

## Historic and Archaeological Resources

Goal: To preserve the Town of Dresden and State of Maine's historic and archaeological resources.

### Background

### Historic Structures

#### Churches:

- The construction of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Dresden Mills started in 1880 and at a cost of \$4,000. It was free of debt when dedicated on March 13, 1884. A Methodist chapel built on a hill west of Dresden Mills preceded this building. In 1880, it was voted to dismantle the chapel and use the materials toward erecting the present building. It originally had a belfry and spire, both of which were removed in 1958. The bell now rests on a concrete base near the building. This building is now privately owned.
- St. John's Church in Dresden Mills was built and originally dedicated as a Union Meeting House on June 27, 1833. On November 17, 1852, the building was consecrated to the service of the Episcopal Church. The church has recently been re-consecrated by the Bishop of the Diocese of Maine, the Rt. Reverend Chilton Knudsen (now retired), and is currently available to the community for concerts, weddings, funerals, Sunday services or gatherings.

#### Schools:

- One District Schoolhouse was located in Cedar Grove and served the children of that area from 1861 until 1943. It has been converted into a private home.
- District School Number 2, also known as the Dresden Brick School house located on route 128, has been converted into a museum run and maintained by the town's Historical Society.
- The Dresden Town Office is housed in what was originally District #6 Schoolhouse is currently owned by the Town. The construction date is unknown, but the structure appears on the 1857 Dresden Mills map. It was the last of the one-room schoolhouses in use before the opening of the Dresden Elementary School in 1971. In 1900, 31 students were enrolled in the District #6 Schoolhouse. The building was remodeled in 1988/1989 and is currently being used as the Town Office.

- It is not known when the District #9 Schoolhouse was built, but in 1845 there were 47 students. The schoolhouse is located on Rt. 127 (Middle Road) and was closed as a school in 1955. It is currently a privately-owned house.
- Bridge Academy was completed in November 1890, and dedicated that December. Samuel James Bridge (1809-1893) first proposed establishing a fund to build the academy in 1887. The architect for the building was George A. Clough of Boston. It is a modified colonial style with pointed gables and a 30-foot-high spire. The main room extends the entire width of the building, with seats originally for possibly 80 students. The building was constructed on two acres in Dresden Mills. A nearby 20-acre wood lot was bought to provide fuel for heat. The builder was Roscoe M. Beedle of Dresden. Bridge Academy served as the high school for Dresden students until 1966, and until 1983 for seventh and eighth grade students. After Dresden built a new elementary school, the building became vacant. By 1984, the building had been listed on the National Register of Historical Buildings and a group of townspeople were instrumental in converting the space into a library, serving all of Dresden's residents, but with emphasis on young people. Today it is known as the Bridge Academy Public Library and is supported in part with a contribution from the town, and from the original trusts.

#### Administrative Buildings:

- Pownalborough Court House is the only existing court building in Maine which was built before the American Revolution. The courthouse was built within the parameters of Fort Shirley on the east bank of the Kennebec River, and finished in 1761. As soon as it was completed, Parson Jacob Bailey used the courthouse as a church. It was a fine three-decker courthouse, the court below, the judge's family above, and soldiers barracked on top to hold them all down. John Adams tried a case there in 1765, and later on, Dan Webster came there twice to plead. Benedict Arnold visited on his famous mission to Quebec and caused a father/son battle that typified the divisive civil war that we now know as the American Revolution." Major Samuel Goodwin, Resident Agent for the Plymouth Company, received title to the property after 1794, and his descendants continued to occupy it until the 1930's, retaining ownership until 1954 when it was purchased by the Lincoln County Historical Association. The Association currently maintains the building and its surrounds, and opens it to the public during the summer.
- Dresden citizens voted at the March 1859 town meeting to build a "town house." The first town meeting held there was in March 1860. In 1867 the town erected, on one inside wall, a monumental slab "In memory of the

volunteers of Dresden who fell in defense of the Union 1861-4". In 1904 the Eastern River Grange added a second story for a Grange Hall. A kitchen was also added. The Grange continued to use its portion of the building until about 1970 when the organization returned its charter. At that time the town assumed control and responsibility for the entire building. The town repaired the foundation and roof in 1974, and more recent foundation repairs have also been done. The building is only occasionally used for various types of gatherings. The current sign on the building: 1904 – Dresden Town Hall.

