

# EARLY HISTORY of HOULTON

## CHAPTER ONE

Reprinted verbatim exactly as it appeared in the issue of the Aroostook Pioneer dated May 13, 1858.

### The Start of a Chronicle of History

Since of late it has become customary to give the historical account of towns in New England, the writer of the following anticipated communication, has, from the novel and extraordinary circumstances under which Houlton was settled, been induced to make a brief statement of facts connected with its rise and progress, for a series of years; not from any ambitious motives or attempts at erudition, science or diction, but to give a simple, unvarnished statement of facts as they occurred in all things with a strict adherence to probity, without which they would prove unworthy of public notice.

As the primitive inhabitants have principally (as must be expected) passed from this theater of action, perhaps there is no one more familiar with the incidents of the early history of that little colony, who would have taken on himself the trouble and assumed the responsibility of the task than the writer, who publicly tenders his thanks to his friends and the citizens of Houlton for many of the occurrences and dates. The writer, of more than sixty years of age, has endeavored to rescue from oblivion this brief narrative, presuming that his friends will cast the mantle of charity over the many imperfections, as it was written in fragmentary moments, amid the pressing cares, duties and responsibilities of active life. The reader must be sensitive that the circumstances and events as they occurred, which compose the following Nos., are of such a heterogeneous character, that they must appear, even if judiciously arranged, in a desultory, chaotic state, which would require the gifts and genius of a Kane or a Livingston to embody form and phraseology that would endure the criticism of a historian.

In order to give an account of the primitive history of Houlton, and of the original Trustees of New Salem Academy, we must refer the reader to some extracts from a letter from our venerable friend, the Rev. Alpheus Harding of New Salem, Mass., in reply to

mation contained in the records of New Salem Academy; he being familiar with the history of that institution, having been connected with the time-honored school, either as pupil, Assistant, Preceptor or Trustee nearly sixty years. Mr. Harding writes, "In regard to New Salem Academy, I find by the records that it was incorporated Feb. 25, 1795, and the original Trustees named in the Act of Incorporation were, Rev. Joel Foster of New Salem, Solomon Reed of Petersham, Joseph Blodgett of Greenwich, Joseph Kilburn of Wendell, David Smead, John Goldsbury, Jonathan Warner, David Saxton, Ebenezer Mattoon, Jr., Daniel Bigelow, Martin Kinsley and Ezekiel Kellog, Esqs. Samuel Kendall, Varney Pearce, and Asa Merriman; that in Oct. 1797, Daniel Bigelow, Varney Peace and Rev. Joel Foster were chosen a committee to sell the half township". But it appears from the records that in the autumn of 1804, at the annual meeting of the Trustees, Ebenezer Mattoon, Samuel C. Allen and Samuel Dickinson were chosen a committee to convey said lands to the following persons; viz: Aaron Putnam, one-eighth, \$625, Varney Pearce, one-eighth, \$625; Joseph Houlton \$1000, John Putnam, \$500, Joshua Putnam, \$500, Rufus Cows of Amherst, \$500, John Chamberlain, \$500, William Bowman of Hadley, \$250, Consider Hastings, \$250, Thomas Powers of Greenwich, \$250; total \$5000. Mr. Harding writes "these lands, being far from any settlement in Maine, at that time were unsaleable, and the purchasers being involved and unable to sell these lands, concluded to dispose of their farms in New Salem and remove into the wilderness, and make new homes. This deprived New Salem of many worthy and good families, and of its most public spirited citizens."

