TOWN CRIER

The State Primary Election will be held Tuesday, June 11th with polls in West Bath open from 7am to 8pm. Absentee ballots are available through June 6th. If you are 65 or older, or identify as disabled, you now qualify for ongoing absentee voting!

A reminder that mooring fees ($10 per mooring) must be paid annually, whether you intend to use your mooring or not, in order to secure permitting. Checks can be mailed to the Town Clerk payable to the Town of West Bath, or in person at Town Hall.

Residents looking to become more involved are invited to apply to join a committee. Current boards seeking volunteers include Planning Board, Board of Assessment Review, and Board of Appeals. Nomination papers for School and Select Boards will be available beginning July 26.

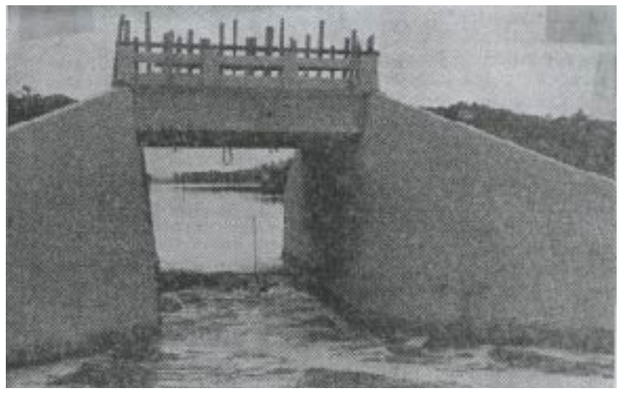
For more information email the Town Clerk at townclerk@westbathmaine.gov or call (207) 386-6938.

-Karly Perry, Town Clerk

THE MIDDLE GROUND
Daily Life & History of West Bath, Maine
Volume 26, Number 1 *** Spring 2024
Published by the
West Bath Historical Society
PO Box 394, Bath, Maine 04530

We publish researched historical materials, local news and events that may be of later historical interest. We don't print advertising, gossip or political opinion. To offer news items, historical photos, or documents, or for more information, contact West Bath Town Hall (443.4342).

THE MIDDLE GROUND
West Bath Historical Society
PO Box 394
Bath, Maine 04530



Pictured here is the nearly completed concrete spillway that is the center piece of the State Road dirt causeway. Built in the early 1930s, the causeway was designed to impound the waters of the uppermost New Meadows River thus creating New Meadows Lake. The view is looking north through the spillway. The present- day New Meadows Marina would be located to the left of the photo. (See story, Pg 1)

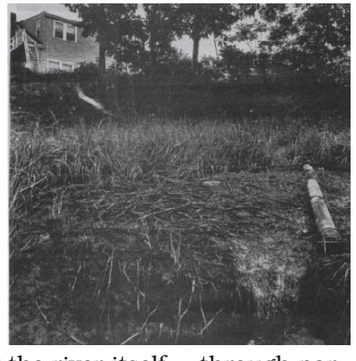
THE MIDDLE GROUND

Daily Life & History of West Bath, Maine

SPRING 2024 • PUBLISHED BY THE WEST BATH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORY OF NEW MEADOWS LAKE

The problem kept getting worse and no one seemed to know what the cause was or how to solve it. It was a problem that existed for decades.



The so-called New Meadows Lake was created in the early 1930's by blocking the river itself -- through partially damming and installing a large culvert -- to construct a short causeway at the point where the New Meadows Marina now sits. It was a way to tame the river so a new road could be built. The consequent lake's history is complicated and noteworthy.

In July 1933, a delegation of Bath citizens asked the Maine State Highway Commission to consider a new route to Bath from Brunswick, which would cross the New Meadows River in the vicinity of the old Bull Rock Bridge, and then continue into Bath. It was hoped that Federal funds could be used for the project.

