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GOVERNORS OF MAINE WITH OXFORD COUNTY TIES

BY STANLEY R. HOWE

Seven of Maine's seventy-two governors or acting governors were either born in what is today Oxford County or served from that county, which was incorporated on March 4, 1805, two hundred years ago this year. Five of these seven left a lasting legacy as chief executives of the state. Hannibal Hamlin, who served briefly as governor, made important contributions by holding other offices, and Sebastian Streeter Marble ably filled out his predecessor's term, but is nearly forgotten today. Below they are described in the order of their service. Dr. Howe received his Ph.d. from the University of Maine in 1977. He is the executive director of the Bethel Historical Society and writes extensively on regional and local history.

ALBION KEITH PARRIS

January 5, 1822 to January 4, 1827

Albion Keith Parris was born in Hebron in the District of Maine on January 19, 1788, the son of Samuel and Sarah (Pratt) Parris. Samuel was a Federalist Oxford County judge. As an only child, Parris was raised on his father's farm and educated in local schools before his admission to Dartmouth College in 1803. Graduating from Dartmouth in 1806, he transferred to New Gloucester to become a lawyer under the tutelage of Ezekiel Whitman, who later became a Federalist judge in Portland. Parris followed Whitman there and was admitted to the Cumberland County Bar in 1809. The following year, he married Sarah Whitman, who became the mother of five children. In 1811, he moved back to his native Oxford County, settling in the town of Paris to become county attorney. During the War of 1812 he abandoned the Federalist party to become a Republican. In 1813, he became a state representative in the Massachusetts General Court, and in 1814 he was selected to serve in the State Senate representing Oxford and Somerset counties. The following November he won a seat in the US House of Representatives. With the British invasion of Maine in 1814, Parris became a strong advocate for



ALBION KEITH PARRIS
Courtesy Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Maine statehood. After his service in the US House, Parris became, in 1818, a US district judge for the District of Maine, serving until 1820. He was active in the movement to separate Maine from Massachusetts, attending the State Constitutional Convention in 1819, serving as convention treasurer, and assuming a major role in drafting the state's new constitution. William King, Maine's first governor, appointed him Cumberland County Judge of Probate, where he served until 1821, when he ran for governor. One of his major focuses as governor was the emerging northeastern boundary dispute, where he labored tirelessly to support Maine's claim to the region. He refused to accept another term as governor and was selected by the Maine Legislature to serve the final year of John Holmes's term in the US Senate. Following his Senate experience, Parris became an associate justice of the Maine Supreme Court. He served there until 1836, when he became second controller of the US Treasury. He retired from that position in 1849, returning to practicing law in Portland, and in 1852, he was elected mayor of the city by opposing the Maine Liquor Law. Two years later, he ran unsuccessfully for governor as a Democrat. This defeat marked the end of his long political career. A Freemason, he also served as the first president of the Maine Historical Society (1822-1823) and laid the cornerstone for Portland's High Street Congregationalist Church in 1831. He died in Portland on February 11, 1857, and is buried in Portland's Western Cemetery. His was Maine's first multi-term governor, and he left a strong imprint on his native state. Better known for his hard work than his brilliance, he was a practical and highly regarded politician in his day and rendered solid service in many capacities at various levels of government.

Sources: *Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1961* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961) p. 1427; Ronald F. Banks, *Maine Becomes A State: The Movement to Separate Maine from Massachusetts* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1970), pp. 69-70; Dumas Malone, editor, *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 14, p 254; *Eastern Argus*, February 12, 1857; John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, editors, *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17, pp. 64-65; William B. Lapham and Silas P. Maxim, *History of Paris, Maine* (Paris, Maine: the authors, 1884), pp. 242-243.

