

ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

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DR. AMMI R. CUTTER'S CHILDREN by Douglas I. Hodgkin

Although genealogists place significant reliance upon official records, they recognize their fallibility. The following account, which of course could be mere gossip, illustrates one sort of problem.

The Society has photocopies of two notebooks labeled "Early items of interest and genealogy, by Ben D. Bryant." In one, on page 88 we find:

Major John Burbank Hooper of Greene, related to me today, September 7, 1882, an occurrence that concerned a number of parties then resident of Greene, and that Mrs. Hooper, who is 73 years of age, says is substantially true. [Editor's note: Mrs. Hooper was not testifying from personal knowledge; she apparently was born in 1809.] That in the year 1807 there resided near Greene Corner a physician by the name of Ammi R. Cutter whose wife was a Miss Curtis from Freeport, Maine, a woman of much personal beauty, but for some time childless as was said by reason of the impotency of her husband, Dr. Cutter, yet both of whom were extremely anxious that the wife should become a mother. After much deliberation it was mutually agreed that their neighbor, Mr. Marshal Mower should receive a cow from Dr. Cutter, if he, Mower would have sexual intercourse with the wife, which was consummated by the wife's giving birth to a child that is now living in Auburn, Maine by the name of John Loring Cutter, aged 75 years. The wife not long after gave birth, under the same arrangement, to a second child that bore the name of William Cutter, an own brother to John Loring Cutter. That Marshal Mower was the father of these two children, was admitted by Dr. Ammi Cutter and his wife, it was said, and that Mower received a cow from Dr. Cutter for his agency in this transaction was not denied by them.

Mower's *History of Greene* devotes half a page (412) to the Cutter family, but mentions only Dr. Cutter. He is described as "A popular physician, and prominent in town affairs. He was town clerk for several years, selectman, and was given other responsibilities and trust for which he was eminently fitted." There is no indication of any sons.

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GENERAL RALPH B. SKINNER AUBURN'S HISTORIAN by Robert L. Taylor

Ralph B. Skinner was born in Hartland in 1892 and resided in Auburn since boyhood. His newspaper career began with the *Lewiston Evening Journal* in 1911, and, except for interruption during World War I and immediately after, he was employed there as a newsman and special writer for 21 years.

He served in both World Wars and in 1947 retired from the service with the rank of Brigadier General. He returned to journalism in 1950 as historical commentator and newsman at radio station WLAM in Lewiston. During his twenty years at WLAM, General Skinner produced a series of commentaries on local historical subjects entitled "Historically Speaking," for which transcripts for 1963-1970 can be found in the Androscoggin Historical Society files.

As the author of two books, *Historically Speaking on Lewiston-Auburn, Maine Churches and Auburn, 1869-1969: 100 Years a City*, he was described as the man who "filled a void in the recorded history of our cities."

General Skinner died on October 1, 1980, after six decades of work in preserving and interpreting the historic heritage of Androscoggin County. He was a member of the Maine Historical Society, Society of Sons of the Revolution, several military organizations, and an honorary director of the Androscoggin Historical Society.

We begin in this issue the publication of an inventory of his "Historically Speaking" transcripts:

1963

Nov. 3 How Turner Got Its Name

Nov. 9 Those Turner Pioneers

Nov. 10 A Way Through the Wilderness

Nov. 16 How the Auburn Home for Aged Women Started

Nov. 24 The Passing of an Old Church

Nov. 29 The Cobb-Watson Closing

Dec. 1 Lewiston's Early Churches

Dec. 7 Time Table of Home History

Dec. 8 Where Danville and Durham Fit In

Dec. 15 How the Androscoggin County Towns Came to Be

Continued on page 4

WOMEN IN MAINE COTTON MILLS -- 1908

Part II

This is the second installment of Miss Eva L. Shorey's report on investigated working conditions in (Lewiston) Maine cotton mills as reprinted in the *Bridgton News*, December 18, 1908.