A public notice urged Bath citizens to attend a mass meeting, the object of which was "to rid the city of further liability caused by the maintenance of the old Bull Rock Bridge by having the state build a new bridge at the same site." The notice stated that a petition was to be presented to the Highway Commission to change the State Highway between Bath and Brunswick. *Con't page 3*

LARRY'S LOG CABIN

Many of you have probably seen a traditional-looking log cabin going up gradually on Berry's Mill Road and wondered what that was all about. We've got the answers, and it's a great story!

Three years ago, Larry Totten, whose large property abuts the road, decided to fulfill a long-held desire to build a log cabin totally by hand – in the way of our ancestors. He devised a long-range plan for doing just that; from designing to building a sturdy log structure, using classic architecture principles and a modern instruction book. *Con't page 2*

West Bath Historical Society Annual Meeting & Potluck Supper

Please join us for a brief business meeting, have some good food, share New Meadows Inn stories with Liz Armstrong, and plan for next year

Thursday, June 13, 2024 at 6 PM
Old West Bath Meeting House
680 Berry's Mill Road, West Bath

The meeting is free and open to all.
Donations welcome.
For more information,
call Leah at 443-5907.

LARRY'S LOG CABIN Con't

He cut the timber himself, shipped it to his West Bath property, and pealed all the giant logs with a tool called an adze. Then he notched and fitted them – one by one, row by row, into a 20x24' log cabin.

In the spirit of a good who-done-it mystery, he had the *motivation* (his life dream); the *means* (a huge woodlot available to him, a tractor, trailer, and good tools), and the *opportunity* (he's now retired and has plenty of time and energy). Larry and his wife, Kathy, have owned a 300-acre woodlot in Monroe, Maine for 38 years. On about 2 acres of that land is a dense stand of huge red pine, planted years ago by a previous owner. Most of these trees are now 80 feet tall and 12-18" in diameter, but many were diseased and dying of a tree fungus. Thus, a chance to act on his vision of a cabin was at hand, and, at the same time, he could cull the sick trees before they died.

In the spring of 2022, he started his project, felling, pealing, and yarding about a dozen red pines. Dealing with that first batch of logs by hand at his woodlot proved to be tough and time-consuming work. He decided to treat the rest of the logs that he would be using directly on his building site, with more proper tools. It was still difficult work, but much easier to do at home. He did hire a logging company to haul the first batch to West Bath, but it was a pricey operation, so he opted to haul the rest of the raw logs himself, gradually, using his own truck, tractor, and trailer. "If you have the vehicles to do that, you can reap significant cost savings!", he says today.

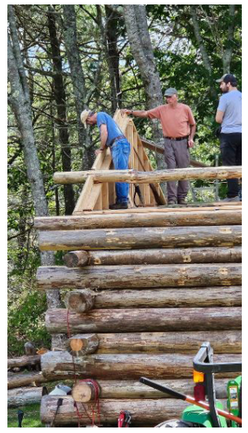
That same spring, he also started with the basics, even before all the logs had been hauled on site. First came clearing and leveling the ground. Then he began setting cement posts 4 ft below ground on all four corners of the building site – with a few in between for added support.

The following fall, he harvested and hauled another 20 logs; the next spring he cut the rest that he needed, using roughly 60 raw logs in total. Once on his property in West Bath, the logs were pealed, then flattened on two sides on a sawmill. Then he carefully stacked and covered them over for the winter.

In late Spring of '23, the prep foundation work was done, and he laid the first logs onto the posts for course #1 one. From there, he notched and fitted each successive course of logs using a homemade "boom" for his tractor to lift and place each one. He then used special elastic caulking between each log to seal the still- green logs as they shrunk and dried out, to keep the camp airtight as the walls rose.

Course after course, he slowly and precisely built up the structure – working 7 days a week, weather permitting, using his tractor, "boom" and lifting straps. When he finished the top course (10 layers and 9' tall), it was time to call in reinforcements to help raise the roof purlins (a purlin is a horizontal beam that runs across rafters to provide extra support and allow for wider roof spans).

Since the boom was not tall enough to lift the purlins, he built the gable ends with notching for each.



"Raising the roof!"

