

ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

June, 1999

Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

No. 27

BRUCE HALL ELECTED TO BOARD

At our annual meeting on May 25, 1999, Bruce Hall of Lewiston was elected as a new member of the Board of Directors. All officers were re-elected. They include A. B. (Bob) Palmer, Jr., president; David C. Young, vice president; Michael C. Lord, executive secretary; Mary M. Riley, recording secretary; Alma Palmer, membership secretary; Susan Sturgis, treasurer; Douglas I. Hodgkin, newsletter editor; and Richard L. Trafton, attorney.

Other Board of Directors members continuing for 1999-2000 are Leslie M. Eastman, Natalie G. Foye, Franklin Goss, Bernice Hodgkin, Douglas I. Hodgkin, Edward Hodgkin, Eva Labonte, Merton Leavitt, Warren B. Randall, Norman E. Rose, and Gordon V. Windle. Honorary directors are Florence Gremley, Geneva A. Kirk, Robert G. Wade, and Leslie M. Wight.

GRIDLEY BARROWS

We note the passing of Board member Gridley Barrows, an architect, photographer, and local historian. "The boy with the camera," as he called himself, left a rich legacy of photographs and other memorabilia on local history. He co-authored and illustrated several publications by the Lewiston Historic Commission. He shared his knowledge in walking tours of the area. His kindness, friendship, and cheerful greetings will be sadly missed and fondly remembered.

RUSSELL WRIGHT

Mr. Russell Wright of Bridgton, our Conservation Assessment Program architectural assessor, died on January 1, 1999. He also contributed to preservation efforts in Lewiston through his authorship of *The Lewiston Downtown Development District Preservation Plan* (1995) and *The Lewiston Historic Preservation Design Manual* (forthcoming). He served as consultant to the Lewiston Historic Preservation Review Board.

LEWISTON GOVERNMENT IN 1899

by Douglas Hodgkin

During a class on "Urban Political Change" at Bates College in May 1999, the students conducted a study of the politics and government of Lewiston in

1899. As in cities throughout the nation, Lewiston wrestled with the problems and challenges of rapid population growth, and technological and social change. The following are some of the highlights.

Andrew Sisto, '01, found that Lewiston began to draw its water supply from Lake Auburn one hundred years ago. The river simply had become too polluted and foul-tasting. First, the legislative authorization needed to work out Auburn's concerns about the purposes for which the water would be used. Then the routes for the pipes had to be determined and the political problem of who would supervise the project had to be settled. Nevertheless, the trenches were rapidly dug, drilled, and blasted, including passage over the falls under the Maine Central railroad track.

Jesse Connolly, '01, found Lewiston responded to a smallpox outbreak in 1899, with the quarantine of cases in a "pest house," the fumigation of their residences, and vaccinations of those exposed. Cases of scarlet fever and diphtheria were attributed to the water supply, and cases declined when Lake Auburn water became available.

Kevin Porter, '02, found great need to expand the sewer system. The large sewer running under the canal near the Music Hall was no longer sufficient, and another would be needed to run to the river further down. It was difficult to find places to discharge waste into Jepson Brook or into the Androscoggin above the falls without causing great harm.

Paul Erickson, '00, noted that the schools included instruction on the effects of tobacco and alcohol, offered interscholastic sports, and conducted evening classes for those who worked in the mills. There was talk of building a new high school, which ultimately was to become Jordan High School.

Jason Silva, '00, examined the role of the police. The new City Marshall, Henry A. Wing, updated the equipment, reorganized the department, and sought more professional behavior. A prominent story was George W. Pierce's attempt to poison Judge A. D. Cornish and former City Marshal H. E. Teel. Two new ordinances established a curfew for children and made the throwing of snowballs illegal. Violations of the prohibition law dominated police work, with intoxication accounting for 649 of the 902 cases brought to municipal court. Benjamin Lamanna, '02,

recounted the difficulties that faced police in enforcing Maine's prohibition law, especially given definitions of interstate commerce at that time.