A Glance into the Weave Room

As you open the door to the weave room in a large mill, a great wave of hot, moist air comes out to you, and a medley of sound as of innumerable railway trains greets your ears, while the floor appears to be swaying and trembling as if the "train" was rounding a curve. Yet those who are employed there say that after a little while you will not notice it at all. It is one of the things in the workaday world to which one becomes accustomed. This department is the goal toward which many an employe [sic] in other parts of the factory is aiming, as weaving is skilled labor and an expert can make more running six or eight looms than at any other work in the mill. Girls as young as fifteen are sometimes seen at the looms, but for the greater part the wage-earners are older men and women, and many of them have spent a life time at the work which seems so hard and nerve-racking to the occasional visitor. "I love to weave," said a woman who had spent over forty years at this business. "My set of looms seems like old friends." Another said, in reply to the remark that it was interesting to watch the work, that it might be interesting to watch, but it got pretty tiresome when you had to do it. It is difficult to describe the actual work of the woman at the loom to give a correct idea of what she has to do, as there are so many duties in tending from four to six machines. There is a loom fixer, a man, who attends to the machinery when it "gets sick," the part of the weaver being to see that the warp is in proper condition, to keep the shuttle filled, so there may be a good weave, to mend the threads as they break or become tangled, and to watch the cloth to note any imperfections or roughness. Sometimes, while attending to one "bad place," some difficulty will happen to another of the six looms which will necessitate spending several minutes, or possibly a longer time, in taking out the threads and starting again. During that interval, there is no cloth being woven on that loom and therefore, no pay. A habit which cannot fail to be harmful is that of threading the shuttle, by placing it in the mouth and drawing the thread through by the suction of the breath. There is much stretching of the arms, and consequent straining, in adjusting a broken thread. When the "cut" is completed, the operator sews a ticket on the end and carries it to some central point. Some of the cuts of cloth are quite heavy. The woman has a chair in which she may sit and watch the machines, and when conditions are favorable she gets some time to

herself. There is little chance for sociability, however, the uproar created by the machinery rendering the only conversation possible that which is shouted at the top of the lungs. Operators do not become acquainted easily and often do not know their next door neighbor. This is partly due to the fact that a woman speaking only French, or some other foreign language, and one conversing only in English, is often side by side; and further because there is a certain social grading in the mill, as in general society. This is not strange when observing the various types of humanity gathered under one immense roof. The few old and original mill operatives, from good New England stock; the man or woman who once worked in the great mills of Manchester, England; the Scotch, the German-Americans, the Irish-Americans, the higher class of French-Canadians, all these are in a separate and distinct class from those who figure in some of the crowds one sometimes encounters in a city where the mill population is large and varied.

To a visitor in the weave room the air, particularly in the winter and spring, seems very oppressive. When the double windows are removed and the windows opened, the cool breezes from the canal make a great difference in the atmosphere. But there is difficulty in this respect, as the workers near the windows stand in a draft, while those in the center of the room obtain but little benefit. It is claimed that the "humidifiers," which render the warp moist and pliable, and other devices, are a benefit in improving ventilation, but the sallow, tired faces of some of the weavers show that the air they breathe is not as invigorating as it should be. Often at noon, or at night, they come out with garments damp from perspiration.

The pay is by the cut, a certain number of yards to a cut. To show the wide difference in amounts made, depending on the number of looms run, the following is given for thirteen weavers on sheeting taken from a pay roll for one week's work. The weavers of seersuckers and "dobby," or fancy ginghams, etc., make higher wages than those on plain goods. Four earned \$5.47 each; 3, \$6.50 each; 1, 7.42; 2, \$8.65 each; 1, \$9.87; and 2, \$11.42 each. This is an average of \$7.60 a week. The general average on higher class goods is \$8.10 for four narrow looms, and \$10.20 for six looms. Average wages on broad looms, for quilts, etc., are from \$8.40 to \$10.11. Some women weavers average \$9.00 and \$10.11 every week, and sometimes make as high as \$13.00 a week.

