

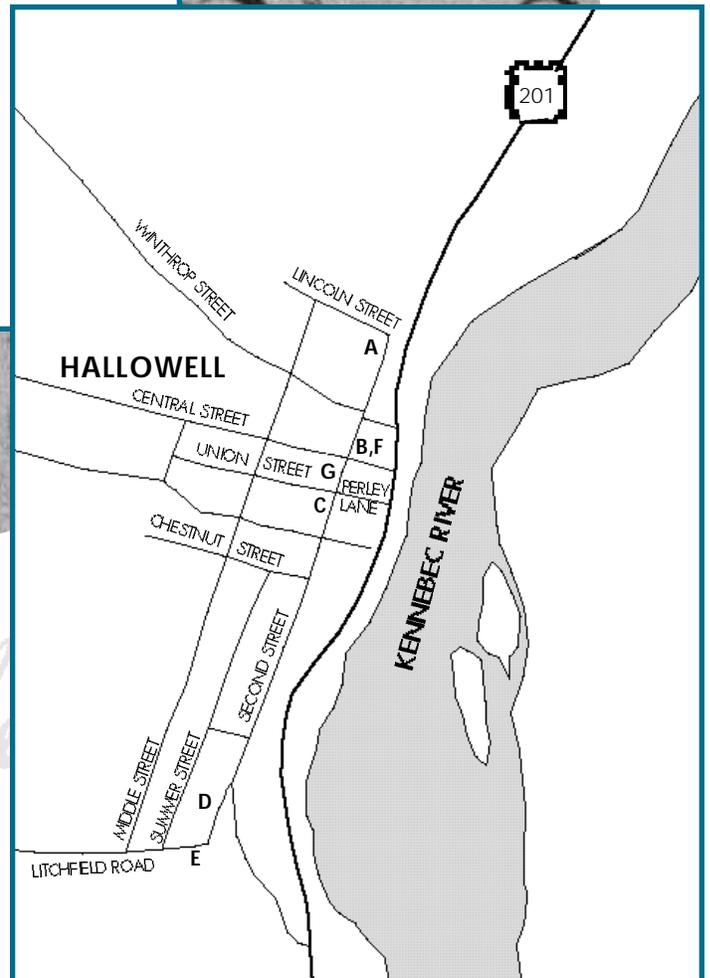
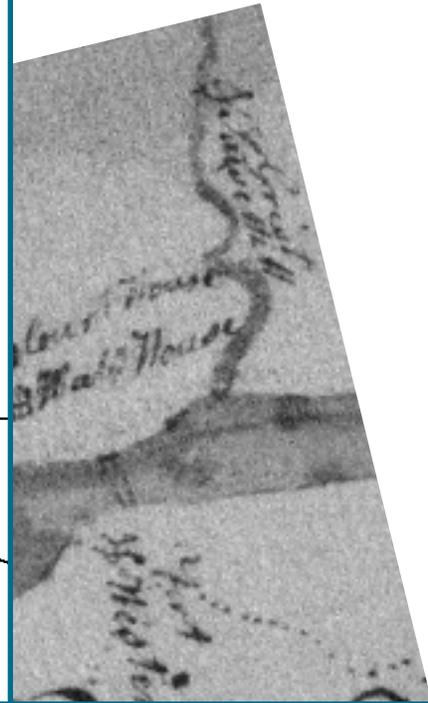