In the summer of 1804, Messrs Joseph Houlton, Aaron Putnam and Oliver Taylor, left New Salem for the Province of Maine — came by land to Bangor, where they hired an Indian with his canoe to convey them to the river St. John. They proceeded up the Penobscot

the Baskahegan stream to the portage at the Schoodic Lake, where the Indian proposed to them that he would describe the way, so they might proceed on their journey without him. Mr. Houlton, having passed the same route before, thought, from the knowledge he had of the lake, that he could pilot them. The Indian returned and they went on, crossing the lake, but they became bewildered, lost their course, and landed on the east shore, where they rambled off into the wilderness, got lost and were for days without food. They came to a brook, where there were fish, but the desideratum was to catch them. With Yankee ingenuity and invention, impelled by the keen demands of starvation, they took a shirt, tied up the neck and armholes, bent a stick in the form of a hoop, which they fastened to the other end of the linen, in the fashion of a dip-net, with which they contrived to outwit the fish, making captive of several trout and suckers, which helped to sustain life. They proceeded without guide or compass, wandering through swamps, climbing over windfalls, camping wherever night found them; exposed to the constant annoyance of the black-flies and mosquitoes; thus wandering in a trackless wild, with naught to rouse them from their dreary solitude, save the discordant croakings of the crow and raven, or the tremulous halloo of the loon and the screeching of the mimic owl, what must have been their emotions at the first discovery of the footprints of civilization, when they finally reached the bank of the St. John, 35 miles below Woodstock. They came to a cottage, the residence of Mr. Harper, and called for food. The good woman, beholding their sad condition — garments torn, limbs scratched and bruised from the snags and bushes, their pale, emaciated features, directly prepared some fresh salmon in a manner as simple and harmless as possible, of which she gave them sparingly, lest they should eat too freely; her husband being absent. Having tarried there until they became restored by the benevolent and judicious treatment of the kind hostess, they asked for their bill of expense. To which she replied, "we never take pay from strangers". Mr. O. Taylor with his accustomed pleasantry, casting an inquiring look around, asked, "of whom, then, in the name of wonder, do you take pay?" With a mutual blessing and a friendly farewell they pursued their journey up the river to Woodstock, from whence they went to view what



ROY A. BITHER

should have been mentioned in the story about Ricker College and given the credit he so richly deserves for having been a member of the school's faculty for the past 31 years.



PERCY H. CAMPBELL

should have had his picture included in the story of Monument Lodge as first member ever to become Illustrious Potentate of Anah Temple Shrine and the only Mason north of Bangor to achieve that distinction.

## Houlton And Its Citizens Had Distinguished Record During World War Two

The Town of Houlton lived through and emerged from World War Two with a long list of laudable civilian achievements as well as a distinguished record of military service established by the many hundreds of men and women from the town who served in the various branches of the Army, Navy and Airforce.

The presence of an Airbase in the community served to bring the war more closely to the people and perhaps may have stimulated to some extent the patriotic responses to the various drives and campaigns that were constantly being carried on.

But regardless of the officers and enlisted men who were everywhere about the community, the town would not have done less than was expected of it in this war any more than it had failed to measure up to its duty in previous wars.

### ATMOSPHERE OF WAR

Although war was actually not declared against Japan until the day after the infamous and unprovoked attack on Pearl Har-

and Holland to the German border. Their first task was to occupy St. Lo.

### CIVILIAN POPULACE BUSY

Meanwhile, back home, the civilian populace was eagerly busy at the many war tasks and responsibilities.

The first negotiations in regard to the Airport that had the sound of advanced military preparedness came, significantly enough, on July 4, 1941 when the town council voted to sell the airport to the U. S. government for \$1. And in that some month the Chester L. Briggs Post, American Legion inaugurated the first airplane observation post.

Activities at the airport began gradually to be stepped up with the project of a ferry command post being uppermost as a consideration for its ultimate use. August 14 the Pioneer Times carried a headline which stated that the government was to develop the local airport and reported the proposed expenditure of \$2,418,000 to be spent to enlarge the area and construct buildings.

