

11. HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive plan should identify significant historical and archaeological resources. These resources are important for their role in remembering Bucksport's history, as well as for their present-day utility and beauty. Historic buildings and sites add to a community's quality of life and help maintain property values.

State Goal:

To preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources.

OVERVIEW

Bucksport has a storied past which is summarized in this chapter. Some of the wonderful homes, commercial buildings and other improvements constructed here over the years have survived and are enjoyed by owners, residents and visitors. Some ancient sites remain to be uncovered by future archaeologists. The town and its citizens have taken measures to protect and preserve these valuable assets.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Bucksport has nine properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- ★ State records indicate three prehistoric sites along the Penobscot River in town.
- ★ Six archaeological sites have been identified by Maine Historic Preservation.
- ★ 34 additional significant historic properties have been identified locally.
- ★ The town has enacted land use standards to protect key historic sites.
- ★ Efforts to preserve historic properties in Bucksport are ongoing.



Interpretive signage along the waterfront walkway identifies historic sites.

Fort Knox, as seen across the river in Prospect. Photo by Hans Krichels, 2015.

11A: A BRIEF OF HISTORY OF THE BUCKSPORT AREA

(With additions since the 2003 plan by local historian Emeric Spooner)

Long before Europeans arrived on the coast of Maine, Native Americans were living in this area. Evidence of them has been found in the form of shell heaps in many coastal towns. Native American prehistoric burial grounds have been excavated at Bucksport's Salmon Point (aka Indian Point) on the paper mill site, around Alamoosook Lake and along the Narramissic River.

Historians speculate that Andre Thevit, a Franciscan Monk and Hugenot from France, sailed in Penobscot Bay in 1556. He visited a Native American village thought to be on the tip of Verona and talked of a French Fort that had been previously established there 50 years prior. The first Englishman John Walker visited the Great Chief Bashaba at his capital city of Arembec later known as Norumbega in 1579, found within Bucksport's limits. Other explorers such as Simon Ferdinando and Martin Pring soon followed from 1580 to 1603. The Frenchman, Samuel de Champlain, followed him in 1604. George Weymouth, an Englishman, sailed through Eggemoggin Reach in 1605 and anchored near Cape Rosier in Brooksville. In 1611 the Jesuit Priest Biard visited Kadesquit thought to be Verona. The French established a short lived Mission near Mt. Desert Island in 1613, known as St. Sauveur, its true location has never been proven. Claude de la tour established a fort, fishing station and trading post in 1613. The trading post was built at the ancient Negue, found in Orono. The fort and fishing station is believed to have been established on Verona.

In 1630, pilgrims from Plymouth Colony, forced La Tour out of his estates on the Penobscot. A fort was thought established at Pentagoet on the Bagaduce Peninsula in Castine to carry on fur trading with the Indians. This settlement changed hands several times between the French and English until 1704 when the English gained final control. The Penobscot changed hands from the pilgrims to Cromwell in the 1650's. Crown and Temple took over until the 1670's. At which time it was handed back to the French and Grandfontaine. He was recalled and baron St. Castin soon took his place. Nelson a son-in-law of Temple sold his lands to Massachusetts and Samuel Waldo became proprietor. He formed the Waldo patent which contained all of the Penobscot up to Eddington bend. In 1759 Governor Pownall with Waldo established Fort Pownall in Stockton Springs and claimed all of this land for Massachusetts.

The first grants of land between the Penobscot and Donauqua (Union) Rivers were granted in 1762 to Deacon David Marsh of Haverhill, Massachusetts and 352 other citizens of Massachusetts and New Hampshire by the General Court of Massachusetts. Each of the townships, numbered one through six, was to be six miles square; they were: (1) Bucksport; (2) Orland; (3) Penobscot; (4) Sedgwick; (5) Blue Hill; and (6) Surry. In 1762 and 1763 a team of surveyors determined the lines of the townships. The first white settler in Bucksport was Joseph Gross, a former soldier at Fort Pownall, who arrived in 1763. He is not considered the first permanent settler because he moved to Orland in 1764.

Colonel Buck, an officer during the French and Indian War and a member of the surveying team, settled in the township in 1764. He is considered by most authorities to be the first permanent settler and it was for him the town was named. He built the first sawmill on the Penobscot River that year (1763), as well as several houses. Later, in 1771, Buck built the first ship on the river, a 60-ton schooner named "Hannah".

