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SHANTY IRISH TO lace curtain Irish.
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If you want to eat where the locals eat, this is where you'll find them—where prices are right and the talk is familiar.

Cover Photograph: Tonee Harbert
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ABOUT THIS ISSUE—Who can write and photograph a place and its people better? Somebody born in the place—an insider—who knows what a raised eyebrow or a manner of speaking means? Or somebody from another place—an outsider—who brings a fresh eye and open mind to the place?

Here at 19 Pine Street where this issue of Salt originated, we don’t see an absolute answer to that question. Both perspectives have their obvious strengths and they have their hazards.

You can be so close to something you can’t see it—or so close you can’t bring yourself to tell it. On the other hand, you can be so new to something you’re gullible—or so new you see only the obvious.

We try to get around these hazards by involving a mix of insiders and outsiders in the collecting and making of the magazine. We work as teams, and we review our work in group editing sessions. Before an article or photographic essay is published, it has gone through many major redrafts and reshootings.

Take Claire Holman’s article about the Franco-Americans of Lewiston. Claire is an insider who was born in Lewiston and speaks French fluently. She brought an immense understanding of Lewiston to her article. But she was protective. There were insightful things she couldn’t bring herself to say. Her early drafts of the article were as distant as viewing Lewiston through a telescope.

With insistent group urging, Claire’s strong insider voice came through in later drafts. We see her anger about the putdown of Lewiston as an ethnic mill-town. We begin to acknowledge the city’s strength, to meet its people, to listen for French cadences, to hear music.

Or take Laura Johnson’s article about the Swedes of Stockholm. Laura is not a native. She is an outsider. She was so impressed by the cultural richness of Stockholm that her first drafts were like term papers. Then the article took on depth. Partly at the urging of the implacable insider-outsider group. Partly because Laura is half Swedish herself and was “adopted” by a strong Swedish family, who let her share part of their lives, including a death in the family.

CONTRIBUTORS

KATE JEREMIAH was a double major in photography and American Studies at Hampshire College when she joined the Salt program. She wanted to prove herself a photographer. She did. Her photographic essay about a Russian church in this issue was preceded in the last issue by photographs of first generation immigrants and a Finnish community.

LAURA JOHNSON had spent 19 of her 20 summers with her grandparents in Ogunquit, Maine, when she applied to the Salt program. A resident of Illinois, she was majoring in English and Communications at Hope College in Michigan. When she chose to write about the Swedish community in Stockholm, she was an “outsider”—but she was also half Swedish (See above: About This Issue).

CLAIRE HOLMAN taught English as a second language before coming to the Salt Center. She wanted to learn to interview, write and edit. She is a Lewiston native, fluent in French (See above: About This Issue).

ROBERT ST. JOHN has been a Maine resident since he was ten. A senior majoring in English at the University of Southern Maine when he came to Salt, his goal was to write in-depth stories about native Maine people. He plans to be a journalist.

CLAIRE SULLIVAN wanted to photograph the mills of Maine when she joined the Salt program. A photojournalism major at Kent State University, she illustrated the Lewiston article in this issue. Her mill study will be published in a future issue.
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Millinocket on Tenderhooks

ILLINOCKET is an unreal place these days. In one way it’s like a boom town. People are walking around with a fistful of money, dazed at their new-found wealth. They might be lottery winners or prospectors who have struck gold.

In other ways, Millinocket is like a bust town. Houses are up for sale that can’t be sold and people are wondering if they’ll have a job day after tomorrow.

The sudden wealth comes from cashing in Great Northern Paper Company stock for a hefty profit. Employees have new money, lots of it, while their houses are next to worthless and they may lose their jobs before long. It’s a situation that draws investment people to Millinocket like a swarm of locusts. All those liquid assets in Millinocket pockets needing a place to go.

Meanwhile the mood in Millinocket is anything but tranquil. Millworkers are on tenderhooks wondering what’s going to happen to them next. This has been the climate ever since Great Northern Nekoosa Corporation succumbed to Georgia Pacific Corporation’s hostile takeover a few weeks ago.

John Mingo, president of Local 24, United Paperworkers International Union, says it’s a state of wait and see, as far as the millworkers are concerned. How’s morale? “We’re on tenderhooks. I guess we have been for five or six years now.”

Uncertainty about the future began with massive layoffs after Great Northern became Great Northern Nekoosa. The corporate perspective changed and the ties to Maine people and the community weakened, as international marketing concerns replaced the old paternal order.

John Mingo’s son was laid off in Millinocket four years ago and went to work in a Great Northern Nekoosa mill in Wisconsin. Now he faces a possible layoff there.

As for John himself, did he get rich from the stock sale? No, he didn’t have any to sell. “I was hourly. It’s the people on weekly and monthly payroll mostly that had stock to tender.”

Called the “magic city of the North,” Millinocket was a town “wrested from the wilderness,” according to Maine historian, David Smith.

Wall Street was involved in the project, so ambitious was its scope. The man who orchestrated it all was Garrett Schenck, a New Jersey native, who built a powerful consortium to break the early monopoly of International Paper Company over newsprint production.

The building of Millinocket by Great Northern was a dramatic event. A thousand men worked on the project, among them 400 Italians brought in from Boston, as well as immigrant Poles, Finns and Hungarians, according to David Smith’s account in his article, “Wood Pulp Comes to the Northeast, 1865-1900,” published in Forest History, April 1966.

In Bangor, the stevedores or “mudlarks” handled 80 cargos of bricks and 20 of cement.

For the milltown created by Great Northern in 1899 and 1900, this is a momentous change in ownership. Great Northern didn’t just come to Millinocket. Great Northern bought 252,000 acres of Maine wilderness in 1899 for $4.13 an acre and built a town.

By the end of the summer, the mill had been built, along with 140 houses, a hotel, church and school. The population was 2,000 at the time the mill opened.

Still, even in those days of rampant expansion and unbounded optimism about the wealth to be gained from making paper from Maine timber, there were many ups and downs in the business, David Smith reports. A number of mills failed and consolidation took place. He quotes a piece of doggerel circulating in the trade which might...
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Emily Kinney's Triumph

E M I L Y K I N N E Y graduated from high school last June. It was not an ordinary graduation and she was not an ordinary graduate. She was among 74 adults who got a high school equivalency degree during graduation ceremonies at Noble High School in North Berwick.

For Emily it was a personal triumph and a family triumph. She had worked for four years to gain the degree. When she entered the Noble Adult and Community Education program, she was unable to read.

Emily was the first person in her family to get a high school degree. Her son followed her example when he went back to school to earn his degree, as well.

Emily Kinney was one of four chosen to speak at graduation. Andree Burk, administrator of the program, says this was because of her unusual perseverance and personal strength. In her speech, Emily advised, "Don't be embarrassed about going back to school when you're middle aged or older. It feels great to do something for yourself and the people in Adult Education don't care how old you are!"

The story of the problems Emily had to overcome to learn to read is told in an article on illiteracy in the December, 1988 issue of Salt.

It is a story with a happy ending. Last fall Emily Kinney bought her first magazine. She can now read it.
ETHNIC GROUPS OF MAINE
Some Basic Facts

THIS is the second of two special issues of Salt about the ethnic groups of Maine.
In the first issue, sociologist Peter Rose of Smith College challenged the notion
of an American melting pot which produces a homogeneous culture. Instead
he offered another metaphor, that of a lumpy stew. In that analogy, distinct ethnic
groups retain their individual character, while the gravy is the common mix of shared
regional experience.

STATISTICS from the 1980 census tell us that the stew has occurred in Maine. About
half of the population claimed either mixed ancestry or didn’t respond to the question
about ancestry at all. Since 1980, only the sketchiest information is available about
ethnic immigrants in Maine, like those from Cambodia, Vietnam and Afghanistan. The
1990 census will undoubtedly reveal a larger percentage of Asian people in Maine.

TO LOOK BACKWARD, here’s an interesting footnote provided by anthropologist
Harald Prins. The official census of 1764, which covered the area of Maine from
Pemaquid to Piscataqua, counted more blacks than Native Americans, 322 blacks to
300 Native Americans in a total population of about 22,000. The black population was
concentrated in Kittery, York, Berwick and North Yarmouth, brought to Maine by ship
captains and probably working in sawmills. Census takers were off by 50 percent in their
count of Native Americans, Harald Prins says, since they didn’t venture into the wild
country north of Pemaquid.

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LOCATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN MAINE

Franco-Americans: biggest concentrations in Aroostook County, 28,932, followed by counties
with large former textile cities (Androscoggin County with Lewiston, 25,514, and York County
with Sanford and Biddeford, 23,483). Irish-Americans: urban concentrations—Cumberland
County with Portland, 13,659; and Penobscot County with Bangor, 9,203. Next is Aroostook
County, 5,771. German, Scottish, Dutch and Asian: scattered throughout the state. Italian-
Americans: Cumberland County with Portland, 5,851. Polish: heavily Cumberland County,
1,505. Swedish-Americans: in Aroostook, 1,228, Cumberland and Penobscot Counties 1,100
each. Greek: York County with Biddeford, 911, Cumberland County with Portland, 622.
Slavic: Portland, Bangor, Richmond. Native Americans: on reservations at Indian Island,
Pleasant Point, and Peter Dana Point. Blacks: concentrated near military installations.
St. Patrick's Day Parade of 1990 drew about 200 marchers in Portland. It was the tenth annual parade for the sons and daughters of Ireland, held in the heavily Irish West End. The flag of Ireland was raised to flutter over Portland harbor for three days. The sun broke through the rain clouds, bagpipes played, songs were sung, and speeches delivered. Gasps when Democratic candidate for Congress Jim Tierney intoned with rolling rrr's, "Oh it's a terrible, terrible thing to be Irish," and guffaws at the follow-up, "But then consider the alternative."
HAPPY T. PATRICK'S DAY
Desmond Egan, left, and Bart Lally, right—cousins and both originally from Galway, Ireland. Bart is president of the Portland Irish-American Club.

Eddie Murphy, left, and Skip Matson, right—two Portland Irish who live in the West End.
SPEECHIFYING at the flag raising at this year’s St. Patrick's Day Parade. The man speaking in the green top hat with Ireland emblazoned on his sweater is Eddie Murphy, grand marshall of the parade and president of the Tyng and Tate Street Neighborhood Association. He has organized and directed the parade since its beginnings. The day before the parade, he was seen painting the park benches a new coat of green. Other sponsors were the Portland Irish-American Club and the Portland West Neighborhood Planning Council led by Jim Oliver, who was master of ceremonies for the annual event.
There are two kinds of people in this world. Irish, and those who want to be.

Pat Keane

Born on St. Patrick’s Day and so Irish he claims green blood, Jack Hayden never had a doubt about which of the two kinds of people in this world he is. He is in his element telling Irish stories at a family get-together tonight.

The stories are of Munjoy Hill, where Jack was born 65 years ago. Stories of longshoremen and shanties, nicknames and families. Sometimes stories that make fun of the old dialect, but no one gets huffy. The Irish are doing the telling.

Each member of this family group brings a distinct experience to the table. Peggy Hayden and her brother, Michael Keane, escaped the bleakness of an ancient farm in rural western Ireland where the last breath of Gaelic can still be heard.

Frank McVeigh and his brother, Brendan McVeigh, broke loose from the industrial ghettos in Belfast, northern Ireland, where a long simmering conflict between Protestant Loyalists and Catholic Nationalists refuses to die.

Jack Hayden grew up in the tightly-knit, Irish neighborhood that once spanned the Portland waterfront from Munjoy Hill to Gorham’s Corner. He’s the only third generation Irish American at the gathering tonight, the only Portland native.

“Tell the story about the peanut butter and jelly sandwich,” Pat Keane says to her brother-in-law, Jack.

“I think that was John O’Toole’s father,” Jack announces. “He was with a couple of other Irishmen, and this is way, way back, when they spoke half Irish and half English. And they were more at home in Irish than in English because they were always together.

“He was a great big guy, and he used to sit up in the shanty, you know, during lunchtime. He opens his bucket, one of those steel ones, and he reaches in there, and he goes, ‘Peanut butter and jelly sandwich! That’s four days in a row,’ and he sails it down on the wharf.” Jack throws his arm like he’s tossing a sandwich.

“Well for crying out loud,” some guy says, ‘Whyn’t ya get Nell to make ya somethin’ different sometime?’” Yelling as indignantly as this Irish longshoreman must have, Jack erupts, “I make me own sandwiches!”

“But he had so little English. Remember, ‘You’re fired,’ Peg?” Jack asks his wife.

“Oh yeah, they tried to fire him,” Peggy says.

“‘I won’t fi-yah,’ he told the guy. ‘I won’t fi-yah, I won’t fi-yah.’”

Brendan McVeigh takes a deep breath. He has been telling me about “the troubles” in northern Ireland. We are in the family room of his ranch house in South Casco.

He has asked me to share a traditional Irish meal with his family. Corned beef and cabbage. Boiled potatoes and onions. A fresh loaf of Irish bread.

For Brendan, Irish bread takes on a world of meaning. “What we eat here as Irish bread, I never saw in Ireland,” he explains. “I find that the Irish in this country and the Irish culture which is nurtured and kept here, the old traditions, they don’t exist in Ireland anymore, or to a very, very little extent.”

Brendan’s brother, Frank McVeigh says, “If the Irish culture is going to survive, this is where it’s going to survive.”

Dinner ends and coffee is served in the family room. Brendan talks of Belfast as he knew it to be. “Belfast is a big series of ghettos, you know, and they all border on each other. Here’s ‘the Protestant Shankle,’ and then there’s a demarcation line—
His stories are of Munjoy Hill, where Jack was born 65 years ago. Stories of longshoremen and shanties, nicknames and families.

Above: Jack and Peggy Hayden. Peggy is the sister of Michael Keane.

you can see it—it's mixed—and then it's all Catholic.

"We were living in an area where—we weren't isolated—but we became entrenched in that area. We lived there, and we had our entertainment there, because it wasn't all that safe to go into town, or go into other areas. If you were spotted as one from the other side, you were quite likely to find some trouble."

In the other room, Brendan's two sons are playing with toy-guns, and a loud "Freeze" is heard followed by gunfire. Their game seems to provide a sound track to the story Brendan is telling. "But on the 15th of August," Brendan says, "I came out of the house to go to work, and I found it really strange. There was a big, red glow in the sky, just aglow, and it was because some of the streets down the Falls Road had been set on fire."

