

# ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

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Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

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## MAINE SUPPLY COMPANY BUILDING

The City of Lewiston has announced a large development project at the south end of Lisbon Street, bounded by Lisbon, Maple, and Canal Streets. New office buildings will be constructed, but the historic Maine Supply Company building at 415 Lisbon Street will be renovated and incorporated into the project.

The historic building was designed by William R. Miller, a Lewiston architect known for his "flamboyant and picturesque" designs. Among Miller's other local credits are Auburn Public Library, Jordan High School, Universalist Church (corner of Sabattus and College Streets), St. Mary's Hospital, first McGillicuddy Block, Elks Home (demolished recently), Lewiston Armory, and United Baptist Church.

The four-story structure was built in 1910-1911 for the Maine Supply and Garage Company, probably as the first commercial automobile garage in Maine. The garage on the first floor had a center door wide enough for two cars. At the left was a display window and at the right, a manager's office and a customer waiting room. On the second floor were offices of the Portland Casualty Company with an auto repair shop in the back. The two upper floors were to display farm implements.

Maine Supply Co. officers were Arsene Cailler, pres.; Horatio G. Foss, vice-pres.; Henri P. Bechard, treas.; Louis J. Brann, clerk; and additional Directors William H. Newell, C. A. Lacroix, Philip Dupont, N. H. Hamel, John B. St. Pierre, and Charles G. Keene.

About 1918 Lévasseur Motor Car Company, a Pontiac and Oakland automobile dealer, was located at 415 Lisbon Street. The next business, about 1930, was Morency Motors, whose ads emphasized general repairs and automobile storage. Briefly in the early 1930s, Somerset Shoe Company (shoe manufacturers) and Gould & Scammon (shoe counter manufacturers) were also at that address. Morency Motors became the Pontiac Center in 1947 (Deed 605:246). From about 1935 to the mid-1980s, Lewiston-Auburn United Grocers operated in the building, succeeded by Good Shepherd Food Bank. However, it may have been about that time that the building fell vacant and into disrepair.

Sources: Roger G. Reed, "William R. Miller" and "Miller and Mayo," *A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine*, Vol. 5, Nos. 14 and 15, 1988; "Everything the Best," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, 5 Jan. 1911, p. 2; various deeds; directories of Androscoggin County and of Lewiston-Auburn, 1910-1990.

## OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 2003-2004

The Society has two new officers for the year 2003-2004. Barbara Randall is our new vice-president, an office that was vacant this past year. Michael Spaulding, of Austin Associates, becomes our treasurer. Special thanks are due to Susan Sturgis, who has served as our very able treasurer for several years.

Officers re-elected are David C. Young, president; Michael C. Lord, executive secretary; Mary M. Riley, recording secretary; Bruce A. Hall, membership secretary; Douglas I. Hodgkin, newsletter editor; Richard L. Trafton, attorney.

Two new members of the Board of Directors are Mary Buzzell and W. Dennis Stires. Continuing members are Franklin H. Goss, Bernice Y. Hodgkin, Edward C. Hodgkin, Douglas I. Hodgkin, Paul F. Martz, Mary M. Riley, Norman E. Rose, Lois F. Rousseau, Susan F. Sturgis, and Gordon V. Windle.

The annual meeting also elected Jane Norris, a former treasurer and board member, as an honorary director.

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## INTERNET ACCESS

A generous donor has paid a year's subscription for the Society's new high-speed access to the Internet. Now you may contact us via email at [androhs@verizon.net](mailto:androhs@verizon.net).

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## COUNTY HISTORY BOOKS

Preparation of the history book entitled *Androscoggin County, Maine: A Pictorial Sesquicentennial History, 1854 - 2004* continues. We are grateful to Mechanics Savings Bank for its sponsorship and initial financing. We have changed to Penmor of Lewiston as our publisher, which provides sufficient savings that we shall be able to publish a second book with the same loan. Nancy Lecompte will produce a volume on Native American history in our region. We expect publication of both books in early November. Start compiling your holiday-giving list of folks to whom you can give one or both of these volumes!