- Pownalborough Hall was built in 1867 by the Pownalborough Hall Association, a Society composed entirely of women. The Society adopted a Constitution and By-laws that year, and Governor Joshua L. Chamberlain signed the act incorporating the Association in 1869. Religious services were conducted there from time to time. Over the years the Hall fell into disrepair. It was most recently used to store Fire Department equipment before being restored in 2009 when the new fire station was built on town property next door. It is currently used for town and other meetings and gatherings.
- Jewett Station was built in Dresden Mills in the 1950's. The fire house was named in remembrance of Alvin and Leona Jewett. Although Dresden has a beautiful new fire house across town, it continues to be used as Station #1, housing Engine #3, due to the building's proximity to Route 27 and structures on the northern portions of the town. The reduced response time in that area was recently demonstrated at a house fire on Route 25, when Engine #3 was the first on the scene putting water on the fire several minutes before the next fire apparatus arrived.

#### Historic Homes:

- Flagg, builder of the Pownalborough Court House, built the Bowman-Carney house in 1765 for Judge Jonathan Bowman, cousin of John Hancock. John Adams lived here while serving as attorney for the Plymouth Company and attended court at the Courthouse. In 1870 the house was purchased by the Lincoln Ice Company and used as an office building and dwelling. It is considered second only to the Pownalborough Court House in historical value for buildings in this part of Maine. It is in an excellent state of preservation and is privately owned.

#### Historic Archaeological Sites

These sites have been identified by Leith Smith from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Municipality: Dresden

Inventory data as of March, 2011 :

To date, fifteen historic archaeological sites are documented for the town.

Fort Shirley (Fort Frankfort)

ME 129-001

English military, fort ca. 1752

St. John's Angl. Ch. & Parsonage

ME 129-002

English church 1770-1779

Gardiner's Mills

ME 129-003

Mill, sawmill and gristmill 1753/1754 to 19th century (and after early 19th)

Goodwin Jr. Mill

ME 129-004

Anglo-American mill, sawmill - last quarter of 18th century (by 1776)

Brickyard

ME 129-005

American brickyard 19th century

Hathorn Brickyard

ME 129-006

American brickyard Mid to late 19th century

Unidentified cellar hole

ME 129-007

Anglo-American domestic possibly abandoned before 1830

Houdlette Burial Ground

ME 129-008

French cemetery ca. 1836 to ca. 1877

Unidentified domestic # 1

ME 129-009

unidentified domestic 1750 to c 1850

Unidentified Barn # 1

ME 129-010

Unidentified outbuilding, barn 1790 to c 1900

Kennebec Riverside Dump # 1

ME 129-011  
Unidentified dump c 1850 to c 1950

Kennebec River Wharf  
ME 129-012  
Unidentified wharf c 1790 to c 1870

Cairn & Burial  
ME 129-013  
Unidentified cemetery c 1799 to c 1800

Farm # 1  
ME 129-014  
Unidentified farmstead c 1780 to c 1930

Indian & River Road Farm  
ME 129-015  
Unidentified farmstead c 1780 to present

#### Cemeteries

Dresden has three main cemeteries: Pine Grove, Maple Grove and Forest Hill. The Town of Dresden contributes to the upkeep. There is also a small cemetery at the Pownalborough Courthouse and many old private cemeteries.

#### Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

These sites were identified by Arthur Spiess from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Municipality: **Dresden**  
Inventory data as of **March 2011** :

There are four sites known in the town of Dresden: a prehistoric campsite on Green Point Farm on Eastern River, a prehistoric site on the Choice View Farm property (managed by Inland Fisheries and Wildlife), and sites 25.45 and 25.46 near Goodwin Point.

Site 25.45, otherwise known as the Dresden Falls Archaic site, has just been acquired for conservation purposes by The Archaeological Conservancy. This site covers more than 14 acres, and was a Native American seasonal village between about 9000 and 4500 years ago. The site is highly significant.

A professional archaeological survey to date has been done on the Dresden Falls Archaic site, and Choice View Farm property, and one small piece of private property on the Kennebec River. In addition, a professional archaeological survey was completed for the Richmond-Dresden bridge project in 2010, with no prehistoric sites in the road corridor between the bridge and Route 128.

Needs for further survey, inventory, and analysis:

Much of the Kennebec and Eastern River banks are sensitive areas for prehistoric archaeology and need reconnaissance survey prior to ground disturbance.