Larry and his grandson

Then with help from a nearby pine tree, a come-along and 3 friends (two friends from Belfast and neighbor Larry Forbes), they manhandled the purlins into the purlin slots. After laying the shiplap boards and foam insulation, Larry found another neighbor (a professional roofer) with a gap in his schedule. So, the roof was actually finished while Larry went hunting, a break he surely needed. By mid-October, the roof was watertight. Another milestone accomplished.

As of this April (2024) the "Deer Shed" (Larry's name for it) is cozy and mostly closed in. The front door is securely in place, temporary front steps are in, and the small woodstove is cranking out just enough heat when needed. All that's left is to install the windows, build a deck in front of the "front" door, and a small porch off the back, overlooking Dam Cove Creek.

To satisfy the curiosity of so many passersby, Larry has generously offered to hold an Open House late this summer to let people look around and to talk about construction details. Of course he's proud of his work, as well as he should be, and happy to talk about it all. Stay tuned for an announcement of the date.

His mission is almost accomplished. "I set out with a 5-yr timeline and I'm ahead of schedule!" What's NEXT? Just sit on the porch and enjoy the fruits of his labor? Well yes, of course. But Larry Totten's not one to stay idle for long. "If you're driving by and see me puttering around, stop and look around or ask questions. I'm happy to take a break." ■

CROSSING THE BAR

Gladys F. Coffin, 79, of West Bath, passed away Dec 25, 2023, at Avita in Brunswick. She was born in Bath in 1944, a daughter of Richard F. and Lillian L. (Rines) Gowen. Gladys graduated from Morse High School in 1962 and married Albert H. Coffin that same year. She was employed by several local shoe shops and later worked from home selling women's wear, and then worked at BIW for over 25 years. Gladys was in a bowling league, and enjoyed horse trail rides with the Maine Trail Riders, four-wheeling, snowmobiling, and spending time at camp on Wilson Pond. She especially enjoyed having her whole family over for major holiday dinners.

She was predeceased by her parents and her brother Andrew Gowen. She is survived by her husband, **Albert**; two sons: **Kevin Coffin** and his wife **Terri**, all of West Bath, Darryl Coffin Sr. and his fiancé Jenny Johnston of Bath; five grandchildren: Chelsea Riva and her husband Derek, Caleb Coffin and his companion Sarah Estabrook, Darryl Coffin Jr. and his fiancé Lauren Quimby, Brittany Coffin, and Shenna Otis; and ten great-grandchildren.

Robert "Bob" Arsenault, 88, of West Bath, passed away peacefully Dec 28, 2023, at Maine Medical Center, with his family by his side, after a brief illness. Bob was born in Chelsea, Mass. In 1935, the son of Joseph Edward & Beatrice M. Arsenault. The family moved to North Bath where he attended Bath schools through high school and, in 1954, enlisted in the Army, serving in Texas and Germany. In 1957, returning home to the Bath area, he met and married the love of his life, **Helena Doughty.** He then worked at BIW for 35 years, retiring as assistant foreman in the Maintenance Department in 1995.

Bob will be forever missed and loved by all his friends and relatives. Known as a hard worker, he always enjoyed everything neat and shiny. He also had a passion for all cars; antique, sports and street rods, as well as boats, and made sure they were "waxed to the max". Bob always owned at least one fancy car or fancy boat and at times was fortunate enough to have both!

He was predeceased by his beloved wife, **Helena**; his parents, Helena's parents, Ralph & Mildred Doughty; his sisters Joan Atkins and Lorraine Atwood; a sister-in-law and brother-in-law; three nephews, Michael and Paul Atwood, Stanley Doughty Jr. and two nieces, Linda Coombs and Michelle King. He leaves behind his son, David Arsenault (Terri) and daughter, Susan (Franklin) Hunt; two grandchildren; twin great-granddaughters; two brothers-in-law; a sister-in-law, and many nieces and nephews.

