



# THE SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

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## If Houses Could Talk The Story of William F. Sampson

By Sylvia Richards Dean



The Sampson house, 138 East Main Street, Dover  
(before 1900)

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If houses could talk what stories they could tell. This house on 138 east main Street Dover-Foxcroft could tell us of the industry and life of a working family in the mid eighteen hundreds. William F. Sampson was one of these workers and this was his home.

William F. Sampson was born in Dover 17 November 1823 the year after the town of Dover was incorporated . His father William Sampson Sr. born 7 October 1782, died 13 December 1831 leaving eight year old William Jr. fatherless at this tender age. He spent his childhood in the shadows of a town growing in population and industry.

In the early 1800's the town of Dover was beginning to rise. Nathaniel Chamberlain built the first framed house in Dover. He was a master craftsman and architect of many of the early bridges in Maine. After the town was incorporated, they voted to build a bridge across the river above Moor's Mill and a second bridge at the lower falls. Solomon Adams was employed to make a plan of Dover Village. (History of Piscataquis County, by Rev. Amasa Loring 1880, P. 55)

Chamberlain's influence was far reaching and may have influenced the timber framed barn connected to the 138 Maine Street house.

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The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society will soon lose two members who have given so much of their time and talent to our group. Because of health reasons, Nancy and Jack Battick are planning on selling their home, which has been in Nancy's family for three generations, and move closer to Bangor to have easier access to their doctors and EMMC.

Nancy has been such a resource to the Society. She is the person we turn to when we get a request for family history, and, if we have the information in our archives, she will find it. And Nancy, for several years, has been the editor of the *Shiretown Conserver*. Four times a year she put together and sent out a first-class newsletter with interesting stories and updates on the activities of the Society. Under her guidance our newsletter went from a few pages to 12 pages, packed with all sorts of memories and information. She was the impetus behind our displays. We would work with Nancy but Nancy had the sense of making these displays come together and come alive.

Jack took on the responsibility of curator of the Observer Building. He kept us informed as to the needs of the building. This took time, energy and knowledge of building construction and repair. Jack also headed up cataloging and protection of our artifacts. He has a vast knowledge of preservation and passed that know how on to those working on a week to week basis at the museum.

Both Nancy and Jack have been heavily involved in our displays and programs. They have wonderful ideas and resources to make them happen. They will be sorely missed by all who work with them. If you see them "out and about" take a minute to say a thank you for all their hard work. Our Society will go on but will definitely feel the loss of these two fine people.

### Snow

The ground is softly covered  
 With something pure and white,  
 It makes the streets and trees – the world  
 Look good and clean and right

The whiteness whirling through the air  
 Makes people laugh and shout;  
 It makes them happy, hides their woe,  
 Erases fear and doubt.

We know not why this should be true;  
 But, Little flakes of snow,  
 Whirl on, you make our world more pure;  
 You hide our sin and woe!

June Austin Bucknam  
 Dover-Foxcroft, February 4,  
 1941

## From our Collection

Thanks to the generosity of many, many kind people, your Historical Society has thousands of interesting items in its collection. Here we showcase just one of the many books and pamphlets in our archives.

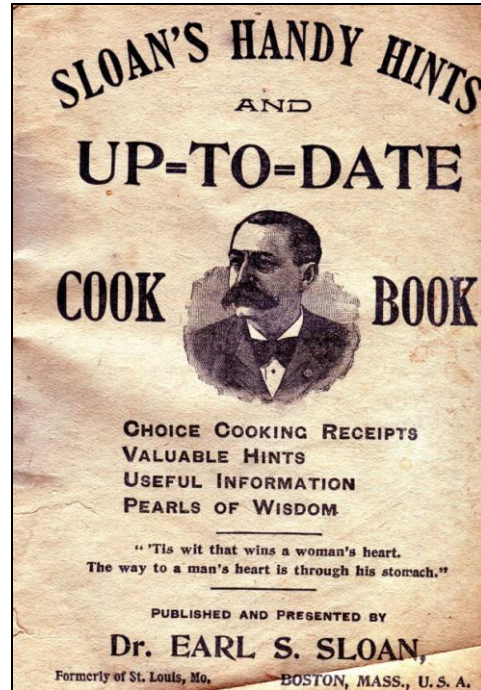
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"I have aimed to put the most valuable hints and the best cooking receipts in the handiest possible form. In compiling my household hints I have admitted only advice and information that would be interesting to the reader, and have rejected everything that I considered dry or tiresome. The cooking receipts are the choicest and most recent to be found anywhere.

