

Androscoggin History

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

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Series On Local Irish History A Resounding Success

As indicated in a *Sun Journal* story, a place to sit became a premium at our series of five lectures on Irish history during September. John Henderson's talks on the Irish in Lewiston and Auburn attracted large and enthusiastic turnouts far beyond John's and our expectations.

"I don't think anyone has been covering the Irish as a topic," program Chairwoman Annette Vance Dorey said. "They've been waiting for something like this. There are a lot of Irish in Lewiston-Auburn."

Attendance at each lecture ranged from 46 to 80 people, averaging at 63. Two were in our own meeting space and the other three were at the two public libraries and at Museum L-A.

Auburn Public Library led off on September 8 with the introduction to why the Irish came to our area. On September 15 at the Society, the focus was upon settlement patterns with the creation of six distinct Irish neighborhoods or "patches" in the two cities. Museum L-A co-sponsored a program on September 22 on the history, art, and architecture of the St. Joseph's and St. Patrick's Parishes.



Some of the crowd at lecture on Irish patches.
Photos by David Colby Young

Henderson's final two lectures focused upon leading personalities in local history. The talk at Androscoggin Historical Society on September 27 addressed the roles of professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers, as well as politicians and community organizations. Finally on September 29, the Lewiston Public Library co-sponsored a description of merchants and businessmen, along with the buildings they had constructed and occupied on Lisbon and Main Streets.

Illustrations for each lecture included John's drawings of buildings and maps from his book, *Androscoggin Irish*.

Henderson, who lives in Auburn, is a graduate of the Maine Maritime Academy graduate logistics management program, and holds bachelors degrees in political science and German studies from the University of Southern Maine. A former teacher, he is a member of the Androscoggin Historical Society, Maine Historical Society, and the Irish American Club of Maine. He has also authored *Early Murphy Descendants of Mary Hurley and James McCarthy*.



John Henderson answers a question.

Origin of the Phrase “Twin Cities”

Why are Lewiston and Auburn called “Twin Cities”? Who originated this appellation? We begin by noting that the phrase could not pre-date the incorporation of Auburn as a city in 1868, Lewiston having achieved that status in 1861.

The first recorded suggestion of the metaphor came when William B. Wood, of Boston, Treasurer of the Franklin and Continental Corporations spoke before a meeting concerning construction of the Lewiston and Auburn Railroad. He said in passing, “Besides, we [the corporations] feel a common interest in the twin city of Auburn, which with Lewiston, makes the Siamese twins bound together by the ligature of the bridge.” [*Lewiston Evening Journal*, April 9, 1872]

This seems not to have caught on, however, until twenty years later in the 1890s. In March 1892, the newspaper referred to a lathe in a little shop at the cross canal in Lewiston that manufactured lasts. “This machine will make more jolting noise when it starts up than any machine in the twin cities—it is warranted to.” [*Lewiston Evening Journal*, March 22, 1892] In the next month the newspaper published an ad for the Twin City Blackbirds putting on a minstrel show. [*Lewiston Evening Journal*, April 2, 1892]

The first business that may have used the name was the Twin City Restaurant of Lewiston. It was referred to when William Hart, “the father of the proprietor of the Twin City Restaurant on Main Street,” was buried up to his neck while he and others were digging a trench in November 1891. [*Lewiston Evening Journal*, November 16, 1891] The restaurant was mentioned again when it ran afoul of Maine’s prohibitory law: “Between 9 and 10 o’clock Friday night Odlin and O’Brien raided the Twin Cities Restaurant on Main street. They caught one man in the act of selling liquor and in one of the stalls found a party of men and women drinking beer.” [*Lewiston Evening Journal*, April 2, 1892] *The Lewiston and Auburn Directory* of 1891–1892 lists a “City Restaurant” at 125 Main Street. It is not certain that this is the same place. Neither a “Twin City” nor a “City” Restaurant is listed in subsequent directories.

However, this could be the first business using that phrase in its name.

We happen to have a photo of an early store that used the label soon after that. The Twin City China Company sold wholesale and retail crockery and glassware at 151 Lisbon Street. Its ad in the 1895–1896 *Lewiston and Auburn Directory* claimed it was “The Finest Crockery Store in Maine.”

A few local businesses have maintained the tradition. In the current telephone directory, there are five listed, including the newspaper, *Twin City Times*, as well as Twin City Boarders, Twin City Cleaners, Twin City Dental Laboratory, and Twin City Tile & Remodeling Company.

While Lewiston and Auburn have been closely identified as “Twin Cities” and the cities have cooperated in various enterprises, they nevertheless have continued to maintain their separate identities.

– Douglas I. Hodgkin with assistance from
Diane Hesketh



Twin City China Co. was one of the first businesses using “Twin City” in its name in the 1890s. Apparently it was going out of business when this photo was taken. Detail of photo from collection of Androscoggin Historical Society.

Postcard Collection Finds A Home



Robert Bedard

Robert Bedard collected postcards for many years and finally, he didn't have enough space to store them all.

Among the most valuable were 132 scenes of old Lewiston and Auburn, gathered in a leather-bound scrapbook.

