

## THE COUNCIL IN THE FIFTIES

### 1956-1960

1958

- MCC opposes "the use of public funds to support any sectarian school of whatever faith." (The issue, it seems, was bussing children to parochial schools in Augusta.)
- Rural Church Day theme: "The Rural Farmer and His Government."
- United Baptist Convention and the Episcopal Diocese of Maine decline the invitation to become members of the Maine Council of Churches.

1960

- The first awards are given in the Council's Achievement Program for Town and County Churches.

#### WE HOPE YOU'LL BE WATCHING



your TV set (or visit a friend, if you haven't one). It will be called, we think, "THE DOOR IS OPEN," and will be presented over WCSH-TV, from 2 to 2:30 every other Sunday, beginning October 9. We hope you'll put announcement of this in your church bulletin.

And this year we have the honor to be a co-sponsor for "WINDOW ON STATE STREET," conducted by Dr. James W. Lenhart. This program is also on WCSH-TV and will be presented September 18, 25 and October 2 at 5 PM.

1955 MCC Promo



Rev. Gladys Doughty York  
1956

A founder of the Maine Council of Churches, Rev. York was the only woman in her graduating class at Andover Newton Theological School in 1935. She was minister of the North Yarmouth Congregational Church for 35 years. In 2000 she was honored by the Maine Council of Churches as one of Maine's Pioneering Women in Ministry.

#### In A Continuing Effort

to create alert interest in government and help Maine people keep in close touch with their State Legislature, the Maine Council of Churches, through its Committee on Social Education and Action, is again maintaining at Augusta a Legislative Agent. The Reverend Harvey F. Ammerman, minister of the South Parish Congregational Church of that city, will serve in this capacity during the 1955 Legislative session.

#### Through "The Augusta Newsletter"

Mr. Ammerman will keep church people informed about developments of interest to them. Mr. Ammerman, in the Newsletter and in personal and public contacts, will not speak for the Maine Council of Churches or represent it in any official sense. He will work with the good citizens of the state, to bring them into closer relationship with the functioning of their state government, that they themselves may make their own voices heard on matters of importance to them and to the state.

#### The Biennial Legislative Seminar

of the Maine Council of Churches will be held under the supervision of Mr. Ammerman. This Seminar, held first in 1947 and continued successfully each Legislative year since, brings Protestants of many denominations together at Augusta to study the work of the Legislature and their responsibilities as Christian citizens.

#### A Man Of Experience And Insight

Mr. Ammerman brings to his task a fine background. Born in Minnesota, educated at Central College, Pella, Iowa, and New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New Brunswick, New Jersey, he served churches in New York and New Jersey before coming to Maine in 1953.

#### If You Wish To Receive

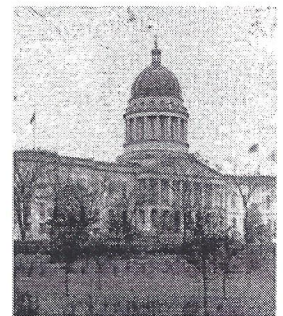
"THE AUGUSTA NEWSLETTER" during the 1955 Legislative session, please contact Mr. Ammerman, 61 State Street, Augusta, or the Portland office of the Maine Council of Churches, 97A Exchange Street. It is issued without charge.

#### If You Wish To Attend The Legislative Seminar

or to secure other information about the activities of the Legislative Agent or the Council's Committee on Social Education and Action, please contact either address above. The 5th Biennial Legislative Seminar will be held during February at the Green Street Methodist Church, Augusta. All may attend; there is no registration fee.

#### This Program Is YOUR Program

Cooperating with Mr. Ammerman and members of our Committee on Social Education and Action are able men and women in the Capitol area. This work is carried on with no compensation for him or for them, and is a service of inestimable value to our state. Your interest and your cooperation are earnestly desired.



*Maine  
Citizens  
Alert*

Augusta Newsletter

Informing congregations about legislative happenings throughout the Session.

SEEKING COMMON GROUND. WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

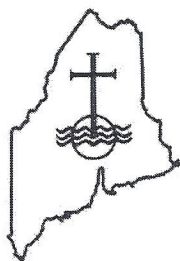


## NEW OCCASIONS TEACH NEW DUTIES

### 1961-1967



**Luther L. Allen**  
MCC Executive Secretary  
1963-1967



MCC logo in the 1960's



**Rev. Mervin M. Deems**  
MCC President  
1960-1964  
Dean of  
Bangor Theological  
Seminary

1962

- MCC begins conversations with denominations not then members of the Council, especially the Episcopal Diocese and the American Baptists.

