

## SOUTH BREWER CHILDHOOD MEMORIES BY MARY ELLINGWOOD ANDREWS

(\*buildings no longer existing)

Growing up in the 1940-50's, we were privileged to live in a self-sustaining community: employment at **Eastern Manufacturing Paper Mill, public bus transportation (previous trolley service),**

Five grocery markets: **\*Grant's Market** corner South Main/Mann Court (when that closed, we had our first coin operated **\*Laundromat (Hartstone's)**, **Black's Market** on South Main across from Post Office (when that closed **Hall's Dry Cleaning**), **Herrick's** (allowed charge accounts and home delivery), corner of South Main/ Elm Streets, **Mac's Market (La Pierre's)** (allowed charge accounts and home delivery by long time employee **Jimmy Strang**) on South Main, across from Kings Court, **T & K** corner of South Main and Chambers Street, later known as **Clem Verow's** next to **Epstein's Clothing Store** and between **Ikie Saunders Drug Store**, later **Dwelley's Drug Store** }.

In earlier years there was a **library, theatre and boxing ring** second floor in block over the Drug Store, etc. We had barber shops: **\*Spiller's**, **\*Joe Arsenault's**, **Joe Verrow's and Getchie's**, **Don Harnum's Restaurant**, **\*Dot Sargent's Lunch**, **Rip Black's Garage**, **U.S. Post Office with Mr. Herbert Howard, Postmaster** and tall **Mr. Lamont Curtis** who delivered our mail six days a week, **Tucker's Shoe Factory (later Tupperware Warehouse)**. **Ken Miller's Lunch**, a **\*Furniture Store** corner of Century Street (also same building **\*Charlie Shair's Pharmacy**), between Century and Tibbett Streets **Foster Ellis's Gun Shop** (bring in your deer skin and get a pair of leather gloves, had fish bait in basement, too), **DeMoupiéd's \*Stanley's Lunch** near **\*Eastern Manufacturing's Ball Field**. **Doane's Airport** on Elm Street.

**Churches: Congregational and Catholic, South Brewer Grammar School, Sargent School** (with busing to **Brewer High School**), **St. Theresa's Catholic School**, the **School Playground at South Brewer Grammar School**, **Boy and Girl Scouts**, **three Swimming Holes on Mill Street**.

**\*A Pool Hall, Cap Morrill's Pub, Laura's Lunch & Pub (Mundy) and Southworth's Pub (early 1900's this building was the Drug Store and Post Office duplex)**, **Hitchcock's Store** next to Southworth's (later this was where **Ken Taylor and Norma Bell**, his sister, started their **antique business** – years later they individually owned their own much larger antique shops and did auctions-Wilson Street, Brewer). **Little's Doughnut Shop** on Stone Street (would always give the kids a free doughnut if you stopped in) and **Nissen's Bakery** was on Abbot Street and the **\*Gulf Oil's office** was on South Main in Cove area just before **Oak Hill Cemetery**, also in Cove area was **\*Nickerson's Variety Store** and **\*Littlefield's Lock and Key Service**, **\*The Plug Mill**, the **Box Factory** and **\*Rolnick's Junk Yard** were on upper South Main Street

Near King's Court was **\*DON's Package Store** beside **\*Graves Grill (had jukebox)**(also in previous years was a **Roller Skating Rink**), **Armory** on corner of Oak Street (previous had been an extension of Brewer Fire Department and later **McGarry's Trucking**), an **Army Guard Armory** across from intersection of Elm /Brewer Streets, **\*LaCrosse Hotel** on King's Court just above the railroad tracks, (later was a **clothing manufacturing business**), **\*Bunt King's Oil Delivery and road tarring** next to Harnum's Restaurant, **\*Looke's Hardware Store** (before tracks going up the hill to Orrington across from turn around for public buses), later **Watson's Hardware Store** in closed Sargent School, .

A new brick building for **\*Campbell's Bakery** on South Main Street across from Pendleton Street (they later downsized to corner of Wilson /Main Streets, then Center Street), later the Campbell building was occupied by **\*Hanson's Ski Shop** then a **\*pizza shop** that caught fire and burned and the building demolished, **Eastern's Guest House** on Ayer Street.

