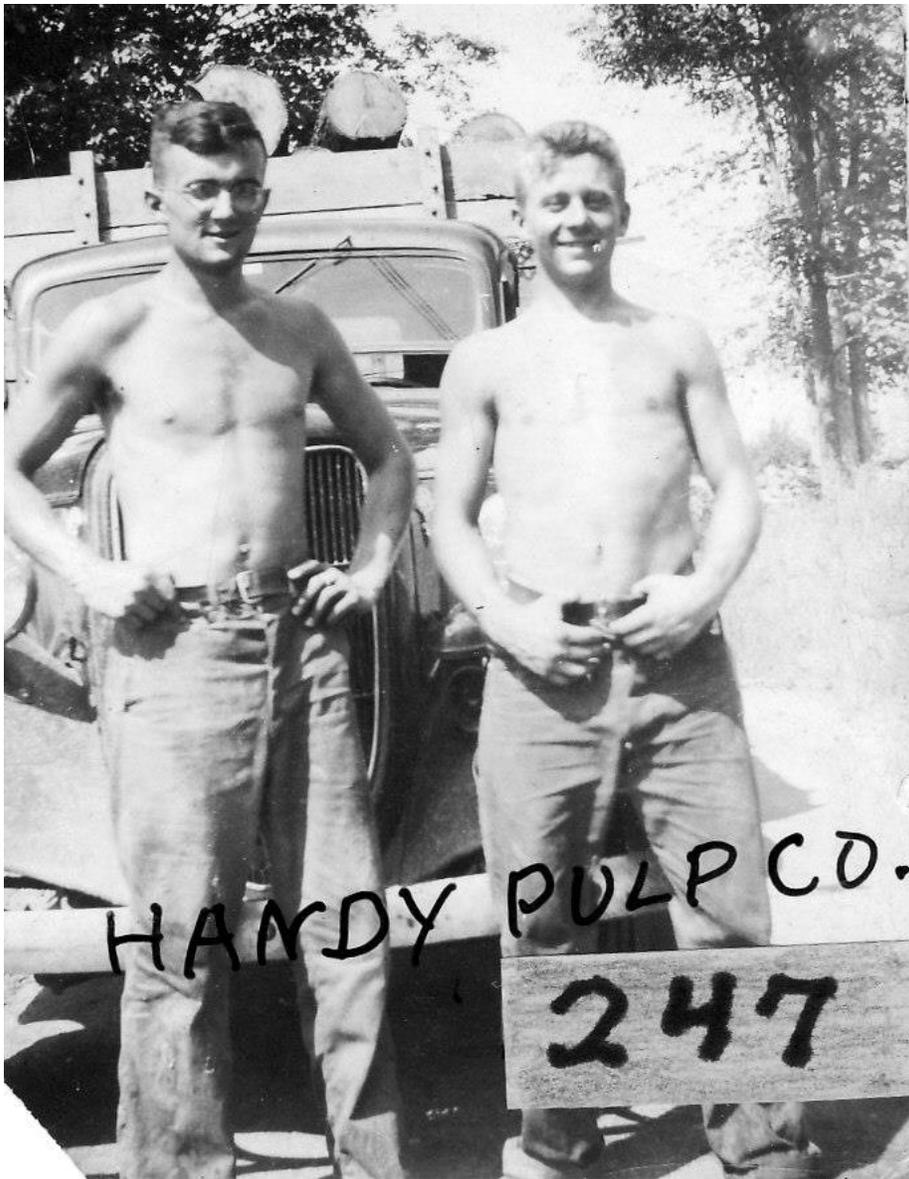


BHS NEWSLETTER, September-October 2022

Eric Hooglund, Editor

BHS is sad to announce the death of a longtime friend and supporter, Clifton ‘Skip’ Hammond, who passed away on September 3, nineteen days before his 95th birthday. He is best known locally as the founder of Hammond Lumber Company (in 1953) in Belgrade Depot, which gradually grew into a major building supply firm, which currently has 21 showrooms/stores in Maine and one in New Hampshire.

Skip Hammond was born on September 22, 1927, to Raymond and Helen (Thompson) Hammond, the third of four sons and one sister. He grew up on the Hammond Farm in Belgrade Depot, where, in addition to doing the routine chores on a farm with dairy cows, he worked in the woods with his father. By the time he was in Belgrade High School (1941-45), Skip had acquired good knowledge about the quality of lumber that could be obtained from the various types of trees that grew in the Maine woods. While still in high school he and his friend Oliver Yeaton formed the H and Y Pulp Company. Their company did well enough to buy a quarter page ad on the back page of the Belgrade High School, *The Echo*, for 1945! The photograph below from the BHS’ Yeaton Collection shows Oliver Yeaton, left, and Skip Hammond, right with their HandY Pulp Co. truck full of recently hewn logs. It is undated but likely from summer of 1943 or 1944. If anyone knows the exact date, please do send me an e-mail!



Skip Hammond's senior year of high school was 1944-45. For readers who may be too young to remember the Belgrade High School, it was located on the second floor of the Belgrade Central School, the same Central School that is in Belgrade Depot, although it only has grades kindergarten thru 5, because middle and high school students now go to Oakland. The Class of 1945 was a small one—only 7 students, and Skip was the only boy! The other boys had dropped out of school before their senior

year to join the army or navy—it was World War II: Glenwood Damren; Edward Meservy; Arnold Stuart; William Treat; and David Webster, who later operated the summer mail boat delivery service on Great Pond for many years. On a sad note, not just for the Class of 1945 but for all Belgrade, was the news that Willis Stevens, class of 1944, was killed in the fierce and prolonged Battle of the Bulge, along the Belgium-French-Luxembourg border on January 11, 1945.



Standing, left to right: Lucille Farnham, Constance Wilson, Clifton Hammond, Elizabeth French and Emily Bickford. Seated, Emogene Nelson, left, and Glenys Goodwin, right.

After graduation, Skip Hammond also went off to join the war, which ended in September, although he served with the army for two years. In 1948, he married Verna Guptill (BHS, class of 1944) the younger sister of Phronie Guptill, who had married Skip's older brother, Reginald. His oldest brother, Paul, married Emily Bickford, one of the six girls in Skip's high school class. In 1953, he launched Hammond Lumber Company, although initially it was just a sawmill and only gradually expanded into the major supplier of products necessary to build, equip and maintain homes. Clifton 'Skip' Hammond, never a braggart, but always curious, kind and generous has left a legacy for his family, town and state.



Upcoming Events:

BHS table at Crafts Fair in Village Green, Sunday, September 25, 10-2; STOP BY and say hello!

Oct. 15: BHS is hosting the Kennebec Region Historical Societies. Look for Report on this event in our next newsletter!