The town continued to grow for the next several years. The occupations of the early settlers were milling, fishing, hunting, trapping, haying and trading. The mill that Buck built continued to operate, providing boards, staves, shingles, and clapboards for the settlers and for shipment to Boston and other ports. The settlers were able to catch salmon, shad, and bass in the river and alewives in the smaller streams. The fish were first taken by spearing and nets and later by what were known as half-tide weirs. These weirs and nets were built across deep coves from point to point and were used to catch shad and bass. Fishing continued to be an important source of income for the townspeople for many years. Agriculture was never a very important occupation for the settlers. What crops were grown were usually for personal consumption. Hay, however, was an exception. The harvesting of hay from salt-water meadows, in Duck Cove and in the Winterport marsh, kept hay boats busy all year long, trading along the waterfront.

The year 1775 saw the beginning of the Revolutionary War and a British blockade at the mouth of the Penobscot River. This prohibited supplies from reaching the settlers, causing great hardship. A poor growing season caused their crops to fail, forcing them to seek provisions from the Continental Congress. In 1779, the Americans attempted an attack on the British fort in Castine, but were forced to retreat. In retaliation, the British sailed up the river to Bucksport and burned most of the town (which amounted to a few log cabins and buck's saw mill), forcing the inhabitants to flee. With the end of the war, many of the former residents returned to the town to rebuild it.

The town was incorporated as Buckstown in 1792. Nine years later, in 1801, a valuation of all the towns in the county was undertaken. In that year, Buckstown had 133 polls (male voters), 94 dwellings, 7 shops, 36 horses, 107 oxen and 284 cows. By 1800, the sea had become very important to Buckstown's economy. Shipbuilding was the town's most important business and continued to be so for a long time. Vessels were built for fishing and coastal and foreign trade. In 1905, Commander Robert E. Perry's ship, the "Roosevelt" was launched from a shipyard on the eastern side of Verona Island. Undoubtedly, much of the labor and craftsmanship that was used to build the ship came from Bucksport. Perry used this ship to make two trips to the Arctic, including one in which he reached the North Pole.

During the 1800s, ships would tie up at the docks along the waterfront. Cargoes that were unloaded here included sugar, rum, molasses, hides, tobacco and salted fish. Large ships destined for Bangor but too large to sail up the river would stop in Buckstown and transfer passengers and goods to smaller boats, horses or ox-drawn carts to finish the trip. Passenger sloops sailing from Newbury, Massachusetts to Bangor stopped at Buckstown to unload supplies, passengers and, occasionally, livestock. Shipping and shipbuilding had turned Buckstown into a busy port. The town

was prospering so well that the Penobscot Bank was established in 1806. It was the first bank on the Penobscot River, but four years later poor management forced it to close. Nearly all the businesses in the town closed as a result. In 1814, the British again occupied the town but caused little damage. The name of the town was changed to Bucksport in 1817 to reflect its importance as a port of entry for ships.

The Eastern Maine Conference Seminary was founded in 1848 and three years later constructed its first building. It was founded by a group of Methodists as a co-educational school for their children. The first class contained 27 students, then grew to an enrollment of over 300. Debts, however, forced the school to close in 1933. The Franco-American Oblate Fathers (of Lowell, Massachusetts) purchased the building and grounds in 1940 to train priests to be missionaries.

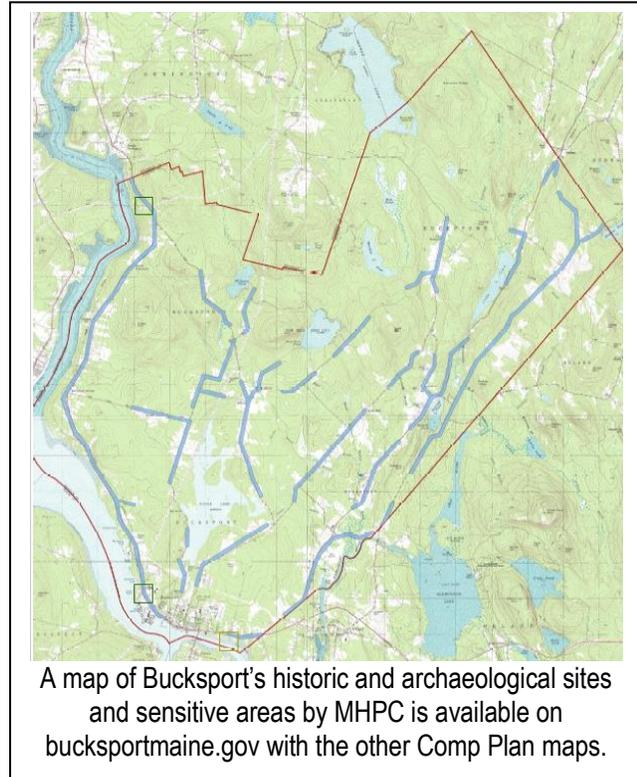
By the late 1860's, Bucksport was a center of maritime activity. Main Street was lined with many large houses and busy shops and inns. The most famous of Bucksport's inns is "The Jed Prouty Tavern." First known as the Robinson House, it is thought to have been built in 1783. Through the years it has been a major attraction in the town, serving many famous people including John Tyler, Andrew Jackson, Jefferson Davis, and Daniel Webster.