"The Loyalists had come over, they had crossed over from their district, and they had set fire to a whole bunch of streets on the Falls Road, which was a predominantly Catholic area.

"Conway street, Cooper street—they just went along the houses—kicked the door in—BANG—petrol bombs—set the houses on fire—shot into the houses at anybody. They didn't care about the people. This might seem like a one sided view, but this is what happened."

Belfast had become a war zone. Bitter political enmity pent up for generations tore northern Ireland apart. Green Nationalists wanted all of Ireland united as it had been in the 12th Century, before the British invasion. They were opposed by Orange Loyalists, the descendants of Protestant, British settlers in Ireland from the 17th Century onward. Loyalists were afraid of the economic, religious, and political consequences of a British decision to pull out of Northern Ireland.

Brendan tells me that the conflict is not a religious one, as many people believe it to be. The Protestant-Catholic dispute is not the root cause, but fuel to the fire.

Terrorism became an everyday thing in the lives of Brendan and his wife, Mary. Mary remembers passing British soldiers patrolling the streets on her way home from school each day. One night in Belfast, as Brendan and Mary sat in a movie theater, outside violence had stormed up, and a curfew was put into effect.

Coming out of the theater, unaware of the impending trouble, they found the streetlights had been shot out, Brendan remembers, "We were very scared, I'm not afraid to admit..."
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Jack Hayden is a third generation Irish Mainer who traces his American antecedents to his maternal grandfather, Patrick Donahue. Patrick immigrated from Galway, Ireland to Frankfort, Maine, and later to Portland. Tonight Jack is remembering the Irish families he grew up with on “the Hill,” Munjoy Hill.

“I lived at 39 Kellogg Street,” Jack remembers. “The Brennans lived at 35 [the family of the former governor of Maine who is now Congressman Joseph E. Brennan]. And the Mulkerns at 38 [Father Steve Mulkern]. That was the way it was about 1930, when we were about five years old.

“It was Jews, Italians and Irish that lived up on the Hill,” Jack says. “And all these people, they moved up on the Hill because they were trying to move up in the world.

“It was all Irish and all longshoremen on the lower southwestern side of the Hill. Many of the Irish families packed together here were related and shared the same surname. This was so, because when the Irish immigrated to America, they normally followed their relatives.

Known as “chain migration,” this phenomenon held true on Munjoy Hill. There were so many Irish that it was difficult to keep track of all of them, and nicknames became a way of distinguishing Coynes, Foleys, Kennedys, or Connollys from one another.


“Course, the reason they got those names is great, too. How about Ice Cream Foley?

“This guy, he had just come over, and this is 1912. The Irish girls used to work for puncans up on the West End.

I ask Jack what a “puncan” is. “A puncan is a Yankee Protestant,” he says. Iris Gaelic, pronounced “pewkahn.” Frank Keane adds, “It’s a derogatory statement.”

“On Thursday night they’d have the kitchen open,” says Jack. “So they’d have all the Irish people in, you know, all the Greenhorns, and they’d cook for them. [Greenhorns are newly arrived Irish immigrants.]

“So here’s Mike Foley, just came out, and he’s eating ice cream. They had that for dessert, and he had never in his life had it.

“So Bridge says to Mike Foley, ‘How do you like the ice cream, Mike?’

“‘Ahhh, it’s awful good, but fwy do dy make it sooo cooold?”

Everyone laughs, and Jack doesn’t stop. “So that’s where he got his name.” Before anyone can recover, Jack has lined up another one. “And Corned-Beef Coyne. Do you know how he got his name?” Nobody has the time or the wits to answer.

“What’ll ya have for dessert, Mike?”

“More corned beef, please!”

“That’s Corned-Beef Coyne, the old fool. What’ll ya have for dessert? More corned beef, ma’am.”

Laughter has filled the room now, like the pleasant smell of the Irish bread and tea that are about to be served. With all this talk about food, you’d think that Jack would be hungry by now, but eating is the last thing on his mind.

“Hey Mike, you know what’s another great nickname,” Jack says, jumping up from the table.

“This guy’s walking home one night,” Jack begins to walk in place, and says, “He’s walking and, say here’s the sidewalk.” Jack points to the floor. “And there’s the window right there. He’s walking home like this.” Jack keeps walking.

“Minding his own business,” Peggy says.

“He’s going by and the window’s wide open.” Jack moves closer to the window and pretends to look in. With a wicked grimace, he turns back to the group and says, “Here’s a girl, you know, getting ready for bed, like this.” Jack imitates a girl undressing.

Smirking and howling now, Jack says, “And the guy just goes, ‘Well, what the hell is this?’ Frank McVeigh says, ‘He knew what it was.”

Jack says, “So they grabbed the poor bum, and they said he was a ‘Peeping Tom.’

“You know what his nickname was?” Jack says, turning back to the group. “Venetian Blinds!”

Jack continues to talk about the early Irish immigrants and their problems with English. “They used to butcher he and she, you know, ‘hay,’ and, ‘shay.’” Jack yells, “Now don’t you fight with him, remember shay’s your brother.”

One of the hardest words for these Irish people to say was umbrella. Jack says they would say “number nell” instead. “They’d say, ‘Give me my number nell,’” Jack says, “you know, with the gloves and scarf and everything.”

I ask Jack where all the old time Irish people in Portland have gone, and he says, “Dead. Down over Cassidy’s Hill.” Cassidy’s Hill, Jack says, “is the old cemetery at the top of Danforth Street before you go down to the bridge. They used to say that when you go down over Cassidy’s, you’re on your way to Calgary. That’s the end.

“When you think about it,” Jack continues, “That’s where all the Irish people have gone, the old timers. I’m the old timer now, and they’re all gone.

“Munjoy Hill changed like the city changed and it changed because the war changed it. When the Second World War came,” he says, “just before it, 1940, when the shipyard
I find that the Irish in this country and the Irish culture kept here, they don't exist in Ireland anymore.

Above: Brendan and Mary McVeigh.

opened, they were building the Liberty Ships over there at Spring Point, over in South Portland. People came from all around to work there, then the neighborhoods broke up.

Jack continues. "Then, after the war, different people came in. All kinds of people, and that's how it changed. Now it's gone, and there are no neighborhoods now."

The final death blow to the neighborhoods came from the building the Franklin Street arterial and the city's urban renewal projects, which took blocks of homes, displacing ethnic groups. What had once been a haven of struggling ethnic liveliness on Munjoy Hill is now a melting pot of urban indifference.

"I find that the Irish in this country and the Irish culture kept here, they don't exist in Ireland anymore."

Above: Brendan and Mary McVeigh.

All there was, was surviving on it," says Michael Keane with conviction. "And you're not a pound ahead at the end of the year, either," adds Peggy Hayden, his sister. They are remembering life on a 22-acre farm in Forba, County Galway, Ireland.

Inside the ancient house, a large stove in the center of the downstairs heated the whole house. It was used for cooking as well. There was no electricity until Peggy and Michael were in their teens. There was no indoor plumbing either, and there is still no bathroom.

"It was the biggest bathroom you ever saw," Peggy remembers. "So big," adds Michael, laughing, "that it was under all the stars of heaven."

Ten children living in a small house, Michael remembers. "On a typical day, we'd come home from school, and we'd all have our chores to do. In the spring, of course, we planted potatoes, but," he says, "all the tilling had to be done by hand, because there were so many rocks.

"We'd stay out in the fields until eight or nine at night, and then do our homework. We were never in bed before midnight, and especially not our father. He spoke only Gaelic, and he used to stay up late every night and read. He was very much in favor of education."

Their father was a very devout Catholic, and Michael remembers, "He would never miss mass." Peggy adds, "And, he never missed the Rosary. He said it every single night."

"The only English he knew was, 'Well, Well,' which he used to say when he came home and caught us children up to no good." One time Peggy and Michael were up on the thatched roof jumping off into the snow, and they both fell through the
Michael left a 22-acre farm in County Galway, Ireland that had to support ten children. Now the land stands idle.

Above: Michael and Pat Keane.

roof, which was very tedious to fix, especially during the winter.

Their father came home, saw what they had done, and marched around the house hollering, "Well, well, well, well," in a deep voice. Both Michael and Peggy laugh about it now.

Peggy and Michael were both educated by a couple who taught many children. The wife taught kindergarten through second grade and the husband taught third through eighth grade. "Oh, they crucified you, they killed you. I hated school. I hated it so much. Graduating into third grade, and moving from the wife to the husband," stammers Peggy, "it was out of the frying pan and into the fire."

In Ireland, pockets of the Irish (Gaelic) language could still be found, called "Gaeltachts," and as Peggy says, "It used to be that the farther west you went, the more Irish speaking." Where Peggy and Michael grew up, west of Galway, is one of the main areas where the Gaelic language has survived.

Michael says that students were awarded money, "if they would not speak English at home." A growing cultural pride resulted in the attempt to bring Gaelic back by confronting the widespread use of English in Ireland. It was an attempt to regain what the British had tried to extinguish, beginning with the Statute of Kilkenny in 1366. And, Peggy says, "We weren't allowed to speak English in our town. It was forbidden."

If Peggy and Michael had stayed in Forba, they could have expected a limited future. Part of what drew Peggy away was the lack of opportunity. "I was not a farmer, not in my heart, never was, and never could be either," she says.

Had Michael stayed he could have had a comfortable job with the post office in Galway, but, as he admits, "I was impatient. I wanted the money now, and there was a lot of red tape involved with it."

"I ALWAYS wanted to come to the States," Peggy says with a smile. Peggy was sixteen when she arrived in New York in 1952 on the ship Britishic out of Liverpool. Her mother had just died and an aunt who lived in Portland "wrote to me and asked if I had any interest in coming over. And I certainly did," Peggy says. "I couldn't imagine living anywhere else."

Once in Portland, Peggy lived with her aunt and uncle for eight years. Her uncle spoke Gaelic flu-
ently, which made the transition easier. "I was right at home there." Remembering her aunt, Peggy says, "I was lucky, she was just like a mother to me. We got along great."

When Peggy first arrived in Portland, she went back to school. "I went to night school at Portland High School for one whole year," she says, "but I found it quite different from over there [Ireland]. Our teacher's name was Mr. Burke, and it was all in English, total English. I just felt, I don't know, timid, and there was no way I would stand up in front of the class and read or anything like that."

Peggy did not return to Ireland for nine years. "When I went back home," she says, "I realized how much I had missed. I went back over and stayed for, I think, 18 months." There she saw her younger brothers and sisters, who had grown considerably since she'd left. Peggy's brother, Padráic (Gaelic for Patrick) was in the process of immigrating. She waited for him and together they came to America.

Peggy says she remembers being called a "Yank" when she went back to Ireland, but she says she was able to take it in stride. Any animosity she experienced from her old Irish friends and relatives about leaving her place of birth disappeared over the time she was back.

"It was great, and I think I got it out of my system."

"I couldn't stand the weather. It's raw and cold, and there's an awful lot of rain." Exhaling a deep breath, Peggy recalls, "At night, hearing the wind howling. It doesn't howl here like it does over there." Like the banshee that warns of approaching death. "Eerie, eerie howling of the wind."

Her brother, Michael, spent eight years in England before he came to live in America. This is where he met his wife, Pat, who is from Clifden, Ireland, also in County Galway.

"Pat had no intention of coming over to America until I started putting a bug in her ear. It took her about two years to make up her mind."

When Michael and Pat first came to Portland, Jack and Peggy sponsored them and helped them to get on their feet. Sponsoring involves taking responsibility for the new immigrants for at least a year, acting as a guide to the new culture, until the immigrants can take care of themselves.

Michael Keane today is a carpenter for Casco Northern Bank. It's a steady job, providing security and a good pension. Pat is a medical officer at the Cumberland County Jail. Of the inmates at the jail, she says, "I tell 'em off when they need to be told off."

Of all the ten children in their family, only one stayed behind to carry on the farm. At the death of the father, it was the tradition in Ireland that the oldest son become sole owner of the land.

Peggy remembers her older brother. "He was alone on the farm a good number of years, five or six, seven years. We all went our different ways. But," Peggy says, "he died suddenly, died of a heart attack." After his death, the land became property of all the children.

"There was nobody home, and it was all closed up," Peggy relates solemnly. Then their brother, Padráic, announced he was interested in going back to the farm. Padráic immigrated to Portland in 1962, and Peggy says, "He still thinks he's in Ireland. He never left the old country. Never left home." Michael adds, "Yeah, he belongs in Ireland."

Like some Irish in America, Padráic has not become an American citizen, even after living here for more than 20 years. Padráic toyed with the idea of going back to work the farm. He changed his mind.

Now the farm has been signed over to another brother, Tom. "But nobody has really wanted to go back there to live," Michael says, "so today our first cousins are grazing it."

Peggy adds, "Probably eventually, Tom will go there and live. My brother, Tom, loves Ireland, and he wouldn't want to live anywhere else. "I wouldn't want to live there, 'course this is my home now. I said to Mike once we were here too long to go back."

Gorham's Corner, at the intersections of Pleasant, Fore, Center, York, and Danforth Streets, was once the old hangout for Irish in Portland. A working-class neighborhood, it was home to many new immigrants who had flocked to Portland. "The shanty Irish" they were called by Portland Yankees.

Jack Hayden was born near Gorham's Corner earlier this century. Back then, boarding houses had been set up specifically for the new Irish to live in, and the networks of Irish families there were a safe harbor to come to. They took care of each other, and many of these related families kept in close touch with Ireland through personal letters and newsletters.

Jack remembers, "It was Depression time, and everybody was so poor that you didn't notice that you were poor. Everybody was poor."

At that time, work was hard to come by, but the closeness to the then thriving waterfront made Gorham's Corner attractive for many Irish longshoremen. These new immigrants were not literate in English, and it was difficult for them to get a good education.

Like other American cities, Portland did not readily accept the Irish. "Shanty Irish" wasn't the only unflattering epithet. Sayings like "Thick as a Mick" labelled the Irish as stupid and unteachable, because they didn't go to school and couldn't speak English.

Peggy Hayden, Jack's wife, remembers seeing signs like "No Irish need apply" in the windows of some Portland area businesses when she arrived in 1952.

