



The SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

Volume XVI, Number 1 Winter 2012

Happy 200th Birthday Foxcroft



The corner of Lincoln and North Streets, decked out for the Centennial festivities

Inside This Issue

Happy 200 th Birthday Foxcroft	1
Send us your photos	2
2012 Programs at Thayer Parkway	2
Letters from the War – Fred Kimball	3
Foxcroft's 100 th Anniversary	4
The Grammar School	5
Message from Mary	9
Don't forget the attic sale!	11

This year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Foxcroft.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

In the year of Our Lord, One thousand, eight hundred and twelve. AN ACT to establish the town of Foxcroft, the the County of Hancock.

Section 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the township numbered five in the seventh range, North of the Waldo Patent, in the county of Hancock, be, and hereby is established as a town by the name of Foxcroft.....

In the House of Representatives, Feb, 29, 1812, In Senate, February 29, 1812.

We are fortunate that John Francis Sprague's wonderful *Journal of Maine History* devoted much of a full volume to the Foxcroft Centennial. A dozen articles in Volume 5 of Sprague's Journal covered much of the early history of the town, the 100th Anniversary celebration, and loads of information on the people important in the town's history, including doctors and clergymen. So, during this Bicentennial of the town's birth, we will reprint extracts from Mr. Sprague's journal. We hope that, reading about these founders, you will, like us, be reminded of old friends.

(For those on the East side of town who may be wondering, we promise to do the same for Dover's 200th anniversary in 10 years)

(Continued on Page 4)

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

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Visit us on-line at
www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs
and on Facebook

Send us your photos!

In our last issue, we appealed for photos to add to our collection of over 5,000. A kind reader shared this photo of Union Square about 1900. The house on the left is still there. The little annex on the back of what is now the Observer building is long gone, as is the old covered Foxcroft Bridge and the Exchange hotel in the distance. This picture also shows a very rare glimpse of Mr. Sampson's marble works (the 2nd building from the house on the left). Virtually every tombstone in the towns' cemeteries made between 1880 and 1920 was made in this building. If you have photos you'd like to share, contact Mary or Chris at any time. We would be happy to make a copy for us and return the original and one extra copy to you.

Upcoming Programs

At Thayer Parkway

We are happy to announce that the Historical Society's 2012 program schedule is available. They are all held in the meeting room at Thayer Parkway, beginning at 7:00 P.M. and typically lasting sixty to ninety minutes. A short official meeting is followed by an entertaining and informative program. This year's schedule is:

- April 4 – Lou Stevens on the Foxcroft Centennial Celebrations.
- May 9 – David Dean shares excerpts from the Prentiss Diaries (1912)
- June 6 – Chris Maas – a photo essay on Dover and Foxcroft
- September 5 – Dennis Lyford remembers the 1987 flood
- October 3 – Our founding fathers.

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Looking down Pleasant Street to Union Square
About 1900

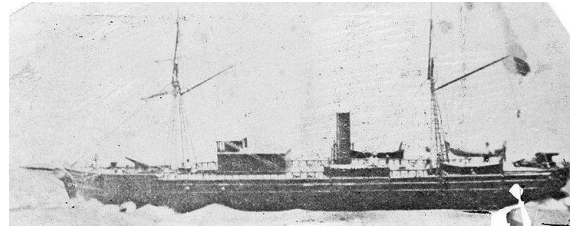
Civil War Letters

This is the fifth of the letters in the Society's collection of a number of letters written during the Civil War from Fred Kimball to his family in Dover-Foxcroft. For more information on Mr. Kimball and his life, see the Spring 2011 issue of the Conserver.

Fred Kimball writes to his mother –

U.S.S. Ohio at Charleston
Sunday, Sept 25, 1864

My Dear Mother,



Dear Mother,

I rec'd your letter day before yesterday. You had not rec'd my last letter at the time you wrote I presume. There isn't the least reason why you should worry so much about me mother. I'm in very good quarters, and don't find the least cause for comfort unless wishing myself down to Mobile instead of here maybe as such. I suppose you would rather have me stay here than go there, therefore, you should rather feel happy than otherwise, not keep thinking me much better off I should be if at least eating melons and cream, but rather that I am better off here than down to Ned's eating gunpowder.

There is no lack of company here, more than at home, and I find that there are good fellows down here as well as in Dock for I have become acquainted with some real good men since I came here. Of course there are some not so good as you could wish, but you cannot expect all to be good in such a crowd as there is here. I am inclined to write to Frank D. but I here he is going away again the first of Oct. so perhaps he would not receive it. I should like to here (sic) from him and I don't see why he did not write to me as soon as he got home and found I was in the Navy.

