

K. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. Purpose

Historical and archaeological resources are important not only for their role in Bucksport's history, but also for their present-day value. Historic buildings and sites add to the town's quality of life and their presence helps maintain property values. The purpose of this section is:

- a. to present a brief history of the town;
- b. to describe Bucksport's historical and archaeological resources;
- c. to assess the threats to these resources; and
- d. to assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve these resources.

2. Key Findings and Issues

- ❖ While there were no properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993, there were nine such properties listed in 2001.
- ❖ In 2000 the Maine Historic Preservation Commission conducted a survey of village area to assess the potential of creating an historic district. A comprehensive survey has not been done of other parts of town.

3. Historical Background

Long before Europeans discovered the coast of Maine, Indians were living in this area. Evidence of them has been found in the form of shell heaps in many coastal towns, including Deer Isle, Brooksville, and Castine. Indian burial grounds have been excavated near Bucksport on the northern side of Alamoosook Lake and along the Narramissic River.

Historians speculate that Andre Thevit, a Catholic priest from France, sailed in Penobscot Bay in 1556, but the extent of his voyage is not known. The first Englishman to visit the area was Martin Pring in 1603. The Frenchman, Samuel de Champlain, followed him in 1604. That same year, the French established settlements on Mt. Desert Island. George Weymouth, an Englishman, sailed through Eggemoggin Reach in 1605 and anchored near Cape Rosier in Brooksville.

In 1626, under the direction of the Plymouth Colony, a settlement was established at Pentagoet on the Bagaduce Peninsula in Castine to carry on fur trading with the Indians. This settlement changed hands several times between the French and English until 1704 when the English gained final control.

The first grants of land between the Penobscot and Donaqua (Union) Rivers were granted by the General Court of Massachusetts in 1762 to Deacon David Marsh of Haverhill, Massachusetts and 352 other citizens of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Each of the townships, numbered one through six, was to be six miles square; they were: (1) Bucksport; (2) Orland; (3) Penobscot; (4) Sedgwick; (5) Blue Hill; and (6) Surry.

In 1762 and 1763, a team of surveyors determined the lines of the townships. The first settler in Bucksport was Joseph Gross, a former soldier at Fort Pownall, who arrived in 1763. He is not considered the first permanent settler because he moved to Orland in 1764.

Colonel Buck, an officer during the French and Indian War and a member of the surveying team, settled in the township in 1764. He is considered by most authorities to be the

first permanent settler and it was for him the town was named. He built the first sawmill on the Penobscot River that year (1763), as well as several houses. Later, in 1771, Buck built the first ship on the river, a 60-ton schooner named "Hannah".

The town continued to grow for the next several years. The occupations of the early settlers were milling, fishing, hunting, trapping, haying and trading. The mill that Buck built continued to operate, providing boards, staves, shingles, and clapboards for the settlers and for shipment to Boston and other ports.

The settlers were able to catch salmon, shad, and bass in the river and alewives in the smaller streams. The fish were first taken by spearing and nets and later by what were known as halftide weirs. These weirs and nets were built across deep coves from point to point and were used to catch shad and bass. Fishing continued to be an important source of income for the townspeople for many years.

Agriculture was never a very important occupation for the settlers. What crops were grown were usually for personal consumption. Hay, however, was an exception. The harvesting of hay from salt-water meadows, in Duck Cove and in the Winterport marsh, kept hay boats busy trading along the waterfront all year long.

The year 1775 saw the beginning of the Revolutionary War and a British blockade at the mouth of the Penobscot River. This prohibited supplies from reaching the settlers, causing great hardship. A poor growing season caused their crops to fail, forcing them to seek provisions from the Continental Congress.

In 1779, the Americans attempted an attack on the British fort in Castine, but were forced to retreat. In retaliation, the British sailed up the river to Bucksport and burned most of the town, forcing the inhabitants to flee. With the end of the war, many of the former residents returned to the town to rebuild it.

