



Guilford

Save all four parts and build a poster!

About the series

The Maine Community Heritage Project is a partnership of the Maine Historical Society and Maine State Library that mobilized Maine communities around the exploration, gathering and sharing of their local histories. Teams from Bangor, Biddeford, Blue Hill, Cumberland-North Yarmouth, Guilford, Hallowell, Lincoln and Scarborough are participating in a yearlong research process that will lead to the creation of websites about the histories of their communities on Maine Memory Network at www.mainememory.net/mchp, the Maine Historical Society's statewide digital museum. Their websites will be launched in June. This project is supported by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Made in Maine: Factories and manufacturing in Guilford

The story of Guilford manufacturing and mills centers on three facilities: Hardwood Products, Interface Fabrics (Guilford of Maine) and Pride Manufacturing Co.

Hardwood Products started out as Guilford Lumber Co. and was incorporated in 1893 by M.L. Hussey, A.J. Goldthwaite and Henry Hudson. The operation was sold to Samuel Boardman, and the company became Guilford Manufacturing Co. in 1907.

Logs that were floated from logging operations upriver fed this mill. Materials also were transported by rail. The mill produced dimension lumber, doors, windows, frames, and box shooks, which were sold throughout New England and the mid-Atlantic states.

In 1926 the Minto Toothpick Co. from Saginaw, Mich., relocated to Guilford. Owner Lloyd Cartwright changed the name to Hardwood

Products. The mill became known as "the pick mill" and is referred to as such today.

Before plastics became popular, the mill produced a variety of products that included candy sticks, cocktail forks, tongue depressors, ice cream spoons, applicators and toothpicks.

In 1958 a fire claimed seven of the mill's 10 buildings. There was an estimated \$750,000 in damage, and 200 people suddenly were unemployed.

Interface Fabrics (Guilford of Maine) is the latest company to occupy that space along the Piscataquis River.

What originally was known as the Appleyard Mill was on the south side of the Piscataquis River, located there to use the river as a power source. The building was leased in 1868 by William Parker Appleyard. It was considered one of the best-equipped mills in New England, with

nearly 100 employees who worked a 12-hour day for about \$1.25 a day. In 1884, the mill was destroyed by fire and was rebuilt into the M.L. Hussey Woolen Co. in 1904.

The Piscataquis Woolen Co. mill was incorporated in 1882 and located on the north side of the Piscataquis River, just across the river from the M.L. Hussey mill. It manufactured cashmere, broadcloth, and ladies wear which was sold throughout the United States by Libby & Co. of New York City.

It employed about 125 people. Piscataquis Woolen later was bought by Herbert Gray and named Old Town Woolen Co. in 1917. It added the well-known "Moosehead Blanket" to its product line. In 1936 it joined Eastern Trust Co. which brought in Willard H. Cummings and later became known as Guilford of Maine. The former mill facilities on both sides of the Piscataquis River were merged,

Exploring Historic Guilford

with the students of Piscataquis Community Middle School

creating what we know as Guilford Industries.

Cummings innovations included 96 automatic looms which replaced 40 hand looms in 1943. In 1955, under the direction of Willard's son H. King Cummings, a modernization program was introduced to produce quality fabrics at a competitive price.

In 1975 there was a need for further diversification including flame-retardant products. FR 701 was developed, opening the door for the office furniture industry. Len Sautler led this effort as president in 1979.

In 1986, it was sold to Interface Inc. A year later it was damaged in the flood of 1987. In 1996 the Leonard Sautler facility was built, and in 2000 the Guilford plant was made corporate headquarters for Guilford of Maine and Interface Fabrics Group.

From 1975 to 2000, the work force grew from 400 to 650 employees.

Pride Manufacturing Co., formerly Drapers Mill, is the third of the mills at the core of Guilford's town history. In August 1956, Fletcher Pride purchased Drapers Mill to be closer to raw materials to produce mouthpieces for Hav-A-Tampa Jewel cigars.