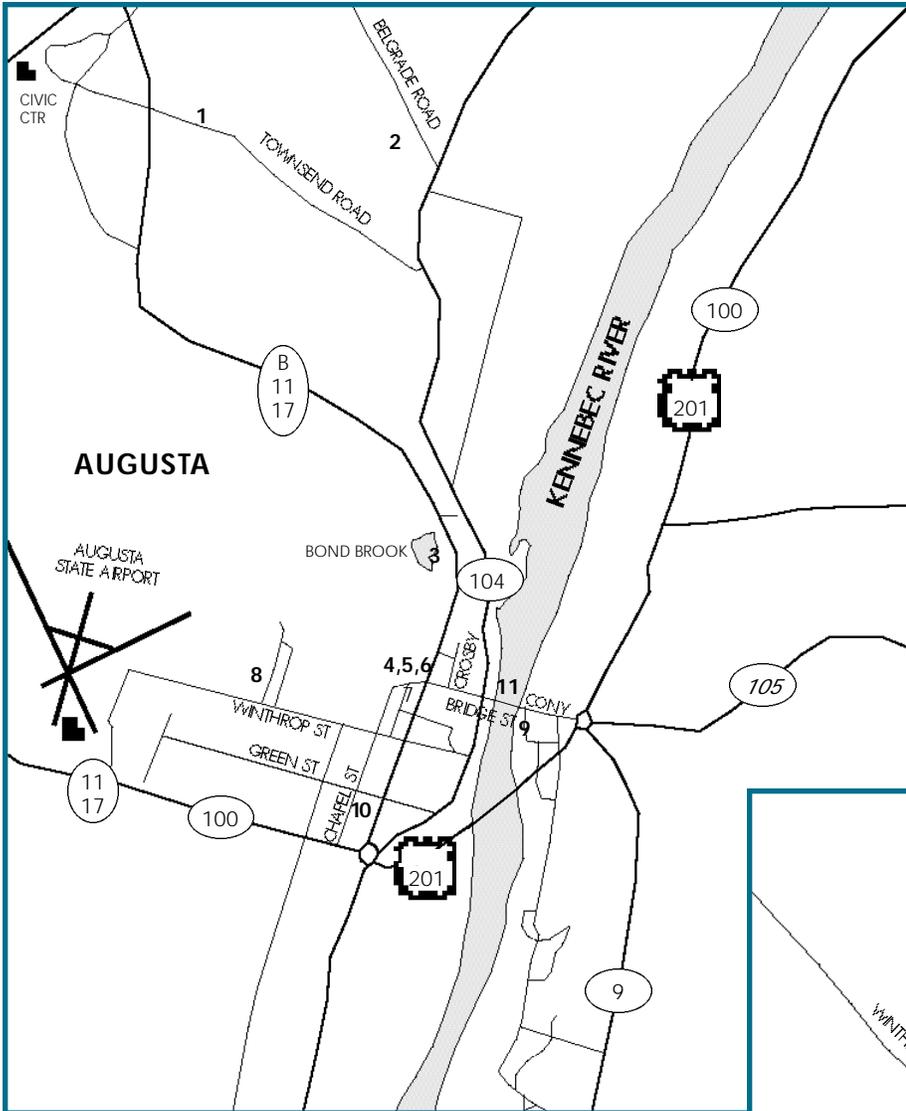
THE MAINE OF
 MARTHA BALLARD
A self guided tour