Our own **physician Dr. Albert Todd** (who made house calls) lived in house with his office next to the small private **Adams' Hospital** on South Main Street. Evening foot patrols by **Police Officers Boy LeClair** and **Bobby Grant** provided neighborhood safety. Fresh milk delivered by our **milkman Allie King** (Brewer Street) with pony (with a white heart design spot on side) named **Pal** and milk wagon and later wagon pulled by blind donkey, whose past memory with sight enabled him to accurately stop at appropriate homes and stations.

Large families with fathers working and mothers staying home with the children struggled to provide the necessary staff of life items. World War II affected the economy with certain items rationed and men going off to war, leaving the wives to care for the children and run the households.

Those in business had their hardships, too, as not everyone paid their bills on time. **One of the most important local businesses was Epstein's Clothing Store.** Mill workers purchased their work clothes, shoes and boots; previous to fall school opening, families bought their children's new clothing and footwear; many families had charge accounts and paid weekly, unfortunately some paid very small amounts and some not at all.

**In 1910 Max Epstein** opened a small clothing store near entrance to the paper mill, Eastern Manufacturing. The population of Brewer was 5,667 and the paper mill had been operating for twenty years. (In the late 1880's Fred Ayer operated a saw mill and later built a pulp mill; the new employees moved their families to the neighborhood and began to make paper in the early 1900's).

**In 1920 Max's teenage son Harry (born 1905) started working in the family business. In 1938 when Max died, Harry took over the store.** He knew the customers by name and considered them friends. As the business grew, so did the need for more space and gradually the adjacent business buildings were added to the main store with an alley converted into the main building and eventually the small store encompassed the entire corner of what had been small shops.

**Harry, his wife Ruth and later son-in-law Stan Israel and daughter Ellie were a very important part of South Brewer's community and economics.** They worked long hours, giving generously to the community, and providing necessary clothing for families at reasonable prices, granting charge accounts (credit cards were not heard of then) and quietly did charitable contributions to many. I remember Harry always with a smile, chewing on his cigar and measuring tape around his neck, enthusiastically ready to wait on the customers with the latest clothing and footwear items.

**Harry was an avid basketball fan and owned the Bangor Five Aces, a semi-pro basketball team that played home teams throughout the state. He also served as a Bail Commissioner. He served as president of the Beth Israel Synagogue for thirty years.**

**In 1959 his son- in-law Stan Israel joined the family business and within fifteen years the business volume increased ten times and the number of stores became six: Brewer, Bar Harbor, Houlton, Millinocket, Presque Isle and Stonington.** Stan became active in civic organizations and with the store's advertising promoted Brewer. He helped form the Brewer Business Council and the Brewer Chamber of Commerce in the 1960's, later serving on the board of directors Greater Bangor Chamber of Commerce.

**In 1980 Harry's daughter Ellie, wife of Stan, began working at the store.** They had four children and she was an elementary teacher in the Bangor School System; when the children were young, she was a pre-school teacher. Musically talented, she sang in the Bangor Community Theater productions, Community Chorus and Church Choirs.

**In 1987, Harry died;** up to the last few years of his life, Harry came to work: when too weak to wait on customers, he sat near the checkout area to greet the customers. His passing was mourned by many generations whose families had not only been customers, but also friends. The area communities lost a friend and important entrepreneur.

**In 1991 a fourth generation entered the business, Melanie Israel, Stan and Ellie's third daughter and eagerly learned all parts of the business.** In their expansion they acquired the South Brewer Grammar School building across the street. After the store closed, they opened an Antique Mall there with individual dealers renting space.

**In 1997 economics and times changed: family businesses, banking, etc. and time for the beloved Epstein's of 87 years to bid farewell.** Everyone who grew up in South Brewer, Brewer and surrounding communities will always remember Epstein's Clothing Store and its kindness in allowing charge accounts to pay according to their means: the mill workers, families, especially the children shopping for their new clothes and footwear, **but most of all Harry and his family as best friends and almost members of their families.** The present world with big box stores can never know this mutual benefit of bonding and connecting to the community as we shared back then.