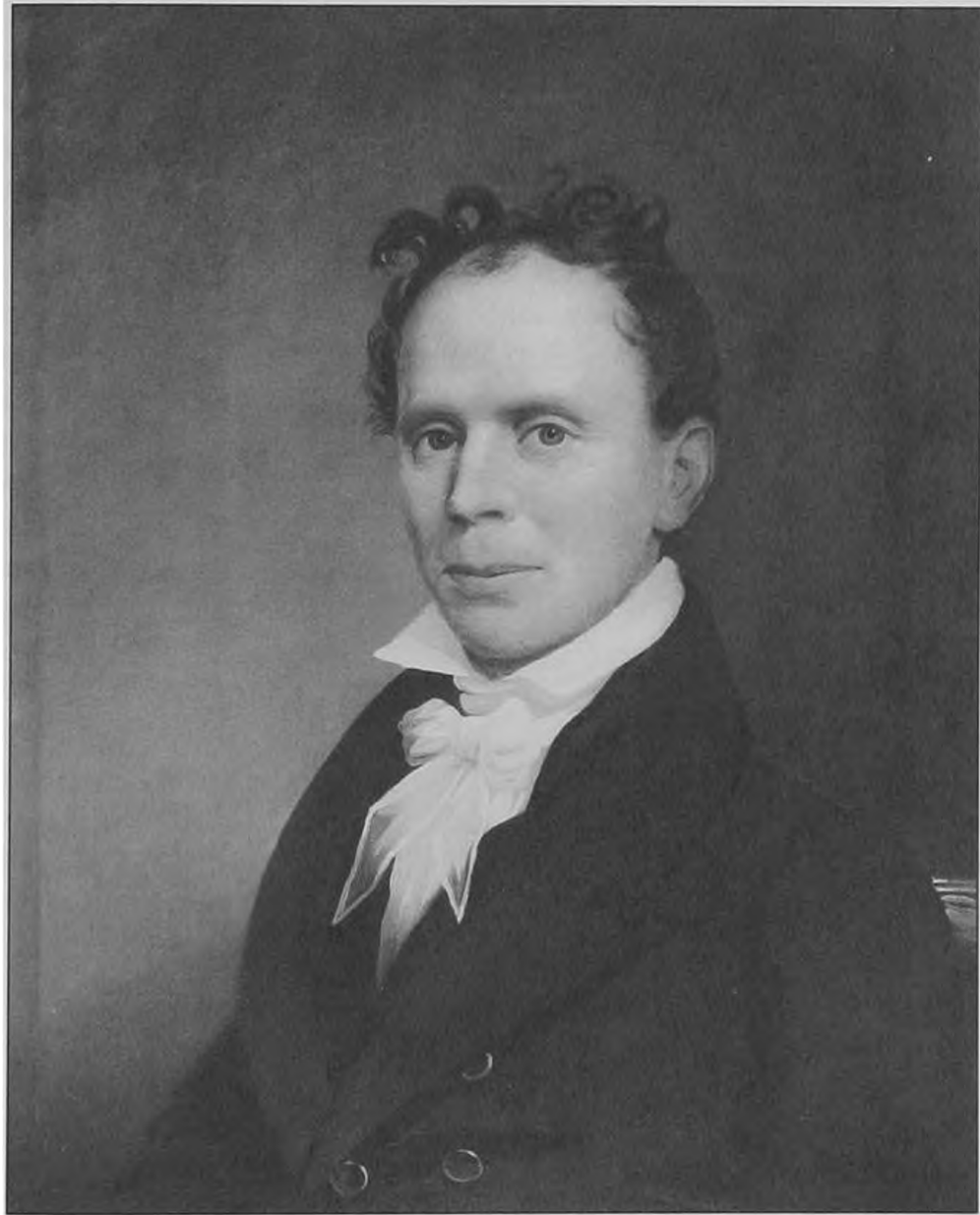
ENOCH LINCOLN

January 4, 1827 to October 8, 1829

Enoch Lincoln was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, on December 28, 1788, the son of Martha Waldo and Bay State Governor Levi Lincoln. After briefly attending Harvard College, he studied law in Worcester and was admitted to the bar in 1811. He began his practice in Salem, but the following year relocated to Fryeburg in the District of Maine. Here he found new interests and his literary pursuits led to a poem he titled "The Village," celebrating his new home. In Fryeburg, he became acquainted with several Native Americans, and he developed a deep, lifelong interest in their culture. In 1819, he moved to the shire town in Paris. Through his family's prominent Republican ties, he moved quickly into Maine political circles, serving as assistant US District Attorney for Maine from 1815 to 1818. He relocated in Washington, DC in 1818, succeeding Albion K. Parris in the US House of Representatives and serving there until 1826. His career as representative was considered unremarkable, but his stand against Maine statehood under the Missouri Compromise of 1820 gained him respect as a man of principle. He benefitted from divisions within Republican ranks in 1826 and emerged as a compromise candidate for governor. He was elected and served until 1829 when he wearied of the political battles and moved to Scarborough. Conciliatory by nature, he was known for his friendly relations with most members of his fractious party. He retired from politics and spent his final years writing about Natives; two of his works were published after his death by the Maine Historical Society. A bachelor, he died in Augusta on October 8, 1829, at the young age of 41, and is buried in a mausoleum in the park across from the State Capitol. Probably his most significant legacy as governor was his strong defense of Maine's claim in the northeast boundary controversy and his warning to the federal government not to cede territory without Maine's approval.