1963

- The Council co-sponsors a race relations seminar on the centenary of the Emancipation Proclamation.
- Mr. Luther L. Allen of Garden City, NY, a layman and graduate of Union Theological Seminary and on staff of the National Council of Churches, is appointed MCC executive secretary.



#### 1963: Miss Ulmer Retires and the Council Turns Twenty-five

Speakers at the 25th Anniversary dinner and service, held at Woodfords Congregational Church, Portland, are: Miss Marion Ulmer, executive secretary who is honored on her retirement after 25 years with the Council, J. Irwin Miller of Columbus, Indiana, president of the National Council of Churches, and Rev. Dr. Mervin M. Deems, dean of Bangor Theological Seminary and president of the Maine Council of Churches.

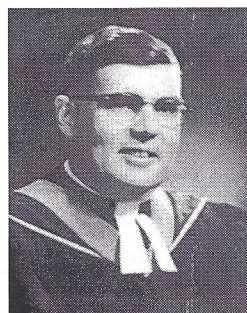
1965

- MCC executive secretary Luther L. Allen joins Roger B. May, vice president of the Portland Branch NAACP in a crowded hearing room in the basement of the Maine Statehouse to support the Anti-Discrimination Rental Housing Bill. A similar proposal was defeated by the 101st Legislature.

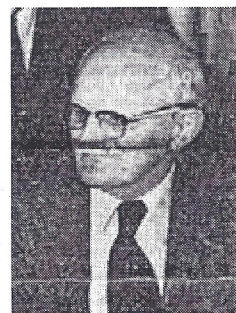
**In prepared remarks, Luther Allen addresses the Legislature: "We call upon our legislators and the citizens of Maine to enact legislation which will assure equal access for all people to all employment, housing, education, and recreation."**

1966

- A new Constitution and By-Laws is proposed that would include a Preamble with specific Christological language. By a vote of 24-4 the new Constitution is adopted. However, the Preamble is rejected by the membership, declaring that the Council will find its unity in its common humanity rather than its common theology.



**Rev. William Thompson**  
MCC President  
1967-1968



**Chester A. Baker**  
MCC President  
1969-1970

1967

- Rev. Philip G. Palmer, a United Methodist, is hired as Executive Secretary, to begin in 1968.
- MCC's Ecumenical Commission votes to join with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland and the Episcopal Diocese of Maine to create a joint Ecumenical Commission.

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## THE BANGOR YEARS

### 1968-1970

1968

- MCC offices move to Maine Hall on the campus of Bangor Theological Seminary.
- The Ecumenical Commission of the State of Maine is organized at St. Paul's Center, Augusta.

1969

- Lenten series, "Relevance of Religion," co-sponsored with the Episcopal Diocese of Maine and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, airs on E-TV.
- The Council's Department of Social Concerns sponsors a "Symposium on Prisoner Rehabilitation" at the Maine State Prison in Thomaston.
- April 1, 1969: Finance Committee recommends that MCC give its support to the Joint Ecumenical Commission of Maine, and sets a firm date for the termination of the Council's existence.

FRIDAY 31 OCTOBER 1969

Yellow's Information Ctr. 1969 104th day - 61 days to come

The MCC is 31 years old today.

In office for a while in a.m.

Picked up Chet Baker & he & ate lunch with Fathers & Brothers at St. Paul's

J + Ec. Comm. Ex. Comm. at St. Paul's at 1 p.m.

We got a lot done on new structure for me

I had supper at Civic League Ann. Meeting in Fairfield Market

Laverne spoke after supper, I spoke briefly.

Have you ordered your diary for next year? See number in Book of Hours.

Home 9:30 p.m.

October 31, 1969: Executive Secretary Phil Palmer noted the 31st anniversary of the Maine Council of Churches.

1970

- February 18, 1970. MCC president Chester A. Baker to the Council delegates: "This is an historic occasion, for today your Executive Committee will present a plan for the orderly termination of the Maine Council of Churches."
- Delegates vote to close as of March 31, 1970, and adopt an expense budget adequate to meet all bills past and current, and honoring the Biblical injunction to - "Be in debt to no one..." (Romans 13:8 TEV).
- In an effort to maintain ecumenical contacts, the state's judicatory leaders create an Office of Religious Cooperation and agree to meet together periodically.