of buildings and
 other features
 of the landscape
 from the period
 of Martha Ballard's
 residence in Hallowell
 and Augusta,
 from 1777 to 1812.



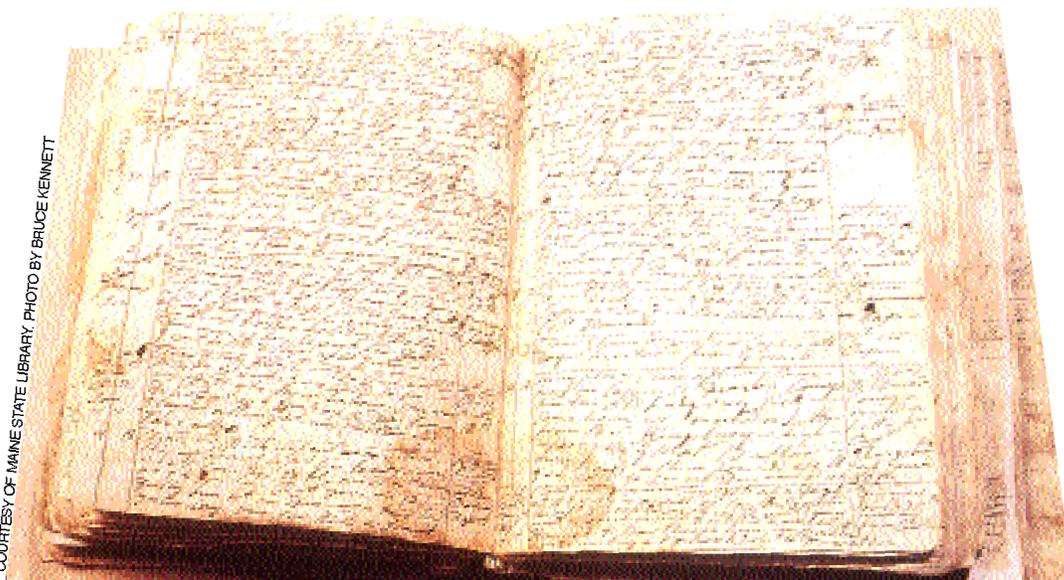
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A Midwife's Tale

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THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, THE EARLY REPUBLIC, AND MAINE

The period of Martha Ballard's diary, 1785 to 1812, spans the eventful and turbulent growth of the new nation born out of the American Revolution. Americans were celebrating their freedom while attempting to build a new nation and new communities. The creation and ratification of the Constitution in the late 1780s established enough political stability to encourage Americans to expand their farming, trade, and manufacturing. Settlers flooded into wilderness lands west of the Appalachians and east of New Hampshire. Maine's population more than quadrupled from 56,321 people in 1784 to 228,910 by the census of 1810, roughly the same span as Martha Ballard's diary.

In the new century, intense competition for power—economic, social, spiritual, and political—strained relationships in new and old parts of Maine. Settlers carving out farms on backcountry lands resisted the efforts of large absentee landowners to assert their enormous territorial claims. Members of newer religious orders – the Baptists and the Methodists – sought the same rights and legitimacy as the established Congregationalists. And for decades, popular leaders struggled to attain support for Maine's independence from Massachusetts until Maine achieved statehood at last in 1820.

HALLOWELL AND AUGUSTA

From the earliest periods of English settlement in New England, the lands along the Kennebec River had attracted the interest of settlers and land speculators. The 1607 Popham Colony lasted less than a year at the mouth of the Kennebec, but the 1620s and 1630s

saw a renewed interest in settlement. Most activity was on the lower Kennebec, with only a handful of fur trading posts occupying the valley north of Merrymeeting Bay. Cushnoc was the earliest of these posts, built by the Plymouth Colony in the late 1620s near the site later occupied by Fort Western. In the later seventeenth century, the English abandoned the region during a series of conflicts with the local Native American groups; settlers cautiously returned to only the lowest part of the river in the 1710s and 1720s.

The construction of Fort Western in 1754 and the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 produced a more stable environment for settlement along the Kennebec. Settlers gradually moved into the Hallowell area and became numerous enough to petition the Massachusetts General Court for the right to incorporate into a town, which was achieved in 1771. The boundaries of the new town included all of present day **Hallowell, Augusta, Chelsea, and parts of Manchester and Farmingdale**. Martha Ballard and her husband Ephraim moved permanently to Hallowell in 1777 (the onset of war had frustrated Ephraim Ballard's earlier attempts to settle in Maine) from Oxford, Massachusetts, a move typical of the third quarter of the 18th century when land in the more settled areas of eastern Massachusetts became less available.

The Hook and the Fort

Hallowell's advantageous location on the Kennebec River made it a center of trade and shipping during the 1790s, as well as major port of entry for settlers bound for interior, central Maine. Area farmers, lumberers, merchants, and shipbuilders all prospered, thanks to the demand for their goods and services abroad created by the opening of new markets outside the British Empire, and by war and insta-

Note: All of the homes on this self-guided tour are privately owned and are not open to the public. Please respect the privacy of the owners as you enjoy the tour.

bility in Europe. Trade and shipbuilding characterized economic activity in “the Hook,” area of Hallowell, while lumber was the basis for the most substantial industry upriver at “the Fort.” Most of the private homes on this tour were built in this turn-of-the-century era.

