

THE SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society Newsletter

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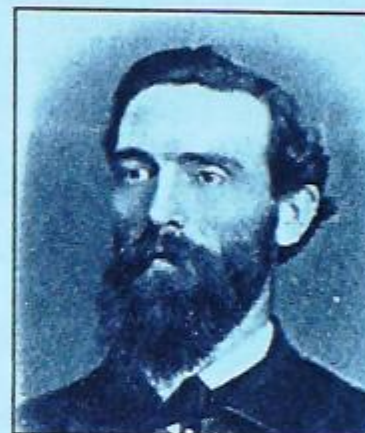
Winter 2001-2002

A Gentle Man in An Ungentle Time

By Nancy Klimavicz Battick

While Daniel Putnam might not have qualified technically as a martyr for his religious beliefs, it is certainly true that he died because he refused to resort to violence. He was a gentle man, raised to believe in goodness and literally turning the other cheek. In 1863, he was a farmer, Quaker, loving husband, soon-to-be father, and trapped in the emotions, maelstrom, and violence of the American Civil War.

Daniel was born in Brewer, Maine, the son of Israel and Adeline White Putnam. His ancestors came from Buckinghamshire in England to Salem and Boston, Massachusetts in the early to mid-seventeenth century. Daniel's parents moved to Maine in the 1820's where Daniel was born in 1832. The family then moved to Dover and shows up in the census records. The son of a prosperous farmer, Daniel pursued the same career.



His photo shows a handsome young man sporting the whiskers customary for the age. On October 17, 1861, he married Mary M. Woodward of Atkinson, daughter of Isaac and Rebecca Damon Woodward. From all accounts the two were extremely happy and the knowledge that Mary was expecting their first child in 1863 must have made their happiness complete.

But the War was never far from anyone's mind in 1863, not even a Quaker farmer and his wife, especially when the wife's family had already made sacrifices to the Union. Mary's older brother, Seth, a member of the 20th Maine Regiment, was killed at the Battle of Fredericksburg; her younger brother, Joseph, in the 2nd Maine, was severely ill and dying slowly, and another brother, Israel was also in the service. More pain was to follow in Mary's life.

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The Union armies ran on the North's industrial might, which was formidable, and volunteers. The earliest volunteers were moved by sheer patriotism, then many were lured into service by the prospect of bounties paid to men who

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Kicksled Unique to This Part of Maine

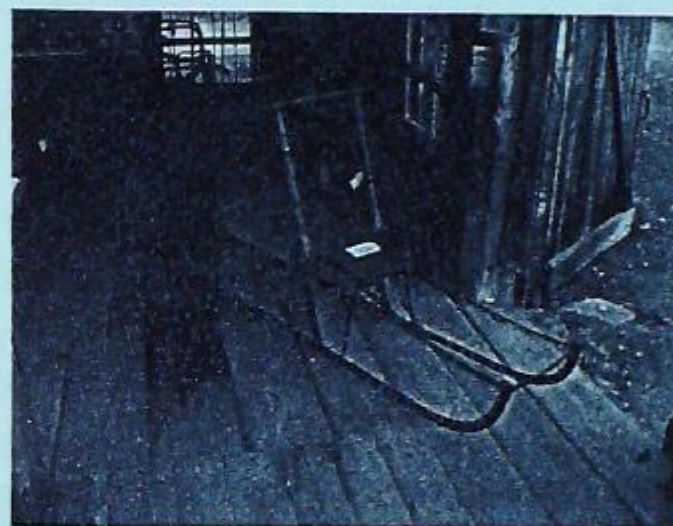
By Jack Battick

The kicksled reportedly was invented in Norway (the country, not the Maine town!) And came to this country via Sweden. The agent of its introduction to Maine was said to have been Monson resident Gustaf Johnson. In Dover-Foxcroft, they were manufactured by Fred Washburn in the nineteen-twenties and -thirties and were quite common back then. Consisting of a pair of long steel runners or blades, curved upward at the front end, with a stout straight-backed chair on top of which was a set of wooden handlebars mounted near the front and suitably braced with cross pieces of steel, kicksleds were a handy contrivance for moving one or two people on roads paved with packed snow.

