

ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

February, 1998

Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

No. 23

CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

by Michael Lord, AHS Executive Secretary

We have received the written report of the Conservation Assessment Program, based upon the visits conducted on September 3, 1997.

Mr. Ronald S. Harvey of Tuckerbrook Conservation in Lincolnville, Maine, focused upon object conservation. He reports that the levels of temperature and relative humidity in the Society's rooms were quite good, although he recommends that a year-long, permanent record be taken in order to establish base lines of temperature and relative humidity to let us know what, if anything, should be done. He also recorded excessively high levels of light in the museum, both visible and ultra violet, that need to be addressed. Mr. Harvey will be speaking at our April meeting to further outline his recommendations.

Mr. Russell Wright, architect and architectural assessor of Bridgton, Maine, did the other part of the CAP, consisting of conservation recommendations for the physical building. He reports that our museum rooms are in overall excellent condition, and relatively little needs to be done. He did recommend, however, the addition of some battery-powered emergency lights, additional smoke detectors and another fire extinguisher, among other things.

Both preliminary reports have been submitted, reviewed, and returned to their respective authors. We are now awaiting submission of the final versions. The Institute of Museum and Library Services funded and the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property administered both assessments; both institutes are located in Washington, D.C.

COMPUTER INSTALLED

Our new computer has arrived, and according to our executive secretary Michael Lord, "It works like a dream." It is a Dell Computer with a Hewlett Packard Deskjet 722C printer purchased separately. Many thanks to Herman Lord, who donated his services on December 31 to set it up.

MUSEUM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

by Michael Lord, Executive Secretary

Ms. Deborah A. Smith, Registrar of the Maine State Museum, conducted the MAP visit at this Society on September 19, 1997. Her 24-page report consists mainly of recommendations on policies: membership dues, accessioning and deaccessioning standards, questions of establishing legal title to items in our collection, staff pay, Society income and endowment, publicity, museum display and storage, community support, and other issues.

She has kindly offered to return for a board meeting in order to interview our governing members so as to gain more input for her recommendations. The MAP was funded by the federal agency the Institute of Museum Services, and is developed and managed by the American Association of Museums, located in Washington, D.C.

ANNIVERSARY POST CARD

Our executive secretary is preparing a picture post card in commemoration of our 75th Anniversary. It will be a reproduction of a drawing by Andrew R. Giddinge of the first bridge between Lewiston and Auburn. On the back of the frame of the original which hangs in our library is typewritten "Lewiston Falls from the Auburn side in 1833. The bridge was built in 1823, Elder Thorn delivering the oration, after which tables were spread and hot refreshments were served on the bridge. . . ."

MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of Androscoggin Historical Society is Tuesday, February 24, 1998, at 7:30 P.M., in the County Building.

Topic: "National Banknotes" (related to Maine)

Speaker: Frank Trask, Dealer of East Vassalboro

NAMING OUR TOWNS: DURHAM

by Douglas Hodgkin

The Town of Durham was part of the Pejepscot Purchase. The plantation was to be called Royalston in honor of proprietor Col. Isaac Royall, but another town in Massachusetts was given that name in his honor in 1765. At a meeting of the proprietors in Boston on May 28, 1765, the name was changed to Royals-borough. On June 3, 1767, of the 96 lots distributed, Royall himself had the most -- 20. He purchased others, for in 1796 his heirs were taxed for 34 lots.

Royall (1719-1781) lived in Medford, Massachusetts, and served on the Governor's Council, 1751-1774. In April 1775 he sailed to Halifax, hoping for the end of the Revolutionary War. According to Stackpole (p. 9), "His sympathies were with the colonies, yet he was afraid to break with England, resign his office and endanger his estates. He had received grants of land under the Crown. He owned large tracts in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, as well as in Maine ." He wrote to his agent concerning disposition of six slaves and then sailed to England in 1776, where he died of smallpox in 1781. In his will he left 2000 acres of land to endow the "Royall Professorship of Law" at Harvard College.

On February 4, 1788, the citizens of Royalsborough petitioned to incorporate and to name the town Sharon, with a postscript, "N.B. if there shall be any other Town In this County by the Name of Sharon, Our desire is that ours may be called Bristol." Sharon was a popular biblical name, after the plains in Palestine where David's herds grazed, already claimed by Sharon, Mass., in 1783. Moreover, Bristol, Maine, had already been named in 1765.

The name actually assigned was Durham. Chadbourne states that it was chosen to honor Royall because his home had been in Durham, a cathedral town in England (p. 85). Stackpole argues that Royall "had no connection whatever to ancient Durham" and that his reputation as a Tory would forestall any attempt to honor him in this fashion (p. 9). It may be that the town is named for Durham, England, but I have found no documented reason.

Sources: Ava Harriet Chadbourne, *Maine Place Names* (Portland: The Bond Wheelwright Col, 1955), pp. 72, 85; Everett S. Stackpole, *History of Durham, Maine* (Lewiston: Press of Lewiston Journal Co., 1899), pp. 3-4, 8-10, 21-23; Frederic W. Cook, *Historical Data Relating to Counties, Cities and Towns in Massachusetts* (Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1948).

