

ANDROSCOGGIN HISTORY

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Newsletter of the Androscoggin Historical Society

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NEW BOOK ON LEWISTON HISTORY

Lewiston author Douglas I. Hodgkin is pleased to announce a new book on Lewiston history, *Frontier to Industrial City: Lewiston Town Politics 1768 to 1863*. It covers the period from the grant from the Pejepscot Proprietors to Jonathan Bagley and Moses Little until Lewiston became a city in 1863.

The focus of the book concerns how Lewiston governed itself as a town. Chapters include schools, managing the poor, roads, bridges, fire and police protection, regulations of livestock and of liquor, and election campaigning. What was the relationship of the Proprietors with the settlers? What was the impact of industrialization and urbanization upon the whole process? What were the relationships of the industrialists with the local people?

The Society was a major source of material for this book. The Society's holdings of newspapers, journals, and records of organizations were essential for the telling the story.

The book is available from the author (dhodgkin@bates.edu or at 9 Sutton Place, Lewiston, ME 04240). It also is available at the Society, at Percy's Burrow (Auburn Mall) and at Mr. Paperback (Promenade Mall). \$29.95 plus sales tax \$1.50 plus shipping \$3.50.

ANDROSCOGGIN ROUND TABLE

On Thursday afternoon, August 21, 2008, at 2 o'clock, the Androscoggin Round Table met at the society. Mr. Douglas S. Rogers, founder of the Ascension (Island) Historical Society, spoke on how to start or expand an historical organization on limited resources. As may be imagined, being on this British island in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean was very constraining. But, he managed, and the resulting society there is going strong today. They even have a Rogers Room named after him. His talk and slide show was on the start and operation of that society, and lasted about two hours. It was very well received, with eight attending, which he was quite pleased with.

MEETING NOTICE:

**Topic: Down-Mountain and Cross-Country:
140 Years of Skiing in Maine**

Speaker: Mr. Scott Andrews

Date/Time: Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2008, at 7:00 P.M.

**Location: Androscoggin Historical Society
Free to the public and wheelchair accessible.**

Maine's skiing history goes back farther than any other New England state. A Mainer wrote America's first book on skiing. A Maine company built the world's tallest ski jump and the first chairlift in the East. Two Maine manufacturers were leading producers of skis in the mid-20th century. Two dozen Maine skiers have competed or coached at the Olympics. Maine has hosted five ski, snowboard and biathlon competitions at the World Championship and World Cup level. Lewiston-Auburn figures include Julie Parisien, John Bower, Karl Anderson, Linwood "Zeke" Dwelly, Bob Flynn, and Otto Wallingford.

The program is sponsored by the Ski Maine Association and the Sugarloaf Mountain Ski Club. Approximately 150 photos — some more than a century old — have been assembled from the Ski Museum of Maine, a Farmington-based museum's collections, and 35 other sources, including several of the state's leading historical societies and skiing organizations.

MICROFILM READER

The History Department at Bates College has donated a used microfilm reader to the Society. This now makes it possible to acquire some materials on microfilm for which we otherwise would not have room. We thank Professor Michael Jones for thinking of us.

