



DIRIGO FLYER

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Newsletter of the Maine Aviation Historical Society
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Old Orchard Beach: Beginnings to Old Glory

We are proud to reprint the Old Orchard Beach story by the late Frederick R. Hamlen. Fred was a good friend of mine and we did a lot of research together on the Harry Jones story and the early aviation at Old Orchard Beach. The last time I saw Fred, we walked the beach together from Grand Beach to the pier. Sad to relate, Fred passed away shortly thereafter. His story, which runs through 1928, begins in this issue and will continue through several future issues. We wish to thank Leo Opdycke, publisher of World War I Aero and Skyways journals, for permission to reprint this great historical story. Hopefully, we will be able to continue his story from 1929 on through the 1930s.

Leo Boyle, Editor

By Frederick R. Hamlen

Long ago and far away, so it now seems, my cousins Joe, Bill and Jimmy Hamlen, as well as myself, had watched incredulously as the events of a twenty year aviation drama unfolded. They were torn at times by tragedy but gilded at others with wonderful success.

During those years, we had summered at the compound of my grandfather Hamlen who, with several of his cronies in Portland, Maine, had gone out to Old Orchard around the turn of the century and purchased a quarter mile stretch of the most beautiful beach property that you could possibly imagine. They called this section "Grand Beach," and it *was grand* because at dead-low tide the hard sand extended fully one hundred yards from the beach grass to the water's edge. Low tide conditions were so good that shortly after 1900 the Daytona motorcycle racers quit their place in Florida in favor of "the beach." I am told, however, by my late Uncle Jim Hamlen, that in due time "Grandpa" and his friends successfully exercised their influence as taxpayers and had them kicked out in order to safeguard the peace.

Let us have a closer look at this place in order to better understand its future attraction to fliers. Located in southern Maine and just six miles south of Portland, it is a lovely crescent extending from beyond a neighborhood known as Pine Point, right at the mouth of the Scarborough River in the northeast, around to a place called Ocean Park, by the mouth of Goosefare Brook in the southwest. The crescent is interrupted only by a great fifty foot high pier which begins at the foot of the main



Harry Jones' first Curtiss JN-4C Canuck at Old Orchard Beach, 1919.

street in Old Orchard. It once extended oceanwards for about three hundred feet upon a complicated arrangement of wood pilings, the outermost of which used to be just awash at low tide. At the outer end were a casino, an outdoor movie and a huge dance hall. The distance to the pier from the Scarborough River mouth is exactly $2 \frac{3}{8}$ miles, and $1 \frac{5}{8}$ miles from my grandfather's compound. When the houses were built for the Portland friends, their combined sewage systems extended oceanwards toward two standpipes which began to emerge as the tide withdrew, and were awash at dead-low tide.

To the beach area in 1919 came one Harry Martin Jones, a fellow who had been a civilian flight instructor at Brooks Field in San Antonio during the Great War years. Back in New England after 1918, he entered the Air Mail Service for awhile, flying Curtiss Jennys and then converted DH-4s. But presently, like so many others struggling for a living, he took up the trade of passenger-carrying. A summer day in 1920 found Harry Jones at Prouts Neck, which extends southeastward from Pine Point. To the north of the Neck is another beach, not anywhere near as long as Old Orchard but good enough so that Harry and a buddy could be there with their OX Jennys.

Now, we all know that you simply do *not* overload one of those fragile babies, and Harry Jones, super cautious as he always was, never did so. But his buddy *did*. And on this summer day, he put both Mrs. Noyes and her little daughter in

OOB, continued on page 4

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Monthly meetings
 are held at 10 a.m.
 on the second Saturday
 of each month
 at various locations.

See calendar for details.