I am convinced that the wealthiest and the poorest family will find in it matter of great value, and will keep it for reference use and emergency.

After you have read the book, please put it where you or any member of your family can readily refer to it."

Dr. EARL S. SLOAN.



### Some Points of Etiquette

- Never use the knife to carry food to the mouth.
- Keep the mouth shut closely while chewing the food.
- Never wear your overcoat or overshoes or carry your umbrella into the parlor.
- Do not stare around the room, nor ask questions about the price of the furniture.
- Your napkin is intended for your lips and beard only, not to wipe your face with.
- Do not cleanse your nails, your nose, your ears in public.

### Fruit Cake

(For the Christmas season)

One pound powdered sugar, 1 pound butter, 1 pound flour, ½ teaspoonful baking-powder, 10 eggs, 1 teaspoonful nutmeg, 1 teaspoonful cinnamon, 2 pounds currants, washed, picked and dredged with flour, 2 pounds raisins, seeded, then dredged, ½ pound citron, cut in thin slices. Cream the butter and sugar, add the eggs, one at a time, beating steadily for twenty minutes, then add flour and fruit, and lastly 2 teaspoonfuls of oil of lemon.

## Buck's Apothecary



As many of you knew, the photo on the back of the last issue of the Conserver was of "Buck's Apothecary". The photo on the left above shows three shops in the building, Wm. Buck & Co. on the right, Elmer R. Blethen, watchmaker in the center, and L.B. Curtis, Millinery and Fancy Goods on the left. All of these were listed in the 1898 directory, so the photo likely dates from that period. Since Dr. Buck began his apothecary practice in approximately 1870, the photo in the last issue of the Conserver probably dates from the 1870-1880 period. Dr. William Buck ran the store until his death in 1908. Then his son, Guy, owned the store until his death in 1918. It passed into the hands of Andy Hoyt until 1935, then to Paul Perin until 1954, then Lanpher's until 1973, and in its last use as a drug store, it was LaVerdier's for a few years in the late 70's. As you can see in the photo on the right above, it's very last use was as an auto supply store. Finally, the building was torn down to make way for a grocery store parking lot.

### Some Comments:

**Lorene Patterson:** Boy I am some excited.... Course I could be wrong, but..... got my historical society newsletter today and I think that "recognize the picture" is Bucks Drug Store, Perins and Lamphers and of course dad was right underneath but no sign.. I see the windows that were there when Tom Bush was there, wonder where the sign is, probably prior to the restaurant...am I right????? I read the newsletter cover to cover and enjoyed it all.(Lorene's father, Roy Annis and her mother Olivia Drysdale Annis ran Annis's lunch which they bought from Harry Bush – **Editor**)

**Hope Lacourciere:** Here's my guess on the "Conserver" picture: The Wm. Buck & Co. across from the old Academy bldg besides the Shell Station (once the site of the Exchange Hotel). Later this building was Perin's Drug store & Down the stairs was the Bush Luncheonette. (But what do I know?) (actually, Hope, you know all about it!).

**Rosalie Leighton:** The historic building is the "Buck" building on North Street, later the Perin Drug store and on the other side was a funeral parlor. I went to a funeral of a classmate of mine that drowned in the river. It was in June at the end of the seventh grade class year.

**Jeff Taylor:** This is an easy one.... Looks like a dirt street there at Monument Square, but when I was a kid the bldg on the corner housed Perrin's Drug Store, which became Lanpher's, which became ...

Next to "Perrin's" in the 40s-50s I think was a dry cleaner (?). Below was a pool hall, then Bush's restaurant, whatever they called it (they lived across the street on W Main St) and then it became a barbershop. When I was a kid, guys, probably from the mill across the street, used to loiter in groups on the cement steps (wooden in this picture).





## **The Blue Lady**

**Jim Annis**

Roy and Olive Annis, my aunt and uncle, lived at 78 River Street here in Dover. They owned Annis' Lunch that sat under Laverdiere's Drug Store on North Street. The entire building has since been replaced by a parking lot for the Shop and Save (Bud's) supermarket.

My uncle was a storyteller. With his story telling, he could enrapt you totally with the seeming facts and heavy emphasis on particular points of interest to you. As soon as he had your interest, he tested you by examining your reactions to certain points and playing on them.