The first railroad was built in the United States in 1828. Eight years later, Maine had its own rail line, running between Bangor and Old Town. A line connecting Bucksport and Bangor was discussed for many years, but it was not until 1869 that the townspeople voted to have rail service in the community. The Northeast American and European Railway Company laid track between Bucksport and Bangor as part of a series of tracks between New York and Nova Scotia. Service by this company began in 1874, but due to financial difficulties, the lease was terminated two years later. The track continued to be used for the next six years by the Bucksport and Bangor Railroad Company. Finally in 1883, the Maine Central Railroad (MCRR) took over the track on a 999-year lease. Each time the track changed hands, the gauge was changed, making it impossible for equipment to be transferred from one line to another. It was changed to the standard gauge when MCRR took control. The Bucksport branch of the MCRR carried goods and passengers inland for many years.

The advent of railroads hurt shipping nationwide, as well as many of the smaller coastal shipping ports including Bucksport. By taking away its commercial importance, the town was deprived of its traditional economic base. Automobiles continued the de-emphasis of shipping and also caused a decline in railroad activity. Bus service between Bucksport and Bangor began in 1934, which forced a reduction in the passenger train schedule. In the 1920's two passenger trains ran daily between the two communities, but by 1942, passenger service had ceased.

While Bucksport lost much of its ties with the sea and the hustle and bustle of a shipping port, it did regain its economic base. In 1930, the Maine Seaboard Paper Company opened a new mill, producing newsprint. Originally employing 450 persons and turning out 100,000 tons of newsprint, it grew, by 1942, to employ 690 persons with

an annual output of 100,000 tons of newsprint, 5,000 tons of specialty products, and 7,000 tons of sulfite pulp. The mill was sold in April, 1946 to Time, Inc., and in August of that same year, it was resold to the St. Regis Paper Company. By 1959, the plant had increased the number of employees to between 700 and 800. In 1984, St. Regis merged with Champion International and in 2002 Champion was purchased by International Paper. In 2007, the mill was purchased by Verso Paper who announced the permanent closure of paper making operations in 2014. Power production continued at the site while mill buildings were demolished anticipating unspecified redevelopment.



11B HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

This section examines sites listed in the records of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC). Pre-historic refers to sites that predate written history, which began with European settlement. Historic sites refer to those following European settlement.

Prehistoric Sites.

MHPC records indicate that there are three sites in Bucksport, all located on the bank of the Penobscot River. The exact location is kept confidential to protect from looters. Only a small portion of Bucksport has had a professional archaeological survey. MHPC recommends that surveys be done along the banks of the Penobscot River, Silver Lake, Brewer Lake, Long Pond and their associated drainages. As noted in the 2003 plan, it would be challenging to survey the Silver Lake shoreline since its level has been raised artificially.

Archaeological Sites.

The six archaeological sites identified by MHPC are shown in Table 6.1. Four of these sites are ship/boat wrecks and two are farmsteads. By contrast, there were only two sites (both shipwrecks) listed in the 2003 plan. MHPC records indicate that no professional surveys for historic archaeological sites have been conducted to date in Bucksport. It recommends that future archaeological surveys focus on the identification of potentially significant resources associated with the town's maritime, agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage. A particular focus would be on sites associated with the earliest Euro-American settlement of the town in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Site Name	MHPC Site #	Site Type	Periods of Significance
Mintora	ME 066-001	wreck, schooner	About 1900 to before 1932
Meddo No. 1	ME 066-002	wreck, scow	12-Sep-1931
Meddo No. 2	ME 066-003	wreck, scow	12-Sep-1931
Mentora	ME 066-004	wreck, schooner	1890
Reuben Stubbs Farm Complex	ME 066-005	Farmstead	early 19th century
Eldredge Colby Farmstead	ME 066-006	Farmstead	shown on Bucksport 1860 and 1881 maps
SOURCE: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, October 2013			

