

# ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

October 1992

Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society No. 7

---

## DUES INCREASED

The Board of Directors of the Society has voted to increase the annual membership dues for the first time in more than fifty years. The increase in annual dues from three to five dollars and in contributing membership dues from five to ten dollars goes into effect for the 1993-1994 year. The lifetime membership remains at fifty dollars.

The Board was concerned about the increasing costs of standard services to the entire membership including postage and printing of all mailings, such as meeting notices and the newsletter. The new dues structure is an attempt to cover these more realistically.

Members and the general public will continue to benefit from other free services that our museum, library, and executive secretary provide. Historians, genealogists, news media, businesses, and others have found our collections a treasure trove. In addition, many children tour our facilities as part of their social studies classes or as members of scouts or other youth groups. We rely upon other sources of income, particularly from our endowment, to support the rest of our budget.

## FUNDS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND FIRE ENGINE RESTORATION

The Board has established two earmarked funds to which persons may contribute. One is created to enable the Society to support worthy historic preservation projects in the community. The second is to enable the Society to restore the Excelsior Fire Engine that we recently acquired. Our current operating budget does not permit us to do this. Future newsletters will provide details. You may send contributions to Susan Sturgis, AHS Treasurer, Mechanics Savings Bank, 100 Minot Avenue, Auburn, ME 04240.

## DIARY OF PHEBE MERRILL

Phebe C. Merrill kept a diary during 1868, of which we have a typed transcript. She was age 36, having been born in Hebron, Maine, 15 September 1832, the daughter of Jonathan Barrows and

Elizabeth (Bearce) Merrill. She died in South Paris, Maine, 22 April 1903. Her diary not only is a record of her daily activities and local events, but also a marvelous account of her feelings and attitudes. Part of the year, she resided in Hebron. Much of the year was spent in Lewiston, where she worked in the Lincoln Block, a boarding house run by the Lewiston Mills Company for mill workers.

Sat., Jan. 11: Attended to washing. Oh how my fingers ached when I got the clothes hung up, in the house, too. An odd day to wash, but the boy could not attend to it before. Hulled corn, had some for supper and it was good. Another Saturday night. I'm nearer death; am I nearer Heaven? O, for a clean heart. Our Pastor not yet returned. We miss him.

Sun., Jan. 12: Very cold. Suffered in church. Atwood B---[Bumpus] read one of Spurgeon's sermons. I guess it was a good sermon, but a poor reader can spoil anything. Concert afternoon. How we did miss our Pastor and superintendent. . . .

Wed., Feb. 5: . . . Mrs. Greenwood has an oyster supper at the chapel. I think it is a disgrace to the place.

Thurs., Feb. 6: A snowstorm, moderated. Levi [her brother] and I have attended to the washing. I have written two letters, then this evening sewed carpet rags about as long as I could. Am very tired. . . . Mrs. G's "supper" did not amount to much; about a dozen or a few more there. I think it came out quite well.

Sat., Feb. 29: . . . The name of the pedler we kept last night, P. A. Darington, of Peru. He appears to be a good man. He carries bed-spreads, table linens, drapes, handkerchiefs, etc., "pure Irish linen". We wanted towels for boarders. Providence sent him here to stay the night.

Wed., Mar. 25: . . . President Johnson's impeachment trial is progressing --- rascal. . . .

Fri., Mar. 27: A splendid sap day. . . . Our Pastor called but I was tending sugar, and besides did not look fit to be seen. We have got a tub of eighty weight ready for draining. Sugar making is hard work for men and women. . . .

Sun. Apr. 19: A beautiful day. Mr. Herrick preached from I Co., 13:12: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." An uncommonly good sermon for him. My scholars in the S.S. did not act well today. I was not prepared with a good lesson. Altogether it seemed to me an unprofitable season. O that I might be the means of doing the dear children some good.

LEWISTON

Thurs., Aug. 6: A pleasant day. I arose at three, got ready, and Levi and I started for Lewiston about five. Got here about eight. It was hard to leave home . . . . Ran around on the street and had lonesome time after Bub left. I have concluded to work in the kitchen of the boarding house. . . .

Fri., Aug. 21: . . . My Pastor called to the door. Brought me a bundle from home & in it was a small bag of apples. How good they did taste! Letters from my Mother & Emma. . . . A pillow in my bundle. The one here smelt badly.

Wed., Aug. 26: . . . A very busy day -- extra dishes & kitchen floor to wash, but no extra pay. It seems good to have a constant companion in my work. Tom Thumb is in the city. I got a glimpse of his coach & ponies from my window.

Thurs., Sept. 3: . . . My work somewhat changed. -- a new dish girl. I clear tables, do second cook's work, etc. Been this evening to the park and heard our own Governor Washburn lecture. Did not stay to hear all. Mrs. Shepard was too tired to stay longer. He was smart. Wish I could remember all I heard. I have to change my room. Very sorry. I fried a bushel and a half of doughnuts.

Fri., Sept. 4: . . . The change in my work has rested me somewhat, but the work is hard anyway. I can not tell how long I shall stay. My pay is not according to my labor.

