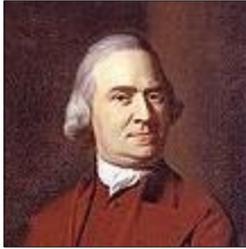




## Dates and Events in Bethel Area History



**Gov Samuel Adams**

1796 signed Bethel's act of incorporation as a town in Massachusetts

**1622** - England grants the land of Maine and New Hampshire to Ferdinand Gorges and John Mason. Mason and Gorges divide the land; Maine goes to Gorges. Massachusetts buys Maine in 1677 from the heirs of Gorges after his death.

**1630** - John Winthrop leads 900 Puritan colonists to Massachusetts Bay; Boston established as the seat of government.

**1639** - Sudbury becomes the 19th incorporated town of Massachusetts Bay Colony.

**1676 - (April 21) King Philip's war;** attack at Sudbury results in forty English killed by the Indian attack. King Philip is hunted and killed in August but in New Hampshire and Maine Saco Indians continue to raid settlements.

**1689** - William and Mary of Orange assume the English throne.

**1690** - King William's War (1690-1697) begins; in the colonies it is the English against the French and Indians. Indian attacks on towns in New York, New Hampshire and Maine spur calls for retaliation. Sudbury men join militia army for campaign against Quebec. Campaign fails to breach French defenses and return defeated. Meanwhile in Ireland, King William leads the protestant English army to rout James II at the Battle of the Boyne.

**1691** onwards: Sudbury militia survivors of the march to Quebec start petitions to the Massachusetts General Court for land grants as compensation for military service. Petitions are not answered.

**1739** - Brunswick, Maine is founded as a town in the District of Maine, near the mouth of the Androscoggin River's emergence into Merry Meeting Bay

**1756 to 1763** - French and Indian war; Treaty of Paris; France gives England all French territory east of the Mississippi except for New Orleans.

**1768** - Massachusetts grants Josiah Richardson, representing 76 Sudbury petitioners, a township of land on the Androscoggin River in the District of Maine. Petitioners meet and name their grant, Sudbury Canada.

**1768 to 1773** - Captain Joseph Twitchell of Sherborn, Massachusetts (a neighboring town south of Sudbury) becomes president of the proprietors of Sudbury Canada.

**1774** - Captain Joseph Twitchell sends a crew of workmen to Sudbury Canada to construct a saw mill and a grist mill on his Mill Brook property lots.

**1775** - English troops are attacked by Minutemen at Lexington and Concord. Battle of Bunker Hill; Washington's troops occupy Dorchester Heights forcing English to withdraw from Boston.

**1775 to 1800** - Water powered saw mill at the Mill Brook site provides sawed lumber for building second generation of Bethel homes; first buildings used whole logs.

**1779** - Eleazer Twitchell and his family arrive from Dublin, New Hampshire to settle and assume supervision of his father's interests, those of Captain Joseph Twitchell, in Sudbury Canada.

**1781** - Ten individual settlements divided into upper (today's Bethel) and lower (East Bethel) groupings have been started along the Androscoggin River's south interval lots. (It took two to three years to clear land, build a log house, small barn and establish a pasture plus garden that could sustain a small family for the next year).

**1781** - August. Small band of St. Francis River Indians attack and terrorize settlers located from Sunday River west to Gilead and Shelburne, New Hampshire returning to Canada with prisoners after killing four 4 settlers. Petition sent to Boston to send garrison of soldiers.

October. Washington receives Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, Virginia.

**1782** - Samuel Barker, a former personal tailor to General Washington, operates the first ferry across the Androscoggin River.

**1782 to 1810** - Eleazer Twitchell becomes the "general manager" of log rafting to saw mills in Brunswick of the "stumpage" logs cut by Sudbury Canada settlers. He also becomes the principal buyer and retailer in Sudbury Canada of goods available from the West Indies many sugar and rum.

**1783** - England and France agree at Treaty of Paris; this ends our war for independence.

**1785** - Flood. This was the first big flood to occur after the early settlers had arrived. Caught unprepared many were forced to abandon their homes near the river. Experience gained caused most to re-build at higher elevations where they could avoid future flooding. Androscoggin River's water level rose over 35 feet.

**1787** - The Constitution of the United States of America is adopted.

**1789** - President George Washington takes office in New York City.

**1790** - First United States census: Sudbury Canada (Bethel) population: 324.

**1796** - Massachusetts grants Sudbury Canada the right to incorporate as the town of Bethel. Charter signed by Governor Samuel Adams on June 10, 1796. August, 15th. First town meeting held at the home of General Amos Hastings at Middle Interval pursuant to a document issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to Eli Twitchell of Bethel in the County of York authorizing him to form a town meeting of qualified voters. Lt. Jonathan Clark (who had escaped from Indians in 1781) was chosen moderator.

**1797** - Eleazer Twitchell builds the first frame and clapboarded house on Bethel Hill; it is labeled "The Castle".

**1798** - First school committee appointed with instructions to divide town into districts. At a later meeting it was voted to build three school houses and spend \$100 on each.