National Historic Register Properties

There are nine properties in Bucksport that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see Table 6.2). No properties have been added since data were collected for the 2003 plan. National Register listing offers properties limited protection when federal monies are involved. Consideration must be given to alternatives before federal funds can be used in a project that might alter a property on the Register. There are also certain tax advantages to renovating historical properties. Listing does not restrict the decisions of private property owners to do what they wish with their property. Rather, if a property is altered by an owner in a way that destroys its historic character, that property is subject to removal from the Register.

Description	Location	Ownership, Current Use
James Emery House	101 Main Street	Private, Residential
Bucksport Railroad Station	92 Main Street	Town/npo, Historical Soc. Bldg.
Wilson Hall	34 Middle Street	Town, Redevelopment
Jed Prouty Tavern and Inn	57 Main Street	Private, Assisted Living Ctr.
Buck Memorial Library	47 Main Street	Non-Profit, Public Library
Phineas Heywood House	77 Main Street	Private, Commercial/Res.
Elm Street Congregational Church and Parish House	31 Elm Street	Church, Church functions
Duck Cove School	429 State Rt. 46	Town, Community Club House
Brown-Pilsbury Double House	106 Franklin Street	Private, Residential
SOURCE: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, October 2013, Town Assessor		

Note: Some Bucksport historic properties such as the Duck Cove School and Wilson Hall are pictured and described more fully at Wikipedia.com. A more complete listing and photos may be seen at <http://maineencyclopedia.com/bucksport/>.

Historic District Study

MHPC sponsored a survey of the village in 2000 and identified a tentative historic district boundary. See map of Proposed Historic District below. According to MHPC, there is also potential for a historic district in the “Town Site” area (the former Maine Seaboard Paper Company mill housing). Further analysis of these areas is needed to confirm their National Register eligibility and the reasons for establishing such a district. MHPC offers some purposes on its website:

Grouping properties as an historic district provides the opportunity to explore the spatial, cultural, technological, and historical relationships between the contributing properties. As with individually listed properties, historic districts must retain overall integrity of design, workmanship, materials, location, association, setting, and feeling, and be significant within the areas of archaeology, architecture, engineering, history or culture.



Emery House - Linwood Cottage at 101 Main St, with its restored tower, is listed on the National Register.

Other Historic Properties

Beyond those already listed on the National Register, Bucksport has many other properties of historic value that could be listed nationally or continue as locally recognized buildings and sites of significance. Buck Memorial Library Staff compiled a list and map in 2015. See Table 11.3.



The historic Chase Block on School Street is a rare local example of row housing

Table 11.3**Other structures of historical value in addition to the National Register (NR) properties:**

No.	Description	Year	Location	(comments)
1.	Brown & Pilsbury	1808	106 Franklin Street	(Old Parsonage) (NR)
2.	Congregational Parsonage	1848	99 Franklin Street	
3.	Gardner House	1850	97 Franklin Street	
4.	Fred Forsythe	1880	38 Mechanic Street	
5.	Old District #1 School House	1835	58 Elm St. (American Legion Hall)	(NR)
6.	Peach House/Octagon House	1845	41 Elm St.	
7.	Congregational Church	1838	31 Elm St. (and Parish)	
8.	N. T. Hill House year	1810	75 Franklin St.	
9.	United Methodist Church	1839	71 Franklin St.	
10.	Rev. M. Blood /Saunders House	1807	36 Central St.	
11.	John N. Swazey	1808	63 Franklin St.	
12.	Dr. Moulton/Edward Swazey	1810	21 Franklin St.	
13.	George Blodget	1833	118 School St.	
14.	Lee House	1792	51 Franklin Street	
15.	Eliakim Darling Jr.	1820	47 Franklin St.	
16.	Amos Darling /Thomas Swazey	1830	119 School St.	
17.	Gibson's Folly & Swazey	1808	45 Franklin St.	
18.	Daniel Buck	1789	34 US Route 1	
19.	River Inn	1799	22 Main St.	
20.	Joseph Bradley	1850	107 School St.	
21.	Chase Block	1835	229-232 School St.	
22.	George L. Bradley	1860	106 School St.	
23.	Buck Memorial Library	1887	47 Main St.	(NR)
24.	Jed Prouty Tavern	1798	57 Main St.	(NR)
25.	Bradley Building (MacLeod's)	1854	63 Main St.	
26.	Judge Caleb Hall, Deacon Darling	1806	14 Evangel Way Apt. Bldg. (Burned/Rebuilt 1820)	
27.	Phineas Heywood	1824	77 Main St.	(NR)
28.	Captain Jabez Snow	1820	9 Elm St.	
29.	Dr. Thegan House	1855	26 Elm St.	
30.	Captain W. H. Spring	1830	20 Elm St.	
31.	Linwood Cottage - Emery House	1853	101 Main St.	(NR)
32.	Captain Mark Ginn House	1834	151 Main St. (Maine Savings Bank)	
33.	Daniel Spofford House	1810	18 Federal St.	
34.	Jonathan Buck House	1785	4 Mill St (Buck Site Ell of current house)	
35.	James Buck House	1830	41 Main Street	
36.	Chase Hall	1853	44 Middle St. (East Maine Conference Seminary)	
37.	Wilson Hall	1851	34 Middle St. (East Maine Conference Seminary)	(NR)
38.	Bucksport Railroad Station	?	92 Main St. (Current Historical Society)	(NR)
39.	Old Union Fire Station	1900	124 School Street	
40.	Alamo Theater	1916	85 Main Street	
41.	Spofford School	1900	83 Franklin Street	
42.	Little Yellow Schoolhouse	1895	429 State Route 46 (old Duck Cove Rd.)	
43.	Moses Buck House	1850	51 Main Street	

