

# ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

October, 2001

Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

No. 34

## PROPOSALS FOR OUR FUTURE

The Board of Directors of the Androscoggin Historical Society has begun discussions concerning the future location of the Society's museum and library. Two major possibilities are being considered. It must be emphasized that neither proposal has any certainty of being a real option. We take this opportunity, however, to inform our membership.

The Society currently leases its space on the third floor of the County Building. It is an excellent arrangement in terms of cost and security. These quarters also have a feeling of history – we are in a building on the National Historic Register and we have been here since 1935. However, we are extremely cramped for space. This handicaps our ability to add to our holdings. We also lack visibility.

Prior to the annual meeting in June, Barbara Trafton presented an idea to the Board concerning the new, large addition to the Auburn Public Library. If the capital campaign for that expansion can raise sufficient additional funds over the campaign goal, an area could be excavated that was not in the original plans. This would open the possibility of providing space for the Society to occupy on a long-term lease.

A move to the library would provide more space and greater visibility. Visitors to the library could also spend time in our library or museum. Field trips by school children could combine a visit to both us and the library.

Doug Hodgkin has been representing the Society during discussions of L-A Excels concerning the establishment of a museum in Bates Mill No. 5 (the one with the saw-tooth roof along Canal Street nearest Main Street). L-A Excels is a cooperative endeavor among Lewiston, Auburn, and Bates College that discusses long-range planning and seeks grant money to conduct studies of various projects to revitalize the communities. Other participants in the discussions of a museum include representatives of Sports Hall of Fame, the two Franco-American organizations, proponents of a Civil War museum,

Great Falls Model Railroad Club, Lewiston Public Library, and others.

The organization and governance of a new museum is as yet undefined. It could be a single museum with the merger of any current organizations who choose to participate. It could be a new museum that focuses on industrial history and we and other organizations remain separate, possibly lending items for exhibit from time to time. It could also be a place where each individual organization has its own display areas with possible additional displays put on by the umbrella organization established to handle common issues such as allocation of space, security, utilities, and the like.

Some advantages of our joining this project would be the greater visibility, huge amounts of space, and the prospect of more generous funding from foundations and contributors. Disadvantages include some loss of autonomy or even identity. Some express concern about pooling all historical resources in one building.

The proposals are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It would be possible to move to the Auburn library, but to cooperate with a museum in the mill by lending artifacts from our collection. This arrangement, however, could make our prospects for funding less attractive as donors go to the bigger and flashier mill museum.

We must be aware that either proposal will require expenditure of funds to finish space to our specifications. There will be moving costs. Our operating budget also will increase.

Finally, we remind all that these options are both in the "dream" stage, very contingent upon many factors to come to fruition.

## MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting of Androscoggin Historical Society is Tuesday, October 23, 2001, at 7:00 P.M., in the County Building.

**Topic: "Thorncrag Past and Present"**

**Speaker: Susan Hayward of the Thorncrag Bird Sanctuary / Stanton Bird Club**

## DAVID DAVIS PAPERS

We have some miscellaneous old documents in our holdings that give some insight into the life of David Davis (1775-1851) and his family of Lewiston.

Lewiston February 16<sup>th</sup> 1800

Dear Madam after our acquaintance together I Must inform you that I have a regard for you So I must inform you that I find my Self to be So unastablished in regard of Matremony that I think it best for you to not put any Dependance on me in regard of them matters Dear madam I hope you wont take any ofence in my writing these lines to you as you and I had ben aquainted & that my Self obligated to let you hear from me

Note: This letter is not signed and the name of the lady is not indicated. Did David Davis write it, but fail to send it? His and widow Molly Pierce's marriage intentions are in Lewiston records 9 March 1800.

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Esteemed friend David Davis

I am informed that thou Can Discribe a medson for the toothach that is a most certain Cure If thou will send me a sufficient quantity for that purpos or to inform how I can obtain it I will se thee Satisfied I want it for my wife She is very much afflicted with the toothach Hannah Sleeper told her of thy cureing a number if thou will Send by some one [paper torn] they return from [tear] quarter thou will ablige thy friend Remington Hobby

Vassalborough [tear] 27 - 5 Mon 1802 [or 1812]

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United States to David Davis . . . .

Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> To the use of my House improved by Majr S. Ranney as a Principal recruiting Rendezvous & Store for the reception & delivery of ready made cloathing from the first of July to the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1813 Inclusive at \$35 pr quarter of the year . . . . \$35

Received of Majr S. Ranney this 30<sup>th</sup> day of Sepr. 1813 thirty five dollars in full of the above account

I have Signed duplicate receipts

Note: This was during the War of 1812.