Thurs., Sept. 10: . . . A new cook, Mrs. Hellar, from Rockland, came last night. She is not a religious woman I find by her talk. She goes to dancing school. I was shocked for she must be fifty years old, I should think, and she is a Democrat!

Fri., Sept. 11: . . . Well, I have been promoted, from dishwasher to second cook. . . .

Sat., Sept. 12: . . . Levi & George Whitman called to see me. They came to the "rally". Two bands and a large torch light procession to the park, where we heard speeches from an Irishman from Mass., a Mr. Shaw & S. Perham.

Mon., Sept. 14: . . . Election day. Enough towns have been heard from to make it quite sure that Gov. Chamberlain, the Republican candidate, has been elected. Very heavy cannon have been discharged. This city went Republican with considerable increase over last year.

Fri., Sept. 18: . . . I think I shall be obliged to give up my place if I have to work as I have for the past week -- from three or four in the morning, until eight, nine or even ten in the evening. One hundred and fifty to cook for, or nearly so.

Wed., Sept. 23: . . . I got nine dollars and twenty-two cents pay for twenty-three days. How glad I am to be earning so much.

Fri., Sept. 25: . . . Work is hard -- I arose soon after three and did not get to my room until half past nine. But the worst of all is to hear such language, God's holy name profaned. And by some I can hardly believe my ears. God have mercy upon them & me.

Tues., Sept. 29: This day I have made 37 pumpkin pies. Mrs. Lowell came down and rolled mince pie crust awhile -- a great help -- so we made 78 pies today, and that is not half the work we have done. Quite a scene in the kitchen in consequence of putting up "a mean dinner" for a man. I got some "sauce" from his wife. I consider her too low to be noticed.

Thurs., Oct. 1: . . . I told Mrs. Ingraham that I thought I must resign my berth in this house. The work is so hard, I fear it will make me sick.

Wed., Oct. 7: . . . This forenoon, besides the everyday chamber work, I washed the sink room, sitting room and short passage from it. Then I was so tired that I lay down, but was soon called to make a sick man's bed, after which Mrs. I. gave me a smart talking to because she thought I was not cleaning enough. She expected me to clean everything until four. I had a good cry, then went and cleaned two flights of stairs, the banisters & two halls.

Thurs., Oct. 22: Mr & Mrs. Ingraham have been trying to persuade me to remain here.

Sat., Oct. 24: . . . Called to Mr. Fuller's bookstore. They are waiting for me. I told him I would go Monday, P.M.

Mon., Oct. 26: Auburn, Maine. . . . Well, I am here at Mr. Fuller's, High Street, Auburn, where I came this afternoon. Mr. & Mrs. Ingraham both invited me to come back there whenever I wished. They would make an opening for me.

Wed., Oct. 28: . . . O such an ironing as I have done forenoon & afternoon. I am satisfied it will be useless for me to think of doing the work here. Told Mrs. Fuller as much this evening. She seemed disappointed.

Fri., Oct. 30: . . . The hand of Providence sent a girl here, so I shall not have to leave Mrs. F. alone. I do feel relieved. I went over to "the block" this afternoon. They want me to go back.

Sat., Oct. 31: Lewiston Well, I am in "the block" again. . . Found the chamber work waiting for me. I feel better. Have not cried today. . . The people here laugh at me some about "my trip to Auburn". I can bear it!

Tues., Nov. 24: I have finished my work here for this time, and expect to go home tomorrow to stay a few weeks.

Wed., Nov. 25: At Home It has been a splendid day. Soon after four o'clock this afternoon I bid adieu to Lincoln Block and its inhabitants for awhile, and here I am with my Mother.

## AHS HISTORY

### Part Six: Olive Morrill's Bequest

by Leon Norris

Olive Morrill was the granddaughter of Nahum Morrill and the daughter of John Adams Morrill. She was an active member of the community, a member of High Street Congregational Church, the Women's Guild, Board of Trustees of Auburn Public Library, Women's Hospital Association, and a life member of the Androscoggin Historical Society as well as the Mount Holyoke Alumnae Club, the college where she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1921. She enjoyed bridge playing and flower gardening. Another hobby was photography. She took slides of her many travels around the world and used them for lectures with various groups.

Miss Morrill passed away on January 5th, 1983, the last of three generations of that prominent family to have resided on Prospect Street in Auburn. She left in trust to the Androscoggin Historical Society her home on the corner of Prospect and Court Streets, together with the contents and funds to maintain it. It was her wish that the Society use the residence as its headquarters and museum. The Board of Directors seriously considered the possibilities and came to the conclusion that the homestead was inadequate to house the exhibits, library and meeting room. Other problems were security, limited parking, and potential difficulties with the driveway.

On recommendation of the Society's Board of Directors the family home at 1 Prospect Street and its contents were sold with the exception of some items that were appropriate for the museum.

A Morrill endowment trust was established with the funds realized from the sale of the real estate and household furnishings combined with the funds provided for maintenance.

This fund is dedicated to the perpetual memory of the Morrill Family whose family ties with this community have spanned three generations.

