

# Androscoggin History

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

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## 1849 Hand Pump Fire Apparatus

At its January meeting, the Board of the AHS voted to loan our 1849 hand pump fire apparatus to Falcon Performance Footwear for their small museum. Falcon, now at 27 Wright's Landing in Auburn, manufactures firefighting, industrial, and mining boots. Their museum also includes a 1933 Ahrens-Fox fire engine owned by the Auburn Fire Department.

Our 1849 Excelsior engine was the first mechanical equipment used in Auburn. It was one of a pair of such hand pumps, the other used in Lewiston and now on display at the South Berwick fire station. When the Excelsior came on the market in 1991, the Androscoggin Historical Society purchased it from a private collector in order to return it to Auburn.

Our newsletter of October 1991 provided the following description: "Each engine was an open tub with a copper lined tank mounted on four wheels and hauled by hand. Two piston type pumps – one on either side – ejected the water as six to eight men on each side pushed down on the rails. If the hand tub were near a source of water, then a suction hose twenty feet long could draw up the supply. Otherwise the tub had to be filled by a bucket brigade."

Initially, the Auburn Fire Department housed the hand pump. However, when they ran out of space for it, the Jay Fire Museum graciously offered to display it. Now we are pleased to be able to return it to its home in Auburn. We thank the Jay Fire Museum for their care of our equipment for many years and Falcon Performance Footwear for agreeing to display this important artifact of Auburn's fire-fighting history.

For more information about the 1849 hand pump see our October 1991 newsletter on line at <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~meandrhs/1091.html>

## Program Notice

**Speaker:** Doug Hodgkin

**Topic:** "When Presidents and Hopefuls Came to Lewiston and Auburn," based on his most recent book (see page 3).

**Date:** 7 PM, Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2012

**Place:** 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, County Building, Auburn. Elevator available.

## Fee for Research Assistance

The AHS Board has adopted a fee schedule for the conduct of research on behalf of users of our library. Persons who come into the library will be provided a free orientation of our holdings and the location of those materials in which they might be interested. If they are able to work independently after that, there will be no charge, although they are encouraged to make a donation to the Society. Those who require continuing assistance will be charged ten dollars per hour in quarter hour increments of \$2.50. Persons who contact us by letter, email, or telephone and who ask us to do the research for them will be charged at the same rates. As is current practice, there will continue to be charges for photocopying, scanning of pictures, and other material services.

Although we have in the past provided research assistance free of charge, we find that we must make these charges in order to maintain our library and to ensure that staff time is used efficiently.

## **Philip M. and Deborah H. Isaacson House on National Register**

Date listed: 11/18/2011

Criteria C: Architecture F. Frederick Bruck, architect  
Local significance

“Located in a quiet residential neighborhood in Lewiston, Maine the Philip M. and Deborah N. Isaacson House [2 Benson Street] is often mistaken for a private tennis court or enclosed swimming pool. The facade of the home, elevated on a level terrace, presents to the street a wall of vertical redwood siding, broken only at the corners by elongated frosted-glass panels and in the middle by an open portal with a white wooden frame. This structure, one of two high walls surrounding front and rear courtyards, is both an integral part of the house and a method of providing privacy for the occupants of the glass-walled International Style House at the core. Designed in 1960 by the Cambridge-based architect F. Frederick Bruck, the Isaacson House is essentially unchanged since its completion, and retains an extraordinary integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, association, setting and feeling. Within Maine, this is one of a very few International-style houses designed for year-round residency and possibly the only example located in an urban residential neighborhood. In addition, is it [sic] the only known International Style court-yard house in the state at this time. The Isaacson House was listed in National Register of Historic Places at the local level for its architectural significance as a building that possesses the distinctive characteristics of a very modern house integrated into a traditional setting.”