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

by Michael Lord

Last October I went to the annual **Maine Archives and Museums Conference** in Berwick where I attended several meetings. They were Marketing & Publicity, where marketing techniques and publicity standards were discussed; Photograph Care & Identification, where photograph preservation concepts and archival consulting resources were represented; Computerizing Collections, where museum software was compared; and Grant Writing, where grant letter writing basics were taught. A Maine Grants Information Center representative spoke at this conference. The photograph and the grant-writing sessions will be of particular use to this Society.

The Maine Grants Information Center is located at the University of Southern Maine's library, and publishes a booklet, which we have purchased, that lists all Maine-based philanthropies that donate money, plus many major out-of-state ones as well. I'll be using this booklet to write a grant for preserving our photographic and map collections as well as for many other things, including fund-raising for a capital fund drive.

The Calendar Year 1997 Attendance Report has been tabulated and the results are the following: 728 telephone conversations, 305 museum visits, 569 correspondence, 322 newsletters, 116 programs sent, 185 meeting attendance, and 71 visitors during the Balloon Festival. The "correspondence" number excludes newsletters, programs sent, meeting notices and junk mail. It does include packages, e-mails and invoices. As you can well imagine, I am quite grateful to have a new computer on which to write our society's correspondence.

The Society closed early on Wednesday, January 7, 1998, due to the County Building being closed on account of the **ice storm**. The Society and the County Building were also closed on the 8th and 9th.

DATES IN AUBURN HISTORY

- 1842 Minot was divided, and Auburn was incorporated as a town. The first town meeting was held in the Congregational Church at West Auburn, March 7.
- 1845 First town hall built by Edward Little.

CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF HORACE F. NASON

Horace F. Nason was born in Chesterville, Maine, 15 May 1840, the second son of William and Aurilla (Leach) Nason. His ancestors lived in Minot and Poland, Maine. He grew up in Chesterville, went to Natick, Massachusetts, in 1860 or 1861, and joined the Army in 1861. The Society has transcripts of 24 letters that he wrote in 1861 and 1862 to his older sister Laura Nason and his brother-in-law Charles V. Pinkham, both of Chesterville. The following are excerpts:

Pleasant Hill, Sept. 29th, 1861

Brother Charles:

. . . My health is good, never was better in the world. I weigh 168 pounds. You would not know me if you should see me in your own house. I am six feet 2 inches in my stockings, as straight as a gun birch . . .

There is no excitement here at present. We are waiting for Johnston to attack us. He is encamped on the opposite side of the river. Our pickets and his keep up a continual firing day and night. . . . The last time that I was on [camp guard] I went over into Virginnny and come pretty near not getting back. I had to swim the river where it was full of snags and got my horse on one and like to drown the critter. The captain was mad as the devil about it at the time but I heard him telling another captain the next day how one of his seargents run his horse through a rebel guard, and got off safe. He stretched the story a little.

Camp of the 2nd. Mass. Regt., Jan. 2nd, 1862

Brother Charles:

. . . I had lots of stuff sent to me from Mass. The other day so that I am supplied for the winter with handkerchiefs, towels, stockings, mittens, pens, writing paper . . . and something which I prize more than anything else, a portfolio to keep my writing materials in and to write on. No one but a woman would have thought of it, so you see the advantage of having a gal to leave behind you, but I am thinking that she will get tired of being left, if she waits for me to come back to her.

By the way, I had a letter from Mrs. Davenport the other day. She says that Laura is being courted on one Foster, son of one John Foster Now I don't hardly credit such a story as that for I think that she is a woman of better taste than to throw her charms away on such a fellow as he used to be, but then he may have improved since I knew him. If this be true I think he must. Jerusalem, what an idea, Orin Foster, my brother-in-law. Why don't he go to war and eat hard bread and salt junk a while - it would take the romance out of him - it has me, what little there was in me, and that was not much. . . .

Jan. 4th: . . . I was in the city yesterday on a time, as boys call it, and may bet that I had a good one. I did

not get drunk though, as those did that went with me, and it was lucky that I did not for if I had we should got into the limboes, all of us. As it was I got two of them back to the lines in a mule team. As we could not get the teams back across the lines I took them out of the wagon and covered them up with leaves so that the police guard could not find them, and left hem till after dark, when with the help of a comrade got them into camp. But I must close now for my fingers are getting cold again. . . .

Camp of 2nd. Mass. Infantry
Near Frederick, Md. Feb. 6th, '62

Dear Sister,

. . . I have just received a letter from you dated the 4th - it has come pretty quick. You say you have not been courted by Foster and want me to find you a bold sojer boy. I have got one spoke for. He is a rouser - he ain't afraid to stand up to a cannon's mouth with the lanyard in the hands of a Rebel cannoneer - he's got the dash too. . .

I am going to a ball in the City tonight to dance with the beauties of Maryland and some of them are beauties, I tell you.