**1799** - George Washington dies at his home at Mount Vernon, Virginia.

**1800** - Second national census: Bethel has 622 residents.

**1806** - First church meeting house of the West Parish Congregational Church is built near Barker's Ferry on the south side of the Androscoggin River (near the main highway bridge location in 2005).

**1812** - A road connecting Bethel with Norway was finished. It ran south from Bethel Hill over Paradise Hill. (2) July 13th: a special town meeting was called to take action on the war with Great Britain. A committee of safety was appointed: all men able to bear arms were to equip themselves as soon as possible.

**1815** - Bethel is authorized its own post office; the new post office was located at Dr. Moses Mason's house with Mason as the post master. Mail was received and dispatched weekly. (1)

**1816** - Middle Intervale Church built. It is still standing in 2005.

**1820** - March 15: Maine is separated from Massachusetts; it is admitted to the United States as the 23rd state as part of the Missouri Compromise, an act to balance the number of free and slave states.

**1830** - Although one family sighted wolves near their home that year, this was the last sighting of wolves in the Bethel area. (1)

**1832 to 1836** - Plans were considered to build a canal system that would connect the Androscoggin River near Bethel to coastal markets in the Portland vicinity. The plan was known as Dr. Moses Mason's Canal System; railroad construction in 1851 ended canal building plans.

**1833** - Josiah Burbank built the first hotel, named the Bethel House, on Bethel Hill.

**1835** - Bethel High School opens; first classes held in the district school house next to the Common; since more space was needed classes were moved to the Bethel House.

**1839** - Androscoggin River is bridged for the first time so that Mayville and Bethel Hill are connected; however, it was a short lived bridged that was washed away the following year. Barker's ferry resumed operation.

**1842** - Bethel's new town house (Middle Interval part of town) was first used for September elections. Plan for the building was approved in 1841. Twenty nine years later, in 1871, town voted to hire Pattee's Hall in Bethel Hill village for five years and to sell the old town house to the highest bidder. (In 1880, the building was still standing; [click here for map.](#))

**1850** - Indians turn to crafts to make a living; set up camps near summer resorts to sell baskets, beadwork, trinkets and war clubs to tourists.

**1851** - The Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad (a railroad venture to connect the port of Portland with Montreal, Canada) reached Bethel from Portland. Irish immigrant workers made up much of the construction work force; a number stayed and became Bethel residents.

**1853** - The first guide book to Maine was published. It praised Bethel for its scenic beauty, stoking Bethel's tourist appeal.

**1858** - December, 17. The Bethel Courier begins publishing a weekly newspaper with Dr. Nathaniel True edited for 15 months and wrote historical columns as well.

**1860** - National census records 2,523 people living in Bethel. The town's population high water mark has lasted to 2005.



William Rogers Chapman

1897 Launched the Maine Music Festivals

**1867** – The Grange (Order of the Patrons of Husbandry) came into being based on the ideas of Oliver Hudson Kelley, a Minnesota farmer. Organized as a fraternal group similar to the Masonic lodge, the Grange served causes important to farmers and residents of rural areas, schools, rural mail, farm improvement and social needs.

**1863** – The Steam Mill Company and village subdivision was built one mile west of Bethel Hill. Its steam powered mill manufactured dowels and spools starting a Bethel industry that lasted for one hundred and forty years. The mill's location took advantage of both the railroad for shipping and receiving raw material as well as the river for water.

**1864**– The Oxford Democrat, November 25, 1864. Results of voting in Bethel for President of the United States: Lincoln—268 McClellan—208

**1869** – A second attempt to bridge the Androscoggin River between Mayville and Bethel Hill succeeds; "Paddleford truss" (arched, longitudinal, laminated) support is used to construct a two lane (called "double barreled") covered bridge that lasts until 1927. The bridge opened February 19, 1869 and for the next 20 years was a toll bridge.

**1872** – Voters approved raising \$12,000 through issue of town bonds to construct an industrial building 150 feet by 30 feet for lease to a manufacturing company.

**February 1872:** Bethel Savings Bank corporation formed. Thirty Bethel men made up the initial corporate body. Officers were: Oliver H. Mason, President; Enoch Foster, Jr., Secretary and Treasurer. Seven members of the corporation made up the Board of Trustees.



**1874** – Bethel celebrated the 100th year of its first settlers' arrival with a major festival. Dr. N.T. True, Bethel's foremost historian, gave the keynote address elaborating on the town's growth, challenges and progress over the past century.

**1879** – Bethel Library Association: a group meets at the Bethel House near the Bethel Common to form a library for the community.

**1880** – Census: Albany, 693; Andover, 781; Bethel, 2077; Gilead, 293; Greenwood, 838; Hanover, 203; Mason, Newry, 337; Riley Plantation, 40; Rumford, 1006; Woodstock, 952.

1880—A corn canning factory has been established in the former Eber Clough's mill building on the Albany Road.

**1881** – Centennial celebration of the Indian raid on Sudbury Canada. One of the largest crowds ever seen in the town gathered for this event.

