

ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

February 2009

Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

No. 56

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

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THE STOCK MARKET AFFECTS US TOO!

The gyrations of the stock market during this past year have affected our income very adversely. The Androscoggin Historical Society is very dependent upon our investments in order to meet our budget. In fact, we estimate that we should make up \$17,000 in order to “balance” our budget this year.

This is where you can help. We are most grateful for the dues that you have paid, as well as gifts that a few of our members have donated. However we must now ask you to be as generous as you can to get us out of the hole. Otherwise we would need to reduce our hours significantly or spend from our reserves while they are at a low point – certainly not a wise alternative.

Think of the benefits of maintaining the Society:

- Preservation of artifacts and documents from town and Androscoggin County history.
- Available resources for researchers in local history, such as our history of *Androscoggin County Maine* and a history of Lewiston, *Frontier to Industrial City*.
- Resources for genealogists researching their family history.
- Answering questions from news media, including the *Sun Journal*.
- An annual series of lectures on topics of local historical interest.
- School field trips from public and private schools in the area and visits by other groups.
- Sponsorship of occasional programs with helpful hints for other local historical societies.
- A newsletter with news of the Society, short research articles, and interesting tidbits from the past.
- A website with a rich array of local historical and genealogical materials.

Your support will make it possible for us to continue to provide these benefits to the membership, the community, and to researchers around the nation. We understand that times are tight. Nevertheless, we hope you can be as generous as possible to help us remain in business. Your donations to us are tax deductible. Please see the form on page 3.

MEETING NOTICE:

Topic: Mary’s Candies

Speaker: Mr. Roger Allen

Date/Time: Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009, at 7:00 P.M.

Location: Androscoggin Historical Society
County Building, Court Street Entrance
Free to the public and wheelchair accessible.

BILLIE GAMMON, 1916-2009

It is with great regret that we mark the passing of Billie Gammon, the founder of the Washburn-Norlands Living History Center in Livermore. She was instrumental in preservation of the history of the Washburn family and the restoration of the 19th century Washburn mansion, church, library, and schoolhouse.

Thousands of Maine children experienced a taste of nineteenth century life through field trips. Teachers and others participated in live-in programs.

Gammon also created and administered the Northern New England Humanities Conference, an annual presentation of scholarly papers.

She served as editor of the Maine Association of Museums’ newsletter. Through her work she helped to make Maine’s museum and historical societies more professional.

For additional information see the news article:
http://www.sunjournal.com/story/299063-3/Franklin/Norlands_museum_founder_dies_at_92/Obituary: http://www.sunjournal.com/story/299088-3/Obituaries/Billie_Gammon/

Frye-Main Street Lewiston Historical District

We have just learned that Lewiston’s proposal for a Main and Frye Streets Historic District has been approved for the National Register. More information will be available in the June issue.

Major Alfred B. Soule, 23rd Maine Infantry **By Charles Beal**

Alfred was a descendant of Pilgrim George Soule of the Mayflower, descending through George, the Pilgrim, John, James, Jacob, William, James, Alfred and Alfred B. Alfred was son of Alfred and Mahala Soule, born on September 25, 1825 at Middleboro, Massachusetts. By age 15, Alfred was a devout religious boy who gave his heart to Jesus Christ.

In the early 1840's he took a voyage by ship to satisfy his desire to see the world. On the seventeen-month voyage he always attended Sunday services, prayer meetings during the week, and maintained his pledge to abstain from liquor. When he returned home, his mother was a second-time widow with dependent children so he became the father and protector. Shortly afterwards they all moved to Manchester, NH. Within four years Alfred would be an overseer in a large mill.

On December 18, 1848 he married Caroline Dodge at Manchester, NH. Alfred would later write that she was a "devoted, praying wife, whose chief object has been to serve God and make me happy."

Alfred's passion was Sunday school either as a teacher or assistant superintendent. In 1857 he was elected a deacon of Pine Street Church.

In late 1858 he moved to New York City. Later on his family would join him in 1859. They missed New England and, unknown to Alfred, Caroline would pray they might find a home at Lewiston, ME. Soon Caroline's prayers were answered by a telegram asking Alfred, "Will you take charge of one of my rooms in Lewiston, Maine"?

They would soon move to Lewiston where Alfred had charge of rooms in the Hill Mill. Alfred would also be chosen a deacon of the church.