Historical Acquisitions

Donations

- *Unity in the House of Labor – Maine AFL-CIO Merger, 1956*, by Charles A. Scontras, (Orono, ME: Bureau of Labor Education, University of Maine, 2006). Donated by the author.
- *Frontier to Industrial City: Lewiston Town Politics, 1768 to 1863*, by Douglas I. Hodgkin, (Topsham: Just Write Books, 2008). Donated by the author.
- A 4"x6" B&W nineteenth century photograph by Curtis & Ross of Lewiston, ME of an unknown young gentleman. Given by Richard Fraser of East Poland.
- Nineteenth century photo of Everett Place by the foot of Perkins Ridge, two 19th century Oxford county deeds, pair of binoculars w/ case, large box of mostly local postcards, and a framed printed picture of an artwork titled Auburn, Maine in Autumn. Donated by Anonymous.
- A framed Auburn school picture of Webster Junior High School from Gordon Windle, ca. 1930. Given by his son-in-law.
- Two petticoats, pantaloons, and marriage announcement belonging to Mrs. Isola (Joseph) Shannon, ca. 1900, and an I.O.O.F. medal of past president William B. Duncan, 1944. Given by Mrs. Shannon's granddaughter, June R. Dyer, of Brunswick.
- A small B&W photo (2 ¾" x 4 ½") of Maine Central Railroad engine #460, (4-6-2), Class C, taken at Lewiston, Maine, on March 25, 1933. Given by Michael Lord of Auburn.
- A 1937 Open House Party ticket of Gayton-Crowley Chevrolet, Inc. of Lewiston. Donated by Nancy Vachon from a house in Lewiston being renovated.
- Maine Central Railroad ticket to Danville Junction, Maine, #10100. Given by Michael Lord.
- Collection of Doris Isabell Rideout's school and work photos & two ELHS yearbooks, ca. 1920s. Given by Nancy Rideout of Lisbon Falls, a niece of Doris Rideout.
- "The Journals of Joshua Whitman, Turner, Maine, 1809-1846," by Marcie Cohen, in *The Farm, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Annual Proceedings 1986*, edited by Peter Benes, 49-59. Boston: Boston University, 1986. Donation of Dennis Stires of Livermore.
- Two Bates Mills bedspreads, ca. mid-20th century, donated by Dennis Stires of Livermore.
- Small collection of old deeds with the name Pingree, etc., given by Dr. Kathryn Low of Bates College.
- *Murder at Darling Hill*, by Judith G. DuPont (Stonington, CT: Stonington Historical Society, 2007). Donated by the author. The murderer convicted had ties to Webster (Sabattus).
- Trunk, secretary, papers, photographs, and letters of Francis Marion Gamage of Auburn. (Gamage Avenue was named after this family.) He went to the Oregon Gold

Rush of 1863. Donated by Nancy P. Bartley of Kittery and Carol S. Woodard of Auburn, descendants.

- Letter from "Judy" in South Harpswell to "Shorty" in Auburn, postmarked 20 August 1934, with envelope and stamp. Given by Erika Mentink.
- Photographs of Thomas A. Thorne (tintype), ships, class pictures, an album, newspaper clippings, papers, and the like. Donated by Paul Walker of Lewiston.
- Class photo of Webster School, grades 8 & 9, June 1937, given by Allen S. Cameron of Auburn, who is in the photo, and is marked with an "X."
- Four identical bronze tokens depicting the seal of the state of Maine, ca. 1920. Given by Glenn Johnson of Brooklyn, CT.
- An 18" x 24" wood burning of the Mechanic Falls Civil War monument, modeled after the picture in our history book, p. 203. It is very nice, and will be a great addition to our picture library. It was done by Stan Wetmore of that town.

Purchases

- Greene, Maine, Bicentennial medal, 1788-1988, bronze, by Blackinton, from Bridgewater Coins & Collectables, \$15.00.
- Lisbon, Maine, 175th Anniversary, 1799-1974, bronze, from Bridgewater Coins & Collectables, \$10.00. These two medals now mean we have one from every town in our county that issued one. There are silver and/or pewter versions that we have yet to acquire, but given our budget, perhaps we'll wait.
- Portland-Lewiston Interurban 10 Ride Ticket from 1931-5, eBay, \$3.55, w/ S&H.
- Bond for John Given of Wales to work on the Androscoggin Railroad at Leeds Crossing, dated 1 May 1863, eBay, \$4.40, w/ S&H.
- *A Happy Abundance – Tales, Memoirs and More – Past and Present in Wayne, Maine*, by Eloise R. Ault & Edward L. Kallop Jr., eds., (Wayne, Maine: Wayne Historical Society, 2008). \$18.00 w/ S&H from the publisher. Our own Dennis Stires wrote the last chapter "In Pursuit of 'The American Dream.'"
- Two bottles – H.H. Ricker & Co., Portland, ME & Sunset Beverage Co., Auburn, ME, nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively. Bought of Orphan Annie's of Auburn, \$16.00 the pair.
- Bliss College currency notes. Crisp, uncirculated, uniface, \$5 - \$21.22; \$20 - \$15.99; \$200 - \$17.99; \$500 - \$17.99. From Richard Morin, Berlin, NH, via eBay.
- *Maine Central in Color, Vols. 1-3*, by George F. Melvin (1, 2, &3) and Jeremy F. Plant (1&2) Scotch Plains, NJ: Morning Sun Books, Inc., 1998 (Vol. 1, \$40.00), 1999 (Vol. 2, \$43.00), & 2008 (Vol. 3, \$46.00).
- Bliss College currency notes. Crisp, uncirculated, uniface, in the denominations of \$10, 50, & 100. From Les Ashe, Gilby, ND, via eBay, \$31.67, w/ S&H.