Camp of 2nd. Mass. Regt.
Maryland Heights, Sept. 28th, 1862

Friend Charles:

. . . I got pretty severely hurt in charging on them through a piece of woods [at Cedar Mountain] and have not been fit for duty since. I am so lame that I can hardly walk. . . .As I was not able to march they urged me to stop with them until I got well. The Surgeon advised me to stay, and so I did, consequently I lost the honor of being in the battle of Antietam, but perhaps it was for the best for if I had been there I might not have been here, as the 2nd lost pretty heavily . . . Out of 1060 men that left Mass. About a year and half ago, only 153 are left. We have had about 200 recruits sent out to us but they cannot fill the places of the noble fellows that are gone. The old veterans of the regiment despise them almost as bad as they do the rebels for they are men who have been bought for two or three hundred dollars apiece. They boast of the large bounties that they get for coming. We call them our hired help. The men have so little confidence in them that they refused to go into battle with them at Sharpsburg and the Colonel had to send them to the rear to help carry off the wounded. At Cedar Mountain I ordered one of them to help lift the dead body of one of our officers into an ambulance. He refused saying that it smelt so bad he did not want to touch it. I just applied my foot to his rear with a force that started him off the ground. Some of them would give ten years of their lives if they could get out of it - they did not come out to fight - they come for the money they got.

SKINNER TRANSCRIPTS

We continue to catalog Ralph Skinner's transcripts of his radio addresses that are available in the Society's files.

1967

May 6 The Stagecoach Taverns
 May 7 From Taverns to Hotels
 May 13 More About Johnson Tavern
 May 14 How the Hotels Road Started
 May 20 The Hotel Road Goes Through
 May 21 How Highways Started
 May 27 The Elm House
 May 28 Last of the Stagecoaches
 June 2 They Called It Revere Block
 June 3 The Two "Auburn Houses"
 June 10 Child Life in Early Auburn
 June 11 Lewiston's First Elephant
 July 1 Perryville July 4
 July 2 Perryville's Last July 4th
 July 9 Where Credit Is Due
 July 16 Fisher Misses the Boat
 July 22 War the Way It Was in 1776
 July 23 The War Sick Were on Their Own
 July 29 The Bad Summer of 1829
 July 30 The Course of Old-Time Illness
 Aug. 5 When the Poor Were Auctioned Off
 Aug. 6 Auburn's First Town Farms
 Aug. 12 When the Poor Farm Burned
 Aug. 13 Passing of the Poor Farm
 Aug. 27 Two Bridges on the Big River
 Sep. 2 The Flood of '96
 Sep. 3 The Flood of 1936
 Sep. 9 Misfortune at the Falls
 Sep. 10 Tragedy Stalks the Mill Job
 Sep. 16 Tom Littlefield, Great Man
 Sep. 17 Tom Littlefield's Reward
 Sep. 24 Littlefield Bounces Back
 Sep. 25 Mayor Littlefield Takes Office
 Sep. 30 A Bridge, a Railroad and Better Schools

Oct. 1 The City Sells Liquor
 Oct. 7 Sewers and Street Lights, 1875
 Oct. 8 First Try for a third Bridge
 Oct. 14 Mayor Littlefield Elected Again
 Oct. 15 Price of progress
 Oct. 21 An Older Tom Littlefield
 Oct. 22 Mayor Littlefield's Last Year
 Oct. 28 Littlefield Left Things Right
 Oct. 29 Old Times and New Ideas
 Nov. 4 Old Times and New Ideas
 Nov. 5 Night and Day Police
 Nov. 11 Food Store Styles for 1990
 Nov. 12 Giving History a Head Start
 Nov. 18 Horse and Buggy Road Rules
 Nov. 19 From Horses to Gas Buggies
 Nov. 25 The Squire's Plea for a Church
 Nov. 26 Goff Corner's First School House
 Dec. 2 Little Family Affairs
 Dec. 3 December at Goff's Corner
 Dec. 9 The Squire's Last Home
 Dec. 10 Generations of Josiah
 Dec. 15 The New Year 1830
 Dec. 16 A Years End in 1829
 The Little Plantation
 Dec. 23 The Squire Gets Mill-Wise
 Dec. 30 the Bridge at Southwest Bend
 Dec. 31 The New Year 1830

1968

Jan. 7 A Council-Manager Prophecy
 Jan. 8 Auburn Steps to Cityhood
 Jan. 13 Maine Winters About the Same
 Jan. 14 Little's Letter to His Ailing Father
 Jan. 27 The Squire Little's Sense of Humor
 Jan. 28 Old time Fire Fighting
 Feb. 3 Salmon Fishing at Lewiston
 Feb. 4 River Trouble Is Not New
 Feb. 10 Androscoggin River Dams
 Feb. 11 Deer Rips and Gulf Island
 Feb. 17 Auburn's Radio First
 Feb. 18 Senator White's Radio Bill

www.rootsweb.com/~meandrhs

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