

# ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

September 1994

Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

No. 13

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## -- 1853 TEACHER EVALUATIONS --

Oliver Hubbard Brown, member of the Minot school committee, recorded his evaluations of teachers in 1853:

May 3. Examined Miss Wilson to teach in school district No. 11. She was young, diffident and embarrassed, so that she failed to do herself justice -- as I should judge.

May 27. In company with Mr. Carr, visited the upper school at Mechanic Falls. It had been in progress about 3 weeks. Teacher seemed ill at ease and the machinery moved hard. School rather noisy, and I fear the teacher will find some little difficulty in sustaining herself, tho there has been no outbreak nor attempt at insubordination.

In the afternoon went alone into the school at West Minot. the term commenced on Monday. Teacher seemed at home, and the wheels moved without friction.

June 9. This P. M. visited school on Hersey Hill, kept by Miss S. A. Read. This is her third successive summer, there, and her government, commonly lax, appeared below par. There seem to be some discordant elements, in and around that school; but perhaps on the whole she can make the jarring strings harmonise, tho it would be advisable if the reins were drawn a little closer.

June 16. Visited the Atkinson school. In the first place I was disappointed as to the size of the school -- it being much larger than I had supposed. And then I was not a little disappointed at seeing my bashful young teacher assume so much dignity and self command. All appeared very well.

June 17. Called in passing this morning at the Downing school -- Miss Sarah Y. Goodwin. . . . Heard the reading exercises which exhibited a pretty good degree of interest.

From thence I went to Woodman Hill. Nancy Verrill. This is her first school and she fears trouble, whose distant mutterings she thinks may be heard. Still, the school appeared well, and I trust under her management it will prosper.

Same P.M. visited the Noyes school -- Miss Parsons. Suffice it to say I was much pleased with the appearance of both school + teacher.

June 22. Visited Jackson school -- Beulah Rice. For some reason or other the school appeared greatly to disadvantage. This is her first attempt at teaching, and her examination was creditable. I can but hope that the imeasiness [sic] was temporary. [Cont'd. next page]

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## RECOLLECTIONS OF LEWISTON

Eunice A. Stevens of 136 Oak Street, Lewiston, was born in East Livermore in 1820. In 1841 she moved to Lewiston and lived there most of the rest of her life. She married Hudson K. Stevens of Poland, a spinner in the Columbia mill. Her recollections at age 91, as published in the *Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 25, 1911, are reproduced here and in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

"When I came to Lewiston, 70 years ago, it was to work for Col. [John] Frye in the old Columbia mill [on the site of the portion of Libbey Mill that burned in 1972]. An old white mill stood where the Cowan mill [Sableman] is but Col. Frye's was much larger. I went into the weaving room under Temple Tibbetts, who was the overseer. They spun cotton warp yarn for the Lowell mills and about 75 hands were employed at that time. Col. Frye was a very kind man to his help and trouble in the mill was unknown. I boarded at a house where the Atwood hotel now stands [later Littleton Hotel, now CMP parking lot on Main Street]. It was a small, one-story affair, owned by the Little family and kept by A. R. Brooks. In one of the corner posts was a hole made by an Indian's bullet and this was to me a great curiosity as it was evidence that Lewiston had Indian battles in the pioneer days. There were two front rooms and a long kitchen with two bed rooms on the end. Twelve of us girls boarded there and altho we were a bit crowded, Mr. Brooks was kind and made it pleasant for us.

"They had a different system in the old days. We worked 13 hours a day and the idea of striking never entered our heads. In addition to making yarn the mill also made cashmere and satinets goods for the market and Mr. Frye always looked after everything in person. His brother, Major Wm. Frye, was boss of the finishing room and he was of a different temperament from the colonel. He was much more active and took a greater interest in public affairs. He was always mixed up in some public scheme and held all sorts of offices. Altho a good public speaker and very social, I always liked the colonel best. Col. Frye attended strictly to his business and seemed to keep his thoughts more to himself.

"Lewiston was a small place at that time. Main street was then a country road leading to Greene and there were but few houses along its line. [Cont'd. next page]

## TEACHER EVALUATIONS (Cont'd. from p. 1)

Aug. 3. Woodman Hill School nearing a close. I spent the P.M. there. A casual half hour there the next week after my first visit seemed in a great measure to smooth down the asperities at first appearing. Considering the shortness of the term the progress was fair. . . .

Aug. 11. Hot as it was, I visited the school at West Minot. A more strict discipline would doubtless have been attended with greater success.

Aug. 12. Jackson school closed to day, and I visited it this A.M. The "disadvantage" of the first visit was still more apparent. There seemed to be a "screw loose" somewhere. Some progress was apparent -- still, more sternness [sic] would have been beneficial.

Aug. 16. Visited Hersey Hill school. It had made more advancement than I anticipated from the first appearance. Some of the jarring strings have ceased to vibrate -- still, authority, that all important requisite was wanting in a great measure.

Aug. 18. Spent the A. M. at the Noyes School. Our expectations were more than realised.

Aug. 22. The Atkinson School came under my notice to day. School was very small -- smaller than usual, but it appeared well, denoting progress.