The snow had to be packed down because the runners had their narrow side down and would just sink into soft snow. To operate the kicksled, a person stood with one foot on one of the runners and kicked backwards with the other foot. On a down-slope, you could plant both feet on the runners and just glide. To steer, you twisted the handlebars and maybe carefully shifted weight to one of the runners. Going uphill was another matter. There, you had to put both feet on the snow and push the sled.

Nancy Battick's father, Tony Klimavicz, used one regularly in the Winter to go into town from his family's home up at Foxcroft Center, to carry barter goods to market and bring home those things the family couldn't grow or make at home. Instead of a person

sitting on the chair, he strapped a pack basket on the chair and kicked, glided, or pushed his sled the four miles into town and back. Sometimes, during recess at the one-room school at Foxcroft Center, the boys would race their kicksleds down the road towards the Milo Road. And if they timed it right, just before the teacher came out to ring the bell ending recess, they would be speeding downhill perhaps with the bell clanging behind them, going too fast to stop until they got to the bottom of the hill. After pushing the sleds back uphill, they could explain that they were late coming in from recess because they hadn't heard the bell.



There's an example of the kicksled in the Blacksmith's Shop Museum, the one in the photograph.

Editor's Note: Do you have a memory or story about kicksleds you'd like to share with your fellow Society members? Please let us know. We'll print a selection in the next edition of the *Conserver*.

Lou Stevens Gives Tour of Pine Grove Cemetery



Photo by Jack Battick

On a perfect early September day, over 30 people gathered at Pine Grove Cemetery at Dover South Mills for the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society's last in a series of cemetery tours.

The tour was led by local historian, Lou Stevens.

Pine Grove's location is truly beautiful, surrounded as it by elegant pine trees hundreds of years old, with peaceful glimpses of nearby Branns Mill Pond. At times Lou was interrupted by the competing cries of a loon, but the audience didn't mind.

In this setting Lou told tales of the earliest settlers such as the Branns, Merrills, Gerrys, Doores, and others and added his personal reminiscences of people and events in this once-bustling community.

This was the last of 6 programs featuring

tours of Dover-Foxcroft cemeteries. After the tour several people lingered to wander around the cemetery looking at individual lots and monuments.

The Society is grateful to Lou for sharing his time and thoughts with us.

Business Pointers from 1897

The following are excerpts from the April 29, 1897 *Piscataquis Observer*.

You can learn of a bargain free of charge. If you have one to offer, it costs 10 cents a line. This Advertising Brings Results.

Tenement to let. C.W. Brown.

Summer underwear in at Pinkham & Anderson's.

Fay's currant bushes. H.A. Robinson.

10 lbs. Rolled Oats for 25 cents at McNaughton's.

Go to Doore's for flour. Price & Quality is what talks.

For Sale: A thoroughbred Jersey bull, one year old. S.C. Greeley, Foxcroft.

New ruchings for sale at the Boston Store.

Pasturage for cow. H.A. Robinson.

Go to G.W. Doon's to get a bbl. Of best full patent flour for \$5.45. Warranted as good as the best

2001 A Good Year for the Blacksmith Shop Museum

By Dave Lockwood

This year we opened the shop on Memorial weekend and officially closed the last weekend of October. There were 190 visitors who signed our guest book, the majority of which were area residents, while many came from the New England region. Surprisingly, there were no recorded European or Asian visitors.

The decline in visitors is a concern, but is understandable, given our out-of-the way location, lack of advertising budget, and recent events. Several visitors commented that they did find us in *Readers Digest's* publication of "Out of the Way Interesting Locations".

We removed the sod around the mill stone and water pump in front of the shop, laid down a barrier fabric, and filled in with a crushed rock layer. This was done to reduce the time needed to trim around those areas. We removed part of the tree hedge which runs along the south property line because it was obstructing the view of the shop from the road.

