

Washington Historical Society

2026 Newsletter

THEN... The Country's Bicentennial... 1976

The town of Washington buried a Time Capsule at Putnam Park

Thursday, September 30, 1976

Washington Time Capsule Includes Mementos From Toys To Town Reports

By Mrs. Gertrude Jones
Washington Correspondent

The more than 75 persons who gathered at the Village Green in Washington on Sept. 9, witnessed an event many of them will not forget for a long, long time, the burying of the Washington Time Capsule.

Sponsored by the Washington Bicentennial Committee, the local Historical Society, and the board of selectmen, the ceremony was held in front of the hand carved sign made by Carol Whelan, which reads "Welcome to Washington Village, formerly Putnam est. 1811." Ann Rowe was the coordinator.

The time capsule, constructed by Thomas Hodge, engineer, of Ft. Petersburg, Fla., and Washington, is a 16"x13.5" cement box, with walls 2" thick.

The capsule was rapidly filled by the town contributors, including the Village Baptist Church and Sunday School, Mt. Olivet Lodge of Masons, Historical Society, Extension, Scholarship Committee, the Ladies Guild, and the Health Council.

Also making contributions were the Washington Volunteer Fire Dept., 4-H Club, Evening Star Grange, Farrar-Ross Post, VFW, and Ladies Auxiliary, and the Hill and Gully Riders Snowmobile Club. These groups and organizations each put in something currently going on attesting to their existence on that particular day.

Items were also put in by ten business concerns in town, including advertising circulars, by Jim's Market, Post Office, Vince Mecca, photographer, Grinnell's Sales and Service, Kappy's Korner Kountry Store, Brann's Garage, the Bargain Shoppe, Rock Maple Realty Co., Washington General Store, and Turner's Store at West Washington.

Many Bicentennial souvenirs were deposited in the box, among which were a dish, pen, post cards, humorous pictures of the town's Bicentennial celebration, all of the Bicentennial celebration artifacts, a new \$2 bill, several 1976 pennies, and an expired driver's license.

Two five-year olds, Jeffrey Grinnell and Patrick Whelan, made what might be called the "supreme sacrifice" deposited their match box cars. Several of the participants had Polaroid cameras and took pictures of the selectmen, former selectmen of the town, and senior citizens, which were also included.

A description of the capsule by Tom Hodge was dropped in the box, along with annual reports of SAD 40 for 1975-1976, a list of the current school children and staff of Prescott Memorial School with pictures

of a few events that happened at school this year, a 1975 telephone book and copies of the Rockland Courier-Gazette including the July 13 edition containing a write-up and pictures of the town's celebration and parade on July 10.

Richard Whelan, first selectman, and master of ceremonies, addressed the group briefly stating that "the spirit of cooperation of working together, young and old, natives and new residents, year-round and seasonal people, was the legacy that would be remembered when the items were unearthed 50 years from this date."

He then deposited four annual town reports for the years 1935, 1956, 1961 and 1975. The last was updated with an account of the last town meeting in April and the officers elected.

A group of school children from Prescott Memorial sang two songs, "We Sing of Thee America" and "America the Beautiful" directed by Linda Shannon of the school's staff.

More Polaroid pictures were taken and put into the capsule with identification of the persons on the back of each picture. One of the final items to be deposited was a current report by Mrs. Rowe stating the weather that day, time, place, number of people attending, who officiated and who dug and covered the hole. Whelan then expressed his thanks, in behalf of the group to Thomas Hodge for his efforts in constructing the capsule. The box was then sealed with black tar, completely wrapped in a covering of burlap, tied and lowered by ropes into a hole previously prepared by George E. Jones, Jr., directly behind the hand-carved wooden town sign.

Whelan and third selectman, Leroy Grinnell, after lowering the capsule into its 50-year resting place, covered it with dirt, assisted by Donald Grinnell.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies, a guest book was passed around for signatures, which will be kept for the Historical Society Archives by Carol Whelan.

Among those present were some descendants of Bert Poland, who some in town may still remember, being related to Frank Poland, founder of the Medomak Camp for Boys. Guests were also present from Rockland.

All in all, it was "quite an auspicious occasion," as one observer was heard to remark, and proved to be a most fitting event to wind up the town of Washington's observance of the Nation's 200th birthday.



NOW... 50 Years Later

Friday, August 21, 6pm, the 1976 Time Capsule will be dug up and moved to the Old Town House in Razorville to be opened Saturday, August 22, at the Washington Historical Society's annual HERITAGE DAY. The digging team will include people involved with filling and burying the capsule 50 years ago!

PLEASE JOIN US TO CELEBRATE THE COUNTRY'S 250th BIRTHDAY

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22ND
WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY HERITAGE DAY

9 - 1:00 Razorville Hall & Old Town House open for visiting

9 - 9:30 Pie Drop Off for the TASTY PIE CONTEST at the Old Town House.

10:00 Heritage Day program will feature family photos and local history of longtime residents, Fred and Gertrude Ludwig, presented by their grandchildren, Valerie, Joanne, and Michael. It will highlight what Fred and Gertrude meant to the town as storekeeper, postmaster, school teacher in addition to the various civic and fraternal organizations to which they belonged.

11:00 Unpacking the 1976 Time Capsule by the town select board and WHS.

1 - 1:30 Filling the new 2026 Time Capsule

2:00 Returning to Putnam Park to Bury the Capsule. We are looking for young people to help with this so they possibly will be in available 50 years from now to help dig the 2026 capsule up in 2076!



NOTICE

LAST CIVIL WAR VETERAN
BURIED IN KNOX COUNTY MAINE

Presented by
WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
WASHINGTON, MAINE
and
CORPORAL GEORGE SAMUEL COBB
CAMP NO. 68, CAMDEN, MAINE

EDWARD D. LIGHT
1844-1938
20TH MAINE INFANTRY

Interred at
MARR CEMETERY,
WASHINGTON, MAINE

COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE:
SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 20, 2026
AT 3PM

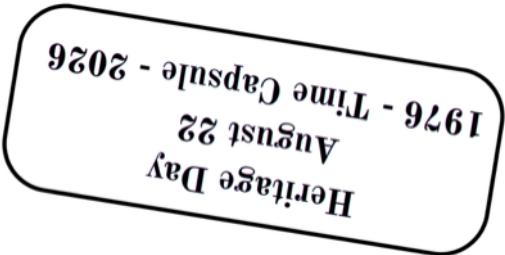
Museum Opens at 2pm

Annual WHS Heritage Day!

This year’s program will be a special presentation of photos and local history of longtime Washington residents Fred & Gertrude Ludwig. Following that will be the opening of the time capsule burried 50 years ago. See the full event schedule in the article.

Bakers Needed

Bakers needed for our PIE BAKING CONTEST. Pies need to be dropped off between 9 and 9:30 at the Town House, 263 Razorville Rd. Judging for the “Best Pie” will take place at 9:30. The winner will receive a gift card from Hannaford. Slices will be for sale after judging until all slices are gone.



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Washington Historical Society

Washington, Maine: Through Frank W. Cunningham’s Lens



2027 Calendar

2027

Washington
Historical
Society Calendar

Our fund raising calendar is now available for \$10 at Gibbs Library, Washington General, Linscott’s, Blueberry Fields, and at our events. The 2027 calendar features photographs taken by Frank W. Cunningham. He captured many images of people, places, and events within the town of Washington.