Pride eventually added six times the square footage and 10 times the work force of the former mill. It diversified to make golf tees, toy parts, furniture parts, industrial parts, and hobby and craft items. The bulk of Pride's sales were in U.S. markets, but it also exported finished products to Canada, Japan, Australia and Europe.

At Pride's peak, approximately 250 million golf tees were made annually.

Aerial view of Guilford looking east, circa 1955



Hardwood Products, Guilford, circa 1930



Armed National Guard troops at Guilford Woolen Mill, 1934



North Guilford School House, 1912



The town of Guilford

1/4 mile



Guilford High School ruins, Guilford, 1925

Guilford High School girls basketball team, Guilford, 1908



Guilford Ball Field, circa 1920



Guilford Ball Field, circa 1920

Like the phoenix rising out of the ashes: The story of Guilford's schools

The eighth-grade students at Piscataquis Community Middle School decided that this was an appropriate title for their exhibit. In total there are three schools that succumbed to a fiery fate, and like the mythological creature phoenix, they rose from the ashes each time.

Twenty-one dollars won't even buy a tank of gas today, but in 1812 the settlers of Township 6 Range 7 set aside \$21 to establish Guilford's first public school in Capt. John Bennett's shed. Until 1817 all schools were private.

School was offered in two sessions: one in summer under the supervision of teacher Miss Betsey Moore and the second in winter under the tutelage of Mr. Robert Low Jr. This arrangement lasted only a short time as town

residents pooled their resources to construct a school building in 1818 in Guilford Center.

The building of this second marked the first time in Guilford's history that a structure was built specifically for the purpose of educating its children. This school also served as a Town Hall and meeting place. The building was constructed of logs and featured an open fireplace, which was said to be used by the children to warm their corn cakes and potatoes for lunch. Unfortunately the Guilford Center School became a casualty of fire in 1825.

A school then was built on the corner of High Street and Blaine Avenue, but this frame structure also was destroyed by fire. Another building was constructed at the same location that served as a school until 1880,

when a new Town Hall containing classroom space was built. By 1880 all Guilford Village school-age children attended classes there.

In 1892, the town appropriated \$15,000 to invest in the education of high school students by building them their own school.

By 1916, Guilford had built a state-of-the-art grade school building located behind where the high school stood.

A fire gutted the high school on April 4, 1925, but townspeople built another one at a cost of \$90,000, and dedicated it one year later almost to the day on April 5, 1926.

In 1947, the Maine Legislature passed a law intending to create regional high schools. Superintendent Frank Kent placed the wheels in motion, and in 1948 Piscataquis Com-

munity High School was formed. The name changed in 1949 to Piscataquis Community School District and served students in grades seven-12.

The school experienced some expansion projects including outdoor tennis courts, a gymnasium, an assembly hall with a stage, a cafeteria and a home-economics room.

On Aug. 29, 1958, SAD 4 was formed to serve Abbot, Cambridge, Guilford, Parkman, Sangerville and Wellington. By the fall of 1963, it was apparent further expansion was necessary so a superintendent's office, chemistry and physics labs, and a manual training shop were added. By now, there were about 1,200 students attending SAD 4 schools with annual expenditures of \$650,000. When the current high school was built in 1969, the building was converted into a

middle school for grades six-eight until 1997 when the current Piscataquis Community Middle School was built.

In 1954, a new Elementary School was built on High Street. Extensive renovations to Guilford Primary School in 1991 added more than 8,000 square feet to include a multi-purpose room, kitchen, handicapped-access bathrooms, two special education rooms, a room for Kinders, a library and office and storage space.

Fourth-graders later were transferred to the PCMS facility, and the GPS building was utilized primarily for grades two and three, with the McKusick School in Parkman absorbing grades K-1. There is a plan to close down the GPS building and students will be transferred to PCMS beginning in the 2010-11 school year.

Eighth- and ninth-grade students, Guilford, fall 1913



About History Hunters

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