

# ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

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## THE MORRILL FAMILY OF AUBURN THE MORRILL FAMILY OF AUBURN THE MORRILL FAMILY OF AUBURN THE MORRILL FAMILY OF AUBURN

by Leon Norris

When Nahum Morrill came to Auburn in 1846 the area was experiencing many changes in its development. Auburn was already a thriving town and the railroad had reached here four years before in 1842. Later he was to see the town of Danville annexed (1856 & 1867) and in 1869 Auburn became a city. In 1859 Nahum was appointed Judge of Probate of the newly formed Androscoggin County. He maintained a law office in the Phoenix Block on Main Street. His son John A. Morrill joined him in law practice. During the Civil War he served as a District provost Marshall. His interests in the community were many including membership in the Excelsior Hand Pump crew, an important part of Auburn's early fire protection. Nahum Morrill lived to the ripe old age of 97 and died August 26, 1917.

John Adams Morrill followed in his father's foot steps in many ways during his life time. He served as associate Justice of the Maine Supreme Court, was a trustee of the Auburn Public Library and later as its treasurer. He also served on the building commission that located a site and erected the present library building. In 1901 he was appointed to revise the Statutes of Maine providing the first modern index to Maine Laws. John Morrill also served as a Judge of Probate for Androscoggin County as his father had. John Morrill was a member of the High Street Congregational Church and wrote a history of the Church that is an important reference to the church's past. Justice Morrill died August 24th, 1945 at the age of 90. He was survived by his two children: Olive Morrill of Auburn and Dr. Dorothy I. Morrill of Frederick, Maryland.

## ESTHER MOODY'S RECOLLECTIONS

(Part 3)

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.

"When I saw Auburn get to be a village of a dozen houses I thought that was a great place. There was a school house over near Littlefield's Tavern, and that was the most important one in the town. The advantages for education in those days were very limited when compared to the present time.

"One of the characters of those early days in Auburn was Dr. Tobias Purinton. He boarded at Keenes tavern, and was considered very skilful. He always kept lot of leeches, and when he was sent for to see a patient, about the first thing he would do was to bleed them. That was the way that they doctored then. Bleeding and giving powerful cathartics were the principal things done for a sick person.

"Goff hill was a wilderness when I was a girl. The only roads leading out of Auburn, was the one to Minot, and another one down the river. Of course the bridge connected us with Lewiston, and there were a few roads over there.

"Squire Little was the big man of the town. I can remember when his father died, and that I attended the funeral. The old gentleman had only one eye, as the other one had been lost several years before. The squire got some property at his father's death, but he made the greater part of his fortune himself. He was a very rich man when he died, but I cannot see that he was very popular. He didn't seem to have a way to make very many personal friends.

"My first recollections of Lewiston are still clear in my mind. There was only one store in the place and that was kept by a man by the name of Lowell. It was located at Lowell's Corner, which must be near the big watering trough on Haymarket Square. There was a carding mill and a saw mill in the place and old Major Frye owned one of them. He was the father of William P. Frye and I knew him well. He kept a little post office near the head of the cross canal. The major was an old fashioned democrat, and when the other party came into power they turned him out. Mr. Frye was a very fine man, and if ever there was a Christian he was one. He and Lane Wright used to come over to our schoolhouse and hold meetings. Major Frye was a good talker in these meetings, and he also used to lead off in the singing. There was one song that was a favorite of his and he always sang it. I shall never forget how the old man looked as he leaned back in his chair and threw all of his force into the last verse, and I shall never forget that verse, either. Here it is:

'We will not be sad and mournful,  
Who have Jesus for our friend;

Tho the world to us be scornful,  
He will keep us to the end.  
Shout, O, glory hallelujah;  
He will help us to the end.'

"O, yes, Major Frye was a dear old man. He was a great friend to my father and the two men were frequently together. He was an Andrew Jackson man in politics, and was greatly pleased when he was elected president. Then there was his son, Joseph Frye, who was fitting for the ministry. He overtaxed his brain in study and broke down and died. I can remember him as if but yesterday.

"I went to Lewiston to live in 1860, and kept a boarding house on Lincoln street. There were only two houses on that street then, and one of them was mine. It was a nice and quiet place at that time.

"The first doctor in Lewiston was old Dr. Gorham and he lived in a little old house on Sabatis street. The first meeting house was on the side of David Mountain, and was of the Free Baptist denomination. After a time it was moved down to Haymarket Square and turned into a store. The only streets in Lewiston when I first saw it was one down the river and another one up towards Greene. Lisbon street was covered with bushes, and where the DeWitt House stands there was a big bog, or frog pond."