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## WEST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MINOT

Disagreements over the location of the meetinghouse led to the construction of two and a division of the Congregation. The Society has a copy of the records of the Second or West Congregational Church of Minot from 1 July 1806 to 18 October 1821. The following are selections concerning creation of the church and calling its first and only minister:

Request for separation by residents in West part of Minot: ... the real situation of most of us is such, that we cannot conveniently and stately attend the Publick worship and ordinances of god with our families at the place of Publick worship in the East of Minot ... and many families in the West, who are not yet members of the Church, are in the same situation and under like disadvantages with ourselves.

Oct. 15, 1806, an Ecclesiastical Council listed the following as the founding members: Moses Bradbury, Isaac Allen, Davis Variel, Samuel Variel, Jun<sup>r</sup>, John Row, Benjamin Butler, Nathaniel Chandler, John Chandler, Ichabod Chandler, Eunice Bradbury, Anne Washburn, Ruth Seabury, Marcy Chandler, Kezia Chandler, Olive Chandler, and Sarah Row.

At a meeting of the Second Church of Christ in Minot duly notified, for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of presenting a Call to the Rev. W<sup>m</sup> Pidgin to settle with us in the Gospel ministry:

Having had opportunity for being acquainted with said W<sup>m</sup> Pidgin, and hearing him preach for more than two years, and being satisfied with his Ministerial gifts and performances ... Voted unanimously that we seriously and earnestly invite him the said W<sup>m</sup> Pidgin to settle with us as a Gospel Minister, and to take the charge and oversight of this Church and Society in the Lord.... Novem – 7-1810”

Answer to the foregoing Call.

A considerable time has elapsed since I received an invitation from you to settle in the Gospel Ministry; and it seems but proper that you receive some answer. ...

When I consider your situation in some respects peculiar, how much you need some spiritual leader to take the oversight of you in the Lord, I cannot but feel concerned for you and some interest in your trust welfare. Having been with you so long, I already seem to be one with you in spirit, in desire and endeavor, and find myself attached to your persons and families. Under these impressions and considerations, I feel a willingness to devote myself to your service in the Gospel of God's dear Son and that it is my duty to comply with the invitation with which you have favored me. ... W<sup>m</sup> Pidgin.

At an Ecclesiastical Council convened in Minot on Tuesday the 15<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> 1811 ...

Wednesday Jan<sup>y</sup> 16: The Council met according to adjournment ... The examination of the Candidate being completed, the question was called and taken, Are this Council satisfied with the Christian Character and ministerial gifts of the Rev. Wm Pidgin? – When it was

Voted unanimously in the affirmative.

While the Council thus cordially and unanimously testified their satisfaction as to the Christian character and ministerial gifts of the Candidate, doubts nevertheless arose; from peculiar circumstances, whether it is expedient now to proceed to his installation: Wherefore, after free conversation and discussion, it was mutually agreed between the Council, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Church, and the Rev. Candidate that on account of the absence of three Pastors and the Delegates of two churches, who were expected to sit in Council, and for other reasons, this council be adjourned to some future day, to be fixed by y<sup>e</sup> Church at their pleasure, and to be increased by the representation of two churches from the Westward, and one other church from this District: .... The Council beg leave to add, that they have learnt with concern that there now exists a difficulty between this church and the first church of Christ in this town. They feel themselves bound earnestly to recommend to this church to appoint a committee to meet a committee of the first church, and to take all Christian measures to adjust the present subsisting difficulties between the two Churches: ...

Session, were again attended to, and the Candidate again examined verbally by the members respecting his doctrinal sentiments and his experimental religion. – After duly considering all the circumstances of the case with deliberation, the Council Voted, To proceed to install the Rev. W<sup>m</sup> Pidgin over the second Church in Minot to-morrow at 11 O Clock, A.M.

Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> met according to adjournment.

As the Council learn that the difficulties between the first and second churches in this Town are not removed, they still earnestly recommend to the second Church to use their utmost endeavors, in every Gospel way, to adjust all existing difficulties, and to restore that Harmony and Christian love, so desireable [*sic*] to every devout mind, and so necessary to the promotion and increase of the Redeemers kingdom in the world.

In April 1818, women accused Mr. Pidgin of indecency. After several hearings and meetings, he was found guilty and in August 1819 he was dismissed. On 18 October 1821, the church voted to dissolve and the churches were reunited.