- S/SGT. HERSCHEL PARKS Belgium January 3, 1945
- PVT. EVERETT YOUNG Germany March 1945
- SGT. LAWRENCE G. ROONEY Germany September 13, 1944
- PVT. WILLIAM H. IVEY Italy May 27, 1944
- F/SGT. W. J. DICKINSON Germany June 29, 1942
- PFC. ARTHUR A. PRINGLE Germany January 15, 1945
- PFC. LAWRENCE A. TILLEY USA December 15, 1942
- LIEUT. FRANCIS C. McCANN France September 28, 1944
- PVT. KENNETH S. GARDINER France August 8, 1944
- PVT. WILLIAM N. BURKE Germany April 2, 1945
- PFC. LEWIS A. ADDINGTON Luzon January 15, 1945
- LIEUT. HAROLD E. HOSKINS Alaska December 21, 1943
- LIEUT. MAURICE E. FRIEL Germany March 17, 1945
- LIEUT. EUGENE V. WILLIAMS France August 1, 1944
- CPL. MERLE H. TIDD China July 30, 1945
- PVT. C. LEIGH PEABODY France October 19, 1944
- SGT. RUSSELL STEVENS England January 5, 1944
- PVT. RALPH McDONALD France June 12, 1944
- JOHN E. McLEAN South Pacific July 20, 1943
- CAPT. LEWIS E. HOWARD France August 17, 1943
- CAPT. GEORGE H. EBBETT Massachusetts July 26, 1945
- PFC. WALDO E. STEVENS Marat Island October 26, 1944
- PERLEY MASON Panama March 29, 1943

## WORLD WAR II HONOR ROLL

This is the list of the sons and daughters of Houlton who made the supreme sacrifice in World War Two, as taken from the crosses erected in Evergreen Cemetery by the Chester L. Briggs Post, American Legion.

- SGT. CLEVE C. RUSH England January 5, 1944
- LIEUT. WILLIAM B. STANTIAL Germany November 26, 1943
- PFC. ROBERT A. TURNER Iwo Jima March 3, 1945
- ELWOOD C. SHANNON North Africa March 28, 1945
- CPL. WESLEY CARPENTER Italy October 13, 1944
- THEODORE LANDRY PVT. DONAT E. BARD France November 2, 1945
- PFC. ARTHUR W. McBRIDE Saipan July 4, 1944
- JAMES BRIGGS South Pacific August 4, 1942
- S/SGT. ROBERT RUTH France July 29, 1944
- SGT. EDDIE M. LAKE Germany April 8, 1945
- PVT. ARTHUR E. ALLEN France September 28, 1944
- EDWIN L. PALMER South Pacific August 5, 1945
- PFC. JAMES W. HANEY USA May 10, 1945
- COXSWAIN CARL GARDNER Leyte Gulf October 30, 1945

- PFC. ROBERT E. SPELLMAN France June 9, 1944
- S/SGT. QUENTIN G. PIKE Italy March 18, 1944
- PVT. WENDELL STACKHOUSE Holland September 17, 1944
- SGT. LYLE D. WIGGINS Italy February 20, 1945
- PVT. LINWOOD CAMPBELL Italy April 15, 1944
- PFC. JACK L. SHIELDS New Britton March 6, 1944
- CPL. BERNARD E. GRANT Luzon March 2, 1945
- S/SGT. DONALD JARVIS Biak Island August 30, 1944
- PVT. FRANK P. BEAN Germany April 9, 1945
- S/SGT. CECIL H. FOSTER Luzon January 10, 1945
- THEODORE S. HATFIELD USA February 22, 1944
- PFC. FLOYD A. SPOONER Luzon August 12, 1945
- PVT. MILO HUGHES CPL. CARL G. HOVEY North Africa January 28, 1942
- PVT. ELMER CURRIER New Guinea July 1, 1943
- S/SGT. JAMES CHASE Italy October 3, 1944
- S/2C IRVING R. DWYER China October 20, 1944
- SGT. HENRY BORDEWICK RCAF Houlton December 5, 1942
- P/O GEORGE N. HARRISON RNZAF December 5, 1942
- PFC. THOMAS A. McNUTT Marine Air Corp. March 3, 1945
- PVT. BARBARA JEAN HOGAN WAC September 1, 1945
- S1 GLENWOOD I. NASON USNR July 18, 1946
- ALBERT C. LOGAN USA November 19, 1946

### SCRAP CAMPAIGNS

Scrap campaigns of various kinds were being carried on all the time but in October, 1942 came the greatest one of all resulting in the collection of 535 tons of scrap metal from every conceivable source . . . even the Civil War cannon from Monument park.