The town was incorporated as Buckstown in 1792. Nine years later, in 1801, a valuation of all the towns in the county was undertaken. In that year, Buckstown had 133 polls (male voters), 94 dwellings, 7 shops, 36 horses, 107 oxen and 284 cows.

By 1800, the sea had become very important to Buckstown's economy. Shipbuilding was the town's most important business and continued to be so for a long time. Vessels were built for fishing and coastal and foreign trade. In 1905, Commander Robert E. Perry's ship, the "Roosevelt" was launched from a shipyard on the eastern side of Verona Island. Undoubtedly, much of the labor and craftsmanship that was used to build the ship came from Bucksport. Perry used this ship to make two trips to the Arctic, including one in which he reached the North Pole.

During the 1800s, ships would tie up at the docks along the waterfront. Cargoes that were unloaded here included sugar, rum, molasses, hides, tobacco and salted fish. Large ships destined for Bangor but too large to sail up the river would stop in Buckstown and transfer passengers and goods to smaller boats, horses or ox-drawn carts to finish the trip. Passenger sloops sailing from Newbury, Massachusetts to Bangor stopped at Buckstown to unload supplies, passengers and, occasionally, livestock. Shipping and shipbuilding had turned Buckstown into a busy port.

The town was prospering so well that the Penobscot Bank was established in 1806. It was the first bank on the Penobscot River, but four years later poor management forced it to close. Nearly all the businesses in the town closed as a result.

In 1814, the British again occupied the town, but caused little damage. The name of the town was changed to Bucksport in 1817 to reflect its importance as a port of entry for ships.

The Eastern Maine Conference Seminary was founded in 1848 and three years later constructed its first building. It was founded by a group of Methodists as a co-educational school for their children. The first class contained 27 students, then grew to an enrollment of over 300. Debts, however, forced the school to close in 1933. The Franco-American Oblate Fathers (of Lowell, Massachusetts) purchased the building and grounds in 1940 to train priests to be missionaries.

By the late 1860's, Bucksport was a center of maritime activity. Main Street was lined with many large houses and busy shops and inns. The most famous of Bucksport's inns is "The Jed Prouty Tavern." First known as the Robinson House, it is thought to have been built in 1783. Through the years it has been a major attraction in the town, serving many famous people including John Tyler, Andrew Jackson, Jefferson Davis, and Daniel Webster.

The first railroad was built in the United States in 1828. Eight years later, Maine had its own rail line, running between Bangor and Old Town. A line connecting Bucksport and Bangor was discussed for many years, but it was not until 1869 that the townspeople voted to have rail service in the Community.

The Northeast American and European Railway Company laid track between Bucksport and Bangor as part of a series of tracks between New York and Nova Scotia. Service by this company began in 1874, but due to financial difficulties, the lease was terminated two years later. The track continued to be used for the next six years by the Bucksport and Bangor Railroad Company. Finally in 1883, the Maine Central Railroad (MCRR) took over the track on a 999-year lease. Each time the track changed hands, the gauge was changed, making it impossible for equipment to be transferred from one line to another. It was changed to the standard gauge when MCRR took control. The Bucksport branch of the MCRR carried goods and passengers inland for many years.

The advent of railroads hurt shipping nationwide, as well as many of the smaller coastal shipping ports including Bucksport. By taking away its commercial importance, the town was deprived of its traditional economic base.

Automobiles continued the de-emphasis of shipping and also caused a decline in railroad activity. Bus service between Bucksport and Bangor began in 1934, which forced a reduction in the passenger train schedule. In the 1920's two passenger trains ran daily between the two communities, but by 1942, passenger service had ceased.