In 1861 when the United States was involved in Civil War, Alfred wondered, "Shall I go"? The ranks of volunteers were readily filled so Alfred decided it was not his duty to go then. Alfred also thought he must hold himself in readiness. He devoted time drilling with gun and sword, saying often, "When duty calls, I am ready". Union disasters, defeats, and successes had their influence upon him. Finally he heard the voice in his soul; his duty was plain and clear. He had to convince Caroline that his duty was going to enlist. The last argument that persuaded her to give consent was that many of the young men from their church were going to enlist. These young men were not prepared for the temptations of camp life; someone must watch over and encourage them, that

person being Alfred.

In September 1862 he enlisted as a Private in Company A of the 23rd ME Regiment, a nine-month regiment. He was quickly chosen Captain of the company and ten days later he was promoted to Major of the regiment.

Alfred was deeply interested in the welfare of his men. He constantly visited tents to see that they were in a healthy condition, distributing papers and looking after their wants in various ways. In addition to his Major's duties, he performed the Chaplain's duties. He organized parts of tents to build one big tent to hold 200 men for prayer and temperance meetings. He was always present at these meetings. It was not his ambition to gain a reputation as a military man but rather to do all the good he could to the cause of his country.

The 23rd ME was not stationary as they moved up and down the Potomac River in the defenses of Washington D.C. At new camp locations, Alfred would find ways to construct a large meeting place to continue prayer and temperance meetings.

In letters written home during the war, Alfred stated that he violated the law of his country in his official capacity; he helped slaves escape and guided them to the Underground Railroad. In another letter Alfred said his superior officers ordered him to discontinue the Underground Railroad. He disobeyed orders and had the satisfaction of passing at least 26 over it, and was willing to suffer the consequences.

The 23rd ME conducted guard duty along the Potomac River/Chesapeake & Ohio Canal from Alexandria to Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. The regiment was directed to Maryland Heights (Harper's Ferry) in late June 1863 to prevent the Confederate Army from marching towards Washington, D.C. The Confederate Army crossed the Potomac River a few miles north of Harper's Ferry, headed for Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The 23rd ME would lose 56 men to disease during its nine-month tour of duty.

The 23rd ME Infantry was a highly respected unit, leaving behind a very good reputation among the persons with which it had contact. They were known for good order, quiet, sobriety, and thorough knowledge and performance of their duties. This tribute to the 23rd ME was probably greatly due to Alfred's influence and guidance.

Upon his discharge in July 1863, family and friends noticed a great change, spiritually and physically, in Alfred. He indicated that his days would be few. Alfred died on February 7, 1864 at Lewiston, Maine from Typhoid Fever he had had for nearly 3 weeks.



Major Alfred B. Soule. His grave was unmarked until recently through the efforts of Charles Beal.

**Goings-On at the Society
By Michael Lord**

- CY 2008 business totals are as follows: Telephone calls – 499; Museum visits – 195; Library visits – 214; Correspondence – 519; Emails – 2,024; Board & Committee Meeting attendance – 127; Meeting No-tices sent – 488; Meeting attendance – 156; Newsletters sent – 498; Annual Dinner – 38; Programs sent – 177; Androscoggin Round Table Mtg. – 8;

Daughters of the American Revolution, Mary Dillingham Chapter – 8.

- Donations Report Since the Last Newsletter: Irving Isaacson of Lewiston- \$250.00; Douglas Hodgkin of Lewiston - \$150.00; **Total: \$400.00.** We thank all donors.
- We are trying to obtain a database of all members’ email addresses. Please kindly email me at androhs@myfairpoint.net with “AHS member emails” in the subject line so that I may compile them. Thank you.
- Speaking of our email address, it has been changed to the above. Please make a note of that in your records. Thank you.
- On Friday morning, December 5, we were visited by a group of intellectually challenged persons and their supervisors from John F. Murphy Homes. There were thirteen in all. It’s wonderful to be able to help these people who have challenges, even in such a minor way as having them visit us.
- We have a new intern who has just begun the semester with us. He is **Robert Washington**, an anthropology major at University of Southern Maine at Gorham.
- We have an eBay Seller’s Account and a Paypal account. We would welcome donated items for us to put on eBay.
- **Robert Harriman**, of Poland, retired as head of building maintenance here at the Androscoggin County building at the end of January. He had worked here for sixteen years. Previously he had retired from the U.S. Navy after twenty years of service as a submariner.

Mr. Harriman came up to the society to wind the Androscoggin tower clock most Fridays until recently, when his subordinates largely took over. Many times we would converse for a moment after he came down from the winding. He has been a very pleasant man to talk with about the latest goings-on in the county building and the local area.