November, 2012

Mary Ellingwood Andrews

**Credit to Ellie Epstein Israel for her help and facts.**

**\*building structures no longer existing**

**As well as many former residents, many building structures are only a memory of the past.**

**Many of the past business structures remain, but are currently used for other purposes.**

**COMMENTS FROM READERS WHO SHARED THEIR MEMORIES OF THAT ERA:**

**Eddie (Dunkie)Street (now lives in Indiana) remembered while in Grammar School (1940's), he and Birdie Tardiff (now lives in Florida) used to sweep the floor of the then small Epstein's store and were each paid one dime with delight (you could buy an ice cream cone for five cents).**

**Nancy Hamilton Griswold (now lives in Colorado) wrote: "Aaah! Those were the days! What memories! I worked for Harry for over 10 years. He was like a second father to me. He took me off**

the street and put me to work and taught me sooo much about the business. I can remember how he told me that anyone who would scoop the snow off the basketball court in the school yard across the street from the store, just to play basketball in the cold Maine winters, he wanted working for them. He gave me time off to play our basketball games and let me go into the store on Sundays to do some stocking and whatever bookkeeping that needed to be done. Ten years later he took in my Mom to be his letterer and seamstress."

**Shirley Tenney Collins, (now lives in Florida): brought back memories of her son Jeff's first haircut at Spillers Barber Shop, crying and had to be held in chair, but survived. (Jeff passed away 2012)**

Hi Mary, was so surprised to see that you mentioned Jeff and his first haircut, my aunt held him while Spiller cut the curls and I cried. Ha Ha

You have done such a wonderful job with these childhood memories, I get goose bumps reading them all over again. I can actually visualize these places and can see Harnums waiting for the men from the mill. Between you and I, the funniest place that you left out was the (\*beer joint) as the women in Orrington called it. It's still is on the sharp turn before Blacks old gas station, the bikers really like it now. ha ha My Mom used to get the biggest laugh out of some of the town gossips that talked about the men leaving the mill and stopping for a cold one (whatever), naturally, It never could have been their husbands, yeah, guess we know. That was always a running joke in East Orrington about the husbands stopping for a little refreshment and their wives denying the whole thing. (\*This would be Southworth's)

Oh, is Eddie Street the kid they used to call Dunkie?, He had such a crush on me my freshman year, I remember Dunkie rode his bike or walked with a couple other guys to come out to see me, I wouldn't come out of the house, shy I guess. Think he was in my home room, that is what got the interest started. SOOOO Silly at that age.

**Others remembered riding their bicycles to the three swimming holes on Mill Street on a hot day and the older boys used to swim nude in the Penobscot River by the Eastern Ball Park.**

**There were many fun and competitive ball games with Eastern ball players at the park and in the winter the park was flooded for ice skating. There were Carnivals there also some summers with a Ferris Wheel and other rides, games and of course, delicious Carnival food.**

**Tobogganing on Goodness's hill and skating on their pond on Tibbett Street and also at Allie King's backyard pond and hill(dug out sand or gravel pit) on Brewer Street brought much winter fun to all.**

**Others remembered the Saturday- Sunday afternoon movie matinees' riding on the bus to Bangor: the Bijou Theater, Opera House, Park Theater and Olympia Theater, Bangor, costing twelve cents.**

**Other comments, "Golly, we really have forgotten so many of South Brewer's businesses we all grew up with and looking at what remains today, both businesses and buildings, our world has changed dramatically. Progress matches on and we have learned bigger is not always better. Each generation strives to improve the world around them, leaving a richer heritage for their children and descendants, taking pride in their achievement s and goals accomplished, remembering the difficult struggles and labors their ancestors wrought to make their lives richer, too."**

**Marilyn Hartery Geiger (now lives in Boise, Idaho): "Thanks Mary, don't remember them all but brings back wonderful memories."**

I remember going into the store next to Epstein's...I always marveled how much variety of stuff for sale he had...I remember seeing a small wooden barrel full of nails and similar. When Spring arrived the nights where nets were brought out to catch that quart or two of smelts. **Lee Sirabella**

Another winner for the Historical Society, great memories. My parents shopped at Herricks, only on occassion to Mom get to the A&P on N. Main By Macks Bread. You must do a lot of research for these Mary, keep them coming. **Shirley Tenney Collins**

Very good, Mary. I enjoyed reading your essay. **Richard Shaw**

Mary, thanx again..I remember very well several of these. We lived on Elmwood Street, and used to get our nickel Popsicle's right there. I was thinking that it was owned by Mr. Andrews...  
Thanx again, **Larry Doughty**

