

## January-February 2020 E-Newsletter

**Eric Hooglund, Editor**

*Published monthly for members of the Belgrade Historical Society*

**HAPPY NEW YEAR** to all BHS members and friends!

2020 is going to be a special year for Maine and for your BHS, because it is the Bicentennial of Maine's separation from Massachusetts and its entry into the Union as a new state, the official date of this event being March 15, 1820.

Quick Quiz:

1. After Mainers voted in 1819 to separate from Massachusetts, whom did the Town of Belgrade elect to represent it in the 1819 Constitutional Convention to draft a constitution for the proposed new state of Maine?
2. Who was Maine's first Governor?
3. Where did Maine's first legislature meet?

Please e-mail your answers to me: [eric.hooglund@gmail.com](mailto:eric.hooglund@gmail.com) The first person to send correct answers to all three questions gets a prize—not necessarily a valuable one in monetary terms but very definitely a very precious keepsake of Belgrade!



Celebrations and programs to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Maine's statehood will be held in Belgrade and elsewhere throughout the year. Maine Public Radio already has started broadcasting one of its several special programs (<https://mainepublic.org>). A team effort with *Down East* magazine, it is called 'Century Notes: Reflections of Maine Centenarians' and features interviews with Mainers over 100, i.e., those who have lived more than one-half of the 200 years since Maine became a state! In November 2019, Patty Wight interviewed Belgrade

native Ruth Endicott (1916-2019), who, after graduating from Belgrade High School in 1933, became one of Maine's—and the country's—early women pilots, joined the Women's Army Corps during World War II, and subsequently became a pioneering woman doctor who had continued to make house calls to patients until she retired at age 90. She and her husband, Miles Freeman, also a physician, maintained a practice in Ogunquit and served patients there and in the nearby towns of York, Wells and Kennebunk for over 50 years. Sadly, a few weeks after the interview, Ruth Endicott passed away on Dec. 1, 2019. But you can find and listen to Patty Wight's interview with her at the Maine Public Radio website above; the written interview, with photographs, also is in the January 2020 issue of *Down East*.

Meanwhile, BHS does have considerable information about and photos of the Endicott family in our Freeman Collection, which Dr. Ruth Endicott Freeman donated to us five years ago. I have selected some photos and prepared accompanying narratives about this remarkable daughter of Belgrade below. Ruth Endicott Freeman was born in 1916, the oldest of 3 children of William and Rhoda (*Wright*) Endicott, who owned the large farm which still stands near the junction of Route 27 and 11. That farm actually remained in the Endicott family for more than a century, but was sold in 2019. Ruth had a younger brother, Ralph, and a younger sister, Mabel. Ruth and her siblings attended both grade school and high school in Belgrade. When Ruth was in the eighth grade at the Belgrade Central School (1928-29), the students designed a 'bird park' behind the school for the birds that did not migrate but stayed in Maine during the winter. Her design for the bird park won a prize, and her drawing was featured in the Waterville *Morning Sentinel* in February 1929.

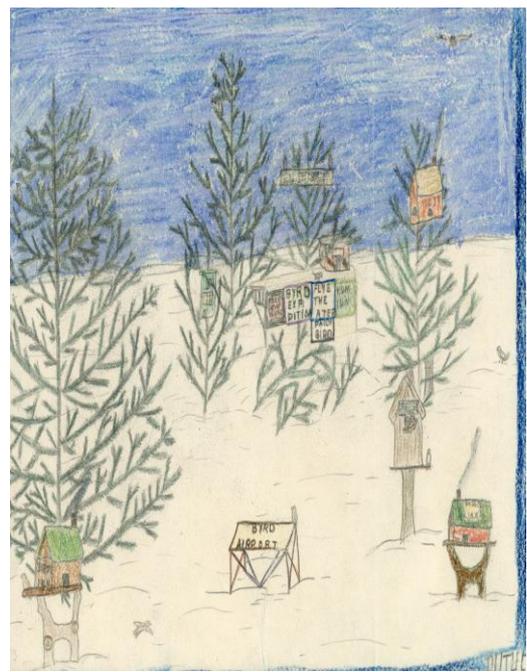


Photo :The original 91-year old drawing by Ruth Endicott (Freeman Collection)



Photo : Clipping from *Morning Sentinel* for 3 February 1929 showing the prize-winning drawing by 13-year-old Ruth Endicott of the winter bird park at Belgrade Central School. From Freeman Collection, BHS.

Ruth graduated from Belgrade High School in 1933, and that same year she was hired to work in the office of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, ME. During the years she worked there, Ruth learned how to fly a plane and obtained a pilot's license. In 1942, she joined the Women's Auxiliary Corps (WAC) of the army.

**Photo 4: Ruth Endicott in 1943 as a US Army WAC (Freeman Collection)**



After the war, she utilized her Veterans benefits to attend Colby College in Waterville, then went on to the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, where she studied to become a physician. In 1956, she married fellow physician Miles Freeman, and they eventually set up a medical practice in Ogunquit. Dr. Ruth Endicott often made house calls, one year logging in 800 of them.

**Photo : Ruth Endicott as a young doctor  
1950s(Freeman Collection)**



The Freemans became the parents of two daughters, Lynn & Nancy. Ruth Endicott continued to work as physician until she was 90. She died on December 1, 2019 at age 103.



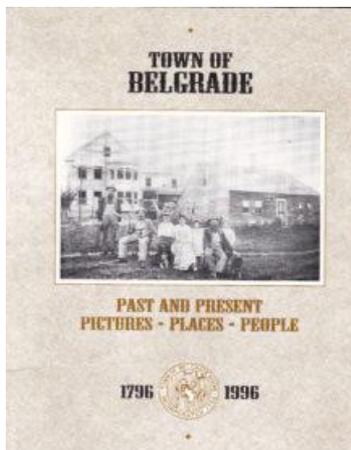
**Photo: Ruth (Endicott) and Miles Standish,  
1990s (Freeman Collection)**



Photo: Endicott Farm in winter, ca. 1942 (Freeman Collection)

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**It's never too late to buy the past as a present, a gift membership, or a make a contribution to our Town House Fund in memory of a beloved relative or dear friend!**



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## Capital Fund Drive



### Rendering of Townhouse after Renovation

Sketch by Artist Erik Johnson

The **Capital Fund Drive** is going well! We have received several thousand dollars and returns are coming in on a daily basis. A friendly reminder to those who want to give and have not yet done so. Use your return envelope or send your own to BHS, P.O. Box 36A, Belgrade, Maine 04917. Use PayPal as an alternative by going to our website [belgradehistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:belgradehistoricalsociety@gmail.com).

**Thanks to those who have already donated, all donations will help the bottom line!**

**Don't forget that BHS is a non-profit 501 (3) 2 organization, so all contributions to its capital campaign to renovate the Old Town House are tax deductible. Any donation you make to BHS can be deducted from your income tax to the extent allowable by law. Please think of making an end-of-year donation to our worthy cause and help to preserve our history.**