

# Androscoggin History

The newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society  
Www.androscogginhistorical.com

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## Valley tales the topic for Feb. 22 Historical Society meeting

Did you know that the remains of an 18th century village lie beneath the Androscoggin River? Its true — the village disappeared when the Gulf Island Dam was built.

Jonathan P. LaBonte, executive director of the Androscoggin Land Trust since 2008 and a county commissioner, will talk about this and other valley tales at the meeting of the Androscoggin Historical Society on February 22 at 7 p.m. in the society's headquarters, on the third floor of the County Building at Court and Turner Streets in Auburn. The public is invited to attend without charge. An elevator is available.

LaBonte also will discuss how land conservation and recreation are opening new doors to telling the history of the river and its communities. The Trust currently conserves more than 4,650 acres, including more than nine miles of frontage along the Androscoggin River.

## SPEAKERS' BUREAU - Share your passion

Do you have an historical topic about which you could give a talk? It may be a topic you have researched, a life experience (such as your occupation, work in a community organization, or attendance in a rural school), or a hobby with an historical dimension.

The Androscoggin Historical Society is creating a Speakers Bureau. We have recognized that community organizations need programs and that the Society can help them fill this need.

Partners or teams are welcome. You may want to pair up with someone who is more comfortable than you are with speaking and can help you share your information or skills.

For more information and/or a form to register your topic, please contact Annette Vance Dorey at [dorey@gwi.net](mailto:dorey@gwi.net).



**GORDON WINDLE**  
1915—2011

Gordon Windle, a former president of the Androscoggin Historical Society, 1981-1986, died on February 5.

He was an avid Auburn historian who spoke at the Society's programs and for other organizations. He was past president of the Lewiston-Auburn Stamp and Coin Club. He was on the board of directors at the Auburn Public Library and the Edward Little Alumni Association. <http://www.sunjournal.com/obituaries/story/981982>

## MAINE CIVIL WAR TRAIL

To commemorate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, approximately twenty-five museums and historical societies in Maine will mount exhibits displaying their artifacts, photos, and other memorabilia. The Androscoggin Historical Society plans to participate in this cooperative enterprise scheduled for Summer 2013. A common brochure and website will publicize this opportunity.

We plan the theme of our exhibit to be the immediate aftermath of the War as it impacted social, economic, and political conditions in Androscoggin County. Although we have several military artifacts that will be on display, we shall highlight the artifacts and data concerning the GAR and other soldiers' organizations, Leeds native Oliver Otis Howard's role in the Freedmen's Bureau, African-Americans who settled here, commemorative statues by Franklin Simmons (a native of our County), economic adjustments, and political party data and election results. We also propose to offer guided Saturday walking tours of downtown Auburn-Lewiston to provide evidence of the continued presence of Civil War outcomes

## THE SCHOONER *AUBURN*

An inquiry came to the Society about whether we had a picture of the four-masted schooner *Auburn*, which was launched in Phippsburg, Maine in 1906. Unfortunately we did not have a picture and it may be that her life was so short that she never was “posed” for a snapshot.

The *Auburn* weighed 633 tons with dimensions of 171.4 feet long and 36.3 feet wide. [Steven D. Singer, *Shipwrecks of Florida: A Comprehensive Listing*, books.google.com/books?isbn=1561641634.]

The ship had a promising start. Her first cargo was 1,172 tons of ice loaded at Rockport, Maine. This well exceeded the estimates of about 1,100 tons and she drew only fifteen feet rather than the estimated sixteen. This meant that she could enter scores of harbors and ports that otherwise would be inaccessible. [“A Splendid Beginning,” *Lewiston Evening Journal*, Mar. 9, 1906.]

It was stated, “The load of ice would pay the vessel ninety cents per ton to Providence, R. I. The loading, unloading and passage will only take two weeks and the clear profit will be \$1,054.80. This is a great showing indeed for the first two weeks of her existence. As one quarter of the vessel is owned in Auburn the news will be exceedingly welcome.” [Ibid.]

It was further reported that the *Auburn* made remarkable speed, passing every ship she encountered. This included a trip from Port Arthur, Texas to New York with a cargo of lumber “to within one plank of her scuppers.” [“Schooner Auburn is Making Good Record,” *Lewiston Daily Sun*, Dec. 14, 1906.]