Rev. Philip G. Palmer

MCC Executive Secretary  
1968-1970

### THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY

When the bill to create a Human Rights Commission in our State was defeated on the final day of the 104th Maine State Legislature, one of the men who voted to scuttle the commission was quoted by the Associated Press as saying, "the problem in Maine is (not) anywhere near as serious as the do-gooders would have us think." Another of the legislators thought that many people who argue for this kind of legislation are "driven by a guilt complex."

But the facts are clear to anyone who dares examine them: minority groups in Maine are subject to a great spectrum of prejudices, from subtle difficulties in obtaining haircuts and hotel rooms to overt discrimination in employment and housing. This is just plain wrong, and to dismiss those who would correct this wrong as "guilt ridden do-gooders" is a blasphemy against the basic principles of justice and truth and love.

Governor Kenneth M. Curtis proclaimed May 25th, 1969, as Human Rights Day in Maine, in part because, as stated in the Proclamation, "The Social Action Committees of each of the major religious faiths represented in the State, and numerous of their leaders, have requested that a particular day be set aside for a rededication of the State to the cause of human rights."

The leaders of the Christian Churches in Maine, including Bishop Wolf (Episcopal), Bishop Gerety (Catholic), Bishop Mathews (United Methodist), Rev. Thompson (United Church of Christ) and Rev. Palmer (Maine Council of Churches), and the Social Action Committees of the churches in the State, have demonstrated by word and deed that we can and we must go further to protect all of our citizens and their rights.

While the idea of a Human Rights Commission was dealt a serious wound on July 2, 1969, it is not yet dead, and we can expect that during the special legislative session in 1970 a major effort will be made to heal the wound and make the idea live.

Maine needs a Human Rights Commission: not because the alienated minorities threaten riots in the streets of Portland and Lewiston and Bangor. No, this is not the case at all. But Maine does need a Human Rights Commission because the basic human rights of all citizens to a place to live and work and to be free from degrading prejudices of all kinds is not yet a reality.

The Maine Council of Churches will continue to keep you informed on the progress of Human Rights Legislation, and will invite you later to encourage your State Senators and Delegates to vote FOR Human Rights in 1970.

Rev. James M. Young, Pastor  
Grace United Methodist Church  
Bangor, Maine

In 1969, the 104th Maine State Legislature rejected calls for a Human Rights Commission. On behalf of the Council, Rev. Jim Young responded.

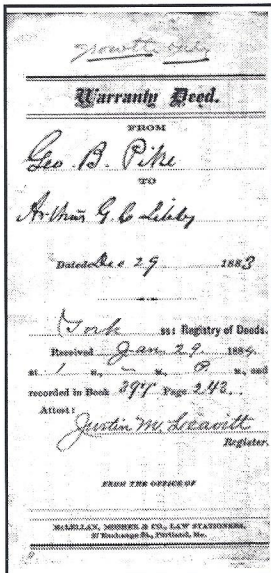
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## A DAINY PLACE FOR DAINY PEOPLE, A CURIOUS PLACE FOR CURIOUS PEOPLE



Elsie L. Libby  
and her daughter, Elsie  
about 1915



Before he died in 1942, Arthur G.C. Libby bought many hundreds of acres of land in and around Wells, Maine. Following his death, Elsie continued to buy even more land. At the time of her death, Elsie Libby owned about 1,000 acres of land on both sides of US Route 1 in Kennebunk and Wells.

### LIBBY'S TEA ROOM

**ELSIE L. KLINGMAN** was born in Louisville, Kentucky, September 7, 1883, the daughter of Baden immigrants. Her father, Dr. Fred L. Klingman was a successful Louisville dentist. On 24 May 1904, Elsie Klingman married Arthur Guy Carleton Libby, a gentleman whose ancestors had been settled in York County, Maine, for more than 250 years.