Has Miss Lucy got her affections tied to him? I should suppose Frank knew better than to have her after him. You think that although father has all the time there is: still it is not enough: well I scarcely see the need of his being pinched for time for I didn't do a great sight of work. I think I could do his and mine way enough so why can't he do mine and his as well.

I am afraid that after being away a year he cannot find anything for me to do when I come back, he will become so used to doing it all himself. You expected to see me again before this didn't you, and I should have been there but we could not get Liberty with those papers. The Capt. said they were good but that if one or all of us did not return, that in order to get the money he should have to write to the authorities of the town, then they would have to call a town meeting to see about raising the amt. that these would be copperheads who would object to paying it, and that perhaps in the end he might have to institute a lawsuit to get the money and he said he had all the business on his hands now that he could attend to. We have got another skinkle (sparkle, bright idea) in our heads now that we may get home and you probably knew about it.

As for money mother, whenever I need any I will let you know it I'll warrant. It wouldn't be like me not to. Ben's and Dock's is most all gone. Ben lost his by some carelessness. I believe he has written to father for more. It costs considerable to live here. We have to buy our soft bread, pies (when we have any), doughnuts and any such things we want. By spending money enough we can live as well as at home. Money is the main lever here. By the way, I think I am getting fat – not much but still a little. I am feeling first rate.

(Continued on page 11)

Foxcroft's 100th Anniversary

Proceedings of the Centennial Celebration October 1, 1912

Reprinted from *Sprague's Journal of Maine History* Vol. V SEPTEMBER (Special Number)
1917 No. 2 John Francis Sprague, Editor



Foxcroft celebrated the anniversary of its organization October 1st, 1912.

The anniversary was August 31st, but belated enthusiasm delayed the celebration until then.

The affair had been planned in a short time and to some of the committees especially belongs a great deal of praise for the efficient work.



The Parade on West Main Street

Tuesday was a cold, raw day and rain fell during the early morning and in the afternoon and evening. A heavy fall of rain made it impossible to hold the fireworks in the evening. During the passing of the trades parade the sun shone and this parade was the feature of the day.

At six in the morning the festivities began. The ringing of bells and the firing of bombs on Foxcroft bridge aroused the blood of every citizen and gave promise of a day of festival enjoyment, in spite of lowering skies. A decorator had been at work for 10 days on the buildings and the appearance of some of the residences and most of the business places, as well as of Foxcroft bridge, which was formally dedicated at noon, was one of gaiety and attractiveness.

It has been estimated by those who made a tour of the towns that there were about five thousand people on the streets during the day.

At nine o'clock the parade of trade floats and antiquities started on Main Street, Foxcroft, being formed on this and streets adjoining. There were three bands in the parade and 65 teams, rigs, farming implements and floats. Some of the trade floats were very attractive creations. The first prize was awarded to Josef L. Brockway, florist, who besides having a beautiful creation, carried out a unique idea. The float was drawn by white horses, the harness being trimmed in pink. The entire color scheme was pink and white. The float represented a bridal party. At the front stood the clergyman, Josef L. Brockway, the "happy couple" were Bela Norton and Miss Ruth Day.

(Parade - continued on page 10)

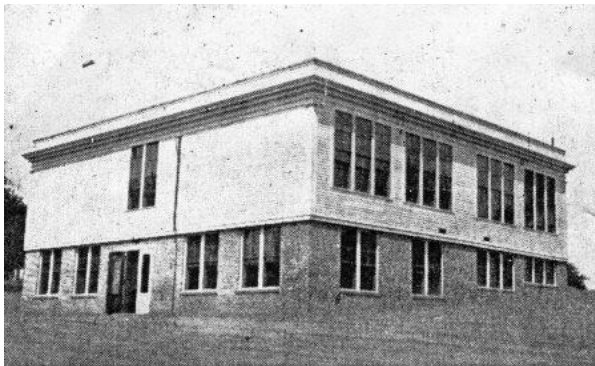
Schools in Dover-Foxcroft

from the 1923 **Annual Report** for Dover-Foxcroft:

“For some time it has been apparent that the village schools were rapidly becoming overcrowded. With the opening of the fall term this situation became acute. In the North Street building we have eight rooms and there are nine grades to occupy them. . . . In the Pleasant Street building conditions are even worse. Here we have six rooms, one of which is used by the home economics department. This leaves five rooms for the nine grades. . . . What is the remedy for this situation? As I see it, the best solution is the construction of a new school building as centrally located as possible to accommodate the seventh and eighth grades from each of the present village buildings and also the manual training and home economics department. . . . Please give the following careful consideration. . . . Failure to provide the necessary accommodations can only result in one of two things, greater over-crowding even than during the present year or part-time schooling for a large number of our children. I do not believe the citizens of Dover-Foxcroft desire that our children be subjected to any such conditions.” **Walter J. Rideout**, Superintendent of Schools

The Grammar School

by Louis Stevens



1923

The New Grammar School on Mayo Street

A new school with four regular classrooms plus spaces on the area below for "Domestic Science" (later called Home Economics) and "Manual Training" (later called Shop) and an office for the Superintendent of Schools was built in Dover-Foxcroft for \$30,000 in 1924. It was to be used for the 7th and 8th grades (later to be called middle school), and later, beginning at the start of school in 1934, the 6th grade from crowded Pleasant Street School was put on the bottom floor with Shop and Home Economics then closed.

Helping keep the price lower than it could easily have been otherwise was the fact that no land had to be purchased for the site because the town already owned the area between the Pleasant Street school and Mayo Street.

All this happened 85 years ago as the first students entered the school in the fall of 1925. This school, of course, as the photo herewith shows, has always been known as the "Grammar School," no matter what its use. While Ervin W. Edgerly was leveling the earth that was to be underneath the school (he also graded the area on the east side for a playground), did he know that the large stretch of ground was "Doore Field" for about 10 years before the football team moved to a new field at the harness track on Park Street in 1912? Or could he have played on the ground he was grading? It would be interesting to know!

(Grammar School – Continued on page 6)

The field was named after its owner George Doore, whose sons played football. Meanwhile, we can peek over the shoulder of S. F. Atwood, the general contractor from Foxcroft, to examine the plan for the school. The building, he points out, will be nearly square at 57 ½ x 62 ½ feet in size, and will rest upon a brick and waterproofed concrete foundation. The structure, said the Observer newspaper, “. . . was constructed in such a manner as to permit the addition of another story at a comparatively small expense, thus adding four more rooms to its capacity.” This was never done. When additional rooms were needed far down the road after World War II, a new complex was built at Morton Avenue and then another next door on Mayo Street.

Before examining more details of the school, let's take time to go back several years to learn how this particular spot was picked for the school. At first, though, it was not the one chosen. At a town meeting held in 1924, folks voted to purchase land behind the North Street school on which to build, but evidently so many were displeased with the vote that this announcement appeared in the Observer two months later in June 25, 1924:

A Call for a Citizens Mass Meeting

Believing that many of our citizens are not satisfied with the location of our proposed new school building as determined by the recent town meeting, and that a mass meeting should be held for the purpose of informally discussing the matter and the desirability of another special town meeting to reconsider the whole subject, the undersigned are responsible for this call for a citizens meeting in Central Hall on Monday evening, June 30, at 7:30 o'clock and hope there will be large attendance.

It was signed by E.D. Merrill, L. C. Sawyer, F. C. Peaks, L.P. Evans, and O. L. Evans.

It was a long meeting but not as long as the first one, which lasted from 7:30 to midnight. This was the headline in the Observer of July 17, 1924: “MAYO STREET LOT CHOSEN FOR SCHOOL.” The long first sentence was probably written by Ora Evans, who, with his father, owned the Observer:

After a meeting . . . Monday evening the citizens of Dover-Foxcroft decided that the new school building for the 7th and 8th grades shall be built on the lot on Mayo Street at the rear of the present Pleasant Street building. That a great deal of interest was manifested in the selection of a lot was shown by the fact that the attendance at the meeting was very large, the hall being virtually filled, many voters from the rural sections of the town being present.

For only the third time since 1922, when they got the right to vote, women had the right to sit downstairs. The Town Clerk, W. M. Steward, called the meeting to order, and former school superintendent of both towns here, Harvey Williams, was quickly elected moderator, a very difficult job with so many ready to speak. First, the vote to build at North Street had to be rescinded to clear the agenda for discussions of the five different sites for the school.

