

In school I found History to be a needless memorization of dates and events that held little or no meaning to me. I have come to understand that history molds our present and shapes our future. History is told in stories-stories that link us to our past. Knowing and remembering our past helps us to see who we are, helps us to understand our present, and, if we listen to the voice within, can direct where we are going in the future. I now find history very fascinating. I still cannot remember all the dates, but the stories are intriguing and wonderful to hear. To the generations growing up now, I would like to say – know and understand your past. Keep telling the stories, and keep history alive. Your roots will show you who you are, help you understand what you are doing now, and give reason to your future.

As a young girl, at the many family gatherings we had, I would often hear that Jane hid in the ash pit. “Why did she do that?” I’d ask. “Didn’t she get dirty?” And then the stories would launch into the Means Massacre, and continue on and on to include the Dummer claim line, Uncle Joseph and Aunt Emily, and all the other stories of our family down through the generations. Jane, my five times great-grandmother, survived her family’s ordeal by hiding in the ash pit – perhaps a well thought out family survival plan, much the same as the fire escape plans I have planned out and rehearsed with my own family. Our Mothers and Fathers that have come before me felt it very important to remember this piece of our history that happened here in this corner of our world. To have been told the story of Thomas Means and his family so often that it has become ingrained into my very being. Survive. Survival. Be a survivor. Take care of yourself. Take care of your family.

My Grandfather, Horace Mann, great, great, great grandson of Jane Means, was one of these survivors. His mother died when he was still a young man of 16. He had to learn at an early age to take care of himself, his father, and his sister. He walked the 2 plus miles each way to attend high school, taking the short cut through the woods at the falls. He graduated from high school and took care of the family dairy farm, delivering milk and butter to the Farmer's Union uptown, as well as to folks on the Neck. Grandpa Mann was a very religious man. He and Grammy, both Deacons, frequently took me to church with them, and provided the foundation for my spiritual journey. During the depression, Grandpa was on the finance committee at the Congregational Church, here in town. When the Church was in danger of closing its doors for a lack of funds, Horace went house to house to visit people and asked them "Please, can't you give just one penny, to help keep the church doors open?" The church survived those many lean, difficult years. I have been told that neighbors would come to him to ask that he mediate and help them solve their problems. I remember him as a big man, methodically going about his daily routine. He shaved in the kitchen, and combed his white hair across his head to try and cover his baldness. In his later years, he and I played Parcheesi by the hour. He was honest and fair, and he didn't mind sending me back to start.

My other Grandfather, Leon Maybury, although not a descendent of the Means family, was of Scotch-Irish extraction (as he put it), and thus had the same grit and determination bred into him as the Means' family. The Maybury family first settled in (what is now

Windham) in 1735, and my great-great grandfather, Reuben, moved to Freeport about 1850. Leon's father died when he was just 8 years old, and he helped his Mother to keep the family and the farm going. Though he did not graduate high school, he was a very intelligent, self-taught man. Leon went to school until he was 16, having been taught all the schoolmaster could teach him. He then built a chicken house, and added on to his mother's flock of chickens in order to produce more income for the family. Leon studied on his own, and earned his degree in Electrical Engineering through The American Correspondence School. He acquired a forge and learned the trade of Blacksmithing. Being one of the few blacksmiths around, he made many tools and other items for neighbors and friends. For 9 years, Grandpa Maybury was a Selectmen for the town of Freeport. He was proud to say that the town did not spend more money than it took in, and thus kept the town "in the black", for the years he was involved in governing. Leon was also a skilled carpenter, and built many buildings, fine furniture, and several violins. One of his violins won second place in a New England Fiddling Contest that was held in Portland in 1923. You will hear two of his violins later today at the fiddle jam. I remember him reading, watching the evening news, writing at his desk, and strolling about the farm with his cane to be sure all was in order. It was an adventure to go into his workshop. A feast for young eyes, and organized so that only he could find things.

Living just ½ mile apart on abutting farms, my 2 grandfathers, Horace and Leon, were fast friends. They grew up together, went to school together, no doubt got into mischief

together, and helped one another as neighbors and friends for over 77 years, as they each remained on their own family farms- Leon raising poultry and Horace running his dairy.

In 1932, my Grandfather Leon felt the story of the Means' Massacre was important enough to tell again, for all the world to hear. With Harmon Cross, one of the authors of "Three Centuries of Freeport", Leon planned a re-enactment as a fundraiser for the Farm Bureau, of which my Grandfather Horace was president at the time. Leon placed a post in the ground, much like the one you see here today, to mark the spot where Thomas Mean's cabin once stood, "Lest we not forget!" the many trials and sacrifices of our pioneering Mothers and Fathers. The re-enactment drew a crowd of over a thousand – a lot of people for that era. Many people have told me the 175th anniversary event would not have happened without Leon. Under the direction of Mr. Cross, my grandparents, Leon and Alice, and Horace and Rubie, with many other people in the community, got together and rehearsed, built props, sewed costumes, all while taking time away from gardening, canning, haying, farming, and any other number of necessary details that had to be accomplished in the short Maine summer to be ready for yet another long winter.

Many of the descendants of the Means family had parts in the re-enactment. We are fortunate to still have some of them with us now, 75 years later. Hilda Coffin Coskery, directly descended from Alice Means, played the part of Alice in 1932. Dorothy Mann Maybury, my mother, was Jane. My uncle, James Mann, was a by-stander in the second

act, which took the audience to Quebec. Walter Schmidt was another by-stander. If you folks are here today, and able, would you please stand, and be recognized?

In closing, I would like to thank John Mann, for the numerous hours he has spent putting this event together. John and Val started planning in May of last year, and spent at least 2 hours a day on this project through the summer, fall and winter of 2005. I KNOW the number of hours has increased through this past spring and summer, as John published his first book “Ulster-Scots on the Coast of Maine”, held a symposium in June which included world wide speakers to help us understand the history of the Ulster-Scots, and pulled together a large committee to help bring us to this day. I can safely say we would not be here at this event today, without the hard work and dedication of John. John and Val felt we must remember and carry on the spirit of our fore mothers and fathers. I can see in John the same kind, gentle soul of our Grandfather Horace. His methodical perseverance, and strict disciplined spirit are evident in his dedication to his family, his friends, his work and the community. I am proud to claim John and Val as my cousins, and I thank you both, for all that you have done and all that you continue to do.

Speech given by:
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