

ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

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Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

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JOHN W. WHITE (1916–2010)

John W. White, a past President, board member, and honorary board member of the Androscoggin Historical Society died on April 20, 2010. He was President of the Society for ten years, 1971 to 1981.

Mr. White did extensive research on the genealogy of the Frye, White, Jones and Kilgore families. He was a descendant of United States Senators William P. Frye and Wallace White, both of Lewiston. His grandmother, Mrs. Helen Frye White, was one of the founders of the Society in 1923.

White was active in the community, including president of the Auburn Heritage Society, membership “on the Auburn City Council from 1960 to 1968, the board of directors of the Auburn Urban Renewal Authority from 1969 to 1974, and the town of Minot Budget Committee.”

He was widely known as a world-class masters swimmer, competing until age 93, and as a hybridizer of Japanese and Siberian iris.

See <http://www.sunjournal.com/node/828770> for his obituary,

LOIS D. ROUSSEAU (1919–2010)

Former Board member Lois D. Rousseau died on April 17, 2010. A native of Nebraska, she came to Maine about 1948. She was a member of several organizations including Pine Cone Chapter 26 Order of Eastern Star, Woman’ Literary Union, Garden Club, and YWCA.

See <http://www.sunjournal.com/node/832561> for her obituary.

NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the Annual Meeting on May 25, the members elected a new Board of Directors for the Society. All officers were re-elected, but four new members joined the Board for a full term.

As announced in the February newsletter, Richard Fraser of Mechanic Falls, an expert on Maine built automobiles, was originally elected on December 12, 2009.

On February 23, the Board elected Annette Vance Dorey. Annette was formerly a museum educator with the Museum L-A and is President of the Board of Directors of the Franco-American Collection at L-A College. She is writing a book about women who served in Maine State Prison.

Elizabeth Dexter taught fourth through sixth grades in the Auburn school system. She is an active member of Auburn United Methodist Church and is the church’s historian. She is interested in photography and presents her works in pictorial bulletin boards and notebooks.

Mark Eustis, a collector of old bottles, has been a faithful attendee at our AHS lectures. As an employee of the City of Lewiston, he is well positioned to observe decisions impacting historic preservation.

Officers are President David Colby Young, Vice President Douglas Hall, Recording Secretary and Newsletter Editor Douglas Hodgkin, Membership Secretary Bruce Hall, Treasurer Susan Sturgis, and Attorney Richard Trafton. Board members are Russell Burbank, Betty Dexter, Annette Vance Dorey, Mark Eustis, Richard Fraser, Bernice Hodgkin, Edward Hodgkin, Michael Lord, Barbara Randall, Norman Rose, Dennis Stires, and Betty Young.

NEW BOOK ON RAILROAD HISTORY

Local author Douglas I. Hodgkin has completed another book on local history, *The Lewiston and Auburn Railroad 1872–2009*. This is the story of a branch line of 5.4 miles of track that was leased to the Grand Trunk Railway and then to the Canadian National Railway.

It probably is best known as the railroad on which many of the ancestors of residents of the Twin Cities immigrated from Quebec to work in the mills. Their destination, the depot on Lincoln Street in Lewiston, still stands. A chapter is devoted to how the railroad was a vehicle to transmit and maintain French-Canadian culture, with some attention to the International Snowshoe Congresses.

The book recounts the story of the founding and construction of the railroad despite the fierce opposition of the Maine Central Railroad and the textile-manufacturing corporations. Particularly controversial was the purchase of all the shares in the railroad by the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn.

After about a century of service, this railroad and railroads across the country were in decline. The railroad yards were abandoned. Eventually the trestle bridge across the Androscoggin River was converted to a pedestrian walkway and Bonney Park and Railroad Park, now Simard-Payne Memorial Park, were constructed.

However, intermodal transportation technology has revived railroads as freight carriers. The result has been a boom in development along the track from Washington Street out to Lewiston Junction by the airport, as well as on the line of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad.

“This was the most-eye-opening aspect of my research,” Hodgkin said. “If one doesn’t have occasion to go to that part of Auburn, one may not realize what has happened there. No wonder Mayor Gleason calls Auburn ‘The Hub of Maine.’”

Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Maine State Historian, wrote a foreword for the book, in which he said, “Hodgkin’s study honors the history and impact of the entire Lewiston and Auburn Railroad enterprise. The junction of railroad history and cultural history ... will more than fulfill the expectations of any serious railroad historian as well as those interested in both local history and the Franco-American experience.”

The 136-page paperback book includes sixty-five illustrations, about half of them in color. The book is available for twenty dollars at Victor News in

Lewiston, Percy’s Burrow in Auburn, Bates College Store, Museum L-A, and Androscoggin Historical Society. You may also order from the author at 9 Sutton Place, Lewiston, ME 04240. Shipping via media mail is \$3.00 and Maine residents include \$1.00 sales tax.

BOOK ON MAINE AUTOMOBILES

Richard and Nancy Fraser have published the 2nd edition of their book, *A History of Maine Built Automobiles and Motorized Vehicles, 1834–1934 with a History of Maine License Plates*. Richard is a member of the Board of the Androscoggin Historical Society.

According to the sales flyer, “The book ... illustrates the early development of this industry in the state. It contains many rare photographs showing the ingenuity of the early pioneers who made noteworthy contributions to the history of the horseless carriage. Many of the vehicles are one of a kind, and some, such as the Casco Truck and the Lombard Log Hauler, enjoyed successful production runs.”

