

4-1-2009

Book Reviews

W. Stanton Maloney
University of New England

David R. Jones
University of Southern Maine

Charles Horne

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

 Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Maloney, W. Stanton, David R. Jones, and Charles Horne. "Book Reviews." *Maine History* 44, 2 (2009): 203-209.
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol44/iss2/7>

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

BOOK REVIEWS

The Voyage of Archangell: James Rosier's Account of the Waymouth Voyage of 1605, A True Relation. By James Rosier. Edited by David C. Morey. (Gardiner, Maine: Tilbury House, 2005. Pp. 140. Cloth. \$20.00.)

On March 5, 1605 George Waymouth, the Captain of the *Archangell*, departed from Ratcliff, England in search of a suitable site for a colony of English Catholics. James Rosier, “a gentleman employed to document the voyage,” recorded the Atlantic crossing. The *Archangell* arrived in the vicinity of Nantucket Shoals on May 14 north of its intended landfall. Rosier describes the situation accordingly: “We stood off all that night, and the next day being Wednesday; but the wind still continuing between points of South-South-West and West-South-West: so as we could not make any way to the Southward.”

Taking the path of least resistance and following the prevailing winds, Captain Waymouth set a course to the north. On May 18, he found anchorage at Mohegan Island in the Gulf of Maine and later at Pentecost Harbor (Georges Islands). During the course of the next four weeks captain and crew met and traded with local Native Americans, explored the surrounding areas, replenished supplies of water and wood, recorded the different species of fish, trees, and wildlife, dined on fish and lobster, discovered a “great river,” and captured and kidnapped five Mawooshen Indians.

Rosier’s narrative provides insight into the prevailing attitudes of the men of the early 1600s. The Eurocentric philosophy of the day is clear. Equally apparent is the sense of excitement that the crew felt as they discovered the quality and quantity of much needed natural resources. Rosier, in addition to providing a narrative, documented the wildlife along the Maine coast.

During the early part of the voyage, Rosier notes the specific locations of the ship, based on Waymouth’s sightings. However, once the *Archangell* reaches Georges Islands the account lacks the specificity of previous sections of the narrative. The absence of navigational sightings contributes to the mystery of the location of the “great river.”

The editor, David C. Morey, is “an avocational historian who lives in Tenants Harbor, Maine near the scene of the events in this book.”

Morey's annotation, with over one hundred footnotes to supplement Rosier's account, enhances and expands the reader's understanding of the original text, which was published shortly after the safe return of the *Archangell* to England. Morey also provides background material, interpretation, and context that help the reader understand the original text.

Morey's introductory chapter, "A Race for the American Coast", introduces Waymouth's voyage and Rosier's narrative. The concluding chapters, the "Five Mawooshen Captives" and "The Continuing Controversy" reveal the treatment of the captives and the identification of the "great river." Morey's material serves as bookends and complements the Rosier narrative. Over the years the Kennebec, St. George, and the Penobscot rivers have been identified as the "great river" of Rosier's account. Until recently it was generally accepted that the river in question was the St. George. Morey challenges that position on the basis of linguistic evidence and the distances traveled; he suggests that the "great river" has to be the Penobscot.

Students of Maine history will find Rosier's account to be a revealing record of early exploration and will find the documented interactions with the Native Americans equally interesting. The key to this work is, of course, Morey's keen interpretation of the material. Without his insight the voyage of the *Archangell* would be valuable only to antiquarians. Morey transforms Rosier's account into an accessible work of history.

W. STANTON MALONEY
Professor Emeritus, University of New England

Bates Through the Years: An Illustrated History. By Charles E. Clark. (Lewiston, Maine: Bates College, 2005. Pp. 131. \$18.95)

Bates has always been co-ed, racially integrated, fraternity-free, and situated in a mill town, features rarely associated with prestigious New England liberal arts colleges. Bates is different, as this 150th anniversary volume makes clear. In the middle of the nineteenth-century, denominational colleges spread throughout America. Many were ephemeral, while others endured. Maine was undersupplied with higher education. The Freewill Baptists were religious liberals; their new college would ad-

mit women, blacks, and persons of other denominations. These were selling points in the diverse catchment of western Maine.