Through all of this vigorous behind the lines help from the people, there was periodic sadness as those fateful telegrams reporting killed or missing Houlton soldiers were received by parents.

### BOYS IN ACTION

In the meantime the boys of our local military company were finding their way into action. In August, 1944, they were in a position north of Evreux and from there pushed their way across the Seine at Mentes. September 19 the 203rd landed and began

continuation of the offensive to the Ruhr river brought the battle to the river bank on November 22, 1944, where the 203rd was attached to the 119th F. A. group on December 14. There it remained for the rest of the war in Europe.

At home the merry-go-round continued. Nation wide gas rationing had gone into effect December 1 despite a storm of protest, food production became vital and President Roosevelt and Secretary of Agriculture Wickard urged farmers to step up their acreage to get more food. In Maine, where an increase of eight percent was sought there was considerable concern as to the availability of sufficient machinery or fertilizer. And so it went to the very end of the hostilities. Houlton people never failed to accept a challenge and never missed a

raid wardens were organized, the town was divided into 12 sections and an observation post was built on the B road on a high spot having an unobstructed view of several miles in any direction. It was sponsored by the Elks, built through the cooperation of several firms and individuals and was to be manned by Elks. Norville Reid was chief warden.

### AUXILIARY UNITS

Sgt. Herron started an auxiliary police unit and a motor corps was organized by Miss Madeline Stephenson. A women's division of civilian defense had been organized and Mrs. Bernard E. Esters was made chairman.

A prompt response came to an appeal to set up recreation facilities at the Airbase and soon a well equipped room was made available. Late in January a more serious effort to meet the recrea-

a letter from our venerable  
id, the Rev. Alpheus Harding  
New Salem, Mass., in reply to  
quest recently made for infor-

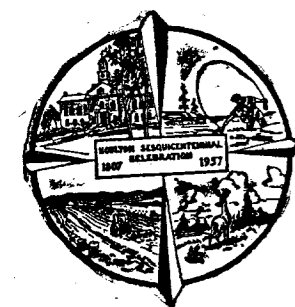
hired an Indian with his canoe  
convey them to the river St. John.  
They proceeded up the Penobscot  
to the Mattawamkeag, thence up

# CONGRATULATIONS HOULTON . . . on this your 150th BIRTHDAY

. . . and to the  
HOULTON PIONEER TIMES  
for 100 YEARS SERVICE  
in AROOSTOOK COUNTY  
. . . a JOB WELL DONE



**CHADWICK**  
THE FLORIST  
Sylvio Raymond - Prop.  
23 SPRING ST.  
HOULTON



GREETINGS  
to HOULTON  
on this their  
150th  
BIRTHDAY

. . . and to the HOULTON  
PIONEER TIMES on your  
100 YEARS of SERVICE in  
AROOSTOOK COUNTY . . .

**WILSON'S MARKET**

21 South Street

Houlton

farewell they pursued their journey  
up the river to Woodstock, from  
whence they went to view what  
they called the promised land.

After taking a survey of this sec-  
tion of the country, having had a  
mid-summer view of their antici-  
pated home, Messrs A. Putnam and  
Taylor were much pleased with  
the land and prospects, as were  
their predecessors; and confirmed  
the favorable report of the first  
discoverers; probably not aware of  
the short summers and long cold  
winters, of this high latitude, not  
foreseeing the destiny which await-  
ed those pioneers who, for years  
were isolated in the heart of this,  
then, wild region. But it appears to  
have been the design of the Cre-  
ator, that this wilderness should,  
ere long, be converted to the use  
and benefit of man; that the giant  
growth of this beautiful land was  
to yield to the axe of the woods-  
man, and this desert become a  
fruitful field, which we humbly  
trust will soon be verified, in the  
moral and spiritual sense as well  
as the temporal.

