

THE SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society Newsletter

Volume VII, Number 2

Summer 2003

Stories In Bronze By Louis Stevens

There are many bronze plaques located at various places in Dover-Foxcroft. Let's take a look at some that honor or mention folks who were born over a century ago back in the 1800's, and not just folks but a bell, too, which is still living on the outside of the gym at Foxcroft Academy.

No doubt the one least seen and read is located on a boulder on South Street (Route 7). Thousands of cars and trucks pass by it daily but how many of their drivers have ever taken time to stop to read what the plaque says:

Birthplace
Lillian M.N. Stevens
Leader of the
Woman's Christian Temperance Union in State and Nation
1844-1914



Mrs. Stevens (no relation, incidentally) was born Lillian Ames in Dover on the farm approximately on the spot where the boulder now sits. She eventually became the state president for 12 years of the WCTU, and then national president 16 years, presiding at world conferences of the organization in Glasgow, Geneva, Boston, and Brooklyn. She married Michael Stevens of Portland and resided there.

Surely, the most widely read plaque is located at the building at the beach at the state park here. It says:

Peaks-Kenny State Park
Presented by Francis C. Peaks in memory of His parents,
Joseph B. and Eliza Peaks and his sister, Annie P. Kenny
Dedicated July 1964

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First time visitors to the park usually notice and read the plaque, and are interested to know that the land was acquired by Joseph Peaks, a lawyer here before 1900, and that Francis, who was born back in the mid-1870's, was in his mid-90s when he gave the area to the state for a park.
(Continued on page 7)

Cupid & the Printer's Devil By Madelyn C. Betts

In June and September Cupid seems to find his sharpest arrows to twang through his golden bow of love and it is then that many fair maidens and reluctant (?) grooms make their embarkation on the sea of matrimony.

Strange contrasts in persons, odd names, and "May and December" are plighted in troth – and there was, and is always a "jester" who can see a humorous side to any occasion.

Editorial prerogatives in the olden days were prone to witticism now and then, and well it was for those were times when serious dignity and decorum needed a bit of a laugh to temper their days. Marriage announcements offered fertile fields for the "Printer's Devil". This character was little concerned if his ink-stained fingers added some odd bits of type to the vital statistic in question, or if it might prove embarrassing to those concerned. He delighted in giving Cupid's bow a facetious twist.

Some 1840-1860 *Piscataquis Observer* marriage announcements were followed by the poetical license of the editor.

MARRIED: In Freedom, very suddenly, on the 24th inst. Deacon John Hunting of Corinth, aged 63 yrs. To Miss Sarah Rollins of Freedom, aged 23 yrs.

Some poets say that cupid's blind
But we think he's insulting
When maids, so tender and so kind
Are sent a Deacon Hunting
(*Piscataquis Herald*, July 30, 1841).

MARRIED: May 7, 1841 in this town, on Wednesday evening last, by Rev. Mr. Wells of Foxcroft; Mr. John S. Woodbury of Dover, to Miss Abigail W. Prescott of Vienna.
(With the above, the publisher acknowledges the receipt of an excellent slice of the nuptial cake –

they have our best wishes for their prosperity and happiness).

MARRIED: In Sangerville, by Philemon C. Parson, Esq. Mr. Benjamin Rich of Bucksport, to Miss Sarah Davis of Sangerville.
Some get RICH by care and toil
And some by speculation,
But, when Cupid lends his magic aid,
The way 'tis done's a caution.

MARRIED: On the 5th of Sept. by Rev. Dr. Potts, Mr. Ezekiel Black to Miss Susanna Kettle
- This is POT calling the KETTLE black.

MARRIED: In city of New York, by Rev. Mr. White, Henry Black, Esq. Of Orange County, to widow Eliza Gray, of Green County, daughter of Henry Brown, merchant of Bluehill, Maine.
The hues of the rainbow blended together
Produce, we read, the fairest of weather.

MARRIED: In Salisbury, Mass. Mr. Moses Moody, a gentleman of 55 years, rather under medium size, to Miss Nancy Merrill, a lady of three hundred pounds weight, after a faithful courtship of thirty-five years.

MARRIED: In Elliottsville, by J.F. Thombs, Esq., Mr. Horace J. Stevens of Abbot, to Miss Mary E. Bodfish, of Elliottsville, after a tedious courtship of twenty-four hours.

