

## The Bethel Journals

# 1897 Bethel Journal

### Part One

Bethel Maine History

January 21, 2010

Newspaper articles, Town Reports, biographical sketches, the year's key events and places in the news.

**Highlights:** Work began on Maine's most ambitious musical program ever—the Maine Musical Festival. Bethel singers formed a Bethel Chorus which would be a part of the grand festival. A.D. Ellingwood sold his interest in the Bethel News to Ernest C. Bowler. Whist parties seemed to have taken over as the top form of social entertainment. Dr. Gehring announced the opening of his medical practice in Bethel; the Gehring residence became the Gehring Clinic. Frank E. Hanscom, an experienced Oxford County teacher and administrator, became principal of Gould Academy. In October West Bethel village's Chapel Aid Society were thrilled to dedicate a new Union church, thanks largely to major financial help from Mr. and Mrs. Alpheus Bean. There was a flurry of excitement over the possibility of creating a Civil War monument. A gift of cannons had been offered to the town. In the end the initiative died. News of a proposed Oxford County Railway, actually a feeder of the Grand Trunk from Bryant Pond to Rumford Falls plus a line to Andover was brought before the Maine Railroad Commission. No decision in 1897.

The town replaced the Pleasant River bridge on the West Bethel to Gilead road with an new iron bridge. (See town reports) A petition to open public roads to the old West Bethel ferry crossings was acted on and a request sent to the County Commissioners. At Rumford Falls the Rumford Falls Paper Company was making ready for the installation of what would be the world's largest paper machine – capable of producing a sheet of paper thirteen feet and nine inches wide.

**Bethel's Man of the Year - William Rogers Chapman, Director of Maine Musical Festival**