Michael Keane tells an anecdote about tavern owner Eddie Griffin
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that flies in the face of this anti-Irish bias.
"Eddie Griffin is as Irish as they come," he says.
"Oh Jesus cripe," Jack agrees.
"Yeah, he is a riot. He has a bar room, the Dugout in South Portland," says Peggy.
"Used to be the Dugout. Now it's the Griffin Club."
"When they moved across the bridge to South Portland, he took all those goats and treasures," laughs Michael.
"Oh yeah, that was great. Eddie Griffin was willed into South Portland. He was moving from the St. Dominic's Parish where all the Irish were.
"They said, 'We don't want those people over here. They haven't got nothing. They ain't got nothing!'"
"They didn't want the Irish in South Portland," says Pat.
"Eddie Griffin said, 'When our family moved across that bridge with one cow, three goats and 125 chickens, we marched them across the bridge. I guess the Christ we showed 'em we had somethin'!'

Once Irish immigrants had been here for a generation or two, they overcame some of the difficulties that had earlier plagued them. Prosperity meant they could move out of Gorham's Corner, and typically they went either northeast, up onto Munjoy Hill, or southwest into the West End of Portland.

These Irish were then called "Lace-Curtain Irish." As the nickname suggests, they had hurdled the disadvantages that had earlier kept them down.

Jack Hayden moved from Gorham's Corner up to Morning Street on Munjoy Hill when he was two years old. Jack's father, Daniel Hayden, was a tough old Irishman, a longshoreman all his life, who was born in Portland. Jack remembers that his father, "was very good with figures and running the ships. He even knew how much grain filled a ship," Jack says.

Of most of the longshoremen,
Jack says, “They were honest. They didn’t ask for much, and they didn’t look for much.” Jack also says, “They were always waiting for a ship to come in, so they sat around and talked a lot. They were good talkers.”

When Peggy and Jack first were married, they lived in a house on the Eastern Promenade with Danny. “But,” Peggy remembers, “we didn’t stay for long.” Danny used to get up at the crack of dawn every day, even though he didn’t have to be to work until three hours later.

“He thought everyone else should get up then, too,” says Jack. In the early morning all they heard was “Burning daylight. Time to get up.” The old man would yell through the house, pounding on all the doors, pounding on all the doors, “Rise and shine!”

In the front yard, before the sun came up, Danny watered the lawn, and he would sometimes spray into the open bedroom windows to wake everyone up. At Christmastime, “He used to nail down the Christmas tree into the hardwood floor with big spikes,” Jack says.

Getting married was one thing Jack thought he’d never do, at least until he met Peggy. What was it that brought Jack to the altar after 40 years of bachelorhood?

“Irish,” Jack says with grin, “I always knew I’d marry an Irish girl.”

Peggy says she first met Jack, “In the chair. Not the electric-chair, but,” Peggy says, laughing, “In the dentist’s chair in his office.” Jack has been a dentist for over 35 years now in the same building on Congress Street in Portland.

“Peggy kept developing toothaches all the time,” Michael, her brother, says. Mike’s wife, Pat, says, “Peggy was a patient of Jack’s, and she used to schedule her appointments for as late as possible on Friday night, hoping Jack would get the hint.”

As Peggy says, “C’mon, Pat. You know me better than that,” Pat laughs and continues the joke. “Peggy would then announce to the nurse that she didn’t have a ride home, and she’d make sure that Jack overheard it.”

Jack laughs, “Peggy was the one who had the car, and it was me who was going to walk.”

Peggy says of Jack, “He was Irish, probably more so than I was.” Though Jack didn’t speak Gaelic when Peggy met him, she remembers, “He gave it a hell of a shot.” Peggy describes Jack as “Craicailte” (pronounced ‘Crackulcha’, it’s the Gaelic word for crazy.)

A quick walk from Gorham’s Corner to State Street is the oldest Catholic church in Portland, St. Dominic’s. As Jack remembers, “It was all Irish at St. Dominic’s.” The Irish families who flocked to St. Dom’s were very large and the church played a decisive role in their lives.

“Damn seldom did anyone ever miss church, for any reason. If anyone did, everyone knew about it, but nobody I knew would even dream of ever missing mass,” Jack says.

“When I was a kid in the thirties, you wouldn’t even dare go into a Protestant church. You wouldn’t even try it. No way. The only time we went into a Protestant church was after choir practice at Cathedral when I was a kid. They had the Holy Rollers, and they’re still there up by the Boys Club.” Jack reminisces, “We used to sail in there and sail snowballs in at the congregation and run like hell.”

TODAY the Irish in the Portland area are proud of their Irish background. Pat Keane talks about it at a celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Irish American Club in Portland, which now has about a thousand members. Over 250 Irish Americans have turned out for the celebration.

“There were Irish before that were not as proud of their ancestry as our generation is,” Pat says. She feels that the new generations of Irish in America hold the key to the Irish culture’s future in this country.

“I know my uncles came over and they didn’t care if they ever went back. They came over, and for the most part forgot everything. All they remember about Ireland were hard times and hunger and the reasons that they left.

“They had unpleasant memories of Ireland, and they really didn’t want to remember them. They were here in a new world,” Pat continues, “and they wanted to fit in the new world, and forget about the hard times of the past.

“Then our generation came along and we were more conscious and more proud. When they came over,” Pat says, “they were uneducated. I think we’re more aware.”

Michael and Pat Keane became citizens of the United States in 1970, and Michael says, “I had no problem with it, because this is a better country and a freer country. More opportunity.” Pat says, “Our children can automatically become citizens of Ireland just by applying for it, and so can our grandchildren.”

Michael and Pat Keane helped start the Irish American Club with an organizational meeting in their living room 15 years ago. Together with Jack and Peggy Hayden, they are four of its first charter members.

Michael and Pat, and Jack and Peggy, have all gone back to Ireland many times, sometimes together, sometimes separately. Peggy says, “It’s great to go back. It’s great to see the people. It does something to you.” Peggy adds, “There’s always a kind of pull there, but I would find it tough to say I’m back for good.”

Michael adds, “Yeah, that song by Johnny Cash called ‘Forty shades of green,’ is very true. It’s about him going back to Ireland, flying in on an airplane, seeing all the farms. It is forty shades of green, and it’s forever new to you, no matter how many times you see it.”
SWEDES OF AROOSTOOK

By Laura Johnson
Photography by Tonee Harbert

News travels quickly in a small town. Whether it is good or bad, there is a steady and reliable way that word weaves its way through a community; a raised eyebrow, gossip over coffee, notes passed in school, or talk at the grocery store.

Tonight it is happening in Stockholm, Maine, a tiny Aroostook County town, settled in the late 1800s by Swedish farmers. The news came quickly without a chance for anyone to prepare for it. Elna Sodegren is dead.
Everyone knew when she was taken to the hospital in nearby Caribou. Everybody was concerned, but nobody really thought that this vital and strong woman could be so quickly overcome by the brain cancer. February to October. Nine months.

All it took was a phone call. It was a quick, matter-of-fact way of letting people know. Stan took the call at the store, and suddenly the easy atmosphere changed. No matter how ready you think you are, death catches you by surprise.

It was the obvious place to call. Everybody comes to Stan's to get coffee, see friends, and gossip. Usually it's a lively place, but tonight as if a switch had been flipped, people grew quiet. Elna Sodegren was everybody's neighbor and everybody's friend. One of the ways to deal with death is to talk about it and that's exactly what happened.

Elna Goranson married Johnny Sodegren 38 years ago in a small ceremony at her home in Jemtland, Maine. Elna was a daughter of two of the original Swedish immigrants. Johnny's grandfather came with the first wave of settlers to Stockholm. Both Johnny and Elna kept Swedish as their mother tongue.

After the wedding, Elna joined Johnny on the farm in Stockholm that has now been in their family for three generations. The house is right on Route 161 which is really the only major strip of concrete that connects them and most of Stockholm with the outside world. Everybody knows where they live because it's right on the way to everywhere.

Elna lived on that farm the rest of her life. She was a farmer. She was a teacher's aide in Caribou. She raised five children. People don't talk about her accomplishments but about her strength of character—about her strength of body. Her daughter says, "I can remember going to the laundromat with seven garbage bags full of clothes. And she was working in the fields, and she'd jump off the tractor, run in, set the bread, run back out, run in, punch it down, put the loaves, go back out . . . ."

Elna Sodegren's love for people ran deep. She was thoroughly involved with her community. As a member of the Lutheran Church, she not only participated in worship but in regular events and functions. She belonged to the historical society. She encouraged her family to join in the traditional community events of Midsommer Festival in nearby New Sweden, and the Christmas celebration of St. Lucia. She was warm-hearted and friendly—qualities she shared with the community.

Now, here I am in the community. It's my third visit to Stockholm and my second time as a guest in the Sodegren home. I am half Swedish. Johnny Sodegren is all Swedish and he teased me and promised to make a full Swede out of me. I wanted to learn more. To explore the Swedish tradition as it now exists. The Sodegrens welcomed me, made me a part of the family, and showed me what it is to be Swedish in this tiny town.

I began to fear that Elna's death would affect my time with the Sode-
grens. To Johnny Sodegren, and to his daughter Beverly with whom I'd been spending a great deal of time, this was a wife, a mother, a confidante, and a best friend. This loss affected them to their very soul. So now, just as I was starting to become a part of the family, I was acutely aware of just how much of an outsider I was.

“W
E’VE ALWAYS been here,” Johnny told me as we sat in his trailer home sharing a cup of coffee. Only 20 feet in front of where we were sitting is a large, solid home. It’s empty now. Fifteen years ago Johnny moved his family into the trailer. It’s cheaper to heat. “See this house sitting in our yard? That’s the first place. Three generations went through this old home.” Now the family house is used mostly for storage.

John Sodegren settled in Stockholm a little more than 100 years ago. Johnny’s grandfather. The Sodegrens were potato farmers and Johnny stayed in Stockholm to carry on the work that his grandfather and father had begun. He was raised in Stockholm with his six brothers and sisters. He’s the only one who stayed. Except for a few years in the service, he’s always been in Stockholm, living right on the farm.

“I loved it,” he emphasized. The farm was small—only about 25 acres. So there wasn’t much room to expand. Johnny thinks it might have been different if they could have planted more potatoes. “And then I worked out. I’d farm and then after, in the winter months, I worked in a potato house. And then in the spring I’d go back to farming.”

The soil is not ideal for farming and the land is hilly. And although farming is a 24 hour a day undertaking, Johnny worked the farm and had a job in the road department.

“My wife and I—we did the farming. So that kept us really busy. And if I didn’t have time to get all my work done, my wife would. She could drive a tractor just as well as I could!” Johnny’s shoulders shook with laughter. They used a pesticide spray program in the summer and that took up all the extra hours they didn’t have. It was times like this when the teamwork between these two farmers became so necessary. “I’d have to spray usually on the weekend, but once in a while I could do some in the evenings. But most of our spraying was done on the weekend when I was home. And if I got behind, then my wife, she’d take over and do it first good weather we had.”

After many years of this pattern, farming and working out, Johnny became discouraged. It simply wasn’t profitable enough. Long hours, hard work, and small returns other than the satisfaction of getting your work done for the day—it was the same for everyone in the area. So what kept them at it? Johnny and Elna hoped that the farming combined with their outside salaries would provide enough money to put their children through school.

And that’s also what eventually caused them to quit farming altogether. “We decided that we’ll quit after awhile. As the children grew older, we couldn’t see any...” I could hear in his voice the faith that he still had in the land and the hope he couldn’t utter.

“We kept hoping the farming would help even though I was working out. ‘Cause I was working out, and taking may wages, and putting it back into the farm instead of keeping it for the family.” Johnny is now retired after 27 years with the state Department of Transportation.

I moved into the kitchen to get some more coffee. Standing at the sink and peering into the darkness, I saw the 1947 tractor standing still in the moonlight. As Johnny had been speaking, I felt the heaviness of his decision to leave the land that was so much a part of him. Johnny’s bare fields that had been nothing but dirt to me now represented the silent but steady devotion of the Sodegrens to the land.

It all seemed clearer now. Now I began to understand the deeper meaning of the people and the place. The people of Stockholm. My first trip to this place, I could only see the surface of things.

SIX HOURS on the road to Stockholm had given me plenty of time to convince myself that my trip would be nothing more than a wild goose chase. The only thing that kept me going was my interest in Swedes and advice from a friend that this was the place to be if I wanted to experience their surviving culture.

My car continued to swallow the long stretches of winding roads and
SWEDISH RECRUITS WERE THE TOWN’S FIRST SETTLERS.

Above: The Town of Stockholm.
the miles disappeared behind me. But as I grew closer to Stockholm, my heart began to beat with heavy thuds, reminding me that I was a stranger entering a strange place.

Parked near the Stockholm post office and the museum, I stood outside the car desperately searching for someone who could tell me where I really was. Just at the moment I turned to get back in my car, Margaret Wardwell came into view.

I walked up to her and asked who I needed to speak with to arrange a tour of the museum. It was closed for the season.

"Why that would be me I guess," she responded, grinning over at her companion. "If you drive me to my place, I'll get my key and we can have a quick look inside."

Our quick look inside turned into nearly three hours. The museum building was originally one of the first stores in Stockholm, and because of its size, easily lends itself to being a museum. A large front room is filled with a photo exhibit donated by townspeople to show the beginning of the town.

Behind that is a mock store complete with an original table and banana split bowl from Annie's Ice Cream Shop. The Veterans' room, the library, the kitchen, and the barn are full of displays. Going up the narrow stairs to the second floor, I entered into a completely duplicated classroom and then a typical bedroom from a home early in the century.

I learned Stockholm is the result of a planned immigration effort to neighboring New Sweden, Maine. In 1870, William Widgery Thomas was appointed Commissioner of Immigration by the Maine legislature. He went to Sweden, recruited 51 people and returned to the farmland that had been set aside in this northern Aroostook township.

As this farming community grew, the people moved into the neighboring areas. Towns like Stockholm, Westmanland, and Jemtland sprang up. Records show that five families
came to Stockholm the first year, and by 1890 the census reported 66 residents.

Several lumber mills established themselves in town around the turn of the century, causing a huge increase in population. Stockholm became a boom town. Waves of French Canadians and Yankees came from the nearby St. John River Valley and from downstate.

In 1930, this tri-cultural community of Swedes, French-Canadians and English had just over 1,100 residents. Then the Depression hit Stockholm, along with the rest of the nation. The mills closed, and three quarters of the townspeople left. Today, Stockholm has shrunk to about 320 people.

In the 1920s there were many stores and shops in the center of town. Eureka Hall had a bowling alley, a barber shop, and a place for dances, meetings, and movies. Annie’s Shop had an ice cream parlor and just off the main road was a boarding house and hotel. Mills were on both sides of the street and five schools were built. The town had three churches—Baptist, Catholic, and Lutheran.

