

2019

# History of Alna Maine

Town of Alna

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## Community

HISTORY

ORGANIZATIONS

BUSINESSES

ALNA VOLUNTEER FIRE  
DEPARTMENT

OTHER LOCAL  
RESOURCES

VOLUNTEERING

FOOD PANTRY AND  
COMMUNITY GARDEN

## About



Dock Rd. Looking North to Hilton's Store c. 1910. The village blacksmith shop (now gone) is the building in the foreground on the right. This photo post card is from Eastern Publishing Co. whose collection of glass negatives is now housed at the Penobscot Marine Museum in Searsport.

## ALNA HISTORY

Archeologists have discovered settlement along the Sheepscot River that pre-dates the 1620 Plymouth Colony. There are written records of a settlement near the present Sheepscot Village from the mid 1600s. These early settlements did not last, being subject to Indian attacks and nature's challenges. Permanent settlement of the area now known as Alna dates from 1758, after the end of the French and Indian Wars.

In 1760 Massachusetts established Lincoln County and incorporated; Pownalborough, which included the present-day towns of Wiscasset, Alna, and Dresden, as well Swan Island. Families from Massachusetts and New Hampshire settled what was then a frontier. The 1766 census of Pownalborough counted 114 families, 39 framed houses and 61 log houses.

Well into the 19th century, rivers were both the primary means of transportation and powered industry. Grain and saw mills were established along the Sheepscot River at Head Tide, Puddle Dock and Sheepscot Village. Virgin forests provided timber, primarily for shipbuilding. Before the Revolution all trees over 24 inches in diameter were marked with the King's Arrow, designating them as masts for the Royal Navy. The original masts

for the USS Constitution were floated from Puddle Dock to Wiscasset in 1797 and then towed to Boston.

After the Revolutionary War, Alna prospered and expanded.

In 1794 the North precinct of Pownalborough split off and became New Milford. In 1811 the name was changed to Alna from the Latin "alnus" for the alder trees that grow abundantly in town.

During the 1800s Alna shipyards built 103 schooners, brigs and a fully rigged 1194 ton vessel, named the King Phillip.

Ships were floated to Wiscasset, the deepest harbor north of Boston.

While farming remained the primary occupation, tanneries, taverns, stores and other small businesses were established. The first meeting house was constructed in 1789 and schools were built.

In 1820 Alna's population was 1200.

In 1895 the Wiscasset and Quebec Railway initiated narrow gauge railroad service through Alna. Until 1933 the little train shuttled mail, passengers, livestock and produce between Wiscasset and the state's interior. Apples grown on Head Tide Hill were said to be harvested and shipped on a Monday and sold in Boston on Tuesday, with the profits back in Alna by Wednesday.

In 1989 a Narrow Gauge Museum was established at the site of the old Sheepscot Station. One of the original engines now travels

2.2 miles of track on weekends.

This historical detail is provided from, "a Brief History of Old Alna"  
written by Nell Walker in 1970.

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Tuesday - 8AM-12PM, Wednesday - 10AM-5PM, Thursday - 2PM - 6PM, Friday - 8AM-12PM