Oct. 28. Learned yesterday that the Chase school had commenced, nor had the teacher been examined. . . .

The school was small and appeared tolerably well, but backward. Teacher passed a pretty good examination, tho' not a long one. He seemed to profess some degree of energy, lacking, perhaps, in method.

Nov. 9. Visited Jackson school -- Miss Milliken. It had been keeping three days, and was making a fair beginning, tho' some unfavorable symptoms were noticed. The teacher appeared very well, yet she seemed to labor rather hard.

Nov. 14. Examined Joseph W. Hodge for the Atkinson School. rank about middling.

Dec. 12. Downing school, having been keeping one week, came under my notice to day. I found the teacher hard at work, seemingly with determination to accomplish the most in his power. The school appeared tolerably interested, but my impression is it has had its own head so long, that it will take some considerable time to bring all things into harmony.

Woodman Hill school came next. This had been keeping one week. Both teacher + scholars seemed quiet + attentive.

Called at the Atkinson school just long enough to hear the first class in grammar. If, this was an index of the school, I should judge it was doing well.

Dec. 24. Jackson School this A.M. The teacher sustained his former reputation, and the school appeared well, tho' it had been provokingly short.

Last year one parent was reported present at the final examination; this year two were present, besides others

talked of going but were prevented by inclement weather. This indicates progress.

Dec. 26. Noyes school in their New House. Teacher and school seemed doing well.

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## RECOLLECTIONS (Cont'd from p. 1)

This whole section where I now live was the Newell farm and Uncle [Nelson] Reynolds, as he was called, lived where Dr. [Wallace E.] Webber now lives [297 Main St.]. Reynolds kept a small store just across the street.

"Between Lincoln and Sabatis street was a wilderness. Squire [Samuel] Pickard lived on the island and down there Col. [William] Garcelon, the father of Dr. Alonzo [Garcelon, who became Governor], also had his home. On the upper side of Lincoln street were the homes of Temple Tibbetts and the first agent of the Bates mill. On the spot where the Bates mills now stand was a mass of rocks and bushes that were almost impenetrable [sic]. It was a regular jungle. The canal was not built until a dozen years after I came here, and where the pumping station now stands there was a huge boom of logs. My little son, Louis, used to go down there to play and it always gave me much concern for fear he would be drowned.

"The Waldrons were here then and were among the leading men. [William H. Waldron was co-founder of *Lewiston Journal*.] In 1848[??] John Otis of Leeds came here to work in the mill and he bought a lot of land near where the Park Street Methodist church now stands [now site of Salvation Army] and there built a small house. It was then a country road and one moonlit evening he invited all of us mill girls out there to a house warming. During the evening I asked him why he built a house so far out in the country. He laughed and replied that some day it would be right in the heart of the city. As no one at that time ever dreamed that Lewiston would one day be a city it made lots of fun for all of us.

"Capt. [Daniel] Holland who lived down by Central block [corner of Main and Lisbon Streets] had a cow yard in the rear of his buildings and at that time the woods came right up to the gate of the yard. That entire section around Lisbon and Main streets was densely covered with woods and rocks. I remember the fun we had when John Otis invited us to spend the summer with him in the country. The old [James] Lowell house stood near the hospital, while his son, Mark Lowell, lived where the Shrine building now stands.

"Dr. Garcelon began his practice about the time that I came here, and he was universally popular. He was very active, energetic and public spirited, and gave every progressive movement a helping hand. But few men did more for Lewiston in those days than he."

## ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY HISTORY - PART 10

by Harold Dutch

In May 1985, the County Commission informed the Society of extensive reconstruction to the building, including installation of an elevator, as required by law. Construction started in 1986, and the museum was closed for several months, although the library was kept open for research. To help pay for the reconstruction, the commission asked for rent, and the Society signed an agreement with the county for \$300.00 per month. This agreement is still in effect.

Officers for 1985-86 were Gordon Windle, President; Harold Dutch, Vice President; Bob Beliveau, Curator; Leslie Wight, Recording Secretary; Ethelyn Penley, membership Secretary; Barbara Weldon, Treasurer; Willis Trafton, Counsel. Although directors had been given the authority in 1983 to set dues, society minutes do not show when annual dues went from \$2.00 to \$3.00. Dues were published for the first time in our printed programs in 1985 and listed Annual Dues at \$3.00; Contributing Membership, \$5.00; Life Membership, \$50.00.

For 1986-87, all officers were reelected, and new directors were elected to bring the board up to strength: natalie Foye, Ingrid Dutch, Frances Jordan, Eva Labonte, Norman Rose, Susan Sturgis, Evelyn White, Florine and Walter Perry. In July, Gordon Windle resigned as president, but remained on the board. Clark Dunlap was named to fill the term.

Curator Bob Beliveau was unable, due to his work schedule, to be at the museum on a regular basis, so the directors appointed a committee to find a part-time administrator and hired Robert Taylor, in the fall of '86, as executive secretary, a position he still holds.