While Bucksport lost much of its ties with the sea and the hustle and bustle of a shipping port, it did regain its economic base. In 1930, the Maine Seaboard Paper Company opened a new mill, producing newsprint. Originally employing 450 persons and turning out 100,000 tons of newsprint, it grew, by 1942, to employ 690 persons with an annual output of 100,000 tons of newsprint, 5,000 tons of specialty products, and 7,000 tons of sulfite pulp. The mill was sold in April, 1946 to Time, Inc., and in August of that same year, it was resold to the St. Regis Paper Company. By 1959, the plant had increased the number of employees to between 700 and 800. In 1984, St. Regis merged with Champion International and in 2002, the Champion mill was purchased by the International Paper Company. Today, International Paper is the major employer/producer in Hancock County, employing over 1000 people (as of November, 2002) and producing lightweight, coated paper for magazines and catalogs. Since 1987, over \$400

million dollars of improvements have been made to make the facility a world-class producer of lightweight coated paper.

The following is a summary of some of Bucksport's historical highlights:

Pre-1603	Indians settled in the area
1603	Martin Pring visited Penobscot Bay and the Islands
1604	Champlain visited the region
1604	French established a settlement on Mount Desert Island
1605	George Weymouth visited Penobscot Bay and the Islands
1636	The English established a settlement in Castine
1762	Deacon David Marsh was granted six townships between and Donaque (Union) Rivers
Penobscot 1764	Colonel Jonathan Buck established the first permanent settlement
1770-1771	The first sawmill on the Penobscot River was built and the schooner "Hannah" was built
1775	The settlement had 21 families
1775-1781	The American Revolutionary War took place
1779	The English burned most of the town, and residents fled
1784	Many former residents returned and rebuilt
1789	Hancock County was incorporated
1792	The settlement was incorporated as Buckstown
1804	<i>The Gazette of Maine</i> , first paper on the Penobscot River, began publication and continued for six years
1806	The Penobscot Bank began operation
1814	The English occupied the town for about 8 months during the War of 1812
1817	The town's name was changed to Bucksport
1821	Orrington was split off from Bucksport
1848	The Eastern Maine Conference Seminary was founded
1874	Rail Service began and the Bucksport Water Company received its charter from the Legislature
1887	The Buck Memorial Library was erected to the memory of Richard P. Buck of New York
1905	The "Roosevelt" was built for Admiral Perry
1926	The Luman Warren School was constructed
1930	The Maine Seaboard Paper Company began operation
1933	The Eastern Maine Conference Seminary was closed
1936	The Walter G. Gardner School was constructed
1946	In October the paper mill was sold to Time, Inc.; Maine and Seaboard merged with Time, Inc.
1946	In December the paper mill was resold to St. Regis Paper Company
1950	The G. Herbert Jewett School was constructed
1954	The town swimming pool was constructed
1960	The town garage was constructed
1963	Bucksport High School was constructed
1966	The Public Safety Building was constructed
1974	The tennis courts were constructed
1978	The Solid Waste Transfer Station was constructed