THE 1867 ANNEXATION OF DANVILLE

By Douglas I. Hodgkin

In 1867, a bill was introduced in the Legislature to annex Danville to Auburn. There was considerable agitation from the Democratic Party because, according to the *Journal*, they were “fearful of being driven from political power in their ancient stronghold, and [were] putting forth every effort to defeat the annexation.” After a hearing, the Committee on the Division of Towns reported the bill seven in favor and one opposed. The bill passed the Senate unanimously. [“City and County,” *Lewiston Falls Journal (LFJ)*, Feb. 2, 1867, 3; “City and County,” *LFJ*, Feb. 13, 1867, 3; “The Auburn and Danville Case,” *LFJ*, Feb. 15, 1867, 3.]

However, extended debate occurred in the House. Much of the debate centered on a proposed amendment to require a majority vote in each town to approve the merger. Opponents of the amendment first argued that the work of the Committee should be respected. Proponents said it was common to have a popular vote on such matters, so it was not a show of disrespect. [“The Auburn and Danville Case,” *LFJ*, Feb. 15, 1867, 3.]

The representatives debated how much local support the bill had. Most agreed that Danville voters opposed the merger, although they disagreed about the margin. Brown of Hampden noted that 456 Auburn residents had remonstrated against the bill, and Hale of Ellsworth thought a majority of Auburn might be opposed. Stevens of Augusta believed that Auburn heavily favored the bill and that a combined vote of Auburn and Danville would show that the area as a whole was in favor; it would not be right for a small minority of the whole to prevail. Daniel Holland of Lewiston claimed to have “a petition of from three quarters to seven eighths of tax payers of Auburn who were in favor of taking the town.” [Ibid.]

Some debate concerned the political implications of the bill. Tyler of Alexander stated bluntly, “It is only a scheme to deprive the only Democratic town in Androscoggin county of its existence.” William P. Frye of Lewiston noted that the opponents of the bill had raised the political question, but he did not see why it should be considered necessary to legislate in order to protect the Democratic Party. [Ibid.]

Geography played a role. Some opponents noted the value of the existing natural boundary of the Little Androscoggin River. Holland countered by showing that the village of Auburn would be nearly

in the center of the combined towns. [Ibid.]

Holland suggested vaguely that there would be advantages to manufactures by annexation. Shepley of Portland did not understand that point. [Ibid.] It may be that the proponents of annexation foresaw that development of the waterpower on the Little Androscoggin would make it desirable to include both sides of the waterway within Auburn. As early as 1870, three years after the annexation, the Little Androscoggin Water Power Company acquired the land along the river for development of a dam, the Barker Mill, and house lots. [Ralph B. Skinner, et al., *Auburn 100 Years a City* (Lewiston, Me.: City of Auburn, 1968), 121-122.]

The amendment did pass by a vote of 69 to 49. [*LFJ*, Feb. 15, 1867, 3.] However, the bill that finally passed both the House and Senate was a compromise that provided a vote in Auburn and Danville on the annexation to be determined by the *combined* vote of the two towns. [“City and County,” *LFJ*, Feb. 21, 1867, 3.]