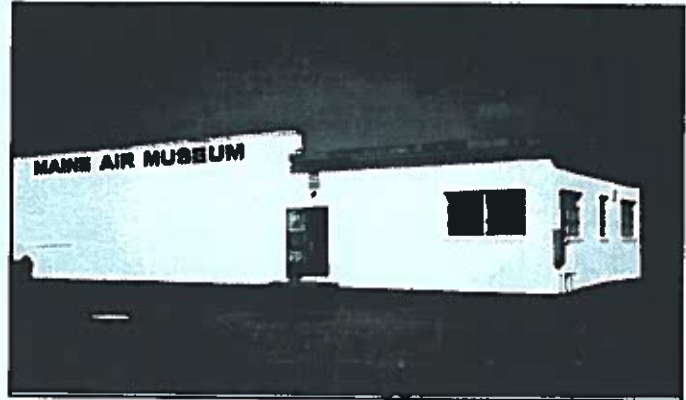
MAHS President's Report August 12, 2000

As you can see, a determined group of volunteers has made great progress in these last two weeks to bring new life to Building 98. I would like to thank publicly my fellow members of the paint crew — Mike Cornett, Les Shaw, Mark Linkovitch, Hank Marois, and Rick Alexander. I would also like to thank Les Shaw for his timely donation of 15 gallon of paint and Mike Cornett for getting five gallons donated by Home Depot. Les, Mike and I used up much of our vacation days trying to get this building painted, and we think it's looking great, but more work is still waiting to be done.

Al oversaw the fence contractor's work as he set the poles. Since then, a few members have worked on the fencing. Jim McCurdy, Scott Grant and Mike Cornett helped me in moving and laying out the fencing. Les Shaw, Joe Quinn and Hank Marois helped me last Saturday to hang the first two sections up.

Some of those mentioned spent long days, others just a short time, but each little bit helped to make this building ready for the next steps we need to take. There is still much to be done, but with their help and yours we can accomplish our mission.

After the membership meeting and Jim's talk, we lit up the BBQ and had some lunch. Later, after the Board had their meeting, Pete Noddin and myself took a ride up to Charleston to look for an F-84 which went down in 1949. The pilot bailed out and survived as this aircraft caught fire. Another interesting hike, and more to come.



Public Notification of Board Action

Not all jobs a president has to do are pleasant ones, and this task I do with a heavy heart, but a strong will to see this task done and this chapter of the MAHS history put to rest.

The Board of Directors has voted on a motion I put forward to expel MAHS member Robert Rohr. His continued disruptive behavior, abusive language, lack of respect for the Board, members of the Board, MAHS members and guests has cost the MAHS too much pain and suffering. Since he refused to heed the warnings he was repeatedly given, we have voted him out. We will do this by the by-laws and he is entitled to a hearing in front of the membership. The time and place for that have been set and he will be able to state his side of the problem.

This is the first time we have had to take such a drastic stand with a member of the MAHS. This is not the first time Mr. Rohr has been in this position with a group. The only options open to him now are to resign or to be kicked out and banned forever from the MAHS and any of its activities or property. You, the members of the MAHS, will be his jury for this appeal. If any of you can not make the meeting, but want to have a short letter read into the minutes, please forward it to Leo Boyle. We are being as fair as we can, but the Board does not, nor will it allow any person to cause repeated problems. We will do our duty.

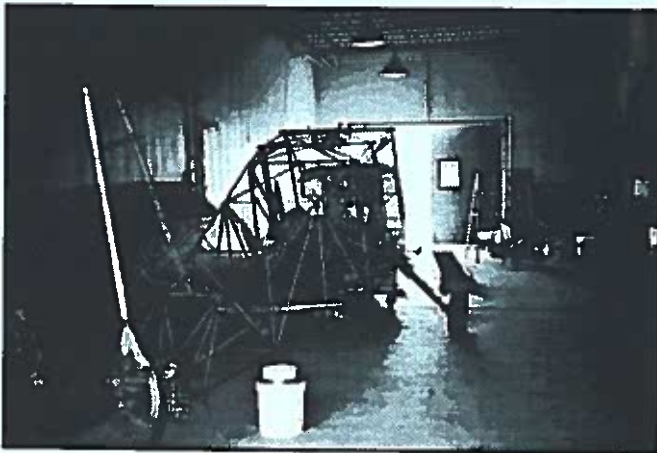
This special Board and membership meeting will take place at 9 a.m. on Saturday, September 16 at the Maine Air Museum.

President's Report to the MAHS Membership

Report and Photos by Jim Chichetto

At this time I would like to stop and reflect on the progress we have made since last spring toward the goals we have set for ourselves. Each little bit of work and help may not seem like much, but it all adds up and we are moving forward with the museum and the other MAHS projects.

On the museum side of the ledger, Carl is still talking and working to raise public awareness and by doing so, selling the MAHS to the public and to those folks who will donate to help us achieve this goal. In May we had a joint meeting with a couple of the Maine auto clubs. It wasn't the best of weather, but everyone did have some fun and we expanded the awareness of our project. In June we also held a training session at the Coles' Museum to learn how to ask for money. We haven't gotten much yet, but then we are still learning. We also hosted a CAP tour of the building. The MeANG air show was a good chance to show off our displays and we had living history people working the area around the B-17 and other vintage war birds. It was a great start to the summer.



