

A-CHS MEETING
May 5, 1981 (Tape 4a)

(Names and other words that could not be transcribed are in italics. Unknown voices are referred to as "man" or "woman." Comments, explanations, and additional names are in parentheses.)

Jane Dudley: This is May 5, 1981, and Pliney Frost is going to read to us from some old newspaper clippings about the Cone, C-o-n-e, Stable in Calais, Maine.

Pliney Frost: This article about Cone Stable is from the pen of the late Ned Lamb. (Reads article.)

"The story of Cone Stable goes back a long ways and some of it cannot now be learned. When the smoke of the big Calais fire on the hot Saturday afternoon of August 27, 1870 had cleared away, among the ruins was that of the livery stable of Haycock and Cone. The loss was set at \$3,000 and insurance of \$1,000. The loss seems to indicate that the stable was not very large and that the horses and at least most of the equipment was saved. This would not be so very difficult as it would only have to be taken up toward Washington Street as the wind was blowing the fire toward the river. Martin Cone was well known and in 1900 he was living on Washington Street, corner of Germain with his wife, *Thurza*, his daughter, Carrie S. who was a school teacher and his son, Charles, bookkeeper at the stable. Just what Haycock this was, I have not been able to learn, but just as soon as the ashes were cold, we read that Masters, Haycock, and Cone had erected a large, spacious livery stable on the site of the one burned down, so this must be the date of the building you were asking about. At one time, Frank Hill was associated with Martin Cone in the *place of Rideout*. At the close of the last century there were nine public stables in Calais: George M. Agnew, Red Beach; Martin Cone, Main Street; E. M. Gardner and Company, Main Street; Frank C. Hill, North Street; F. S. Hartford Exchange Stable, Main Street; Boundary House; F. W. Hinckley, Mill Town; Andrew *Arlin*, Milltown; and George Sheahan, Golden *Loo* Hotel, Milltown; John A. Sprague, North Street. All of these boarded horses. They came because people were coming into town by team, even for a day, and wanted some place to bait their horses. Some of these had teams to let and furnished coaches to meet the trains and boats and for funerals. It was no cinch here to drive a coach to a funeral, especially in the wintertime. The driver was exposed to all kinds of weather. If the minister was long-winded, he would almost freeze when waiting. He was so wrapped up for his work that it was hard for him to climb down and up again. He would trot the team around the block to keep the horses warm. There were always drummers to have their big trunks taken to the different stores or perhaps themselves were driven to another town. One or two of these stables had a barge that would hold a number of people and especially in the wintertime with two or four horses would take crowds into the country or give the school children a ride around the four towns. Of course they had horses to let, nice rigs for their good customers, but some old hacks for others especially to go to the Pembroke Fair. Sometimes the drivers would get drunk and on the way home would race other teams and lash the horses all the way. When Martin Cone died, his son, Charlie, succeeded to the business, and he was a horseman all of his life. Some of these stables took pride in having a pretty good goer and Charlie Cone was no exception. The St. Stephen Fair, the Princeton Fair, the Pembroke Fair all gave him a chance to exercise a love for the high trotters, and soon they were farther afield. Transportation has always depended on internal combustion engines and when the gasoline burner began to take the place of the hay burner, the stables struggled along the best they could but garages took their places. At one time the Cone stable was turned into a miniature golf course with the floor covered with thick *bunk* and the walls with *murals that were another course* in the Grant Anderson

store near the bridge. Both of these lasted quick and the old stable was turned into a storing place for autos and trucks. But, old age kept taking the toll and it was often spoken of as a fire menace on account of the old dry lumber. This summer it has been taken down and it was a queer site to see the old carriage tops and the pungs taken to the dump and listen to the many stories and traditions of the old horse and buggy days. If, P.J., you want to learn more about the stables just listen to some of the old people when they read this.”

Jane Dudley: Do you remember that stable at all? You’re not one of the old people.

Pliney Frost: Yes, I remember the stable.

Jane Dudley: You do. Do you, Jack?

Jack Dudley: Do you want to turn that off for a second?

(Sound of recorder turned off.)

Jane Dudley: Do you remember, Jack?

Jack Dudley: The old Cone stable was on Main Street directly across from now where the Murphy Restaurant is where they sell ice cream cones, just up river from the Alexander Buick Garage. There used to be a harness shop in there, too. Steve Wilder had a harness shop there, either right above the Cone stable or right below it.

Jane Dudley: Do you remember the little golf, what was it, little golf course in there that was mentioned in this article?

Jack Dudley: No.

Jane Dudley: That was before your time, then.

Jack Dudley: No, probably not. . . . (mumbled)

Jane Dudley: And this is the second article which is self explanatory.

Pliney Frost: Again this is from Ned Lamb’s pen. (Reads article.)