In the summer of 1805, Mr.  
Aaron Putnam and family, accom-  
panied by Varney Pearce, Jr., Sam-  
uel Houlton and Luther Tryon, left  
New Salem for the eastward, as it  
was then called. They came on  
board a vessel from Boston to  
Fredericton, from thence in boats  
to Woodstock, 60 miles above Fred-  
ericton. Mr. Putnam and family re-  
mained at Woodstock, while the  
young men proceeded to what is  
now Houlton, and felled the first  
trees in place. The circumstances  
connected with the settling of this  
new colony were indeed novel.  
What could have induced the in-  
habitants of New Salem to pur-  
chase wild land in the interior of  
the District of Maine, at a sacrifice  
of the privileges and enjoyment of  
churches, schools and society, and  
embark on such an enterprise —  
to encounter the privations, perils  
and hardships of establishing a  
petty colony in this region of frost  
and snow, in a latitude of more  
than 40 degrees, appears to be a  
problem of mysterious solution.

Capt. Joseph Houlton, wife and  
eight children, viz: James, Samuel,  
Joseph and Henry, sons, and Sarah,  
Polly, Lydia and Louise, daughters,  
left New Salem for Houlton Plan-  
tation, as it was then styled, in  
the summer of 1807, and arrived at  
Woodstock, after a safe and speedy  
passage from Boston.

Leaving the daughters at Wood-  
stock the others, assisted by kind  
friends, cut a bride path to Houl-  
ton, the matron following on horse-  
back, with her china tea-set care-  
fully packed in a basket, hanging

not declared against Japan until  
the day after the infamous and  
unprovoked attack on Pearl Har-  
bor the atmosphere of warfare  
had been present in this commu-  
nity for many months prior to that  
date. It did not require Japanese  
treachery to cause this nation to  
get itself in readiness for what-  
ever might come.

Ten months before December  
8, on February 24, 1941, Head-  
quarters Battery, First Battalion,  
152nd Field Artillery had been  
called up for intensive training as  
a part of the government's step-  
ped up program of national de-  
fense. Under the command of  
Capt. Laurence Peabody and 1st  
Lieut. Ray Astle, the contingent  
of 78 men left by special train for  
Camp Blanding, Fla. They were  
given a rousing send-off reminis-  
cent of World War One as 1500  
people gathered to wish them  
God-speed.

### DRAFT LAW IN EFFECT

Prior to that time the univers-  
al draft law had been put into ef-  
fect and since 1940 a steady pro-  
cession of contingents had moved  
into regular army service.

The first destination of the  
152nd was Camp Blanding, Fla.,  
where they became a part of the  
203rd Field Artillery Battalion  
which was mustered into federal  
service soon after the sneak at-  
tack on Pearl Harbor. The Houl-  
ton Company joined its new regi-  
ment at Camp Shelby, Miss. Then  
it went to Fort Bragg where it  
was assigned to the 15th Field  
Artillery Brigade. This battalion  
was reorganized March 1, 1943  
and saw a second year of duty at  
Fort Bragg with the maneuvers  
of the Second Army and also  
trained for desert warfare in Cali-  
fornia.

The 203rd, under the command  
of Lt. Col. John G. Doran sailed  
for England on HMS Pasteur on  
February 10, 1944 and disemb-  
arked at Liverpool. Soon after  
they had crossed the channel and  
hit the firing line July 17, 1944.  
The battalion was later reported  
to have rejoined the 228th group  
commanded then by Col. Doran  
and crossed into France, Belgium

on her arm, supported by a pillow  
— a very necessary appendage to  
their outfit — for after the fatigue  
of so long a ride, wending their  
way on a zigzag line, they would  
require something from that cup  
which "cheers but not intoxicates".  
They came to a thicket of cedar,  
where they left the horses and be-  
came pedestrians the last two  
miles to the promised land.

\$2,418,000 to be spent to enlarge  
the area and construct buildings.  
The following week contracts  
were let for two hangars at a cost  
of \$59,000, plans were advanced  
to pave the runways under the  
direction of the Army Engineer  
Corps, of Boston.