BUCKSPORT HISTORIC HOUSE LIST LIBRARY STAFF 2015. See map next page.



A protective Historic District was proposed by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in 1999.

Bucksport has capitalized on the historic character of its downtown through its waterfront and downtown revitalization projects. While not all buildings are of historic value, the overall appearance of the area captures the town’s history. Elsewhere in town are homes built by sea captains and the first merchants. There are also some rural farmsteads of historic interest. These contribute to the town’s overall appeal as a place to live.

Burial Grounds. Cemeteries provide records and insights into the town’s history. The town website lists ten town-maintained cemeteries and six private ones and describes the functions of the 5-member Cemetery Committee. The public library houses detailed records on many of the town’s burial grounds.



The Veteran's Memorial at Peary's Landing was dedicated in 2008.

11.C PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Threats to historic resources include development and decay. The high cost of maintaining and heating older buildings also brings challenges. It is often difficult to improve the energy efficiency of older homes without some compromise to their historic character. Maine's State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program can provide some relief in these efforts

Are there threats to local historic resources and to those of state and national significance?

National Register. As mentioned above, properties placed on the National Register are provided some protection. The downtown improvements are an indirect protective measure. They have resulted in walkways, street furniture, and other amenities that keep the area attractive for further private investment. This investment is essential in keeping older buildings in good condition. Investors are less inclined to maintain and improve properties in blighted areas.

Bucksport Land Use Ordinance. There are also specific protective measures in Section 12.9 of the zoning ordinance. It requires MHPC review of any application involving structural development or soil disturbance on sites listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. MHPC comments must be considered in the application review process. The applicant must include appropriate protective measures. The town may require secondary documentation for any required protective measures involving designed structures or other engineered methods of protection.

Bucksport Subdivision Ordinance. Section 8.12.1 of the subdivision ordinance requires MHPC review if any site of historic or prehistoric importance identified by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission is within or abuts a proposed subdivision. The planning board may require any measures for the protection of the historic or prehistoric resources recommended by the commission to be included in the subdivision application.

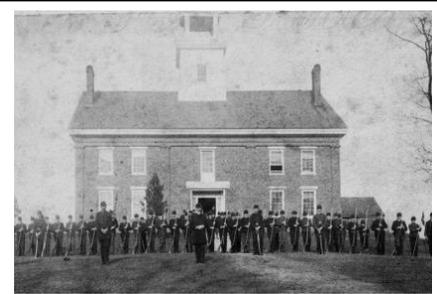
11.D HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Some Bucksport historic buildings and sites have received significant attention since the last Comprehensive Plan, including renovations, reconstruction and exploration. Others need

care in the not too distant future. It is not within the scope of this plan to chronicle all of the details regarding these properties. A few notable projects are included below.

Have significant historic resources fallen into disrepair, and are there ways the community can provide incentives to preserve their value as an historical resource?