A strong rivalry developed between Hallowell’s two distinct villages, “the Hook” (area of present day Hallowell) and “the Fort” (area of present day Augusta). By 1796, commercial competition, swelling civic pride, and physical separation of the two centers finally came to a head in a dispute over the best location for a Kennebec River bridge. Backers of a Fort location won the ensuing legislative battle, and the Massachusetts General Court (Maine was still part of Massachusetts) designated the Fort as the site for the bridge. Not content with their bridge victory, inhabitants of the Fort area agitated for separation from Hallowell. In 1797, the Massachusetts General Court officially separated the Fort from the Hook, with approximately two-thirds of the land and half of the population of the original Hallowell forming the new town of Augusta.

Land Claim Disputes

Although both towns continued to prosper economically for the next ten years, a powerful controversy of a different sort troubled the region. Many settlers had occupied land in locations so remote they lacked accurate surveys or viable authority. The Kennebec Proprietors, owners of extensive wilderness lands, commenced the process of securing their claims. Local farmers dressed in Native American costume resisted these efforts, and harassed and intimidated surveyors, sheriffs, and deputies. The Augusta jail, a symbol of authority, mysteriously burned in 1808. Martha Ballard’s own nephew, Elijah Barton, was implicated in the murder of a surveyor’s assistant by a group of settlers dressed in Native American costume.

Embargo and War

Meanwhile, the events leading to the War of 1812 also gripped Hallowell and Augusta. The economic sanctions designed to punish England and France in fact stifled the prosperity the United States had enjoyed during the previous fifteen years, especially in export and shipping-dependent New England. Hallowell and Augusta farmers, merchants, and shipbuilders suffered dramatic setbacks. As nineteenth century Augusta historian James W. North writes,

The streams of prosperity were dried at their source, and in the general depression which followed Augusta had her full measure of distress; her wheels of industry in a measure stopped, her navigation dwindled, and her trade nearly ceased; and for many years her prosperity and growth were greatly retarded.

Widespread trade with the enemy during the War of 1812 would be an important means of economic survival. Martha Ballard’s diary closes prior to the onset of this conflict.

MARTHA BALLARD

Martha Ballard moved from Oxford, Massachusetts to Hallowell in 1777, at the height of the Revolutionary War with England. She and her husband Ephraim farmed leased land, an arrangement typical of the era. Starting in 1778, they lived on a farm owned by John Jones in an area near the confluence of the Bond Brook and Kennebec River. On April 21, 1791, they moved to a farm owned by Samuel Howard near what would become the Hallowell/Augusta town line. This put Martha Ballard in a central location during the most productive years of her midwife practice. From the end of 1799 to her death in 1812, she lived on her son Jonathan’s farm north of the town’s center, at the fork between the roads leading to Belgrade and Sidney. In her practice as a midwife, but also in her daily activities, Martha Ballard traveled the length and breadth of today’s Hallowell and Augusta in all seasons, attending births, caring for the ill, exchanging goods, and sharing news, fellowship, and misfortune.

As historian Laurel Ulrich writes in *A Midwife’s Tale*, Martha Ballard’s diary reveals the immense scope of the “unseen acts of women.” Physical evidence does not speak to the comfort given to a grieving mother, to the small exchange of yarn or potatoes, or to simply stopping by a neighbor’s home for a visit. Ulrich writes that the diary “by restoring a lost substructure of eighteenth century life, transforms the nature of the evidence upon which much of the history of the period has been written.” The *physical* evidence of Martha Ballard’s Hallowell and Augusta, which constitutes the subject of this self-guided tour, differs very much from the documentary evidence of the diary. The physical evidence, with the exception of the river, tends to reflect the activities of prominent men of the period—property ownership, business activity, town or state politics, or competition for social status—rather than the essence of Martha Ballard’s life.

