

ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

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THREE GREAT DIARY KEEPERS

by Robert L. Taylor

There is no better way to record history, as it unfolds itself from day to day, than to keep a diary. Not everyone has the patience and persistence to make diary entries each day. It takes time, but once the habit is confirmed, it follows as a natural routine.

To be sure, a diary may be a quite personal document, but it takes note of events of general interest, and even if only in near vicinity of the diarist's residence, it could prove of eventual value to descendants, in fact to all posterity interested in the historical development of that part of the country. It is the diary, studiously kept, that reflects the effect of historical happenings at other locations and levels, periods of war, disaster or depression, good fortune and bad, advances in science, industrial method and manners of life.

Moreover, a diary should be rich in names and dates and unusual observations. Not all who keep a diary can sense its historical relation except as a personal reminder, but that does not damage its value as an adjunct to history of the times.

Three of the most famous diary keepers in our own part of the Androscoggin Valley and environs seemed to have sensed well that they were in fact recording the history of new settlements in the Province of Maine. These were Amos Davis, land surveyor and fourth settler in Lewiston; and Andrew Robinson Giddinge and True Woodbury, both early settlers of that part of the Pejepscot claim which became the town of Danville.

The diaries of these three early residents on the east and west sides of the river are probably the most important historical documents in the files of the Androscoggin Historical Society. They do not fill the full scroll of historical narrative but they do fix exact dates, names, circumstances, even matters of conversation that might otherwise have left larger record in doubt on these points.

We present here selections from the diaries of Andrew Giddinge. Future issues will include extracts from other diarists.

Andrew Giddinge

Squire Andrew R. Giddinge was a native of Gloucester, Mass., and came to Pejepscot in 1787 and became a prominent citizen. He was a man of much learning and kept one of the most unique and valuable diaries of all. He set down countless facts of daily events and observances, and his thought and his philosophy, his hopes and fears and joys and sorrows. He kept a daily diary from 1767 until blindness overtook him in 1838, two years before his death. His spelling and mastery of the English language were superb. He even illustrated each page on the margins of his diary with well executed drawings, the only known pictures of scenes of his time. He left a

ANDREW ROBINSON GIDDINGE
Self-portrait

views of a citizen of this area. On the last day of 1800, he made the following entry:

"The last day of the expiring year which ends the Eighteenth century. . . . And with the new Century begins a new and an untried scene to this country -- ushered in by a treaty with France, and a predominance of power and Influence in the Factions that rise, and have been dissentient -- to many of the measures hitherto purposed by the Federal Government. The First effects of the vibration of public opinion, or rather the Art and perseverance of the late minority, is the Election of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency. . . . What measures this change will produce are uncertain -- but expectation is a tiptoe, and curiosity awaked -- and much anxiety falls to the share of the well-wishers to the Independence of the United States.

"My own opinion is, that very few of the fears, if any, has a real foundation. Rotation in office is certainly a good principle to regulate those measures that would exclude a perpetuity to one Man or one faction -- And the malignance of party & faction may cease when they each in their turn furnish a Magistrate to preside over the Councils of the Union. . . . The business of Railing at Administration will fall to the share of those who have hitherto had to defend that of the late administration. . . ."

great heritage.

The following account of his attendance at the dedication of the Congregational Church on what is now Main Street, Auburn, dated Nov. 14, 1833, indicates the detail in his accounts:

"About 10 o'clock, or before, I walked toward the Falls by Deacon Loring's. found all well, and preparing to go to the Dedication. I made a very short stop and proceeded to the Falls. made a very short call at the Mansion [the old Squire Little house] and proceeded to the Meeting-house where singers were practicing. Met Sarah Little on her return from hearing the singing. I walked then over the Bridge to Mr. Pickard's where I dined and waited till the hour of the Meeting, and then walked over in company with Mrs. P. & Miss Hackett and got a seat as near the desk as I could.

"At two P.M. the Reverend Gentlemen entered. viz, Mr. Adams the pastor, Greeley of Turner, Thurston of Winthrop, Hawes of Topsham, Jones of Minot, some others might be there but none took parts except the above. Mr. Adams said a few words on the subject I suppose of a Bible in two vols. presented to the Society for use in the public services of the church and society. Music--Prayer by Mr. Greeley. music. a Dedicatory Hymn-- Original--Sermon by Mr. Thurston. Music. Address by Mr Jones--prayer by Mr. Hawes. Music. &c., appointment of an evening service. music. Dismission. Benediction.

"I returned to Pickardville took supper and then came to the evening meeting, and thence to Dea Loring's where I arrived in a calm but dark time. soon after a very heavy rain commenced which continued till sunrise of the 15."

