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# Repairing Maine's Open Sewers: Unlikely Allies in Cleaning Up the Androscoggin

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# Who are these People?



Auburn  
Attorney – no  
photo yet

# Why am I telling you about them?

- This team attempted the first serious action against pollution of the Androscoggin by state government
- Many gaps in the story...this is a rough sketch
- Anybody know more?



Source: Andro River Alliance 2006  
PPT.



# Mayor Edmond Lambert of Lewiston



- Bio...
- Pursued remedies against notorious odors poisoning life all summer
- Middle classes turned their backs!
- His obit mentions this, but badly

# Why Lewiston?

- Life growing intolerable
- Angry editorials every summer
- Paper mills upstream, one in another state
- Why not textile mills? (no odor ?)

# Attorney General Frank Cowan



- Bio notes
- Brought suit against 3 Paper companies for Nuisance
- Common law remedy – no effective pollution laws
- Initiated program by Prof Lawrance of Bates

# Auburn Attorney Seth Manser

- Photo Not Available
- Any leads?
- Brought on as Asst AG for case
- Developed the “Information” with testimony from 79 people
- Followed through on litigation & Court decree

# Supreme Court Justice Harry Manser



- Bio
- Lived in Auburn
- Signed court decrees ordering limits in 1942 and subsequently.
- Decrees not dissolved until 1970's. (AG JEB)



# Governor Sumner Sewall



- Bio
- Said to have supported action against paper companies.
- What was his role, the real story?

# So, This was a Dream Team!

- The River and the People Finally Won
- And the fish
- ...Many years Later



# How did they Do it? And Why?

- Riparian law a dead letter
- State comfortable in abdication of trust duties
- Wartime pressures
- Little or no effective public pressure
- Nuisance law was a way around blockade in Legislature
- Why not tried elsewhere in Maine?