Sources: *Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1961* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 1219; Francis M. Carroll, *A Good and Wise Measure: The Search for the Canadian-American Boundary, 1783-1842* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 154; Dumas Malone, editor, *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), 11, pp. 261-262; *Eastern Argus*, October 13, 1829; John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, editors,

American National Biography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13, pp. 674-675; William B. Lapham and Silas P. Maxim, *History of Paris, Maine* (Paris, Maine: the authors, 1884), pp. 243-244.



ENOCH LINCOLN

Courtesy Maine Historic Preservation Commission

JOHN W. DANA

January 3, 1844 (Acting Governor for a one-day term)
and May 19, 1847 to May 13, 1850

John W. Dana was born in Fryeburg, June 11, 1808, the son of Judah and Elizabeth (Ripley) Dana. His mother was the daughter of a Dartmouth College professor and the granddaughter of Eleazor Wheelock, the college's founder and first president. His father was briefly a US Senator from Maine (1836-37). Dana attended local schools, graduating from Fryeburg Academy. He married Eliza Ann Osgood of Fryeburg, and they raised five children while Dana served in both houses of the Maine Legislature. In 1844 he was senate president. Known for his parliamentary prowess, he seldom took part in debate. In 1847 he was elected governor and re-elected in 1848 and 1849. After Dana's service as governor, President Franklin Pierce appointed him Minister to Bolivia. Despairing of the nation's future after the Civil War, he sold his property in Fryeburg and moved to Argentina to raise sheep. Serving as a nurse during a cholera epidemic shortly after he arrived, he contracted the disease and died in Buenos Aires on December 22, 1867. He was buried there, but several years later his remains were returned to Fryeburg and now repose in the village cemetery among his ancestors.

Sources:

John Stuart Barrows, *Fryeburg, Maine: An Historical Sketch* (Fryeburg, Maine: Pequaket Press, 1938), p. 217; Henry Chase, editor, *Representative Men of Maine* (Portland, Maine: Lakeside Press, 1893), p. xxvii; *Rockland Gazette*, March 6, 1868.



