

ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

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Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

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LYCEUM HALL RESTORATION AWARD

Maine Preservation has selected Eric and Carrie Agren of Lewiston to receive a 2007 Statewide Historic Preservation Honor Award for their rehabilitation and restoration of Lyceum Hall at 49 Lisbon Street. They invested their personal funds to bring the building back to much of its original appearance while adapting it to new uses: a restaurant named Fuel, a gallery for L/A Arts exhibits, and their own apartment.

The 1872 building, designed by noted architect Charles F. Douglas, is on the National Register of Historic Places. It originally contained the area's first theater, which hosted touring productions as well as locally produced shows. Some noted in 1874 were Metropolitan Theater performers from New York, the Mendelssohn Quintette Club of Boston, and "Buffalo Bill" Cody and "Wild Bill" Hickok with their "Scouts of the Plains." Local organizations also hired the hall for plays, concerts, and the like.

On the first floor were two commercial spaces. The men who had the building constructed, Robert M. Owen and Horace C. Little, had their hardware store there. Little, a grandson of Edward Little, also served as Lewiston's postmaster and as mayor in 1888 and 1889. This store evolved to become Owen & Hall Hardware and then Hall & Knight Hardware.

The other store housed merchant tailors specializing in men's clothing, David O. Richards and John L. Merrill. Beginning about 1904, Augustus N. Berry, succeeded by Edgar M. Berry, operated Berry Paper Company there until about 1972, when the store was acquired by Loring Short & Harmon.

Second-floor offices included those of real estate agent James T. Small and lawyer William Hines. The latter was a state representative (1909-10), county attorney, and mayor (1913). Ezra H. White conducted a dental practice there from 1880 to 1932, with associates Fred L. Leavitt, W. H. Thomas, and John H. Bresnahan. The latter closed his practice in 1939.

M. LORD TEN YEARS RECOGNIZED

At our annual meeting on May 22, the Society recognized Michael Lord for his ten years of service to the Society as Executive Secretary. He has, *inter alia*, helped researchers, given museum tours, and served as the communications hub for the Society. We appreciate his loyal contributions.

The business meeting re-elected all officers and board members for another year and elected Keith W. Brann of Auburn as a new board member.

NO. YARMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY ACQUIRES RECORDS

By Holly K. Hurd

The North Yarmouth Historical Society (NYHS) recently received a gift of several North Yarmouth-related historical documents from the Androscoggin Historical Society. These records include a 1774 Revolutionary War-era letter written and signed by about 150 North Yarmouth residents to the town of Boston stating they would not trade with England until Boston Harbor was reopened after its closure by King George III. Also included were five volumes of original manuscripts with vital records of "North Yarmouth Families after 1720" kept by the Reverend Allen Greely in the 1800s. Rev. Greely was a native of the area of Ancient North Yarmouth (founded as a plantation in 1680) that later became Cumberland and the brother of Eliphalet Greely, whose bequest established Greely Institute in 1868. Rev. Greely served as the Congregational Church minister in Turner, Maine, which is how his manuscripts came to the Androscoggin Historical Society (AHS) after his death. The Greely manuscripts were given to the AHS in 1923, the year of the Society's founding, by Charles Adams, who may have acquired them from local historian Janus Elder.

The Greely volumes appear to have been compiled in the first half of the 19th Century as indicated by letters to Greely found with his manuscripts and others in the collections of the

Maine Historical Society. The contents of these letters suggest that Greely obtained much of his information by writing to families and asking them to send him what they knew of their family origins and vital records, an invaluable source 150 years later. A comparison of Greely's manuscripts with the town of North Yarmouth's vital records, which date back to the town's founding in 1733, shows that, although some of the information is overlapping, Greely's records contain some previously unknown information.

Because of the importance of the Greely manuscripts and the other North Yarmouth-related documents to the town's history, the Board of Directors of the Androscoggin Historical Society voted to donate these holdings to the North Yarmouth Historical Society. The Board's unanimous decision was based on their Society's mission to collect and preserve the history of Androscoggin County, but the records were about North Yarmouth (Cumberland County) families and history. ...

The willingness of the AHS to address the placement of North Yarmouth-related materials in a timely fashion is greatly appreciated by the NYHS, the townspeople of North Yarmouth, and those who have ancestors from the area who will particularly benefit from the vital records kept by Rev. Greely. For more information contact the NYHS Archives at 829-9376.

AN ANDROSCOGGIN PATRIOT: SAMUEL PROCTOR (1749-1794) By Nancy Lecompte

Samuel Proctor (the third of this name to live in Maine) was born about April of 1749 in the town of Falmouth (the area now Westbrook) the son of Samuel Proctor 2^d. Samuel died accidentally in Lewiston on the 26th of November 1794 while hauling timber out of the woods. I have not been able to locate his grave, but his name has been added to the Veteran's Monument in the Veterans Park by the Great Falls.