Organizational changes occurred in the fire department in 1899. John Merriman, '02, described the centralization of authority in the fire chief, rather than in a fire commission. Also, a chain of command was established among the ranks of the department. Citizens were "asking new fire stations to be placed in residential areas, such as near Mount David, [lower] Lincoln Street, and upper Main Street." Major fires that year included destruction of the Island Garden Theater and a 100-acre forest fire near the Webster line.

Michael Jensen, '01, described major construction of 10,000 feet of sidewalks at the end of the century, including Lisbon, Park, Pierce, Walnut, Birch, Pine, College, Webster, Main, High, Howe, Blake, Sabattus, Chestnut, Cedar, Island, and Oxford Streets. However, one issue was the patchwork nature of sidewalk construction as some residents refused to pay for the sidewalks in front of their houses or businesses. A steamroller or road machines were used on most of the streets in downtown Lewiston as well as College, Wood, Nichols, and Holland Streets to repair the wear and tear of winter months. Curtis, Newman, and Summit were newly accepted as public streets.

Peter Fell, '00, noted the introduction of trolleys in Lewiston in 1898 and an improvement in the trolley wheel invented by Charles Jackson of Summer Street.

Ryan Gray, '01, described the functions of the City Farm, which housed 155 during 1899. Problems included the deterioration of the dormitories, the need for boiler repair, and health risks at the stables.

In the political arena, Thomas Ito, '99, found the city trending toward the Democratic Party. Heath Huston, '01, described the election of Democrat George Pottle as mayor over Republican Orland S. Ham. The campaign was low-key, with the needs for a water supply and new policemen the main issues, but centering primarily on mobilization of the party vote. John Weaver, '02, described a City Council of seven Aldermen and twenty-one Councilmen, many with prominent positions in the community.

James Carlson, '02, and Matthew Dominici, '02, described the lives of Congressman Nelson Dingley, Jr., and Louis Martel, respectively, both prominent politicians who died in 1899.

Finally, scandal touched Lewiston government as Brian Mulready, '01, found that Tax Collector E. G.

Woodside was discovered to be skimming off some of his collections.

NAMING OUR TOWNS: SABATTUS

What is now the Town of Sabattus originally was a part of Lisbon, as described in the February 1999 issue of this newsletter. In 1840, the northern portion of Lisbon was set off to form the Town of Webster, named for Daniel Webster, then at the height of his career as a United States Senator from Massachusetts.

What came to be known as Webster Corner was settled about 1775 or 1776 as Burnt Meadows. With the establishment of mills on Sabattus River, the corner rapidly declined as population concentrated at Sabattusville on Sabattus Pond. Rutherford states that the name comes from Sabattus, the name of a Native-American chief. 'Sabattus' is said to be the Indian pronunciation of the common French name "Jean Baptiste," the sound of the letter "J" not being found in the local Native-American language.

The town name was changed from Webster to Sabattus in 1971 to reflect the concentration of the population in the village and because the post office address was "Sabattus."

Sources: Ava Harriet Chadbourne, *Maine Place Names and the Peopling of Its Towns* (Portland, ME: The Bond Wheelwright Company, 1955), p. 274; Phillip R. Rutherford, *The Dictionary of Maine Place Names* (Freeport, ME: Bond Wheelwright Company, c1970. p. 5.

THANKS TO CORPORATE MEMBERS, '98-'99

Mechanics Savings Bank
High Street Congregational Church
Hannaford Bros. Co. (Paul A. Fritzon)
Chapman Trucking (Edward & Sharon Chapman)
The Cote Corporation (Daniel A. Cote)
Custom Masonry (Irving P. Bradstreet)
Johnson Associates (Dr. Thomas B. Johnson)
Laskoff & Associates (Robert & Jackie Laskoff)
Maine Thread & Machine Co. (Ronald A. Vallee)
NDT Cleaning Services (Nancy Manley)
State Alarm/Electric Co. Inc. (Daniel Rodrigue)