WEST BATH SCHOOL HOLDS COMMUNITY GARDEN CELEBRATION

Ann, Joan and Leah representing the garden club

These kids love their vegetables

The very first West Bath School Garden Festival was held on a sunny Saturday morning in early May. The goal of this inaugural event was to bring garden enthusiasts together to share and learn about all things garden related.

Topics, which were presented by local experts, included composting, irrigation, pollinators, invasives, soil testing, small plant pruning, seedling/seed swap, and plant propagation demonstrations. There were multiple stations ranging from a sharing table of beautiful donated perennial plants, while The Bath Garden Club was represented by **Joan Drake**, **Ann Bradbury**, and **Leah Zartarian** (all current or former WBHS Board Members!), who offered a variety of free sunflower seeds along with baby spider plants snipped from a "mother "plant. **Judy Stallworth** (also a former WBHS Board Member!) hosted a table to share her experience with dahlias, while **Madelyn Hennessey** explained the Garbage to Garden composting program. Fred Jungbluth brought his tools and talked of his experience as an arborist. Even the students took part in the morning, dressed in whimsical costumes representing an assortment of fruits and vegetables. ■

CROSSING THE BAR

WEST BATH – **Mary Elizabeth "Beth" Brewer,** 76, passed away on Monday, Jan. 29, 2024, at her home with her family.

Beth was born at Bath Memorial Hospital to Mary Elizabeth "Betty" (Diseker) and George Milton Ames, Jr. in 1947. She grew up in Phippsburg, attended Phippsburg School and graduated from Morse High School in 1965.

After graduation she attended Birmingham Southern College and St. Vincent's School of Nursing, in Birmingham, Ala., graduating in 1969 as a Registered Nurse. She returned to Maine and worked at Brunswick Regional Hospital in the Intensive Care Unit for two years before going to work as an Operating Room and Recovery Room Nurse for the Bath Memorial Hospital and MidCoast Hospital for the remainder of her forty-year nursing career.

Beth loved nursing, living near the water, gardening and her family. She found her forever home in West Bath and was surrounded by loving friends and the wonderful Shoal Cove community. She enjoyed kayaking, neighborhood gatherings and afternoons at the beach. In retirement, Beth became active in the Bath Garden Club, completing the Master Gardener Program through the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service. She enjoyed creating gardens and built ed a Japanese garden in the woods behind her home.

While nursing was her vocation, her avocation was grandmother extraordinaire. She loved her family. From the time her first grandchild was able to talk she became "Bee". Bee attended soccer games, baseball games, basketball games, track meets, wrestling meets, concerts, and any other events her grandchildren were involved in. She supported and praised her family and their accomplishments; they were her joy. She was active as a Board member of the West Bath Historical Society for some time, and could always be counted on for floral arrangements.

Beth is survived by her sons David and Matthew (Kara); grandchildren, Ethan, Benjamin, Lanye, Ellie and Jax; sister, **Ann Ames Bradbury;** maternal aunt, Maude Collier, paternal aunt, Roberta Ames; and nieces Katherine Pye Rioux and Jennifer Pye; and several cousins. She is missed dearly by all and will never ever be forgotten. Beth was predeceased by her parents; her brother, George; and her stepson, Chad Brewer. The family wishes to thank the many caretakers at Chans for their wonderful care and attention. ■

Beth and her beloved Coco

Alan M. Orr, 72, of West Bath passed away Dec. 12, 2023. He was born in Brunswick to Kenneth & Anne Orr in 1951; graduated from Brunswick High School in 1969 and went on to graduate from the United States Coast Guard Academy in 1973. While at the Academy he was a top-notch marksman and proudly rowed for the crew team. Alan sailed on The Eagle; served on the USCGC Woodrush, spent a year on Attu Island in Alaska, and served at the Duluth station where he later met his wife, **Judy**. He was on active duty until 1980 and continued serving in the Reserves as a Commander. He then worked as a Mechanical Engineer at BIW, retiring after 28 years.