Samuel was twenty-five and unmarried when Falmouth was destroyed by the British in April of 1775. In 1777, Samuel listed his residence as North Yarmouth, so it appears he moved there after Falmouth was burned. There were at least two Samuel Proctors (father and son) in Falmouth at the time of the war, so we cannot be certain who is

referred to in several of the military records that survive. Most are for short periods of time with the local militia in and around Falmouth and could be for either of them.

The first service we can be certain of for young Samuel is from the 1st of March to the 23^d of November 1776, where we find him listed as a private with Captain William Crocker's Company, Col. Mitchell's Regiment, stationed at Falmouth defending the seacoast.

Samuel was serving under Col. Peter Noyes in the 1st Cumberland County Regiment on the 28th of February 1777, when he signed up for three years of service in the Continental Army. He served in Capt. Daniel Lane's Company, Col. Ichabod Alden's 7th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. Captain Lane was a local man and an experienced soldier from the French and Indian War period. Samuel's regiment probably took part in the Saratoga Campaign during the summer and fall of 1777, for his Captain is reported taken prisoner in July of 1777 in New York.

Samuel began his second year of service in Albany, New York, where he appears on a regimental roster dated January 14, 1778. This would suggest Samuel's regiment had winter quarters at Albany, rather than the more famous Valley Forge.

Samuel's regiment was ordered to Cherry Valley, New York during the summer of 1778. Cherry Valley was a little settlement about 60 miles west of Albany. The region was rife with British sympathizers along with British Rangers and their Iroquois allies under Chief Joseph Brant. Settlements throughout the region had been attacked and lived in terror.

Upon arriving at Cherry Valley the end of July, the regiment's (approx. 250 soldiers) first business was to build a sturdy fort, which was christened "Fort Alden" on the 15th of August. Throughout the late summer and fall the regiment was on constant alert and regularly sent out scouting parties looking for enemy. Snow began falling in mid October and everyone believed the enemy threat was over for the season.

On November 8th, Col. Alden received word that a raid on Cherry Valley was imminent. He chose to believe it was only an idle rumor. The townsfolk begged to be allowed to move their food stores and valuables into the fort, but Col. Alden refused them. However, the Colonel did send out additional scouting parties.

Samuel Proctor was a member of the scouting

party led by Sergeant Adam Hunter. Hunter threw caution to the wind and ordered a fire when they camped for the night. The fire was spotted by the enemy during their approach to Cherry Valley. When Samuel awoke on the morning of November 10th, he was staring into the musket barrel of the enemy. Upon interrogation, a soldier in his party gave up important details about the fort, including mention of the officers being quartered outside the fort. Samuel and his party were taken prisoner.

The next day, the enemy attacked Fort Alden and the town of Cherry Valley. The Colonel was killed as he ran from his quarters and several officers were taken prisoner. The fort was attacked and quickly repulsed the enemy, but the regiment was heavily outnumbered and unable to venture beyond the walls of the fort. The enemy remained in the town for the next thirty-six hours, killing and destroying property at will. The record shows thirty-two civilians and fifteen soldiers dead, seventy civilians and five officers captured, and about a dozen enlisted men captured. The town of Cherry Valley was a smoldering ruin.

The military prisoners were held through the winter. On February 12th, Sergeant Hunter arrived at Fort Alden after escaping from his captors. He said the prisoners were being kept by the Iroquois at their Oswego Village. They had traveled about 300 miles through the wilderness in winter over a two-week period. Once the men arrived at Oswego, they would have faced the gauntlet - a practice by most Woodland Indians of lining up all the villagers in two lines facing each other and forcing captives to run

Goings-On at the Society

By Michael C. Lord

- **Fiscal Year 2006-07** business totals are as follows: telephone calls - 521; museum visits - 188; library visits - 246; correspondence - 499; programs sent - 165; meeting attendance - 201; meeting notices sent - 625; Board & committee meeting attendance - 46; newsletters sent - 483; Annual Dinner tickets sold - 42; Emails - 2,333.
- We have donated two sets of our books to the Maine Public Broadcasting Network for their 36th **MPBN Great TV Auction** on April 28. We have received a Certificate of Appreciation and, we hope, more publicity.
- We have had some nice publicity from the donation of the **DeWitt Hotel register**: *The Twin City Times* had it on the front page of their March 22, 2007 issue, and *Auburn*

between the lines while being brutally struck from both sides. After surviving this far, Samuel had to concern himself with surviving the winter in the hands of the Iroquois, who would treat him as a slave.

The enlisted prisoners did not get paid for time in captivity and did not get credit towards their enlistment time. Samuel probably was freed from captivity during the late summer campaign of 1779. If so, it appears he was allowed to return home to recuperate from the ordeal before completing his enlistment. He was back on the payroll from the 1st of January to the 31st of December 1780, during which time he completed his three-year enlistment.

It appears Samuel's regiment remained in the New York theater during 1780. There were a number of British raids in the Mohawk Valley in 1780, but no evidence of conflicts involving his Regiment. They were camped near West Point in September, when the plans of the traitor, Benedict Arnold, were discovered.