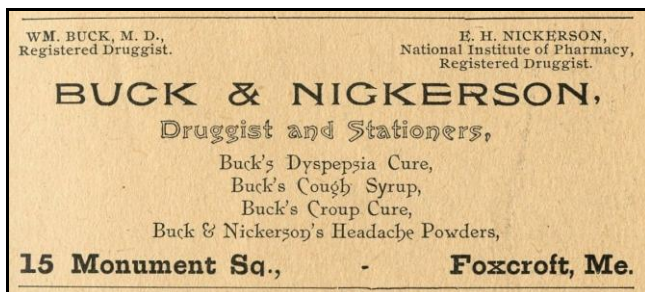
Soon after our marriage, I took my wife, Mary, up to Dover-Foxcroft to meet my aunt and uncle with whom I had spent many summers. My cousin Lorene and I were double cousins - brothers married sisters. Roy and Lou (my father) Annis were brothers. Sue (my mother) and Olive Drysdale were sisters.

Soon after all the "How are yous?" and "How've you beens" been played out and there was a pause in our conversations. It was at this tune Uncle Roy asked, "And so what room are you staying in tonight?"

Knowing full well which room we were staying in, I jumped in with, " The upstairs room in the north of the house." His reply was, "Oh, the blue room." And let it drop. Mary was a little slow to the query, but asked why the room was called the blue room when it was, indeed, not blue. His quick reply was, "Oh, it's called the blue room because of the lady dressed in a blue gown who passes through occasionally at night. But don't worry about it, she's harmless." And let it drop. Boy, could I see this one coming.

Obviously, Mary was unaware of my uncle's story telling. After more conversation we all retired to our respective rooms for the night. The next morning at breakfast my aunt asked us if we spent a restful night to which I replied, "Yes I did."

Mary complained that she had spent all night waiting for the lady in blue to pass through the room. And she never did. After a good laugh by all, we informed her about Uncle Roy's storytelling and how good he is at it. To which she heartily agreed. From then on, my uncle never caught Mary with a tall tale.





The Sampson House – after 1900

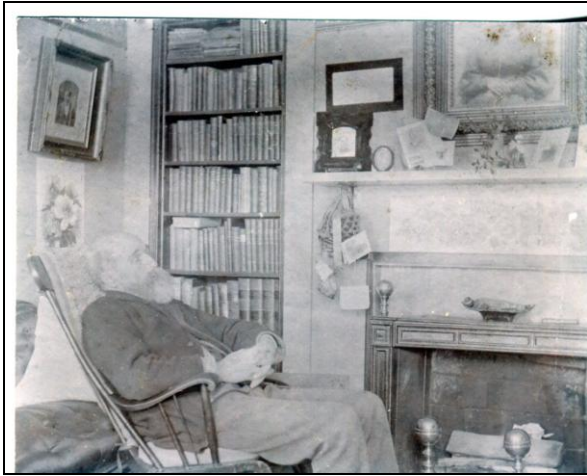
**From Page 1:** Charles Vaughn opened the first grist mill with machinery for cleaning the flour in 1825. In 1826 this mill served growers thirty miles away and had earnings of \$2000 per annum. (Loring p. 56). Vaughn employed S. P. Brown to operate his mill in 1827 and by 1836 Vaughn, Brown, and Sawyer converted the operation into a woolen mill. Within six years W. F. Sampson began his half century of work in the woolen mill and he began to acquire property as seen by the collection of deeds and legal documents stored in his home.

This house tells us that coming of age was a significant bench mark in a young man's life. A beautiful leather wallet embossed W. F. Sampson and the year 1844 was one momentum saved. Sampson was twenty one years old, a working man in a growing town with opportunities for a prosperous life.

So perhaps this house can talk to us. Upon examination of deeds, receipts, wills and notes found on the premises we can follow the activities of William F. Sampson who owned property in Dover from the age of twenty three. In consideration of \$200 William purchased property in Foxcroft from Cyrus Holms 2 November 1846. [Was this the property on which his son William Lewis Sampson built his home years later?] On 15 May 1846 John Wesley Barrett of Dover purchased property from John Merrick of Hollowell for \$58 to be paid annually in the amount of \$14.50 - 6 May 1846. A mortgage record shows only one payment made by John W. Barrett. The back of this deed has another transaction showing that John Merrick conveyed this property to William F. Sampson 13 June 1851 for the sum of \$58 as recorded in volume 22 page 337 of Piscataquis county records. The property passed from John Merrick to William F. Sampson as recorded 12 June 1851 vol. 24 p. 337 of Piscataquis records. The following day John Merrick personally appeared before the Justice of Peace to acknowledge his signature transferring the deed to Sampson "to be his free act and desire". This property is described as being in the Village of Dover the south part of lot number fifty-one of Solomon Adams survey bounded East by Piscataquis river; West by the town road North by the land of Lowell Cochren and south by lot number fifty-two being where Ira Sprague lives.