The churches and one of the stores still remain, but virtually every trace of the busy town earlier in the century has been erased. Now, lined up on Maine Street is the museum, the post office, Legion Hall, service station, and the fire department. A senior citizens’ center uses part of Eureka Hall, but it looks closed and a “For Sale” sign hangs in the window.

It was nearly dinnertime when I waved good-bye to Margaret Woodwill at the museum. She had directed me to Stan’s Grocery for a good cup of coffee and a place to stay the night. As I drove away, I couldn’t help but laugh at how different I felt after only a few hours in Stockholm. I certainly didn’t know how much more I’d be laughing after a couple of hours at Stan’s.

Stan’s Grocery and General Store—home of the ten cent cup of coffee—sits right on the shore of Madawaska Lake. Stan says, “If we don’t have it, you don’t need it,” and he truly does make the world’s best cup of coffee. Every square inch of space is filled with something. It may have been there since he opened 25 years ago, or it may be brand new. This collection of products is all neatly balanced on less than level shelves. The building follows the slight dip in the ground beneath and it leans different ways in different places.

It smells like an old place—kind of musty, like the hamburgers fried back in the kitchen, like cigarette smoke, and above all like coffee. The sounds of laughter and talking are only background noises in competition with the TV that is blaring the evening news.

Stan Thomas himself greeted me, asked me where I was from, and what had attracted me all the way to Stockholm. When I told him of my interest in the Swedes, he grinned and said I was in the right place because he usually “gets a few” in every night. After the dinner hour, business began picking up and by
nine o'clock that evening the place was full. Being a stranger in town, I got to talk to everybody, and the more I talked, the less like a stranger I felt.

All the regulars know how to play cribbage. Before I knew it, another steaming cup of coffee was in front of me and someone was teaching me how to play. The cigarette haze grew thicker and the stories flew faster and faster, partly because my ears were a new audience. Fathers were handing me the Catholic church. The Swedes worshipped at either the Lutheran or Baptist church. The separations were clear.

The reason the separation was so strong is that the first generation immigrants—both French and Swedish—clung fiercely to their traditions and heritage.

“When we grew up, there was a distinction. Yes, very much so,” Johnny explained. “Even in school. We were separate. You might even say clannish! Because at school, we'd get in a snowball fight or something, and there was always two sides!”

Laughter.

His laughter grew to outright bursts as he told me some of the nicknames the French and the Swedes had for each other. “Boy, they called us everything, and I don't think we held back either! They called us Swedish pickles, and we called them frogs. But it was nothing... there was no real animosity.”

Sometimes the differences were more obvious and less humorous. If one of the schoolchildren did not want to be understood by the others, it was simple to switch from the English required in the classroom to either French or Swedish. This use of native language carried over into the workplace. “Where I worked it was the same thing. Our supervisor was French, and the monitor of the crew I worked on was French. And this supervisor would come in, and right off even though there were usually two of us Swedish there, he'd start rattling off in French.”

Not to be outdone, Johnny and his friend would fix them. So they started talking between themselves in Swedish. “Hey,” barks Johnny, “it didn't take them long to get on to English then!”

Time mellowed the ethnic division. Johnny's daughter, Beverly, didn't feel the same distinction growing up and doesn't think the clannish feeling will ever return.

“You don't feel the difference anymore, to me, between the different cultures that our parents did,” says Beverly.

“My mom talked about that. I think on her hill [her girlhood home], it was mostly French people. She walked to school with a boy who was French every day. Most of the Swedes were on one side. They were actually on one side of the river, and the French were on the other side of the river.”

In Beverly's generation, “Everybody's pretty much intermarried, anyways, cross cultured, so we don't think anything about it. I don't think our children will either.

“I mean the strength and the pride in being what your heritage is, I think that will always remain. The French are very proud to be French, and the Swedes are very proud to be Swedes. There's no animosity maybe like there used to be. Everyone's on an equal basis.”

Johnny has his own philosophy about how this once divided community became so close. “It's just the fact that I think you accepted it. They're in town, and we accept them.
"I THINK once you have roots in Stockholm, you always have some definitely root connections right through," says Johnny’s youngest daughter, Carol. “Like whenever we have vacations or long weekends, we always come home. I still consider this home. Stockholm.”

Once again I was sharing a cup of coffee with Johnny and Elna’s two daughters, Beverly and Carol. It was a ritual now and it certainly made me feel like a part of the family. This time we talked about the significant impact this tiny town has had on their lives.

Both women attended state universities to get their college degrees. Carol met her husband at school and since then has not lived in Stockholm. Beverly, after spending a year in Alaska, came back to marry her sweetheart from Stockholm. She and Greg lived in Connecticut for two years, and after he completed his college degree, they returned to Stockholm. Even though one daughter has returned and the other hasn’t, they both hold the same values.

“Again we say a root connection,” Beverly told me, “It was your roots. But it’s your family primarily. It’s the family you want to be near to, as well as the community. All the advantages of living in the country, and a place you feel secure. And you know the schooling is good, and your church is also your family. So we decided to come back.

“We don’t have any intentions of leaving here,” she continued. “This is home for both of us.”

Beverly has a three year old daughter, Lena. As a mother, she feels that Stockholm is a solid place to be raising children. “Everywhere you live, no matter where you live, it’s not going to be ideal. There’s always going to be some problems and there’s going to be some terrible things that happen. But I feel very secure with Lena.

“People have come back to raise their families here. Because of the community feeling and the family feeling—not only in the town but in the churches. It’s a wonderful place. It’s kind of old fashioned in a sense to bring your children to the harvest suppers, church suppers, potluck dinners, winter carnival, and the ski carnival . . . and have family participation.

“My own concern is not as far as the community, what it will be like in the year to come, ‘cause I think it will be solid,” Beverly helped me understand. “I guess my only concern is worldwide. What’s the world going to be like in ten years—and other things that I don’t really have any specific control over.”

It is different for Carol. She lives with her husband and two year old daughter Anna in Wells down in the southern portion of Maine. It’s a sharp contrast to the way of life in Stockholm and it concerns her.

“As far as the school system, that is a concern of mine.”

Carol is very emphatic about this. “Because in Stockholm, not only was it a good school system and you had a good solid education, but it was almost like private tutoring. A lot of your classes only had six to twelve [students]. So if anybody needed help, you got that individual help. And it was always readily available.”

Anna attends a large daycare center in South Portland and Carol thinks that her daughter enjoys it there. But, unlike Stockholm schools, Anna does not receive the individual care that Carol would like. Because of the nature of her husband’s job, they are constantly on the move. They will be moving for the fifth time in December. Carol told me it’s difficult getting used to different homes and neighborhoods.

Stockholm is stable, and social interaction is very home oriented. “That’s one thing I like about the area,” says Carol, speaking of Stockholm. “You center around the home first before you seek outside.

“Whereas in the city, you think outside first—‘Let’s go bowling, let’s go to a movie, let’s go to the mall.’ You don’t think about staying home.

“One thing that was very hard for me to get used to when I went outside the area was not to get to know your neighbor,” she continued. She told me how she felt living in the city of Portland. “You didn’t trust them [neighbors], ‘cause you didn’t know what they could do. When you do get to know your neighbors, it’s a very slow process.”

“Everybody in Stockholm knows everybody else,” said Beverly. Although it is a tiny town, there is rarely a night when there is nothing
to do. PTA meetings are well attended. Most of the people get involved in church functions. Seasonal events such as winter carnival or Midsummer’s Celebration in New Sweden are open to everyone.

“A lot of times when we socialize, as a group of friends and as a group of people, it’s when there’s some big function going on in the town,” explained Beverly. “Like the baby showers here and the wedding showers are huge.”

“With both of our weddings we had around 300 people,” Carol joined in. “You don’t just send an invitation to your relatives and a few friends. You announce your wedding in all the churches, and even in some neighboring towns. To invite EVERYBODY to your wedding.”

The three of us laughed while Beverly summed it up, “You don’t send local invitations. We just send them to the church and they read them. The majority of the people read the announcements in the church. And everybody comes who’d like to come. It’s wonderful.

“That’s where a lot of socializing takes place, besides the family. Like Carol said, I think we start within the family first, and then it’s through the church and these big activities.”

Last Fourth of July they had a big Swedish pancake breakfast at the Brigade Lodge, Beverly recalled. “It was so well attended. Usually the young people help participate in that. And that’s a big plus. It’s not like someone doesn’t know you or doesn’t invite you along. Everybody includes everybody.”

“It’s the baby showers, and the bridal showers, and the funerals,” Beverly gestured rapidly with her hands as if it would help me to understand. “And the weddings. Everybody gets together and dances with everybody!”

GOOD MORNING!” Beverly said to me over the telephone. “I hope it’s not too short notice for you, but Gregory got his deer yesterday, and we’re making Kolv tomorrow night.”

I was anxious to get back to the Sodegrens again near Christmas time when so many Swedish traditions are observed. Beverly says Christmas starts with the making of Kolv, a homemade Swedish sausage.

Of course I would go. The next night around seven o’clock, the dining room table was cleared of dinner dishes and the lacy tablecloth. Beverly brought all the spices to the table, Greg went outside to get the fresh meat, and Johnny started to clamp to the edge of the table a stuffer that resembled a meat grinder with a long nozzle.

Out came a big white enameled tub that was chipped around the edges and the bottom from years of use. We put Swedish music in the cassette player and Beverly carefully laid the recipe card labelled “Elna’s Sausage” on the table.

“I’m glad Lena will be old enough to remember what we’re doing this year,” confided Beverly. “I don’t think she remembers much from
last year." Three year old Lena had stepped up onto a chair and was happily up to her elbows in 26 pounds of ground venison, pork and beef.

While I carefully measured the spices into the tub, Beverly worked the meat in. It's like kneading bread except she was more careful because the spices need to be evenly mixed.

First I added rice and crackers. Then sage, allspice, and poultry seasoning. The finely chopped onions that were making our eyes tear were the final ingredient. Greg continued to supply us with warm water to make the meat more workable and less cold on our hands.

Beverly, Lena, and I all had our sleeves up to our elbows and our fists in the meat. Lena was full of questions like, "Mommy, when do we make the sausage?" Beverly carefully answered her daughter's questions and told her that what she was learning she could teach her children someday.

Greg made several little patties out of the meat we had been working and put them on the stove to cook. Johnny had finished setting up the stuffer and was now ready to offer his expert advice as a taste tester. When they were cooked, Greg brought the patties to the table and we all took a tiny piece.

I rolled the meat around in my mouth, sucked on it to taste each flavor, and found myself delighted with this Christmas custom. The Korv was almost perfect—just a little more sage.

Now the careful work began. Stuffing. First we blew out the casing so it would be simpler to ease it onto the nozzle of the stuffer. It's made of processed cow intestine, and although it is thin, it is strong enough to hold the sausage together.

I put the piece of casing up to my lips, forced the opening with my tongue and blew, checking for holes the entire time. My lips began to sting after several tries because of the salt used to preserve the casing.

Soon we developed an assembly
CHRISTMAS STARTS WITH THE MAKING OF KORV.

Above: The Sodegrens at work making Korr, a traditional Swedish sausage.
I threaded the casing onto the stuffer and guided it as Johnny sat behind and cranked the meat through. Greg tied off the ends with string and Lena and Beverly wrapped and labelled each sausage for the freezer. We turned over the cassette of Christmas songs and as we worked, I learned a little more about the traditions of the season.

The Swedish celebration of St. Lucia at this time of year is a special event in the community as well as in the Sodegren home. Every year this same unique time of celebration takes place in Stockholm, Maine, and Stockholm, Sweden.

Johnny feels that this tradition captures some of the true spirit of Christmas because, "Its purpose is to go and visit the shut-ins, the elderly, and the house bound." The children come singing hymns, bringing season’s greetings, and it gives the people a chance to serve coffee and cookies to their young guests. It also brings adult members of the community together since the town is so spread out, the parents need to drive their children from home to home.

Johnny laughed at my wide-eyed question about whether the children still wore wreaths in their hair with lighted candles. "Now it’s dangerous with the real candles. Now they have battery. They can turn the lights on and off in the crown, which is a lot safer. But years ago they had the real candles."

Elna had always made sure that her family was involved in the St. Lucia celebration and it was a special day when both their daughters had their turns at wearing the Lucia crown. The children stand out in what is sometimes the very blustery and cold weather and visit not only the homes of the Swedish folks, but the French and Yankee households, too.

Beverly is especially sensitive about the passing down of their heritage. “There’s a lot of Swedish families here, but there’s not too many families left that are 100 percent Swedish. We are Swedish.

“But even our generation, I married someone who’s half Swedish and half English. So that’s been broken. And I know there’s a little sadness that goes along with that.”

Of the five children, Beverly is the only one who has married someone who is part Swedish.

“We still have the tradition and the heritage that our family, our parents gave to us. And we’ll continue those and teach those to our children so that they’ll continue with them. But still to me, there’s a little ending to what was constant.”

Eager for me to understand how important this is to her, she continued, “They didn’t always teach us the ‘why’ either. But you learn as you get older, why you do the things you do. It was just part of the family. In fact, they told us it was Swedish, but we didn’t pay a lot of attention to it. We just did it. ’Cause that’s what we did.

“That’s a gift my parents gave to me. My cultural heritage. To get me started and then it was my choice whether or not I’m gonna continue on in the Swedish traditions. Those were the best gifts my parents ever gave me.”

Three hours later we’ve finally finished making Korv. A boiling kettle of water was ready on the stove and we dropped a large sausage in to cook. We changed the cassette to softer Christmas music, and returned the handmade lacy white table cloth to the table.

As Beverly and I reset the table with red candles and the best dishes for the traditional beginning of Christmas, she pulled me aside and said, “I’m really glad you’re here. Mom would have liked it. And even though we miss her, it’s good to have you here sharing something that was so special to her.”

As we all gathered around the table in the candlelight with fresh homemade rolls, the newly made sausage, and the sweet juice it had cooked in, Lena kept asking her mother and her mo-far [mother’s father in Swedish], why we were having a party. Both her mother and her grandfather explained that after making Korv they had “dypp i grytta” when you ate the sausage and dipped the rolls into the cooking juice. Beverly promised to show her how it was done if she agreed to be silent while Greg said a blessing.