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Lewiston April 29th 1816 --

I William Waymoth of Athens (Me) hereby declare & affirm that the White horse which I have exchanged this day with David Davis of Lewiston for another horse was my lawful property until the said exchange was this day made with said Davis and I Do warrant said white horse to be sound in wind & limbs and I say according to the best of my knowledge that the said horse is about thirteen years old. I have made saide exchange in consideration of one dollar advanced to me by said Davis

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Dorchester August 11 1827

Kind Father

In the late trying and afflictive scenes of Gods providence which I have been called to pass through I flatter myself if I put my trust in God he will give me strength and bare me up under every affliction which he sends upon me. O my Parents and Sister this is a scene peculiarly trying to us all. How much do we require every consolation at this trying hour. God by his rod of affliction has taken from us a kind Son and a beloved Brother he was but of as a flour at noon day may his Friends and companions realise this suden event which has taken place in the midst of them as a solemn warning to them to be also ready for we now not the hour when the son of man cometh. . . .

Note: Alice M. Davis to her father David Davis. Her brother Seth Davis died 31 July 1827, age 20.

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"I have had very good success in school keeping as yet: have about 30 or 35 scholars; a number that are larger than I am; and some boys that are upwards of 20 years of age."

Note: Letter from Olive Woodard to Miss Sarah Davis in Lewiston, dated Lewiston Dec 19 1830.

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Lewiston, Me., November 29 1878

David Davis Son of Amos Davis was Born Sept 1st 1775 and Deceaesd January 5 1851 Born in Lewiston on the Doc Gorham Farm in a Log house Bought the Farm where I now live Paid \$1000. for it. the house on the corner of Whipple St was built in 1817 he had two wives. had 5 children he was an man. he bot a piece of land now a part of the Whittum farm Paid all the man asked for it But a few day before he died he cald me to his bed and Said. you know I hold a not against Hackett he says I dont want you to collect it it was good as could be I thought I shoud lik to know why he did want it collected So I ask.d him he says we did not pay Enough for it I says you paid. all he askd for it I know it. he says it was not what it was worth on the setlemt of his Etate the not was burned up. pity we have not Some such men living now a days

I was Born August 23 1811 in Buxton York County Maine, live with the Shakers so cald untill I was about 19 years old Carried there by my parents, when I was 3 years old went to Gorham Say the family moovd to Poland in 1818 and I went with them. left them in may 1831 came to Lewiston January 1st 1832 it was Sunday and I walkd over from New Gloucester with all my Real Etate and Personal property tied up in pocket handkerchief with only \$7.00 in money was as happy then as now

Note: On letterhead of Treasurer's Office, City of Lewiston. Probably written by Davis's son-in-law Archibald Wakefield, who was born place and date indicated.

**NEWS FROM MAINE PRESERVATION**

We reproduce two items in the Summer 2001 Maine Preservation newsletter that concern buildings in Androscoggin County. We thank them for permission to reproduce these articles.

**POLAND SCHOOLHOUSE**

The Poland Historical Society is working to restore a one-room schoolhouse built in 1848. Beverly Tripp, a member of the town's historical society, is spearheading the effort and so far, more than \$13,000 has been raised, the largest contributor being Poland Spring Bottling Company. Once the renovations are completed, the town intends to use the schoolhouse for meetings and the historical society will use the basement to store historical artifacts. Originally, there were 26 one-room schoolhouses in Poland, but only three remain – this being the most salvageable. . . . To help or make a contribution contact: Beverly Tripp, 1111 Maine St., Poland, ME 04274, or phone (207) 998-4219.

**UNION CHURCH / TOWN HALL, DURHAM**

The Commission reviewed the nomination of this building for National Register on April 27, 2001. Kirk Mohny, Architectural Historian of the Commission, writes:

Erected in 1835, the Union Church is a late Federal style frame edifice that is detailed on the exterior with Gothic Revival style features and on the interior with Greek Revival moldings. In 1924, the building became the Durham Town Hall. It is eligible for nomination to the register . . . for its association with local government, . . . for its architectural significance . . . [and] due to the building's former religious use.

**LEWISTON ANDROSCOGGIN MILL BLOCK**

The newsletter also notes that the Maine Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the nomination of this building on January 26, 2001. It has been granted a listing on the National Register. This apartment house constructed by the Androscoggin Mill at 269-271 Park Street is one of three such buildings still standing side-by-side on Park Street. The City of Lewiston has invested money in the preservation of the building, and up to three different parties are interested in its acquisition.

Dara Kidder of Ashland, Maine, our August intern from Bates College, Class of 2003, has finished the preservation work on our Map Project. The maps of the map case have been put into archival quality Mylar-D, the larger ones have been put into archival boxes, and the largest into six-inch tubes. The rolled maps on rods by the gray vault are now in three-inch archival tubes without Mylar-D. A manifest has been compiled. The photographs, including the oversized ones in our map case, are also done using archival quality polyethylene bags.

Ms. Kidder also started the long process of compiling a deaccessioning list of our holdings. This list will help our Board decide item by item what to place for sale and what to keep. Things to be sold will be placed with an auction house or on an Internet auction site.

