

STATE GOAL

To preserve the State’s historic and archaeological resources.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The material presented in this section was mostly obtained from the sources below. The comprehensive plan committee did not spend time verifying or documenting the primary sources. This is something that should be done in the near future.

Clifton Historical Society’s booklet “*The Reflections of the Past*” printed for Clifton’s sesquicentennial celebration in 1998.

Evelyn Huckins manuscript (unpublished) “History of Jarvis Gore and Clifton” dated 1979.

WA Sherman, Superintendent. 1875. Atlas of Penobscot County, Maine. Comstock & Cline, New York.

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

The Town of Clifton is located in the south central portion of Maine in Penobscot County. The Town is bordered by the Town of Bradley to the northwest, the Town of Eddington to the west, the Towns of Dedham and Otis to the south and the Towns of Amherst and Mariaville to the east. The landscape is hilly with elevations between 140 and 1,152 feet above sea level. The lowest elevations (less than 280 feet) are in the north-northeastern portion of the Town near Chemo Pond, and account for approximately one-third of the Town’s area. The highest point, Peaked Mountain, is located on the eastern border with Amherst. Most elevations above 700 feet are located along the Town’s southern and eastern borders.

As you will see on Map A –1, although the Town of Clifton, is located in Penobscot County, the Town is also very much tied to Hancock County. The geographic features of the Town more closely resemble that of neighboring communities of Amherst, Aurora and Mariaville, which are part of Hancock County. Clifton is just about the same distance from Bangor/Brewer as it is from Ellsworth.

EARLY SETTLERS

Clifton originally formed part of the post-Revolutionary War township of Jarvis Gore. The name derived from its early landowners, Leonard and Philip Jarvis, who around 1770 began buying lands in what, was then the Massachusetts territory of Maine. They continued to do this for some thirty years, purchasing some of their lands from the original grantees and some directly from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In February 1794, the General Court of Massachusetts granted Leonard Jarvis a tract containing over 63,000 acres, which included

present-day Clifton and Eddington. The Jarvis family never lived in the township, but instead settled in Surry. Around 1800, Philip Jarvis sold out his holdings to Leonard. It was estimated that the Jarvises at one point amassed more than 96,000 acres in Maine, second in size only to the holdings of the Bingham estate.

The first road was built through the town around 1800. In 1803 David Cobb, an agent for William Bingham, wrote in a note to Bingham: "...The road from Penobscot River to Mariaville is in constant use by immigrants. This road is the entry port to our lands. Mr. Jarvis through whose land it runs promised to pay his part of expense of making it." That original road left the present Route 9 at the Bangor Water Road in Eddington and came around the west side of Woodchuck Hill, continued across present-day Route 180 and behind what is now Maplewood Cemetery, passed close by present-day Parks Pond, and then proceeded over Chick Hill to Amherst. It was called Cobbs Great Road. Traces of the old road are still evident, more in some places than in others. Some portions of the old road are still maintained as access trails for snowmobiles and cross-country skiers, ATVs, hikers, and hunters.

By 1810 there were 50 people living in Jarvis Gore (incorporated as a town in 1816); however, not many lived in what is now Clifton. Most people lived in the part that would be incorporated as the Town of Eddington in 1823. In 1816, Benjamin Penny (also spelled Penney) built a log house near the old road behind Maplewood Cemetery. Benjamin Jr. was born in that house in 1818, the first child born in what is now Clifton. At least four veterans of the War of 1812 moved into the Clifton portion of Jarvis Gore to settle during these years.

Sometime around 1820, a widower from Ireland, Timothy Scott, came across with three of his four children and settled near Chemo Pond. The Scott Point Road is named after him. He is buried in the little cemetery beside this road, which also bears his name.

By 1820 Jarvis Gore had a population of 139 and 50 acres in tillage. Most of the townspeople lived in the section that was annexed to Eddington at its incorporation in 1823. By 1830, what remained of Jarvis Gore (today's Clifton) was home to 17 families, including Thomas Parks, Sr. (also spelled Parkes), who settled near the pond that today bears his name. Oliver Curt Eddy also established a homestead during the 1830s. He was a veteran of the Black Hawk Indian War who had served as a sergeant under Zachary Taylor.

By 1840 the Town had become known unofficially as Hillsboro in honor of a distinguished local citizen, Squire Hill; but the squire in turn suggested the name Clifton, for the many cliffs to be seen here. The first annual town meeting was held in 1842. The town was officially incorporated first as Maine in 1848, then as Clifton in 1849. In 1840 the population was 185, with 27 families in residence. By 1850 the number had grown to 50 families, many of whose names are familiar since their descendants still live in Clifton: Campbell, Williams, Jellison, Gusha, Penny/Penney, Chick, Eddy, Orcutt, DeBeck, Sebley, and Davis.