We all joined hands in a circle around the table. Greg offered thanks to God. Lena broke in with a child’s impatience to demand, “Mommy, teach me now!”
IN, RICHMOND, MAINE, St. Nicholas Church is one of four churches established by Slavic immigrants who began settling in the Kennebec River Valley in 1952. The “Russian Colony,” as it has come to be called, was begun by Baron Vladimir Kuhn von Poushental, who bought tracts of land in a depressed Maine town and convinced immigrants to buy a home or a farm for a few thousand dollars. Some of the Slavic peoples were farmers or artisans, others were from the Russian intelligentsia or nobility. They brought with them the Orthodox church rituals banned in their homeland.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATE JEREMIAH
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LEWISTON: OFF THE TOURIST TRACK TO A PRETTY NICE, PRETTY FRENCH CITY

By Claire Holman
Photography by Claire Sullivan

Look over here. This is Lewiston—too big to be undiscovered and not off the beaten track, not at all. In fact, it’s right on I-95 about halfway between Portland and Augusta. Out of state visitors do not come here. It’s not like the places people love to go to in Maine, not the near-mythical picturesque New England town, nor a factory outlet shopping mecca.
It’s a milltown.
To say town is deceptive. Lewiston is a city and together with Auburn stands as the second largest of the three ruling metropoli of Maine. In the popular jargon of the day, they're known collectively as LA, a term neatly ignoring traditionally grating rivalry.

Lewiston has industry and immigrants. Does this sound like Maine? Just look on the state seal: a farmer, a sailor, both in colonial-looking garb, a pine tree, a lounging moose. No sign of industry, factories, mills, shoe shops, any of that. No hint of influx of ethnic groups. Perhaps that is why Lewiston gets picked on, the target for slurs.

The epithets are telling. One launched by a former state art boss calling Lewiston the “cultural desert” of Maine. Another in the form of an unsubtle question posed by a student, “Did you know Lewiston is called the ‘armpit of Maine?’”

I know that. People who are from Lewiston do know it. It’s a little cross for this mostly Catholic, mostly Franco-American, town to bear, and to wear, too. Every place is known for something, and this place is known for its “Frenchness.”

Still, what do they show, these slurs? Not what it is: a whole place alongside a big river, full of people who have no doubt that they live, willingly, in a small city in Maine.


Listen to the rhythms of textiles, well-oiled machines on the move, sometimes for three shifts steady, stopping only for a hitch, a repair, and then back on again. Looms with names like families: Dobby, Jacquard, Malmo, Malimo, looms weaving, shuttles flying, fibers carded smooth and twisted spun, threads—warp and woof—tightening, and in the tenter, whole fabric stretching straight and even. Woolens, yes, some; cotton once king; some of these sounds are ghost-echos now where synthetics and non-woven fabric are whirling and stamping themselves, ever more electronically, into form.

Swooping down Court Street in Auburn—that’s Route 100—a modest four-lane bridge with generous sidewalks sets a stage before the Great Falls of the Androscoggin River. When the water is high, the falls are commanding waves of roiling white water and massive rock decorated periodically by brave graffiti artists. This year a red and blue Grateful Dead emblem is not yet washed away.

Up above the falls is the railroad trestle, lookout point for those well apprised of the train schedule and not given to vertigo. Look down, the water rushes and twists under the tracks. Almost too compelling, it’s best not to look at the white water that way for long. Death lies below the trestle, and the two cities are full of tales of adventurous boys who did not make it across before the train came.

Here’s a trestle story from my childhood, told me by a friend about his father's family. Once five of the brothers were walking along the trestle. When the train came, the vibration was so great that they all fell into the river and drowned. The vibration just shook them into the waves.

It was a horrifying tragedy for the parents and the twelve remaining children in his family. Five children lost to the river, and there were still twelve left.

An industrial river, paper mills upstream and textile mills at various points, the Androscoggin is a true beneficiary of the Clean Water Act. Still capable in the sixties of sending a rotten smell into neighborhoods well beyond its banks, and rushing those unfortunately dunked in it to the hospital emergency room, it is now an average grade C river, not quite clean, still pale brown and strong-smelling, but no longer dangerously filthy and widely offensive.

Straight ahead across the bridge, the works of the Age of Progress are on display. The industrial revolution came here, classically, through textiles. Left to right a panorama of red brick. The mills stretch a good mile or more, Libbey, Bates, Continental, Hill, Androscoggin, Pepperell, each boasting a clock or flag tower to mark its individuality.

Most of the mills are not really along the river, but line the canal, a water switchback of human creation with steep vertical sides. Find it at Canal Street, at the crest of the hill on Main Street, a slight quarter mile up from the bridge. Water power made the mills move, and it was through the canals that water was channeled. It was a plan for profit, starting up in the 1840s, an early example of industrial urban engineering.

Following the canal—really a winding network of

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**Lewiston is home to New England's largest ethnic group, the Franco-Americans, whose members left economically unworkable farms in Canada for factory jobs in the south.**

Facing Page: The mills of Lewiston near the Great Falls of the Androscoggin River.
Terry logged ten years in the restaurant business, five of those out of state. She came back to Lewiston to settle where her mother and seven siblings live. "I wouldn't even move to Portland."

Above: Theresa Henry, who works at Casco Belton.

canals—the facades of the mills emerge, stately and imposing, from just above the water's edge. Up close modern changes are visible. Once immense windows have been blocked up to leave small, energy conserving ones. Signs from small companies seem to crop up every couple hundred feet. These businesses fill much of the space which was once exclusively textile territory. A few buildings appear empty.

Listen again and you can hear a human sound that is part of all this: French, spoken now mostly by an older generation, but felt widely in the English of several generations. The central Maine accent that must have dominated once is buried, shadowed by this romance language sound, more lilting, that came to us from where the Great North Woods suddenly give way to densely settled farm land, above the northern border—c'est la province du Quebec, bien sur!

Quebec, yes, gave the local tongue its idiosyncracies: questions end with an upward flair, T-H's streamline into T's or D's and then H's appear unexpectedly out of turn. Whole words—me's or there's—punctuate the feeling of a phrase. It may not come all at once, sometimes it just hints of itself, but then it may speak out, "What d'you tink of dat car, dere, eh? Me, I prefer the Holdsmobile every time. You know what I mean, eh?"

A HUGE MILL complex, the biggest one, rises from its moat on Canal Street like a medieval castle. This is Bates Mill, maker of famous, expensive bedspreads, a half-mile of brick five stories high. At the main entrance, a brass plaque displays a regal crown, the company symbol. Next to it a wrought-iron gate leads to the bridge that crosses the canal.

Nowadays Bates is not so big and high above the water. Casco-Belton Corporation has rented out a chunk of unused space for its operation: making and inserting the wiring and controls in electric blankets.

Manufacture, manufacture. How often do we imagine the hands that worked each thing? It may be new, but hands have touched it, hands have touched it.

Up there on the fifth floor at Casco Belton is where
Theresa Henry works with her sister, Janet. They’ve been there for two years. Terry has a beautiful face: a small pointed chin, just a bit of an upturned nose, and large, exotic pale green eyes in a frame of fine, blonde, casual hair.

Downstairs somewhere in Bates Mill, her aunt Lillian Arsenault works for the company she’s been with, almost exclusively, for some thirty years. Terry’s mother and grandmother all spent time working in the mills, different mills at different times, but mills all the same.

Not everyone thinks of working at Casco-Belton as millwork. The jobs vary; at times the workers can move around from job to job. In the mills traditionally people have had a trade that gave them a name they could go by: weaver, spinner, oiler, battery hand, spooler, loom fixer, doffer. People saw a piece of the operation and at the end someone finally handled the finished product. The millworkers sometimes moved to a different trade, but the operation was too vast to work on each part from start to finish.

At Terry’s job, things are on a different scale, “We learned every job in the place, my sister and I. We can go from start to finish. We could take a blanket raw and do everything to it till it’s done. Except for binding, we never learned that.” Mostly, though, the main job, the one that takes the most time is putting in the wires.

Asked about her job, this is the part Terry volunteers to describe first, “I like it, I like it a lot. I work with my sister, Janet—we work face to face all day .... It’s really neat .... We have this big table, a BIG table and . . . . it’s lit up so that you put the blanket on it, you can see through the blanket. There’s channels in the blanket. We have rods with wires all around them.

“And it’s just like weaving: I untie the rod and I pass it to my sister, she lets a wire down and passes it to me. We just pass it back and forth. And then we pull the harness through with poles. It’s kind of hard to explain, but it’s basically weaving the blanket with wires.”

There’s a season for each job at Casco-Belton, and when the weaving is done, it’s back to making the innards, the harness of wires that goes in the blankets. Terry doesn’t like this job, which they do three of the innards, the harness of wires that goes in the blankets. Terry doesn’t like this job, which they do three of twelve months a year. It’s not her style and it’s painful, too.

“It’s one machine day in and day out, and I’m not a machine person, so I find it very boring. It’s a sit down job. I couldn’t sit down because my back hurts so bad. I asked them to raise my machine, so I could stand up and I wouldn’t have to quit. Well, then my legs hurt. So every day it’s take your pick, either your legs hurt, or your back hurts.”

Then why stay? Before Casco-Belton, Terry logged a total of ten years in the restaurant business, five of those out of state in California, Florida, Ontario, Alberta. She came back to Lewiston, though. In her mind she “always wanted to settle here.” Her mother and her seven siblings are here, and this is where she wants her own family to be.

“I wouldn’t even move to Portland. I think it’s too fast. I want to raise my kids here. I feel lucky, very lucky to have been raised in the family I was raised in. I respect my mother so much and I want to raise my kids exactly the way my mother did.”

When she came back to Lewiston, Terry worked her way to management positions in the restaurant business, but the conditions there finally got to her. The endless weekends and holidays worked, the little time left with her family, the calls at home to rush to work to patch a crisis. It was enough.

“What I like now is I go in six to three. I know I get out at three. I know nobody is going to call me in and I don’t have any headaches. I don’t work weekends. Having two children, I don’t need the headaches anymore.”

“I figure, I don’t care if anyone can do it and I don’t feel like a no-mind person for working there. I know I could be someplace doing something smarter or whatever, but for now I like what I’m doing.”

Not that it’s a piece of cake, what with getting up at four-thirty to get her two sons and husband out the door in time to be at work by six o’clock. But it suits her for now, and she knows why she’s doing it.

She also knows that for some people it comes with a reputation, defines what kind of person you are. She knows, and says she doesn’t care. Other people do care, do the work, but don’t feel they can shake the rap. “I know a lot of people over there, they don’t like to tell people they work at Bates Mill, because everyone goes, ‘Hunh? You work at Bates Mill?’ So a lot of people don’t. They go, ‘Well, I work at Casco-Belton,’ and they hope that that person doesn’t say, ‘Well, where is it?’ Whereas, it doesn’t bother me at all.”

The work would bother Tania Royer. Like Terry she was born and raised in Lewiston in the fifties and sixties and she’s spent a lot of time working in the restaurant business. Her family originally came here from Quebec to work in the mills. Her grandparents and great-grandparents both worked there. But it’s not for her.

“Dumb Frenchmen,” she says of the people still working in the mills, “you know, counting on that pay. I can’t imagine. I don’t think I could work in a mill.”

In fact she did try once at a place called Supreme Slipper. In Lewiston, mills and shoeshops [factories] were traditionally considered two different domains. Nowadays the young people often don’t recognize the distinction.

For Tania, Supreme Slipper, mill or shoeshop, spelled the threat of a life of unending repetitive
motions. What would she become if she stayed there?

Her job was to staple the bows on the slippers. "It was horrible. First of all, it's drab in there . . . and it's dusty as heck and this is all I did all day. I would take from this big crate slippers without bows and then staple them and put them in there.

"And you would look around and they're all doing it. How boring. I just walked out, never even told anybody. I just put the slippers down and went to lunch. I never came back. I said this is for the birds, forget it. I lasted three days and it seemed like a lifetime.

"I was thinking, these people have been here twenty years!"

I WORKED THERE 16 years," says Tania's grandfather, Antoine Cote, of his job in the Bleachery at Pepperell Mill. That was his second mill job. His first was at Androscoggin Mill starting at age 15, a farm boy from Quebec.

"I left there when I was about fourteen years old," he says of his Canadian birthplace, "and we went to Vermont. My father bought a farm there. And it was after we bought the farm that the Depression came. We couldn't make it, so we had to leave the farm. Then we came over here and we started to work in the mill. Not the first day, but the first week.

"It was hot and wet," his first job in the bobbin steaming operation. "It was in [side]. I used to work outside a lot. The farm was always outside, and when I got in there, I didn't like the heat, there . . . ."

The sound of Quebec is still vibrant in his voice today. Sprightly and agile in his eighties, it is easy to imagine him outdoors on a farm.

"It was different is right! But we got used to it. I went in the mill. I made friends there. We had a baseball team, a hockey team. That kept us busy."

The work week was five and a half days long. Sundays were church and family. Saturday afternoons were free. The move to Lewiston was the end of a rural life and the beginning of an urban one based on wage labor and lived in densely packed neighborhoods.

It was a life where time could be told by the steam-driven sound of the mill whistles and the flow of bodies in and out of the mills at the changing of the shifts.

Seven to three, three to eleven, eleven to seven.
hard the housing situation was on their mother.

"I remember on Lincoln Street when we moved. She had five kids at that time," and then six when brother Nel was born. "We lived in two rooms and we slept in the shed. And there was a while they didn't want children in the rents and she hid every one of us.

"My mother moved and in the middle of the night they came and got us and we moved in. And there was only two rooms, so we had to sleep in the shed, and there was ice in the house. We were three girls to a bed." That was Lincoln Street, Lewiston, Maine, circa 1935.

The living conditions of the millworkers were well known to Father Camille Bouvier of the Dominican order which ran and developed the largest Franco-American parish. He saw the conditions of his time this way, "I arrived a little later, but still, the people who worked in the mills, these people worked enormously for their money, enormously.

"And that's why there are many of these people whose children weren't able to stay in school—because it just wasn't possible with the salary that they made. I found that they worked very hard, these people. Very hard. Very, very, very hard."

Survival without multiple incomes was not possible. Fathers and mothers worked, sons and daughters worked as soon as they were old enough: day one after graduation from the eighth grade.

"My family was poor and when I was 15 and a half," says Loretta, "we graduated from the eighth grade and my father believed in work, did not believe in school, so we went straight to work, from school to work. I didn't mind because I didn't like school too well, but I have two sisters and my brother who would have loved to go to college.

"You know, the old French people, it was work. They had just gone past the Depression and that, so education wasn't very big in the French community. Everybody my age worked."

