

THE SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society Newsletter

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Spring 1997

Mary Chandler Lowell, a Thoroughly Modern Woman

by Helen Streeter Kelly

One of the most brilliant women in Maine's history, Dover-Foxcroft's own Mary Chandler Lowell was the first woman in the United States to earn degrees in both medicine, her vocation, and law, her avocation. By the age of twenty three, she was a respected physician, an M.D. Yet, in mid-life when deafness robbed her of the ability to function effectively in her profession, she studied law. By forty, she had earned the right to place L.L.B. (Doctor of Laws), J.B. (Bachelor of Jurisprudence), and J.M. (Master of Jurisprudence) behind her distinguished name.

Mary attended Mt. Holyoke, her mother's alma mater, and graduated in 1883. She intended to pursue the legal footsteps of her father and grandfather, but was persuaded a law career would require too much confinement and that her health would be better in medical practice. She returned home to Foxcroft to ask the opinion of Dr. William Buck, who at once encouraged her with practical advice and loaned her a book on anatomy.

Her course of action determined, she enrolled at Boston College of Physicians and

Surgeons (now Tufts). On the day she first entered the Surgery, the doctor slammed his scalpel on the table, saying, "I understand there's a woman present! I shall not proceed until she removes herself from the room." Within two days, a petition gathering thousands of signatures was presented; a public meeting attended by Julia Ward Howe and Booker T. Washington was held. Mary, invited to return, the first woman ever allowed, was received with gracious dignity. Mary became a doctor in 1886. She graduated into a man's world she was determined to change.

In a lifetime of "firsts," Dr. Mary Chandler Lowell was house surgeon at the Lucretia Mott Infirmary in New York, first woman (added by Legislative authority) on staff at the State Hospital at Augusta, and Medical Director at Mt. Holyoke, where she scoffed at tradition and sent the young ladies outside for recreation in their gymnasium bloomers.

Her mother, Mary Ester Chandler of Garland, died of complications at Mary's birth in 1863. Her father, Col. Charles Winthrop Lowell of Farmington, was an adventurer who left for

Louisiana after his wife's death and the birth of his daughter. He placed the young child in the care of her aunt, Emily Chandler Hale, the wife of Probate Judge John Hale, of Foxcroft. Mary remembered her childhood with great happiness. It was a rare day when she and the Judge neglected to discuss current events.

Mary's scholarly passions, life-long, were genealogy and history. It is because of her book *History of Old Foxcroft* that today we have a clear picture of early life in the town. She was unable to complete a companion book "Old Dover," but there are several others to her credit, including *Genealogy of Chandler-Parsons and Allied Families*, *Ready Reference Directory of Piscataquis County*, *Laws Governing Property of Married Women in Massachusetts*, *Medical Education of Women*, and *Value of Genealogical Research Work as a Pastime*.

Mary Chandler Lowell never practiced law, but it provided the basis of knowledge she needed for serious genealogical research, and she spent many fulfilling years pursuing her search for historical connections. ☛

MESSAGE FROM MARY:

Welcome to the very first issue of our Historical Society newsletter. We hope you enjoy it and ask for your input. Do you have any suggestions to make it more interesting? Do you have anything to contribute? Any articles, photos, anecdotes? This is your newsletter and we'd like to hear from you.

As Dover-Foxcroft celebrates its 75th Anniversary, the Historical Society will be very much involved in many ways. On March 1st, we were part of the kick-off ceremonies at Central Hall. Our next project will be to set up window displays in Union Square. We hope this will spark interest not only in the celebration but in the Historical Society as well.

We held our Annual Meeting on April 2nd. Elected to serve this year are:

Mary Annis - President
Lois Reynolds - Vice President
Madelyn Betts - Secretary
James Annis - Treasurer
Dave Lockwood - Curator

Directors -
James Brown
Joe Champeon
Gilman Glover
Helen Kelly
Louis Stevens

We all look forward to a successful 1997.

Preserving Our Past

by David B. Lockwood

As a picture framer for the past twelve years, I've become aware that people go to extraordinary lengths to preserve what is important to them. The intention of this column is to offer some practical, sensible, and easy to follow tips to aid your efforts to keep those precious articles safe and secure.

Let's begin by concentrating on paper and cloth artifacts: the autographed baseball program, the newspaper article about Aunt Mary, Grandmother's crochet, or Uncle John's army hat. It's easy to guess you've packed them away in a box or bag in the attic or the basement. Usually you run across them when cleaning or searching for something else, and the memories take you back in years. You find yourself spending more time than you can afford looking through the collection. Finally, you return everything to its box or bag to leave neglected until rediscovery in the next exploration...who knows when? Well, it's okay; everybody does the same thing. It's natural to "organize" things and put them out of sight, but...

In dealing with an important article, the first rule is to think of it in human terms. The most healthful and beneficial environment for it is exactly what is good for us, warm and dry with enough humidity to make it feel comfortable. Therefore, the attic with its high temperatures and dry atmosphere and the basement with its high humidity are the least desirable. We wouldn't want to live in that environment constantly because eventually our health would suffer.