**1883** – Brown Post #84 of the G.A.R. chartered, Enoch Foster, Jr., elected first Commander. Post named for Harlan Page Brown who was killed at the battle of Antietam and for his brother, William H.H. Brown, who died while serving in the Department of the Gulf. Brown Post succeeded Cuvier Grover Post #30 chartered at Bethel Hill, April 30, 1868, which by 1877 had ceased to exist due to lack of support. (See page 406, History of Bethel, Maine, William Lapham)

**1884** – A company of investors (J.B. Chapman, H.C. Andrews and Elmer Young) built the Rialto Skating Rink on Main Street. Its dimensions were 84 feet long by 50 feet wide with its floor laid of the very best lumber. The Gorham (N.H.) Band would provide music for its opening.

Judge Enoch Foster's elevation to Maine's high court is very gratifying to the people of Bethel. The judge and family are visiting in Boston and Portland.

**1885** – April, Wolff and Reessing of New York, packers and importers, signed a five year contract to continue canning and picking sweet corn in Bethel. In addition, the company would spend \$4,000 for improved canning equipment.

**1886** – Feb 26: Storm of the Century begins – roads blocked for five days, buildings de-roofed and blown down, railroad blocked, derailments.

July 3: Special town meeting approves proposal to build a chair factory building; \$5,000 appropriated; James Barrows will occupy new building with his chair manufacturing business then located in West Paris.

September 13: Bethel voting for Governor: Joseph R. Bodwell, Hallowell: 279; Clark S. Edwards, Bethel: 222. Note: Bodwell, a Republican was elected Governor but he died in office on 12-15-1887.

October 10: It was reported that the town had voted to raise \$3,000 for the engine, boiler and machinery for the factory.

November 2: The Democrat reported that "the chair factory building is finished outside and is a noble looking building". Machinery was being installed and a large number of unfinished chairs were being stored in the building. The employment news indicated that about 100 hands would be hired to run the factory.

**1887** – Voters at Bethel's annual town meeting agree to abolish the district school system and adopt the town system of school management.

**1888** – The Bethel toll bridge (Androscoggin River covered bridge) charter expired on December 31, 1888. Beginning January 1, **1889**, travelers crossed the bridge free of charge. Bad weather in the summer growing months threatens hay crops, rots potatoes and greatly shrinks sweet corn canning production.

The **Bethel Chair Company** was formed in October. President, James H. Barrows; Treasurer, Hannibal G. Brown – Barrows and Brown had operated a chair manufacturing business in West Paris. Secretary, J.U. Purington, Bethel. Bethel board members of the company included Edwin C. Rowe, Calvin Bisbee and J.U. Purington.

**1889** – In the spring, the Bethel Chair Company rented Rialto Hall also known as the "skating rink" (Main Street) for finishing work, office and show room space.

Bethel Lock-Up – turned down by voters in previous years – proposal passes in 1889. Committee chooses lot bordering High Street near Rialto Hall.

Maine chartered the Bethel Village Corporation and the Bethel Water Company. Water Company mission will be to supply the village with pure water and fire protection supplies; fire department, police service and street lighting will be responsibilities of the Village Corporation. All towns report a very busy year at their rail depots. The corn factory in Bethel has a new owner: the Wyman Bros.

**1890** – Public water system (Bethel Water Company) was completed with a water main running over four miles from its Chapman Brook reservoir which used the Barker Mountain watershed to its distribution system at Bethel Hill.

Bethel voters received an extensive, critical evaluation of the Bethel school condition written by Superintending School Committee members Dr. John G. Gehring and Horatio Upton.

New corn canning factory in Bethel. Voters approve more town investment for industry -\$2,500 plus additional money as needed. Town to construct and rent building by the rail depot to the Wyman Bros., Woburn, Mass. Wyman's will hire local workers, contract for produce to can sweet corn, apples, lima beans.

1890 Census: Albany, 645; Andover, 740; Bethel, 2209; Gilead, 336; Greenwood, 727; Hanover, \_\_\_; Mason, \_\_\_; Newry, 343; Riley Plantation, \_\_\_; Rumford, \_\_\_; Woodstock, 859.

**1891** – The American Bobbin, Spool and Shuttle Company of Boston buy the Bethel Steam Mill Co. Civic leader William E. Skillings leaves Bethel for Boston. Gilead booms as Wild River development – logging, mills and railroad – races ahead. There is great fanfare in Mayville as the Riverside Trotting Park and Riverside Agricultural Fair celebrate their inaugural events.

Wild River Railroad – eight miles of track from a clearing next to Wild River called "Nigger Tom's" (later called Hastings) connected with the Grand Trunk Railroad at Gilead – was in operation at end of October 1891. W.R.R.R. and the Wild River Lumber Company were owned by an investment group from Island Pond, Vermont. The company also ran a telephone line from Gilead depot to their Wild River office.