Bay 1 of the museum building with the Stinson fuselage and the Luscombe wings.

In June we had a joint meeting with the EAA Young Eagles. About 35 young people had a chance to go up in an airplane. The MAHS cooked up some burgers and hot dogs for the kids and their parents. A lot of happy kids enjoyed the day and their parents did, too.

July came and we started to do the work on the outside of the building. Now it's August, and 25 gallons later, it is almost done and the fence posts are in place. Some fencing is up and we are starting to look like a going concern. Inside, most of the old heaters, steam pipes and the old boiler are all gone. We have been working inside and out to clean, repair and set the building up for inside work as the weather cools off. We still have much to do, but we are doing what we can and people are donating time and equipment to help us get tasks done.

On the hiking side of things, the MAHS climbed up to the Bald Mountain F-101B crash site, only to find some lowlife had stolen the plate on the cross. Peter Noddin and I fashioned another cross and memorial, which we set in place after another



Welcome to the Maine Air Museum!

meeting. We also have walked the site and taken photos of the F-84 crash site in the Charleston-Bradford area. On September 9th we will be leaving the Greenville Fly-In to visit the B-52 site on Elephant Mountain. A number of folks have hiked with us and we have provided others with maps and details to find sites they were seeking.

MAHS members Vic Kraft and John Garbinski have both published books on Maine's Air Force history. John's book deals with all USAF history; Victor's on Loring AFB. Peter Noddin has had an article published in *Lost Birds*, and one coming out in the *Atlantic Flyer*. Plus, a number of other people, like Leo, Juels Arel and others have sent fine articles for the *Dirigo Flyer*. We have an interesting group with some great stories to relate.

We have had a number of speakers who have thrilled us with their fact-filled stories of WWII and flying, both in the service and for money and fun. Slide shows and talks have made many of our meetings both educational and interesting. WE have more speakers lined up and this fall will be a great time to make the meetings that you can. I'll see you there.

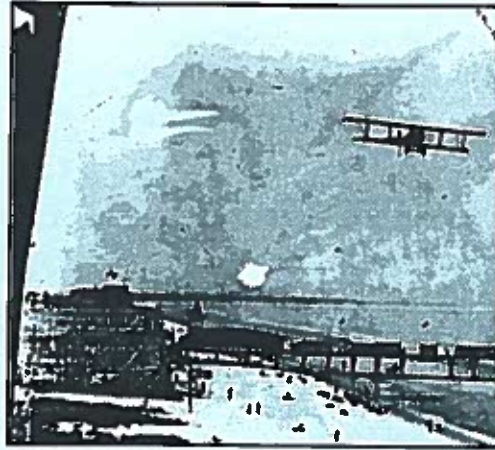


Republic F-84B Thunderjet wing at the crash site in Charleston on August 8, 2000.

Old Orchard Beach: Beginnings to Old Glory



All Photos:
Harry Jones Scrapbooks,
Old Orchard Beach
Historical Society



Above left: Harry Jones and his Curtiss JN-4C Canuck ready for business, 1919.
Above center: Jones flying over the Pier and the roller coaster at OOB in his Curtiss.
Above: Harry Jones, Charlie Howe and Fred Snow, ready for a day's flying.
Left: First aerial photo of OOB taken by Mr. McElwee, local photographer. Harry Jones, pilot, 1919.

OOB, continued from page 1

the front cockpit for a ride. The Jenny took off and at only a few hundred feet of altitude the OX quit cold. The pilot nosed down, banked sharply over and headed across the Neck, trying for the beach on the Old Orchard side. He made it, but there was a severe crash landing in which he was unhurt. The passengers, however, were badly injured and both died.

Harry was guiltless in this incident, but there was an uproar at the highly fashionable Prouts Neck. And one conjectures that he was asked to take his activities elsewhere, for it was at this time that he arrived upon the Old Orchard Beach scene and "set up" at a point only a quarter mile down from my grandfather's.