[To be continued]

A. CUTTER'S CHILDREN (Cont. from p. 1)

However, elsewhere in the book, John L. Cutter is mentioned as a merchant at Greene Corner (p. 42), and he is of Bangor when he marries Eliza J. Kimball, 26 Dec 1829 (p. 149). William Cutter is listed as marrying Malendia (p. 150) or Malindia (p. 252) E. Robbins.

Benjamin Cutter's *A History of the Cutter Family of New England* records the family of Ammi Ruhahmah Cutter (p. 186). He married Deborah Curtis, daughter of Captain Thomas and Abigail (Studley) Curtis 28 October 1792. The Cutters then moved to Greene, where Dr. Cutter "was regarded as honest and upright in every respect, and was beloved and esteemed by all of the community in which he lived." Moreover, the two sons are listed as "his issue."

John Loring Cutter (born 19 June 1807) had three children by his first wife, but apparently none of them had children. All three died by 1863. When he died 19 October 1884, his will dated 22 November 1865 left his estate entirely to his second wife [Androscoggin Probate, #2408].

William Cutter (born 24 September 1813) had eleven children. It appears that eight were still living about 1871, the time of publication of the genealogy. It is possible, therefore, that there are descendants. If they attempt to trace their ancestry, there appears to be no record except in Bryant's gossip that Ammi R. Cutter may not be their biological ancestor.

What of Marshall Mower? He had settled in Greene from Charlton, Mass., with his father Jonathan Mower. He married Charity Curtiss, daughter of Rev. Caleb and Charity (Combs) Curtiss of Worcester, Mass. They had fourteen children born between 1790 and 1815. He moved to Calais, Vermont, the latter part of 1813 (Mower, 271, 328).

MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of Androscoggin Historical Society is Tuesday, February 27, 1996, at 7:30 P.M.

Topic: D. D. Coombs -- Artist in Retrospect

Speaker: Genetta McLean, Director, Museum of Art, Bates College

Location: Our museum in the County Building

DIARY OF ANNA DAGGETT

The Society has the 1878 and 1886 diaries of Anna (Bailey) Daggett, who was of Cambridge, Maine, when she married Converse R. Daggett of Greene. Their daughter, Emma Rose, was born in 1880. Anna was "a lady of gifted piety and musical ability who served the local choir many years." She died 21 July 1914, at age 69. Her husband attended Bangor Theological Seminary. He was a pastor in Somerset and Androscoggin Counties, last serving in Greene. He served on the Greene school board and in the Legislature. (Mower, *History of Greene*, p. 244). The following are selections from the 1878 diary:

Jan. 23. Had two callers before we arose this morning. Mr. A. B. Parker called to relieve his mind on several subjects. He has been very much disturbed; but I hope he will look away, and above to Jesus only, so he can hear His voice saying - "peace, be still!"

Jan. 24. At work on my "Greene" album quilt.

Feb. 14. Hard at work preparing for a donation visit from our friends. . . . Mr. Isaac Cole and Miss Addie F. Hunt came to be united in marriage. Her sister, Mrs. Rogers, and her husband accompanied them. Enjoyed their call. The evening brought quite a little company of our friends to our home, bringing with them tokens of their sympathy and good will. [A list of 53 persons follows; 8 others are named as sending gifts.] The donation amounted to about \$34.00, \$30.00, cash - and \$4.00, in other things.

Feb. 16. We went to Lewiston with Mrs. Washburn and Charlie. Went with her to the different music stores to examine and price musical instruments. Also went to Mrs. Heath's to see her piano. Not pleased with it. Did shopping at Moore's new store.

Feb. 20. This evening the friends of Rev. Mr. & Mrs. Pinkham make them a pound party.

Feb. 25. Mr. Oliver Hooper called to inform us of the death of Mrs. Wilbur Mower and to request Mr. Daggett to attend the funeral. O how sad how very sad her death seems! She has always been so well and robust; and in a few short days stricken down by that dreadful disease - diphtheria!