Plans are being made to have the south side of the shop roof replaced with new cedar shingles in 2002. Otherwise, the only other immediate concerns are repairs to the windows and the eventual replacement of the back shed roof. It would be appropriate this year to update our brochure and have a quantity printed for the coming spring and summer.

We acquired a grindstone and frame this summer in great condition. Like so many articles it appeared one day with no apparent donor identification. If anyone knows about this please contact the curator so an appropriate tag will credit the donor.



Maine Temperance Journal

The following is an excerpt from Vol. XX of the July 18, 1863 *Maine Temperance Journal, Extra*. The Battle of Gettysburg was fought July 1-3, 1863.

A distiller in the Cumberland Valley, Pa., was robbed of 700 barrels of whiskey by Lee's army. Good for us but bad for the rebels.

Times Past Celebrated in Fred Washburn's Poetry

The members of the D-F Historical Society were given a rare treat on October 3 when Berta Fitzgerald read selections of her father's poetry to the group.

Fred Farrington Washburn had two volumes of poetry published (*Laughter & Tears* in 1951; and *Facts & Fables* in 1958). His work was honored with a foreword from the



Washburn Sisters, L-R: Berta Fitzgerald, Metella Woodworth, Carolyn Olson holding a portrait of their mother. Photo by J. Battick

Observer's late publisher, Ora L. Evans, and was featured in the *Lewiston Journal Magazine* in 1959. His poems are memorials to a world long past, but fondly remembered, and celebrate the innocence of a rural childhood. Fred's lively sense of humor is revealed throughout.

One particularly poignant piece deals with the death of his son in World War II when the gentle innocence of youth in rural Maine was shattered forever.

Fred's books, collector's items today, have been combined, along with some unpublished poetry, and a volume is now available.

Members of Washburn's family were present for the reading and shared stories, photos, and other memorabilia.

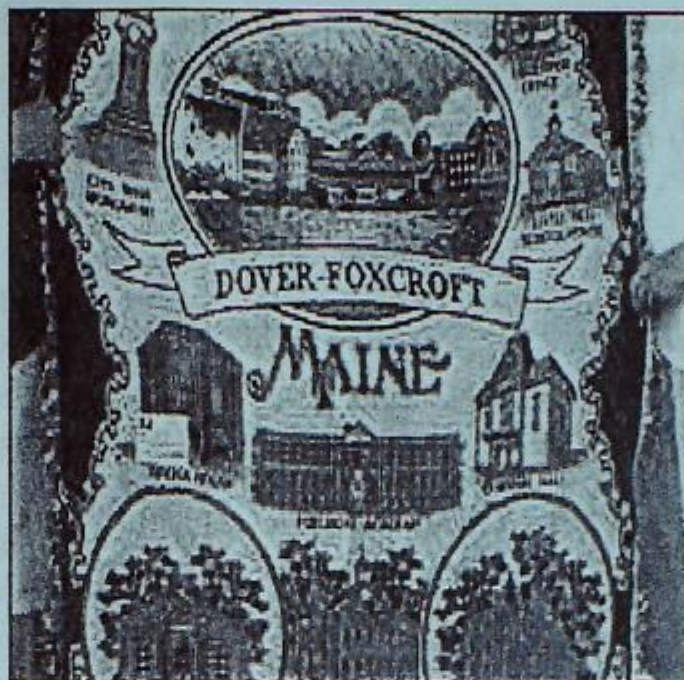
Retrospective

Since the appearance of the article on Daniel Neal in the Fall issue of the *Conservator*, several persons have written to contribute additional material. It is the hope of the author of the original article that other facts, recollections, and anecdotes concerning Neal will be sent in so they may be reported in the *Conservator* and kept on file at the Historical Society.

Bill Davis remarks, "I enjoyed the story on Dan Neal. They left out the Indian deer hide moccasins he used to make They were slippery on snow and the boys would run and slide a long way on their feet."