THE 1893 DIARY OF LIZZIE ROGERS

The Society recently was given the original and a transcript of a diary of Lizzie Rogers that was found in Minnesota. We thank Ms. Jennie Hakes of Monticello, MN, and Ms. Jean Detert, who recently moved to Brunswick. Lizzie was a young girl whose home apparently was near Woodstock, New Brunswick. She did housework at the beginning of 1893 for Mr. and Mrs. Frank B. Norris and their three children of 413 Court Street, Auburn. She went home for the summer, but returned in the fall to work for Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow W. Boies and their son of 826 Main Street, Lewiston. The following are selections from the diary:

Jan. 4. Cold & fine Got up this morning the sink spout was froze up. Hung out the clothes . . . I ironed tonight.

Jan. 7. Fine . . . The kids acted scandalous all day.

Jan. 11. Cold Slept this morning until 7 o'clock . . . I slept downstairs tonight four in a bed.

Jan. 15 cold I intended to see Lena today but was sick all day. Mrs. N. went out this afternoon. I went to bed at 5 o'clock but did not sleep for awhile as they had a fierce fight down stairs. She broke the lantern over his head.

Jan. 27. Fine Mr. and Mrs. N. and I had a little fracas this morning before breakfast. I had a headache all day but kept up . . .

Feb. 2 Fine It was pretty cold today. I was at home all day. We made cornballs and put the day in lazing around. Went to bed early. Had a fire upstairs.

Mar. 13 Lovely. Did not wash today. Mrs. Norris wasn't very well. She went to - bed this afternoon. Called Dr. Peables tonight to see her.

Apr. 18 Mrs. Norris went over river this forenoon. Had the impression of her mouth taken. I went down street. . .

Apr. 20 Mrs. Norris went over the river this A.M. and got her teeth. They went out to ride this afternoon. Got back about four. He took me out then for a ride. . . .

June 15 . . . Packed my trunk and took the 11.30 [PM] train for Woodstock.

June 16 Arrived in Bangor at 6 o'clock this A.M. Go to Woodstock about 2 P.M. Hardly knew the place. . . . I was homesick enough to die tonight. . . .

July 4 Kate, Maggie, Kate McCann, Edith and I went to Houlton at 8 this morning to the 4th July. Put up at Exchange. It rained all day but we enjoyed it. . . .

Sept. 4 Got up at 5. J. J. carried me to Woodstock. I took the 8 o'clock train for Auburn. Was awful tired. Got to Auburn about 8. Mrs. Norris and Alice Cary met me. Stayed with Mrs. Norris all night.

Sept. 7 Got up and went to Fair on the 10 o'clock. . . . Got our pictures taken . . .

Sept. 28 . . . Mr. Boies called. I promised to go to work for him. . . .

Sept. 29 Got up this morning and got ready for to go to Lewiston to work. Ludlow [Jr.] came for me about 9 . . .

Oct. 27 . . . Mr. Boies did not come home to supper. Stayed to Lodge. It was rainy.

Oct. 28 . . . Mrs. B. and I joined the Good Templars tonight. Three fellows joined also. [Hall in Central Block, corner of Lisbon and Main Streets]

Nov. 1 Got up and done some cooking this morning. Mrs. B. went to Greene to Dr. Pierce's funeral. I went down st on the 11.30 car. Went to Fred Whitings funeral. Gusty and I drove up after Mr. Boies. I ordered my hat. . . .

Nov. 4 . . . Went to Good Templars tonight. Was election of Officers. I was elected chaplain. . . .

Nov. 16 . . . I made a cake for the ent Temple. I wrote to Sam and Sadie this afternoon and went to the temple ent [entertainment] tonight. Had a good time. Got a pair of boots tonight from F. B. N. [Mr. Norris]

Nov. 17 . . . I swept the house all through. We went to pop corn social at Odd Ladies tonight. Got home at 10.30 Had a nice time.

Nov. 18 . . . We went to Lodge tonight and were installed.