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## COUNTY HISTORY AVAILABLE

Merrill's Bookshop of Hallowell has a copy of Georgia Drew Merrill's *History of Androscoggin County, Maine*, 1891, for sale for \$125, in excellent condition, I'm told, if anyone is interested. On the other hand, reprints of the book are available from the Society. Please allow up to ten weeks for your order. Please give us your mailing address and telephone number. The price is \$90.00 plus \$5.00 S&H plus \$4.50 (5% Maine Sales Tax). A must for the serious Androscoggin historian.

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

\* **Fiscal Year 2002-3** (June 1<sup>st</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>) business totals are as follows: telephone calls - 906; museum visits - 225; library visits - 442; correspondence - 1010; programs sent - 168; meeting attendance - 219+; meeting notices sent - 692; board & committee meeting attendance - 49; newsletters sent - 511; Great Falls Balloon Festival attendance - 18+; annual dinner attendance - 48; Androscoggin Round Table meeting attendance - 111. In addition, the Auburn Art Club had a meeting here on February 24 with an attendance of 25. Also, since we have just had email installed, the few emails we have had in the ten days or so of the last fiscal year I will count in the next.

\* **Old Fort Western in Augusta** has kindly offered one dollar off admission to our Society's members from Memorial Day to Columbus Day this year. (They're doing this for all members of Maine Archives & Museums member organizations.) All you need to do is present your current AHS membership card as proof when you arrive.

\* Our **Corporate Membership Drive** for this coming year totals \$700 so far; we thank Atty. Irving Isaacson of Brann & Isaacson of Lewiston for \$100 on 12/11/02; Pres. Sherwood C. Moody, Mechanics Savings Bank of Auburn for \$500 on 4/23/03; Mr. Ronald A. Vallee of Maine Thread & Machinery of Lewiston for \$100 on 5/21/03. If any reader wishes to join corporately or knows of someone who does, then please contact your Executive Secretary. Thank you.

### ACQUISITIONS

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

#### Donations

- \* Small packet of newspaper clippings relative to Turner, ca. 1908-1916. From Mrs. Cindy Mason of St. Albans, ME.
- \* *Bicentennial Salute 1775-1995, 200 Years in 5 Towns! Canton, Fayette, Jay, Livermore, Livermore Falls.* By W. Dennis Stires.
- \* The Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce 2003 Resource Guide. From the Chamber.
- \* A compilation of the Paul, Swift, and Eaton family histories, 2002, by Nancy Fricke of Arnold, MD. By the author.
- \* Photograph of possibly military inductees taken in front of the Lewiston Public Library, 10 February 1943. By Parker Kinney of Jay.

\* Eight diaries and daybooks probably of Amos Harris of West Minot (?) from 1895-1921. By Nancy Larrabee.

\* A few copies of *Lewiston Evening Journal* of the 1890's. By Connie Tuller.

\* *Down East Magazine* of April 2003. By the publishers. It contains an article on the restored Poland Spring House. They also published one of our photographs of the Lewiston and Auburn Wheel Club, 1891.

\* "Gridley Barrows: A Recollection," by Phillip M. Isaacson, Lewiston Public Library, Lewiston, Maine, April, 2003. Signed by the author as number ten. Also an LSJ newspaper insert of 4/17/03 on the Lewiston Public Library's Centennial. Both by Richard A. Spear for the Lewiston Public Library.

\* *The Political Power of Refugees: An analysis of social and political mobilization with regards [sic] to the Somali community in the city of Lewiston, Maine.* A senior thesis presented to the Political Science Department of Bates College and prepared by William Benjamin Karz, 4/1/2003. By the author.

\* Our new DSL connection has been donated anonymously.

### Purchases

\* *Michaud: A Paleoindian Site in the New England - Maritimes Region*, by Arthur E. Spiess and Deborah Brush Wilson. Augusta, ME: The Maine Historic Preservation Commission and The Maine Archaeological Society Inc., 1987.

\* One Projecta Scope, E-9680. This can be used in presentations to project opaque material.

\* *Bakerstown Births and Families - Minot*, by Noella R. Hemond & Lucille Hemond Hodsdon. Norway, Maine: Printed by Lucille Hemond Hodsdon. Revised edition, January, 2003.