Alan was active with his children, **Kristin** and **Michael**, from coaching soccer, to attending dance practices, and his most recent venture, helping Michael build a garage. He was an avid fisherman and hunter, although he spent more time reading a book than spotting deer. He loved storytelling and was the first person to laugh at his own expense. He was also an excellent self-taught carpenter. A devoted husband and father, he was the first to offer help to anyone in need and volunteered throughout the community.

He was predeceased by parents; his brother, Dana and his father- and mother-in law. He is survived by Judy, his wife of 43 years, his two children Kristin and Michael (Colby Gail); his brother Scott (Katherine) and his sister Sandra; two sisters-in-law, and many nieces and nephews.

Con't page 7

Find us on Facebook:
@West Bath Historical Society

HISTORY OF NEW MEADOWS LAKE Con't

Historically, (since the early 1800s) Bath needed a direct route from Brunswick to facilitate ship-building related commerce. The Bull Rock Bridge was key to that. However, for well over 90 years, Bath had been held responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the bridge. If a new route were found, with a new bridge, then Bath would no longer be on the hook. By the '30's, over 10,000 local citizens had petitioned for "a straight road" – a State Highway – to be built to improve access. At that time, the existing road that connected Bath and Brunswick was narrow, curvy, and difficult to navigate, crossing the New Meadows River over the Bull Rock Bridge. Both towns wanted the State to straighten the road and extend it into Bath. Bath's big interest was that when the State rebuilt the Bull Rock Bridge (which it would have to do) then it would also take over maintenance responsibility and relieve Bath of a decades-long old financial burden.

But no new plans were immediately forthcoming from the Highway Commission for crossing the river; the going estimate for such a bridge was $85,000. It was reported that "a well-known person in Bath" said publicly it had long been his dream that, instead of building a bridge, a causeway and spillway could be substituted. He envisioned that the resulting "Lake" would create an "excellent place" for landing seaplanes. (which ultimately happened).

Some Opposition

Some Bath citizens opposed the plans on the grounds that the new road would divert tourist trade from the center of the city. On the other hand, Brunswick sentiment was that it would make a straight road, thus eliminating serious dangers and shorten the distance by a mile. Not surprisingly the most opposition in Brunswick came from the people living along the existing old road who would be left high and dry, losing their homes through "eminent domain".

In October, 1936, three years later, the State Highway Commission finally released plans for a "straight" highway between Brunswick and Bath along with a dirt causeway to span the New Meadows River. Specs called for the bottom of the spillway to be 6.5' above mean low water tide, which would be closed by "stop planks" to retain water in the basin ["lake"]. The planks could be removed to allow passage of small boats when needed. By summer of '37, several real estate developers swooped in to propose building houses along the shore of the soon-to-be New Meadows Lake. According to one local citizen, the lake will "prove a fine place for bathing and fishing" and pictured the area rapidly developing into a colony of summer "camps".

By November of that year, construction of the causeway was underway, but a serious surprise was in store. Unfortunately, the nature of the bottom caused serious settling, and hundreds of truckloads of dirt and rock sank immediately under the water. Engineers watched in shock as thousands of yards of fill material were dumped into the river only to see it disappear, despite their best calculations. At one point, 100 feet of fill in the middle section dropped eight feet without warning. Needless to say, the project was severely delayed.

Aerial photograph of New Meadows Lake

Finally, with the addition of much more fill, and presumably over budget, the causeway was complete. The spillway itself was described as "...a beautiful concrete affair with wide flaring abutments to keep the tide from wearing at the edges of the fill." An immovable gate was designed to keep the water above the fill at nearly high tide level, thus backing up the river's flow to create a permanent lake.

It also meant that small boats could pass in and out, but only when the removable planks were taken out and only at the peak tide.

New Meadows Lake indeed became a recreational hot spot. Cottages sprung up along its shoreline, and the 1.3-mile-long lake was used extensively for swimming, summer boat racing, winter skating and ice fishing, training for the Bowdoin College sailing team, and other aquatic recreation.