- 1980 Wasson Field was purchased
- 1984 St. Regis merged with Champion International
- 1988 The new primary treatment plant began operation
- 1989 The waterfront walkway was constructed from Old Ferry Landing to Rosen's Department Store
- 1990 The Luman Warren School became an administrative office, the new K-3 school was constructed, and the new town office was constructed
- 1991 The new pool house was constructed and the skating rink and support building were constructed
- 1992 The Senior Citizens' Center was constructed at Bucksport Square Apartments, the waterfront walkway was extended to the new town office, Googins Park was reconstructed, the town celebrated its bicentennial, and Champion appealed property taxes
- 1993 The recycling center was constructed at the Transfer Station, the old dump was closed, and the Bucksport Comprehensive Plan was adopted
- 1994 The Champion tax appeal was deliberated in front of the State Board of Assessment Review
- 1995 The State Board of Assessment Review ruled in favor of the town regarding the Champion appeal, and the Economic Development Plan was adopted
- 1996 The Land Use Ordinance was adopted
- 1997 The marina at Marina Point was developed, land was purchased by the town, the town dock was expanded, Consumer Maine purchased the Bucksport Water Company, and the Town Council approved Tax Incremental Financing for paper machine 5 rebuild
- 1998 The Public Safety Building was renovated and 3,000 square feet added to building, and Consumers Maine constructed a water treatment plant
- 1999 Route 1 was reconstructed, a basketball court and Miles Lane Field 2 were constructed, an all weather track and bleachers were constructed at Carmichael Field, the Buckstown Heritage Industrial Park was constructed, Miles Lane Field 3 was constructed, and Consumer Maine constructed a standpipe
- 2000 The Main Street Parking Lot was developed, gateways were constructed at the north end of Route 15 and at the Route 1-15 intersection, Tax Incremental Financing was approved for the new turbine at Champion, the Silver Lake property was purchased and plans were prepared to develop the property into a wildlife and nature reserve, the Riche Monument was repaired, a Community Health Plan was completed, and the first business located in the industrial park
- 2001 The north end of Main Street was reconstructed, the high school addition was completed, the waterfront walkway was extended to the Verona-Bucksport Bridge, Champion was acquired by International Paper, the outdoor volleyball court was constructed, the Public Works Director's office was constructed, the Family Dollar Store was the first business to locate in the Horizon Business Park, and property was purchased for the new middle school

4. Updated Historical Resource Information

a. Prehistoric Sites

Prehistoric sites refer to those that predate written history, generally before the first European settlement. As mentioned in the 1993 plan, three sites were destroyed by development during the early 20th century near the downtown. A fourth site along the Penobscot River, identified by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission as a Native American shell midden, was not mentioned in the earlier plan. The shore was a common place used for shell middens. Other prehistoric sites may be awaiting discovery along the banks of the Penobscot and Narramissic Rivers, as well as along the shoreline of the town's great ponds. An archaeological survey would help identify these sites.

It may be challenging to conduct a survey along Silver Lake since the shoreline has been raised artificially and the earlier shoreline is now under water.

b. Historic Archaeological Sites

The MHPC lists two historic archaeological sites in Bucksport. These are shipwreck sites that date between 1902 and 1931. The exact locations are kept confidential to protect from vandalism. According to the MHPC, no professional survey for historic archaeological sites has been conducted to date in Bucksport other than a survey conducted for a power line transmission corridor. Future surveys could focus on sites relating to the earliest European settlement of the town, beginning in the 1760s.

c. Historic Buildings and Structures

The 1993 plan did not report any buildings in Bucksport listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are now nine properties on the Register. These include the James Emery House, the Bucksport Railroad Station, Jed Prouty Tavern and Inn, the Buck Memorial Library and the Phineas Heywood House. These buildings are all on Main Street. The other four structures are the Elm Street Congregational Church and Parish House, the Duck Cove School (Route 46) and the Brown-Pilsbury Double House (Franklin Street).

National Register listing offers properties limited protection when federal monies are involved. Consideration must be given to alternatives before federal funds can be used in a project that might alter a property listed on the Register. There are also certain tax advantages to renovating historical properties. Listing does not restrict the decisions of private property owners to do what they wish with their property, but property that is altered by an owner in a way that destroys its historic character may be subject to removal from the Register.

The MHPC sponsored a survey of the village in 2000. Further analysis of this survey should be made to determine the feasibility of establishing an historic district that includes properties that are listed on the Register or are eligible for listing.

5. Threats to Historic and Archaeological Resources

While there are no immediate threats, there is the risk of unintentional harm if a parcel containing such resources is developed and the developer is unaware of its historic value. This

can be addressed through land use ordinance standards that require the identification of historic and archaeological features as part of the land development review process.

6. Assessment of Existing Measures to Protect Historic and Archaeological Resources

The subdivision ordinance addresses protection of historical resources only in a very general way. Some additional protection is offered by the listing of the nine properties on the National Register of Historic Places. Consideration should be given to incorporating preservation standards and guidelines to enable the Planning Board to assess the impact any development may have on historic and archaeological resources.