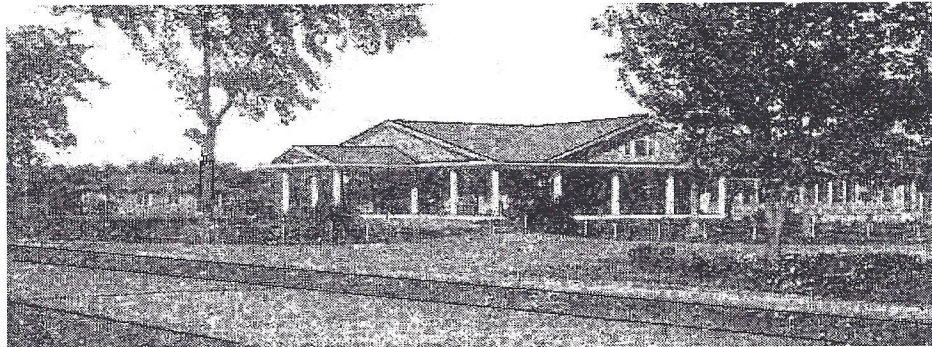
Arthur Libby brought his wife to Kennebunk, Maine, where she opened her tea room and filled it with unique southern flavor, charm, and elegance.

Libby's opened in 1920. Two years later the Kentucky Riding Club was started with thirteen fine saddle horses. On October 2, 1922, lightning struck a tree near the stable; passed to an iron hitching rid, then through a stall window, killing one horse, caused mahem along the rail-

road trestle, and took the life of a member of the railroad crew sent to rescue the horses. Libby's Tea Room was rebuilt and re-opened the following summer and, until it closed in 1942 was a landmark on the Kennebunk-Wells town line.

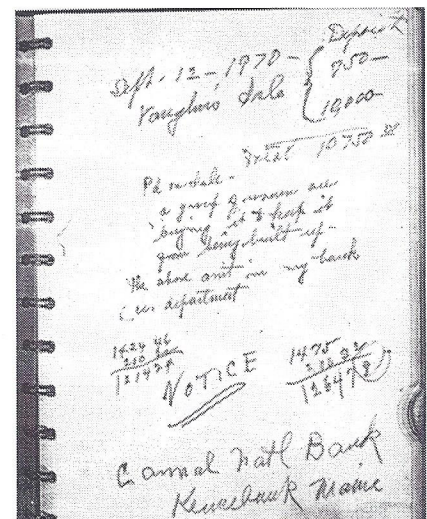
In 1980, columnist Ellen Warren Willis wrote an affectionate article for the *Maine Sunday Telegram* entitled "Tea Room too dear for Roosevelt," in which she described Libby's Tea Room in its heyday.

"Place settings of Rose Medallion china adorned tables. There was a special dining area in the back for chauffeurs of the illustrious guests whose Rolls Royces and Packards frequented the parking lot. Prices were at the time exorbitant. When president Franklin D. Roosevelt dined there he ordered the chicken. We're told he thought the lobster dinner was too expensive."



Legends concerning Elsie Libby abound. Evidently she did not permit chauffeurs to dine with regular customers; there was a place for them out back. She is said to have paid her waitresses a meager \$3.00 a day. Apparently she had no great love for the IRS. On a tax notice found among her papers is a notation, "Infernal Revenue - and I don't mean maybe." Although Elsie Libby had little use for organized religion, she considered herself a religious person. She would sit on her front porch and listen to religious broadcasts on the radio, including the MCC broadcast "Church School of the Air." In her later years, she grazed sheep on the land beside her house some yards from the former Tea Room which still housed her impressive antiques collection.

When Elsie sold Vaughn's Island in Kennebunk for \$10,750 in September 1970, she noted in her log book: "a group of women are buying it to keep it from being built up."



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AN ANTIQUE PLACE FOR ANTIQUE PEOPLE, AN IDEAL PLACE FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE.

**A place to ride, A place to eat,  
A place that's new, Yet filled with antiques,  
In fact, it's a difficult place to beat.**

**- A guest from  
Toledo, Ohio  
(ca. 1920)**

**Special Chicken Dinner 1.25**

Chicken Soup Tomato Juice Fruit Juice Toasted Crackers  
Fried Spring Chicken (Jointed)  
French Fried Potatoes Garden Vegetable  
Green Salad or Fruit Gelatin Salad  
Hot Biscuit Cornbread  
Hot Gingerbread with Whipped Cream  
Ice Cream Coffee

**Special Lobster Dinner 1.50**

Steamed Clams, Drawn Butter, Bouillon  
Toasted Crackers  
Hot or Cold Boiled Lobster, Drawn Butter  
Chips Green Salad Hot Biscuit  
Cheese and Crackers Ice Cream Coffee