"History of the Town of Bethel, Maine" is published by William B. Lapham. Besides using most of Dr. True's research, Lapham portrays detailed accounts of early Bethel including his extensive research in the Massachusetts archives. Lapham's most valuable work may have been his recording of Bethel family histories.

The Cole Block – Main Street's "King of Buildings", a development by the Cole brothers of Washington, DC, opened – Odeon Hall (named circa August 1892, the hall first known as "Coles Hall" was dedicated May 18, 1892) promised to be a center for town meetings, lectures and the town's first movie theater.

**1894** – Bethel Grammar School, a fine brick structure, opened. It had four classrooms, two on each floor and a principal's office on the second floor. In 2002, Gould Academy's McLaughlin Science Building opened on this site across from the junction of High and Elm Streets.

**1895** – First telephone system installed along Main Street connecting the Dr. Mason's house on Broad Street. Long distance called started in 1900 and lines to East Bethel were running in 1902. Rural lines ran from Bethel to Errol, New Hampshire and to Rumford Falls.

**1897** - The Maine Music Festival debuts in Bangor in October followed by a second Grand Opening in Portland. The Festival was organized and directed by William Rogers Chapman. The Bethel Chorus along with choruses from many



**William Bingham  
2nd**

Bethel's most significant benefactor of the 20th Century

**1907**- Liberty E. Holden, a Gould Academy alumni, donated funds to purchase the former Wiley house (Church Street) so that the

house and barn could be converted into a girls and boys dormitory. The project was completed in 1909 and named Holden Hall.

**1908** – After 40 years of on-again, off-again efforts to raise a monument dedicated to Bethel's Civil War soldiers, a granite monument is placed on the corner of Mechanic and Main Streets; it was unveiled in a ceremony with of parade and speeches on Memorial Day.

**1909** – Expanded lighting system was running with power generated by the Merrill-Springer Mill located near the Route 2 and Route 26 highway bridge over the railroad and the intersection with Railroad Street. Many streets were lighted as well as the town's library (1911) and Gould Academy (1913).

**1911** – March, the Weeks Law passes Congress. This law authorized the Federal government to make land purchases in the east to protect watersheds. This act led to the creation of the White Mountain National Forest. Drastic, widespread forest fires in the White Mountains had triggered federal action.

Bethel's new Board of Trade (Chamber of Commerce) held its first annual banquet at the Prospect Hotel in January

William Bingham II and his friend, William Upson, both from Cleveland, Ohio, come to Bethel to attend Dr. Gehring's clinic.

July 22, The Prospect Hotel burned with the exception of one wing (the former Elms) but was completely torn down soon after the fire. William Rogers Chapman, Bethel's "Music Man" quickly announced plans to build a new, elegant hotel on the site and bought the property occupied by the Prospect. Chapman bought the Prospect Hotel property that summer.

**1913** – The new Bethel Inn opened on the site of the former Prospect Inn; principal owners were William Bingham 2d and William Upson. Dr. J.G. Gehring was president of The Bethel Inn Company, Inc. and Ellery Park clerk of the corporation.

**1920** – William Bingham's first gift of a building to Gould Academy occurred when the Martin House on the corner of Elm Street and High Street purchased and used for a domestic arts program. (2)

**1923** – Canada nationalizes the railroads which includes the Grand Trunk Railroad running through Bethel.

**1924** – December: Professor William Rogers Chapman directed a performance of "The Messiah" at Portland City Hall. (5)

**1924-1925** – Bethel Hill's watershed on the south side of Barker Mountain was purchased by William Bingham II. In April 1925 the directors of the Bethel Water Company accepted the deed to the watershed in Newry from Bingham.

**1925**-June 23rd. Julius P. Skillings, long time general manager of the Skillington steam mill (Bethel Steam Mill) died at his home in the mill village.

**1927** – October 21, Androscoggin River covered bridge at Mayville closed to traffic – dismantling of the 58 year old two lane bridge begins. Last party to cross on the old bridge was that of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Chapman, Mayville residents.

November 4, severe storm in Vermont and upper Androscoggin River valley – 5 inches of rain in Berlin, NH – three temporary bridges swept away in Bethel – 11 families fled homes – no trains through for five days. Lost bridge over Androscoggin between Bethel village and Mayville required temporary ferry operation - possibly worst flood since 1785.

**1931** – First airfield. Clarence (Cad) Bennett provided land for the first reliable airport in Bethel at West Bethel. There were four student flyers (Elmer Bennett, Ray Crockett, Carmen Onofrio, and Harold Lurvey) and one instructor, Dean Cunningham. The airfield was marked WB.

Indian Raid Sesquicentennial celebration aroused the public for a huge celebration in Bethel. Parades, floats, reenactments made the day a very memorable one (now recorded on DVD, at the Bethel Historical Society). The Bethel Oxford County Citizen published a special edition that has become an excellent historical resource.

**1936** – Flood. This flood has become known as the 100 year flood because of its high water mark. In Mayville, the flood crested at twenty-seven and one-half feet above the river bank. Bethel village was virtually cut off from other towns until the flood subsided.