Old Orchard never was nor would be the place of high fashion that Prouts Neck was. It was peopled by vacationing surf lovers such as the retired 300 pound wrestler Stanislaus Zybyso and the wonderful Dean of Georgetown University, Father Robert J. White. These people had built themselves really honky-tonk wooden houses, business establishments and hotels. In short, it was junk city! But Harry found passengers and plenty of them. They went up around the beach with him for \$1.50 for the ten minute ride. By the time Harry closed his operation, he had carried more than 100,000 passengers without a single accident to his plane or injury to a person. That is how very skilled and cautious he was. And during that time, if my grandfather had had any complaints to lodge they would not have done him one single bit of good — because Harry was good for Old Orchard.

I suppose that in that summer of 1922, the year when I came into this world, Harry did not have his plane hanged but outdoors, carefully tied down and fastidiously tarpaulined

overnights or during inclement weather. Caring more than most pilots of the day about his equipment, and far more respectful of it, he was not just the run-of-the-mill barnstormer. He became deeply respected, trusted and ever more widely known throughout Maine, and the country. I am unable to say whether or not he had purchased a beach lot where he first set up. But eventually he did own land (probably two lots) and a house right there. The planes, later hanged, were on one lot while he, his wife Doris and growing family were in the house on the other. There he summered, becoming a fast friend of all the Hamdens. During the non-flying winters, he ran a little radio shop in the city of Portland. That was the way it was from the beginning until his retirement in 1939. *OOB, continued on page 6*

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First Time Around

Many thanks to Jim McCarthy for submitting the following article for our reading pleasure — and for sharing his fond remembrance of Maine's early flying days.

By James E. McCarthy

It was the kind of an early autumn day when soft breezes barely ruffled the uncut grass in the field and the white cumulous clouds seemed to be fixed in an azure sky. The details of the scene remain with me yet.

The location is so deeply rooted in my memory that I could go back to it blindfolded, with hardly a peek to check on my progress. Were I to open my eyes, however, I wouldn't find the twin-engined Curtiss Condor that graced the sweet smelling field that day. Instead, there would be a community of tract houses as far as one could see. Strangely, in spite of my vivid recollection of the occasion, how I happened to be there is not clear. I was with my grandmother, so the year could not have been later than 1932.

Only a year earlier, on June 22, 1931, Ruth Nichols was preparing for an attempted trans-Atlantic flight from Harbour Grace in Newfoundland to Paris to be the first woman to fly the Atlantic solo. This was after holding a string of records, culminating in the women's world speed and altitude records. She had been coached in this activity by Clarence Chamberlin. Unfortunately, enroute to Newfoundland, she lost her Lockheed Vega in an accident at the St. John, New Brunswick airport.

Chamberlin had earlier flown the Atlantic, from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, starting on the morning of June 4, 1927, only 13 days after Lindbergh's historic flight. With a passenger on board, he flew the Bellanca, Columbia, non-stop, onto a field near Eislbien, Germany, landing the following afternoon.

The day I'm remembering, I sat behind Clarence Chamberlin who was in the left seat. Ruth Nichols was in the right as they cranked up the two Wright radial engines hanging between the wings of the Condor. The discordant play of the exhausts, resonating in and out of tune with each other and with the wires and struts of the aircraft's two wing structure, added suspense and excitement to the scene. With throttles advanced, the engines smoothed to a steady roar. The tail lifted almost as soon as we turned into the mowed strip. In a thousand feet or so, we were airborne over the Maine countryside. The Penobscot River was immediately visible, as were the multitude of lakes surrounding the town. From that moment, I was intimately connected with the geography of the area and recognized a need to see more of it, everywhere. That was my first flight. A little more than ten years later, I flew my own airplane, first in another part of the world, later in Maine.

The area of my recollection was a broad stretch of open field east of Kenduskeag Avenue and west of Broadway on the north edge of Bangor. It was known as Frost Field, probably in acknowledgement of adjoining farm ownership. Now, it's the Bangor Gardens area. Although used by visiting aviators in earlier years, the visit of Chamberlin and Nichols, in which I was so privileged to participate, may have been nearly the end of Frost Field as an airport. Godfrey Field was in the offing.

Just Look at That Grin!

The happy pilot at the right is the late Robert "Bob" Mott of Millinocket, Maine in a Stinson L-5 during his U.S. Army Air Corps days at Elbee Field, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The date was October 16, 1944.

Oops . . .

Inadvertently left out of the last newsletter were the names of those in our "Gathering of the Eagles" Mystery Photo. The names are listed below (*l to r*):

Harris Mower; Archie Ricker, Gene Betterley, Prentis Godfrey, Harold Noddin, Mr. Godfrey (of Godfrey Field fame); Caldwell Sweet, Rip Palmer and Henry Smiley.