From 1860 to 1920, the community developed and thrived. During its heyday, Clifton had a prosperous rural economy that included small shops and a general store, a post office, five schoolhouses, three churches, three cemeteries plus one hearse house with a horse-drawn hearse, and even a crank-action movie theater during the first few decades of the 20th century. The resident population peaked in 1880 at 350 people, but then slowly declined in each successive decade before hitting a low point of 156 in 1930.

EARLY INDUSTRIES/OCCUPATIONS

As Written by Evelyn Huckins and printed in Clifton Historical Society's booklet "*The Reflections of the Past*"

"Saw mills have been popular in the history of this town. Rosalie Wood told me that an early mill was an up-and-down saw mill built by Sylvanus Hammond on the stream below his house (he built the house where Phillip Bragg lived). It must have been built in the 1840-1856, as he died in 1856. One of the first saw mills was on the "Mill Road" run by Luther and Benjamin Penney. They manufactured shingles, long lumber, laths and clapboards. It was run by water power. Later they sawed out old fashioned blueberry boxes, which held about 2 quarts.

Another early mill was built on the brook just below where Dale Green lives now. That was a shingle mill run by Frank Penney. His brother (or cousin) William was the shingle buncher. There have been several mills powered by steam in later years. One was built by L.J. Penney and one by W.F. Chute near Clifton corner. Frank McLaughlin built the mill opposite his house in 1904, which he ran as a long lumber mill and later as a novelty mill. I remember Neal McLaughlin was running it when I was first married and I worked in it for a short time. He was making cue sticks and beautiful trays.

Earl Campbell built a diesel-powered mill in later years. It ran for approximately 40 years when he gave it up in 1965. A mill was started and ran, I believe, by steam. It was run by "Pete" Kaslaskas, who now is in Amherst. It was built in Mrs. Walker's field. R. Leon Williams started a mill in 1956 and had been adding to it almost every year. It has had several fires but has been built back again, better than before."

"Frank Penny was the inventor of the "Dingo" shingle machine, sometimes called the "Penny Machine.""

"In 1891, the town offered C. F. Archer a 10 year abatement on his taxes, if he'd build a new sawmill. We know that in 1903, he owned a saw mill."

Committee Note:

Parks Pond Campground stands today on the site of Earl Campbell's diesel powered mill. It is owned and operated today by Earl's granddaughter, Barbara Moore.

SCHOOLS

In 1863, there were four school districts; number five was added in 1868. School #1 was located at the foot of Chick Hill, School #2 (Roosevelt School) was located in the Parks Pond area, School #3 (Harold Allen School) was located at the intersection of Route 9 and Scott Point Road, School #4 was located near where Maplewood Cemetery currently is and School #5 was located at the top of Rebel Hill. Each district had their own agent and each agent hired their own teachers. Each year the Town voted on which district would have summer or winter sessions and how long, by 6 or 8 weeks. By 1900, a Superintendent of Schools had rule over this.

Two of the original school buildings still stand in town. One is the Harold Allen School, standing at 15 Rebel Hill Road and belongs to the Clifton Historical Society, serving as a museum and meeting place. The other is the Roosevelt School building located at 743 Airline Road and is now a private home.

The School District System was abolished in 1894 and the Town system commenced until 1966 when the town, in cooperation with Eddington and Holden, formed Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) #63. Today there are no public schools located in the Town of Clifton. The Town is part of MSAD #63 along with the neighboring communities of Eddington and Holden. Students attend Eddington Elementary School for grades K - 4 and the Holbrook Middle School in Holden for grades 5 - 8. High School students have their choice of high schools.

POST OFFICE

The Clifton Post Office was established in 1868. This Post Office was housed at the Moses Chick General Store on the corner of Route 180 and Route 9. In response to the declining population and economy, the Clifton Post Office closed down for the entire month of January in 1928, reestablished February 1, 1928 and then was permanently discontinued on March 15, 1930. >From 1930 to the 1980s mail delivery switched back and forth between the towns of Holden and Eddington. From the 1980s to the present (2002), mail delivery services have come from the Eddington post office.