R. Dow wrote " practically every male in town had deer skin moccasins that [Neal] made by hand." And at a camp near Buttermilk Pond, "a small brook ran . . . by the camp. This was in the Spring and huge suckers were running. Dan lay on his belly and reached in and *by hand* caught 6-8 suckers 3-4 lbs. Each and heaved them onto the bank. "Can't beat sucker chowder", Dan said. And we had it for supper." He also write "Another time, Dan was in disgrace for a while because he rolled his canoe over in Early's Pool (Salmon Pool) on opening day and half the town saw him swim ashore!"

Warm D-F Coverlets Perfect Gift for You or Loved One



Detail of the D-F Coverlet. Photo by J. Battick

While Supplies last these handsome coverlets featuring historic fiber portraits of the Shiretown's most notable architecture make perfect Xmas gifts for your favorite FA grad or fan. The coverlets are good-sized, in Academy colors of maroon and cream, and are great for curling under on a cold day while you read your latest issue of the *Conserver*.

The cost is \$38 each, with \$5.00 for shipping. Place your order with **Society Treasurer Jim Annis, 10 Orchard Road, Dover-Foxcroft, Me. 04426-3706**. Or if you live in town they can be purchased at Dave's World on Summer Street.

Don't miss owning one of these fine souvenirs of Dover-Foxcroft. Buildings portrayed include Foxcroft Academy, the Congregational Church, the Opera House, Central Hall, the Blethen House as well as other landmarks.

A Gentle Man

(Continued from Page 1)

served. And, then, to replace casualties the North resorted to the draft. Many men resisted; there were riots in some parts of the country; immigrants who hardly spoke English often found themselves in battle. And thus it was that Daniel Putnam, aged 32, and a soon-to-be father received his draft notice and was enrolled as a Private in the 16th Maine Regiment on August 14, 1863 for a term of 3 years. In September Mary gave birth to a son, Israel Franklin. Daniel never saw his son.

In addition to worry about his wife, Daniel ran into immediate problems with his officers. In a memoir written by one of his fellow soldiers in the 16th Maine, it is reported that Daniel's refusal to bear arms and his request to be assigned to a duty not requiring killing, earned him scorn and punishment, despite his offer to serve at the battlefield. His request was refused.

When Daniel persisted in his refusal to bear arms he was "strung up by the wrists, his feet barely touching the ground for four hours, until exhausted and then cut down." Daniel told the author of the memoir, H.F. Andrews, later a General and State Senator in Iowa, that his arms had no feeling for hours after this incident. The officers ordered Daniel's gun and equipment fastened to him and he carried them, passively. Andrews reported Daniel never used the weapon assigned to him. This eyewitness described Daniel Putnam as, "honest, courteous, [an] intelligent gentleman . . . [who] never uttered a disrespectful word against his tormenters."

Daniel Putnam was captured at the Battle of the Wilderness on May 5, 1864 along with one other soldier in the 16th Maine. At first Daniel was reported as "deserted" and his pay was stopped for a missing knapsack, haversack, canteen, tent, weapon, etc., but this was changed when the report of his capture became known. Daniel was sent to Andersonville Prison in Georgia where the gentle rarely survived, victimized by guards and fellow prisoners alike. When Sherman advanced into Georgia in 1864, the Confederates in charge of Andersonville rightly anticipated revenge from Union troops and abandoned the facility, shifting all but the dying to other camps. Daniel was left behind and died of scurvy brought on from starvation on September 18, 1864 and is buried there. His campmate from the 16th Maine, Joseph Parsons of Herman, died 12 days before.

And Mary? She remained a widow, fighting to gain a small pension to help support her son and herself. In 1867, she was granted \$8 a month, with \$2 additional for the care of young Frank until he reached 16 or was "abandoned". Fortunately, she lived with her family and her brother, Benjamin, acted as surrogate father for her son. Unfortunately, the tragedy of the Civil War continued to assail the Woodward family. Mary lost not only her beloved husband and brother Seth, but her brother Joseph died of war-related tuberculosis in January 1866. Younger brother Israel was severely wounded, captured, and died in a Richmond prison camp in the fall of 1864 shortly before Daniel's death. In addition, Mary's sister Jennie lost her sweetheart at the Battle

(Continued on next page)

of the Wilderness, and her sister-in-law, Mary Emma Thurston (Benjamin's wife) lost both brothers in 1864 and 1866 from wounds and disease acquired in the War. The family also lost cousins in the conflict. The entire family must have been terrified when Benjamin was drafted in 1865, but the war ended before he left Maine.