So there she was, not quite sixteen, off to help her family make ends meet. Almost all her life in the shadow of the mills, and the first time she entered one was the day she started work.

"We went by ourselves. First day I took my legs and I went to Libbey Mill and I said, 'I'm going to get a job.' I got a job right away of course.

"It was scary, because it made a lot of noise and I had never been in a mill, but it wasn't all that hard. I liked it. Then I quit there and I went in a shoeshop. I thought the people were kind of rough, so I went back to the Androscoggin Mill and I was there till I got married. I was there about ten years. I liked it there. We made parachutes in those days."

Those days were the days of World War II. The mills were running at full tilt and the "man shortage" made jobs easy to come by. At her first job, Loretta made $25 a week.

"We went home and gave our pay to our mother without opening the envelope. And we felt that whatever she gave us, that was our allowance. I bet if you talk to people my age they did the same thing. That's what the kids did in those days. They were going to work to help their parents, like my father and mother went to work to help their parents. Not to buy anything for ourselves—we didn't even think of that.

"My father said, 'You have to go to work to help us.' And I went out the next day, got a job, came home, gave my mother the pay."

"I didn't really want to go," says younger sister Lucienne of her first job. "I went from a child and then going to the work force and working. The day you turned sixteen you had to work.

"I think I was afraid, and my first job I never got used to. I had a job with the Continental Mill. It was being a spinner. Spinner is a very hard job... and I don't like it at all. I was there I guess about nine months, because it was more than I could handle. I was a very tiny, little person, and very, very shy. We didn't get out much, and I think I was afraid of the whole thing.

"And then my sister was having it easier at Androscoggin Mill. Loretta, she was in the weave room and she said it was so much easier. And I went to work there and I loved it. We'd have fifteen minutes every hour—we'd go sit in the ladies room and embroider. We were all getting our hope chests ready. What a good life that was."

There is nostalgia in these voices. Nostalgia for a feeling of togetherness that kept pace with the hard, repetitive, work.

"Everybody got out of the mill the same time," says Loretta, "and everybody knew each other, and most people didn't have cars. Everybody walked. So you got to know more people because you walked to work with them everyday.

"It was more free than today," Loretta says, "more secure, I should say. All the mills were working. You knew when you got out of school you'd go to work in the mill. You had a job. You weren't worried. It was more secure."

There was no sense of leaving the community. It was all right there and it was all happening in French.

"There were no Englishmen working in the mill." Lucienne says, "Maybe the owners were the only ones. But oh, no, it was all families down from generations like my father and me. It was all people like us and there was, I would say, 98 percent French."

Almost all French, or French-Canadian to be more precise, or Franco-American to use the currently favored term. Around Lewiston, "French" has always been the most common usage. Everyone knows that "French" means originally from a French-speaking
part of Canada, usually Quebec. Up there above the border, French remains the dominant language. In Lewiston with each child that learns to speak, French gets closer to being a thing of the past.

THIS PLACE was French, very French not long ago at all. Father Bouvier arrived in Lewiston from Canada in 1958, never feeling that he had left his country, never feeling that it was essential to learn English.

“At that moment Saints Peter and Paul Parish, served by the Dominicans, had a population of sixteen thousand. Sixteen thousand! At that time the two churches functioned at full force. There was no English at all in the parish, none at all. It was all French, all the masses.

“I recall that I had taken a trip home and that my mother who was alive then asked me, ‘Do you preach in English?’

“I answered, ‘No, we don’t preach in English.’

“How can that be? You’re in the United States and you don’t preach in English?’

“Well, then I told her that no, St. Peter and St. Paul Parish was more French than the St. Jean Baptiste Parish of Ottawa at that time. This meant that the city was about 70-75 percent French. One heard French everywhere.”

Not just church and the workplace, but the social and commercial life of the community could be conducted completely in French. Five parish schools and a high school taught half the day entirely in French. The community had a daily French paper, *Le Messager*, and a hospital, L’Hôpital Sainte Marie.

Numerous social clubs and organizations kept up a steady stream of events: dancing, music, roller-skating. The names of the clubs tell it: Jaques Cartier, Le Montagnard, Le Passe-Temps. Tout se passait en francais.

Little Canada could not contain the community. It extended beyond the mill neighborhoods, beyond millwork. The Franco-Americans were the majority in Lewiston. Still mostly working class, there were also politicians, professionals, business people.

By the end of World War II, the mills started moving south, seeking the lowest wage level, leaving

“It was more free than today, more secure. All the mills were working. You knew when you got out of school you’d work in the mill. You had a job. You weren’t worried.”

Above: Loretta Arsenault, sister of Lucienne Giasson.
the miles of brick emptier and emptier. Not long after they married, both Loretta and Lucienne left mill work.

“When I got married, I left it and I never went back in the mill,” Lucienne says. “Millwork is very hard work, even today when you have computerized machines. But it’s still hard work. It will always be hard work.

“I don’t understand people who want to stay in this job for years and years and years. I don’t understand it. Because once you have that smell, you’ll never forget it.

“It just came back,” she says recalling a mill tour organized by the Franco-American Festival. “It was like I had worked there the day before. It’s a musty smell and an oil smell, because don’t forget, they have to oil these machines all the time, because they don’t stop. They go three shifts steady, steady, steady.”

The beginning of World War II found Antoine Cote working at the Bleachery at Pepperell Mill, working all three shifts on a rotating basis. “I was working, it was one week days, one week second shift, one week third shift, and I used to walk back home. That was four miles one way. It was kind of tough at night, though. In summertime you could go across the pasture, but in the winter we had to follow the sidewalk.”

South Temple Street, nowadays Cram Avenue, four miles from the Bleachery at Pepperell Mill, well beyond mill territory, there were hardly any houses there in those days. That’s where the Cotes moved. Halfway to the town of Sabattus.

He married a woman who like himself was raised on a farm in Quebec, Blanche Grenier. They started out living in apartments. That’s how almost everyone who worked in the mills lived. But it didn’t suit them. Not enough room for the children who would number six in all, no vegetable garden, no animals. When the landlord told them not to let their children play in the yard, that was the last straw. They found a house.

The Depression that had driven the Cote family into the mills put a house within their reach. “Because all I paid for my house was $2200. My payment was $18 a month. Two hundred dollars down.”

Their’s was a different kind of Little Canada, more like the Canada they had known growing up than the urban Little Canada by the mills. A barn with chickens, pigs, a cow and fresh milk every day. Berries to eat and herbs picked wild in the woods, like “feuilles de plantain” for an infection and “l’herbe a milles feuilles” for a fever.

A few years into the four mile hike to the Bleachery, unhealthy work conditions began to take their toll. Antoine Cote describes the conditions as, “Not too good, oh, gee whiz, no! You had to work with a wet rag over your face—your nose—because of the dye and you had to use acid nitrite with that and that made a big fume.

“It was poison and it could knock you out. It was hard. That’s why I got out, because I was down to 131. My father said, ‘You’d better get out of there,’ he said, ‘you won’t last long.’”

After 16 years in the bleachery, Antoine Cote went into construction. “In wartime, there was more money. And I stayed there. I worked for one contractor for ten years here. Then I went to Portland to Profenno, a big company, and I worked for them 20 years. It was outside all the time, see, and I liked that better.” He put it together: outdoor work, a little bit of farm to raise his family on and a Catholic school close enough for his children to attend.

No illusions, though. It was not an idyllic life. Husband and wife both worked. Often he was home only on weekends because construction kept him away.

“I had a family, so I had to work,” he says. Work defined the family’s fortune. “I was always lucky and I had work, I find work.”

Antoine Cote worked from age fifteen until age 68, fifty-two years. Thirty years in construction, fifteen of those for the union, always the same union. He didn’t get the pension he paid in for, though. Three of those years were in Bangor, not Portland, so they didn’t count. Fifteen years is the minimum to get a pension.

Today he is a man with sparkling blue eyes, rosy hued cheeks like he just came in from outdoors, a life mostly outdoors. He laughs when asked if the union gave back the money he paid in.

In front of him, at the table where he sits, is a soup plate, turned upside down upon a paper towel, protecting the tablecloth. As he speaks, he handles the plate, running his finger along its perimeter, never quite moving it from its place. On one hand a finger is missing, the ring finger—the story of a work accident which Antoine Cote, in his soft, modulated voice does not tell.

“[Mother] had five kids at the time, then six when Nel was born.
We lived in two rooms and slept in the shed. There was a while they didn’t want children in the rents and she hid every one of us.”

CONNIE LAMBERT got all the songs. All that singing became part of her. "When we were little, of course they sent us to bed, but there used to be a grill in the ceiling so that the heat from the wood stove would go upstairs to our bedroom. "Well, we had our ears plastered to those grills to watch them down there and listen to them. They'd be singing and dancing and that's how I picked up a lot of the songs, the music, everything."

She kept singing and made quite a thing of it—sang in clubs around Lewiston, and even in Boston, not the French songs she learned at home, but songs of her generation’s time and place. Once in a while she sings the old songs—sang them at the Franco-American festival for two years.

Connie has the elegance and beauty of a star. Her makeup is flawlessly done, and her hair, a soft, flattering chestnut brown, shows her flair for detail: find a tiny artificial rose about the size of a ladybug among the curls just above her temple. At home she likes the comfort of velours jumpsuits and wears them well, notwithstanding a figure which shows the mark of kids and a sound appetite.

The home songfests and dances of Connie’s childhood are gone. But the singers and dancers can still be met at Connie’s house. They’re framed in photos on the walls and bureaus—every generation that could possibly be photographed. One wall is all portraits. Snapshots are tucked into the edges of mirrors and glass cabinet doors.

This is the dining room. A drop-leaf table sits in the center. Upon it an elaborately crocheted covering, too big for a doily, too small for a tablecloth, reflects the color of the table through its lacy holes. Upon the lace, a centerpiece of driftwood and dried flowers. There is no unadorned space in this house.

In the bedroom is a picture of her grandmother, with hair so long she’s practically covered by it. Connie tells of standing in a circle around her bed as she died. It sounds like a moment that no one would willingly miss—a moment of privilege and togetherness with the women gathered there. But it was a death, the death of a grandmother. Connie had—and has—lots of relatives. One uncle had eighteen kids here in Lewiston, another in Canada had twenty-one, yes, twenty-one from one mother. Connie knew them all, even the ones in Canada. The Cotes made frequent trips there. The last trip was a couple of years ago, when she took her mother to a grand family reunion, a “retrouvaille” in her little village, Val Racine.

Connie’s found all her family, gone all the way back, to the first days in Canada in the 1600s, all the way back to France, to Normandy: the whole family genealogy for both Cotes and Lamberts. This instinct to go to the root of things has not always worked to her advantage—especially in school with the nuns. "You were not allowed to ask questions, I found that out the hard way. They’d say something and the logic wasn’t there and I’d question it, and I was punished.” The accent of her first language comes through as she speaks.

"Eating meat on Friday,” Connie says, was the subject of a serious run-in. “Because I said, ‘I’ve studied all the Church history and everything and nowhere does it say that God says that you couldn’t eat meat on Friday.’ So I said, ‘Somebody else said that and it wasn’t Him, so how come?’ They slapped me real good. "It was kind of rough, but it made me a little bit of a rebel, I guess. In a sense it also made me stronger. I would . . . survive anything.”

Connie’s own daughters also received a strict Catholic education. She and her husband were working out of state, so during the week the nuns kept the two daughters at the Marcotte Home, a French Catholic boarding school and orphanage.

“Nuns! Nuns!” says Tania, her daughter, “If you had to go to the bathroom at the Marcotte Home, they wouldn’t let you go. So if I raised my hand and said, I really have to go, they’d say no, and of course you’d pee on the floor. They’d have one person assigned to clean up the urine . . . . It’s so sick. “Looking back, I hated it then, but I got a good education there. I mean discipline and stuff, but I’d never do it to one of my children. No way!”

Sitting at her kitchen table, Tania, an athletic blonde
She kept singing and made quite a thing of it—sang in clubs around Lewiston, and even in Boston, not the French songs she learned at home, but songs of her generation’s time and place.

Above: Connie Lambert, daughter of Antoine Cote.

just into her thirties, seems free of the early tyranny of the nuns. Whatever scars the frighteningly strict sisters may have left on her are tempered by a more recent appreciation of those years. Something of the religion stuck with her.

“I consider myself still very Catholic,” she says, and although she doesn’t attend mass because she doesn’t want a “middle man,” she does say her prayers every night. Look around her kitchen. It’s neat and orderly, fully equipped with modern-looking appliances which contrast with the yellow wooden cabinets of a 1930s style. The feeling is that everything has its place, a not un-Catholic way of having things be.

It’s a French way of having things be, too, echoing those French gardens—French from France gardens—masterpieces of order and control. Full of ornamentation, full of the human hand. The gardens around here are like that, too. These things go back a long way.

An ornament is the central focal point. At Loretta Arsenault’s this is a statue of the Virgin Mary in an upturned bathtub shrine. Then come flowers, then lawn, then shrubs. All the borders are marked. Detail is supreme.

Inside their homes, sisters Loretta Arsenault and Lucienne Giasson keep their sense of style on display. Lucienne collects little spoons with elaborate handle tops. Every state, a number of countries, a handful of presidents, soon she’ll be out of wall space. Loretta’s collections are themselves a collection: a wall full of teapots, windchimes spanning the ceiling, “little heads” (ceramic busts for holding plants) in one bedroom.

All these French houses are full, but the feeling is uncluttered. There’s great attention to place and detail, and almost nothing left to accident. The interiors are vast in their minutia—a total surface area of incalculable proportions—360 degrees of objects ordered by cleanliness and tidiness.

THERE’S PLENTY of Frenchness in Lewiston, but it’s lying low now, getting more subtle. Father Bouvier didn’t need English in 1958. Thirty years later, French is just another subject in school for most young people.

At fourteen years old, with six years of parochial school safely behind him, Tania’s son, Matthew, does
not speak French. This is something which his great
great-grandfather, Antoine Cote, cannot understand. He
thinks school has something to do with it.

Connie says it's because young people were humili­
atated. "If you spoke with a French accent, you were
ridiculed and you were made to feel like you were
inferior. You were not as good. You were stupid. You
were just a stupid Frenchman. Being hurt as they were
growing up, it sort of made them . . . turn away from
speaking French and go more to English to get away
from this."

Matthew had French in school, a subject which he
found embarassing and did not like. And about his
grandmother Connie teaching him, he says, "I don't
want her to." Thinking it over he adds, "I wouldn't
mind knowing it."

