



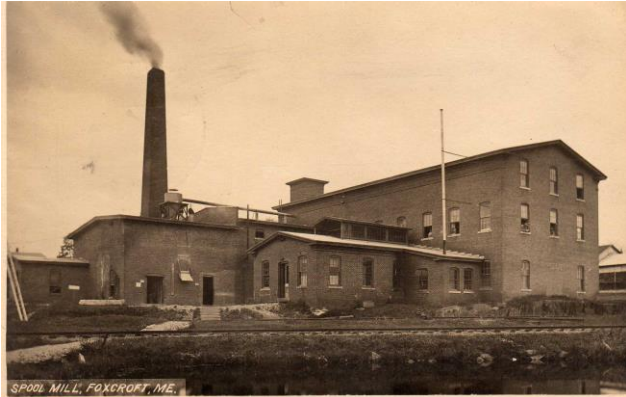
# The SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

Volume 18, Number 2

Summer 2015

## Mayo's Mill – The Early Years



Stowell McGregor Spool Mill  
(Lucius Dwelley's Spool Mill)

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*One of the many pleasures of editing the Conserver is finding in my mailbox interesting notes from our readers sharing their memories of Dover and Foxcroft. The last issue's stories on Mayo's mill bought back memories for at least two of our readers, Lowell Tyler and John Wentworth. We thank them both for bringing to life our town as it existed many years ago.*

### A SMALL TOWN By Lowell Tyler

It was with great interest that I read the recent article on Manufacturing in early Dover-Foxcroft. My early memories growing up in DF going back to the 1920's remind me of how fortunate I have been to enjoy a small Maine town before the advent of many changes that have developed since then and having the advantage of graduating from the Old Foxcroft Academy.

This early mill town was quite a booming little town then. The Mayo and Brown mills provided the incomes to a majority of our residents. Stowell McGregor Corp. (Spool Mill) was a major manufacturer that provided a steady income to the residents that never shut down because of the depression. I worked there myself during school vacations and summer.

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## The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

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Visit us on-line at  
[www.dover-foxcrofthistoricalsociety.org](http://www.dover-foxcrofthistoricalsociety.org)  
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By Anna Shaw Buck

### Captured from Summer

My Room is a gay summer garden  
That glimmers in gold autumn light,  
Where vases hold blooms of the season,  
Assembled to gladden the sight.

Nasturtiums that vie with the sunshine,  
Blue larkspur, musk-roses that glow,  
Pink snapdragons fashioned of satin,  
White Stock-bloom soft petaled like snow.

My room is a garden of fragrance!  
In vases of crystal I see  
Late autumn-bloom captured from summer,  
Imprisoned in beauty for me.

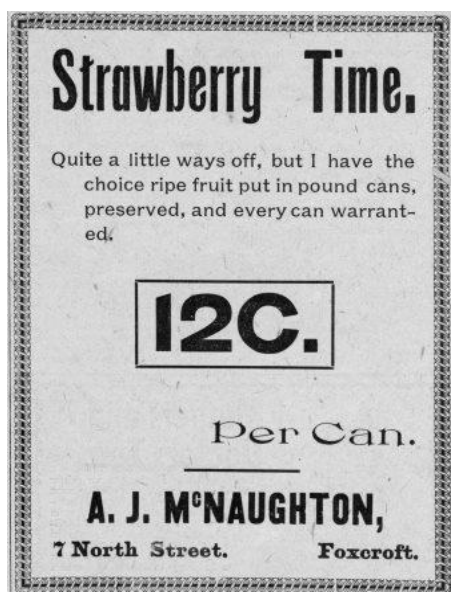
### Treasures

Deep in my heart I hold these things:  
A redbird flashing bright scarlet wings,  
Sentinel-pines where silence falls,  
Broken only by peewee calls;

A vine-draped house in a quiet nook,  
An open fire, and an open book,  
Shadow of flames upon the floor,  
A glimpse of bloom thru a friendly door;

Children's voices in chatter bright,  
Warm eyes aglow with a tender light,  
And the clasp of loving hand in hand,  
The look that says: *I understand.*

Anna Shaw Buck  
"On Wings of Song", 1935



(A Small Town, continued from page 1)



There were other businesses that provided DF with most of their needs. Before the massive shopping centers there was Koritsky's Department Store and several other clothing stores. Grocery stores supplied our needs without the need to drive to Bangor. A trip to Bangor was often a once a year trip. Many did not own cars. When you did go you usually had someone going with you sharing the ride and shopping in the city with more stores.