Another deed dated 24 April 1847 conveyed lot number 5 range 12 from Charles Blanchard to W. F. Sampson for the consideration of \$200. This property is described as two acres including water power on Frost Brook and the premises occupied by Rev W. Frost and Leona Hodds. This is the same brook we call Fox Brook today. This is the earliest mention of a house on the property. William Frost was the first to make a permanent abode in the county, moving to Dover in 1822 or 1823. (Loring p. 259)

Continues on Page 7



William F. Sampson, at home

#### **William F. Sampson, FROM Page 6:**

W. F.'s land purchases were not restricted to Dover and Foxcroft. In 1858 Sampson purchased land in Millo from John S. Sampson for \$450 In 1861 a Millo town lot was purchased for \$86 from Daniel Dennett, located adjacent to Jane S Sampson's property. A warrantee deed of 28 April 1847 indicates John Warner conveying part of number 4 range 12 to W. F. Sampson for the consideration of \$200. This included one undivided half part of the Water Power in or about the brook.

William's wife Sabina also purchased land . In 1882 she purchased eight acres part of lot 6 range 11 in Dover together "with the right of passing and re passing with teams etc". 10 June 1878 William conveyed two parcels of property purchased from S. O. Brown and George L Dyer for a consideration of \$1 to his wife Sabina A. Sampson.

These records show the efforts of a young man intent on acquiring land for developing business as well as a home for his family. William F. Sampson married Sabina Ames. She was born in Dover 21 November 1822. She was a partner with her husband as evidenced by her name on deeds of property and her participation in the Dover and Foxcroft Congregational Sabbath School.. They had four children all born in this old house; Edwin P. 1849, Mary Emma 27January 1854, William Lewis 18 March 1856 , and Charles B. 16 January 1858. The 1860 census shows the family with two year old Charles B. as the baby. In the 1870 census he is sadly missing. Charles died in 1863. Family legends tells us of the loss of a brilliant little boy who had read the bible through by the age of five. How sad for the family and especially for nine year old Emma.

Emma lived nearly all her life in this house She must have cared for her father after Sabina died 26 Sept 1892. Pictures show her with her brothers at their camp site at Sebec lake. She was an artist of considerable talent as is seen in her landscape oil paintings and beautiful hand painted china. She did not wait many until after her father died in 1901. At the age of forty-seven, five months after her father's death, she married a widower, my great-grandfather Sumner Sargent Richards. They resided in her house later making a home for Sumner's two orphaned grandsons.

Edwin and William Lewis gave title of the home to their sister. Both brothers had interesting lives of their own. Edwin was an educator and was head master of several schools throughout Maine. His last position was at Foxcroft Academy where he signed the diploma of Sumner Sargent Richards grandson S. Fernald Richards. He had also signed the diploma of S. S. Richards' daughter Mary Alice at Thorton academy in Saco years earlier.

William Lewis remained in Foxcroft marrying the Baptist minister's daughter Clara . He was a business man and noted for his thriving monument business. His sister was the secretary-treasurer of the cemetery association. This family connection must have been significant for his business. William Lewis and Clara were fondly remembered as Uncle Lou and Aunt Cade by younger family members.

Continued on Page 8

## **Sampson House: from page 7:**

In the 1870 census a girl Rose J. Sampson age 13 is living with the family. It is not known why she is there but one might speculate that an orphaned relative was filling the void left by little Charlie.

There was little public notice of W. F. Sampson's young life or of his work at Brown's Mill. I've found no mention of W. F. in the history books. There is little indication of his presence in government or education. He was a manager working at the mill. He has no living dependents to pass on his story. Edwin's son Charles E. and William Lewis's Daughter Bessie both died as young adults. So we have this old house to give up his story.