(Grammar School – continued on page 7)

(Grammar School, from Page 6)

Some well-known personages in the town spoke about the many disadvantages and few good points of the five suggested locations. They were Dr. E. D. Merrill (a long-time doctor of 60 years in the town); Charles W. Hayes, Esq. (who started the law firm bearing his family name); S. F. Atwood (already mentioned as the builder); Supt. of Schools Walter Rideout (whose father was principal for the 10 years of Dover High at Pleasant Street); George Howard (who started Howard Insurance); W. L. Brown, a Manual Training teacher; both Dr. Maurice O. Brown and his wife Blanche (she later would be named Postmaster here); Charles D. Paine (store owner and Civil War vet); his daughter, Miss Elizabeth Paine, who taught in Massachusetts and at Foxcroft Academy); and finally, Arthur L. Libby, a long-time farmer on the Bear Hill road, who made this perfectly simple but perfectly phrased statement that could easily have helped voters make up their minds about the decision. He said, as reported in the Observer, “. . . that the farmers had to practice economy and there is no reason why the town should not do likewise. The town owns a good lot on Pleasant Street which is sightly and desirable and should be built upon.” Plainly stated--easy for all to grasp and understand!

Here are the biggest reasons for their saying NO to four of the five locations: North Street, too many houses nearby should a fire start there; too high a price for the Babson lot on West Main that would push the cost over the appropriation of \$30,000; South Street due to the location (though it never gave the exact spot); Dr. J. B. Cochrane's lot at the end of Lincoln Street, too wet by the river and too near the trains and railroad tracks at the top of Depot Street; and none mentioned about Mayo Street.

Finally, the long-awaited decision came just after 11 p.m., and the Observer said that a total of 478 voted, with the Mayo Street lot winning by 308-170. It is easy to wonder how big a part Mr. Libby's speech and the votes of the many women in the large crowd played in the decision.

It took Mr. Atwood and his crew (including the Dana Crockett Co. of Dexter for plumbing and heating, Central Maine Power for wiring, and Jewett & Pray of here for painting) a bit over a year from the vote to complete the school. So the Observer was able to print this large headline on August 2, 1925.

The 17 inches of type surrounding the photo described the school in great detail both outside and in. Some of the highlights mentioned were these that will be remembered vividly by those of us who attended the school for three grades or just one or two. All will recall the paint color, which could be called "schoolhouse brown," and what was it like inside? Some of the school's best qualities are the easiest to understand and appreciate if you were a student there, as I was for three years starting in 1942: Each corridor was well-lighted, with a drinking fountain. Rooms were 22 x 28 with cloak and book rooms. Blackboards of Monson slate were used in all rooms. Windows on the first floor were placed so that the light came over the left shoulders of students. Rooms were finished with hardwood floors. All the windows were equipped with double runs so that no double windows for winter were needed.

(Grammar School, continued on page 8)

(The Grammar School, from page 7)

Heat came from steam, thanks to a boiler of great size. Both outside doors had bars running the full width, which can be easily pushed to unlock from inside in case of fire. Inside walls were a buff color; basement floors were hard pine over concrete. The boiler room and coal pocket in the basement were cut off by a brick wall. The rest rooms contained lavatories, stools, and urinal for boys, and lavatories and stools, enclosed in metal work, for the girls. For those of us who attended Pleasant Street School, what great improvements!

The ventilating system described in the Observer must have been excellent because I don't recall noise from its operation on the roof, even though it had a 42-inch rotary ball bearing. Ducts beneath the radiators carried foul air to the ventilator to assure a fresh supply of air, "...the danger of colds from drafts being eliminated."



From the 1925 Town Report New Grammar School

The building of the New Grammar School building during the past season relieved the over-crowding under which we have been struggling for several years.... This relief from over-crowding has greatly improved the work of all grades which have suffered from this condition hitherto. This improvement has been very apparent and very gratifying.

The construction of the building was begun early in the spring and it was completed in season for the fall term. It consists of four class rooms and rooms for manual training and home economics. It houses all of the seventh and eighth grade, each division occupying a classroom of its own. A teacher is assigned to each room as home room teacher but the teaching is departmental. Miss Harriette Crockett is principal of the building and teaches arithmetic and penmanship. Miss Bertha Tardy teaches English and spelling. Miss Bernice Whitten teaches history, hygiene, and reading. Miss Carolyn Erskine teaches geography, civics and music. Miss Ida Russ teaches home economics and Mr. Walter Brown teaches manual training.

I believe that the organization of Seventh and Eighth grades upon this plan, made possible by the new building, is a most important forward step along progressive educational lines. It is the universal testimony wherever this plan has been tried that it not only greatly increases the efficiency of the work of the grades involved but also makes the change from grade to secondary work much easier.

