

# ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

June 2009

Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

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

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## FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES RESULT IN LAY-OFF OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

On April 28, 2009, the Board of the Androscoggin Historical Society, found it necessary to reduce dramatically the hours that it could afford to pay staff. Therefore, unfortunately, it could no longer afford the services of Michael C. Lord, who has served us loyally for thirteen years.

Our financial advisors indicated that, while some spending from our investments could occur, we were doing so at an unsustainable rate. Therefore for the long-term health of the Society, it was necessary to take action.

Our budget has been a bare bones budget. We pay rent to the County. We must maintain our insurance, pay the expenses of running an office, and pay for telephone and Internet connections, among other requirements of running an organization.

The Board has authorized the hiring of an administrative assistant to staff the office eight hours a week. We also expect the office to be open additional hours with the assistance of volunteers.

Michael Lord will be on duty through the end of June. After that President David Young will be in the office on Friday afternoons until a new schedule is worked out.

The Society will now rely on volunteers to maintain as many services as possible. We hope to maintain the lecture schedule and to continue to provide our resources to the public.

### ARE YOU INTERESTED IN LOCAL HISTORY?

#### ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS NOW HIRING AN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

8 hours per week; 4 hours on each of 2 days.  
\$10 an hour to begin.

The successful applicant should be able to work alone, but also have the ability to deal with people. Must be able to use the computer for word-processing and email.

Duties will be clerical, record-keeping, managing the library and collection, some research for clients.

Send resume and cover letter or inquire for job description to Doug Hodgkin at [dhodgkin@bates.edu](mailto:dhodgkin@bates.edu)

## MAIN STREET – FRYE STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Department of Interior has approved a district in Lewiston for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. It contains all of Frye Street and neighboring properties along Main and College Streets. The Main Street portion comprises the east side of the street from the Bauer Apartment Block (425) to the James C. Lord House (497), as well as a few houses on the west side (444-460). On College Street, the district extends from the corner of Frye Street (226) to the Oren B. Cheney House (262).

The District is significant for the community's development as a residential neighborhood "where business leaders, politicians, and college professors chose to build their fine homes." The area was developed from 1843 to 1950.

The district is a showplace of architectural styles, including Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Second Empire, Italianate, Queen Anne (both Stick Style and Shingle Style), Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Modern. Architects designed many of the homes, including twelve by George M. Coombs. The district includes carriage houses and garages in various architectural styles.

Many of the buildings in the District have a significant association with Bates College from the founding of the College. Bates now owns all the buildings on College Street and all but two of those on Frye Street. The college's stewardship is credited with preserving this neighborhood, while adapting the houses to students housing, faculty apartments, and other uses.

## FORMER BOARD MEMBERS

We note with sadness the deaths of former board members **Leslie H. Wight** on March 18 and **Eva Labonte** on April 8. Leslie H. Wight was the Mary Dillingham Chapter of the DAR representative to our board for many years. Eva Labonte worked on our textile collections and did very well, retiring from our board in 2000.

## **An Androscoggin Patriot: Allen Davis (1756-1836), by Nancy Lecompte**

Allen Davis was born of the 11th of May 1756 in Gloucester, Massachusetts and died on the 22nd of April 1836 in Minot, Maine. He was the son of Jacob Davis and Jemimah Riggs of Gloucester. On the 14th of January 1786 he was married to Abigail Jumper (1762-1834) in New Gloucester. Allen and Abigail had three known children, all born in Poland – Jemimah b. 7-Apr-1787, Elizabeth b. 6-Jun-1788, and Jacob b. 17-Jun-1791. When Jacob came of age, he chose to remain at home, working his father's farm, and caring for his infirm parents. At some point, Allen gave his land and home to his son as payment for the years Jacob spent supporting them by his labor.

On the 20th of February 1777, at the age of 20, Allen Davis enlisted as a private from Gloucester in the Continental Army for the period of three years. He served in the company of Capt. John Burnham, in the 8<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment commanded by Col. Michael Jackson. His regiment served in the New York theatre of action in 1777. On September 19th of that year they participated in the Battle of Still Water, where they faced the British Army of Burgoyne. At the end of the day it was a draw, but the Americans celebrated because they had stopped the British advance. Unfortunately, Allen Davis had nothing to celebrate. During the action he was taken prisoner, along with 26 other privates and 3 officers, and held by the British until Burgoyne surrendered his army the following month at Saratoga. He may have seen more action in the defense of Philadelphia before moving into winter camp at Valley Forge.

Allen Davis would have suffered along with all the other brave men at Valley Forge. As spring approached, needed supplies arrived, discipline improved, and the morale of the common soldier was lifted. However, that did not stop some from deserting. In March of 1778, Allen was "sent on a scouting party from Valley Forge in pursuit of a deserter, and was taken prisoner by some English light horse and kept till 30 Oct following when i was exchanged ... ." A deposition by his neighbor, Joseph Smith, found in Allen's pension file gives us a little more detail. Mr. Smith adds, "... lameness by a wound in the right leg which at times makes him unable to perform but little labour said wound is said to have been received on board a prison ship ... ."