Terry Henry wishes she knew French, too. But
where would she learn it? It's too late to learn it at
home. There's no more Little Canada where every­
things happens en francais. Look downtown on Lisbon
Street, in Kennedy Park. Some of it's empty, some of
it's run down, even sleazy, little of it's French. Ca
n'existe plus.

But right down in Kennedy Park for a week in the
summer there's a burst of Frenchness: The Franco­
American Festival. There is song and dance and music
by locals and Canadians and artists from other parts
Franco-American. This is where Connie sang. The
Meservier family sang here, too, the whole family, four
generations worth.

"We did three festivals of old French songs and all
the musicians—it was all family," Loretta explains. "I
think there was 75 on the stage. The little kids—four,
five years old—they sang French songs."

Terry sang with the family at the Festival, "That was
a lot of fun . . . we all felt very honored. There was
a lot of French songs. Of course some of us didn't
speak French, but we read the sheets and faked it."

Distance. Now the stamp of Frenchness is paler.
The old definitions no longer hold. Speak English if
you want, live in any neighborhood, do any kind of
work. It's safe to claim Frenchness now.

"For years you didn't even dare say it," says Lu­
cienne. "And now people will say, 'You speak French?
Gee that's wonderful.' All of a sudden it's okay."

SOMETHING BIG happened when the mills
came to town and made everything clockwork
and industry—made Lewiston a city that today
wears its Franco-American heritage like an ornament.

It is not a city unadorned. Stand up on Walnut Stret,
a mile from the river. Pastel houses alternate with
white and brown, the spires of Saints Peter and Paul
Church rise behind them. Local style, local taste.

Today there is change in the air again. Not only is
it okay to be Franco-American, but Lewiston is the
place to move. Not just Lewiston, but Lewiston­
Auburn. It's really LA now. The two cities joined
together in a new campaign: the Right Move. There
are ads on TV with jingle and everything. The right
move.

But this is not the change that has insiders speculat­
ing. L.L. Bean has moved part of its telemarketing
operation to the former Peck's Department Store
building. Right on Main Street, it's in the ghostly
downtown that lost its guts in the move to the malls,
only an alley way and a grassy patch of park from the
channel.

Six hundred new jobs, white collar jobs. They will
join the trend nationwide towards the service sector.
Somehow this feels like progress. Once before, the
arrival of an industry transformed this place. There are
those who predict a second coming.

"I see with L.L. Bean's coming here," says Connie
Lambert, "that's kind of opened the door to things
here. I think things are beginning to move. I'll bet
you by the year 1995, before the turn of the century,
we're going to see some big changes."

Look north from the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial
Bridge—the farthest upriver—and the Androscoggin
widens to banks of mostly trees, a few visible struc­
tures, an occasional field.

No room for doubt. This is Maine, seen from a
point somewhere between Lewiston and Auburn,
from a bridge in LA. It's a bridge connecting two cities
to make one place. A place with "du coeur au ventre,"
a trendy West Coast nickname, and none of the
pretention to go with it.
“PAST FEW YEARS I’VE WORKED HERE AT THE LANDFILL, I’VE NEVER SEEN A SALT MAGAZINE IN THERE. “EVEN WHEN I WORKED IN THE RECYCLING CENTER— NEVER SEEN A SALT MAGAZINE COME THROUGH THERE.”

NATHAN GALLANT
SANITATION WORKER
TOWN OF FALMOUTH
LANDFILL AND
RECYCLING CENTER

SALT is a KEEPER. Nobody, but nobody throws it away. Sometimes it gets stolen—er, borrowed—and sometimes those center sections full of tremendous photographs end up on somebody’s wall. But chucked in the trash can. NEVER!

Anybody who reads Salt can tell you why. Salt collects stories and photographs about Maine people that you’ll never find in any of those magazines that go to the recycling center. Stories that last. Stories about real people like you. People who tell it like it is, the good and the bad, the funny and the sad, the stuff that makes them see red, the things that are important to them.

So that’s why Salt goes from hand to hand and never goes to the dump. On the average, every copy is read by four to five people. One copy was read by a whole shipload of Merchant Marines!

Now if you don’t mind waiting your turn, you’ll find out what others already know. Salt is habit forming. And it’s the kind of magazine you keep around forever. Some people have every issue since we started publishing in 1974.

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Subscribe to Salt and help solve Maine’s growing trash disposal problem. Because nobody EVER throws Salt in the dump.
Our list comes entirely from unassigned and untaxed reviews. We wouldn't pay a plug nickel for any of them. And though it was suggested, with merit, we've resisted mentioning Burger Kings. This is an informal guide to places where locals feel comfortable enough to sit, eat and talk and not have to worry about looking right, eating right or their wallet. We rely on suggestions from readers. We welcome others. Tell us about the place, what goes on and how it came to be.

ALFRED
Leedy's. Route 202 in the center of town. Everyone takes their children here on Mother's Day. It's mobbed. The two seaters at the counter are different. Avoid the pies. Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7 A.M.-8:30 P.M.; Friday and Saturday, 7 A.M.-9:30 P.M.; Sunday, 11 A.M.-8:30 P.M.; closed Tuesday.

ANDOVER
Alisson's Variety Store. "Can't understand why they call it that because it's a place to eat," says Monty Washburn, who tests his fishing stories at the counter every year. "Maybe it's that you can get a variety to eat." Addie Feener opens at 6 A.M., closes 12 hours later at 7 P.M. and does it all herself at age 70. Coffee and hot chocolate go for 25 cents. Ham, eggs, toast and coffee cost $1.50. There's one lunch special every day.

BIDDEFORD
Christo's. 66 Alfred Road. Can you believe it? After all these years as the Colonial Hut in downtown, milltown Biddeford, the restaurant now has joined the "ethnic" restaurant bandwagon. We understand their children are the culprits. Christo's is the name of the husband-owner. We're waiting for Pat's (the wife-owner) name to be given equal space. Other than the change of name, the building is the same. What's different is the expansion of the restaurant's trademark of Greek food. Pat and Roger are all cranking it out. Try their homemade spinach pie. The Franco-American club Richeleau still meets here weekly. Hours: 8 A.M.-10 P.M. every day except Saturday when open until 11 P.M.

Dan's. 106 Elm Street. Brash Biddeford Democratic Party politics argued here. Heaps of cheap food spills over the edges of your plate. Open for lunch only; Tuesday and Wednesday, 11 A.M.-6 P.M.; Thursday and Friday, 11 A.M.-7 P.M.; closed Saturday and Sunday.

BINGHAM
Thompson's Restaurant. In the center of town on Route 201. The kind of town on Route 201 where people still talk about the deer that broke through the front plate glass window 20 years ago and ran into the men's room sending the occupants out with their trousers down. Hours: 5:30 A.M.-8:30 P.M. every day of the week.

BRUNSWICK
Miss Brunswick Diner. 101 Pleasant Street. Fourteen (10 + 4) stools front a long and short counter. Also several booths. Daily specials listed on board. Mexican food offered. A Budweiser beer costs $1.25. Placemat was a puzzle of finding presidents/vice-presidents' names from a maze of letters the shape of a U.S. map. People in three booths were heavily into it. Hours: 4:30 A.M.-9 P.M. Sunday through Thursday; 24 hours Friday and Saturday. Early Bird Special: 4:30-8:30 A.M., 2 eggs, toast, bacon and home fries, $1.25. Dinner listings available from 11 A.M. to 9 P.M.

CAMELIA
The Chinese Restaurant. 35 Main Street in the heart of Camden. It ain't exactly positioning itself for the windjammer crowd. Signs in the window attest to this. Signs such as, "The Last Local Luncheonette. Fresh, Fancy, Juicy, Fresh, Fast and Friends," and "Down Home, Down East, No Fries, No Quiche." Two eggs, toast, juice, coffee, $3.35; clams, $7.25. Special: Early Bird Breakfast and Daily Dinner. Open, 6 A.M. to about 2 P.M., Monday through Saturday.

CAPE NEDDICK

EAST NEWPORT
Log Cabin Diner. Old Bangor Road. Begun as a tiny take-out stand in 1946, the diner now boasts three generations of quality meals at fair prices. The sign outside reads, "The Little Place With the Big Plate," and they aren't fooling. Lunch and dinner menu from $2 to $11, featuring seafood, steak, poultry and homemade desserts. Take out, too. Grignon's Taxidermy Trophy Mounts on display inside set the tone for an experience in country dining. Dear Mrs. Libby may take your order.

EASTPORT
Waco Diner. ( Pronounced Waa-co, not like that foreign place of Waco, Texas). Bank Square. Water Street in the downtown. Originated as a lunch cart. Name comes from combining founders' names Watt and Connolly. A hot dog costs 75 cents. One outsider didn't the second time. So much for outsiders. Hours: 6 A.M.-9 P.M. Monday through Saturday; 7 A.M.-11 A.M. Sunday (breakfast only). The owner of the Waco wrote us recently and wanted to know on whose authority our description of her place was based. Our authority was two: a native and a non-native. One likes to eat there, the other didn't the second time. We correct our description on this point—last issue we said "outsiders don't the second time"—we only know of one.

FORT KENT
Doris' Cafe. Route 11 on the way to Eagle Lake. Across from the Dodge Dealer. If needed, you can grab a room for the night or have your laundry cleaned. You can brush up on your Acadian French while feasting on Doris' large succulent omelettes and thick homemade French Toast. Only three bucks. Comes with a smile.

HERMON/BANGOR
Dysart's Truckstop. Just off Exit 44 of Interstate 95 in Hermon about three miles south of Bangor. See Salt issue number 28 for article about this place. Dysart's has its own fleet of trucks and truckers have their own tables. Breakfast is the deal here, slabs of ham so big they hang over the side of the plate. One of Salt's trustees from Bangor says he has a sticky bun here before driving to a board meeting.

JONESBORO
White House. One of our readers, Bill Conway, sent us the following review on this place: "Route 1 on way to Machias. Too much good food when you go for dinners. Order light for specials, sandwiches, salads, and you are served tremendous meals. The crackers and cheese placed on table before any order will fill you up—be careful. Plenty of tables with a long counter space."

KENNEBUNK
Glen-Mor. Route 1, just north of center of town. Good pies. Heavy on the fried food variety. A salad brings you half a head of iceberg lettuce. Rotary Club takes over back room once a week, but there's plenty more room out front. Hours: 7 A.M.-8 P.M. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday; 8 A.M.-7:30 P.M. Sunday. Hole in the Wall. Now expanded to the corner beside its former hole, but the old name sticks. What do you call a growing hole in the wall? Route 1 in the center of town. Good, simple and cheap. Sign on the front door says Carol, the owner/cook, is something. Easy to be in the middle of a minor war of give and take between her and her regular customers. Come twice and you're a regular. She'll remember you.

KENNEBUNKPORT
Alison's. In center of town at Dock Square. Bastardized descendant of the old Wonderful Chat and Chew. Polished brass rails instead. Don't expect miracles with the food. Tourist types enter heavily through the summer, but locals still dominate the bar. Emery rules the roost. Hours: Serves breakfast 6 A.M.-11 A.M.; lunch 12 noon-4 P.M.; dinner 6 P.M.-10 P.M. every day of the week, except Sunday when opens at 7 A.M. Bar is open until 1 A.M.

LUBEC
Thistle Hill. Main Street. Just off Exit 44 of Route 1 in Lubec. Gone out of business. Soup's on us. Hours: 6:30 A.M.-6:30 P.M. every day except Sunday when it's closed. Only this time it's REALLY closed.

MACHIAS
Helen's Restaurant. Unfortunately, now the New Helen's just north of the center of town on Route 1. Nothing like the great old Helen's. But the thick pies with thick topping of whipped cream are still the greatest. Counter area has closest feel to the old Helen's.

MILBRIDGE
The Red Barn. Route 1 in the center of town. Straight food and a large salad bar. Has a wishing well out front where coins are tossed in. Eat blueberry pancakes in wild blueberry barrens country.

ORONO
C.D. "Pat" Farnsworth's Cafe. 11 Mill Street. Established in 1931, then selling ice cream and confections. Later became a restaurant, adding pizza to its menu in 1958. Now Pat's Pizza chains are dotted throughout the state. This, however, is the original, and littled changed since the '30s. Tin ceilings, a long bar with worn formica counter, high red stools, a wooden cigar case with large glass doors hanging behind the counter, and a straight row of rustic booths lines the opposite wall nearly.
forever. Added bonus: two Lion's Club gumball machines beside the entrance. Pat is 80 and "going strong," said her daughter. Open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner from 6 A.M. to 9 P.M. six days a week.

PORTLAND


"No."

"You wanta table, young lady?"

She takes it. Two minutes go by. "George, there should be something breaking shortly for you."

Port Hole. 20 Custom House Wharf. Near the end of the old Casco Bay Ferries pier off Commercial Street. First name place for people who work on the waterfront. Sit down at the 25-foot counter and before you know it someone will be calling you "deah"—either Russ the owner or Linda the waitress or Louise the cook. Speedy comes in at noon. "Sit down, deah. Louise has made you your favorite dinner. It's ham today."

"Just sit yourself right down, Speedy."

Breakfast served all day on Saturday and Sunday. Fall and Winter hours: Monday-Thursday: 3 A.M.-6 P.M.; Friday: 3 A.M.-9 P.M.; Saturday: 6 A.M.-12:30 P.M.; Sunday: 6:30 A.M.-3 P.M.

Village Cafe. 112 Newbury Street. Inexpensive Italian food. You get what you pay for. Serves as a reminder of Portland's Italian community before it was dispersed by housing renewal projects, and a link for the remaining community. Micucci's Italian grocery is around the corner on India Street. Hours: 11 A.M.-11:30 P.M. Monday to Thursday; 11 A.M.-12:30 P.M. Friday and Saturday; closed Sunday.

PORTSMOUTH (NEW HAMPSHIRE)

Rosa's. We realize this is just over the state line, but it's one of the two places outside of Maine that's worth eating at. 80 State Street in the downtown. Straight Italian food. Not the same since recent expansion and renovations. Catch the Memorial Bridge All Stars musical group—a mixture of ages and instruments from piano, trombone, drums, to clarinet. Heavy on old tunes. Play every Wednesday evening.

SACO

The Plaza. Main Street. Don't be fooled by the fancy new front. The Plaza is a great old girl in a new hat. The steam that clouds the windows on a winter day comes from the same 50-year-old coffee and water urns that began belching out strong black coffee in 1936. Wooden booths and teak wall panelling are also of that vintage. Mashed potatoes, meatloaf and reliable green peas from a can in the two dollar range.