The First Sign of Trouble

In June of 1956, an estimated 600 bushels of alewives (at 36 bushels to a ton, that translated into over 16 tons of fish!) had worked their way into New Meadows Lake and could not find a way out. Legally, the fish could not be touched unless both West Bath and Brunswick requested a conservation ruling from the Commissioner of Sea and Shore Fisheries. The problem was urgent because the fish were at the end of their spawning cycle and would die soon.

Both towns scrambled to find a solution. However, just when town officials had reached an agreement to have a local fisherman remove the dying fish, someone snuck in during the night and pulled the spillway planks, releasing most of the fish out to sea. Unfortunately, not all were swept away, and many were left behind in the lake to die. Whoever removed the planks did so without permission. It was reported that cottage residents and owners of commercial properties who depended on the lake for swimming, bathing, and other water sports were none too happy.

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NEW ARCHIVIST AT PFL

The Patten Free Library welcomes Jack Martin as the new Archivist and Special Collections Librarian in the Sagadahoc History and Genealogy Room!

Jack has a BA from the University of Southern Maine and an MLIS with a concentration in Archives Management from Simmons University. It may have been watching James Cameron's Titanic that first inspired Jack's love of history, but it was the Patten Free Library that spurred his interest in archiving. Jack was a library volunteer in his sophomore year of high school (Morse Class of '16) and has been an employee since 2019. You have probably seen him at the Reference Desk or in the History Room!

NEWS FROM PATTEN FREE LIBRARY

Spring has sprung at the Patten Free Library! We celebrated National Poetry Month in April with our annual Poetry Walk in Library Park, and, in May, hosted a History Room "Live lecture", as well as holding our spring Spelling Bee fundraiser.

On the computer front, we also have two new remote-work pods and a new website. The pods were funded through the Maine State Library and the Department of Economic and Community Development and have been in high demand since their installation in January. They are private, reservable spaces ideal for remote work, online classes, telehealth appointments, or quiet space.

WEST BATH TOWN HISTORY TALK: A GREAT SUCCESS

This past February, on Saturday the 17th, Liz Armstrong presented a well-attended presentation on "The New Meadows Inn Through the Years" at the Patten Free Library as part of their annual Town History Series.

Liz, the granddaughter of the Inn's founder, shared stories about how the business developed and became a much beloved part of West Bath history, beginning with her grandfather, then followed by her parents. There were family members in the audience as well as former employees, some of whom also shared stories.

She showed photos of the NMI in its early days; the Inn's famous fire; old menus, and summer pool parties with the NMI employees. Liz will be joining us at our Annual Meeting & Potluck supper -- June 13, 6 pm, at the Old West Bath Meeting House -- to share highlights of her presentation. We invite you to join us with your own stories about the New Meadows Inn.

COOK'S KORNER

DOUBLE GINGER RHUBARB CRISP

(with some thanks and a bit of amendment, to Williams-Sonoma's New Flavors for Dessert)

Spring has sprung and it's time to think about Mother Nature's super food - Rhubarb. To winter-weary Mainers, this vigorous plant, with leaves like curly elephant ears and ruby red stalks, is especially appreciated because it's one of the first edibles – and a welcome tonic - to appear in the spring garden. Not only are these strange stalks tartly delicious and versatile when cooked into pies and sauces, but they are also mega-good for you. They contain lots of Vitamin C, calcium, and some fiber. For over 4500 years, rhubarb has been a medicinal and tasty boon to man. (Even today, there is scientific research indicating that rhubarb helps lower cholesterol, has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-allergy properties, and may improve liver inflammation in hepatitis sufferers.) How's that for a cure-all?

Here's a rhubarb crisp that will knock your socks off and keep you healthy (well, it does have some sugar!) at the same time. Don't forget to cut off the leaves; they are wicked poisonous. Even deer don't like them!

