

1941—Government Buys Herrick Brothers Machine Shop

The News: Herrick Brothers' machine shop on lower Main Street was sold to the government. The shop's equipment will be moved to Bath where it will be used in a National Youth Administration (vocational) school. Edgar A. Herrick (1865-1945) had no immediate plans for the future.

Background: The National Youth Administration had been created as part of the Works Progress Administration; it employed young people ages 16-25 during the Great Depression. In June 1941, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited a Maine NYA camp at Quoddy Village in Eastport. In her daily news column she wrote about her visit there, "I was impressed by the excellence of the workshops and the tremendous interest which the boys show in the work they are doing in aviation mechanics and the regular machine shops."

That the Herrick machine manufacturing works had come to government notice demonstrated the professional quality this family enterprise had achieved over 40 years.

Three Herrick brothers, Edgar, Arthur W., and Gardiner, began their machine manufacturing business in 1900 at West Bethel. A year or two later they moved into a new building on High Street that had been built by Calvin Bisbee (in 2012 the building houses Ruthies and the Village Motel) for them in the rear of his grain mill and store.

Edgar Herrick had worked for the Julius P Skillings spool mill for twenty years before the three brothers decided to form their own company, Herrick Bros. All three men had a special aptitude for machine work and innovation. They became expert in automatic spool and wood novelty manufacturing machines. They manufactured and shipped their machines to various parts of Canada, Michigan, Mexico and Finland as well as other countries.

Once established in their new building on Main Street, they continued machine manufacturing and added garage service to take advantage of growth in automobile owners. The Herrick Bros. business continued in this form until 1917 when two things changed: A new machine shop was built in the rear of the original 1907 building. Machine shop stock and equipment was moved into the new addition.

Growing demand for automobile repair service persuaded Edgar and Arthur to expand their machinery skill to automobile service. In 1917 they created a second company, Herrick Bros. Company. The new company bought the 1907 property of Herrick Bros (a paper transaction) - a reorganization that separated the garage business from the machine manufacturing which continued under the Herrick Bros. name. They also hired Harry King to manage the garage - automobile part of the business. In the meantime, Gardner Herrick had passed away about 1911.

Edgar Herrick's son, Arthur E. Herrick (1890-1966) had graduated from Gould Academy and was employed as teaching principal at the Bethel Grammar School. In 1917 he apparently left school teaching and began his own automobile service garage on Mechanic Street.

Arthur E. Herrick (son of Edgar A. Herrick) operated a garage on Mechanic Street from 1917 to 1922. In 1921 Arthur E. Herrick acquired a Ford Sales and Service dealership which he added to his Mechanic Street garage business. Next year, in 1922, the Herricks made more business changes.

The Herrick Bros. Co. sold its Main Street property to Arthur W. Herrick and Arthur E. Herrick. Arthur E. Herrick, Edgar's son, would run the garage and auto dealer ship business.

At first there would be little change but in the fall of 1922, the stock and tools of the Mechanic Street garage would be moved to the Main Street garage. Harry King would no longer be manager; Arthur E. Herrick would run the new setup.

In 1931 the Herrick businesses were running as they were in 1922 after the reorganization. See [Bethel 1931](#), page 17, for Herrick biographical sketches.

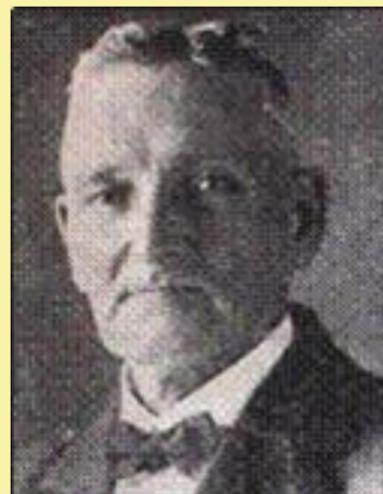
Sometime before 1941 Arthur E. Herrick apparently closed his Ford auto and garage business on Main Street. In 1941, when the Herrick machine shop was sold the main garage was owned or leased by Lawrence Lord and it was known as Lord's Garage.



The former Herrick Bros. garage, Ford dealership and machine shop. Rear section of the building (darker siding) is the addition where machine shop was located. Also notice to the right of the garage, Martha and Billy Von Zintl's Roadside Grill.



Above is the Herrick Bros. garage and Ford dealership as seen in 1931 when this photo was taken.



Edgar Herrick was born in 1865 in Greenwood. After working for 20 years at the Skillings mill, Edgar along with his brothers produced automatic wood specialty machines that achieved national and international recognition. Herrick Bros garage on Main Street became the Herrick sign post but their machine shop was the income producer of their company.