Samuel married Joanna Berry at Falmouth in 1784. Soon after, he and several siblings began establishing farms along the Androscoggin River. Samuel established his homestead near the Lewiston/Lisbon line. Two brothers established their homesteads on the other side of the river and figure into the histories of Danville and Durham. We do not know how many children were born to Samuel and Joanna, but only one son, George Henry Proctor, survived to adulthood.

Highlights had it on page five of their April issue. There also were stories in other papers.

- **Gifts in memory of Marian Hodgkins Reed**: Gary Reed, Falmouth, \$50; Jim & Susan Hathorne, Lyman, & Jean & Lawrence Hathorne, Auburn, \$10; Janice Millett, Turner, \$20; Virginia Moore, Auburn, \$25; James Reed, Lisbon Falls, \$100.
- **Donations Report**: Mary Jane Densmore, Treasurer, Mary Dillingham Chapter of the DAR, \$25; Dennis Mason, Lewiston, \$50, in a corporate matching gifts program with Citigroup; DeWolfe & Wood, \$50. We thank all donors.
- **Thank you**. Michael Lord wishes to thank the Society, and especially Dennis Stires and Barbara Randall, for the thoughtful desk name plaque and basket of health food goodies presented to him at the Annual Dinner May 22d.

Historical Acquisitions Donations

- Bronze coaster medal of the new Business Service Center of the Lewiston-Auburn Economic Growth Council, donated by the same. This building also houses the Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce.
- Newspaper, *Star in the East*, official organ of the Maine Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Vol. IV, No. 2, February 1893. Found in the walls of the Washburn School during demolition. Donated by Pauline Delehanty.
- Two very long photos of the New Auburn Fire of 1933, given by Fleurette Chicoine Dumont.
- Napkin collection, four inches thick, ca. 1950, given by Joanne Campbell of Turner.
- Washburn Studios photo of Auburn school, 1933, with many names filled in, given by Ann & Philip Howard of Harrison via Ben Conant.
- DeWitt Hotel register, December 1873 to March 1874, given by the late Wilbur Viles of Paris Hill, via the Paris Cape Historical Society and Ben Conant.
- *History Notes, 1826-1899, High Street Congregational Church, Auburn, Maine, With a Biographical Directory of Pastors, 1832-2006*, authored and published by Douglas I. Hodgkin, 2007. Donated by same.
- Paper ephemera & patent photocopies from Richard Fraser of Poland.
- One book of S&H Green Stamps and five books of Top Value yellow stamps, given by Douglas Hodgkin.
- Lewiston High School Senior Class photo by Washburn Studios, Lewiston, 1936, given by John Beganny
- *The Church at Walnut Hill - A History of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, North Yarmouth, Maine*, Kathryn H. Whittier, ed., North Yarmouth, ME: First Congregational Church, U.C.C. of North Yarmouth, Maine, 2006. Given by the North Yarmouth Historical Society.
- *Around North Yarmouth*, by Lincoln J. Merrill Jr. and Holly K. Hurd, Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006. Given by the North Yarmouth Historical Society.
- Five 5x7 film negatives of an infant of Mrs. Alberta (?)

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Jackson, 83 Main St., Auburn, taken by Ethel Wight, professional photographer of Ocean Park, Old Orchard Beach, ca. 1920s to the 1950s. Given by the Old Orchard Beach Historical Society, originally from the Maine Historical Society.

- Lewiston Police Department Challenge Coin.
- *A Twenty-Year Review of Androscoggin River Pollution Control Activities, A Report to the Androscoggin River Technical Committee*, by Walter A. Lawrence, Lewiston, Maine, June 6, 1961; the same, *A Twenty-Three Year Review ...*, April 15, 1964; the same, *A Twenty-Five Year Review ...*, March 15, 1967; and *Androscoggin Pulp and Paper Industry and Pollution Abatement, 1942 - 1977, Final Report of the Androscoggin River Technical Committee*, by Walter A. Lawrence, Lewiston, Maine, August 1, 1978. Donated by Bates College, Lewiston.
- A felt banner of Bates College, Lewiston, given by Cynthia Lord of Auburn.
- *Androscoggin County Profile: A Portrait of Our Communities, May 2007*, with CD-ROM, by and donated by Healthy Androscoggin, Lewiston.

Purchases

- Androscoggin County Fish & Game Association button, green, ca. mid-twentieth century, purchased from Orphan Annie's in Auburn.
- *150 Years of Catholicism, 1857 - 2007, Auburn, Greene, Lewiston, Lisbon, Mechanic Falls, Norway, Oxford, Sabattus*, by Jean Paul Labonte. Printed by J. S. McCarthy Printers of Augusta, 2007.
- *Lisbon*, by Debra Colleen Daggett, Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006.
- *Maine's Jewish Heritage*, by Abraham J. Peck and Jean M. Peck, Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007.
- Button welcoming the New England Music Festival to Auburn - Lewiston, Maine on May 23-24, 1941, purchased from Orphan Annie's in Auburn.