OOB, continued from page 4

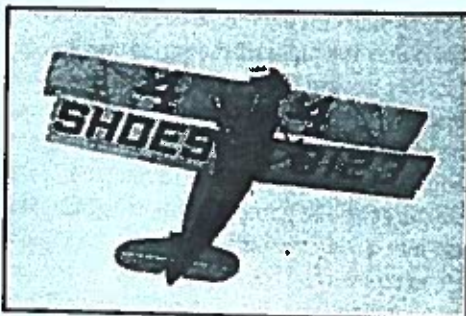
In 1924, for the first time ever, the "Little Kid" was taken by his parents to stay the summer with "Grandma and Grandpa" Hamlen. Besides loving the beach, he somehow got into his bones the sight of the large biplane, translucent in the sun, circling toward him from the direction of the water, turning again nearly overhead and settling a little way down the sand.

Soon afterward, the affable and popular Harry Jones acquired an "angel." In the town of Gardiner, Maine there was a shoe manufacturer by the name of Robert J. Hazzard. He had turned himself into a very wealthy man through the provision of good though inexpensive shoes (\$4.00 the pair) for "the people," a point on which Bob Hazzard *really* prided himself. Right next to Harry's he had purchased land and constructed a lovely summer house, complete with lush sweeping lawns and gardens, and a tiled saltwater pool. In addition to being wealthy and a wonderful neighbor, he became highly airminded as well.

Over the next two years, Robert J. Hazzard negotiated some business with his flying neighbor, and I supposed that during talks Harry had mentioned that his ship was getting old and unreliable, and that with the new airplanes as well as Charley Lawrence's fine Whirlwind engine on the market he really ought to get himself re-equipped with a ship that would carry more than just one passenger. The upshot was that Hazzard agreed in 1927 to underwrite Jones to the extent of a new airplane — whichever type he thought best. Hazzard also may have agreed to pay for the construction of a nice hangar, complete with a large semi-circular concrete apron out in front, so that a plane might easily approach from any direction off the soft powdery sand.

Joe Snow confirms the story about the aircraft but is not completely certain about the hangar. Joe eventually came upon the scene as a talented 20-year-old mechanic from nearby Pine Point to help in maintaining the equipment in mint shape.