Although Auburn scheduled a town meeting for the vote, the selectmen of Danville refused to do so, despite the provision in the act that “the selectmen *shall* call a meeting of their respective towns.” [“City and County,” *LFJ*, Feb. 25, 1867, 3; “Act to Annex Danville to Auburn,” *LFJ*, Feb. 26, 1867, 3.]

When the news reached Augusta that Danville had refused to comply, House members were outraged. Holland of Lewiston introduced a new bill that provided that the towns be united if Auburn voted in the affirmative, provided that Danville continued to refuse to act. Foster of Waterville stated that they should dally no longer and that the Danville selectmen and their supporters must “understand that such conduct cannot be tolerated.” Woodman of Bucksport “said that he was originally opposed to rebellion everywhere whether in South Carolina or Danville, and when one town sets itself up against the authority of the House he was in favor of any bill that will compel them. (Applause).” Foster moved a substitute to Holland’s bill to provide for the outright annexation of Danville without any town meeting votes. The rules of the House were suspended, the amendment was substituted, and the bill was passed to be engrossed (that is, to be passed to be written in its final form after all amendments have been disposed of). Five minutes before adjournment (for lunch?), the Senate also suspended its rules and passed the bill to be engrossed. That very afternoon, each chamber passed the bill to be enacted and the Governor signed the bill. [“Maine Legislature” and

“Danville Annexed to Auburn,” *LFJ*, Feb. 27, 1867, 1, 3.]

Probably under the procedure of the first act, Danville would have been overwhelmed by the Auburn vote, although that should not be considered a foregone conclusion. Proponents of the merger may have exaggerated their support. Notably, the 1859 vote on complete annexation showed that a favorable margin of 80 in Auburn would have been offset by the 110-vote margin in Danville if a regional vote had been held. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Danville selectmen’s obstreperous behavior backfired. The Legislature and Governor quickly responded by imposing the annexation all within a single day, February 26, 1867. Danville disappeared as a municipal entity, and two years later the new enlarged Auburn won incorporation as a city.

Goings-On at the Society

By Michael C. Lord

1) Donations Report Since the Last Newsletter: Mechanics Savings Bank - \$400.00; Chapman Trucking - \$50.00; Mr. Daniel L. Gagné of Cote Crane & Rigging - \$100.00; **Total: \$550.00.** We thank all donors.

2) On Tuesday evening, June 24, 2008, St. Jean Baptiste Day in Quebec, I attended the Franco-American Heritage Center’s Mural Unveiling and Steeple Lighting at the former St. Mary’s church on the corner of Cedar and Oxford Streets in Lewiston. Some of you may recall that I was on the brainstorming committee two or three years ago for the planning of the mural, and my invitation was the

follow-thru. It started with a nice reception in the basement, followed by an awards gathering in the performance venue of the building, and then the formal unveiling of the two murals. By then it was dark, so the about one-hundred persons in attendance went outside to view the newly lit steeple. The lights are automatically set so that they come on at dusk and stay on until 11:00 P.M. The copper spire looks very nice under the new spotlights; you may have seen the newspaper photos and articles of the event.

3) Our cleaning lady, Mrs. Lynn Roy of New Gloucester, has kindly donated a new plant for our library. It is an *Epipremnum aureum*, an exotic ivy from the Solomon Islands in the Pacific Ocean. It looks much better than the old root-bound fern we had, and it doesn’t shed either. She now has to clean up much less than before. Many thanks to her for her thoughtfulness and generosity.

4) *Memories of Maine* (Kennebec & Androscoggin River Valleys Edition – Summer 2008) has another reprint of my chapter, this time focusing on the political aspects of Androscoggin County and the industrial aspects of the Androscoggin River more than the environmental, although that is mentioned too. There is also a nice article on Lisbon Falls by Bill Barr of the Lisbon Historical Society

GRAFFITI

“The rocks on the falls have been daubed with immense patent medicine inscriptions. One of them reads somebody’s patent ‘Pain Kiler.’ Why deface the Dictionary and the Falls at once?”

Source: *Lewiston Falls Journal*, Aug. 17, 1869, 3.

Douglas I. Hodgkin, Editor
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