I think Andrews was married to Mr. Grant's daughter. I remember Mr. Andrews, who was related to Larry Andrews, who was a year younger than me and lived across the street from the market, who played with Rosalie Andrews and Flossie Kershaw who lived on Elmwood St. with her grandparents, the Richards. Mr. Grant was older, heavy set, gray hair and wore glasses and not always at the Market and lived in house attached to the market. **Mary**

OK- Got ya...I don't remember Grant, just Andrews...  
By the way, Larry Andrews has passed away **Larry**

That is sad, I knew he passed away young, he played with my cousin Annette Duplisea who also lived on Elmwood Street, Flossie Kershaw, Rosalie Andrews, Irma Strang and Alan Matthews (they lived on Grove Street). I remember them ice skating on flooded Eastern Ball Park field and roller skating on the sidewalks. **Mary,**

I think I knew most of these folks, as I too lived on Elmwood Street in the late 40's#2.. Robertson's next door, Richards, Buchanan's. .Memories... **Larry**

My aunt Winona Dupliesea rented the bungalow beside Buchanans: (Dicki Street, Annette and Terry and Judy Duplisea) which was before Kane's house on the hill, across the street Lenfests lived in house next to Richards **Mary**

Mary: This was a post on the web site. Thought you would enjoy it. Let me know if you want his e-mail david **March 17,2014**

Wow! I stumbled on to this website by chance and enjoyed reading every bit of it.  
Thanks to whoever put this up.  
Born in 1952, I was raised in South Brewer. I attended St. Teresa's Catholic School, Pendleton Street School, and Brewer High school. I remember many of the businesses mentioned in this article. Clem Verow's...My favorite place to browse used comic books. Dwelley's Drug Store...my favorite place to get a double decker ice cream cone for 14 cents. Eastern Paper Mill...as a kid I would stand near the guard shack at the end of the first trick work shift and ask for donations to whatever cause my school had us out and

about collecting donations for. I recall several times winning "first place" for gathering the most monetary donations. Those mill workers were very generous. In 1960, at the age of eight, I secured my first ride on a train doing switching chores at the mill. I even remember the engineers and fireman's names. Joe Hickson & Leo Higgins. I was fascinated by trains. Those old days served me well as I just this past year retired from CSX Railroad as a locomotive engineer here in Cincinnati. Harnum's Restaurant... my mom used to work there. The barber shop beside Epstein's... can't think of the guys name... always cut my hair. Joe? Southworth's Bar... in the wintertime I would always be the kid shoveling snow from their driveway between the two buildings. Can't remember the name of the stores name. Herrick's... was always a great place to pick up a few groceries. Stone Street... was the gathering point for neighborhood kids for a great game of kickball. My grandmother lived on Elm Street... up near the armory. In 1968 there used to be a snowmobile trail between the armory and the Pooler residence. It would take us out to Pine Tree Golf Course and from there to Brewer Lake and other places. Back when it was relatively safe I would hitchhike to Freeze's Department Store in Bangor to purchase the latest edition of The Hardy Boys book. Cap Morrill's... where I was a bus boy in their restaurant and when I became of age enjoyed my first beer in the bar. Brewer Fire Department... in 1974 I joined as a call firefighter. Had a great time working and hanging out with the guys. Men like Ed Hamilton, Captain Kiley, Chief Raymond Wood (I think he was still chief then)... and all the rest of the guys. Anyway, thanks for the memories. I totally enjoyed the look back.



Jim Currier

**From:** [Mary Andrews](#)

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 02, 2014 4:16 PM

**To:** [Jim Currier](#)

**Subject:** Re: Jim Currier & Patches

How very special to hear from you. What a handsome man you turned out to be as well as intelligent and industrious. You look so much like your dear mother Mary. She was a wonderful person and life was not always easy for her; she had many friends and was well liked and loved. It is such a treat to hear from you and your life journey. I do remember your daily visits standing by the drug store to watch the trains at the mill go back and forth, your enthusiastic smiling face watching every move and I am sure the trainmen looked for you every day, too. I would pass you on our lunch hour going home to eat. We all walked in those days and seem to know everyone – a nice neighborhood community. So glad you enjoyed my article on South Brewer; looking at the present South Brewer with so many of the businesses, buildings and residents now gone, comparing to what was when we were growing up, makes us realize what a great place we shared growing up in this self-contained community. We may have not had many material possessions, but we had the proper ingredients of family, church, school and taught good work ethic, discipline, manners and consideration for others and respect for our elders, our country, President and the American Flag. We made up our own games and entertainment, playing out doors most of the day, didn't expect a lot of gifts and were content and happy. Very different than what the youth of today experience in the electronic age.