Tomato Juice Fruit Juice Toasted Crackers

**Broiled Sirloin Steak**

French Fried Potatoes Garden Vegetable  
Hot Biscuit  
Hot Gingerbread with Whipped Cream Ice Cream Coffee

Steamed Clams, drawn Butter, Bouillon Toasted Crackers

**Baked Live Lobster 1.75**

Chips Green Salad Hot Biscuit  
Coffee

The "New" Libby's Menu - after 1922



**LIBBY'S**

(Copyright)

*A dainty place for dainty people  
A curious place for curious people  
An antique place for antique people  
An ideal place for hungry people*

State Road 100  
Keweenaw and Wells  
Maine

E. L. Libby, Proprietor  
Telephone-Keweenaw 204  
Copyright 1922 by E. L. Libby

**The Original Libby's Menu  
1920-1922.**

Following the 1922 fire, the "new" Libby's featured a varied menu that included chicken dinner for \$1.25, "special" lobster dinner for \$1.50 or baked live lobster for \$1.75.

Desserts included Hot Gingerbread with Whipped Cream (25 cents), Old Fashioned Shortcake (35 cents), Berries in Season with Heavy Cream (30 cents), or Ice Cream (15 cents). Coffee, tea, and milk cost 10 cents. Iced coffee or iced tea cost 20 cents. A pint of Ginger Ale or White Rock Water with cracked ice could be had for 50 cents.

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## ELSIE LIBBY'S BEQUEST

### Elsie Libby's Will: May 18, 1961

BE IT REMEMBERED, That I, Elsie L. Libby, of Wells, in the County of York, State of Maine, being of lawful age and of sound and disposing mind and memory, but mindful of the uncertainty of life, do make, publish and declare this my last will and testament hereby revoking all former wills made by me.

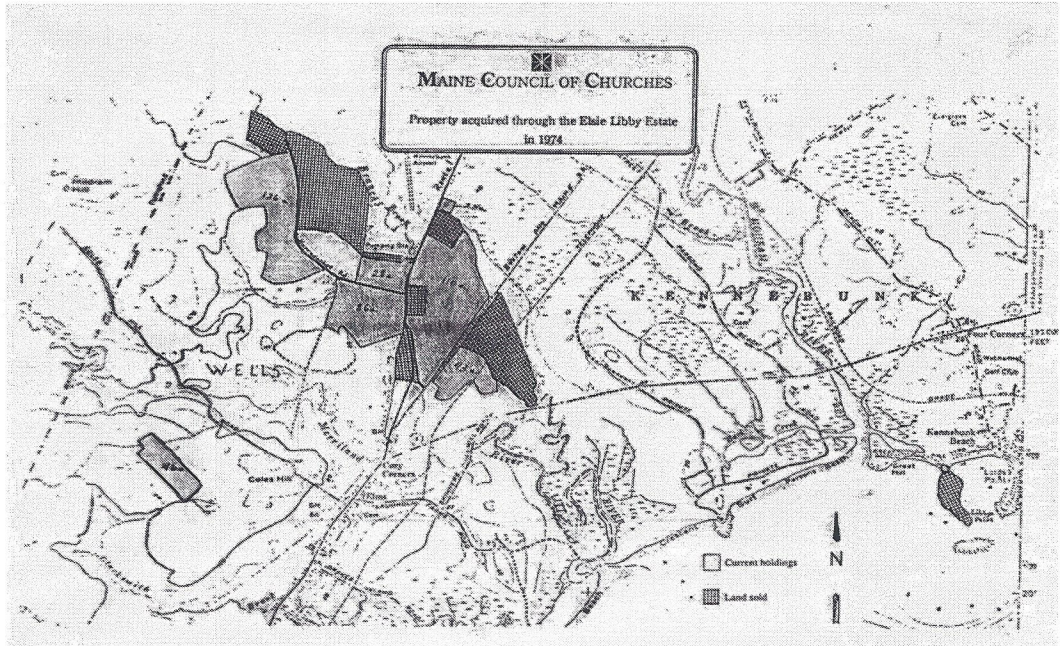
After the payment of my just debts, funeral charges and expenses of administration, I dispose of my estate, as follows:

FIRST: I give and devise to Maine Council of Churches, a corporation organized under the laws of the State of Maine and having its principal office at Portland, in the County of Cumberland, in said State, all real estate and all interests in real estate which I shall own at the time of my decease, and which shall be situated in the County of York, in said State, and which shall be situated elsewhere, to have and to hold the same to it and its successors and assigns forever.