The generous gift of Olive Morrill will have an impact on the future of our Society. The challenge that she has extended to us will require far more involvement of the directors and Society members than ever before.

## ESTHER MOODY'S RECOLLECTIONS

(Part 2)

Mrs. Esther (Nason) (Ray) Moody, at age 87 when interviewed by the *Lewiston Journal* about 1903, reminisced about early Lewiston and Auburn. The story was reproduced in *Lewiston Saturday Journal*, February 2, 1918, p. 9.

"I can easily remember back to the year 1821, when I was five years old. Old Mr. James Goff kept a small store on what is now Court street, and I frequently went there to do errands. I lived near Littlefield's Tavern, and it was quite a long walk, but I did not mind it much as I usually got a stick of candy for my trouble.

"I can well remember that old store and just how it looked. Mr. Goff had a barrel of molasses, a barrel of rum, some sugar, fish, dry goods and a few other articles of general necessity. I can remember just how he looked the first time that I ever saw him. He sat in the door of the old store fiddling, and I thought that I never heard such beautiful music. Mr. Goff was a very tall and spare man, and used to make a good deal of me when I came to his store.

"Where the Auburn depot now stands there used to be a blueberry bog, and my mother frequently went there to pick berries. Close by was an old graveyard, and I can well remember how frightened I used to be when passing it, I generally shut my eyes and ran by it as fast I could go.

"The only two story frame house in those days was owned by old Squire Little. It was painted white and looked upon as a great place for those times. There was a meeting house down at the foot of Drummond hill, and an old tavern farther up that was owned by Elisha Keene.

"A few years later, Tom Little, a son of the old squire, built another store in the village. He claimed that his store was more up to date than the one owned by Mr. Goff, but neither of them would compare very well with the stores they have in Auburn today.

"The first physician in Auburn was old Dr. Chandler, of Minot. He lived six miles from the bridge, but he had all the practice there was at that time. There didn't seem to be as much sickness in those times as now. The people all lived in a simple manner and they knew nothing about the new fangled diseases. . . .

"Then there was old Squire Giddinge, another queer character. He was a short and thick set man, smooth shaven, and always walked with a cane. He was a great talker and when he and father got together they had some warm discussions. They were firm friends, but each one was a great stickler for what he believed. The old squire was a very intelligent man, but had some queer notions and habits.

## CHURCH RECORDS IN OUR COLLECTION

- \* Records of Baptist Society in Lisbon, 1822.
- \* Records of Christian Social Library, founded at Lewiston in 1819.
- \* Records of Free-will Baptist Church of Lewiston (1817-1830) and Records of Second Free-will Baptist Church.
- \* Records of the South Meeting House in Lewiston, 1818-1825.
- \* Records of Clough Meeting House, Second Free-will Baptist Church in Lewiston, 1838 and on.
- \* Records of the Lewiston Falls and First Baptist Society, Lewiston, 1852-1868.
- \* Record of Lewiston Falls Baptist Sabbath School, 1859.
- \* Records of Monmouth Church, 1817-1847.
- \* Records of the Meeting of the Proprietors of the First Congregational Meeting House in Danville, near Lewiston Falls, 1833.
- \* Records of the First Free-Will Baptist Parish in Pownal, 1847-1865.
- \* Records of First Congregational Church, West Auburn, Book I, 1844-1870.

### WILLIAM PLUMMER'S REVOLUTIONARY SERVICE

(from his diary)

Wednesday 14th December 1836 . . . this day 81 years ago I was born at Scarborough In the year 1755 at the age of 13 or 14 years my Mother died and I went to Sea of & on tell the year 75 then I joned army at Cambridg - in January foloing i sarved as soldier in Portland And discharged in the of 1776 then i went a privvitteerin

next march i inlisted & went into the army - was to takein Burgoine & his army - and in monmouth Battle

Monday 19th d . . . I Should like to write a good deal more But I am Not able I went with mjor Tollbert to take The pickit gally lieing at fogleings ferry by Rhod island and we carraed her to Stoning town in Conecut I was to the takeing Buroine & his army I went from Saratogue to valoie ford or forgue A Remarkable hot day and from thence To Rhod island & winered at providence i was a solder at Cambridg and a Solder in Caskobay after it was Burnt by mowit I went in a Schooner Priveteer Putnam Capt Stephen Mashell of Salem and he Was Killed ' a James mgfary they ware Shot thru with a olb shot and 15 grape Shot & cut all to peces I was ship Wracked on the Cours of france and a Number of times at other times and I Remin yet Blesses by god for all things I Cant write one hunderedth part of my hardships fare well all - Wm Plummer

### OTHER RECORDS

- \* Records of the Proprietors of Lewiston Bridge, 1823-1865.
- \* Records and charter of the Lewiston Falls Village Corporation 1849-1856.
- \* Buckfield School Book for District No. 4, 1854-1872.
- \* Livermore School Book for District No. 1, 1829-1885.
- \* Lewiston School Book for District No. 6, 1824-1844.
- \* Lewiston School Book for District No. 2, 1853-1863.

Androscoggin Historical Society  
County Building  
Auburn, Maine 04210