Life aboard the *Auburn* and in Caribbean ports was detailed in a lengthy article in the *Lewiston Evening Journal* [“Four Months a Sailor: Auburn Boy’s Adventures,” Mar. 21, 1907.] Warren Watson spent four months in the summer of 1906 sailing 6,000 miles from Norfolk, Virginia, to Havana to Port Arthur, Texas and from there to New York. He experienced hurricanes, quasi-pirates from the island of Bimini, a waterspout, several adventures in Cuba, and clouds of mosquitoes in Port Arthur.

The *Auburn*’s first captain was Thomas J. Ginn of Auburn, Maine. The last cargo that Ginn saw loaded was creosote piling bound from Norfolk, Virginia for San Juan, Porto Rico. Then Capt. Charles W. Clark took command, while Capt. Ginn was called to Maine to supervise the final stages of construction of the schooner *Lewiston* in the Cobb-Butler yard in Rockland. We also learn from this source that two other schooners, *The Perryville* and *The Horatio G. Foss*, were planned so that Auburn and Lewiston “may well be proud of their fleet.” [“Auburn and Lewiston,” *Lewiston Evening Journal*, June 4, 1908.]

We next hear of the schooner *Auburn* having arrived in an unspecified port “after a four months’ cruise to South America.” There it was stated that the Gilbert Transportation Company of Mystic, Connecticut, owned her. [“Schooner Docks after Long Trip,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 27, 1909.] Other sources all say that the *Auburn*’s agents and principal owners were Crowell and Thurlow of Boston.

However, unnamed residents of Auburn, Maine also had invested in the ship, and were understandably concerned when the vessel was reported a month overdue. The *Auburn* had sailed from Jacksonville, Florida to Philadelphia with a cargo of lumber on December 23, 1909. She was under the command of a Capt. Bates with a crew of eight other men. It was feared that she had been wrecked in a gale. It was noted that the *Lewiston* had been blown off course, but Capt. Ginn had safely brought her in. [“Interests Auburn Men,” *Lewiston Evening Journal*, Feb. 14, 1910.] The *Auburn* and her crew were given up for lost by May. [“Of Local Interest,” *Lewiston Evening Journal*, May 7, 1910.]

If any reader knows of a picture of the *Auburn*, please let us know. In the next issue, we shall feature the schooner *Lewiston*.

-- Douglas I. Hodgkin

“Some of the vans on the Grand Trunk freight trains beat all the art galleries.” *Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 30, 1887.

## WHAT TIME IS IT?

That question did not have a certain answer in Lewiston during May of 1922. Daylight Saving Time became a contentious issue during the Aldermen's meeting of May 12, 1922.

During World War I Daylight Saving Time had been passed and was observed for seven months each in 1918 and 1919. However, Congress had repealed it in 1919, for it was quite unpopular as people went to bed earlier and got up earlier than they do now. It returned to a matter of local option. In Maine the rule was Standard Time, unless a municipality opted for DST.

In May 1922 Inspector Page had set the clock on the Lewiston City Building ahead to conform to Daylight Saving Time. Apparently he had taken his cue from "the industries of the city," which were operating on DST.

Meeting on May 12, the Aldermen ordered the municipal clock returned to Standard Time because Page had exceeded his authority. At least five of the seven Aldermen opposed DST itself, stating that the farmers were unanimously opposed and probably so were the majority of their constituents.

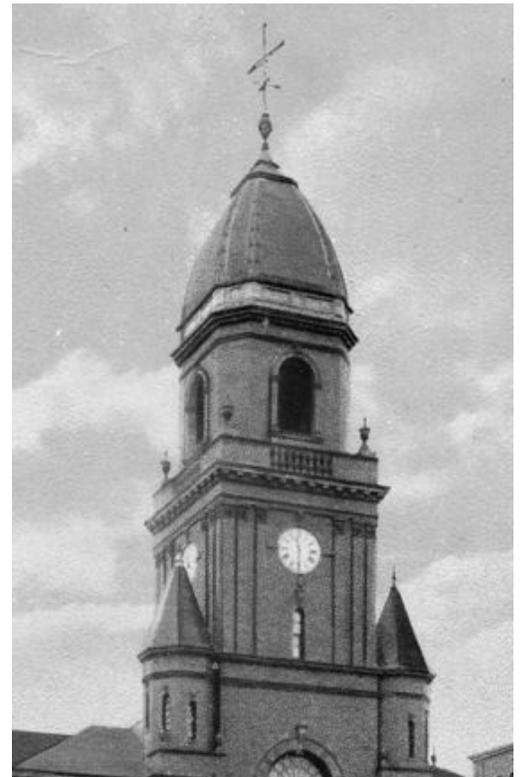
However, Alderman Verrault favored DST. "He said he worked in a shoe shop and that the majority of his co-workers favored daylight time." When Alderman Kerrigan moved that city council meetings be scheduled at 7:30 pm standard time, Verrault objected and said he would come to meetings at 7:30 pm daylight time. Verrault accepted a compromise at 7:00 standard time.

