

ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

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Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

No. 30

THE RIVER ROAD IN DURHAM

The Lewiston Weekly Journal of November 17, 1898, provides information on an important road in the initial development of Androscoggin County:

When Lawrence Harris brought his family . . . in 1771, he landed at . . . Harrisicket (Freeport) and took the "county road," which had been built the previous year, to the "South west Bend of the Androscoggin River," through Royalsborough [Durham]. At that point he took to the water, since he had reached the end of the road. The boats were rowed up to Dresser's Rips; the goods were hauled around the rips and committed to boat again, and so on to "Luestown," which existed only in name. The Pejepsctot proprietors soon saw the need of a road, which, however, was not built till 1781. There was probably a bridle-path along the river before that date, since an old deed in 1777 mentions "the path that leads to Eunice's brook," from S. W. Bend. . . .

Capt. O. Israel Bagley, who kept the first store in Royalsborough from 1770 to 1789, was employed to built the road. The original bill of settlement between him and Josiah Little . . ., dated April 10, 1784. . . . states that 184 day's works were spent on the "Rode from Southwest Bend to the Line of Royal Borough clearing Rodes and Building Bridges", and ten "Days work on the Bridge over the Little Androscoggin River." The total cost was fifty pounds, four shillings and two pence. Bagley received his pay in goods for his store, viz., "227 pounds of cotton, 206 pounds of Sugar, 15 gallons of N. E. Rum, 14 Silk Hankerchiefs, 4 yards of silk and 16 yards of Duch Lace."...

In Bagley's account book is found this entry: "Went to work upon Luestown Royd October 4, 1781." Then follow the names of the men employed and the number of days each worked. They were Major Charles Gerrish and his four sons, Nathaniel, William, Charles and George, Ezekiel Jones, Simeon Sanborn, John Blake, William Dean (or Dain) John Randall, O. Israel Bagley, John Dean, John Farr (or Farrar?) Lemuel McGray, Benjamin Vining, Pelatiah Warren, Stephen Weston, Samuel Green and Samuel Ray....

The original road kept close to the bank of the river. It has since been moved back over the hill by the Union church, in 1828; also at Garcelon's or Dingley's Ferry and along by James Wagg's in South Auburn. This was laid out as a county road in 1791. . . . The expense of surveying this road was more than three times the cost of building it originally. It was one hundred and fifty-five pounds, three shillings and four pence.

NAMING OUR TOWNS: DANVILLE

Danville was a town in Androscoggin County that no longer exists. It was incorporated in 1802 as the town of Pejepsctot. However, in 1818, the inhabitants successfully petitioned to change the name to Danville.

In his account of the change, George Thomas Little mourns "This abandonment of an Indian name for an English one of no especial appropriateness." He attributes it as possibly a response to "the general dislike shown by the neighboring towns of the names they had borne before their incorporation or during the few years succeeding that event." Towns in Androscoggin that made such changes included Lisbon, Durham, Poland, and Leeds.

Little continues, "But it seems unfortunate that so distinctive an appellation as Pejepsctot should have been surrendered to increase the number of Danvilles, of which there were already five in the United States. Of these, the shire-town of Caledonia county, Vermont, was the largest and may have suggested the name. How little thought was given to the selection of a new name is incidentally shown by the fact that the citizens first voted for Oxford and then at the same meeting reconsidered their action and took Danville."

In 1859 a part of Danville was annexed to Auburn, and the remainder was annexed in 1867. Nevertheless, the community continues to exhibit a sense of identity.

Sources: George Thomas Little, "Danville," in Georgia Drew Merrill, ed., *History of Androscoggin County* (Boston: W. A. Ferguson & Co., 1891), pp. 691-692; Stanley B. Attwood, *The Length and Breadth of Maine* (Augusta: Kennebec Journal Print Shop, 1946), p. 134.

WALKING TOUR INTERNET SITE

William Karz, '03, a student at Bates College from California, has taken a deep interest in the Lewiston-Auburn community. During the Winter Semester this year, he served an internship with the local Chamber of Commerce to develop an Internet site on local history. He photographed significant buildings and wrote short descriptions of each. He also used some photos from the Society's files. Here are the site addresses:

www.androscoggincounty.com/visitor/latour.html

www.androscoggincounty.com/visitor/walkingtour.html

ROBERT G. WADE, SR. (1900-2000)

We sadly note the passing of Honorary Director Robert G. Wade, Sr., of Auburn on March 19, 2000. He was a graduate of Bates College and he attended Harvard Business School. His business career began in the shoe business in Auburn, continued with positions in Boston, and after 1944 he was in the investment business in Maine, principally as the owner and president of Morton Hall and Rounds. He represented Auburn in the Maine Legislature for three terms in the 1950's, and served as Majority Floor Leader. In addition to his interest in local history, he sang in several organizations and was a member of fraternal organizations. (*Lewiston Sun-Journal*, March 22, 2000)

NEW CENTURY PRESERVATION GRANT

We have received an award of a New Century Preservation Grant of \$1,500.00 from the Cultural Resources Information Center (CRIC), run by the Maine State Archives. This is given for the archival preservation of our map and photograph collections, including the making of finders' aids. Our intern Zachary Blair, as well as other volunteers, will be assisting in this endeavor.