Jimmy, so glad you still have the painting of Patches after all these years. Enjoy your retirement; many options are available for you. I retired in 2009 from Real Estate and Antiques and now have time to do the things I didn't have the time to enjoy while working: gardening, writing, getting back to my art work and reading all the wonderful books I have, but just didn't have the time to enjoy. I would love to see you when you come back to Maine. My friend Vicki Goodkowsky Spearing is friends with Anita and mentions her occasionally. We have a So. Brewer classmate group that meets once a month for lunch and so we stay in touch Classes Brewer High School 1954-5-6 – classmates from Grammar School. I graduated in 1955.

**From:** [Jim Currier](#)

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 02, 2014 2:43 PM

**To:** [andrews9520@roadrunner.com](mailto:andrews9520@roadrunner.com)

**Subject:** Jim Currier & Patches

Well hello!

It is very nice to hear from you. I'm pleased my posting on the Historical Society web site made it to you. It has been what...over 50 years since you painted that picture of Patches. I've cherished that all these years. I'm still a cat lover. I must have passed that love onto my daughter as she has two cats herself and has always had cats.

That is a great article on the Historical Society's web page. It sure brought back many, many good memories. On a sad note, I did not know Jimmy Hamilton passed away. We were pretty good friends in our school age days. I have lost track of so many people since getting married and leaving Maine. I do make it back there about once every other year, but now that I am retired I plan on coming up every year. I spent three weeks there last October. I plan on coming back for a visit again this Fall if all goes well. Would be great to see you if that is something you would like. Just let me know.

Anita (Curtis) is still alive and kicking. she's in her mid 70's now. Her and her husband live in Clifton. Cathy (Looke) lives in Bangor. She's in her upper 60's now. Her first husband and her ended up divorced shortly after they lost their 18 year old son in a car wreck a long time ago. Sad how that happens. Her husband was a good guy and he retired from the Bangor Police Department, now remarried and living in Georgia. He has had enough of Maine winters! Cathy's second husband, Jerry Looke (remember him from Looke's gas station near the railroad tracks just before going up the hill into Orrington?) passed away several years back. Brenda is married to David Littlefield and lives in Washington state. Sad to say Brenda doesn't seem to want to get along with her family and has pretty much given us up. I've tried to keep in contact with her but it gets me nowhere. It's too bad because David and I were friends growing up. I'm still alive and kicking. Celebrated my 61st birthday last November. Was married once for 19 years before ending up divorced. I've a great daughter who lives in Washington state. She's married, 30 years old, but no kids. I sure would enjoy being a grandfather! Her name is Lindsay and she is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor. They keep after me to move out to be near them. Her husband and I get along great. He's a great

guy. I don't know what I'm going to do now that I am retired. There's nothing here in Cincinnati to keep me here so I will either move back home to Maine or to Washington state to be close to my daughter. It will probably be to Washington state.

I've attached a picture you might get some joy out of seeing. Also I have my own website but I don't keep it up to date as well as I should. Just click on the link below to view it.

<http://trainguyjim.com/>

Thanks for taking to time to write. It's always nice to hear from people from my past. Take care.

**From:** [Mary-Ellen Gartner](#) **Sent:** Saturday, September 27, 2014 2:55 PM

Thanks Again!

Harnum's Restaurant was run by Don Harnum, dad to my classmate Sally Harnum. My 5th grade teacher, Mrs. Downs, used to send me over to buy her lunch. I missed out on the geography lesson and still have some difficulty in geography!

Enjoyed others' comments....I spent much time with Annette Duplissie and her cousins. What a fun home.

Harry Epstein gave me my first charge account at age 12 . He remained a good friend of the whole Crook family. When Dad died Harry sent a beautiful floral arrangement with his condolences.

Herrick's always delivered all our groceries, and Dad stopped by each payday to settle the account. Although times have certainly changed, I still have an ongoing account with our local store here in Bryant Pond. Maine still has many, many honest and trusting people!

Wish my brother Paul were still alive. He would have enjoyed your reminiscences, and would have added many more! Sister Jane & I loved hitching rides to swim at Brewer Lake. I don't think our parents ever worried



