

THE BOWDOINHAM NEWS

Bowdoinham Historical Society News

By Betsy Steen

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In September, we all watched the fascinating process of painting our “Green Bridge” also known as the “Brooklyn Bridge”. I think of what it must have been like the last time it was painted. The inspector said they expect 25 - 30 years out of this paint job

The first Bridge across the Cathance River there at the landing was built in 1805. “It was to be 12 feet high above the water across the channel. It was a toll bridge: the tolls being a foot passenger - 2¢; a horse and rider - 6¢; a two wheel carriage for pleasure - 10¢; a four wheeled carriage with two horses - 25¢; sleigh or sled drawn by one beast - 6¢; sheep or swine, each - 1¢, etc.” This bridge was replaced in 1826, and made a free bridge in 1828.

parts, 144 feet in length. It had been built in Troy, NY in 1866. By 1931 it was the only such bridge in New England.

By the early 1950s, as it was approaching 100 years of age, having lasted 55 years in its Bowdoinham location, and surviving two floods, it was declared unsafe. At that time it was the only cast iron bridge left in the Unites States. A temporary military pontoon bridge took its place. When the Cast Iron Bridge was taken down, bidders from around the country wanted it as “cast iron was worth its weight in gold.”

The new bridge, Bowdoinham’s present Green or Brooklyn Bridge, a 156 foot steel truss bridge, was finished in 1953. It cost \$145,000. The contractor was Herbert



When millwright James Madison Kendall arrived in Bowdoinham in 1865, he put into operation a unique tide mill, under the Cathance Bridge, a wooden king post span, which he built to replace the previous bridge. This mill provided the power for the Kendall Plaster and Grain Mills and Sagadahoc Fertilizer Company for well over 40 years

These bridges over the Cathance were all wooden structures. By 1890 a better bridge was needed, and the town began to look for one. Berlin, Connecticut, aspiring to a more modern bridge, advertised one for sale. John Rideout, master ship builder, was charged with inspecting and negotiating for the bridge. An agreement was made, for \$3885.52 and the bridge taken apart , loaded on a flatbed train car, and shipped to Bowdoinham, where John Rideout was instrumental in helping to erect it. It was a cast iron bridge with some wrought iron

Callahan of Auburn. Talking with the inspector at the current painting site, I learned that our Green Bridge would again be green; the gray and white coats having been different primers. They expect the paint to last from 25 to 30 years. David and I remember one previous paint job since we arrived in Bowdoinham in

1973.

Bowdoinham’s Green Bridge has been declared worthy of being placed on the National Register of Historic Places. BHS would love some help in doing the paperwork to make that happen

Adams, Silas, History of the Town of Bowdoinham, Maine 1762-1912 . 1912

Edition reprinted 1985 with added pictures and a separate Index.

The Cast Iron Bridge c 1912



The Cast Iron Bridge: looking from Brooklyn toward Bham Village.



The Bay, the Land, the People: Bowdoinham 1762-2012. 2012

Portland Press Herald “Bowdoinham, Once a Seaport, is 170 Years Old.” October 1, 1931

It’s Still That Time of Year!

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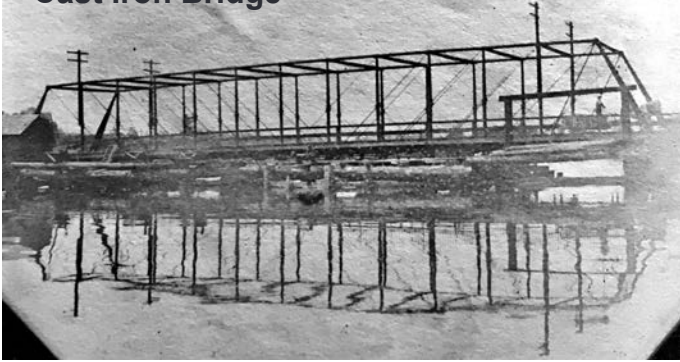
These membership moneys help us actually run BHS. Stationary, printer ink, and other products for the BHS Research Center, purchases of Bowdoinham-related artifacts, such as the Daybook with records the building

of the Union Church (Town Hall) in 1823.

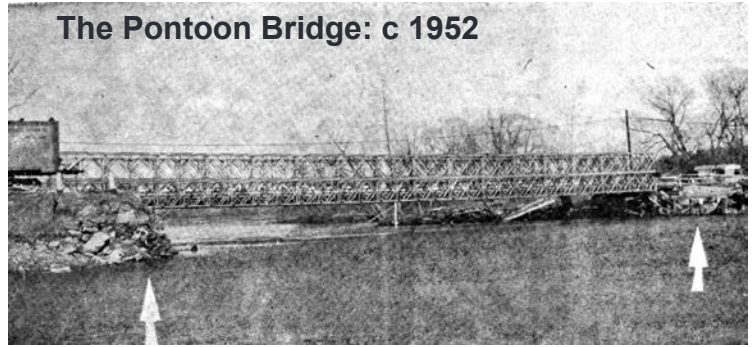
Thanks for Your Support!!



Couldn't resist this photo of the
Cast Iron Bridge



The Pontoon Bridge: c 1952



The Green Bridge: 1968
Bowdoinham
Barbecue Parade



The Green Bridge:



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay 2021 – 2022 Zoom Speaker Series

7:00 PM LOG IN LINK POSTED AT
WWW.FOMB.ORG PRIOR TO EACH PROGRAM.

DECEMBER 08 King Philip's War: Impacts on Merrymeeting Bay
Bruce Bourque, Archaeologist, Director, Merrymeeting Bay Pioneer Project

JANUARY 12 Don't Be a Nuisance! (FOMB v CMP)
William Most, Attorney at Law

FEBRUARY 09 Restoring the Lower Androscoggin
Steve Heinz, Trout Unlimited, Maine Chapter

MARCH 09 Are Dogs Really Our Best Friends & Love Muffins?
Marc Bekoff, Ecologist, Evolutionary Biologist & Ethologist

APRIL 13 American Shad
Nate Gray, Fisheries Biologist, Maine Department of Marine Resources

MAY 11 To Bee or Not To Bee
Piti Theatre Company

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