



# Pages in Time



Individual Supporters:  
Lyn & Joe Rowden, Fairfield

## Living history – Beatrice Hussey Oakes Comas

by Lyn Rowden

At age 96, Beatrice Hussey Oakes Comas, has seen a lot of history: Born during World War I, first married in World War II, re-married during Vietnam War, and living with the wars of today, Bea could say she's seen it all. But she does not dwell on the negative aspects of life. With a lively mind and jovial spirit Bea is still doing what she loves – writing. Just last week one of her articles appeared in the *Maine Observer* and each month she is featured in *Journal America*, a magazine based in Hewitt, New Jersey.

Bea Hussey was born in 1915, in Woolrich, Maine, to Chester and Marguerite Hussey. The family moved in 1922 to East Vassalboro, where Bea graduated valedictorian of the eighth grade class of East Vassalboro Grammar School, in 1928. In high school English was always her favorite subject. She attended Coburn for a year and went three years to Oak Grove School to graduate in 1932. She was also a member of Friends' Meeting. At the age of fifteen she wrote her first poem which was published in a Quaker newspaper.

In 1934, Bea moved with her parents to Waterville, and in 1940 took a job with Emery Waterhouse Hardware in Portland. In 1955, she went to

On June 13, 1970, Bea married George P. Comas, whom she met when she hired him to work as the director of the school lunch program.

getting married at 55!" After retirement Bea became serious about her writing. She has written poetry, articles, short stories, and columns for more than 60 publications including the *New York Times*, *Boston Herald*, *Chicago Sun Times*, and *Saturday Evening Post*.

Locally, Bea is recognized for her contributions to *The Town Line*. From the inception of the paper, Bea has avidly contributed articles and columns, first writing about radio personalities and then a regular column, "Tasty Trivia Tidbits." In 2001, she put together a book, *Mini-Rhymes and Magic Recipes*, featuring her favorite recipes, each with an introductory poem. From this she created her newspaper feature by the same name.

Surprisingly Bea says, "I don't call myself a great cook – but I love food and I love a great meal."

She began writing about the histories of foods and other interesting food facts, then added rhymes. With these interests, it is not surprising to see her columns in magazines such as *Good Housekeeping*, *Yankee*

*Magazine*, *McCalls*, and *Ladies' Home Journal*.

She is a member of the Poetry Fellowship of Maine and is honored by inclusion in the Poetry Society of America, which requires writing samples and selection for membership.

### Memories

from *Childhood*  
(from "Life is a Souffle")

Three things make me young again...  
Memories of scuffling, shuffling  
through the brittle, acrid autumn leaves;  
standing in an icy puddle in March  
until the water reaches my boot tops;  
blowing off the hoary wigs of dandelions gone to seed.

Bea calls herself "the voice of the elderly" because many write or call to say how much her words have inspired

them to make the most of old age. She is drawn to addressing elders, their issues, and the process of aging. In this regard, she has written several books which feature her poetry: *Growing Old Gracefully*, *Life is a Souffle*, *Helpful Hints for a Hilarious(?) Old Age* and *The Heart Remembers - the Story of a Maine House in Verse*.

Bea says writing has not really been her career, but a paying hobby. To her, writing is fun and satisfying, in and of itself. Today, Bea struggles with arthritis and other disabilities and needs help typing on her trusty typewriter, but she still has thoughts to write about.

"Writing is really my life," she said. "I enjoy it, and like all writers, I enjoy seeing my name in print."



Beatrice Hussey Oakes Comas.

Contributed photo

work as the assistant to the superintendent of schools in South Portland where she retired almost 18 years later.

She fondly recalls, "I never thought I would meet a man at the school. It's kind of a dull atmosphere and everyone is usually married already. But they hired a new director of the school lunch program and he showed interest in me."

George died in 1999 after a happy marriage of 29 years – as Bea says, "Pretty good for

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**Seeking histories on American Legion and VFW posts**  
by Lyn Rowden  
In our special feature, "Pages in Time," we focus each week on an aspect of local history. I am looking for brief histories of the various American and VFW Posts in our area, which I would like to feature in May.  
A small piece of about 250 words would be wonderful. No worries about "perfect" writing and editing, we will take care of that for you. An old photo, if available may be sent in jpeg format or mailed or brought in to the paper for scanning. You will get your photo back as long as you include your address.  
Please send me your information along with a reliable method of contacting you, by email to [townline@fairpoint.net](mailto:townline@fairpoint.net) or mail to P. O. Box 89 Jonesbrook Crossing, South China, ME 04358.  
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