KENNEBEC RIVER

The Kennebec River is as central to Augusta and Hallowell as it is to Martha Ballard’s diary. There are three public access sites for close-up views of the river. In Hallowell, the public boat landing just south of downtown allows for an unobstructed view. Parking is available on Water Street next to the landing. In Augusta, there are good views of the river from both the west and east banks. The Augusta Waterfront Park in downtown Augusta, located at the bottom of Winthrop Street behind the Old Post Office, has ample parking and a short sidewalk along the river’s edge. Across the river on the east bank, the Augusta city boat landing is located on Howard Street (from Cony Street, turn right on Arsenal Street just past Fort Western, right on Williams Street behind the Augusta City Hall, left on Howard) and also affords a good view of the river, as does the lawn of nearby of Fort Western.



A. Dr. Benjamin Page House

A. Dr. Benjamin Page House (located at southwest corner of Second Street and Lincoln Street facing out over the river)

One of the important themes of Ulrich's *A Midwife's Tale* is the emerging conflict between the traditional medicine practiced by Martha Ballard, and the scientific medicine practiced by male doctors who relied on more academic training. Benjamin Page, who began to practice medicine in Hallowell in 1791 at age twenty-four, embodied the issue. Two entries from Martha Ballard's diary obliquely capture the tensions between the well-versed midwife and the young doctor:

June 14, 1798: The wife of James Bridge was delivered this morn at 1 hour of a son. It was Born dead and is to be interred this Evening. Dr. Page was operator. Poor unfortunate man in the practice.

July 15, 1798: A patient in the hands of Doctor Page . . . he gave the case up to me and she was (after I removed obstructions) safe delivered.

Page had begun to have an impact on the midwife's role by taking over the actual delivery, even under routine circumstances.

Laurel Ulrich suggests that Page may have assumed responsibility for all deliveries in Hallowell after 1812. A biographical memoir of Page states that he attended three thousand births during his career. The reliability of the memoir is suspect, however, because it also states that he never lost an infant.

B. Nathaniel Dummer House (gray house on Dummer's Lane which runs parallel to Central Street between Water and Second)

Nathaniel Dummer held several prominent roles in the civic life of Hallowell. Having settled there in 1789, he served as the town's first postmaster from 1794 to 1802. As a judge on the Court of Common Pleas in Kennebec County, in 1794 he presided over a paternity case involving

one of Martha Ballard's patients. Such suits often relied upon the record of midwives who confirmed the identity of fathers by taking testimony from mothers at the height of their labor. Martha Ballard's diary also states that Ephraim Ballard attended the raising of Nathaniel Dummer's house on June 19, 1792.

C. Joshua Wingate House (located at southwest corner of Second Street and Union Street, facing Union)

The Wingate House provides another example of a surviving home of one of Hallowell's early prominent citizens. Wingate settled in Hallowell in 1794 and pursued a career as a merchant. He succeeded Nathaniel Dummer as postmaster of the town. Emma Nason, in her history *Old Hallowell on the Kennebec*, describes Wingate as follows:

He lived to the remarkable age of ninety-seven years. He was always a conspicuous figure on the streets, as, up to the time of his death in 1844, he maintained the fashion of his early manhood, and wore small clothes and knee buckles. He was universally respected for his industry, integrity, and a faithful discharge of all social and Christian duties.

Martha Ballard makes one brief mention of him in her diary.

D. Reverend Eliphalet Gillet House (201 Second Street, white house with black shutters)

Emma Nason, early 20th century historian of Hallowell, provides the following description of Reverend Gillet: "His authority was unquestioned, and the dignity of his position was unassailed." His orderly house, which Martha Ballard notes in her diary was raised on July 26, 1799, testifies to his position as the minister of the town's established Congregational Church. Martha Ballard also recorded the start of Gillet's career in Hallowell in 1795, attending his discourse in April and his ordination in August. Later on during his 32 year career as Hallowell's minister, Gillet would found the Maine Missionary Society.