## **AHS HISTORY - Part 7**

by Harold Dutch

We now return to our chronological listing of Society officers and essential business. In 1961-1962, the directors once again discussed the need for a suitable building in which to display the Society's collection. One location suggested was The Franklin in Auburn where the new Edward Little High School had been built. The *Lewiston Sun* reported that the directors saw the site as the place for an Auburn civic center, a building that could also house a museum, library, and city building. The idea never developed. It's interesting to note that thirty years later we still need a larger museum, a new library, a new city building, and a civic center.

Neil Donahue was elected president that year, and Harry Rowe, who had been president, became vice president. Others were Clarence March, executive secretary; Ruth Estes, recording secretary; Imelda Thibault, treasurer; Willis Trafton, general counsel. These officers served for two more years, with Ruth A. Bishop replacing Ruth Estes in 1963-1964. In

1964-1965, Donahue and Rowe exchanged positions; all other officers remained the same. Another change in recording secretary was made in 1965-1966, with Edith Labbie elected to the post and Ruth Bishop named assistant recording secretary. The other officers were reelected, and the entire slate was returned for 1966-1967. Geneva Kirk, who still serves as a director, was elected to the board in 1965.

The dream of a new building came to the forefront again in 1966, when Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gremley (He was a director, and Mrs. Gremley came on the board in 1975.) offered their house at the corner of Elm and Main Streets, Auburn, to the Society for a museum. Harry Rowe, Neil Donahue, and Clarence March viewed the 14-room home and reported to the directors that the Society could not afford its upkeep and, regretfully, so notified Mr. and Mrs. Gremley.

The by-laws were revised in 1967, calling for the officers plus seven members to form the board of directors, the officers to include an "executive secretary and curator" and a membership secretary. With March adding curator to his title and Mrs. Bishop becoming membership secretary, the 1966-1967 officers continued for another year. Robert Wade was named to the finance committee, on which he served until 1992. In 1966-1967 the Society received over \$2,000 from the Katherine Kilbourne estate.

We conclude the 1960's with the list of officers for 1968-1969: President, Harry Rowe; vice President, John W. White, still a director; Executive Secretary and Curator, Clarence March; Recording Secretary, Edith Labbie; Membership Secretary, Ruth Bishop; Treasurer, Imelda Thibault; General Counsel, Willis Trafton Jr. Jane Norris was elected to the board of directors.

## **JONATHAN HODGKIN DIARY**

Jonathan Hodgkin (1795-1876), son of Jonathan and Anna (Welch) Hodgkins, was a farmer and carpenter in south Lewiston. He married Sally Brooks in 1817 and they had six children. After her death in 1836, he married her sister Orpha and they had six children also. Ironically Orpha's first marriage is recorded in the very first entry of Jonathan's diary. He served in the local militia, winning election as lieutenant and later as captain. He lived in a brick house still standing on Pine

Woods Road across from Apple Valley Golf Course. A transcript of his 1829-1833 diary and of his account book with entries from 1823 to 1835 are in the AHS library.

March 22d [1829] was Sunday I went to meeting to clough school house Curtis preached after meeting we came home Squire Garcelon & wife came here Benjamin Merrill & Orpah Brooks was Merried Ai [Brooks] was here

[Apr] 6 I was to town meeting settled with John carvill paid him 50 cents for A taro board that i had of him I paid farnham four dollars in part for tailoring Wm Garcelon Dan Reed W B Blasdel was Elected selectedmen

7th Am Was at home pm I helpt Jones moove barn

13 Am went down to lamberts Birk promised to pay mr lambert 50 cents for me for bording school miss last sumer for him pm helpt John Brooks hugh for a ½ day i owd him for buchering

[June] 8th Am went over to Dwinols Returned some bad money to him 2 dols he let me have 2 dols good got some thin cloth to make me a Jacket 3 yds at 25 cents pm went to help capt Saml Garcelon rase barn mrs sophy garcelon cut me jaccot paid hur 17 cents it rand wet time for rasing

13 I went to Election [of local militia] up to Joseph Dills at ten oclock Elected Joshua Robinson Capt sward Horn insgn myself lieut

[July] 4th Mr morse had my horse & waggon to meeting house I bored 2 dollars of mr morse went over to Ebnezer hams settled with him paid him two dollars & one cent it being one third part of the cost for rum Brandy & shugar for our Election June 13th 1829 got some rotabaga turnip seed soad some pm went to mr hollands hoing bee

[Sept.] 10th I went up to the corner got coat & pantalons farnham made for me I paid him 26 cts for lining buttons and silk Extere Baugh sward appalet & belts of coln Read for seven dollars gave him my note payable in one year

11th Am helpt mr morse thrash pm looked for my calves today we heard Littles factory was burnt last Knight

[April] 5 [1830] I went to town meeting coln Garcelon wm Dingley Walter R blasdel was elected select men overseer

[Nov.] 29th was to on school house wee hald it up on the ledge

30th mr row helpt me two hours under pin poarch . . .