JOHN W. DANA

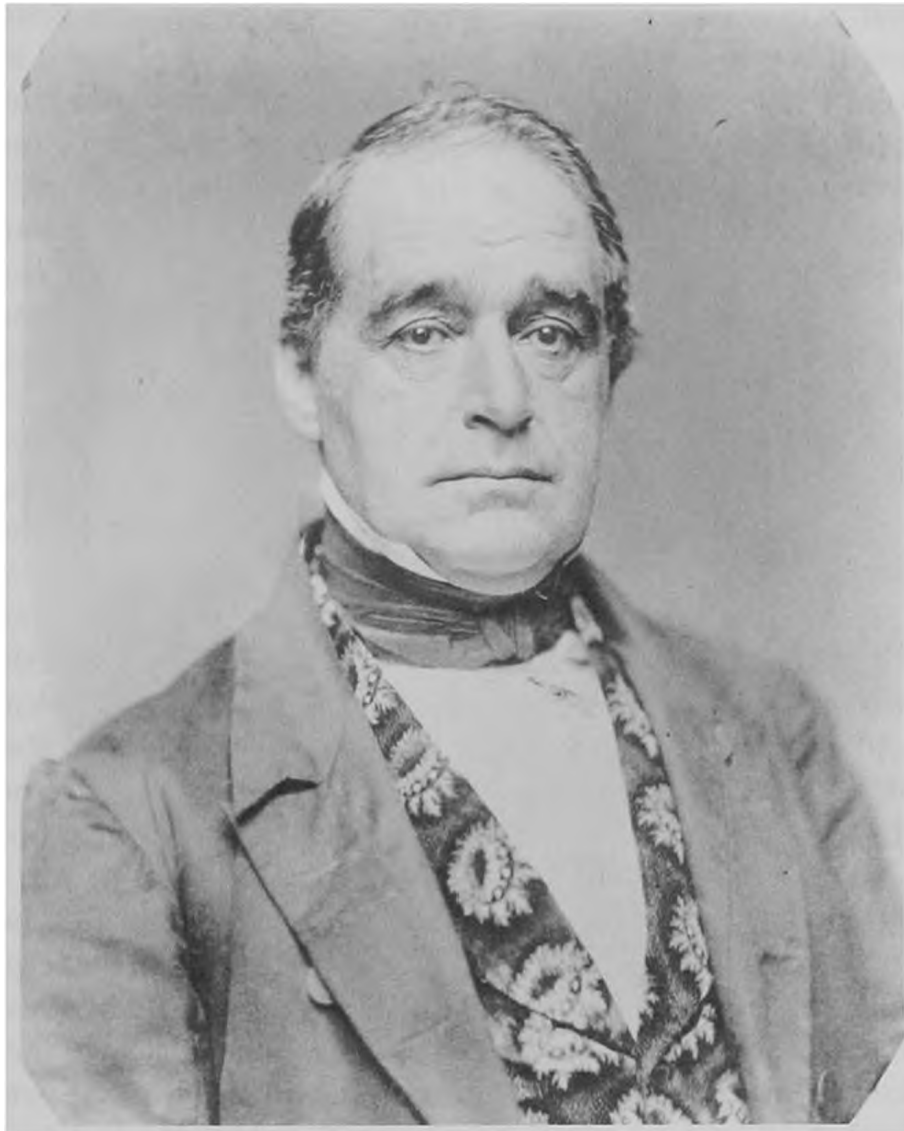
Courtesy Maine Historic Preservation Commission

HANNIBAL HAMLIN

January 8, 1857 to February 26, 1857

Hannibal Hamlin was born in Paris, Maine, August 27, 1809, the son of Cyrus and Anna (Livermore) Hamlin. He attended local schools and then Hebron Academy for the 1826-1827 academic year. He was employed as a clerk, a surveyor, and a schoolmaster before moving home to take over the family farm following his father's early death in 1829. In Paris he became interested in politics and became an owner of the local Democratic newspaper, *The Democrat*, for a brief period. Intent upon becoming a lawyer, he studied law and served in the law office of Samuel Fessenden of Portland. He gained admission to the Maine Bar in 1833 and the same year married Sarah Jane Emery, who became the mother of four of his children. They settled in Hampden where he opened a law office, and as a Jacksonian Democrat, he was elected to six one-year terms in the Maine House of Representatives (1836-1841 and 1847). He was speaker for three of those terms, opposing capital punishment and condemning slavery. In 1843 he was elected to the US House of Representatives, where he remained for two terms. During this time, he again established a record of opposition to the expansion of slavery. He lost a bid for a US Senate seat in 1846, but was successful two years later, completing the term of the late John Fairfield. His opposition to slavery alienated those in Maine who saw his views as a threat to national unity and to Maine's interest in the cotton trade. He was re-elected, but only by the narrowest of margins. Finding the Democratic party's positions increasingly difficult to square with antislavery, he bolted to the Republicans in 1856. He won the governorship handily that year, but served only a few weeks before he was sent back to the US Senate. His first wife died that year, and he married her half-sister Ellen Vesta Emery, with whom he had two sons. He continued his attacks on slavery but also supported a number of other projects, including the transcontinental railroad. Viewed erroneously as a Seward supporter, he was selected to join the Republican national ticket with Lincoln. Hamlin was elected vice president, but found the duties frustrating and unfulfilling. He expected re-nomination in 1864, but Lincoln selected Andrew Johnson in his stead. After the war, he became collector for the Port of Boston and again a US Senator from 1869-1881, where he served ably as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In 1881 he was appointed Minister to Spain, returning to the United States the following year. He died in Bangor on July 4, 1891. He was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in that city.