Giddinge also commented on historic events, thereby providing us insights regarding the

AHS HISTORY

(Part 2)

by Harold Dutch

The founding of the Androscoggin Historical Society and its early years were covered in the last issue of this newsletter, as pieced together from newspaper clippings. There are no secretarial records from those years; however, we do have a list of those who served as presidents of the Androscoggin Historical and Antiquarian Society, and records since 1939 seem complete. In this article, we'll carry the society forward to 1950.

The following persons were president: Mrs. John Sturgis - 1923, Reuel W. Smith - 1924, James E. Philoon - 1925 to 1933, Charles P. Wight - 1933 to 1937, Mrs. Charles W. Eaton - 1937 to 1939, Mrs. William F. Schoppe - 1939 to 1940, John E. Libby - 1940 to 1943, Mrs. Verna H. Woodbury - 1943 to 1946, Arnold G. Westerberg - 1946 to 1947, Mrs. Isabel F. Marble - 1947 to 1950.

Secretaries (clerks) were Mrs. Harry J. Stone - 1939 to 1942, Mrs. Verna H. Woodbury - 1942 to 1943, when the term "secretary" was replaced by "clerk," Ruby A. Briggs - 1943 to 1946, Sarah L. Staples - 1946 to 1950.

Treasurers were Bernard A. Chase - 1939 to 1944, Charles F. Adams - 1944 to 1945, Imelda Thibault - 1945 to 1950.

Custodians (in charge of the collection) were James E. Philoon - 1939 to 1947, John E. Libby - 1947 to 1949, Mrs. Dorothy Pierce - 1949 to 1950. In the year 1942-43, a curator was added to the elected officers, whose job seemed to be to report on the acquisitions. Miss Edna Cornforth served from 1942 to 1944, Mrs. James E. Philoon from 1944 to 1947, and Thelma F. White from 1947 to 1950.

The original by-laws designated three directors, but in the year 1940-41, four directors were elected, and two years later, five directors were named. The following year, 1943-44, the by-laws were amended to have the board consist of seven members plus the officers. The dues structure was also set at one dollar per year, contributing membership at five dollars per year, and life membership at fifty dollars.

At the annual meeting held in the spring of 1945, a committee report stated that nothing definite had been accomplished in finding a permanent home. Evidently, the society was looking for a new location.

The 1950's were a period of growth for the society, the decade opening with the gift of a house from businessman Everett A. Davis and with Clarence March being elected president.

LOCAL HISTORY BOOKS FOR SALE

You may now order three books on local history in our office in the County Building. The reprints of a history of Lewiston and a history of Greene are the result of the efforts of our members David C. and Elizabeth (Keene) Young. Our executive secretary Robert L. Taylor has written a history of Limington, Maine. All three are published by Heritage Book Publishers of Bowie, MD.

You may pick up the Lewiston and Limington books at our office. You may place an order for a copy of one or more of the three books to be mailed to you; please include \$3.00 for shipping. If you have questions, call our office at 784-0586, weekdays between 1:30 and 5:00.

A History of Lewiston, Maine, with a Genealogical Register of Early Families - Janus G. Elder; ed. by David & Elizabeth (Keene) Young. This work consists of two main parts: the first part is a reprint of a narrative history of Lewiston which was written by Elder, and first published in 1882; the second part is a family register based on data collected by Elder, but never before published. The family register has been extensively corrected and expanded by the editors. 1989, c430 pp., maps, index, paper, \$27.00.

Sesquicentennial History of the Town of Greene, Androscoggin County, Maine, 1775-1900, with some matter extending to a later date - Walter Lindley Mower; new Preface by David C. & Elizabeth (Keene) Young. This history covers all the usual topics, and spans the time from the aboriginal Indians down to the early years of the twentieth century; one chapter has civil lists for 1788-1938, and another gives marriage records and marriage intentions for 1803-1937; two-thirds of the volume consists of genealogies of local families which are now made much more useful by the addition of a name index. (1938) 598 pp., illus., new index, paper. \$35.00

History of Limington, Maine, 1668-1900 - Robert L. Taylor. This work is drawn from a wide variety of sources including the town records, the day books of Francis Meeds which contain a year-by-year record of deaths in the town from 1816 to 1845, from newspaper files, and various private collections. Includes chapters on a variety of topics and lists of Selectmen, Town Clerks, and Principals of Limington Academy for the years 1900-1990. The genealogical chapter which appeared in the original edition of this work (1975) has been omitted because a more extensive publication of the genealogies of early Limington families compiled by Mr. Taylor is planned. 1991, 2nd ed., c165 pp., illus., maps, index, paper, \$15.50

Andrew Giddinge drew in his diaries the illustrations in this issue. These are enhanced reproductions from Lewiston Saturday Journal, July 21, 1900, and Lewiston Journal, Illustrated Magazine Section, 1922.

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