On his last day, Friday, January 30th, he took a camera up the tower to take pictures of the clock, the tower, the bell, and environs. Our board signed a set of our books as a retirement gift. The building is already not the same without him.

Yes. I want to help the Androscoggin Historical Society close its budget gap. It is important to me to maintain the record of the history of the towns in Androscoggin County and our services to the community. I enclose:

___\$500 ___\$250 ___\$100 ___50 ___\$25 ___\$10 _____Other income tax purposes.

Name(s)_____

Address_____

Town/City_____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please make check payable to:
Androscoggin Historical Society
2 Turner Street, Unit 8
Auburn, Maine 04210

Contributions to AHS are deductible as charitable contributions for federal

Historical Acquisitions

Donations

- Nineteenth century 4x5 inch B&W photo of one Spencer of Auburn, Maine. Given by the Kennebec Historical Society.
- *Maine Seniors Golf Association: A History of the Association, its Members, and Golf Clubs*, by John Sullivan of South Freeport, 2007. Given by the author.
- *The History of Broadcasting in Maine: The First Fifty Years*, by Ellie Thompson, published by the Maine Association of Broadcasters, Augusta, ME, 1990. Given by Scott Gallant of Auburn.
- One Sitzmark coin from 1965. This was a skiing promotion for Maine skiing, sitzmark being a term for a skier's involuntary sitting in the snow. This thirty-cent "coin" was a coupon as it were for a discount at Maine skiing lodges, lifts, and the like. Given by Michael Lord of Auburn.
- Two loose-leaf notebooks of Androscoggin Chapter #4077 of AARP, 2000-05. Donated by Anonymous.
- Four items of Tel-Star material from Andover; *1898-99 Turner's Franklin County Directory*, (Auburn, ME: A. R. Turner Pub. Company); *Sarah Jane Foster, Teacher of the Freedmen, A Diary and Letters*, Wayne E. Reilly, ed., (Portland, ME: USM Bookstores, Spring 2001); *Samantha Smith, Journey to the Soviet Union*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1985); *Declaration of Conscience*, by Margaret Chase Smith, William C. Lewis Jr., ed., (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972); *The Sea Around Us*, by Rachel L. Carson, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951); *We Took to the Woods*, by Louise Dickenson Rich, (Camden, ME: Down East Books, 1970); *Selected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson*, Morton D. Zabel, ed., (New York: Collier Books, 1966); *The Maine Register, 1822*, facsimile reprint, (Portland, ME: Tower Publishing Company, 1972). All given by W. Dennis Stires of Livermore.

Douglas I. Hodgkin, Editor
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- *Androscoggin County, Maine, Atlas* (Philadelphia: Sanford, Everts & Co.), 1873. Given by Nancy Henthorn in memory of her late father Leslie Pearl.
- *We Took to the Woods*, by Louise Dickenson Rich (Mattituck, NY: Amereon House), Current limited edition reprint of 80 copies of a 1942 original. Given by Larry Small of Lewiston.
- *History of Edward Little/Lewiston Basketball*, by Bim Gibson (Lewiston, ME: Falcon Printing and Graphics, 2008). Donated by Douglas Hodgkin.
- George Foxcroft Read Civil War material: Photos, diary w/ transcription, discharge papers, uniform buttons, piece of flag under which Robert E. Lee surrendered, and many like items. He was born in Lewiston and was a private in Company K of the 17th Regiment of Maine Infantry Volunteers. From Ms. Alice E. Kennedy of Spokane, WA.
- Copy of the *Maine Historical Collections, Vol. 1, Series 1* (Portland, ME: Bailey & Noyes, 1865.) Given by the Kennebec Historical Society in Augusta.

Purchases

- 3x5 inch B&W real photo postcard of the Falls at Lewiston, Maine, ca. 1930s.
- Maine Register, 2009, No. 139, by Tower Publishing of Standish, Maine. \$92.00, our annual subscription.
- *The Betrayal of Local 14*, by Julius Getman (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, an imprint of Cornell University Press, 1998). This is a left-leaning account of the paper mill strike in Jay, Maine in 1987-88.
- Four nineteenth century stereoview cards of A) Continental Mills, B) Lewiston City Hall and Park (before the 1890 fire), C) Lewiston Falls, showing the railroad bridge and D) Androscoggin Mill.
- *Fishery Management in the Androscoggin River*, by Stuart E. DeRoche of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game, Fisheries Research Bulletin No. 7, 1967.