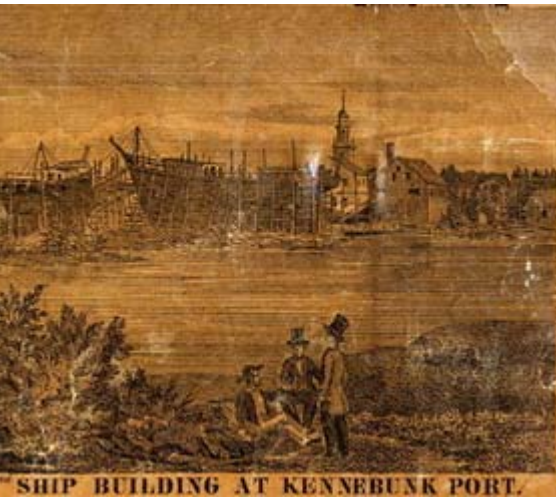


# Some Historic Facts

## Regarding Places Along the Rally's Course 2009



**Schooner Eleanor & Captain Lord:** Shipbuilding on the Kennebunk River began in 1755 when a schooner was launched at John Mitchell's wharf near the river's mouth (site of today's Franciscan monastery). By the 1760s vessels were being built at Kennebunk Landing. In 1790, the Mousam River-builder Tobias Lord moved his shipyard operation to The Landing, recognizing it as a superior building site. From 1790, when the merchants and mariners of Kennebunk petitioned for and were granted their own customs district, until about 1860 numerous shipyards flourished at The Landing. The yards provided work for a community of builders and artisans as well as economic vitality for Kennebunk that is still visible in the Summer Street houses of the merchants and shipmasters who commissioned and sailed the ships.

Shipbuilding did not end in Kennebunk until 1918. It was the need for merchant vessels of large tonnage that brought shipbuilding to an end at The Landing. Even with the aid of a river lock to dam a sufficient flow of water it became too difficult to bring the large vessels down river from The Landing to the ocean. By the 1850s enterprising yard owners like Nathaniel Lord had moved their shipbuilding operations to Lower Village. There Kennebunk shipbuilding continued until Kennebunk's last large sailing vessel, the fittingly named Kennebunk, was launched in Charles Ward's shipyard in 1918.

B.F. Warner was one of the builders of large ships on the Kennebunk river. His grandson, Rich Woodman, built the Schooner Eleanor 10 years ago, and carries on Kennebunkport's boatbuilding heritage.



**The Clam Shack:** Occupying one of the most important spots (historically) in Kennebunkport, the Clam Shack is likely the longest continually running seafood market in Maine.



**Wedding Cake House:** A plaque placed at the side door of the George W. Bourne House in Kennebunk, Maine by the Maine Society, Daughters of American Colonists, tells us that "In 1825 the shipbuilder George Washington Bourne (1801-1856) brought his bride, Jane, to this new brick Federal-style home. Inspired by Milan's Gothic Cathedral, Bourne started the house decorations in 1852, using only hand tools. He completed the work shortly before his death. By century's close, the name "Wedding Cake House" was widely applied. The house was completely refurbished in 1983-1984 by Mary and Anne Burnett, first owners not of the family."

A practical tale of home improvement vies with a romantic legend for the truth about the Wedding Cake House, not unlike the way in which the original house struggles under its burden of Gothic frosting. The home-improvement story has shipbuilder George W. Bourne constructing a brick house for his bride in 1826. As an example of late Federal architecture, it had five bays, a hipped roof with a balustrade and paired chimneys, and a Palladian window above the front door fanlight. The simple, rectangular structure was first painted white, then yellow. (Wedding Cake House continue on back page)

(Wedding Cake House continued)

Then in 1852, the barn, connected to the house by a shed, burned and fire fighters tore down the shed in order to save the house. Bourne, who was now retired with time on his hands, built a new barn and shed. He had been to Europe and had greatly admired the Cathedral of Milan. The Federal-style house was soon connected to a Gothic-style barn by a shed embellished with five extremely tall, remarkably Gothic looking pinnacles.

Bourne must have realized that something had to be done to stylistically marry the shed and barn to the house. So, he added some unifying Gothic ornamentation: four buttresses with pinnacles support the four corners of the house; two buttresses with pinnacles define the central bay; the front door is framed by a pierced arch with a finial; subsidiary one-story buttresses hold up a cusped and crocketed, trefoil-pierced, ogee arch above the Palladian window; this is topped by a "poppyhead." Two sets of carved cornices support small crenelated battlements. Below the cornices hang Tudor-arched spandrels with quatrefoil- and circle-patterned fretwork. Bourne designed and carved all of this himself, aided only by a ship carpenter's apprentice, Thomas Durrell. In the end, it must have seemed just right to him.

The romantic legend arose some fifty years later when an enterprising Kennebunk businessman published a postcard of the house and entitled it "Wedding Cake House." It came to be said that the carving had been done during long lonely hours aboard ship by a recently married sea captain who had had to leave his bride before he even had time to eat his wedding cake. The legend's romance, while inspired by the desire to make money, provides a "sensible" explanation for the likes of such an eccentric architectural artifact. However, the home-improvement scheme of George Bourne, with its aspirations, displaced energy, persistence, toil, and reward is the stuff of legend, too.



**Hammond Farm:** Part of a larger homestead that was the Waterhouse Farm. In 1660, John Sanders, John Bush, and Peter Turbat purchased from an Indian Sagamore named Fluellen, the land now known as Lyman - an area of 14,250 acres. The proprietors sold their title in 1668 to Harlackindine Symonds, who conveyed his right to Roger Haskins and 35 others. Under their proprietorship, the land was settled in 1767. Who the original settlers were is not known for certain, but early records of deeds and such, mention the following: William Waterhouse, the schoolmaster, and his brother Jacob, from Kennebunk; Love Roberts and his son Peter came in 1775; Alexander Grant, 1774 and his son Silas, 1779; Thomas Lord, 1776; Jacob Rhoades; Benjamin and Mark Goodwin, brothers; John Low, who for many years was chosen Moderator and Town Treasurer; John Burbank, who was aboard the Bon Homme Richard with John Paul Jones; Joseph Whitten; James and William Brock, 1789; Mark Ricker; Robert Cousens; Valentine Hill; and Gershom Downs - many coming previous to 1789.

**Kennebunk Train Depot:** The Boston and Maine Railroad transported several thousand-summer visitors to Kennebunk, where a station had been established. In 1900 the Atlantic Shore Line trolley system was constructed carrying visitors to their various destinations and making access easy. Interesting to note is that Maine's publicity slogan, "Vacationland," can be traced to the publicists of the Maine Central Railroad in the late 1890s.

**The Grist Mill Property:** The Perkins tide mill dates back to about 1750, making it one of the oldest in Maine. It continued on as a gristmill until 1937, when it closed due to the ill health of its owner, James Perkins. This mill was not only a very early mill, but was also a working gristmill for close to 200 years, and run by the same family for that length of time. The mill was converted to a restaurant known as The Olde Grist Mill by the Lombard family in about 1940. In 1983 it was reported that it was the only remaining tide mill still standing in Maine. It became a popular eatery, but unfortunately burned down in 1994.

The Clem Clark boathouse (the structure on the property where the car show for this year's rally was held, is the last remaining property on the Kennebunk River where boats were actually built around the turn of the century. It is owned by the Conservation Trust, and the property is open to public use as a boat launch and recreation area.