Of course textile was the major manufacturing plant of the town during these years. They employed many persons, both men and women. Women mostly worked the Weaving Rooms.

For a short time I worked in the card room. I was kind of unable to handle the night shift and did not particularly enjoy working inside. The lint was kind of greasy. Lunch boxes had to be hung up so that rodents would not get into them. So it was a short career.

The mill tower had a large bell. This bell rang a few minutes before the starting of work. This warned all mill workers to move along and get to work. It then rang again when it was time to start work. At lunch it rang for lunch break and again when lunch was over. It rang at the end of the day at mill closing. Other businesses also would conduct their warnings off the same clock.

The river supplied the source of generating power to run the machinery.

Spring ice floating down the river could jam. I remember one spring the ice jammed up right at the dam. Normal flow of high water was blocked ultimately flooding the bottom floor of the factory. I went down to that bottom floor and observed that all of the flooring had broken loose and just floating freely making it impossible to walk on.



I understand they later constructed a cement wall to guard against that. But it was always entertaining to stand on the bridge and watch these large cakes of ice go over the dam breaking along the way in its tumble.

Early lumbering operations upriver would pile their four foot pulp wood on the ice. When spring approached and the ice began to flow downstream, the pulpwood would fall into the river and likewise float downstream to Paper Mills. Log drivers from Canada would man double ended Bateau's, poling the pulp wood keeping it off the river banks. Once reaching its destination it would then be captured by booms stretched across the river.



(Continued on page 4)



(A small Town – from Page 3)

Paper mills then unloaded the product where it would be made into paper. This of course cut the cost of transportation by truck. Again, it was entertaining to watch the logs as they sluiced over the dam. Every year as these pulpwood drivers reached the Foxcroft dam and the drive above the dam cleared, they bet over who could shoot down the dam sluice and stay upright in their bateaus. You daily watched waiting for the feat of who would successfully make it down the sluice through rapids below without capsizing. I never saw one make it right side up.



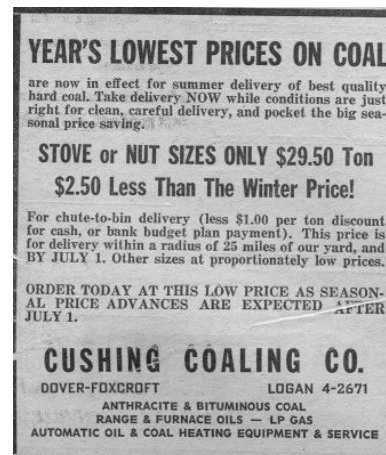
### WALTER AND ANNIE MAYO HOUSE



The Mayo's were well known residents and as Chris mentions, they owned some of the better homes in town. One in particular is the home on 103 Lincoln St. It was a 20 room Victorian home (small rooms) with 3 floors and a separate Carriage House, the land extending to the Piscataquis River.

Wainwright Cushing built the house in 1892 which took over 2 years. They also had a cottage just above the narrows. Wainwright and Flora both died in 1919. The house was left to Caleb who gave it to Annie. My mother would stay at their cottage each spring getting it ready for the summer.

Walter was manager of the Dover Foxcroft Water District for years. We lived at 85 Lincoln St. one house removed from the Mayo House .



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(A Small Town, Continued from Page 4)

As a kid I mowed their lawn at 25 cents an hour with a push mower. A large lawn, although it fortunately did not extend all the way to the river, I remember asking Annie if I could get a small raise. She said yes, if I could work faster. That ended my chance for a raise because I was having a difficult time as it was. I certainly could not work faster.

Annie had all of us neighborhood kids in on Wednesday afternoons to play monopoly. There was a beautiful large World Globe next to Walters's chair. I remember it to this day. Whenever they traveled they would bring me home a book, one I remember a trip to China. They had a large library of fine leather covered books complete sets such as Teddy Roosevelt's, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Victor Hugo, WWI, and Famous Orations From Homer to McKinley.

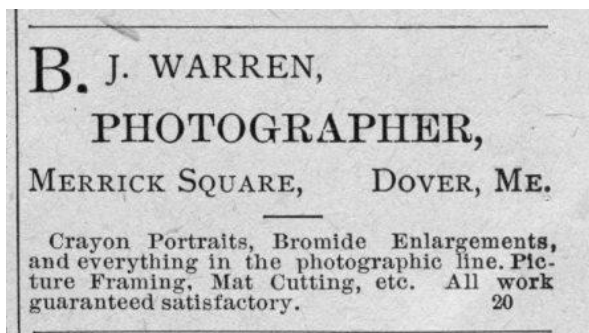


**Annie and Walter Mayo**



**Annie (Cushing) Mayo**

I remember those because I remember receiving them myself when the property came to be sold. On the third floor which was the attic, they had stacks of books laying around that they apparently had no room for. They allowed me to go up by myself, browse around and borrow some to take home. I thoroughly enjoyed myself.