What makes sense is to incorporate those valuable personal things into your living quarters as part of the decor, hung up or on display. Over all, the first step is to move your articles into your living area, possibly a closet, a bureau that's not full, or the area under your bed. This will not be an overwhelming task if you take one or two articles at a time. The only other suggestion is to make a master list naming the article and its new location. By creating an inventory, you will not only know what you have, but where it is located. 🐾



GENEALOGICAL CORNER

The Historical Society has received a request for information on the **Southerland** families of Sebec, from 1840 through 1880, and the **Stephen Palmer** family that lived in Barnard Plantation at the same time.

Contact: Mrs. Carol Tindell

14462 Upper Guthrie Ct.

Apple Valley, MN 55124

Also, information is needed on **Simon Lanpher**, who had a son **Nathan Lanpher**, mar. **Diadamia Johnson**, whose son **William A. Lanpher** was born 1847 in Sebec or Atkinson.

Contact: Robert H. Coeckel, D.C.

G-4306 Richfield Road

Flint, MI 48506



We're About to Take Title to The Observer Building

Through the spirited generosity of Northeast Publishing Company, the Historical Society will be free soon to move to its permanent home at Union Square. The *Piscataquis Observer* has found a new office space and the newspaper plans to turn over this unique "flatiron" building to our keeping. This means we have begun in earnest to collect funds, volunteers, and treasures. Can you help?

We envision our town's museum as a place to gather and protect interesting, important, and tangible pieces of our history, where all will explore, share, and learn...an important resource for future generations.

Blacksmith Shop Museum

This "old smithy shop," that dates to the early 1860's, is one of few remaining and perhaps the only one in the State of Maine. Our effort to maintain the building and its collection, much of which is original equipment, is ongoing. This year the blacksmith shop received minor roof repair, its chimney was capped, and reglazing of the windows continues apace. Currently curator Dave Lockwood is framing, refurbishing and relabeling the photo and paper memorabilia collections.

The Blacksmith Shop Museum was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1963, through efforts of the new Historical Society.

Reports from the *Observer*, 1878:

☆ "Officer Poole of this place (Dover) seized about five quarts of liquor from the Express cart, Monday, marked 'I.D. Blethen' (Blethen House). 'He don't drink; neither does he traffic in the stuff. But his wife met with an accident by falling down stairs and the injuries required application of liquor, which could not be obtained here; hence his object in sending away for it.'"

☆ "An Irishman, on being asked why there was no record or trace of any of his race being found in Noah's Ark replied that all his countrymen at that time were very rich and had boats of their own."

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, Inc.
c/o Madelyn Betts, Secretary
11 Harrison Avenue
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426

August 2, 1997 Festivities Update

Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society EVENTS SCHEDULE - 1997

Big Doings in Celebration of
Dover-Foxcroft's 75th Anniversary

Just a few of the events being planned
include ♦♦

- ♦♦ Victorian Anniversary
Tea Party
- ♦♦ Town's Largest Ever
Birthday Cake
- ♦♦ A Festival Parade
- ♦♦ Balloons & Clowns
- ♦♦ Arts & Crafts Sales
- ♦♦ Historic Window Displays
- ♦♦ Fairgrounds Showdown
and Steer Roast
- ♦♦ Fireworks !!

Ideas and *especially* all offers of time
and talent will be gratefully accepted by
the town's Anniversary Celebration
Committee. Call 564-3318 to help.



June 4

*The Life of a Revolutionary War
Scottish Soldier*

Jim Annis, Reenactor

August 2

*Celebrate 75 Years of Marital
Bliss*

Town Party, Downtown, Saturday
Tour of the Dover Cemetery

Lou Stevens takes us on a tour of
the grounds ♦♦ 6:00 p.m. ☉

Restoring Old Interiors

Helen Kelly, Tips from the
School of Hard Knocks

September 3

October 1

NOTE: All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held at
7:00 p.m. Wednesdays, at the Central Maine Power building
on the corner of Park Street and Mechanic Avenue...but the
meeting place may change during this year, so watch your
newspaper.



**1880 Census : Foxcroft Village 730
Dover Village 600**

In 1878, the *Observer* reported: "Mr. Robbins, editor of the *Dexter Gazette* will be here on the Fourth (of
July) and will exhibit the Phonograph in Mayo's Hall (the Ward building)."



We are now accepting dues for fiscal 1997. Our annual dues remain at \$3.00 per person per year and are
a bargain at that price. Any amount tendered above the \$3.00 will be considered a donation and is tax
deductible. Please accept our Thanks!



My check payable to *The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, Inc.*, in the amount of \$_____ is enclosed.

MEMBER'S NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE _____ ZIPCODE _____

Please mail ✉ to: Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, Inc.
c/o Madelyn Betts, Secretary
11 Harrison Avenue
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426