As was true throughout the nation, new colleges had to take the students they could get, ill-prepared as they might be. Bates began as a seminary, offering secondary-level education and creating a college-level clientele as it went along. Unlike other colleges that diversified their academic fields, Bates stuck to the liberal arts; these were the professional preparation of clergy and teachers, and there was sufficient demand for graduates in these fields.

Clark records the last half century's progression from a local "poor man's college" to an elite institution. The changes were deep: teaching-oriented professors supplemented and eventually supplanted publishing scholars; students with high standardized test scores were drawn from increasingly distant locales; endowments were acquired, and facilities were improved. Clark does not thoroughly explain how this happened, and some comparisons might have helped clarify this transformation. Why did some colleges take this high road and succeed, while others failed? Why did others carve different paths to success?

In some ways *Bates* is History-Lite. In 131 pages it cannot match either David Stameshkin's monumental works on Middlebury, or Charles Calhoun's detailed interpretative essay on Bowdoin (*A Small College in Maine*, 1993). Nonetheless, Clark focuses on big issues, not the antiquarian minutia and biographical reminiscences of so many commemorative volumes. His analysis of WWII is a good example. Rather than relying on the traditional roll call of veterans and lengthy anecdotes detailing a temporarily feminized campus, he addresses the cultural significance of a worldwide conflict, the GI Bill, and a number of related issues.

Clark's account is not overly celebratory. The school's vaunted liberalism broke down under social and economic pressure in the early to mid twentieth century. Blacks were not a problem—there would never be many in Maine. But too many bright, ambitious Jews presented real competition for the offspring of WASP elites. Bates adopted the widespread, infamous policy of quotas. More truly religious prejudices occasionally marred Bates' non-sectarianism. During the 1940s, a search for a *Protestant* professor of a secular subject caused an outcry.

Clark also detects flaws in Bates' image as a socially advanced institution. The many ways in which co-ed has not meant equality are carefully considered. Extra-curricular segregation by gender died a belated death. Bates faculty remained overwhelmingly white and male until surprisingly recently; women seeking role models would find them first at

women's colleges, then at public universities. But these are the imperfections of a good record, and Clark's is a convincingly favorable assessment.

Some additional issues deserved more attention. Bates' place in the regional economy and society could have been emphasized. Did attendance facilitate social climbing, reinforce established distinctions, or level social inequalities? How did gown affect town, and other towns as well? These criticisms aside, it is a book that should satisfy not only alumni, but a broad, curious public, as well as an array of historians.

DAVID R JONES
University of Southern Maine

New England's Covered Bridges: A Complete Guide. By Benjamin D. and June R. Evans. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2004, Pp. 344. Paper. \$24.95.)

New England's Covered Bridges provides basic information and photos of historic bridges and recent replicas built to traditional designs. The volume's introductory material is less comprehensive and indeed a little scant. Eric Sloane's "Covered Bridges," written a half-century ago, suggested far more about the public interest in covered bridges. He argued that the structures could be interpreted as tools for imagining the past. (*Our Vanishing Landscape*, Dover reprint, 2004) In contrast, *New England's Covered Bridges* leaves much to be desired.

For those devotees who have been touring covered bridges for some time, there may not be much new material. One may have the local guides, older discussions of the construction and meaning of these bridges, but most of those guides only cover one or two locales. If the reader's known region is not New England, but another of the great concentrations of covered bridges in the mid or far west, this volume may prove useful since the authors have previously catalogued and analyzed the bridges of Pennsylvania. New England is a new study for them, not an old habit; their coverage should be uniformly thorough and reliable across the region. A check of one locale may serve to test the quality of this book. This reviewer's locale is Oxford County, where many of the state's remaining covered bridges are found.

Primarily, this *Guide* guides. Even without the recommended supplement of Delorme state atlases, bridge enthusiasts can easily find their way over back roads. The basic data on age and truss type, the occasional discussion of construction or introduction of an anecdote help to bring the bridges to life.

To identify and find all or almost all the covered bridges of New England, readers should be certain to look here. To learn more about the history of a bridge's funding, construction, maintenance, and purpose in its locale, covered bridge aficionados need to seek guidance elsewhere, starting with the references included in the Evans' work. For those who simply want to enjoy the bridges' beauty, *Covered Bridges* is their guide.

DAVID R. JONES
University of Southern Maine

Styles Bridges: Yankee Senator. By James J. Kiepper. (Sugar Hill, NH: Phoenix Publishing, 2001. Pp. 270. Cloth. \$24.95.)