Bedard thought these should be preserved as local history so he took them to the Lewiston City Hall, where he was told there was no space to display them. But a staff member scanned the cards for possible use in the city's economic development and historical publications and arranged for them to be sent to the Androscoggin Historical Society. There, they have joined other old postcards in the Society's archives.

Bedard received a letter from the Society that said, "We are very pleased to accept them. Many businesses and people come in to seek various pictures that they can scan or photocopy for publication in newspapers and books, as well as for personal use. We have very few postcards. Your collection can be added to our collection of

images of the area, so they are a valuable resource."

The oldest postcard in the Bedard collection is from 1909. Others include scenes in the 1920s or 1930s. All are in excellent condition.

Bedard, who lives in an apartment on Wildwood Drive in Lewiston, says he is glad his collection will be safely preserved.

He retired four years ago after being employed at St. Mary's Hospital for 25 years and then for 15 years as activities director at the St. Mary's d'Youville Pavilion, working with Alzheimer's patients.

Asked where he found all the cards, he said, "I've been collecting postcards for forty years, at yard sales, flea markets and antique shows. I've got cards from all over the world. Whenever I go traveling I buy postcards."

Where has he traveled? "Europe, California, Hawaii. When I was in the service I got to Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, Thailand."

Where to next? "Russia, if I can afford it. I like Russian history."

Will he be collecting more postcards? "No. I finally got enough."

– Russ Burbank

Historical Acquisitions: Donations Since June 2011 Newsletter

- Women's Columbia bicycle, 1948. Donated by Doug Hodgkin of Lewiston.
- Framed letter from Muhammad Ali to The Many and One Coalition of Lewiston Auburn, c/o Calvary United Methodist Church of Lewiston, confirming his support of their efforts of combating racism and discrimination. Donated by Mark Schlotterbeck of Lewiston.
- Photographs of the snowstorm of April 7, 1982, the flood of 1987 (both Auburn and Lewiston photos), photos of major house fires in Lewiston in 1989. Donated by Barbara M. Doyle of Auburn. The photos were taken by Barbara's mother, the late Leona B. Mann – donated in her memory.
- Collection of postcards from Lewiston and Auburn. Donated by Robert Bedard of Lewiston.
- A pamphlet entitled "Souvenir of Visit to Gulf

Island" published by Central Maine Power Company about 1927. Donated by Doug Hodgkin of Lewiston.

- A booklet entitled "Ice Storm 98, A CMP Photographic Journal" published by Central Maine Power Company 1998; booklet entitled "Celebrated Mass of Thanksgiving on the Occasion of the 125th Anniversary of the Founding of Saint Joseph's Parish, Sunday, April 18, 1982"; scrapbook pages with articles concerning local churches and priests 1980's era; scrapbook page with photo St. Andre's First Communion May 16, 1949; scrapbook page with *Sun Journal* article: "Renovation reveals old transfusion kits in Auburn Building" dated November 5, 1985; *Sun Journal* article concerning the Ice Storm of 1998, "Ice Age stories told in numerous ways," January 25, 1998. All donated by Barbara M. Doyle of Auburn.

New AHS Website

The Androscoggin Historical Society has a new website! Please take a look at <http://www.androscogginhistorical.com>.

The Society decided it was time to update our presence on the Web. We contacted Central Maine Community College to determine whether a computing student might volunteer to help us. Rhonda Briggs of Lisbon stepped forward. We are most pleased with the results. She has even volunteered to continue to be the site's Webmaster. Thanks, Rhonda!!

We thank David Colby Young for creating and maintaining the website for many years. He did not have the time to conduct the renovation.

Cash Donations Report since June

Cote Corporation of Auburn \$100
Robert Maxwell of Florida \$ 10
Auburn Savings Bank of Lewiston \$30
Marilyn Simonds of Auburn \$5
Library visits & Lecture Donations \$99.77

THANK YOU!

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A Visit to Garcelon Cemetery

On October 22, the Androscoggin Historical Society is sponsoring a tour of the Garcelon Cemetery, Ferry Road, Lewiston, Maine. It is one of the earliest burying grounds of Lewiston and includes the sites of some of the earliest town leaders and other inhabitants of South Lewiston. Come to hear the stories of the fabled Garcelon family, of participants in the Civil War, the effects of the year without a Summer, and even the solved mystery of a missing gravestone. Leaders of the tour are David Garcelon and Douglas Hodgkin, both of whom have several ancestors in the cemetery. Garcelon has researched the Garcelon family in several archives. Hodgkin has written a book on the early settlers of Lewiston.

Time: 1:00 p.m., Saturday, October 22, 2011

Rain date: 1:00 p.m., Sunday, October 23, 2011

Place: Garcelon Cemetery, Ferry Road, Lewiston at the intersection with Cotton Road.

Goings-On at the Society

Since June 2011 business totals are as follows: Telephone calls – 100 ; Museum visits – 14; Library visits – 143; Correspondence – 134; Emails – 559; Board & Committee Meeting attendance – 20; Lecture Attendance – 313.