Allen Davis survived the horrible winter at Valley Forge only to endure seven months of inhuman

conditions on board a British prison ship in New York Harbor. The British saw their American prisoners as traitors rather than POWs, but did not dare to execute them for fear it would create even more traitors. Their solution was to allow them to die from neglect. All prisoners were said to have suffered from scurvy. Epidemics of small pox and yellow fever were constant. Rations were often inedible and never more than half portions. Guards were brutal. The only relief, if you could call it that, was to agree to become a sailor in the British Navy. More than 10,000 American prisoners died from intentional neglect on British prison ships - that's more than died in all the battles of the wars!

After Allen Davis was exchanged, he tells us he spent some time in the hospital, but just how long we cannot be sure. On the 1st day of January 1780 at West Point, Allen was formally discharged due to "inability." We are left to assume this relates to health problems brought on by his time as prisoner, which left him unable to perform the duties of a soldier.

In 1818, Allen Davis applied to his government for help, asking to be provided pension for his service. In his application he stated he was a farmer, no longer able to provide for himself due to infirmity, general debility, and lameness "... which in great measure deprives me now of the use of said leg ... ." He listed his only dependant as his wife, Abigail, age 60, "a feeble woman unable to contribute to my support." His assets consisted of a cow & calf, 4 sheep, 1 swine, and household furniture "of little or no value." He claimed he owned no real estate at this time. Allen Davis received his pension, but it was suspended in early 1824 after seven of his neighbors addressed a letter to the pension board stating that Allen Davis owned 100 acres of land worth \$1,000. Allen was not able to get his pension restored until March of 1832, despite a number of depositions from other neighbors stating that Allen had given the land to his son, Jacob, as compensation for ten years of unpaid service caring for the farm and his parents.

So folks - things have not changed much in the last 200 years – our government has never properly provided for its veterans!

*Allen Davis*

Sources:

Military Pension Record S.16750 at Footnote.com  
Papers of the Continental Congress at Footnote.com  
Local vital records for Bakerstown, Minot, Poland, and New Gloucester, Maine.  
Various [www.myrevolutionarywar.com](http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com) topics

## Historical Acquisitions

### Donations

- *Reflections of Readfield (The Story of Our Town)*, ed. by Mary Schultze Page (Farmington, ME: The Knowlton & McLeary Co.), 1975. Given by Marius and Mildred Péladeau of Readfield, ME.
- Goss Genealogy Data Disc, by George H. Smith.
- *Progressive Cook Book*, Lisbon Progressive Club, 1915, & *Cook Book*, Philathea Class, Court Street Free Baptist Church, 1922. Given by Montress Kenniston of Kennebunk, ME.
- *Origin & History of the Ancient Name Kilgour and Descendants of Joseph Killgore 1690 (1701) to 1764 of Scotland*, both by Paul E. Killgore, published by the author of Nipomo, CA. Donated by the author.
- Petticoat, long underwear, and knitted cape or necklace of Mrs. George C. Wing Sr., of Auburn, and copy of a photograph of her with her two sisters dated 1946. Brought in by Barbara Randall of Auburn.
- A Peck's box; *Kimball's Business Speller* from Bliss College in Lewiston; *Growing Up on Maple Hill Farm* (Auburn), by Jerry Stelmok and signed by the author; bottle of C. K. Donnell's Indian Chloroform and Camphor remedy, Lewiston; Vincent NEHI bottle, Auburn; and paper ephemera. Given by Elaine L. Berry of Auburn.
- *Yankee Diva – Lillian Nordica and the Golden Days of Opera*, by Ira Glackens. *Kingfield, Maine, and A Picture History of Kingfield, Maine* (both by the Kingfield History Book Association). *Agriculture of Maine*, 1892. *Nine Mile Bridge – Three Years in the Maine Woods*, by Helen Hamlin. *An Island Garden*, by Celia Thaxter with illustrations by Childe Hassam, 1988 edition in a box. *Maine Charm String*, by Elinor Graham, 1946. *Maine General Highway Atlas*, State Highway Commission, 1968. Donated by Dennis Stires of Livermore.
- A porcelain plate celebrating the Bicentennial of Minot, Maine, 1802 – 2002, plate #198. Given by Eda Tripp of the Minot Historical Society & Allen Saunders, both of the Minot town office. Many thanks to Coastal T-Shirts of Auburn for arranging this donation. They were the dealers in the plates years ago.
- Blank letterhead of Hiram Ricker & Sons, Poland Water, ca. 1910. Given by James W. Swanson of Lisbon Falls.
- Magazine about Androscoggin County and the new Viet-Nam Veterans Memorial Bridge, sponsored by the county commissioners, 1972.
- Eight school photographs and a school pin from the estate of Eleanor Mae Thompson of Hopkinton, MA, given via the First Congregational Church of Hopkinton, MA. Her mother and she grew up in Auburn.
- Native American spear point of the Moorehead Period, found in the Norridgewock/Skowhegan area, black in color. Given by Lawrence E. Small of Lewiston.
- Items relative to Pepperell Manufacturing and the Julia and Lawlor families, viz: one Champaign tap of 1871; a silver plate cigar box w/ initials RA; 3 Real photo

postcards of Bear Pond in North Turner, ME; receipt book of Charles A. Julia's, ca. 1880s; old factory photo; L/A Rotary pin of Albert Julia; textile scrapbook of the 1890s; ELHS Senior Drama play of 1924 (2 copies); Pepperell men at Poland Spring in 1926. Given by William T. Lawlor of Potomac, MD.