The book contains over 500 pages and “includes 317 photographs and illustrations encompassing the 232 makes of vehicles known to date.”

“There is a section on early auto racing and hill climbing contests, which were popular in the early part of the last century to determine whose auto performed best.” Other sections examine “the history of the issuance of Maine license plates, as well as touring in Maine and other states.”

“The early colorful writings announcing the birth and growth of this industry is preserved to convey to readers the truly wonderful experiences felt by those early pioneers.”

Richard and Nancy hope “that the schools and colleges in Maine will employ this book as a tool to teach students about a segment of Maine history that did much to get the automobile industry off the ground in New England and in this county.”

This hardcover book is priced at \$49.95 each. Maine residents add the 5 per cent sales tax. Priority mail is \$10.50 and media mail is \$6.00. Send your order to Nancy L. Fraser, P. O. Box 39, East Poland, ME 04230.

ARCHEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL

The Damariscotta River Association announces a continuation of the historical archaeology field school on July 11-16 and July 18-23, 2010 at the 18th century Bryant-Barker Tavern in Newcastle, Maine. Cost is \$300 for one week. If you are interested in learning about the fundamental principles and methods of historical archaeology, there is more information at <http://www.draclt.org/Archaeology.html>.

Goings-On at the Society

Fiscal Year 2009/10 business totals are as follows: Telephone calls – **323**; Museum visits – **46**; Library visits – **266**; Correspondence – **304**; Emails – **960**; Board meeting (10) attendance – **92**; Lecture (7) attendance – **155**; Meeting notices sent – 500; Newsletters sent – 451; Annual Dinner – **41**; Programs sent – 145.

Cash Donations Report since the February Newsletter:

\$25 Phil & Anne Meldrum
\$50 Bruce Hall
\$250 Edward & Bernice Hodgkin
\$75 Susan Sturgis
\$20 Erich Dietz
\$10 Norman Rose
\$15 Marilyn Simonds
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Donations

- “Royal” Brand Typewriter, “Airmaster” tube radio, two Hudson Sprayer/Dusters, fallout shelter signs, miscellaneous toiletry items. Donated by the Maintenance Department of Androscoggin County Building.
- Scrapbook containing various newspaper articles concerning local events and people from 1939-1941 compiled by Dorothy Riley and Andrew Stass of Auburn along with six student publications from Lewiston High School - *The Booster* from 1939-1940. Donated by Laurie Mower of Ripley, Maine in memory of her parents.
- A file folder containing information/articles on Auburn’s Centennial Celebration belonging to Victor and Ida Lindquist of Auburn. Donated by Victor Lindquist, III of Poland Spring.

- Photograph of Herbert & Gertrude Kneeland Wyman with Lena (photograph not dated). Herbert resided in Lewiston in 1891 and Gertrude was from Harrison. Donated by Priscilla Gadzinski of White River Junction, Vermont.
- Five glass electric insulators used on utility poles believed to have been used in the 1930s–40s era; Twenty matchbook covers advertising Lewiston businesses; one photo dated 1969 of the Grand Trunk Depot on Lincoln Street, Lewiston. Donated by Douglas Hodgkin of Lewiston.
- Electoral College Ballot Box believed to have been used in the Presidential Elections of 1896 and 1900. Donated by Sue DeRoche of Auburn and her brother Andrew White, descendents of Senator William F. Frye, who was President of the United States Senate at that time.
- Book entitled *The Lewiston and Auburn Railroad Company 1872-2009* by Douglas I. Hodgkin. Donated by The Lewiston Auburn Railroad Company.
- Obituary and newspaper articles regarding John W. White (1916–2010) of Minot published by the Lewiston Sun Journal. Mr. White was a leading local figure and past President of A.H.S. Donated by Douglas Hodgkin of Lewiston.
- Boy’s sailor suit from 1934 worn by Arthur Cass, Jr. at age 1. Also, Uncle Sam Costume worn by Arthur Cass, Jr. approximately 1939. A medical book- *The Library of Health* 1923 edition, given to Leona Perry by Dr. M.S.F. Greene of Lewiston. A box of World War I letters written by Harold Wight to his Mother, Minnie Wight. Donated by Leona Elaine Cass of Auburn.
- Panoramic postcard (21 inches) of Turner and Court Street; various receipts for Retail Sales in Lewiston-Auburn from late 1800’s to early 1900’s along with a newspaper clipping of values of processed foods dated February 24, 1943. Donated by Linda Lewit of Auburn.
- Framed portrait of William T. Grant, founder of the W.T. Grant stores, along with various newspaper articles pertaining to the local store closings. Donated by Donald Fyfe of Auburn.
- Two photographs: Grand Trunk railroad station at Danville Jct. March 25, 1922; M.E. Williams at Grand Trunk Lewiston Junction. Donated by Douglas I. Hodgkin of Lewiston.
- 1830s bedroom set, including a red-stained maple and birch cannonball and bell turned post rope bed, a dresser, and Empire two-drawer drop-leaf side table. The dresser was allegedly brought to Lewiston by the Pettengill family. Donated by Effie Scribner Murch Plummer Estate. It has been arranged that it will be on loan for display at the Knight House.

Purchases

- Subscription to the *Lewiston-Auburn Magazine*.