“Martin Cone and the Wolf Route. As we expected the story of Cone’s stable did bring out other stories and here is an interesting one of Martin Cone and the Wolf Route. Martin Cone came from Houlton and we were told that he didn’t have any father or mother, so perhaps we’d better say that Martin was an orphan. He drove stage from Houlton to Mattawamkeag. There were a number of stages out of Houlton and some of the stage drivers got wealthy. Some of them got a little start by carrying something liquid for the satisfaction of the male passengers when the drive proved too invigorating. They drove through long stretches of timberland and they knew many of the owners so some of them invested in timberland and became wealthy. The first stage route between Bangor and

Calais was of course along the shore road, but there was a man by the name of George W. Spratt of 43 Essex Street, Bangor who got an idea that what we call the Airline was a shorter route and if he could show the government that the mail could go quicker that way he might get a contract to carry the mail. He came to Calais, got a team, drove over the Airline, pulled a few strings, and got a contract to carry the mail at \$5,000 a year. The stage left Bangor at 9:30 in the evening and in 18 hours reached Calais. They changed horses at Clifton, Aurora, Bedington, Wesley and Alexander, probably stopping at Ben Strout's at the fork of the road in Alexander."

Jane Dudley: Where would that be, Pliney?

Pliney Frost: Where the Stagecoach Motel is now.

Jane Dudley: Where the Cooper Road comes in.

Pliney Frost: Yes. (Continues reading.)

"Down at the foot of the hill where the road turns to the right to the four corners and to Wesley was a blacksmith shop where repairs could be made and horses shod. Martin Cone enlisted in the army. Among his great friends was Weston Haycock who persuaded Martin to come to Calais and he got a job of driving on the Airline. A early list of drivers (few mumbled words that can't be transcribed) Martin Cone, Dan Gardner, and Albert Metcalfe. Now comes the story of the Wolf Route. The proprietors of the stage line along the shore road did not like competition so they tried their best to keep passengers from patronizing the new line. They told how the wolves chased the stages on the new route through the woods and published a picture to prove it. A copy of the picture is still in existence. It is a crude wood cut which would take about three columns of The Advertiser and shows the stage rolling along with a four horse hitch, the driver with the long lash of his whip a-play over the backs of the horses, a passenger with a gun sticking out of the window, a guard up behind with a gun, and a pack of eight wolves, one of them dead in the road and the others in a cluster chasing the stage as if they were sure of their dinner. This was contrary to nature but it made good reading and in the course of time it did scare timid passengers from that route, but after a while it became a very good ad for the stage because men wanted to see wolves and get a chance to shoot them. They say they never did. And, so the old Airline became the Wolf Route. After a while Martin Cone and his friend, Weston Haycock, got into the livery stable business in Calais and Dan Gardner went into the hotel business."

Jane Dudley: Do you have any comment about the wolves?

Pliney Frost: I never saw one.

Jane Dudley: How about you Jack?

Pliney Frost: I've heard stories about them being around here, but I've never seen one.

Jack Dudley: I've never seen a wolf.

Jane Dudley: Do you think it's all made up?

Jack Dudley: Unquestionably at one time probably there were a few wolves in this area but I don't believe they ever went around chasing the stage. I think that was all just story. Matter-of-fact, I've never seen the original of that picture, but I've seen copies of that picture.

Pliney Frost: Yes, there's a copy of that wood cut in Bailey's "History of Early Baileyville."

Jane Dudley: Oh, good. Then we have it. That's fine.

Pliney Frost: I don't know if I could find it.

Jane Dudley: These are wonderful old stories that you have collected here. Could you tell me a little bit about Mr. Lamb. I understand he was from Alexander.

Pliney Frost: I think he was born in Calais. According to an article - a memorial wrote about him by Ed Boyd he was born in Calais. His grandfather (Benjamin Strout) lived in Alexander at the fork of the road where one goes to Cooper and the other goes to Wesley along to Bangor. His mother was born and raised in Alexander and for a number of years, I believe was a pianist at the Methodist Church.

Jane Dudley: Well that's good to know a little bit about him so we can claim him as our own. Calais doesn't have the full honor of having Mr. Lamb's stories.

Pliney Frost: At one time at least one Lamb family lived here in Alexander, but whether they were any connection to Ned or not, I wouldn't have any idea. I've never seen any indication of them.

Jane Dudley: Being such an unusual name, you would think they would be connected.

Pliney Frost: It's entirely possible. The old Lamb place is much south of were Zeke Cousins now lives in between the Godfrey place and the old Scribner place actually if you're looking for it from a point - -

Jane Dudley: Is there a cellar hole there?

Pliney Frost: I believe there is. It's the old Lamb lot. It's been referred to as that always in my lifetime. Foster Carlow owns it now.

Jane Dudley: How many years have you been an assessor in this area?

Pliney Frost: Twenty five.

Jane Dudley: Twenty five, and you're a native son and so there isn't anyone who would know more about this than you.

Pliney Frost: I wouldn't say that.