Mar. 16. Doing Sat.'s work and sewing. Eve. John called. He and Converse went to the F. B. ch. to hear Mr. Solon Chase lecture on "Greenback" question.

Apr. 2. Stella Washburn, Nettie Pratt, and Florence Manson came to be examined for school teaching. They passed a good examination. Glad for them.

June 25. This P.M. I went to Lewiston in company with Mr. V. H. Sprague and daughter and son to attend the Bates Commencement.

June 26. Walked . . . to the Cong. church to attend the State Conference. Listened to the Secretary's Report (Dr. Adams) and sermon by Rev. Mr. Woodbury. In the afternoon enjoyed the Woman's Missionary meeting. . . . Went to Dea. Silas Sprague's to spend the night.

June 27. . . . went to City Hall to enjoy the Class Day exercises, and the conferring of Degrees. Saw our Gov. Connor for the first time. . . . Enjoyed a part of the exercises very much - some of them too light to be agreeable.

July 26. Baking and making preparations for the Camp Meeting Convention.

July 27. I started for the depot. . . . We had a pleasant, prosperous journey, and arrived at Old Orchard at about 2 o'clock.

July 30. The Lord revealed Himself to me as He had never before. I saw clearly how He had long been extending this blessing to me. [On the cover of the diary she wrote, "Old Orchard, Received the Divine Comforter."]

Aug. 5. Mrs. Haskell, Lillie and I left Old Orchard in the 11:40 train for our home.

Aug. 15. In the afternoon husband and I went to the "old folks" meeting at the Bap. church. By a singular coincidence the day appointed for this gathering occurred on the 85th anniversary of the church.

Aug. 20. Mr. Daggett, in company with our neighbors went to Monmouth and Livermore in search of the missing boy - John Furbish - who left his father's home last Sat.

Nov. 2. Baked ten pies and did other hard work so I could not go to the Conference: but it is not right - and I hope I shall have a different arrangement in the future. Churned 5 lbs butter.

Dec. 25. We all spent Christmas at Bro. Almeron Parker's. Mrs. Crosby, and Nellie with little Maude were there. Mr. Daggett gave me a basket. Recd. a letter from sister Rose containing \$5.00. God bless her.

SKINNER TRANSCRIPTS (Cont. from p. 1)

1963

Dec. 21 They Used to Call Them Quilts

Dec. 22 The Lewiston City Seal

Dec. 24 The Long Trail to Leeds

1964

Jan. 4 The Pioneer Picture of Lewiston

Jan. 5 The Hard Road to Religious Worship

Jan. 11 The Drama in Local History

Jan. 12 A Mob Scene of Early Days

Jan. 18 The Emergence of Bates College

Jan. 19 Why Bates College Located Here

Jan. 25 The Old Clough Meeting House

Jan. 26 An Old Church Lives Again

Feb. 1 Lewiston's Early Methodists

Feb. 2 The Family Side of Church History

Feb. 8 Those West Auburn Hotels

Feb. 9 We're All in History

Feb. 15 Auburn's First Framed House

Feb. 16 Looking Over the Landmarks

Feb. 23 How the Church Came to West Auburn

Mar. 7 Auburn's First Baptist Church

Mar. 8 How East Auburn's Church Grew

Mar. 14 Congregational Trail

Mar. 15 Congregationalists Near a New Name

Mar. 21 Lewiston-Auburn Universalists

Mar. 22 North Auburn's Churches

Mar. 29 When the Logs Stopped Coming Down

Apr. 4 More on the Lake Auburn Spring House

Apr. 5 Those Other Lake Auburn Hotels

Apr. 11 Those Early Lewiston Quakers

Apr. 12 The Quakers Move On

Apr. 18 The Catholics Come to Lewiston Falls

Apr. 19 St. Joseph's . . . Then to Now

Apr. 25 Saints Peter and Paul Parish

Apr. 26 The Dominican Influence

May 2 The Founding of St. Patrick's Parish

May 3 An Old Church in a New Light

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