### ENGINEERS ARRIVE

Engineers began to arrive here  
late that month and the develop-  
ment of the Houlton Airport real-  
ly got underway at that time.  
Men and machinery moved in,  
Washington announced an in-  
crease of \$369,394 in the alloca-  
tion for facilities. The possible  
impact of workers on the com-  
munity was recognized by the  
Chamber of Commerce and a  
housing survey was conducted to  
get a list of all available rooms.

It was on November 20 that the  
first military men appeared in  
town with the arrival of Maj. Al-  
bert Holburn and Lt. Vincent E.  
Poppelmeier. They were just in  
time. It was only a few weeks  
later on that fateful December 7  
that the stupid Japs moved in.  
The war that everyone knew was  
coming finally became official.  
The next day war was declared on  
Japan and a few days later we  
also took on Germany and Italy.  
Things then began to move  
with speed. Early in January air

ade. Late in January  
serious effort to meet the recrea-  
tion problem came with the arriv-  
al of John Gill, USO representa-  
tive from Boston, to complete ar-  
rangements for the establishment  
of a USO post here to assist in the  
recreation and entertainment of  
the soldiers stationed at the base  
here. Headquarters were set up  
on the third floor of the Almon  
H. Fogg block.

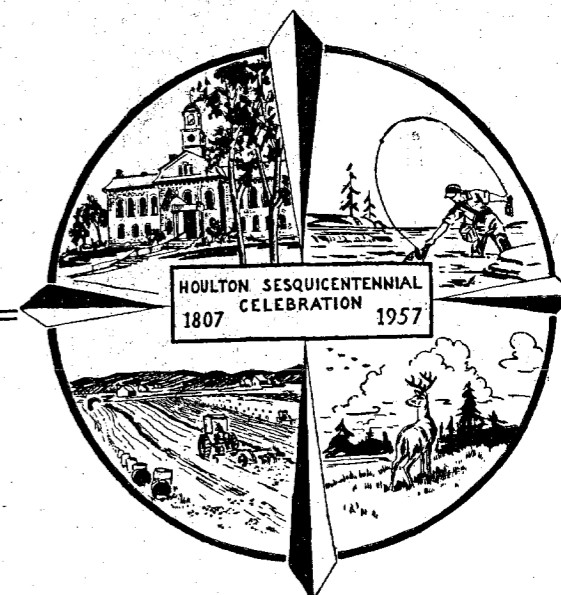
### RATIONING STARTS

This year was not a quarter  
gone before sugar rationing and  
stamp books appeared on the  
scene. The public school teachers  
handled the registration at the  
high school building early in May.

In May Col. James Ellison as-  
sumed command at the Airbase  
and immediately took an active  
interest in and part in town af-  
airs. He was a speaker on many  
occasions during the year and a  
half of his stay here and it was  
with regret that news was learned  
of his transfer.

Automobile tires and tubes  
went on the ration list at about  
this time, the draft went relent-  
lessly on and periodic black out  
tests became routine. There was  
the NYA center, the community  
canning center. No Gas signs were  
hung on many pumps as the  
rationing program went into ef-  
fect.

Seine at Menten. September 19 the  
203rd landed and began an at-  
tack on the Seigfried line. The  
and never missed a goal of an ob-  
jective.



# CONGRATULATIONS HOULTON . . . on this your 150th BIRTHDAY

. . . and to the  
HOULTON PIONEER TIMES  
on your 100 YEARS of  
SERVICE in AROOSTOOK  
COUNTY . . .

**FITZPATRICK BROTHERS**

*Bottlers of the Famous*

"FITZ" BEVERAGES

Woodstock Road

Houlton

# CONGRATULATIONS HOULTON on this your 150th BIRTHDAY . . .

. . . and to the HOULTON PIONEER TIMES on  
your 100 years of service in  
Aroostook County



**DICKISON'S MARKET**  
COURT STREET, HOULTON