The Kid, considerably grown up by now, happened to be with his parents over at

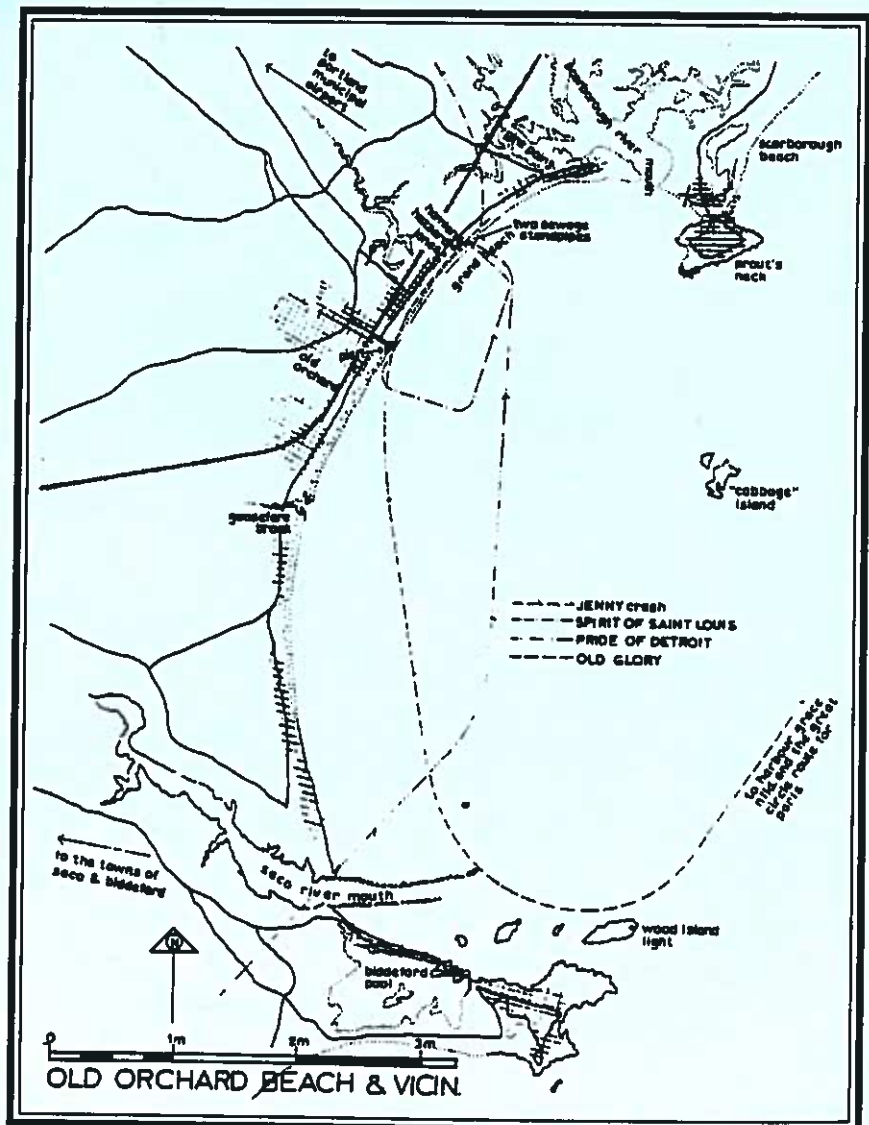


Harry Jones' Stinson SB-1 Detroit in August 1927. On the upper surface of each lower wing was painted \$4 BECK HAZZARD SHOES \$4. The message on the lower surface of each wing was clearly visible, along with the registration number.

Prouts Neck that summer of 1927, and often he would be brought around to the beach to play with his brand-new celluloid model plane and his air-minded cousins. On the first of those days, as the tide was receding, he heard the now very familiar sound of an engine starting down-beach. As he watched, a plane was seen to move from the soft sand down toward the water and then turn toward him. It started its takeoff, making considerable more noise than he had previously heard. As it flew quite low overhead he was delighted to see a plane with a green "body" and silvery wings. All over the plane were big markings in black. This, of course, was Harry's new Stinson SB-1 Detroit acquired thanks to Bob Hazzard's help. Instead of the single passenger of the Jenny, Harry could now take five people aloft at a single whack! The plane's power plant was the reliable new Wright J-5 Whirlwind.

Harry, with the fine help of Joe Snow, flew this ship, festooned with Hazzard advertisements, until the summer of 1930. He then junked it because somehow, according to Joe, the rear portion of the fuselage frame rotted out, rendering the ship non-airworthy.

To be continued . . .



Upcoming MAHS Meetings and Calendar of Events

- Sept. 9-10 All Day Greenville Seaplane Fly-In, Greenville, ME.
 Sept. 16 9 a.m. MAHS Meeting, Maine Air Museum, Bangor, ME. *NOTE CHANGE OF DATE AND TIME.*
 Sept. 30-Oct. 1 ... All Day 75th F.S. Reunion, Bangor, ME.
 October 7 All Day Bush Pilot's Round-up, Bethel, ME. FMI: 207-824-4321
 October 14 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting, TBA.
 October 20-22 All Day Rhinebeck Aerodrome, Rhinebeck, NY. Northeast Aero Historians.
 November 11 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting, TBA.
 Nov. 2000 All Day Cole's Land Transportation Museum Reunion.
 December 9 10 a.m. MAHS Meeting, TBA.

Meeting sites are flexible. Call Scott Grant at 207-775-3404 if you have any ideas or can be of help.

Welcome New Members

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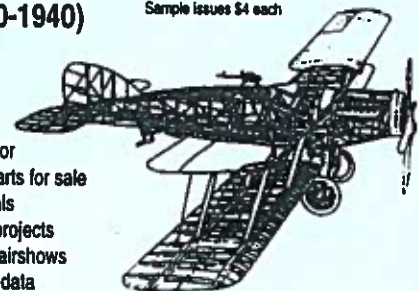
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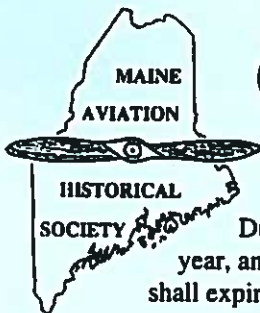
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Maine Aviation Historical Society
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September Meeting

Saturday, September 16, 2000

9 a.m.

Maine Air Museum Building
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