....

IN TESTAMONY WHEREOF, I have subscribed my name in the margin of the seven preceding pages and hereunto set my hand and seal and declare this to be my last will and testament, this eighteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and sixty-one, at Portland, Maine.

*Elsie L. Libby*



Land bequeathed to the Maine Council of Churches by Elsie L. Libby

**ELSIE LIBBY** was not a church-going woman, but she admired the work of Marion Ulmer and the Maine Council of Churches' "Church School of the Air."

It was because of Marion Ulmer that in 1961, when Elsie Libby made out her will, she bequeathed the bulk of her estate to the Maine Council of Churches. If that fact was known by anyone at the Council in 1961, it had been long forgotten by 1973.

Elsie Libby died on September 9, 1973, in Portland.



In 1974, Elsie Libby's former home was leased for a year to Tatnic Hill Environmental School. In 1985, the house and land on which it stands were sold to William and Jo Johnson.



On September 30, 1973, Rev. Bruce Roberts received a telephone call. As Rev. Roberts reported it: "The telephone rang and I was asked if I was President of the Maine Council of Churches.... Fortunately I was guarded in my answer, for I was to hear that Elsie L. Libby had died and the Council was the sole beneficiary of her will, which would amount to a million and a half dollars. I did two things right at that time. I didn't say 'No' and I called our lawyer...."

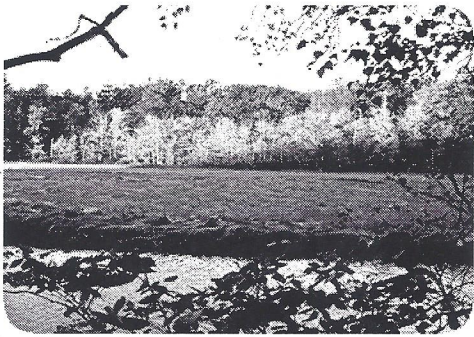
**For the Maine Council of Churches  
a new day was about to dawn.**

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## THE SALE OF THE LAND

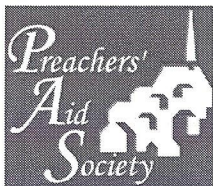
**For more than a generation** Elsie Libby's gift of land to the Maine Council of Churches has made it possible for the Council to expand its mission. As various parcels of land were sold, assets from sales were carefully invested in order to ensure that the current work might be sustained and that its ability to serve congregations would be preserved for generations to come.



In 1982, 87 acres of land was sold to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to add to the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in the Town of Wells. Another 157 acres was sold to the Service in 1991.



In 1994, the Council sold land on U.S. Route 1, Wells, to the newly forming Messiah Christian Church.



In 2007, the final parcel of land was sold to the Preachers' Aid Society of New England which is developing Jesse Lee Village, the name honoring Maine's pioneer Methodist circuit rider. Twenty-three single family cottages for retired United Methodist clergy are being built.

Under the terms of the final sale, a **Memorial Trail and Marker** is to be created on the property in memory of **Elsie L. Libby** whose generosity gave the Maine Council of Churches new life.



Interior of Johnson Hall Museum as it appears today (2008)

Since 1980, the former Libby's Tea Room building has been operated as Johnson Hall Museum, an antiques auction house and curios museum by William I. Johnson, an old friend of Elsie Libby. At the time Elsie's personal property was put up for auction, Bill Johnson acquired a number of items that had been part of Elsie Libby's antiques collection and they are now part of his museum collection. The Johnson Hall Museum houses a wondrous collection of curios, antiques, musical instruments, weather vanes, statuary, vintage furniture, lamps, artifacts, and photographs representing Johnson's eclectic tastes and passion for preserving all things old. Like Elsie Libby, William Johnson is a self-proclaimed eccentric. He says that there is a story to be told about every item in his museum.

The painting above the mantel of the double fireplace is of Elsie V. Libby, daughter of Arthur and Elsie Libby, in her attire as a horsewoman with the Kentucky Riding Club. Elsie V. (Libby) Spencer died in Los Angeles 1963, and her ashes buried at Forest Lawn Cemetery, Glendale, California. At one time, she was said to have been a cartoonist with Walt Disney Productions.



St. David's Episcopal Church, Kennebunk

In 1989, St. David's Episcopal Church purchased land from the Maine Council of Churches to build its new home on U.S. Route 1 in Kennebunk.

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