

COBURN CARL CROSBY - HIS FAMILY

Coburn Crosby was my grandfather, my mother's father. His ancestry can be traced back to Simon Crosby, an immigrant from England to the New World. Simon, his wife Ann and his eight-week old son Thomas arrived on the *Susan and Ellen* April 13, 1635.

Thomas (1635) married Sarah Shedd. They had at least 11 children, including John. Thomas was listed as a minister. The next generations have fewer details. John Crosby (born ca 1670) married Hanna and their child was Jonathan (1705 – 1782) was born Eastham, Massachusetts. Jonathan married either Hanna Huckins or Martha Howard, or both and was the father of Ebenezer.

Ebenezer was born at Mansfield, Connecticut in 1747 married Elizabeth Robinson who was born at Falmouth, Massachusetts in 1750. They emigrated from New England to Nova Scotia to settle on land that had been cleared and farmed by the Acadians. After the British defeated the French in Nova Scotia in 1755, many Acadians left, or were forced to leave, their farms. The new British government granted much of this land to farm families from New England. Ebenezer and Elizabeth had several children including Edmund, born at Yarmouth, N. S. on February 18, 1775.

Edmund married Lydia Ring and had ten children, Elizabeth (1801), Zilpha (1803), Nancy (1805), Nancy (1806), John (1807), Lydia, Edmund, Milford, Samuel (1816), and Lewis.

Milford (1815 – 1891) emigrated from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia to Calais, Maine where he worked in the mills before going up river to Township 21 where he created a farm out of the wilderness on the shore of Big Lake. He married Matilda Brown in 1844. Milford and Matilda had the following children of record; Lucy (1847), Mahala (1848), Vashti (1850), Zilpha, Milford (1851), Lewis (1853), John (1855), Ephraim (1857), Rosebella (1860), Maude, Giles (1864) and William (1866).

John (1855 – 1906) married Ida Cass and lived at TWP 21. Their children were Osborne (1879), Lillian (1882), Ralph (1884), Etta (1887), Maude (1890), David (1891), and Coburn.



Yola & Coburn with Dyer



Crosby/Lane Farm on North Union Road

Coburn was born on March 9, 1894 and died at Cooper on June 15, 1948. He married Yola Lane on April 10, 1915. They had five children; Audrey (1916 – 1967), Dale (1919 – 1998), Dyer (1924 – 2001), Joyce (1927 – 1941), and Jane (1928 -).

The following describes how Coburn earned money during the years before World War Two. Dyer Crosby provided all the account books. The activity on Coburn Crosby's farm was not unlike that on many farms in this area during that era. Prepared by John Dudley

COBURN CROSBY - DOWNEAST FARMER

Coburn had come to Cooper from Princeton with a haying crew. He married Yola Lane, youngest child of Civil War veteran Frank Lane and his wife Eliza Jane (Strout), "Nannie" to the family. Living in Nannie's house in 1931 were Coburn and Yola, their five children, Audrey, Dale, Dyer, Joyce, and Jane, and Nannie. Nannie was 82 and getting the veteran's widow's pension.

FARM and EQUIPMENT INVENTORY – In 1931 Coburn filled in the front pages of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension "Farm Account Book"

Dwelling - \$100.00
Other buildings - \$200.00,
Land - \$100.00,
Timber land - \$200.00,

Fields - 24 acres,
Pasture - 10 acres.
Orchard - 1 acre, 25 trees,
Woodland - 1 acre,
Waste land - 100 acres,
Blueberries - 14 acres.

Light farm wagon - \$20.00
Heavy sleds - \$10.00
Sulky plow - \$50.00
Disc Harrow - \$10.00
Cultivators - \$10.00
Mowing machine - \$15.00
Manure spreader - \$25.00
Potato planter - \$20.00
Potato digger - \$60.00
Potato sprayer - \$30.00
Brooders - \$10.00
Cream separator - \$25.00
Heavy harness - \$10.00

He also listed the following equipment having no dollar value; buggy, light sleds, walking plow, spring tooth harrow, hay rake, hay rack, potato horsehoe, milk cans and pails, light harness, robes and

blankets, and hand tools. He had 2 horses, 2 pigs, 105 poultry, a bull, 2 heifers, and 7 milking cows. Here is his 1932 account sheet.