The officers for 1987-88 were Harold Dutch, President; Bob Palmer, Vice President; Robert Taylor, Executive Secretary; Robert Beliveau, Curator; Frances Jordan, Recording Secretary; Ethelyn Penley, membership Secretary; Barbara Weldon, Treasurer; Willis Trafton, Counsel. Mrs. Weldon resigned, due to moving from the area, and Susan Sturgis was appointed to the post. She was elected in 1988, along with the other officers for another year.

In 1989, Heritage Books of Maryland published the society's first book: *A History of Lewiston with a Genealogical Register of Early Families*. Based on the Janus G. Elder papers, owned by the Society, it was edited by David and Elizabeth Young and was

well received. David Young was elected to the board in 1989, as were David Rogers, Peter Rubens, and Mary Riley.

Two new officers were elected in 1990: Douglas Hodgkin, President; Ingrid Dutch, Recording Secretary. President Hodgkin, in October, initiated a newsletter, *Androsocoggin History*, published three times a year, to keep members and the public aware of the Society's activities and to convey bits of local history.

In 1991, the Society purchased Excelsior No. 2, one of the first hand pump fire engines used in the Lewiston-Auburn area, going into service in 1849. The history of this hand tub, written by Clarence Penley, is in Newsletter No. 4. The engine is housed at Auburn's Central Fire Station. Dues were increased in 1992: Annual are now \$5.00; Contributing, \$10.00; Life Membership, still \$50.00. the following long-time members, directors, and officers of the Society were made Honorary Directors in 1993 in recognition of their years of service: Florence Gremley, Geneva A. Kirk, Ethelyn O. Penley, Robert G. Wade, and Leslie wight. In April 1994, Willis A. Trafton Jr. died. he was named to the board in 1950 and since 1960 had served as the Society's attorney and counsel.

The purpose of this series was to present a short, factual history, listing foficers and the events that highlighted th Society's development and growth. We hope that someday a full hisotry will be written, going into the bakcgorund of the people who formed and served AHS, fixing its place in the community, its effect on the area, its service to county and state, and evaluating the historical materials it preserves.

But for now, here in the pages of our newsletter, you may check past facts and keep up-to-date on officers, directors, bylaws and dues changes, as well as our ongoing activities.

Editor's Note: We are all deeply indebted to Hal Dutch for compiling this history of the Society. Thanks, Hal, for all your work involved in producing these ten installments. We welcome additional notes from our readers, whether on the Society or other items about local history.

**AHS RECENT ACQUISITIONS**

Anon. A manuscript of Durham, Maine, cemetery inscriptions.

Anon. *Turner in Review*.

Bartlett, Charlene B., and Jayne E. Bickford. *Cemetery Inscriptions and Revolutionary, War of 1812, and Civil War Veterans of Bowdoin, Me.*

Bedford, Richard, comp. *Vital Records of the Town of Poland: Intentionas of Marriage and Marriages 1795-1869*. Gift of Richard Bedford.

Bradbury, Osgood N. *Norway in the Forties*.

Bryant, Albert Scott (1868-1955). *Early Families of Leeds, Maine*. 2 volumes.

Bryant, Albert Scott. *Cemeteries of Leeds, Maine*.

Eastman, Harland H. *Alfred, Maine: the Shakers and the Village*.

Frost, John Eldridge. *Maine Probate Abstrcts*. 2 volumes.

Frost, John Eldridge. *Marriage Returns of York County, Maine prior to 1892*.

Goss, Dr. E. L. *The Family Tree: The Goss Family of Danville, Maine (1622-1993)*. Gift of Franklin Goss.

King, Marquis F. *Vital Records for Gorham, Me.*

Kluge, Melissa J. *The History of Casco, Maine*.

McAllister, Rev. Donald L., and Naas, Lucille E. *Marriage Returns of Oxford County, Maine, prior to 1892*.

Mower, Walter L. *Sesquicentennial History of the Town of Greene . . . .*

Paris Cape Historical Society. *Paris, Maine: The Second Hundred Years 1893-1993*.

Richard, Mark Paul. *Out of 'Little Canada': The Assimilation of Sainte-Famille Parish Lewiston, Maine (1923-1994)*. M. A. thesis, University of Maine. Gift of Mark Paul Richard.

Scontras, Charles A. *Collective Efforts Among Maine Workers: Beginnings and Foundations*. Gift of Charles A. Scontras.

Sears, Albert J. *The Founding of Pearsontown (Standish), Me.*

Sinnett, Rev. Charles N. *The History of the Scribner Families in America*. Gift of Mrs. Thelma Redmun.

Wing, Albert E. *Trafton Genealogy: Joseph and Sarah Trafton of York and Their Descendants*. Gift of Dain Trafton.

Young, David C., and Elizabeth Keene Young, eds. *Stackpole's History of Winthrop, Maine with Genealogical Notes*. 2 volumes.

Young, David C., and Elizabeth Young. *Vital Records from Maine Newspapers, 1785-1820*.

## MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of Androscoggin Historical Society is Tuesday, September 27, 1994, at 7:30 P.M.

**Topic:** "Maine State Flag Collection"

**Speaker:** Brian Sipe

**Location:** Our museum in the County Building

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