Sources: *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 998; Dumas Malone, editor, *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), 8, pp. 196-197; H. Draper Hunt, *Hannibal Hamlin of Maine: Lincoln's First Vice-President* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1969); John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9, pp. 936-938; *Kennebec Journal*, July 6, 1891.



HANNIBAL HAMLIN

Courtesy Maine Historic Preservation Commission

SIDNEY PERHAM

January 5, 1871, to January 7, 1874

Sidney Perham was born in Woodstock, Maine, March 31, 1819, the son of Joel and Sophronia (Bisbee) Perham. He attended the common schools of Woodstock and spent one term at Gould Academy in nearby Bethel. At age nineteen, he began teaching school during the winters and working on the family farm during the summers. He continued in this way for fifteen years, taking an active part in teacher institutes and educational conventions, and later became president of the Board of Trustees at Westbrook Seminary. At age twenty-one, he acquired his father's farm and was engaged in the duties of keeping from two hundred to five hundred sheep. As a member of the State Board of Agriculture, he was often called on to speak upon agricultural subjects. An avowed temperance advocate, he also frequently addressed groups throughout the state on behalf of the Sons of Temperance and the Good Templars. He was also active on behalf of the Universalist Church, serving on state and national boards, and at age twenty-two, he was elected to the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Woodstock. A Democrat until 1853, he then took an active part in the formation of the Republican party. In 1854, he was elected to the Maine House of Representatives and was promptly elected as speaker—the first so selected without previous legislative experience. In 1856 he was a presidential elector for John Fremont, and two years later he was elected Clerk of Courts for Oxford County. He was re-elected in 1861, resigned in 1863, and then took a seat in the US House of Representatives, where he took great interest in Civil War veterans and was a firm supporter of both Reconstruction and the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. In 1870 he was elected governor of Maine and re-elected twice. During his terms he advocated prison reform, an industrial school for girls, the establishment of free high schools, and biennial elections for the Maine Legislature. In 1877 he was appointed appraiser for the Port of Portland and served in that capacity for eight years before resigning. In 1891 he was appointed by President Harrison to a commission to select a dry dock for the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. During the last years of his life, he divided his time between Washington, DC and his summer home on Paris Hill. He died April 10, 1907, and is buried in Lakeside Cemetery, Woodstock, Maine.

Sources: *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 1444; *Representative Men of Maine* (Portland: Lakeside Press, 1893), p. 61; *Kennebec Journal*, April 12, 1907; William B. Lapham, *History of Woodstock, Me.* (Portland: Stephen Berry, 1882), pp. 163-166; William B. Lapham and Silas P. Maxim, *History of Paris, Maine* (Paris, Maine: the authors, 1884), pp. 486-87.



SIDNEY PERHAM

Courtesy Maine Historic Preservation Commission

SEBASTIAN STREETER MARBLE
December 15, 1887 to January 2, 1889

Sebastian Streeter Marble was born in Dixfield, March 1, 1817, the son of Ephraim and Hanna (Packard) Marble. His grandfather, John Marble, who was born in 1751, served in the American Revolution at Bunker Hill and became, in 1794, one of the founders of Dixfield. Educated in the common schools of Dixfield and by private tutors, he then attended Waterville Academy. He began his legal studies in the office of Isaac Randall of Dixfield and subsequently continued with John E. Stacy of Wilton. Following admission to the Maine bar in 1843, he spent a year and a half teaching school in the American West and South before returning to Maine in 1845, where he began the practice of law with John Stacy in Wilton. The next year he returned to Dixfield, and five years after that settled in Waldoboro, where he remained for the rest of his life. In 1861, he was appointed deputy collector of customs for the Waldoboro District, and two years later, he became the collector, where he remained for three and a half years. In 1867, he was appointed register of bankruptcy for the Third Congressional District. On February 3, 1870, he was appointed United States Marshall of Maine, serving for eight years. In April 1878 he resumed his law practice, simultaneously serving on the school committee and as chairman of the Board of Selectmen in Waldoboro.