January – 5 trips to Calais

EARNED	17 3/8 cords P. wood	78.19
	115# butter	28.75
	42 1/2 dozen eggs	<u>8.82</u>
		115.76
SPENT	cows	17.80
	hens	11.70
	horses	<u>11.70</u>
		<u>41.25</u>

February – 1 trip to Calais

EARNED	54 butter	13.50
	21 3/4 dozen eggs	4.23
	4 bbl potatoes	<u>4.00</u>
		21.73
SPENT	cows	6.45
	hens	6.15
	horses	<u>2.40</u>
		<u>15.00</u>

March – 2 trips to Calais

EARNED	96 # butter	24.00
	61 1/2 dozen eggs	9.74
	6 bbl potatoes	<u>6.00</u>
		39.74
SPENT	cows	15.55
	hens	7.60
	horses	<u>8.40</u>
		<u>31.55</u>

April – 3 trips to Calais

EARNED	44 fowl	45.20
	veal hinds	6.15
	veal skin	.17
	140 # butter	35.00
	61 1/2 dozen eggs	12.05
	6 bbl potatoes	<u>6.00</u>
		104.57
SPENT	cows	20.54
	hens	4.75
	horses	<u>3.73</u>
		<u>29.02</u>

May – 2 trips to Calais

EARNED	42 # butter	10.50
	59 # butter	12.65
	18 1/2 dozen eggs	3.06

41 bbl potatoes	28.00
spreading dressing	3.00
planting potatoes	3.25
work at SP*	<u>12.50</u>
	72.96

SPENT	cows	14.40
	hens	3.23
	horses	<u>12.01</u>
		<u>29.64</u>

June – 4 trips to Calais

EARNED	145 # butter	29.00
	10 ½ dozen eggs	1.77
	4 bbl potatoes	4.00
	bull money	1.00
	3 pigs	31.12
	one cow	<u>39.00</u>
		105.39

SPENT	cows	7.60
	hens	1.50
	horses	<u>5.95</u>
		<u>15.05</u>

July – 4 trips to Calais

EARNED	123 # butter	24.80
	12 dozen eggs	2.31
	bull money	<u>.50</u>
		27.61

SPENT	hens	1.60
	horses	<u>6.10</u>
		<u>7.70</u>

August – 4 trips to Calais

EARNED	113 # butter	25.90
	15 dozen eggs	3.75
	bull	<u>.50</u>
		30.15

SPENT	cows	2.00
	horses	<u>7.70</u>
		<u>9.70</u>

September – 5 trips to Calais

EARNED	122# butter	30.50
	4 dozen eggs	1.00
	6 fowl	4.59
	163 ½ bu blueberries	<u>366.24</u>
		402.33

SPENT	cows	12.50
	hens	1.70
	horses	<u>11.45</u>

				25.65
October – 4 trips to Calais				
EARNED	83# butter	20.75		
	14 fowl	9.48		
	hauling cordwood	<u>53.25</u>		
		83.48		
SPENT	cows	2.00		
	horses	<u>4.95</u>		
		<u>6.95</u>		
November – 4 trips to Calais				
	EARNED	92 # butter	23.00	
		milk	1.90	
		9 bbl potatoes	16.00	
		2 bu potatoes	1.50	
		bull meat @ 6cents	22.34	
		heifer (home use)	12.00	
		skins	1.45	
		work on road	<u>101.80</u>	
			186.99	
	SPENT	cows	16.10	
		horses	1.65	
		taxes on place	<u>70.99</u>	
			<u>88.74</u>	
December – 4 trips to Calais				
EARNED	117# butter	29.25		
	5 bbl potatoes	<u>10.00</u>		
		39.25		
SPENT	cows	<u>10.00</u>		
		<u>10.00</u>		
1932				
	EARNED		1230.46	
	SPENT		<u>310.20</u>	
	DIFFERENCE		920.26	

NOTES ON COBURN CARL CROSBY'S 1933 ACCOUNT BOOK

Here we have a month by month synopsis of Coburn's account book. Note that certain activities produced income each month. Coburn took the butter, eggs, potatoes, fowl, and meat to Calais to trade, mostly at Groves Store, and later at E. B. Wade store, both in Milltown. He used a Model A Ford for this except in winter. Coburn worked out, sometimes at the *Sullivan Place. That family had moved to Massachusetts where most were in the water well drilling business. (In 2002, family members still own the place and return regularly to Alexander and Cooper).

COWS – Coburn had Jersey cattle, known for their high butterfat content milk. Coburn had maintained his herd of about a dozen, breeding then for the qualities that he felt were important. Cows were milked by hand. In earlier days milking was done out-of-doors, but Coburn used the tie-up, which he whitewashed regularly with the by-product of carbide gas systems from Sam Cooper's and Charlie

Cousin's homes. Butter was made in a barrel churn with two crank handles. All had their turn at cranking, but Yola mixed the salt in and "printed" it into the one pound shapes. Butter could be made from sweet cream or sour cream, but the two could not be mixed. Any butter that did not sell was brought home, and packed away in salt for family use the coming winter. Cows produced more butterfat in summer, so sometimes there was a surplus then. By 1936 buttermilk was being sold on a regular basis to donut makers in Calais.