The house was located across the river from Browns mill. In 1863 a new brick building was built replacing the mill lost in a spring freshet a few years before. . The house and brick building still stand today. I can imagine W. F. heard the 7 AM mill bell calling the worker as I did one hundred years later. In my mind I can see him walking to work up East Main Street, cutting through the south end of River Street, over the long covered bridge across the Piscataquis river to the mill housing six sets of machinery and 75 operatives in 1867. (Loring) The Civil War created production demands that must have kept the mill going full speed ahead.

W. F. was not a soldier but supported the war effort at home. A document dated 1 June 1862 addresses Sergeant Wm F. Sampson by Warrant of appointment by order of Maj General James H. Butler. The original instructive General Order No. 32 requested 9,609 able bodied men to be enlisted throughout the state for a nine month draft. On a separate paper are written 76 names of men from Dover with notes of their status. This hand written work page demonstrates W. F. was meticulous in his record keeping. His handwriting is clear and shows training for management and as an accountant. Sampson received letters from Union soldiers requesting his aid in carrying out local matters. One letter request collection and deposits of moneys owed to the soldier. Another asks W. F. to see Mr. Edes to place notices in the local paper. Another of 8 August 1864 states Received of Sarah Palmer by W. F. Sampson thirty Dollars and is signed by Susan W. Palmer. Though W. F. remained in Dover during the great rebellion he offered his services to his brothers in arms. It is evident he is well respected and trusted by his peers.

What are the dreams and aspirations' of a man in Dover during the late 1800's? We can only look at the physical evidence and speculate as to his success. It is evident that W. F. was not a farmer cutting a living out of the wilderness as his forefathers had done. There is much evidence of forward thinking and planning for the future. For the consideration of \$300 paid by William F. Sampson to S. O. Brown 7 May 1877 Obtained the rights to water power and land for building dams on the Piscataquis River. Both Edwin and his father are members of the Masons Mutual Relief Association of Mechanic falls in 1881-1882. There are two receipts for payment to the Eastern Express Co. of Boston, State of Maine, British Provinces 1865 and 1866 along with several receipts for payment of town property tax.

Dover was the shire town of Piscataquis County incorporated in 1844 and George V. Edes started a weekly newspaper. The Bangor and Piscataquis Railroad arrived in Dover in 1869. W. F. purchased stock in the rail line in 1868 and 1869. The town purchased \$35,000 worth of stock and private individuals bought \$10,000 more to push the project through. Though the railway proved not to be lucrative to the investors directly it certainly gave a boost to business and the valuation of the town. (Loring)

Continued on Page 9



### **Sampson House: from page 8:**

On 23 September 1886 Sampson purchased pew no. 53 in the congregational meeting house from George Sawyer. His activity in the church must have been significant in view of the beautiful large blue leather bound bible presented to him by the Foxcroft and Dover Congregational Sabbath School 13 November 1864. His library held a Scripture Biographical Dictionary 1833. A book of Bible Biographies (1849) was presented by Miss Avilla Ames of Clinton Mass. In March 1850 a three page Catalogue of Dover and Foxcroft Congregational Sabath Day School Library and a note from Abbott Village requesting aid in starting a Sabath Day School shows he was a recourse for religious organizations.

William F. Sampson spent the remainder of his life living in this house with his wife and daughter. In the Piscataquis Observer 29 September 1892 the simple announcement on page two states "DIED Sampson-In Dover, 25 September, Mrs. Sabina A. wife of W. F. Sampson age 69 years 10 months and 5 days". On the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1893 W. F. bought from his son W. L. Sampson one monument for cash \$250. This monument of polished garnet still looks new today.

Indeed this old house has spoken and its contents continues to speak of those who lived and died within its walls. Keep well the scrapes of antiquity and yet another story can be told.

### **From the Obituary of William F. Sampson** *Piscataquis Observer*, March 14, 1901

"William F. Sampson was born in Farmington, Me. Nov 17, 1823 and died February 28, 1901. In 1849 he united by letter with the Congregational Church of Foxcroft and Dover and so long as his health permitted was one of its most faithful members. For 25 years he was superintendent of the Sunday-school and in the meantime organized Sunday-schools in the rural districts and surrounding towns.... Few men have such a record for faithful and consistent service in the church and Sunday-school as had Mr. Sampson, and his faithfulness will not be soon forgotten by his friends and associates in the work.

On August 28, 1842, Mr. Sampson entered the employment of the late Stephen P. Brown and remained with the company a little over 51 years and until failing health compelled him to give up the work. Here as in the Christian life, that prominent characteristic of the man – faithfulness, was shown and the interests of his employers were his interests and in his last hours, when his mind wandered, his thoughts were on the mill just as in his days of active service there.