[http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?to pic=mhpc\\_recent\\_listings&id=321769&v=article](http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?to pic=mhpc_recent_listings&id=321769&v=article)

### **LCD Projector**

The late Gordon Windle, a former president of the Androscoggin Historical Society, left a bequest to the Society. Part of it now has been used to purchase a much-needed LCD projector that enables us to project PowerPoint presentations and other digital material on a large screen. Most of the presenters of our programs expect to be able to project material for the audience to view. Gordon reveled in the knowledge of local history provided by our lectures.

## **DOWN WITH CROQUET!**

### **When They Play It on Sunday—A Valiant Auburn Officer Draws a Revolver on Participants in the Pernicious Sunday Sport**

John W. Robbins, the special police officer for Sunday duty at New Auburn, recently appointed by Mayor Savage, scored a point, yesterday, by stopping a rather largely attended game of croquet in the field just above the Barker Mill.

Games of croquet have been played here often on Sundays of late, and the officer decided to stop the practice if he could. He learned from several authentic sources about where the croquet grounds were to be pitched, [sic] yesterday, and after waiting till the day was well advanced, he made a careful approach and was rewarded by getting well up to the crowd before being noticed. There were eight of them—five men and three boys.

The advent of the officer was a big surprise to the Sabbath breakers. The first thing they did was to grab for the croquet set, thinking to gather it in and make good their escape. The police officer, however, finding that the men he had been looking for were making too hasty a departure, pulled his revolver from his pocket and pointing it at one of them commanded him to halt. The effect was marvelous. Every man of the party stopped and the officer found himself master of the situation. Every man dropped whatever part of the croquet set he chanced to have. The man at whom the revolver was pointed was badly frightened and cried piteously for mercy, while his companions were in about the same state of fear. The officer gathered up the croquet set in a bag and took it to the lockup. He has the names of the men, but probably will not arrest them unless they again violate the law.

The next thing Mr. Robbins will try to stop will be the practice of boys who go in bathing Sundays, just above the Barker Mill. He has a lot of their names and only awaits the opportunity of apprehending them, to be dealt with by the judge of the municipal court.

Reproduced from *The Lewiston Evening Journal*, May 26, 1890.

## New Books

**Marguerite Stapleton, *St. Mary's Health System: A Ministry of Healing, A Lifetime of Caring.* Lewiston, Me.: St. Mary's Health System, 2011.**

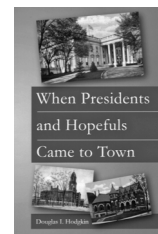
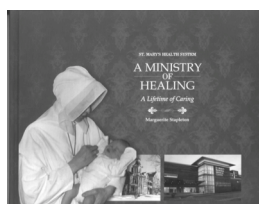
Stapleton's text provides a summary account of the history of a major healthcare institution in Lewiston, Maine. She was vice president of Mission Effectiveness for St. Mary's Health System.

Beginning with a biography of Marguerite d'Youville and the founding of St. Mary's Hospital in 1888, we learn of major developments and expansions of facilities in local healthcare.

The story includes associated institutions of St. Mary's School of Nursing, the Healy Asylum orphanage for boys and the Marcotte Home, constructed with one wing for elders and one wing known as St. Joseph's Orphanage for girls. In recent years, the hospital has expanded into the community with the Bates Street Health Center, a Food Pantry, the Nutrition Center of Maine, Lots to Gardens, and a Neighborhood Housing Initiative.

Annette Bourque, the hospital's marketing designer, contributed her substantial talents to design both the cover and the interior matter. The book is profusely illustrated, mostly from the Sisters of Charity of Saint-Hyacinthe Archives. The result is delightful and visually pleasing.

Although she recognizes that this is not a definitive history, Stapleton has provided a handy outline that recognizes the work of the Sisters of Charity. The book is available at the St. Mary's Hospital Gift Shop for \$18.90.



**Douglas I. Hodgkin. *When Presidents and Hopefuls Came to Town.* Lewiston, Me.: Published by the author, 2012.**

Hodgkin has published a work that compiles the history of the visits to Lewiston and Auburn, Maine, of incumbent, future, and past Presidents of the United States, as well as candidates for the office. This includes visits of incumbents Johnson and the elder Bush, future presidents such as Garfield and Kennedy, and former presidents such as Teddy Roosevelt and Jimmy Carter. A final chapter includes a selection of future party nominees and first ladies. More than seventy visits are described.