NEWSLETTER AT AGE 10

This is the thirtieth issue of this newsletter, which thereby completes ten years of publication. We have endeavored to provide news of developments within the Society as well as articles on a variety of items of historical interest. The latter have included both pieces of research and reproductions of previously printed material. We have also featured several serials over many issues, including selections from old diaries and journals, Harold Dutch's history of the Society, the chronological list of Ralph Skinner's radio talks, and the stories behind the naming of Androscoggin County towns. Please contact us with ideas for future articles. Of course, we also encourage you to submit your own pieces of research on history in Androscoggin County.

ALL OFFICERS RE-ELECTED

At our annual meeting in June, A. B. (Bob) Palmer was re-elected as president of the Society,

and all other officers and board members were also returned to office.

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

We thank the following local businesses for their generous donations to the Society:

- Brann & Isaacson (Mr. Irving Isaacson)
- Mechanics Savings Bank
- Laskoff & Associates (Robert & Jackie Laskoff)
- Maine Thread / Lewiston Rubber & Supply, Inc. (Mr. Ronald Vallee)
- The Cote Corporation (Crane-Rigging) (Mr. Daniel Gagne)

MAKING OR REVISING YOUR WILL?

Please remember the Androscoggin Historical Society in your will! Here's how – Simply include the following in your will: "I devise to the Androscoggin Historical Society, 2 Turner St., Auburn, ME 04210-5978, \$_____, in cash for its general purposes." Did you know that a devise such as this could reduce your estate taxes? This Society is exempt from Federal taxes!

POSTCARDS FOR SALE

We have a large surplus of old postcards. Our intern Zachary Blair has sorted our holdings, and we have sets ready for sale:

LEWISTON STANDARD SET	26 Cards	\$20.00
LEWISTON COLLECTORS' SET	42 Cards	\$40.00
AUBURN STANDARD SET	16 Cards	\$12.00
AUBURN COLLECTORS' SET	28 Cards	\$25.00
BOTH STANDARD SETS	42 Cards	\$30.00
BOTH COLLECTORS' SETS	70 Cards	\$60.00

If you order by mail, please add \$3.50 Shipping and handling.

Please also remember our 75th Anniversary post-card for sale at 25 cents each or five for one dollar.

DIARY OF AUGUSTA ELLEN ROAK PULSIFER

Augusta Roak Pulsifer (1838-1933) was the eldest daughter of Jacob H. and Mary (Packard) Roak, he a founder of shoe manufacturing in Auburn. She married Horatio B. Pulsifer, who practiced medicine in Philadelphia, but returned to Auburn to enter the shoe business as a partner in the firm of Pulsifer & Roak. Mrs. Pulsifer was educated at Lewiston Falls Academy. She was a charter member of the Auburn Art Club, served as president of the local branch of the International Sunshine Society, was a member of the Women's Literary Union, and a charter member of Sixth Street Church in New Auburn. She wrote occasionally, Nov. 1, 1863, to Sept. 16, 1873:

Nov. 1, 1863 ... I feel great anxiety that my husband has never made a profession of religion and my daily prayer is that he may give his heart to God and live a holy life. May my example be such that I may not be a "stumbling block" to him but a "bright + shining light."

Nov. 25 Thanksgiving day and we a happy family are all at home – for the first time on this day since our marriage – My dear husband came yesterday. I hardly dared think he would come. and am so happy that I was not doomed to disappointment. In the morning we all went to church but mother who staid at home to attend to the dinner. in the afternoon Rosa + I took a walk went to the post office then to A. M. Pulsifer's office where we found Horace + Horatio – they came home with us and at half past seven we all went down to E. T. Little's found Mr + Mrs Josiah Little. Charles + Hattie L + Mr + Mrs Green – had some nice oysters beside many other goodies – had a pleasant evening and came home quite weary –

Jan. 17, 1864 . . . quite a change in our family with-in a few weeks and I think it promises to be a pleasant one. Father + Mr Packard after having been in company in business for seventeen years have dissolved copartnership. and Mr P. has bought the old shop. Father has gone into business by himself and Horatio + Horace with him. Horace has sold his house in Bridgton and moved here. We have sold our furniture in Philadelphia and now the plan is for all of us to board at home. We anticipate much pleasure here together and hope the business relation will be both agreeable + beneficial [sic].

It is very nice to be watching at a regular time for your husband's step. I think I'll like it much better than his practicing medicine where he will be called at any time of day or night. . . .

Jan. 1, 1865 . . . last winter + spring I suffered much from ill health. but since the birth of our darling boy I am much better than for a number of years before. At first, (being unable to nurse him) we thought he would die but

through kind providence he has been spared until now (seven months) [Jacob Roak Pulsifer was born 3 June 1864.] I had several wet nurses – among them Mrs Barker whose husband was in the army – another Mrs True Davis living in Danville where baby + I boarded about three weeks. finally Mrs Leader took him home, having lost her baby – kept him two months. She was very kind to him and did as well as I could expect – as she could keep him no longer I took him home and thank God he has done well thus far. is a great pet with Father + Mother + his uncle Jake.