**1937** Bethel Library Association builds new main library on Broad Street.

**1939** – Riverside Farm (Edward Bennett) became the first (and only) local dairy to pasteurize milk delivered to Bethel customers which included Gould Academy and the Bethel Inn. In 1952 a homogenizer was also added to the dairy's processing equipment and paper cartons were used for the first time.

The new Holden Hall, boys dormitory, Gould Academy was opened and dedicated. Professor Frank E. Hanscom, retired Gould headmaster, delivered the main address. The building was named for Liberty E. Holden, a Gould alumnus, former editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Holden had become the first graduate to make a substantial donation to the school

Gould Academy organized its first ski team coached by faculty member, Wilbur Myers.

**1945** - Construction begins on the Bethel Airport (Edwards Airport) on land donated by Henry Boyker and Fred L. Edwards located a few hundred yards northwest of the former fairgrounds barn. (The Bethel Regional Airport, Colonel Dyke Field includes the site of the original airport.) The runway orientation was 12 – 30.

**1947** – National Training Laboratory (NTL) began summer sessions in Bethel, hosted initially at Gould Academy, NTL has been a part of the Bethel social science landscape ever since. NTL and its life in Bethel

June 14th: Top Hat Dance Hall – grand opening in Hanover. Located on Route 2 east of Hanover Village – has been an antique store for since the 1970's.

The Maine Turnpike opened its first section (Kittery to Portland about 48 miles; by-passing US Route 1). In 1955, the second section with an exit at Gray, Maine opened making auto travel from the Boston area to Bethel, using both the Maine and New Hampshire turnpikes, much smoother.

**1948** – Bethel's Chevrolet automobile dealer, Bennett's Garage, received new cars by rail. The new models were unloaded from the railroad's special auto carriers (50 ft box cars with double doors) from the rail siding on Railroad Street next to the former John Swan potato shed. The cars were then fueled and driven to the garage on Main Street.

**1940 to 1950** – Bethel's "Down Town" businesses reached their zenith: The Specialty Shop, Cotton's Restaurant, Red and White Grocery, Bosserman's Pharmacy, Lyon's Jewelry, Bethel Savings Bank, Casco Bank and Trust, Brown's Variety Store .Central Service Station, Bowling Alley and Taxi, Bennett's Garage and Chevrolet Dealership, plus Taxi, Bethel Theater, Bethel Restaurant, D. G. Brooks Hardware, Bethel Spa Ice Cream and Soda, A&P Store, First National Store, Bryant's IGA Store, Young's Service Station, Martha's Roadside Grill, Lord's Garage, Bud and Shirley Clough's Breeze Inn ( first soft ice cream in Bethel).

**1951** [New Crescent Park grammar school](#) opened with grades 4 - 8. In January 1952 at a Parent Teachers Association meeting a name for the school was chosen. The name was suggested by Mrs. R. R. Tibbetts because the building was located on the Crescent grounds.

**1953** – March Flood. Androscoggin River and its local tributaries rose (in Mayville) 24 feet over its bank. U. S. Route 2 at the Norseman Inn's south driveway entrance was cut by the surging river current. Access to Bethel was closed at Alder River and Mill Brook. Milk deliveries from Riverside Farm (Mayville) to Bethel traveled via boat operated by Burton Newton and Wilfred "Pete" Baker. Boat trip was from the farm driveway to the Bethel rail station.

**1954** – At a special town meeting in Odeon Hall called to decide on the Bethel town manager question, 165 votes were cast: 135 in favor and 30 against. Chairman Harold G. Bennett of the committee named last March to investigate the advisability of adopting a town manager form of government read the committee's report in favor of the new way. Other committee members were – Carroll Abbott, Robert Blake, John Irvine and Edmond Vachon. Henry Hastings moderated the meeting. There was no debate on the question.

**1955** – January: The Bethel Village Corporation members moved to dissolve the corporation subject to town and state approval. (5)

William Bingham II died in Florida on February 17; he was 76. (2)

The Walters Infirmary, Gould Academy, was constructed on the corner of High Street and Church Street. Later this section of High Street was discontinued with the land reverting to Gould Academy ownership. The infirmary was named for Mr. Bingham's personal physician and close adviser, Dr. Arthur Walters.

June 27th: Bethel Inn to become property of Mr. Guy Butler and his wife. Trustees of the late William Bingham II approved sale of the inn which Mr. Bingham had owned for 42 years. The Bethel Inn's manager, Peter Schutt, agreed to remain as manager for one year.

