# Boston Post Cane

*On August 2, 1909, Mr. Edwin A. Grozier, Publisher of the Boston Post, a newspaper, forwarded to the Board of Selectmen in 700 towns* (no cities included) in New England a gold-headed ebony cane with the request that it be presented with the compliments of the Boston Post to the oldest male citizen of the town, to be used by him as long as he lives (or moves from the town), and at his death handed down to the next oldest citizen of the town. The cane would belong to the town and not the man who received it.*

*The canes were all made by J.F. Fradley and Co., a New York manufacturer, from ebony shipped in seven-foot lengths from the Congo in Africa. They were cut to cane lengths, seasoned for six months, turned on lathes to the right thickness, coated and polished. They had a 14-carat gold head two inches long, decorated by hand, and a ferruled tip. The head was engraved with the inscription, — Presented by the Boston Post to the oldest citizen of (name of town) — "To Be Transmitted". The Board of Selectmen were to be the trustees of the cane and keep it always in the hands of the oldest citizen. Apparently no Connecticut or Vermont towns were included (at one point it was thought that two towns in Vermont had canes, but this turned out to be a bit of a myth).*

*In 1924, Mr. Grozier died, and the Boston Post was taken over by his son, Richard, who failed to continue his father's success and eventually died in a mental hospital. At one time the Boston Post was considered the nation's leading standard-sized newspaper in circulation. Competition from other newspapers, radio and television contributed to the Post's decline and it went out of business in 1957.*

*The custom of the Boston Post Cane took hold in those towns lucky enough to have canes. As years went by some of the canes were lost, stolen, taken out of town and not returned to the Selectmen or destroyed by accident.*

*In 1930, after considerable controversy, eligibility for the cane was opened to women as well.*

The foregoing was taken verbatim from "The Boston Post Cane: news and history of a New England tradition." http://web.maynard.ma.us/bostonpostcane/origins-of-the-tradition (accessed April 24, 2015)

The related page **http://web.maynard.ma.us/bostonpostcane/the-canes/maine** lists all Maine towns reporting that they participate in awarding the canes.
Towns are urged to report information about recipients through the web site http://web.maynard.ma.us/bostonpostcane/contributing-updates