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(A Small Town, Continued from Page 5)

Although they supported the Congregational Church, I seem to remember that Annie was a member of the Christian Science Church next to Cushing Dye House. My memory seems to tell me that she died of a burst appendix and because of her strong beliefs refused medical care in this case. Annie was a particularly nice lady.



**The Christian Science Church**

I would do just about anything as a kid to earn money. Child labor laws were not the same then. Cushing's had added to their dye business heating coal. (Cushing Coal) Their coal came into a siding on open container cars at the Maine Central yards on Railroad Avenue and had to be shoveled out and placed in canvas bags for transport. I would help shovel that coal into bags. The coal was stored at coal sheds adjacent to the Dye shop.

They also had scales, official town scales, and whenever anything to be weighed for whatever reason in town they were sent there, to be weighed and certified. Particularly exciting was when the Piscataquis County Fair on Fairview Avenue came to town. Horses that were in pulling competition had to have official weight certified to place them in the right category as were other animals in competition. We would sit nearby as they unloaded the horses, usually large work horses as well as the others. Sometimes they did not transport them in trucks but would come walking down the street controlling the teams with reins. This was more fun than watching pullings at the fairgrounds. My mother, of course enjoyed it every year having been raised on a farm she enjoyed it just as much as us kids.

### **SEBEC LAKE LODGE**

Coming out of Kenduskeag and approaching Bangor you shared the road with the Bangor electric streetcar line. Entering Bangor you passed that tall Radio Tower transmitting from Dover-Foxcroft born WLBZ . This station had its beginning in a barn adjacent to the Thompson Free Library by Tom Guernsey. At one time Tom purchased a farm house at Greeley's Landing, converting it to the Sebec Lake Lodge where among other activities it would once a week broadcast WLBZ as a remote location. Tom used the fields as a runway for some of his planes. In the winter there was constructed an outdoor ice skating rink for his guests.

Some guests were clients and contacts brought in from Boston, New York often free gratis, flying them up in one his several planes. Sometimes they were put up in his lodge on top of Borestone Mountain. One of his many guests was "Rochester " (Eddie Anderson) who appeared on the Jack Benny Show for years.

Tom started a Beach Club where the later public beach sat at of the mouth of the brook and charging admission fee, supplying lawn chairs etc.

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The farm house had been the home place of my mother, Alice Brawn Tyler Dow. Her father raised a family of six there by himself after her mother had passed away. He purchased this farm after living in North Guilford because he was fond of water and it had a great view of the lake. I remember the large barn that ran along the edge of the property that housed his milk cows. Visiting him one time I remember going out to the barn and the son Earl Brawn was milking cows. Earl being a kind of joker, while milking pointed the spray of milk toward me making a direct hit giving me a milk shower. My mother had to work the fields during haying season because she was the only one who did not get infected with poison ivy which would grow in the fields. Of course in that time there were no electric milking machines and haying was done by a horse pulling iron-wheeled mowing machine and rake.

Earl was drafted during WWII and was in one of the battles on Luzon Island in the Philippine chain I believe. Earl was doing duty at one time doing duty on what they called a Suicide Squad. They would track through the jungle ahead of the main troops looking for snipers or enemy troop movement. If they did not get shot at, then the others followed. One of the troops accompanying him was wounded. While attempting to save his companion he himself was wounded. Earl received the Purple Heart for his wounds and the Silver Star for saving the other soldier who always remembered Earl with a card at Christmas or his birthday. Growing up in a rural Maine community, Earl, like most others, hunted during season. After the war he never again hunted saying he knew what it was like to be hunted.