Mary's photo taken later in life hints at beauty. The eyes are full of sorrow and memories. She died of "paralysis" in 1910 with her sister Jennie at her side. Her son Frank never married, looking after his mother and widowed aunt. He died in 1916. He and his mother lie buried beneath a solitary obelisk on top a rise at Pine Grove Cemetery, not far from Mary's sisters, Lydia W. Gerry, and Jennie R. Hutchinson. The



Mary Woodward Putnam

monument lists Daniel, his regiment, and his place of death.

Outrage over the conditions at Andersonville persists to this day, though conditions at prisoner-of-war camps in the North are now coming to light. After the War ended, the Commandant of Andersonville was tried as a war criminal (the only Confederate so

tried), found guilty, and hanged.

No charges were ever brought against the officer who tortured Daniel Putnam and forced him into combat and eventually his death.

Note: The author is indebted to Wayne Bennett for bringing the Andrews' memoir to my attention. On a personal note, Daniel Putnam's wife, Mary Woodward, was my great-grand aunt. The photos illustrating this article are in the author's personal collection.

For further reading on Andersonville, see *Andersonville: The Last Depot* by William Marvel; *The Report of Maine Andersonville Monument Commissioners* is a primary source on Maine men who are buried there; and *Company D, 16th Maine Volunteers: A Brief History of the Individual Services of Its Members, 1862-1865*, by H.F. Andrews.

What Is History, anyway?

Henry Ford once said, "History is bunk!" Others [Napoleon Bonaparte?] have said "History is lies agreed upon." A classical definition says "History is the record of all that mankind has said and thought and done." In the next several issues of the *Conserver*, a series of essays on how the writing of History has changed over time will appear. We will see how what is deemed worthy of being examined by historians today has also changed. And we shall see how local history fits into the larger picture drawn by academic scholars.

A Message From Mary

Our year draws to a close and things are quiet at the Society. *Ryan Stitham* has completed the Back Room and this winter we will begin to look at track lighting, carpet in some areas, and ideas for displays. If all goes well we'll have a new room open to the public next summer.

Our building once again is outlined with white lights for the Christmas season. It is a beautiful sight at the head of Union Square.

Several people gave up their weekend afternoons to host at the Observer Building. A special thanks goes to: *Lou Stevens, Charles and Sallie Hesketh, Edie Hussey, Helen Kelly, Dot Greenlaw, Eunice Mitchell, Susan Annis, Linda and Steve Howard, Ruth Kinney, Madelyn Betts, Jim Brown, Bob and Addie Ladd, Jean Holmes, Gilman Glover, and Jim Annis.* And a thank you goes to *Dave Lockwood* who kept the Blacksmith Shop open all summer.

Mary Annis, Historical Society President

Editor's Corner

I'd like to hear from you with comments and suggestions about the *Conserver*. If you'd like to contribute an article or share something with your fellow members, we'd gladly help write it for you. Also, we'd love photos and guarantee anything you'd be willing to lend us will be returned safely. If you're in town we'll try to return it the same day. And, let me know if you have an idea for a future piece. I'm at 117 Foxcroft Center Road, Dover-Foxcroft, Me 04426 or e-mail me at battick@midmaine.com. And, as always, I'd like to give . . .

A Tip of the Hat To . . .

the following contributors to this issue of the *Conserver*: *Mary Annis, Dave Lockwood, and Jack Battick.*

Nancy Klimavicz Battick

Recent Acquisitions

Henry Packard Postcards
Kineo Lodge #64C 1920 Photo
Central Maine RR Items &
Skillings Home Items

Ethel Hersey
Madelyn Betts

Joe Guyotte

1940 8th Grade Class Photo &
Wenonah Rebeckah Lodge Gavel
Gladys Huntington

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From the Officers, Directors, and Conserver Staff

Of the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society