CHURCHES

At one time there were three churches in the Town of Clifton; the Calvinistic Baptist, Christian Societies and Freewill Baptist Church. In 1890 the Freewill Baptist Church changed its name to United Baptist Church. On November 19, 1838, the Free Will Baptist Church became the first church to be organized in the township. In 1918, the Church's name was again changed to Clifton United Baptist Church and it continues to serve Clifton residents today. For many years, it has been the only organized church in the Town.

CAVES

With all the exposed rock within the Town of Clifton, comes the possibility of caves. There are two (2) caves known to exist in the Parks Pond and Peaked Mountain areas. It is not known if these caves were ever used by Native Americans.

CEMETERIES

The 1875 map of the Town (Map A-2) shows the location of the Town's cemeteries.

Veterans of many of this nation's wars are buried in Clifton cemeteries. The Town does not have an inventory of veterans who served in World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War or the Iraqi Freedom effort. Each year the veterans' gravestones are decorated with little flags for Memorial Day, sometimes through the town coffers and sometimes through the efforts of private citizens -- but every year the flags fly to honor those who sacrificed for our nation. Since the early 1950's flags have been provided by and dispersed by R. Leon Williams and his family. It is not known if R. Leon started this tradition or if he carried it on from his parents. It probably began in honor of his grandfather, Melvin S. Jellison, who was a civil war veteran.

Mount Pleasant Cemetery

In 1879, the Town bought a cemetery in District #2 and named it Mount Pleasant Cemetery in 1880. Five Civil War Veterans are buried in this cemetery. The oldest grave located in Mount Pleasant Cemetery is that of Nehemiah and Betsy Goodwin who both died in 1836.

Maplewood Cemetery (Mount Waldo Cemetery)

In 1892, the Town bought a cemetery in District #4 and enough land to enlarge it. The Cemetery was called Mount Waldo Cemetery until 1927, when the name was changed to Maplewood Cemetery. The oldest grave in Clifton is located in Maplewood Cemetery and is that of Abigail Crosby who died in 1836 at the age of 84.

Veterans buried in this cemetery include one from the Black Hawk Indian War, two from the War of 1812, thirteen Civil War veterans, one from the Spanish-American War, and fifteen from World War I [as of 1979].

Scott Cemetery

Scott Cemetery is located on the Scott Point Road and is the oldest cemetery in Town. It holds most of the Scott family. In 1894, the Town accepted the deed to the cemetery. The oldest grave in the Scott Cemetery belongs to Augusta Scott, daughter of Daniel Scott Senior, who died at the age of 17 in 1863.

TOWN GOVERNMENT

The Town of Clifton was established in 1816, but not incorporated as a Town until 1848 with the name of Maine. The Town’s name was changed to Clifton in 1849. Although the first town meeting was held in 1842, the earliest records only start in 1863. Town business was operated out of the homes of the Town Clerk’s until the mid 1990s, when the woodshed of the Harold Allen School was used as the Town Office. This office was used, with no running water, until 1998 when the current municipal building was built on Airline Road. A decade that began with the Town’s business being transacted in a number of private kitchens and living rooms ended with all the records and personnel under one roof in a new municipal building at 135 Airline Road.

In the 1950s and 1960s the primary town officers were the selectmen/assessors (3 members), town clerk, and treasurer. Now town business is overseen and conducted by the selectmen (5 members), administrative assistant, assessor’s agent, planning board (5 members), and code enforcement officer. Clifton’s town government has grown more complicated than it once was but hopefully more competent, more accessible, more accountable and more responsive to the needs of its residents.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Clifton Historical Society

The Town of Clifton celebrated its sesquicentennial in 1998. The Clifton Historical Society, which was established in 1993, organized the festivities. This group of committed volunteers has worked tirelessly to help retain a living sense of Clifton’s past through the collected stories and donated items of lifelong residents. In 2000 the Town of Clifton sold the former Harold Allen School building at Clifton Corners (which had previously housed the Town Office and Clifton Library), the Town Hall and Hearse to the Clifton Historical Society for \$1.00 each, in order to provide a meeting space for the group and a museum for the public.

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Established through a legislative act in 1971, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) is the state agency which functions as the State Historic Preservation Office in Maine. As such, the Commission is responsible for the identification, evaluation, and protection of Maine’s significant cultural resources as directed by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Commission oversees the statewide survey program, nominates properties to the National Register of Historic Places, reviews development activities for their effect on cultural resources, co-ordinates rehabilitation projects under the Preservation Tax Incentives Program, assists local governments in survey work and the design of preservation guidelines, and is involved in a variety of public education activities.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Authorized under the National Register Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archaeological resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service under the Secretary of the Interior. Properties listed in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. These resources contribute to an understanding of the historical and cultural foundation of the nation. Listing in the National Register includes the following results:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, and the community;
- Consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects;
- Eligibility for federal tax benefits; and
- Qualifications for federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.

