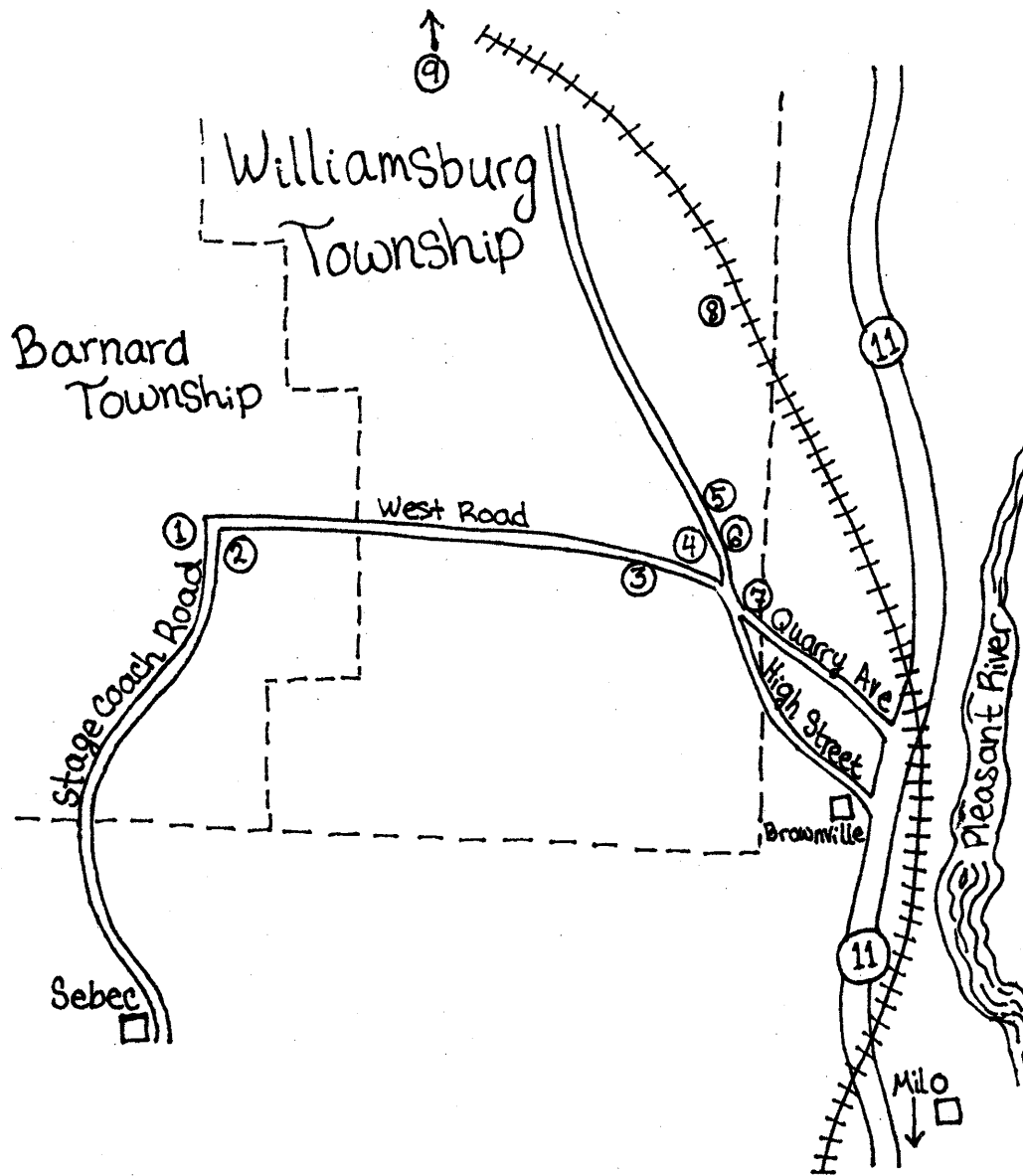


IN 1836, THE BANGOR & PISCATAQUIS RAILROAD that Moses helped organize the year before his death, completed a rail line from Bangor to Old Town. Later it was extended to Milo, Foxcroft, Brownville, and Katahdin Iron Works. As Moses had predicted, this railroad made the further development of industry and agriculture possible in the land along and above the Piscataquis River.



ALTHOUGH MANY OF MOSES GREENLEAF'S CHILDREN eventually left Maine and migrated west, his great niece, Lillian Fredin, kept the family heritage alive on Greenleaf Hill. She was the last family member to live in the Greenleaf home until her death in the 1990s. In 2003, far-flung Greenleaf descendants donated a collection of family papers to the Maine Historical Society, including letters and three journals kept by Moses from 1810-1816, from 1819-1821, and from 1824-1825. These journals are an important resource for understanding the life, work, and character of Moses Greenleaf.





## HOW TO FIND MOSES GREENLEAF'S WILLIAMSBURG TODAY

1. Probable site of Greenleaf's first house (page 9).



2. Approximate location of early west-side schoolhouse (page 16).

3. Eben Greenleaf's house site, no longer there (page 22).



4. Site of early schoolhouse, current monument (pages 16 and 25).



5. Site of Old Town House (page 22).



6. Moses Greenleaf house, still there (page 9).



7. Merrill Quarry, still there (page 12).



8. Bangor & Piscataquis Railroad (now Montreal, Maine & Atlantic), section to Katahdin Iron works, now gone (page 26).



9. Katahdin Iron works blast furnace, still there (page 11).

## **The Osher Library Associates**

The Associates of the Osher Map Library of the University of Southern Maine is an organization of interested persons formed to support the Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education and its activities. Incorporated as a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation, it is legally separate from both the map library and the University. Its mission is to support and to promote the interests and continuity of the map library in every way possible.

The Osher Library Associates, formed in 1990, have grown from a small group of interested people to a diverse, international collection of scholars, map collectors, and people from all walks of life. The organization's membership continues to expand and diversify as visitors to the Osher Map Library's facilities and Web site discover the library's treasures and elect to participate in and support its activities.

Initially, the Osher Library Associates were closely involved with planning, fund raising for, and constructing the Osher Map Library. During this early period, they also sponsored cooperative exhibitions and lectures at the Portland Museum of Art. Since the Osher Map Library opened in 1994, the Osher Library Associates have undertaken a wide array of activities in support of the library, including funding lectures and exhibitions, staffing and funding educational outreach programs, assisting in the production of catalogs and posters, funding acquisitions and conservation, and acquiring and distributing grant funds for library development. They have also supported and sponsored a number of activities for the benefit of members and of the general public, including local, regional, and international cartographic conferences, public lectures on cartographic themes, field trips, and tours of cartographic and geographic interest in New England.

The purpose of this occasional publication series is to stimulate public interest in and awareness of maps and cartography. It seeks to provide meaningful contributions to the cartographic literature that can be appreciated by both the layperson and the scholar.

Osher Library Associates  
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