Ingredients:
2 lbs. rhubarb stalks, cut in ¼ inch pieces
½ granulated and ½ brown sugar, mixed
1 small orange, zested and then juiced (lose the pits)
3-inch knob of fresh ginger, peeled & grated

Topping:
1-½ cups all-purpose flour (or 1 cup white to ½ cup whole wheat)
¾ cup brown sugar
½ cup quick-cook oats
1 tsp each cinnamon & ground ginger, ¼ tsp salt
6 tablespoons melted butter (plus a bit more cold butter for dabbing on top of crisp mixture)

Preheat oven to 375. In a 13 x 9 buttered glass baking dish, mix rhubarb sugar, grated ginger, and grated zest of orange; then juice the orange over the baking dish. In medium bowl, mix dry ingredients; stir in melted butter and sprinkle over rhubarb. (Sprinkle a bit of rum over the crisp if you like.) Bake for 15 minutes, uncovered; then loosely cover the dish with foil and continue to bake until topping is brown, and juices are bubbling around the edges, 15-20 mins. more. If you want a bit more crunch, add chopped walnuts into the rhubarb before you bake. Cool slightly and serve with good quality vanilla ice cream.

Fast forward to the 1960s
In the early 1960s a nasty issue was surfacing. The lake began to stink (not from dead fish; that problem was long gone). The source of the stench was decaying aquatic weeds that had invaded the placid lake. This rampant weed growth was thought to be due to the inadequate opening of the causeway for draining and refilling the lake. Another theory, in addition to the blockage of tidal flow, put the blame on the overboard discharge from human waste pipes flowing straight into the lake from shorefront houses. West Bath town fathers also blasted the "faulty construction of the original dike and spillway".

The odors ultimately reached the point where recreational activities on the lake and further development of the lake shores had stopped. In fact, New Meadows Lake had been unusable for the past several years.

It was time to seriously address the problem. In early 1963, a new Route #1 was already under construction, and West Bath was battling not only to have the old State Road causeway re-built, but also to have a "real bridge" constructed for the new highway. A resolution presented on behalf of WB stated that "A bridge span would be absolutely essential rather than a culvert on the proposed highway crossing." The resolution, sent to the Maine State Highway commission, went on to say that "...the present stench has reached the point where recreation and any new development on New Meadows Lake is not being done. Also, "...in the near future the spillway in old State Road causeway should be changed to allow a greater flow of tidal water into the lake." It was believed that the lake was essentially being "starved" due to inadequate and infrequent opening of the spillway for draining and refilling the lake. The Maine State Highway commission appeared to pay attention and immediately promised additional study before making a final decision on how best to bring the new Rt #1 highway across the New Meadows River.

In May of '63, the Commission reversed earlier plans and agreed to construct a bridge rather than a culvert on the new highway. It was to be 78 feet long spanning a channel 40 feet wide, with the old spillway widened to 40 feet. Small boats would be able to pass under the bridge. Plans also called for two bridges, one for each divided lane, but were reduced to only one for cost constraints. However, the State Highway Commission obviously flip-flopped once again, since the final project used culverts!

The 1970s to 2000
The stench continued throughout the '70's and both West Bath and Brunswick realized something HAD to be done. An outside consulting firm was hired to study the problem and made several recommendations. Unfortunately, none were followed.

In 1999 the New Meadows River Watershed Project was initiated and, among other things, immediately addressed the issue of pollution in the New Meadows Lake. They concluded that restoration of complete tidal exchange in the lake was the highest priority and presented several options for achieving it. Once again, though, none of the suggested solutions were adopted. However, things began to improve, probably at least partly due to the Watershed Project's outreach efforts.

The Present
Anyone who lives in the area today knows that the New Meadows Lake no longer stinks. Indeed, the last written mention of any significant lake odor dates back to the mid-1970s. What happened? The answer is shrouded in mystery. As far as we know, nothing that could have been considered proactive was ever done. The most likely answer is that the citizens of WB and Brunswick unwittingly cleaned the Lake and the river up themselves through a growing awareness of resource conservation and "best practices" which, undoubtedly, were assisted by regulations that eliminated the discharge of household and boat waste directly into the water. Whatever the cause, New Meadows Lake has come full circle and is once again an important resource to all, including local clammers. Moral: don't mess with Mother Nature too much. But if you do, sometimes she fixes herself!