**1957** - A meeting was held at Gould Academy between NTL principals and Bethel people of the original Chamber of Commerce Industrial Survey Committee for the purpose of discussing ideas that might help Bethel industrially and economically. The Oxford County Bethel Citizen, August 15, 1957

#### **1957— Artist Bridge, Newry**

March 4, 1957, the town voted to build a new bridge rather than rebuild the Artist's Bridge on Sunday River under State and County aid, and the Selectmen were directed to post load limits on the town's bridges. It was voted to save the Artistes Bridge rather than tear it down when building the new bridge. Today this bridge continues to be maintained and repaired (a new roof recently provided by the State) and is a welcome tourist attraction, being one of the few covered bridges left in the State. The cost of the new Sunday River Bridge was \$62,859.83, the town's share being \$2,100.00 in 1959. Roads and Bridges, Newry Profiles 1805 – 1980 by Paula M. Wight



**Edmund J. Vachon**  
Gould Academy  
Headmaster 59-67  
President of Bethel  
Savings Bank

**1958** - February: Bethel Area Development Corporation elected officers Howard W. Cole, local insurance executive, and State Representative Addison C. Saunders, of the Hanover Dowel Company were elected this week to the offices of President and Vice President, respectively of the newly formed Bethel Area Development Corporation The Bethel Citizen, 2/13/1958.

April 28: The SUNDAY RIVER SKIWAY, CORPORATION was incorporated under the Laws of the State of Maine, at Bethel, Maine, on April 28, 1958 to "construct and operate for profit one or more recreational areas in the State of Maine, with major-emphasis on winter sports, but not necessarily limited thereto." Its present objective is the development of a major ski area, with all necessary appurtenances on Barker Mountain (some-times called Bald Mountain) in the Town of Newry, Maine, approximately five (5) miles from the business and shopping district of Bethel.

**1959** - "East Bethel Road" by Eva Bean is published, printed by the Citizen Printers in Bethel. Miss Bean's efforts in local history led to the founding of the Bethel Historical Society in 1966. She was its first president. Her book was re-printed in 1984 by the society she founded.

**1960** - A.T. & T. (Bell Telephone) engineers working on the Andover Satellite Earth Station in Andover, Maine, stayed at The Bethel Inn.

**1962** - **Telstar** On July 11 the world's first transatlantic television signal via satellite was relayed by Telstar 1 from Andover Earth Station, Maine, to a similar site located at Pleumeur-Bodou, France.

([http://www.space.com/news/telstar\\_anniversary\\_020711.html](http://www.space.com/news/telstar_anniversary_020711.html))

**1962**, August - Overhead bridge removed and replaced by new concrete and steel bridge. New bridge cuts off direct connection with Church Street.

The Silent Spring by Rachel Carson was published. It describes the widespread destruction caused by generalized use of the pesticide DDT. Her book set into motion environmental protection by the federal and later state governments.

**1963** - The Bingham Hall auditorium, Gould Academy, which had been added to the newly remodeled William Bingham Gymnasium (1922) was dedicated to William Bingham II, by his sister, U. S. Congresswoman, Frances T. Bolton, Bingham's sister and major donor.

December: Living Nativity performed on the Bethel Common for the first time. (5)

**1964** - December: Reginald Godwin's Mayville chicken house, Bethel's largest broiler raising business, was destroyed in a fire with the loss of 13,000 chicks. (5)

Bethel Airport is licensed by the State Aeronautic Commission.

**1965** - University of Maine President Lloyd Elliot leaves his office for the Presidency of George Washington University; his departure ends the possibility of Gould Academy becoming a University of Maine western campus. Edmund Vachon, Gould's Headmaster (1959-1967), studied many options for Gould's future in Bethel including a university campus one.

*Evans Notch District, White Mountain National Forest* moved from Norway to its new buildings in Bethel located near the railroad bridge on Routes 2 and 26. (5)

**1966** - The Bethel Historical Society is founded by Eva Bean. "I Was A Summer Boarder" by Ruth Crosby was published by the Christopher Publishing Company. The book is a personal story of summer vacationers at the Locke Mountain House in North Bethel.

The Bethel Inn is relinquished by Guy Butler to William Bingham II Trust after the death of Mrs. Butler. A subsidiary corporation - The Bethel Holding Company - was formed to run the inn. Butler remained for one more year. Blaine Moores was hired in 1967 as resident manager and became general manager upon Butler's departure.

**1967** - Bethel Airport was re-named in honor of Lt. Colonel Sydney Dyke who had retired from the U.S. Air Force to Bethel in 1962; Dyke became an active agent for airport improvement and certification. He died in a plane crash in 1966.

**1968** - Bethel becomes the "capitol" of new Maine School Administrative District No. 44; office for the superintendent of schools, the new high school and new middle school of the district will be located in the town. Telstar will be the second high school in town. Voters repeal Bethel zoning—May 14.

**1970** - Davidson Hall, Gould Academy's third student dormitory, is built on Church Street, adjacent to and north of Holden Hall. It was dedicated in 1971 to Sydney W. Davidson, a Gould Academy trustee and legal adviser to William Bingham II.

**1972** - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) banned the use of DDT.

**1974** - Dr. Stanley R. Howe becomes the Bethel Historical Society Executive Director.

**1975** - Management of the Bethel Airport was transferred to the Bethel Town Manager. The Airport Advisory Committee was created as part of the management reorganization.

Town ambulance service established. Bethel Emergency Ambulance and Rescue (BEARS). Ambulance service had previously been a private service run by Greenleaf Funeral Home - John and Eldon Greenleaf.