Rapid Ray's. Center of Main Street. Gussied up from former elongated super mobile unit of duo Rapid Ray and Dynamite Don. Part of the gentrification look for Saco which no one thought possible three years ago. Don't let the sleek diner architectural style fool you. It's just an outer skin. Inside, the place still has much of the feel of their former hot dog van. Ray Camire, the original owner, began business in 1954 using a Hood milk truck, three years before McDonald's arrived in town. Ray

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recently died from a heart attack, but the place is still going. Biggest bargain; steamed hot dogs. This is pure hot dog heaven with servers you'd think if you met them on the street sold hot dogs for a living. Have hamburgers as well.

SEBAGO LAKE
Galli's Variety/Cafe. Intersection of Routes 35 and 114. Offers $1.69 breakfasts 6 A.M.-11 A.M. Walk past the variety store goods to the four or five tables by the beer cooler in back. Lunch and dinner from 11 A.M.-9 P.M Coffee for 25 cents all day long. Real food for real men. Local fishing stories exchanged daily, both fact and fiction.

It's 7:00 one recent morning and a portly, bearded man walks in wearing an orange cap, baggy blue trousers and a black and red checked jacket. He smiles broadly as he rounds the corner to find his friend Walter mixing with some locals over coffee.

"Hey, how are ya, Walt," he says.

"Not too bad, Ben. I'd be better if this rain would let up. What've you been up to anyway?"

"Took my youngest out on the lake last week salmon fishing. Had fair luck anyway, brought in a small one. It's too cold still."

"Now that you two are settled down, would you care for breakfast this morning?" says owner Dan Galli.

"Not for me, thanks," says Walt.

"Two eggs over medium," says Ben, lighting a cigarette while helping himself to a cup of coffee.

"Yea, I was up around Bangor last week and thought I'd scout for this pond I'd heard so much about," began Ben. "I finally found it and damn if it wasn't still iced over! Jesus, you know I don't think the sun's been in there for years. All that bushwacking and I didn't even wet a line."

"Well," says Walt, "just because ice-out came at Sebago in April, there's no telling if it will ever come to them dark bogs!"

TUNER
Jimbo's Restaurant and Truckstop. Route 4, a mile or two south of the center part of Turner and on the same route. Open 24 hours daily. A long open room inside with a bunch of tables, along with a front counter on one end with a couple of stools. A sign above the counter proclaims, "Senior Citizens' Discount 10%." A board near the same spot says, "Weekly Deluxe Steak Dinner Drawing. This week's winner—Todd." A full salad bar at the opposite end of the room. $3.85 gets an order of liver and onions.

On one Friday night, three Androscoggin County Sheriff Department members in brown uniforms occupied two sides of a booth. They were deep in conversation, particularly in twitting their waitress.

"Give us a can of Alpha [dog food]," said one to her, when she first approached their booth. They're regulars no doubt.

"Put it in the microwave and put some gravy on it," he continued.

Some time later, their talk has turned to drink. Says one, "Black Label, that's raunchy stuff."

WALDOBORO
Moody's Diner. Route 1. An institution. Waldoboro police eat here. So do truckers. Open 24 hours a day. Banks of refrigerators cool food beneath your feet. There's a new book out on Moody's, What's Cooking at Moody's Diner: 60 Years of Recipes and Reminiscences, by Nancy Moody Gentner, daughter of the founders, edited by Kerry Leichtman. It's mostly recipes for some of the specialties with some photographs and reminiscences. But there are also a series of six architectural perspective drawings by Rod McCormick, showing how the Moody Diner building (inside and out) changed since it began in 1934. They're INCREDIBLE! Priceless! Buy the book. Cost: $8.95, paper-bound, 112 pages. Published by Dancing Bear Books, P.O. Box 4, West Rockport, Maine 04865.
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PORTLAND

Inn On Carlton, Portland, 46 Carlton Street. 207-775-1910. Innkeeper: Susan Holland. Graciously restored 1869 Victorian Townhouse located in Portland's historic West End. Sue Holland's custom bookbindery is located downstairs, where she restores old books and designs new bindings. Elegant stairway, large rooms, high ceilings, comfortable antique furnishings. Seven guest rooms with private and shared baths. Full continental breakfast. $60 to $80 double, lower off season. Open year round. (See display ad this page.)

Inn at Parkspring, Portland, 135 Spring Street. 207-774-1059. Innkeeper: Judi Riley. In the heart of Portland, close to museums and movies, this three story townhouse built circa 1845 reflects popular 19th century Portland architecture. Seven comfortable guest rooms with fine furnishings, most with private bath. Continental breakfast served daily. $80 to $90 for two, lower off season. (See display ad this page.)

Pomegranate Inn, Portland, 49 Neal Street. 207-772-1006. Set in Portland's historic and architecturally rich Western Promenade, the home is registered by Greater Portland Landmarks as the Barbour/Milliken House, circa 1884. Stunning interior design retains the architectural integrity while lending a decidedly contemporary flavor. Truly unique accommodations. Six guest rooms, antiques, fine linens. Full continental breakfast. $95 double, $85 off season. Open year round. (See display ad opposite page.)

FREEPORT

Bagley House, Freeport, R.R. 3, Box 269C. 207-865-6566. Innkeeper: Sigurd A. Knudsen, Jr. Built by Israel Bagley in 1772, it is the oldest house in the area and has served as an inn and a schoolhouse. The area's first worship services were held here and Mr. Bagley opened the area's first store next to the house. Set in the country on six acres of fields and woods, the Bagley House offers five antique-filled guest rooms with both private and shared baths. Full breakfast is served to all guests. A splendid country home. $60 to $80 double, lower off season. Open year round.

KENNEBUNK/KENNEBUNKPORT

Kennebunk Inn, Kennebunk, 45 Main Street. 207-985-3351. Innkeepers: Angela and Arthur LeBlanc. Located in the heart of Kennebunk, the Inn has been a landmark since 1799. Nationally renowned for its fine dining room and charming, historic accommodations, the Kennebunk Inn offers a variety of guest rooms with many antiques and fine furnishings. $45 to $98 double, lower off season. Open year round. (See display ad this page.)

The Captain Lord Mansion, Kennebunkport. P.O. Box 800. 207-967-3141. Innkeepers: Bev Davis and Rick Litchfield. Built in 1812 by Captain Nathaniel Lord. 16 spacious guest rooms, all with private baths. 14 working fireplaces, octagonal cupola, blown glass windows, hand pulled working elevator, and other unique architectural features (Don't forget to see the gold vault). Full family style breakfast with freshly baked muffins and breads. Each room is richly appointed with period reproduction wallpapers and quality antiques. $90 to $159 per room, May through December. Lower off season. Open year round. (See display ad opposite page.)

Guide to Maine Inns
The Really Important Places

The Captain Lord Mansion, Kennebunkport

Kennebunk Inn boasts exemplary menu, service

"The chowder was the best I have had in Maine, period. It's thicker, creamier, more flavorful and more loaded with scallops, mussels and fish than half the entrees I've been served."

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MIDCOAST/DOWNEAST

Hannah Nickels House, Searsport, Route 1, Box 38, 207-548-6691. Innkeeper: Linda Ruuska. The mansion is set on over six acres of beautiful grounds with ocean views and a short walk to the ocean's edge. Located in Searsport, whose wide streets are lined with large frame houses and larger barns offering antique bux. This 1864 mansion was built by Captain A. V. Nickels and offers five comfortable guest rooms with period features and antique furnishings. Full breakfast served. $50 to $75 double. Open all year, with reservations required November through April.

Captain Drummond House, Phippsburg Center, Parker Head Road, P.O. Box 72, 207-389-6617. Innkeeper Donna Dillman. High on a bluff overlooking the Kennebec River, the inn is minutes of ocean's edge. Located in Searsport, whose wide grounds with ocean views and a short walk to the ocean's edge. Located in Searsport, whose wide streets are lined with large frame houses and larger barns offering antique bux. This 1864 mansion was built by Captain A. V. Nickels and offers five comfortable guest rooms with period features and antique furnishings. Full breakfast served. $50 to $75 double. Open all year, with reservations required November through April.

Le Domaine, Hancock, Box 496, 207-422-3395 or 422-9316. Innkeeper: Nicole L. Purslow. Le Domaine began as a tea room operated by Nicole's mother, an accomplished chef, who fled France during World War II. She and her husband left behind their inn in France, settling in Hancock and building Le Domaine in 1946. "People come for the cuisine," remarked Nicole. "We are small enough to provide our guests with superb service and fine French cooking they will return for." Le Domaine offers 7 finely appointed rooms in its shingled French country style inn. Fully stocked wine cellar. 100 acre grounds complete with trout pond. $80 per person, includes breakfast and dinner. Open mid-May to November. (See display ad this page.)

The Captain Lord Mansion

An Intimate Maine Coast Inn

- Our inn is nationally recognized for quality and hospitality.
- AAA has awarded our inn a rating for 8 consecutive years.
- Country Inns & B&B magazine in their Jan/Feb '89 issue rated our inn as one of the top 10 inns in North America.
- We extend a special invitation to Salt readers to experience our inn this winter. Call now for winter rates.
- Bev Davis & Rick Litchfield Inkeepers

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Le Domaine Restaurant & Inn Français
Nicole L. Purslow, Propriétaire et Chef

Dinner Was An Occasion to Celebrate

"A low-key first impression belies the elegance and attention to detail that awaits within, where innkeeper Nicole Purslow owns and operates a Provencal auberge on the rocky coast of northern Maine.

"The first floor is entirely given over to a sitting room and Nicole's restaurant, which you enter through French doors to find an open hearth blazing in cold weather, pristine damask tablecloths, and walls decorated with maps, crests, and costumes of France. "COUNTRY INNS OF AMERICA.

"Aperitif placet o pependre le tirage." NEW YORK TIMES.

"Early the next morning, breakfast was brought to our room. We sat out on the porch, overlooking the flower garden and pine trees, and ate wild blueberries and raspberries with thick cream, croissants served with homemade raspberry jam, and Nicole's own honey. "MAINE TIMES.

"Salade de saumon a la vinaigrette; lapin aux pruneaux; coquille St. Jacques are prepared with an authority truly astonishing considering. "TRAVEL HOLIDAY.

"A restaurant and inn that transports you straight to France. "WASHINGTON STAR.

Rates: $80 per person double occupancy includes room, dinner and breakfast. Acadia National Park, golf, tennis, swimming, fishing and sailing nearby.

DIRECTIONS: Take Rte. 1 up the Maine coast. Inn is 9 miles east of Ellsworth on Route 1. Box 491, Hancock, Me. 04640. (207) 422-3395/3916

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The Salt Two book (hardbound, 433 pages) sells for $14.95 plus $1.00 for shipping. The cost of back issues is $3.00 each plus $.50 shipping, with the exception of Nos. 21 & 22 (Eastport for Pride) that costs $6.95 plus $1.00 for shipping. Library rates for back issues are available. Binders (each holds 8 issues) are available for $9.25 including shipping cost.

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- No. 13: River Driving (12 chapter series); Cider Making; Old Time Christmas (interviews with scores of Salt's people about Christmas 50 and 60 years ago).
- No. 14: Grandfather's Golden Earring; Marie Gallaros: 50 Years in the Mills; Felling a Tree; Paddle Making; Cod Liver Oil; Ken Berdeen's Lilacs; Swan's Island (Part 1); Maine Diner.
- No. 15: Fishing Cutters; Laying the Keel; Swan's Island, Part 2 (Ruth Moulden, Walter Stinson, Basil Joyce and Edwin Goot); Country Sawmill.
- No. 16: Indian Island, Madasa Sapiel; Clan Mother of the Penobscots; Medicine Man (Selah Francis), Part 1; Ships in Bottles; Fishermen's Superstitions; Fire of '47; Metal Spinning.
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- No. 31: Lost Hunter at Chesuncook; Custom House Wharf (Portland); Repairing engines unseen (Ken Doane); Woman rural doctor (Marion Moulton).
- No. 32: Life at the Summer Hotel; Airline Road Tour; Les Acadiais du Mada­waska; Lost Hunter of Chesuncook (Part 2); Fifty years a bellman (John Foster); Outsiders in Friendship.
- No. 33: The Mall; Community and the Concrete Beast; Vassals of the Farm; The Farming Edge.
- No. 34: Rural Poverty in Maine: Piecing Together a Year; Following a Social Worker; Single Parent With Child; Staying in School.
- No. 35: Folk Culture/Popular Culture: Two monuments (Paul Bunyan, Woodman's Memorial); folk group Schoo­ner fare; Inner Maine (photography); Bingo Fever, Junkyards of Manicured Maine.
- No. 36: Jamaican Apple Pickers; Flea Market; Peaks Island.
- No. 37: (Maine's New and Old Ethnic Groups, Part I): Cambodians; First Generation (Austria, Italy, Afghanistan, Ireland); Finnish.
The Big, Old Summer Hotels are a dwindling breed. They cater to a lost elegance. But some people go without jacket and tie!

The Magazine About the Really Important People of Maine

Salt 2
Edited with an introduction by Pamela Wood

Big Paul Bunyan, Maine "folk hero," is an ad salesman's product. His nemesis stands in the heart of the great North Woods.

Six million people come to Maine on vacation each year. Do they make life better or worse for Mainers? How are they changing the state?

The Magazine About the Really Important People of Maine

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Flea Markets are as Maine as pine trees and lobsters. What's a flea? "Anything that's been used, abused and ready for resale."

On Custom House Wharf, life stays much the same. That's the way Fonnie likes it. Grime, fish and sweat. Not a place for Yuppies.

The Magazine About the Really Important People of Maine

Salt

One in every five: rural Mainers is poor. Like Monica, struggling to get by. Christmas rubs in the difference between having plenty and little.

The Magazine About the Really Important People of Maine

Salt

Flea Markets are as Maine as pine trees and lobsters. What's a flea? "Anything that's been used, abused and ready for resale."

Kansath Pon is now a Mainer. She takes her place in the ethnic mix begun when Yankees first settled on Wabanaki land.

The Magazine About the Really Important People of Maine

Salt

How are they changing the state?
Retirement Has Its Rewards.

"If I had to do it over again, I wouldn’t fret about all those details. I’d go for more picnics, and I’d give my wife more hugs. Lucky for me, it isn’t too late. My wife is a very patient woman."

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