### **FEMALE CHASING MOOSE**

There was one interesting incident that occurred revolving around the Christian Science Church. As I have said, the church was adjacent to the Cushing Dye House and we lived one house from that. All of us backed up to the river. It had some pretty high, steep banks. River Street ran along the other side of the river,

The town had purchased a new fire alarm and was in the process of installing it. They were testing the alarm on and off all day. The sound of the alarm somewhat resembled the sound of a cow or moose. It was loud and necessarily so because it was to alert volunteer firemen to head for the fire department in an emergency, no school alarms on stormy days etc. Sometime in the afternoon I was on the river bank behind our house. A large bull moose had wandered into town and walked down North Street approaching Monument Square. It was thought he was probably following the sound from the testing of the fire alarm thinking it was the mating call of a female moose. The Central Maine Power Company had an office in the town square at that point, I believe in the Hale Building. The encroaching animal approached the front of the CMP and seeing a reflection of himself in the window, and not having a lot of experience with windows and mirrors in the wilds, thought it in fact was his quarry, the imagined female moose. He poked his head through the plate glass window to make contact and broke the window. Now alarmed he started down the main street. When he got in front of the P.E. Ward Building he again observed himself in the plate glass window. Now with the activity of the people around him, getting ever close to the fire station and the source of his alarm, some trying to corral him, he panicked. Running up River Street by the bank building he exited at one point to the river bank.

He then jumped his way down the bank and into the river. I being on the opposite side of the river observed his descent leaping down and into the fast moving water. As he started swimming across the river it seemed to me that he might come out of the water behind Cushing Dye or the Church. I immediately ran to the Lincoln Street sidewalk to see as he climbed up the embankment. Just as I arrived at Cushing's the animal came from behind the church. Those of you who are familiar with the site realize how high an embankment there is between the Church and the street. This occurred, I guess in about 1946. During WWII they had stopped the production of all civilian automobiles converting factories to the production of war machinery.

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(A Small Town, Continued from page 7)

The war ended in 1945. Once the factories converted to the production of civilian automobiles the consumer had to go on a waiting list to allow time to fulfill the orders from a market that had not been able to buy a car for five years. A family by the name of Starbird had placed their name on that list. It took about a year for one's name to come up on that list. Starbird had finally got his new car, a 1946 shiny new Red Ford. Their son Erick was driving up Lincoln Street with this car, probably a week old with temporary plates. Erick and the moose arrived at about the same time at the small hill that fronts the church. The lawn slops deeply until it comes to the sidewalk and with a granite wall maybe four or five feet allowing the passing of pedestrians freely and then there is another smaller embankment reaching street level. The moose paused very briefly atop the granite wall at the sidewalk, and then made a giant leap for the street as the driver of this nice new car arrived at the same point. The airborne moose landed on the hood of this shiny new car nearly demolishing it. The animal was now really wanting out of there deciding he had enough of civilization and disappeared out of town. Erik at one time told me his father had accused him of drinking although he had not.

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## **The Moosehead Hydro Plant**

**By John Wentworth**

The dam and power plant were originally installed to power Mayo's Mill. It did not produce electricity at that time but rather turned a series of shafts that ran the length of the mill with leather belts running off of these shafts powering individual machines. When Moosehead Mfg. Co purchased the mill in the 60's, my father Bill Wentworth and my uncle



Wayne Huff realized that this abandoned hydro facility could be used to produce electricity. They created Moosehead Energy Co. and secured a used motor and attached it to the shaft. Driving this motor generated electricity which was partially used to both power Moosehead Mfg. during the day and was sold back to the grid in the evening. The original gears and drive mechanism were retained. The vertical shaft rising from the turbine located in the base rested on top of a mushroom shaped piece of lignum vitae, a very hard piece of hardwood from South America. The action of the water through carefully designed passages passing through the turbine provided enough lubrication to prevent it from wearing despite the several tons of weight on top. .... that is until the flood of 1987 which sent sand through the system, destroying the wood piece which was probably close to 100 years old.

(Continued on Page 9)



## A Thank You

A special thank you goes out to the following people and businesses who made the Dunham Forge possible. We had a wonderful summer last year with blacksmithing demonstrations almost every Saturday. If you see these folks around town or shop in their business please express your gratitude for their generosity –

### Person/Business

Alice Percy/FEDCO  
John McKusick  
James Morin  
Gerald Peters  
Dick Millett  
Tim Robinson/Dover True Value  
Mark Robinson/Webber Hardware  
Mark Lewis/Lovell's Hardware  
Steve Larrabee  
Blaine Nuite  
Roger Kaufman  
Rob Haley/Haley Construction  
Carl O'Donnell/Mid-Maine Metals  
A. E. Robinson  
Brewer Lowe's  
Bangor Lowe's  
Bangor Home Depot  
Town of Dover-Foxcroft  
Matt Tibbett's/Bob Hardware  
Portland Glass  
Dave and Christian Homchuck