We thank Dara for her conscientious and enthusiastic work, and Bates College's Center for Service-Learning for sending her to work with us.

**RUBY CEMETERY OF DURHAM**

A rather important but forgotten cemetery has been rediscovered in Durham. A part of the prominent Maine African-American Ruby family was buried there. Ed Hurley found it while out hunting and did research at our Society to confirm that Samuel Ruby, who is buried there with his family, is the eldest brother of Reuben Ruby, who helped found the Abyssinian Religious Society in Portland and the Maine Antislavery Society. When William Lloyd Garrison visited Portland, Reuben, a hack driver, drove him around and entertained him at his own house. Reuben has been profiled in a documentary, *Anchor of the Soul*. President Roland Jordan of the Maine Old Cemetery Association and Ed Hurley removed some downed trees, etc., from the cemetery. More needs to be done, but this is a fine first step.

**EVELYN WHITE, 1917-2001**

We are sad to report that Evelyn White, former Secretary and Treasurer of the Society, died July 27, 2001. She and her husband, John, made their home in Minot after living in Auburn many years. We offer our sincere condolences to her husband and family.

## GOINGS-ON AT THE SOCIETY

by Michael Lord, Executive Secretary

We have a **new sign** outside the County Building! Made by MW Signworks, it is being installed at our Court Street entrance. We hope that this will increase traffic at the Society and give us more visibility.

On September 13, Eric Marengi of WCNN, a local radio station that feeds CNN audio over the air, interviewed me for occasional intermission broadcast. The **interview** topics consisted mainly of our Society's purpose, history and recent accomplishments. This will give us more recognition and publicity.

Please check your mailing labels to be sure your **address** and especially your **membership** are up to date! Please direct all membership matters to Bruce A. Hall to his home telephone (795-6134) or by mail directly to the Society's address.

## ACQUISITIONS

We have acquired the following items during the past few months:

### Donations

- By Androscoggin County Commissioners: A courtroom chair formerly used by jurors in the Androscoggin County Courthouse.
- By Jody Dube: Section of metal exterior façade (with green star), ca. 1951, removed from 69 Lisbon Street, during 2001 renovation for new District Court House.
- By Marilyn Mansfield, compiler: *Descendants of Richard Barker of Andover, MA with descendants (sic) of Lewiston, Maine and other Descendants*, 2001.
- By USDA office, Lewiston: Soil Survey of Androscoggin and Sagadahoc Counties, Maine, by U. S. Dept. of Agriculture - Soil Conservation Service, 1970.
- By USDA office, Lewiston: Map, "Important Farmlands: Androscoggin County, Maine, by U. S. Dept. of Agriculture - Soil Conservation Service, 1977.

- By Douglas I. Hodgkin: pamphlet, "Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Auburn-Lewiston Y.M.C.A. 1922-1947."
- By Edward Parker of Monmouth: Map of Croft's West Lake Shore Land Co. on Lake Auburn, 1914.
- By Eric Liberty of Auburn: A tab of dairy tickets from A. Ouellette of 282 East Ave., Lewiston, ca. 1940's.
- By Earl W. Martin, Jr.: Bottle of S. B. Scribner, Market Gardener, Twin Pines, Lewiston, ME, ca. 1890's.
- By Charles A. Scontras, author: *In the Name of Humanity: Maine's Crusade Against Child Labor*, 2000.
- By Town of Sabattus: Computer printout of about fifty pages of history of Town of Webster or Sabattus, no author, title, or date.
- By Herman Lord: **Edward Little High School's first computer**, a Litton Monroe Model 1880, ca. 1973. It has a roll of paper for a "screen," a non-QWERTY keyboard, a slot for photocopier like memory cards for a "disk drive," and no hard drive, meaning that all memory is lost each time it is shut off. Truly a computer fossil!

### Purchased

- Fifty photographs of the construction of the Libbey-Dingley Dam, Lewiston, 1902.
- David Nevin, *Muskie of Maine*, 1972.
- George Woodbury, *The Story of the Stanley Steamer*, 1950.
- Sondra Wieland Howe, *Luther Whiting Mason: International Music Educator*, 1997.
- Donald W. Beattie, et al., *A Distant War Comes Home: Maine in the Civil War Era*, 1996.
- Marquis King, *Publishments, Marriages, Births and Deaths from the Earlier Records of Gorham, Maine*, 2001 reprint of 1897 original.
- Andrew J. Wahll, *SABINO – Popham Colony (Maine) Reader: 1602-2000*, 2000.
- Steven D. Simpson, *Tax Compliance for Tax-Exempt Organizations*, 2001.
- Wayne Clark Gilman, ed. & comp., *A Maine Family Index: 1900-12, Vol. III, The Androscoggin Region*, 2000.
- Buckfield Historical Society, *History of Buckfield, Maine – 1900-2000*, 2001.
- Will Anderson, *Lost Diners and Roadside Restaurants of New England and New York*, 2001.

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

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