Students of Maine's twentieth-century political history readily think of United States Senators Margaret Chase Smith and Edmund S. Muskie as the leading native figures of their times. Both were accomplished senators, both claimed the national spotlight, and both sought their parties' presidential nomination. What such students may not realize is that a third Maine native in the last century was also a major figure in the Senate, claiming the national spotlight and seeking, also unsuccessfully, his party's presidential nomination. There is a twist, however, as Styles Bridges, though born, raised, and educated in Maine, sought his political fortune in New Hampshire.

Styles Bridges was widely regarded as one of the ablest and most significant senators of his generation, serving from 1937 to 1961. Despite his reputation, very little was written about Bridges until Professor James Kiepper's biography, *Styles Bridges: Yankee Senator*. Professor Kiepper has meticulously researched the details of Bridges' life, which began in 1898 on a farm in West Pembroke, Maine and ended sixty-three years later after a quarter-century in the national spotlight. Following graduation from the University of Maine and work as a county agricultural agent, Bridges moved to New Hampshire to edit a farm journal.

Just over a decade later, Bridges was governor of New Hampshire and two years after that, one of its youngest senators ever.

Throughout his life, Bridges overcame considerable adversity that included family tragedies, periods of ill health, the loss of his savings in the 1929 stock market crash, and resistance by some of New Hampshire's political elders to his political advancement. Kiepper frequently underscores how Bridges succeeded with native charm, down home "smarts," and Yankee thriftiness.

Kiepper provides a brisk tour of Bridges' accomplishments. In 1940, he was regarded highly enough to garner support for an unsuccessful Republican presidential bid. Two years later, President Roosevelt chose Bridges and three other senators to secretly appropriate billions of dollars to build the atomic bombs that were dropped on Japan. By the 1950s, Bridges was considered one of the half dozen most powerful political figures in Washington, with a reputation as a consummate "bridge builder" in his own party and as a dealmaker with the Democrats.

Though Kiepper clearly admires Bridges, his book presents the flaws and controversies in the Senator's career. Perhaps most controversial were charges of corruption arising from Bridges' propensity to collect cash for favors done to benefit constituents. Kiepper points out (and foreword writer Robert Novak concurs) that Bridges' money-taking was well within the common practice of the day. The Senator was investigated a number of times, but always managed to clear his name. New Hampshireites continued to re-elect him by increasing majorities each time he ran.

An admittedly minor criticism of this book concerns occasional lapses on dates. A 1954 Bridges re-election poster is reproduced here, but labeled from 1959. The photo of the opening of Pease Air Force Base is incorrectly dated 1954, instead of 1956. Professor Kiepper erroneously writes that Senator Joseph McCarthy's initial election was 1948, rather than 1946.

These quibbles aside, my principal criticism of *Styles Bridges: Yankee Senator* is that it does not go into more detail concerning Bridges' legislative achievements. How did Bridges manage (with three other senators) to conceal two billion dollars in order to fund the A-bomb? When Lyndon Johnson began his rise to the Senate majority leadership, biographer Robert Caro writes that Johnson in his dealings found Bridges "too powerful and shrewd to be gotten around." Kiepper points out that Bridges held court in a hideaway office near the Senate floor, where many of the legislative deals were made, but once again, there are few ac-

counts of specific bills where Bridges' intervention made the difference.

In fairness to Kiepper, Bridges apparently chose to operate behind the scenes and without much fanfare. Kiepper cites Senator Hugh Scott's (R-Pennsylvania) account of how Bridges mediated between the ranting conservatives and raving moderates of the Republican party to secure moderate Thomas Kuchel's election as GOP whip in 1959 after the more conservative Everett Dirksen had been chosen minority leader. Scott remembers Bridges quietly "working the room" and obtaining the desired result.

Still, *Styles Bridges: Yankee Senator* shines most when we discover just how effective Bridges could be when he put his charm and knowledge to work. Professor Kiepper provides rich detail of Bridges' New Hampshire campaigns, the senator's thriftiness (he bought \$30 suits and had them re-cut when the styles changed), and his impact on a whole generation of New Hampshire politicians. That alone makes this fascinating and readable biography worth one's time.

CHARLES HORNE
Bangor