Marble had become a Republican and attended the National Convention in Baltimore in 1864. He also attended the Chicago National Convention in 1888. In 1882, he was elected to the State Senate and served three terms. He was president of the Senate when Governor Joseph Bodwell died on December 15, 1887. As Senate president, he succeeded Bodwell and served out the remainder of his term, retiring from public life in 1889. On October 17, 1846, Marble married Mary E. Ellis of Jay. He died on May 10, 1902 in Waldoboro, where he is buried.

Sources: *Kennebec Journal*, May 12, 1902; *Leslie's History of the Republican Party* (New York: Judge Publishing, n.d.), 2, pp. 209-210; *Representative Men of Maine* (Portland, Me.: Lakeside Press, 1893), p. 53.



SEBASTIAN STREETER MARBLE
Courtesy Maine Historic Preservation Commission

EDMUND SIXTUS MUSKIE
January 6, 1955 to January 3, 1959

Edmund Sixtus Muskie was born in Rumford, Maine, on March 28, 1914, the son of Stephen Marciszewski (his surname became Muskie at Ellis Island), a tailor and Josephine Czarnecki. A bright and ambitious child, he grew up in an economically disadvantaged family, graduating from Stephens High School in 1932 as valedictorian of his class and as president of the Student Council. During this time, he became known as a skilled debater.

Muskie entered Bates College in 1932 and graduated four years later in 1936 with a B.A. degree. He was president of his class and received a Phi Beta Kappa key. For his legal education at Cornell Law School, he was supported by the Maine philanthropist William Bingham II of Bethel. He received his L.L.B. degree in 1939, and following admission to the Maine bar in 1940, he settled in Waterville to begin his practice. In 1948, he married Jane Gray of Waterville, and they became the parents of five children.

During World War II, Muskie served as a lieutenant in the US Navy, returning to Waterville in 1945 to resume his law practice. He became interested in Democratic politics, successfully seeking election to the Maine House of Representatives in 1946; he was reelected in 1948 and 1950. He ran unsuccessfully for Mayor of Waterville in 1947, and in 1951 he left his legislative seat to become state director of price stabilization, a post he resigned in 1952. In 1954, with little chance of winning and meager financial support, he challenged incumbent Governor Burton Cross and defeated him by more than 22,000 votes, becoming the second Roman Catholic Governor of Maine after Edward Kavanaugh's term in 1843-1844.

A popular governor, Muskie was re-elected in 1956. In 1958, he took on Senator Frederick G. Payne and won by a margin of 61,000 votes, becoming Maine's first popularly elected Democratic US Senator. He was re-elected to the US Senate in 1964, 1970, and 1976. In 1980, he resigned his Senate seat to become secretary of State briefly in the administration of President Jimmy Carter. In 1968, he ran for vice president on the Democratic ticket with Hubert Humphrey, which lost narrowly to Richard Nixon. After a brief but unsuccessful race for president in 1972, he returned to his work in the US Senate, where he served as chairman of the



EDMUND SIXTUS MUSKIE
Courtesy Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Budget Committee. Among his major legacies in the US Senate was his leadership on environmental issues, which resulted in the Clean Air Act of 1963 and the Water Quality Act of 1965.

Muskie always stayed in touch with his Oxford County roots, visiting the area regularly and coming to Rumford to see his mother. When he left government service in 1981, he practiced law in Washington, where he died on March 26, 1996. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Following his death, his native town dedicated a memorial to him in a small park below Rumford Falls.

Sources: *Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1961* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 1376; David Nevin, *Muskie of Maine* (New York: Random House, 1972); John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Supplement 1, pp. 439-441; John J. Leane, *A History of Rumford, Maine: Its Historic Background, People and Resources* (Rumford, Maine: Rumford Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 77-80; *New York Times*, March 27, 1996; Richard A. Hebert, *Modern Maine: Its Historic Background, People and Resources* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1955), 3, pp. 79-80; Theodore Lippman, Jr., *Muskie* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971).