B. Nathaniel Dummer House

E. Dr. Benjamin Vaughan House (intersection of Second Street and Litchfield Road, set back from the street)

The biographies of men such as Benjamin Vaughan once constituted the histories of towns such as Hallowell. Born in Jamaica of a wealthy, English merchant family, Vaughan distinguished himself early in his career by contributing to the negotiation of the Treaty of Paris between the United States and England in 1783. He moved to Hallowell in 1797 with his wife and family after his English political career had foundered because rivals viewed him as sympathetic to the French Revolution. Supported by a substantial fortune, the Vaughan family arrived to a new home built by Benjamin's brother, Charles, on land inherited by their mother. Vaughan retired to the banks of the Kennebec to enjoy a pleasantly secluded life of scholarly contemplation, correspondence with other prominent men, and society.

Laurel Ulrich believes it unlikely that Martha Ballard had any contact with Benjamin Vaughan, although Ephraim Ballard may have conducted surveys for him or his brother. Vaughan advised Benjamin Page on medical matters, especially the value of bloodletting, and contributed to the development of area agriculture through experiments in his own extensive gardens.



C. Joshua Wingate House

2. Ballard House (located at 268 Old Belgrade Road, white house with green shutters set back from the road, just north of "Y" formed by the Sydney Road)

As Martha Ballard entered the last decade of her life, she and Ephraim moved to a home on her son Jonathan's farm located at the "Y" formed by the roads to Belgrade and to Sidney. Laurel Ulrich describes this period of Martha Ballard's life as a difficult one. She and Ephraim were "living in semi-dependence on their son's land."

Martha shared a house with the temperamental Jonathan and his wife, struggled through the term of Ephraim's imprisonment for debt, and suffered from declining health. These circumstances challenged Martha Ballard at a time when her endurance was no longer the same as that of the indefatigable midwife of a few years earlier. Still, she retained much of the community respect which her long experience commanded, and found some reward in the cultivation of

her garden.

Historical evidence, including deeds and Martha Ballard's diary, does not definitively confirm that Jonathan Ballard built this house. It stands on property which was once part of the Ballard farm, and Martha Ballard's diary states that Jonathan Ballard raised the frame for a new home in the vicinity of the "Y." Researchers have not been able to reconcile discrepancies in the two records, however, in order to positively confirm the original builder of the house.

AUGUSTA PERIOD HOMES AND SITES

1. Townsend Road Cemetery (access from the parking lot of Staples office supply store)

The papers of Augusta historian Charles Elventon Nash describe a Ballard family burial ground near the fork in the Belgrade Road where Jonathan Ballard had established his farm at the turn of the 18th century. According to Nash, Jonathan Ballard's infant son, Samuel Adams Ballard, was buried there in 1800, followed by Martha Ballard in 1812, Ephraim Ballard in 1821, DeLafayette Ballard, her grandson, in 1833, Jonathan Ballard in 1838, and other members of the Ballard family. In 1850, the remaining headstones and some of the remains were moved to the Townsend Road Cemetery by the new owners of the farm in order to return the land to production. DeLafayette Ballard's headstone and others are still quite legible, but the actual location of Martha Ballard's grave is unknown.

3. John Jones mill site at Bond Brook (the brook runs parallel to Mt. Vernon Ave. on the south; look for a sharp bend in the brook shortly before Mt. Vernon intersects with State Street)

Martha and Ephraim Ballard rented their first long-term home in what was then Hallowell from John Jones, near the confluence of what was known as Bowman's Brook (now Bond Brook) and the Kennebec River. They lived there from 1778 to 1791. Martha Ballard's diary frequently mentions the mills, both saw and grist, that Ephraim Ballard and his son operated for Jones there.