### What they gave

Metal barrels  
Flue pipe and roof collar  
Carpentry help  
Building design and carpentry help  
Forge frame and construction  
Building supplies  
Paint and building supplies  
Flue supplies  
Lumber/structural boards  
Lumber and planing services  
Pine boards  
Stone dust for forge floor  
Roofing materials  
Forge hood repairs  
Hardware  
Hardware  
Pressure treated timbers  
Metal barrels  
Wire mesh for windows  
Plexi-glass for 3 windows  
Help with construction

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society wishes to thank all of these generous people for their help. We also send a huge thank you to Dave Lockwood, curator at the Blacksmith Shop Museum for all the work he did in getting the Dunham Forge up and running. Check our website at [www.dover-foxcrofthistoricalsociety.org](http://www.dover-foxcrofthistoricalsociety.org) for this year's demonstration schedule.



## Annual Dues

Many thanks to all those who have sent in their Historical Society dues for 2015. 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*.

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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.

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(The Moosehead Hydro Plant, continued from Page 8)

Attempts to substitute hard maple failed and a piece of lignum vitae was secured to replace the bearing. The top gear case is comprised of a series of wooden teeth on the gear of the vertical shaft and a corresponding cast gear on the horizontal shaft. The theory being if there was a problem, the wooden teeth would be destroyed . protecting the rest of the system, This worked several time in my recollection! The machining of the wooden teeth was a meticulous procedure requiring many precise and intricate machining steps.... and there were a lot of "teeth" to replace. The advent of a CNC machining center made replacing "teeth" somewhat easier. Despite that, I always was amazed at the ingenuity of the men who designed, built and maintained that system with the tools they had .

Somewhere, and I wish I had kept it, was a hand-made box containing the tooling and set up pieces for each step to the machining process to make the original replacement wooden "teeth"

The rebirth of the generating system with what I am sure will be a new drive mechanism will be a fitting tribute to all those who were associated with it. While many refer to the "Mill on the Piscataquis" as the Mayo Mill, I will always think of it as the Moosehead Mill..... and if nothing else the electric generating portion of this revitalization should be referred to as the Moosehead Hydro !

### **Message from Mary**

Here we are at the beginning of another summer. The Observer Building Museum will be open once again on Thursdays from 11 to 2 and I'd love to hear from you if you would like to host. It can be a quiet day or a busy one – we never know. Our Grand Opening is Whoopie Pie Day on June 27 – we'll be open from 9 to 3. We have two new exhibits this year – Dennis Lyford has been working on one we call "The Unplugged Generation" featuring toys of days gone by. Ted Grant and I have been working on a display of our commemorative china in the front room.

The Blacksmith Shop is already open. Dave Lockwood has contacted several blacksmiths to do demonstrations at the Dunham Forge. This was very popular last year. Check our website for a schedule as it gets filled in. We hope to see you this summer and remember, if you're in town on vacation and it's not Thursday, give us a call. We'd be happy to meet with you.

### **Our Corporate Sponsors**

A grateful thank you to the following businesses whose funds support the Society and its efforts to preserve our history. When you shop or see these folks, please tell them 'thank you' for their support!

Ellen Anderson, D.P.M.  
Family Eyecare  
Green Door Gallery  
Lary Funeral Home  
Maine Highlands Federal C/U  
Mallett Real Estate  
Pleasant River Lumber  
Rowell's Garage  
Steinke and Caruso  
Mark Stitham, M. D  
Sean Stitham, M.D.

**Thank you all!**

### **Items Available**

We thank Bob's Home and Garden on Lincoln Street for stocking our ornaments and DVD's. Please stop by their store and support this local business.

Glass Christmas ornaments: \$6.00 each (add \$4.00 for shipping)

2008 – Blacksmith Shop  
2009 – Observer Building  
2010 – Central Hall  
2011 – Thompson Free Library  
2012 – Foxcroft Academy  
2013 – The Blethen House  
2014 – Pleasant Street School  
2015 – Mayo's Mill

DVD's :

Glimpses of Dover and Foxcroft - \$10.00 (add \$3.00 for shipping)

Memories of Central Hall/Lou Stevens - \$15.00 (add \$3.00 for shipping)

Dover-Foxcroft throws: \$40.00 (add \$8.00 for shipping)

### **Work Day at the Historical Society**

Thursdays are almost always work days at the Historical Society. We generally start work at about 10:00 and work from two to four or five hours. If you are interested in joining us for an interesting and enjoyable day working with good friends, contact Mary for more information.

**The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, Inc.**  
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**Dover-Foxcroft, ME**  
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