Maine Memory Network

The Maine memory Network is a statewide digital museum and archive that was developed and is maintained by the Maine Historical Society. This Web site provides educators, students, and the general public with unprecedented access to historical collections throughout Maine. The Network enables organizations in communities across the state to upload and manage digital copies of artifacts, images, and documents from their collections into one centralized, Web-accessible database.

Evelyn Huckins History of Jarvis Gore and Clifton

Evelyn Huckins was a schoolteacher and resident of Clifton (1908-1985) who became housebound in her later years of life. She chose to use her time to create, in handwritten notebooks, a history of Jarvis Gore and Clifton, using old records and her memories. Her "History" was completed in 1979 and is an assorted collection of material. Although it would require much more research and documentation to verify the accuracy and completeness of all its material, it is an interesting introduction to anyone who wants to start research into Clifton history. Some of the references she makes can start one on a journey of historical research, and some of the information probably cannot be verified, as some records may not exist.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

Arthur Speiss of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission reports that there are no known prehistoric archaeological sites in the Town of Clifton. However, no archaeological survey has been done.

Historic Archaeological Sites

Earle Shettleworth of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission reports that there is one known Historic Archaeological Sites, the Hepsibeth Debeck farmstead. No professional survey for historic archaeological sites has been conducted to date in Clifton. Future surveys could focus on sites relating to the earliest European settlement of the Town beginning in 1815. Maps A-3, A-4, A-5 and A-6 show areas of potential archaeological resources as identified by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS/STRUCTURES/OBJECTS

Kirk Mahoney of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission reports that there are no registered historic buildings, structures or objects in the Town of Clifton. A comprehensive survey of Clifton’s above-ground resources needs to be undertaken in order to identify properties that may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

BUILDINGS WITH LOCAL HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Hearse House

In 1882, the Town voted to buy a hearse and build a hearse house. The house was to be 14 feet wide and 22 feet long. In 1904, the hearse needed repair, but the townspeople voted not to repair it and bought a new hearse in 1907. Today, the Hearse House still stands by the Maplewood Cemetery with the hearse bought by the Town in 1907. The Historical Society has hopes of restoring the hearse (which it now owns), and may consider repairing the Hearse House, which is still located near Maplewood Cemetery.

Chick House

The Chick House, located on the corner of Route 180, is believed to be the oldest house in Clifton because tax records indicate it was built in 1782. The house has been updated; however, the original architecture has been maintained.

Town Hall

In 1892, the “Band of Willing Workers Society” built a two-story 30X48 foot building on a one-half acre lot on “Otis Road” as a hall to hold entertainment and socials. When the hall was dedicated on June 6, 1892, it was named Cliffwood Hall. It became the Town Hall in 1899, when the Town bought the hall complete with stoves, chairs, oil lamps, piano, silverware and dishes, and tables to seat 100 people. The upstairs hosted a wooden basketball court. In 1912, School #3, the Harold Allen School was moved up to the Town Hall lot.

By the late 1990s, Clifton was no longer able to conduct business in the fine old Town Hall where, for the past 100 years, voters had waded through the March mud and slush to gather on wooden benches (those near the wood stove baking, those back by the door feeling the cold drafts) to execute the town’s warrant for another year. The end of the decade brought some revolutionary tinkering with Clifton’s form of government.

Roosevelt School

Parkes School (#2) later called Roosevelt School was built in 1854. It was located on the corner of Mill Lane, with the Cemetery behind it and on one side of it. The building was moved to its present site, across from the Baptist Church in 1923. It was sold in 1973 and is now used as a private residence.

Harold Allen School

School #3 - now called the Harold Allen School was moved up to the Town Hall Lot in 1912. It now belongs to the Clifton Historical Society and serves as their meeting place and part of their museum.

Other buildings with local historical significance

There are other buildings still existing today that are presented on the 1875 map that should be researched for historical significance. Tax records indicate that these buildings were constructed prior to 1900. Most likely there are other structures over 100 years old within the town, but the tax records do not specify it.