The original mills burned on August 6th, 1787, also the eighteenth birthday of Hannah Ballard, Martha's oldest daughter. Martha Ballard's unusual mention of Hannah's birthday in her diary entry for that day proved to be an important clue for historian Laurel Ulrich. A scarlet fever epidemic plagued Hallowell that summer. Ulrich suggests that it reminded Martha Ballard of the diphtheria epidemic 18 years earlier in Oxford, Massachusetts when she lost three daughters while she was pregnant with Hannah.

4-6. 4. John Hartwell House (37 State Street, at north-east corner of State and Crosby, a white house with black shutters); 5. George Crosby House (22 Crosby Lane next to Hartwell House, white house with blue doors); 6. William Robinson House (Crosby Street Place, u-shaped white house with black shutters)

Three prominent Augusta men built their homes in the economically prosperous period after the signing of the Constitution and before the events leading to the War of 1812. John Hartwell was the son of one the Ballard's neighbors who lived near Jonathan Ballard's farm. According to Martha Ballard's December 31, 1805 diary entry, John Hartwell's father started a school in one of Jonathan Ballard's former homes.

Mrs. Hartwell, John Hartwell's mother, brought the news of the Purrinton murders to Martha and Ephraim on July 9th, 1806. George Crosby and William Robinson were business partners as well as brothers-in-law. Crosby, an inventor and merchant, built his home overlooking his riverfront store where he sold liquors by the cask, tea, and imported English goods.

Robinson's home, built in 1801, overlooked Augusta's center of trade and shipping where the partners built a new store and wharf in 1806. According to historian James North, the War of 1812 "proved disastrous" to the two. However, their homes perched on a hill overlooking Augusta's business center testify to the strong stake of Augusta's leading citizens in the success of their town.

7. Hamlen House [also known as the Malta House (ell of 62 State Street)]

The long-running conflict between settlers and proprietors in the Kennebec Valley escalated in the years 1808 and 1809. Taken as a whole, the resistance of the settlers and the measures taken by the proprietors and town leaders against them are frequently known as the "Malta War." During the conflict, the Augusta jail burned from unexplained causes in March, 1808. According to early Augusta historian James North, the displaced prisoners "were mustered under guard and taken to the house of Lot



5. George Crosby House

Hamlen."

Hamlen came to Augusta in 1795 and built the house in 1803. A painter and glazier, he also served as the town's surveyor of lumber. Martha Ballard delivered his niece, Hannah, in December 1793. Hannah was the daughter of Lot's oldest brother Theophilus, who happened to be one of Jonathan Ballard's frequent opponents in legal matters. These intertwined community relationships certainly suggest the "social web" which bound the inhabitants of Hallowell and Augusta together.

8. Burnt Hill Burying Ground (northwest corner of upper Winthrop Street and Granite Street)

In July, 1806, James Purrinton, a neighbor of the Ballards, murdered his wife and seven of his eight children before killing himself. Martha Ballard observed the murder scene and described it as "the most shocking scene that was Ever seen in this part of the world." The terrible murders shook the foundations of the entire community.

Mrs. Purrinton and her six children were buried in the northeast corner of the Burnt Hill Burying Ground on July 10, 1806. Their actual graves are unmarked. James Purrinton, as befitted the perpetrator of such a horrible act, was not buried in the cemetery but outside the walls near the intersection of Winthrop and High Streets. Martha Ballard attended the funeral and described the ceremony in her diary. Joseph and Hannah North gave the cemetery land to the town in 1802.



6. William Robinson House

9. Fort Western (16 Cony Street, east side of the Kennebec River, just over the Father

Curran Bridge)

Old Fort Western, built in 1754 and a National Historic Landmark, is New England's oldest surviving wooden fort. James Howard's Company garrisoned the fort and guarded the head of navigation on the Kennebec in the 1750s and 1760s. Benedict Arnold used the Fort as a staging point for his assault on Quebec during the American Revolution.