Walter J. Rideout, Superintendent of Schools.

Message from Mary

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society is very fortunate to have many items that have been donated over the years – some going back to the founding of our towns. We take the safety and preservation of these items very seriously. So many outside influences can hurt the collection: light, temperature, humidity, pests.

We store our artifacts in two dark rooms upstairs. We are very careful about food – taking leftovers and wrappings with us when we leave. We are constantly on the lookout for any sign of unwanted animal visitors.

Temperature and humidity will soon be under control as we install climate control in the two rooms housing our collection. This was made possible through the Jim Brown Memorial Fund, established in his honor to be used for special projects at the museum.

We have been making some major changes to the first floor exhibits. Susan and Tim Burleigh have volunteered to work on these exhibits, which are taking shape nicely. Many new things are coming this summer, and we hope you will put us on your list of places to visit.

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 in your dues yet, please do so now so you can continue to enjoy all of the benefits of membership in the Historical Society, including receiving copies of the *Conserver*.

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 and on Facebook.

(Parade, continued from page 4)

They stood beneath an arch from which was suspended a wedding bell. The arch and bell were wound with smilax and decorated with pink roses. The rest of the float was occupied by four little flower girls, Rachel and Kathleen Stoddard, Eleanor McNaughton and Mary Moran. The ring bearer was Clifford McNaughton. At the four corners were white posts on which were palms. Other palms, ferns and white doves were part of the dainty, beautiful and artistic piece of work.

The second prize was given to Ober & Clark, dry and fancy goods dealers. The float was a creation of white trimmed with sweet peas. At each corner was a post upon which was an urn filled with asters. In the center was a birthday cake, three and a half feet in diameter, bearing candles. The float bore a banner, "Our one hundredth birthday."

The telephone operatives had one of the daintiest rigs of the day. It was of blue and white and a bower and arch were very attractively arranged. Some of the girls occupied positions on the float, dressed in attractive gowns. This last float got special mention from the committee we understand.

Following the parade was a ball game at the Central Driving Park between Henderson and Newport, the game being won by the latter 6 to 0. In the afternoon the winners were defeated by D. & F. 7 to 2.

Band concerts were given in the various squares at 10:30 by the three bands already mentioned and by the Milo band, which arrived on the forenoon train. The work of these organizations has been highly complimented. The Monson band, made up of men from their town only, was deserving of especial mention.

The new Foxcroft concrete bridge was dedicated at noon. The exercises consisted of an address by Hon. W. E. Parsons, music by the band and the display of day fireworks.

The automobile parade at one o'clock was a disappointment, only two or three cars bearing any decorations. W. G. Parker had his Buick attractively trimmed. There was a good display of cars but no finely trimmed ones besides this one.

There was a football game at the park in the afternoon following the baseball game, between Higgins and Foxcroft academy, which was easily won by Higgins, 38 to 0. In the evening there was a grand ball at Central Hall and a dance in the Palace, both of which were largely attended. Kendall's orchestra furnished music for the former, giving a concert that was much enjoyed. The dance committee, B. T. Genthner, chairman, report a very successful outcome of their end of affairs.

On account of the heavy rain the fireworks were postponed to Thursday evening.

(Fred Kimball, continued from Page 3)

I shall expect a letter from father soon – send Tom Rockwell my best respects if he is in town yet. I got Lelander's note, suppose he will be in D (Dover) soon so shall not write to him until then. Give father and Annie my love, I also send you a full share. Fred Tabor and James Thompson came to see us yesterday and we had a pleasant time. The Brooklyn from Mobile came into port for repairs two or three days ago, she was hit forty three times in the fights there and was well riddled. Her crew which was sent here while she is repairing went ashore yesterday on liberty. I have seen three or four blockade runners that have been captured and sent in here. I think of nothing else now so will close.

Affectionately, Fred

COMING SOON!!!

Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

ANNUAL ATTIC SALE

Saturday, June 2nd

9:00 am to 1:00 pm

held at the

Dover-Foxcroft Fire Station

Featured this year –

Vintage hats and hatpins

**Save your items for the sale, including any hats or hatpins
(no clothing or tv's or computer items)**

Contact – Sylvia Dean at 876-3663 for information



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Do you recognize the building in this photo from the Centennial Celebration of 1912?
If so, let us know. We'll share the answer with all of our readers in the next issue.