Nov. 24 Swept and done the work. The boys and girls were here tonight rehearsing for their drama. Thirty [mouths] for refreshments.

Dec. 13 Ludlow's birthday. We made the cake and frosted it today. There were between 20 and 30 here. Had a good time. Stayed until after 12.

Dec. 14 Got up at 6 o'clock we washed the dishes from last night's party it took me about an hour to thaw out the sink spout. . . .

Dec. 21 . . . Went to the social at United Lodge tonight [159 Main St., Lew.]. George Bartlett had his coat stolen.

Dec. 25 Christmas. . . . We were over to the hall most of the afternoon getting ready for the tree. . . . We had a good entertainment.

Dec. 31 [Sunday] Got up at 7.45. Had breakfast at 9. Dinner at 2.30. Had chicken pie. At home all day and evening. Arth, Lil and Hazel were in here this evening. Ed Storah and Lou Wood called here. Mr. Boies popped corn. I ate three saucers. Put the clothes to soak and went to bed before 9.

So ended 1893. I have during the year seen some good times also some hard times. I am going to try and live better 1894 and pray God I will by his Grace.

[Items in Memoranda section:]

James G. Blaine died Friday Jan 27th was buried on Monday 30th at Washington

Lake Auburn spring hotel was burned Tuesday eve Jan 31st

GOINGS-ON AT THE SOCIETY
by Michael Lord, Executive Secretary

- Your Executive Secretary has contacted Dell Computer Corporation from whom we purchased our office computer to inquire as to our **Y2K status**. This is the potential Year 2000 computer problem we have all heard about. With the help of Herman Lord, a Y2K compliance file is now installed in our computer. The file was provided free of charge by Dell Computer on their web site. Provided this was done correctly, we should have no Y2K problem on our society's computer.
- The Board has authorized the Executive Secretary (1) to purchase **library computerization software** as soon as a grant is received and (2) to hire a **data entry clerk** for computerizing our collections and library under our grant from the Davis Foundation.
- The **Fiscal Year 1998-99 totals** are as follows: Telephone, 644; Museum, 281; Library, 379; Letters, 853; Newsletters sent, 419; Business Meeting attendance, 21; Liberty Festival, 0; Balloon Festival, 89; Program Attendance, 224; Programs sent, 162; Meeting notices sent, 649; Fund-raising letters sent, 2703. (These totals overlap the calendar year 1998 totals reported in the February newsletter.)
- We have been given several *Maine Registers* from the 1980's and 1990's by the Registry of Probate. Our thanks go to Registrar John Cleveland for his thoughtfulness.
- We still have our **75th Anniversary Post Card** for sale at 25 cents each or five for \$1.
- The **Auburn and Lewiston Art and Literature Club** has given us some of their more recent records in order that they may be preserved in a permanent manner.
- As you may have noticed, we participated in the **Great TV Auction on Maine PBS**. On Tuesday, April 20, 1999, they auctioned our two donated sets of historic postcards of Lewiston and Auburn, the same ones we have for sale here at the Society. We were in fact the first auction item of the evening! They each were auctioned with a family membership, for a total value of \$45.00 for each set. This was an excellent opportunity for our society to get name recognition for not a large price.
- There is a painting in our small museum of the **U.S.C.G.C. Androscoggin**, built in 1908 for the Coast Guard. It was the first purpose-built cutter for ice-breaking off the New England coast, and the last major vessel built of wood for the Coast Guard. As it happens, there was another Coast Guard cutter by the same name that served in the Vietnam War. We have obtained information from the Coast Guard on them, as well as a photo of the older one from the National Archives. It is pictured in *Jane's Fighting Ships of W.W. I*.

Please be sure you have renewed membership for 1999-2000; check the label on this newsletter. Individual - \$15; Family - \$25; Life - \$150; Corporate - \$50, \$100, \$150, \$250. Make check to Androscoggin Historical Society and mail to Mrs. Alma Palmer, Membership Secretary, P. O. Box 67, Minot, ME 04258-0067.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~meandrhs>
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