Wilson Hall housed a seminary and various educational functions from its construction in 1851 until 1971. It was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. The brick and wood-frame structure is situated prominently on Oak Hill adjacent to the original town cemetery, overlooking the village, the Penobscot River and Fort Knox. The long vacant structure, threatened by neglect and water damage, was placed on Maine's Most Endangered Historic Places List in 1999. It has remained on the list since then, awaiting preservation efforts. The property was acquired by the town in 2010, and demolition was considered at one point. A group of citizens donated funds to preserve the building, and these funds have allowed volunteers to stabilize major structural damage from rot. It is believed that the building is still a viable candidate for restoration. Grants and developers are being sought to bring Wilson Hall back into prominence and use for the Community.



Historic photo of Wilson Hall

The Little Yellow Schoolhouse on Route 46 was built in 1895 replacing three schools that were in disrepair. As many as 30 first to eighth grade students attended there. The school was closed in 1944 and was in danger of demolition when purchased by Byron Colby and it became the Duck Cove Community Club. It was self-supporting until recent years when the membership began to dwindle. The property was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. In 2012, the school was deeded to the Town and, for \$1, was leased back to the Community Club for 99 years. Per agreement, the Club re-shingled the roof and will provide routine maintenance and operating costs. The Town will take on long-term maintenance such as needed sill and foundation replacement which it contracted to do in 2016. When the Club no longer needs the building, it will be turned over to the Historical Society.



The Little Yellow School House

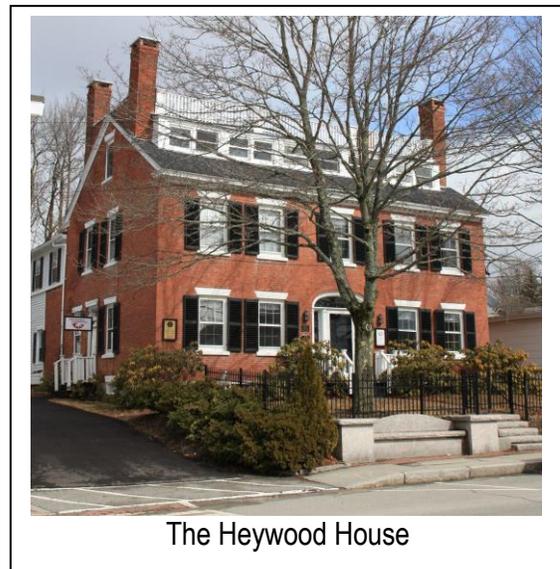
The Old Town Office Building at 52 Main Street was built in the mid 1800's. The Town purchased it from Parker Spofford in 1915 for \$600 to be used as the Selectman's office and location for the town lock-up cell, which is still in the basement today. The east wing of the building was added in 1938. The chamber of commerce occupies the upper floor of the structure which is maintained by the Town.



The original "old town office" building

Private home and commercial upgrades

As mentioned above, maintenance of historic properties can be costly, but the rewards great. Several privately owned historic properties received significant investments in recent years including extensive rehabilitation of the Blodgett House (#13), the Bradley Building (#25) and Emery house-Linwood cottage (#31). Such efforts add value to the properties, neighborhoods and the community at large. The Phineas Heywood House (#27) at 77 Main Street is a good example of a historic home that has been adapted for mixed use with offices and apartments.



The Heywood House

Norumbega is described in Wikipedia as “a legendary settlement in northeastern North America... It often appeared on early European maps, lying south of Acadia.” In 2015, A local effort, with help from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC), investigated a site in north Bucksport to determine whether it is the site of the massive native village known as Arembec. Arembec was pronounced by the Natives as N'Arembec'a, which became written “Norumbega”. Some historic map information and massive stonewalls on private property near the Penobscot River led some to conclude that this is indeed the location of Norumbega. The MHPC funded a dig of test holes and did not find enough for it to continue. Another dig found some evidence to corroborate the theory. More exploration of the vicinity may be forthcoming.



The search for the “Lost City of Gold” in North Bucksport was written up by local newspapers. The Bucksport Enterprise published this map that appears to depict Norumbega in Bucksport north of Pentagoet, an old settlement known to have been in Castine.



The **Bucksport Historical Society** houses a museum of local artifacts in the old railroad station on Main St. The group has periodic meetings and a Facebook page.



The **Buck Memorial Library**, owned by a private, non-profit organization, is conducting an on-going restoration of the 1887 building. Re-building of the (pictured) south wall was completed in 2015 using grants and donations. \$200k of needed work remains.