Howard purchased the fort after the American Revolution and opened a store in the old military main house. The store became a center of trade in the region, and the succeeding generations of Howards figured prominently in the development of Augusta. Martha Ballard frequently visited Fort Western to purchase goods, to deliver babies, and to care for the Howard family.



10. Benjamin Whitwell House

10. Benjamin Whitwell House (22-24 Green Street, white house with green shutters)

Benjamin Whitwell arrived in Augusta in 1796 to practice law after graduating from Harvard College in 1790 and studying law in Lancaster, Massachusetts. Whitwell appears to have established himself quickly: he was chosen to deliver an oration on the day of mourning for George Washington in 1800, an event Martha Ballard notes in her diary. Whitwell would later represent Augusta in the Massachusetts General Court in 1804 and serve as an agent of the Kennebec Proprietors at the height of the conflict with settlers over land titles in 1808. He also served on a town committee which drafted a letter to President Jefferson requesting the suspension of the 1807 Embargo Act (Jefferson replied to the letter, but was unpersuaded by the argument). Whitwell's house on Green Street, built in 1805, reflects nearly ten years of successful law practice and a prominent place in the community.

ly supplanted many of the traditional functions of midwives in the era after Martha Ballard. After managing the family farm and then graduating from Dartmouth College in 1816, John Hubbard, Jr. would go on to receive his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1822. He practiced medicine in Hallowell from 1830 to 1869. The Hubbard office, with its separate waiting and examining rooms, medical reference books, and spartan atmosphere, prefigures the modern medical office. A local historic preservation effort saved the office by moving it from John Hubbard, Jr.'s home on Winthrop Street to this site in 1988.

G. Hubbard Free Library (southwest corner of Second and Central Streets)

The Hubbard Free Library contains an original copy of the issue of the *American Advocate* which printed Martha Ballard's obituary in 1812. Further, according to a footnote in early twentieth century Augusta historian Charles Elventon Nash's *The History of Augusta*, Captain John Malloy's house stood on the lot now occupied by the library. Martha Ballard describes the delivery of Captain and Mrs. Malloy's daughter there on a stormy night in November, 1793. Martha Ballard noted that, once she had successfully delivered the baby, "we had an Elligant supper and I tarried all night."

OTHER LOCATIONS IN HALLOWELL AND AUGUSTA

F. Dr. Hubbard's office (small, one-story white building with black shutters located at northeast corner of Second Street and Central Street, primarily on Second)

Many doctors practiced in the Hallowell and Augusta areas during the same period as Martha Ballard's midwife practice. When Martha herself was ill in the fall of 1801, she called on Dr. John Hubbard, Sr. for help. Hubbard lived in neighboring Readfield, but he frequently attended patients in Hallowell and Augusta.

His son, Dr. John Hubbard, Jr., represented the new generation of academically trained physicians who gradual-

11. Father Curran Bridge (connects Bridge Street on the west bank of the Kennebec River with Cony Street on the east)

Today's Father Curran Bridge stands at the same location as the original 1797 Kennebec Bridge. The 1796 dispute between residents of "the Fort" and "the Hook" over the bridge's location was a primary cause of the separation of Augusta from Hallowell in 1797. Martha Ballard mentions the dedication of the bridge in her November 21, 1797 diary entry. She also notes that three men suffered burns from the careless discharge of weapons used to celebrate the event.



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Written by Charles Fischman. Mary McCarthy and Sam Webber contributed significant research on the sites in Augusta and Hallowell, respectively. Jay Adams, Emerson Baker, Victoria Bonebakker, Allison Hepler, Mary McCarthy, Nancy McGinnis, Dorothy Schwartz, Sam Webber, Marli Weiner and Deborah Zorach all provided helpful comments on earlier versions of this brochure.

This online version of “The Maine of Martha Ballard: A self guided tour” is available at the DoHistory Website at www.dohistory.org/martha/MB_WalkingTour.pdf