- *Looking Back – The Villages of North & West Auburn*, by Donna Berry, George Buker, Judy Holbrook, Methyl Park, and Beverly Spofford, published by the West Auburn Historical Society, Auburn, printed by the Central Maine Community College, Auburn, 2008. Signed by all the authors. Given by Donna Berry on behalf of the West Auburn Historical Society.

### Purchases

- An Androscoggin & Kennebec Railway Company School Ticket, cancelled, #9889, from when students rode the rails instead of the school bus. \$2.80 w/ S&H, via eBay.
- *Loyal But French*, by Mark Paul Richard (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press), 2008. \$26.89.
- Postal cover with cachet of the Liberty Ship SS *Bates Victory*, cancelled in Lewiston with a U.S. Merchant Marine stamp of the World War II era and a modern flag stamp, dated 16 June 2008. This ship was launched on 2 May 1945 by the California Shipbuilding Company of Los Angeles, CA. \$3.68 via eBay.
- A B&W 4 ½ x 2 ¾ inch photo of Maine Central steam locomotive #632 in Danville Junction, Maine, ca. 1940s. \$3.80 via eBay.
- A Maine Vacationland 1½" x 2½" advertising stamp, ca. 1930s-'40s, depicting "Sunset at Camp, Androscoggin County." \$5.00 via eBay.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At the Annual Meeting of the Society on May 26, 2009 the following officers were elected:

President	David C. Young
Vice President	Douglas A. Hall
Executive Secretary	Michael C. Lord until 6/30/09
Recording Secretary	Douglas I. Hodgkin
Membership Sec.	Bruce A. Hall
Treasurer	Susan F. Sturgis
Newsletter Editor	Douglas I. Hodgkin
Attorney	Richard L. Trafton
Directors:	Franklin H. Goss, Norman E. Rose, Bernice Y. Hodgkin, W. Dennis Stires, Edward C. Hodgkin, Elizabeth K. Young, Barbara V. Randall.
Honorary Directors:	Jane P. Norris, Mary M. Riley, Alma G. Palmer, Gordon V. Windle

At the Board meeting of June 10, 2009 Russell Burbank and Michael Lord were elected to the Board, the latter effective July 1, 2009.

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER – David Young**

The Androscoggin Historical Society requests the help of every member. In the past we have asked for money. We thank you for past gifts but we presently request some of your time as well. The past 87-plus years our Society with the help the general membership has acquired many artifacts and an archive collection greater than any in Androscoggin County. We have under taken many publishing projects and will continue to preserve, collect, and disseminate the history of Androscoggin County. We will continue to post more of our collections online for the use of the membership and the public.

We need to reach out to other area historical groups as well as ask for help on our projects. We are calling other area historical groups in the next few weeks. Knowing better what others are doing can only be a good thing. Our support of all Androscoggin historical groups is important. We need to take an active role as a county organization getting out the word on all Androscoggin historical projects.

The loss of our current staff person will mean volunteers will do many of the duties. Service to the general membership and the public will be different. It might be better, but it will be more work for some people. The Program Committee has been appointed. Starting in second week in July the Society will be open Fridays. The Board of Directors plan to hire some office staff too but the Society will likely closed the first week of July. We will have other days open as well if volunteers can be found.

Members or the public can call me at home 207-786-2129, if you are interested in helping or need to

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use our collections. If you live in Androscoggin County and have not called me, I will try to call you. Please volunteer. Please help us to build our collections. Help us share our historical resources with our membership and the public.

## **Goings-On at the Society**

By Michael C. Lord

**Calendar Year 2008** business totals are as follows: Telephone calls – 455; Museum visits – 200; Library visits – 211; Correspondence – 434; Emails – 2,451; Board & Committee Meeting attendance – 121; Meeting Notices sent – 364; Meeting attendance – 185; Newsletters sent – 510; Annual Dinner – 41; Programs sent – 177; Androscoggin Round Table Mtg. – 8.

**Donations Report** Since the Last Newsletter: The L & A Fund, \$500.00; Anonymous, \$200.00; Elinor H. Brockway of Auburn, \$20.00; Elsie M. Gervais of Auburn, \$50.00; Nancy and John Griffin of Auburn, \$100.00; - **Total: \$870.00.** The newsletter fundraising drive is having an effect! We thank all donors. As well, the “additional gift” line in the membership renewal garnered **\$185.00** from nine donors.

Carol MacNeill, Regent of the **Mary Dillingham Chapter of the DAR**, has informed us that Bernice Y. Hodgkin will be their representative to our board. She is already a board member here and she replaces the late Leslie H. Wight, who was their representative here as an Honorary Board Member with us. This fine point of our By-Laws is now fulfilled. We thank them for seeing to this.