Farm made butter was being crowded hard by butter made in the creameries, which came into being in the last part of the nineteenth century, and by oleomargarine. Creamery butter was of consistent quality and "lard butter" was cheap. In spite of this, some farm butter operations continued even after the second War. In 1880 Washington County had over three thousand farms that produced nearly three-quarters of a million pounds of butter for the city markets. Times have changed.

PIGS - Note that the pigs produced income, but cost nothing. That is because they were fed skin milk, a by-product of the butter operation, and mash produced from garden crops.

HORSES - In May the horses were shod, the rest of the horse expense was for grain. The horses earned money in ways not so obvious by today's thinking. In January the horses were a part of getting that pulpwood out of the woods. That wood likely was owned and trucked by Ralph Sadler. In 1935 Coburn earned \$96.47 hauling wood for Ralph Sadler and in May got \$65.62 for pulpwood off the farm. In 1936 pine logs were sold to Calais Box and Lumber Company for \$248.32. The horses pulled the manure (dressing) spreader, plows, harrows, seeder, and cultivator to produce the potatoes. One horse pulled the pung loaded with butter and eggs to Calais during winter months. In October, the cordwood was hauled from the woods to roadside likely for Ralph Sadler. Finally, the work on the town road was done with the horses. Roads were muddy each spring and times were changing. People had cars and/or trucks and were depending on getting themselves and their products to market on a timely basis. Coburn, and others used the horses and his own muscle power to haul rocks to the roads, dig ditches where needed, and haul gravel to place over the rocks. Many rural farmers worked off their taxes in this manner. After 1940, Coburn used his new one-yard dump truck for this road work.

HENS – Coburn kept Rhode Island Reds. Each May he would buy a couple hundred day-old mixed chicks. (On April 29, 1930 he bought 250 day-old chicks for \$40.00). As they grew, the family would eat the roosters. The hens could produce eggs or be sold as fowl. Egg production had been an important part of the Maine family farm's economic base since the Civil War. Farmers or their wives traded their eggs at stores for goods they needed. The eggs were then shipped to city markets for cash by the storekeeper. Of course the store had to be near a railroad or a seaport. Plymouth Rock was another favorite of earlier farmer. By the 1950's, a few Maine chicken farmers were raising thousands of chickens for the meat market and hens to produce the brown eggs that are preferred in New England.

POTATOES – Coburn raised Green Mountain, and usually certified seed. Those potatoes sold in May were sold from the farm as seed to other farmers. The other potatoes were sold in Calais.

BLUEBERRIES – In 1934 Coburn paid \$11.00 for cartage of, and \$2.10 for dust for his blueberries. The labor of keeping the field and picking the crop was done by family. Dyer earned his first dollar by picking 3 bushels with a 38-tooth rake at about this time. For many years berries were sold to A. L.

Stewart and Son of Cherryfield. Bill Cushing of Crawford was their local agent. Later the berries went to Gaddis Brothers in East Machias. Blueberries were a good cash crop for the family.

FERTILIZER – Coburn sold fertilizer for The Summers Fertilizer Company of St. Stephen. At first he took orders and the company delivered. Later he used his truck to haul the fertilizer to his place. Those buying from him in 1939 were Minden Perkins, Howard Dodge, Earl Frost, Ralph Howe, Myra (Maria) Leland, William Leighton, Oscar Dodge, John Henderson, Fred Clark, Herb Lowe, Sam Cooper, Ralph Sadler, Lindsay Clarke, and H. Clark. This was a good cash business for Coburn as the statement printed below indicates.

SUMMERY SHEET - The last accounts we have from Coburn is for 1942, and the back of that book has a balance sheet which we'll share.

Cash --	earned	\$2845.83	less spent	\$2030.99	=	\$814.84	
Cattle –	earned	\$1314.17	less spent	\$ 553.63	=	\$760.54	
Poultry –	earned	\$148.62	less spent	\$107.22	=	\$ 41.40	
Potatoes –	earned	\$330.15	less spent	\$32.30	=	\$ 197.95	
Pigs –	earned	\$0.00	less spent	\$45.90	=		\$45.90 overdrawn
Horses –	earned	\$4.50	less spent	\$130.53	=		\$126.53 overdrawn
Berries –	earned	\$476.08	less spent	\$160.51	=	\$ 315.57	
Truck –	earned	\$151.19	less spent	\$226.17	=		\$74.98 overdrawn

This article shows how one man provided for his family. Other bread-winners in our area had similar ways of earning a living. Can you share something from your family with our readers?