Growth of these communities, developments in transportation technology, election calendars, and changes in campaigning and conceptions of the presidency combined to bring presidents and aspirants to the office to these relatively small cities.

There are several photos, mostly from newspaper accounts at the time. Bibliographic material enables the reader to follow up for more detail.

The book is available for \$10.00 at Percy's Burrow in Auburn Mall, Bates College Bookstore, and AHS.

### Recent Cash Donations

- \$25 Robert & Jacqueline Laskoff
- \$100 Benjamin & Barbara Lounsbury
- \$100 Hall's Gravel & Development Corp

Thank you for your support!

***Maine Mothers Who Murdered, 1875 to 1925 – Doing Time in the State Prison*** by local author Annette Vance Dorey is out in time for Women's History Month. The book reveals the untold stories of over thirty mothers — their disturbing murderous acts, their desperate situations and dilemmas, family life, vivid trial accounts, and biographical sketches of their judges and attorneys. The book has over 320 pages, nearly 100 historic illustrations and 25 data tables.

## Donations to the Collection

- Four postcards (County Building Main Street Auburn, Court Street Auburn, Main Street Auburn, Lake Grove Entrance East Auburn) and eight commemorative stamps (Come to Lewiston The Industrial Heart of Maine). Donated by Linda Lewit of Auburn.
- Mahogany Empire chest-6 drawer, circa 1830; Empire 2-drawer drop leaf table, c1830 and wooden rope bed, c1830. Donated by Mary Ann Douglas of Topsham in memory of Effie Scribner Murch Plummer and her brother Thomas Scribner Murch.
- Book entitled *St. Mary's Health System A Ministry of Healing a Lifetime of Caring*, by Marguerite Stapleton. Donated by St. Mary's Health System of Lewiston.
- Photocopies of various newspaper articles (dated 1917-1919) and Theses concerning the History of the Nazarene Church 1893-1920 and History of the Protestant Churches of Lewiston and Auburn. Donated by Sheldon Walton of Auburn.
- Record book of Burnside Post, No. 47 of Auburn, Dept. of Maine G.A.R., 1881-1886, belonging to Ezra Getchell, the last member of the Burnside G.A.R. Auburn Post. Donated by Priscilla Getchell of Florida.
- 8-drawer file cabinet with 13 banks of genealogical file cards. Donated by Anne & Frank Jewett of Lewiston.
- Book entitled *Early Wings over Maine* by J.D. Davis. Donated by John D. Davis of Yarmouth.
- Photographs of Libbey Mill from December 1999. Donated by Linda Hanscom of Windham
- Several undated photos purchased in a 1980's auction of the Pulsifer House on Shepley Street, Auburn. Donated by Barbara Shapiro of Auburn.

## AHS First Historical Houses Walking Tour

We are hosting a fun opportunity in spring — a walking tour of a fascinating section of Main Street, Lewiston. Part of the tour will cover a portion of Main Street – Frye Street Historic District recently designated by the City of Lewiston.

As a group, we will walk and stop outside each site, where you'll learn about the buildings, residents, and historic events in the neighborhood. It's a family event, suitable for anyone interested in local history and able to walk for an hour and a half – no hills.

Mark your calendar. The tentative date is Saturday, May 5. Group size will be limited. Watch for announcements about advance registration in spring. Future tours will feature other areas of Auburn and Lewiston.

## Androscoggin Land Trust Tour

On February 3, 2012, the Society collaborated with the Androscoggin Land Trust in a snow shoe tour in Auburn. Jim Sargent of AHS provided stories of some of the people buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery, while Jonathan LaBonte of ALT explained the work of his organization with regard to the Huston Farm Conservation Area.



*Jim*

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