**1978** - Bethel Area Health Center opened in the former S.D. Philbrook home, later Tom Brown home, on Main Street.

**1979** - An ad hoc committee was formed consisting of Bethel Town Manager, Norman Ness, the president and vice president of the Greater Bethel Chamber of Commerce, Donald G. Bennett and Attorney Gordon Gillies, and the general manager of the Sunday River Skiway, Leslie B. Otten, to offer information and assistance to any potential buyer of the Bethel Inn. It was deemed essential to Bethel's future that the inn should continue as a Bethel landmark institution.

May 22nd: Richard Razor of New York purchased The Bethel Inn from Canal Bank of Portland. Prior to Canal Bank's assumption of ownership, the inn had been operated by the Harris (Barry Harris) - Cayhill Partners.

**1985** - February 17th: End of an era - Bethel Citizen deactivates its ancient letterpress printer and linotype machine marking a transition in the composing room by new owner Bernie Wideman.

**1988** - New runway completed at the Bethel Airport by Pike Industries with an orientation of 14-32 and the original runway (12-30) was closed.

**1989**, March - The Mahoosuc Land Trust is incorporated as a conservation land trust. Read its chronology from 1988 to 2009.

**1990** - August - November: Bethel Selectmen approved plan for final phase of Cole Block renovation. Peter Kuzyk contractor - Cole Block: modern town office, zoned heat, handicapped access, meeting room seats 45 comfortably.

**1990** - Bethel Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade completed; replacement of storm water and sewer collection systems begun. \$988,100 Downtown Revitalization Project: storm water, sewer and water lines, Main Street, Spring Street, Mason Street, High Street and part of Elm Street - Scott Construction of Newport, VT, contractor. Under budget work allowed Elm Street to be completed and begin Railroad Street. A.E. Hodsdon Engineers contractor Inflow and Infiltration Removal Program.

**1990**, September: Town Manager Rodney Lynch (1985-1990) resigned. Lynch was known for skilled grant writing and land use regulation development.

**1991** - "Bethel, Maine An Illustrated History" by Randall H. Bennett is published by the Bethel Historical Society with funding assistance from the Betterment Fund, created in the Will of William Bingham II.

1991 - Bethel Town Office computer system: Computer Study Committee (Deborah Michaud, Harry Dresser, Pat Doen, Cheryl Eliot, Tom O'Meara, and Merton Brown, Jr.); April 27, 1991, special town meeting appropriated \$16,500 to be added to existing fund of \$10,000 for the purchase and installation of a networked system of six stations and MUNIS accounting and tax collection software.

April 27, 1991: Grand opening of Bethel Recycling Center.

December 26, 1991: Town meeting had voted to purchase the GAMM II property at the Bethel Airport Industrial Park. Price for purchase was \$146,500 (assessed value was about one-half million dollars). The building had been built by Plymouth Trust, owner of GAMM Inc. Mid-January 1992 Airport Industrial Park Committee formed.

**1992**, May: Town entered lease/purchase agreement with Groan and McGurn (screen printers, etc.) to use the GAMM II building. By May 1994 the lease agreement had produced 10 new jobs.

1992, December 31: Final date for closing Bethel Land Fill.

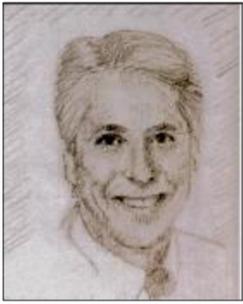
**1992**, December 12 Fire destroyed the Kennett Realty office building (formerly Brown's Variety Store) on corner of Spring and Main Streets. Also lost in the fire was the former Central Service Station and Bowling Alley.

**1992**, August 17: Bethel Special Town Meeting for Phase III, the Streets and Roads naming and numbering project, three separate Maine Jobs Bonds Grants: allowed construction of transfer station and Davis Park Picnic Area.

**1993** - The Grand Summit Hotel opened at the Sunday River Ski Resort on a site that overlooks the stone cellar of a nineteenth century Barker family home.

Bethel's first micro-brewery opened at the Moose's Tale Food and Ale near the intersection of Route 2 and the Sunday River Road (formerly a hay field, part of Thurstonia Farm). Program manager was M. Heine Merrill, developer.

**1993** - Silver Bullet Express Ski Train began winter operation between Portland and Bethel. Its Bethel terminal was the



**Leslie B Otten**  
**Entrepreneur and**  
**President of Sunday**  
**River Ski Resort**

**1994** – December. The Bethel Station development started its planned \$25 million dollar project on Cross Street. (5) Old mill sites were cleared away that had been locations of Hanover Dowel Company, L.E. Davis Lumber Company and The Bethel Chair Company/Thurston Dowell Company.

Bethel Station began as a planned development of 70 acres located between the Androscoggin River and the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad in Bethel – east and west boundaries were Maine Route 26 (east) and U.S. Route 2 (west). M. Heine Merrill was Bethel Station President. Lloyd Kleypus of Kleypus, Inc., was hired as resident architect.