\* *Minot Death & Cemetery Records*, by Noella R. Hemond & Lucille Hemond Hodsdon. Norway, Maine: Printed by the Authors, February, 2003.

\* *Danville, Maine: A History in Pictures*, by Rose Morrison. Auburn, Maine: Central Maine Technical College, 2003.

\* *Community Resource Guide*, Compiled by Seniors Plus, Funded by Empower Lewiston, Spring 2003.

\* *Early Families of Limerick, Maine*, by Robert L. Taylor. Rockport, Maine: Picton Press, 1993.

\* *Super U.: The History and Politics of the University of Maine System*, by James Delmas Libby, Ph.D. Rockport, Maine: Picton Press, 2000.

### DANVILLE BRICKS

Morin Brick Company of Danville has kindly donated a number of custom-made bricks imprinted with "Danville 1802 - 2002" for Danville's Bicentennial. We have them at the Society in the County Building for five dollars a brick, or six for twenty-five dollars, plus tax. We've sold most of them! Only 35 are left.

## 1915 ROAD RACE by Douglas I. Hodgkin

On Memorial Day, 1915, the *Lewiston Evening Journal* sponsored a ten-mile road race in Lewiston. This was a promotional for the newspaper as it hyped the event in the days before the race. The paper claimed that “thousands and thousands” of spectators, possibly as many as 40,000, did show up to watch. Police Chief McCarron and others used their automobiles to clear the course of enthusiastic fans for much of the route.

No entry fee was charged, but there were only thirty-four entrants. Only twenty lined up at the starting line, which was in front of the Journal Building on Lisbon Street where Androscoggin Bank is located today. From there the course proceeded to East Avenue and turned left, then right on Sabattus Road, left on Russell, right on College, left on Stetson, left on Main, left on Frye, right on College, left on Sabattus, left on Campus Avenue, and into the Lewiston Athletic Park (now occupied by Lewiston Middle School).

Various automobile dealers and other individuals donated the use of cars to enable race officials to monitor the runners for any infractions of the rules.

The paper reported conditions a bit inconsistently, “The day was ideal and while not as cool as the early days in the spring . . . was not blazing hot,” and in another place, “The heat of the day was intense and the roads were as dry and sandy as the desert. The hundreds of autos that followed the race kicked up a sea of dust and gasoline the [*sic*] made the hardship of the runners greater.”

Clifton Horne of Dorchester, Massachusetts, led the entire race and finished in 59 minutes and 40 seconds. The drama was in the contest for second place between Willis P. Lane of Bates College 1:00:00.2 and Ezra

Wenz of Colby College 1:01:18.4. Only seven more runners finished: Harold B. Moreau of Berlin, NH; Oswald Sparsam, local; Waldo DeWolfe, Bates College; Webster, GeBauer, McClellan, and Turner. One runner, DeCicco, was disqualified for riding an automobile part way. The others dropped out, one of whom, Frank Noyes of Bowdoin College, collapsed after eight miles and was taken to the hospital.

Data from two ten-mile races in Maine in 2002 show remarkable changes. On June 29, in Bucksport there were ninety finishers ranging from age 14 to 66, including 35 women. The winner’s time was 55:55. (<http://www.mainetrackclub.com/tourdulac02.html>) Another race on February 3, 2002, in Cape Elizabeth, had 592 finishers ranging in age from 14 to 80, including 216 women. The winner’s time was 52:54. (<http://www.mainetrackclub.com/midwin02.html#Overa11>)

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### CIVIL WAR LETTERS FOR SALE

We have a collection of 32 Civil War letters plus three related pension papers on approval from Apfelbaum Rare Manuscripts & Archives of New Jersey. They were written by John E. Nash (Co. K, 28th Maine Reg’t.) to his family in East Livermore (he was from Jay). They tell of his experiences in Brooklyn, where he lodged in Henry Ward Beecher's Church, but mostly in Louisiana, where he went behind enemy lines. Would anyone purchase them for us, another area historical society, or even themselves? It would be nice to have them in Maine rather than New Jersey. Asking price is \$3200, but you should negotiate; Mr. Charles Plummer of Lisbon estimates the value at \$900 - \$1000.

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

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