Because the industries were on daylight time, the clocks in the public schools had been set for daylight time "to accommodate the homes in the matter of meals." Therefore, Superintendent C. W. Bickford sent a memo to principals and teachers stating that the hours of the high school were "7 a.m. to 12 m (corresponding to 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. daylight saving time)" and elementary schools—7.45 a.m. to 10.45 a.m., 12.30 to 2.30 p.m. (corresponding to 8.45—11.45 and 1.30—3/30 p.m. daylight saving time). This you will observe makes no change in the present hours of school."

Therefore the superintendent manipulated the "official" school hours to conform to Daylight Saving Time! Thus a student who lived in a DST home across the street from the high school would need to depart by 7:55 a.m. to be on time according to the school clock reading 7:00 a.m. (ST). When he left school at 12:00 noon (ST), he would find he was having lunch at just after 1:00 p.m. (DST) at home.

Sources: *Lewiston Daily Sun*, May 13 and 15, 1922; *Lewiston Evening Journal*, May 13, 1922.

-- Douglas I. Hodgkin



Lewiston City Building Clock Tower

## DONATIONS & NEW MEMBERS

*The Society is grateful for the following donations:*

Mechanics Savings Bank	\$500.
Brann & Isaacson	\$250.
Benjamin & Bonnie Lounsbury	\$100.
Hall's Gravel & Development Corp.	\$ 75.
Central Maine Power	\$ 50.
Taber's Lakeside Stand	\$ 35.

*We welcome these new members:*

Austin Associates PA CPAs  
WEZR 124 – Gleason Media.com  
Chip Morrison  
Edward & Candace Walworth

## **GETCHELL CEMETERY**

On August 14, 2005, Bill Sylvester, Roland Jordan of the Maine Old Cemetery Association, and I met with John Nelson of Maine Noninvasive at the so-called Getchell Cemetery in southern Auburn. It is located between the Sylvester house and the Penley Corner Church on Riverside Drive, or Route 136. This obscure plot (not to be confused with the Penley Corner Church Cemetery next to the church itself) is barely noticeable to the casual passerby; there are only nine stones, and most of those are damaged and worn to such an extent that they probably would not be recognized as gravestones except for the one legible stone marker. This is marked "H. G." with a date, 1815. Research shows there was a Herschel Getchell in the area at that time who disappeared from the official records just after. This is as close as we are right now to a correct name, and it seems as good as any we are likely to get any time soon, so we call it the Getchell Cemetery for lack of a better one.

Anyway, John Nelson was a ground penetrating radar (GPR) specialist and also had invented a new way of looking underground called "electrical resistivity measurement." This latter he used for his doctoral dissertation as I recall. He conducted GPR and ERM studies that showed well over a dozen graves that go with the nine stones, plus one

leaning against a tree. He sent copies of his results to Mr. Sylvester, and the latter recently gave our society one as well. Work continues to preserve this cemetery for posterity. We are looking into erecting a fence to protect the remaining stones once we have determined the precise perimeter. Perhaps we will eventually legally associate it with the Penley Corner Church and Cemetery across the street, but this is speculative at this point. (Bill Sylvester, Roland Jordan, and I have met with attorney Richard Trafton to look into this.) Happily, Bill Sylvester has recently acquired the property surrounding the Getchell Cemetery.

This cemetery at the date of 1815 was of course in the town of Pejepscot, later Danville, in the county of Cumberland, as would be the later church with its cemetery, until 1854, when this county was founded, and until 1867, when Danville became part of Auburn.

-- Michael Lord, with help from Bill Sylvester

## **DANVILLE FIELD TRIP**

It has become necessary to reschedule the field trip to Danville's historic spots from June to July. The precise date and other details will be published in the June newsletter and the local media.

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Address correction requested