Jan. 7 1865 . . . News came tonight that the Steamer "Potomac" running between New York + Portland was burnt. Mr. E. F. Packard is among the losers.

Jan. 11 . . . Went up to Miss Stephens engaged her to take care of Roak for me to make calls. in the afternoon mother + I went out together and made twelve calls. Saw several babies. dont [sic] see but what mine looks as well and smart as any of them. . . .

Mar. 2 . . . My Dear Roakie was taken with croup last night – father went for the Dr about ten o'clock at night – he considered him very sick . . . this morning I send for Miss Stephens and she has assisted me in taking care of baby – he was quite sick all the fore noon – gave him some physic. in the afternoon was quite cheerful . . .

Mar. 3 Baby had a very restless night – did not rest at all until three o'clock. Had a high fever. Dr was in this morning say there is danger of lung fever. I am so anxious about him I hardly know what to do. expect his papa will feel badly when he hears of it. I sent him a letter this morning.

Mar. 4 Baby is much better his cough is quite loose. Dr was in this morning says he is out of danger now. I feel very happy about it. he is troublesome but I do not mind that if he can only get well. Miss Stephens went home this morning. I paid her a dollar for her services. the bells were all rung this noon in honor of the day. . . .

Jan. 14 1866 . . . my dear husband rose for prayers in church. how thankful I am. I have prayed so long for him that he might turn to Jesus, and acknowledge him as his saviour. and now at last he is awakened to a sense of his condition. on coming home from church we read the bible and prayed together for the first time since we were married. . . .

July 1867 I don't remember just the day but near the middle of the month we gave a party invited about sixty of our friends and nearly all came had a very social time. next day invited several older people to tea –

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

- We continue to make grant requests to various trusts, foundations, and other philanthropic organizations.
- The Board approved expenditure of \$800.00 on computer equipment to enable our secretary to write letters to our donors to clearly establish legal title to our holdings and to computerize our library, museum and archive holdings. Herman Lord set up the computer.
- We participated in the 29th Great TV Auction on Maine Public Broadcasting this year. We donated Collectors' Sets of Auburn and Lewiston postcards, valued at \$60.00, and they sold on Tuesday evening April 11. It is hoped that it provided us with some publicity.
- Daily business totals for our Fiscal Year 1999-2000 were: Phone calls - 686; Museum visits - 220; Library visits - 386; Correspondence - 1, 025; Meeting Notices Sent - 533; Meeting Attendance - 208; Business Meeting Attendance - 39; Programs Sent - 170; Newsletters Sent - 474; Balloon Festival - 57; Annual Dinner - 39.
- On Wednesday, April 12th, 2000, the ladies of the Mary Dillingham Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution held a meeting here at our Society. Miss Leslie H. Wight, who is their representative and an Honorary Director on our Board at the Society, led the meeting. This Executive Secretary had a short talk at the beginning of the meeting on our Society and on some of the more important persons in history from this county.
- Please check your mailing labels! If it say "99-00" on it, then your membership needs to be renewed. Individual memberships are \$15.00, family memberships are \$25.00, and life memberships are \$150.00. Please remit all payments to Mrs. Alma Palmer, Membership Secretary, P. O. Box 67, Minot, ME 04258-0067. Telephone (207) 783-2513. Please also make sure your address is up to date, including nine-digit ZIP Code.

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

- Reprint of *Gorges and the Grant of the Province of Maine, 1622–A Tercentenary Memorial* by Henry S. Burrage
- An 1894 reprint of *Maine Constitutional Convention, 1819-20*, donated by The Honorable Mr. Robert Clifford
- A 1928 Haskell Implement & Seed Company (of Lewiston) catalog, donated by Douglas Hodgkin
- *Native American Directory, Vital Records of Maine* (and several other states) by Lorraine (Rainwater) Henry
- *New England Family Histories, States of Maine and Rhode Island*, by Lu Verne V. Hall & Donald O. Viridin
- Copy of a videotape of Col. Louis Millett's Congressional Medal of Honor Ceremony with President Truman and of his *Psalm of a Soldier* upon his retirement. Col. Millett is from Mechanic Falls and an uncle to our secretary Debra Chadbourne. We thank Mr. Albert Stronach for loaning the tape so we could have a copy made.
- A modern reprint of *The History of Androscoggin County, Maine*, by Georgia Drew Merrill, desk copy given by Higginson Book Company of Salem, MA.
- *Industrial Androscoggin*, dated 1917, a review of local industrial history, donated by Douglas Hodgkin
- Miss Leslie H. Wight's Master's Thesis, *A School History of Auburn, Maine*, photocopied from a copy loaned by Bates College Library. Miss Wight is an Honorary Director of our Society.
- *Penley Family in England and America*, by Rev. Robert Penley, manuscript photocopied by permission of John King of Norton, MA.

SUPPLEMENT: With this edition of the Newsletter is Michael Lord's compilation of Androscoggin county and statewide historical, genealogical and cultural organizations. Do you have any additions or corrections?