[Dec.] 7th I was seting Glass in school house winders

8th I Am workt on school house pm sot some glass 1,68 put in 28 squars of sash at 6 cts 37 squars of glass at 4½ cts 1,66 to putty and seting 1,11 2½ days work at 50 cts 1,25 for use of timber for shoes 16 cts making in the whole 5 dols 86 cts more than my tax

9th was about home got up some wood

10th was to work on shed up to school house framing for wood shed

11th Am was to work on shed . . .

12 was Sd was about home cold and windy

13th was about home made fore ex to Ezekiel merrills waggon and seat board painted it got up some wood

14th was to work on wood shed up to school house shingling

[Jan.] 5th [1831] ice all gon dull weather I was about home Am pm was to work on litle house mooved it across the road esq Garcelon run out school house lot made A deed

[April] 4th went to town meeting . . . H Read was elected town clerk & 2d select man coln Garcelon 1st select man John M frye 3d . . .

[April] 2d [1832] went to town meeting coln Read Coln fry S B Garcelon was ellected selectmen sleying pore

[Nov.] 5th . . . pm went to town meeting carrd in my votes for electors for presedent + vice pesd Clay electors had 155 Jacson electors 61 anti mason electors 3 making in the hole 219 . . .

[Dec.] 21st Am. . . Agreed with ham brooks to keep our school this winter for 16 dollars pr month bord him self 26 days for the month pm went to notify the neighbors the school to commence next monday the 24d

### **HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES? CAN YOU RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS?**

The Board has elected Alma Palmer to fill a vacancy in the office of Membership Secretary. If you have not paid your dues for 1992-1993, please send your three dollars (or five dollars as a contributing member) to her at Box 167, Minot, ME 04258. You can also help us by finding new members. Ask friends, neighbors, co-workers, and relatives to join.

### **OUR COLLECTION'S LOCAL NEWSPAPERS**

#### **Bound Volumes**

- \* Lewiston Falls Journal, 1854-1866
- \* Lewiston Weekly Journal, 1866-1912
- \* Lewiston Evening Journal, 1872-1952
- \* Lewiston Weekly Gazette, 1872-1879
- \* The Democratic Advocate, 1854-1859
- \* Lewiston Journal Magazine, 1925-1983
- \* The Lisbon Enterprise, 1912-1951
- \* Auburn Clipper, Dec. 1873-Aug. 1874

### Collection of Articles

Robert Taylor has been engaged in a long term project of going through the Lewiston newspapers looking for historical and genealogical articles relating to Androscoggin County. The years covered were from the earliest newspaper in 1854 all the way to 1947. A variety of topics are covered. Photocopies obtained from the microfilm of the newspapers at the Auburn Public Library are now available for researchers in the Society's files.

### MANUSCRIPTS IN OUR COLLECTION

- \* True Woodbury (1756-1828) of Danville, account book covering period 1772-83, with partial diary for 1777-78. Another account book covering 1791-98. Individual diaries dated Dec. 1805-Apr. 1806, Mar. 1810-Aug. 1817, Mar. 1818-May 1819, Dec. 1820-Aug. 1823.
- \* Amos Davis of Lewiston, account book for 1790, Book on Mathematics and nautical Sailing, made by him in 1790.
- \* Col. William Garcelon (1786-1872) of Lewiston, diary, 1832-34.

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- \* David Davis (1775-1851) of Lewiston, account book, 1801-03.
- \* Logging Boom Book, dated 1833, in back a short diary covering period 1881-87 (Topsham, Maine).
- \* Pejepscoot (later Town of Danville) Treasurer account book, 1802-58.
- \* Record of Marriages and Marriage Intentions in Topsham, Maine, 1764-1889 (Handwritten).

### AN EARLY HISTORY OF EAST AUBURN

This selection is taken from an 1859 account published in an 1864 Lewiston-Auburn directory:

"This village is situated at the outlet of Wilson pond, three miles from Lewiston Falls. . . .

"The first grist mill upon the stream was built by Mr. [Samuel] Berry. A saw mill was built in 1792 or 1793. A second grist mill was built in 1798 or 1799. The first meeting house (Baptist) was built in 1819. The present one, also Baptist, in 1849. The first school was taught in Mr. Berry's house, in 1798 by Daniel Briggs, Esq., who is now living."