Limited test pit excavation has been done at all the known prehistoric sites. The Green Point sites are now eroding into the Eastern River; little is left of them. The Choice View Farm site, a small Archaic camp ca. 6000 B.P., has probably been close to completely excavated. These sites are, informally watched over by local residents who alert MHPC to any inappropriate activity.

Our major site, one of considerable significance, is the Dresden Falls Early and Middle Archaic site (ca. 9000-4500 B.P.) along the Kennebec River. The Archaeological Conservancy (with considerable assistance from FOMB and Land for Maine's Future) recently acquired the site for conservation purposes along with more than 15 surrounding acres that also include historically significant archaeological remains, excellent wildlife habitat and rare plants. The Archaeological Conservancy has a preservation agreement with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, which may mean that MHPC will manage the property, and a conservation easement held by FOMB. There are no immediate plans for further excavation on the property, but when funds and staff become available, MHPC hopes to do additional excavation, welcoming assistance from local volunteers.

Somewhat surprisingly, no prehistoric or historic sites were found on the Dresden side, between the current Kennebec bridge and Route 128, when it was surveyed by archaeologists last year in anticipation of the new bridge construction.

It is very likely that many other prehistoric sites exist along the Kennebec and Eastern Rivers and around Dresden Bog (see areas shaded on the following map of prehistoric sites), just waiting to be identified. Our Comprehensive Plan and Planning Board ordinances should include means for identifying and assessing the archaeological significance of these unknown sites before they are destroyed or disturbed by any form of development. The MHPC will do archaeological surveys of such areas when and if they are scheduled for development as long as our Planning Board or some official Dresden source requests it as a requirement of our local ordinances. It should be possible for the

Planning Board to monitor these areas and include such a provision before permitting development in archaeologically sensitive areas.

## **Goals, Policies & Action Strategies**

### Introduction

Historic preservation in Maine occurs at many levels, ranging from the actions of private individuals and the advocacy work of non-profit organizations, to the regulatory decision making of municipal, state and federal governmental agencies. The Town of Dresden has a wealth of historic resources that define the character of the town. The Town encourages private property owners to protect and restore historic properties. Historic buildings owned by the Town are intended to be maintained under the supervision of the Select Board. Additionally, the Dresden Historical Society works to identify sites, buildings, and structures that possess sufficient architectural or historical merit to be addressed. The Town may seek to create an incentive program to encourage the listing of individually eligible sites, buildings, structures, and objects on the National Register of Historic Places. Properties listed on the National Register would be eligible for state and federal tax credits for restoration, and other benefits.

There is a growing recognition between citizens and governments across the country of the value of a community's historic resources. Historic buildings provide insight into a community's past and help answer broader questions about history. Serving as functional elements of a community, maintained historic buildings can conserve resources, time, energy and money while they sustain a sense of community character.

No professional surveys for historic archaeological sites have been conducted to date in Dresden. Any future archaeological survey should focus on the identification of potentially significant resources associated with the town's agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those associated with the earliest Euro-American settlement of the town in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Policy**

The Town of Dresden adopts a standard by which it will work to identify and maintain the values of structures, sites and areas that possess architectural characteristics of historical importance and/or possess historical significance.

### **Action strategies:**

Known historic and archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, will be protected through local land use ordinances.

### **Responsibility Short Term & Ongoing**

Prepare amendments to land use ordinances that require the planning board to incorporate maps and information provided by the Comprehensive Planning Committee into their development review process so that new land owners will be made aware of these historic resources.

### **Responsibility Short Term & Ongoing**

The Town will work with the Dresden Historical Society to continue to determine the history of any other possible sites in Dresden that have not yet been identified.

### **Responsibility Short Term & Ongoing**

The Town will contact current owners of historic sites and structures, providing information and encouraging maintenance and upkeep for future generations. As provided for in Title 30-A MRSA Section 5730 and Title 36 MRSA Section 5219-BB assess the benefits to raise or appropriate money to reimburse taxpayers for a portion of taxes paid under Title 36, Part 2 on real property if the property owner agrees to maintain the property in accordance with criteria that are adopted by ordinance by the governing legislative body of the municipality and that provide for maintaining the historic integrity of important structures and areas.

### **Responsibility Short Term & Ongoing**

The town will continue to contribute to the maintenance and upkeep of the three local cemeteries. Also, the Historical Society currently takes care of several marked graves around town documented as war veterans. Ten graves have been identified as Revolutionary War Veterans.