THREATS TO HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Historical and archaeological resources must first be identified before they can be protected from any potential threats. Protection of identified historic sites in Clifton is the responsibility of the municipality or individual owners of the site(s). Archaeological resources are often threatened by development because their existence is not obvious. Public ownership of historic sites is an option, only if the owners desire to sell their property

RESOURCE PROTECTION MEASURES

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

The MHPC is the central repository in the state for archeological and historic buildings survey information. Survey files include computer files, map sets, paper data forms, field notes, unpublished reports, photographic archives and published works. Archeological files are exempt from the “right to know” legislation and are accessible only with permission from MHPC staff, to protect sensitive archaeological sites and landowners’ privacy. Summaries of sensitive archaeological information are made available on a case-by-case basis.

The MHPC contains an inventory of sites, yet has no jurisdiction over these sites. The MHPC coordinates funding for inventory and restoration of historic sites. Towns with historic protection ordinances may also be eligible for monies through MHPC. Funding for inventory and restoration is (sometimes) available depending on legislative appropriation.

National Register of Historic Places

MHPC also coordinates a National Register of Historic Places. Sites registered by the owner with the National Register of Historic Places are protected through federal legislation, but only protected against any intervention or development by a federal agency. Eligible sites include those with only local significance or value.

Listing a property on the National Register provides protection only when federal funds are used for a project, which would affect the historic property. More complete protection is provided by a local historic preservation ordinance.

Local Ordinances

Local adopted ordinances, such as land use and subdivision ordinances can protect historic area zones from harmful impact and regulate their development.

Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

Because archaeological sites are found along shores (99% of Maine's know prehistoric archaeological sites are located near water), shoreland zoning will often provide protection of such sites. To the extent that the future archaeological sites may be identified on the banks of water bodies within the community, they may be partially protected from development by state mandated setbacks in shoreland zones.

The Site Location Law

The law requires consideration of impact on historic resources.

Easement and Initiatives

Individual landowners, historic societies, or nonprofit agencies may apply a number of development restrictions to their properties on a voluntary basis. These restrictions may be strengthened by deed constraints or easements.

Public or Nonprofit Ownership

Public ownership of historic resources is another option for protection of historic buildings or sites.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In order to preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources from development that could threaten those resources, the Town of Clifton has developed the following policies:

A1. Policy

The Town will ensure that all local prehistoric and historic archaeological resources, historic artifacts, documents, buildings and objects are preserved and protected to the highest extent possible.

Near-Term Implementation Strategies

- A. The Board of Selectmen will encourage the creation of a Historic Preservation Committee.
- B. The Board of Selectmen, or their designee(s), will support the Clifton Historical Society in their efforts to inventory and catalog historic artifacts currently in their possession.
- C. The Board of Selectmen, or their designee(s), will support the Clifton Historical Society's efforts to maintain an appropriate location for a museum.
- D. The Planning Board, along with the Code Enforcement Officer, will provide information to interested residents about special initiatives and financing available for historic preservation projects.
- E. The Board of Selectmen, or their designee(s), will support the Clifton Historical Society's efforts of becoming a contributing partner with the Maine Memory Network to digitize and centralize Clifton's historic documents.

F. The Board of Selectmen, or their designee(s), will seek out verifiable and documented resources in regards to the history of Clifton.

Short-Term Implementation Strategies

G. The Board of Selectmen, or their designee(s), will invite the Clifton Historical Society to meet on a semi-annual basis in order to coordinate efforts concerning needs and historic project status.

H. The Board of Selectmen, or their designee(s), will encourage local school children through the School Administrative District #63, and the Clifton Historical Society, to document oral histories and preserve recordings of living histories of the Town's oldest residents whenever possible.

I. The future land use ordinance will contain language to ensure preservation and protection of prehistoric and historic archaeological resources, including those that may be discovered or registered at a later date.

Long-Term Implementation Strategies

J. The Town Clerk will maintain a voluntary listing of homes by building date. A map identifying approximate locations of the community's older homes will be created for possible display at the Clifton Historical Society Museum.

K. The Board of Selectmen, or their designee(s), will coordinate with the Cemetery Committee to verify when Town cemeteries were created, identify which individuals were first buried in each cemetery, and prepare an inventory and document all veterans buried in all local cemeteries.

L. The Planning Board, or their designee(s), will seek available funding sources to perform a professional survey of all historic and prehistoric archaeological resources within the Town.

M. The Board of Selectmen, or their designee(s), will transcribe and publish Evelyn Huckins' 1979 History of Jarvis Gore and Clifton so that it may be made available to the public for research purposes.



EDDINGTON HOLDEN & CLIFTON

Scale 240 Rods to the inch

Source: Atlas of Penobscot County Maine. 1875.
 Published by Comstock & Cline, New York
 W.A. Sherman, Superintendent
 L. E. Neuman, Engraver
 Charles Hart, Printer