Bethel Station and the Town of Bethel received a community development block grant of \$400,000 from the state of Maine for infrastructure improvements at Bethel Station. Contract conditions included that the town create 200 permanent new jobs.

**1996** – American Skiing Company merger completed. ASC president Leslie B. Otten announced that the merger includes Sunday River Ski Resort, Sugarloaf USA, in Maine, Mount Snow, Haystack, Killington and Sugarbush resorts in Vermont and Attitash Bear Peak in New Hampshire. The ASC headquarters will be in Newry.

The Limited Partnership of Bethel Station consisted of Heine Merrill, developer, Leslie B. Otten, Sunday River Ski Resort president, and Grant Wilson, developer. By September 1996, more that \$6 million dollars have been spent of infrastructure development.

Norway Savings Bank began construction of a new two story bank building within Bethel Station near the junction of U.S. Route 2 and Parkway Road. The new building will have space for professional offices and retail shops.

**1998** – January: A **major ice storm** covered all of central, southern and coastal Maine including Bethel. Many areas around Bethel such as the North Road lost power for two weeks or more. Many of the power outages occurred from tree branches that were loaded with ice breaking from the tree and falling on power lines.

**2000** - The Millennium Celebration – The Millennium sculpture, "Life in Balance" mounted next to the Bethel Post Office building on Main Street was unveiled on Mollyockett Day, July 15, 2000. It was designed by four fifth grade Crescent Park School students: Crystal Herrick, Bret Kendall, Erin Murphy and Caiti Shimamura. SAD 44 elementary art teacher Leslie Rosenberg assisted in the design. Richard Duka crafted the ironwork sculpture at his studio in Hanover. "Making Time Count" is the sculpture's main theme.

**2002** – September: Gould Academy celebrated the opening of its new state of the art McLaughlin Science Center on the site of the former red brick Bethel Grammar School during Alumni Weekend.

**2003** – April 25, 2003 the most recent airport renovation project was completed with a daylong celebration. Governor John E. Baldacci was the main speaker. The main runway had been lengthened to 4000 feet and was 75 feet wide. Improved lighting was installed and a protective cyclone fence placed around the entire airport operational area.

**2004** – Ladd Farm in Bethel (Mayville) was sold to David McCrum and his associates of Mars Hill, Maine. McCrum owns farm property in Mars Hill; he renamed Ladd Farm to Sunday River Farm. Ladd Farm was the largest crop farm in Bethel and in Oxford County, with potatoes being the main crop. Three generations of the Ladd family had owned the farm in Bethel as well as its second farm in Rumford Point.

**2005** – April: The Bethel Citizen reported that the town's inability to produce the 200 permanent new jobs promised by the town in receiving a grant of \$400,000 in 1995 may be cause for Maine to re-call grant funds. The grant was made to support Bethel Station development.

May. Construction of a recreational bridge paralleling the Route 2 Androscoggin River Bridge in Mayville was underway. This bridge is to serve snowmobiles. The contractor is Reed & Reed from Woolwich, Maine. The bridge dedication occurred Oct 8, 2005 with Governor Baldacci cutting the ribbon. Reported cost of the bridge: \$1.4 millions

July, the Sunday River Golf Course officially opened its full 18 holes to the public. The Sunday River Golf Club is a partnership between Sunday River ski resort and Harris Golf, owner of Boothbay and Bath Country Clubs and Harris Golf Shops in Maine. The Golf Club charges \$100 for 18 holes of play, golf cart included.

**2006** – As an indicator of change in the Bethel area economy, Bethel's weekly newspaper, The Bethel Citizen has nine real estate agency advertisements. Maine Street Realty & Rentals, 20 Railroad Street; Sunday River Realty, 23 South Ridge Road; River Valley Realty, 111 Main Street; Apple Tree Realty, 14 High Street; RE/MAX in the Mountains, Norway Savings Bank Building, One Parkway; Handlen Realty, 57 Main Street; Four Seasons Realty, 918 Walkers Mills Rd; Mahoosuc Realty, 16 Parkway Road and Sunday River Road; Kennett Realty, 103 Main Street.

**2009**, July 1 – James Doar succeeded Scott Cole as Bethel Town Manager



James Doar  
Bethel Town Manager 2009-2014



Scott Cole  
Bethel Town Manager 1999-2009

**2011 - Bethel Water District** was connecting its main supply and treatment plant to the West Bethel water system via an under the Androscoggin pipe.

**2012** At the Irving/Circle K station in Mayville: major renovation.– fuel tanks, pipes and pumps replaced.

**2014**—Bethel Airport new terminal building open

**2014 June**—Bethel Town Managers—James Doar departs and Stephen Eldridge became Bethel's Interim Town Manager

**2014**, November 11—Christine Landes introduced as Bethel's new Town Manager at Selectmen's meeting



June 2014— left, James Doar departing Bethel Town Manager and right, Stephen Eldridge, Interim Town Manager



Christine Landes introduced as Bethel's new Town Manager