Although Mr. Sampson never sought nor would accept public office he was a good citizen always taking an interest in and using his influence for the public good. He was a patriot, as well, and during the Civil War enlisted, but Mr. Brown sent a substitute in his place. ....During the last seven years of his life Mr. Sampson was in feeble health but bore his confinement and suffering without a murmur."

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Steinke and Caruso Dental Care  
Camden National Bank

## DVD available!!

Our historian, Lou Stevens, is sharing his memories of Central Hall, in a DVD entitled "Memories of Central Hall with Lou Stevens". Price is \$15.00 and can be obtained at the Observer Building. They can be ordered and mailed with an additional cost of \$3.00 for postage.

### Jacob "Jack" Koritsky

Among the many really fondly remembered people is Jacob Koritsky. Unfortunately, we in the historical society have very little material about him. We don't even know when he died or where he is buried. We would very much like to publish an article on this gentleman. We solicit from our readers your memories (and photos) of Mr. Koritsky, his family and his business here in Dover-Foxcroft.

## Other Items Available

**Glass Christmas ornaments:** \$6.00 each + \$4.00 shipping

- 2008/Blacksmith Shop,
- 2009/Observer Building and
- 2010/Central Hall
- 

**DVD of scenes of old Dover and Foxcroft:** \$10.00 + \$3.00 shipping

**Throws:** \$38.00 + \$8.00 shipping

Some of these items are available at Mr. Paperback.

**W. L. SAMPSON,**

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### **Message from Mary**

This is the time of year when we let our ideas for next year take shape. We continue to work at the Observer Building, cataloging, taking down displays which will be replaced, and getting items ready for the new displays.

The coming year, 2011, is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War. We will be replacing our WWII exhibit with a Civil War display. And to commemorate the anniversary, we plan to have our five open meetings focus on that era.

Please remember we are always looking for help. We work every Thursday at the Observer Building Museum and could use help with identifying old photos of the 1960's through the 1980's. What a great way to spend a cold winter day – with friends and memories. And if you're really adventurous, and have a Civil War ancestor, you could share that story at a meeting. Just give me a call at 564-0820.

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### **Annual Dues**

Many thanks to all those who have sent in their Historical Society dues for 2011. We really appreciate having you as a member. If you haven't sent yours in yet, there is still time to get your tax deductible contribution for this year.

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#### **The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society – Membership Application Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

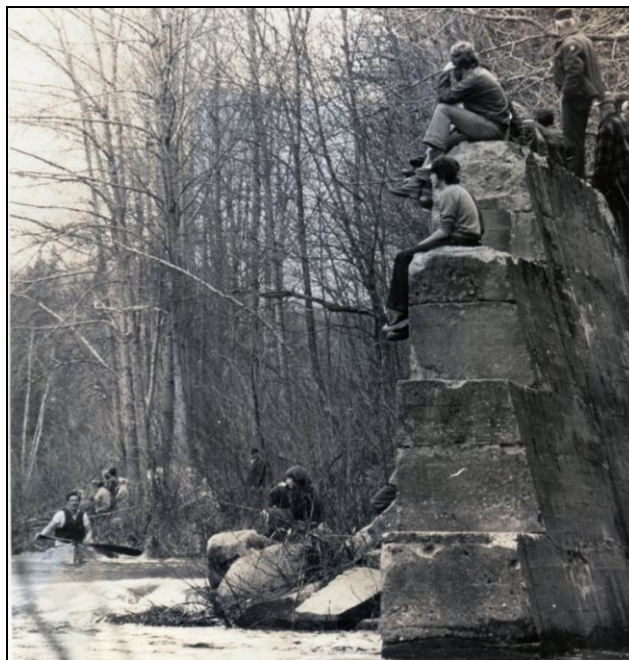
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues are \$10 per person and \$7.00 for senior memberships. Please make checks payable to: Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, 874 West Main Street, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. Dues cover January to December. If you are giving a gift membership, please include the name and address and we'll gladly notify the recipient of your gift.

The Society is on the Web at [www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs](http://www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs) and on Facebook.

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Do you recognize this historic spot? If so, contact Mary Annis with your winning entry. (First prize is a tour of the Historical Society. Second prize is a tour of the basement of the Historical Society).