TALL MARRIAGE: At Mount Pleasant, Iowa, on the morning of the 11th ult., by J.T. Morton, Esq. (Height 6 ft. 3 in.), Silas G. Weeks, Esq. Of Warren County, Illinois (height 6 ft. 4 in) to Mrs. Mary Rob of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, (height 6 ft. 1 in.). Long life to the parties!

MARRIED: In Kennebunk, Mr. Benj. Jones, aged 23, to Miss Mehitable, daughter of Nathaniel Treadwell, aged 46.
A single life without a wife, Is hard and full of trouble,
Twice twenty-three is forty-six, How easy it is to double!

Days Remembered, Part II
By Phyllis Jones Pelosi

Old Road, Sebec Village Maine

I've been here before - many years ago.
I have faint memories of raspberries hanging
 lush on bushes,
Old cellar walls and sagging barn door,
My mother, fingers red with berry juice,
 Laughing and gossiping with my aunt
As they filled lard pails with fragrant fruit.
I remember looking into the old barn
Wondering if the worn place on the rusty iron
 latch
Was made by my grandfather's hand,
And seeing spider webs turned to gold by the
 sun's rays
Slanting through the old dusty windowpanes.

Now there's only the road.
Woods, ferns and an old graveyard
 Reflect the peace of times gone by.
One stone marked with my family name,
Moss covered and tilted, seem to beckon me.

Walking back up the path, the waiting car
 shattered my mood.
I wanted to see instead, a dapple-gray horse
And a shiny black buggy that would carry me
 back
Up the road to that other time.

Editor's Choice Award, National Library of Poetry,
1993.

(Continued from Spring edition)

On Saturday nights we would go "upstreet" to do the shopping at the old Cloverdale store on Main Street. To this day I have only to think of that store and I can remember the wonderful smell of the coffee being ground and see the great bunches of bananas hanging from the ceiling. We could get five lbs. for only 25 cents in those days. We would be upset if our bill

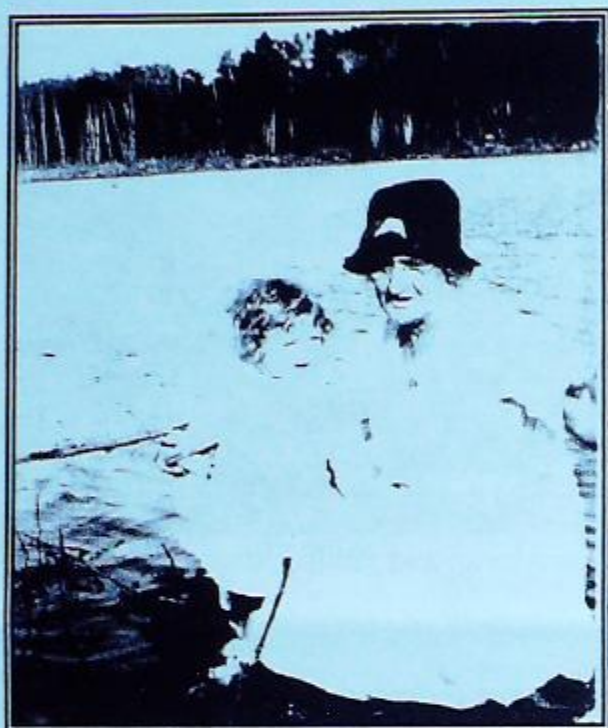
went over \$5. In winter we would pile all the bags on our sled and then hide it in an alleyway near the theatre and go to the movies. Can you imagine what would happen to those groceries if left unattended nowadays? One movie we saw was "The Connecticut Yankee" and I have always loved this story ever since because it reminds me so of the fun we had on those Saturday nights so long ago.



Jimmy Dyer, Muriel and Phyllis Jones.

We were always required to have a nap for one hour after the noon meal (dinner was always at noon and all the fathers came home to eat as soon as the mill's noon whistle went off). In summers I would lay and listen to the horses and wagons pass by the house or in winter to the sound of sleigh bells and soft clucking of the driver. There were still a lot of horses even with the town then and those coming from the farms below us would go past to the feed store on Lincoln Street which is still there today. In the winter we would often hitch a ride to school by putting our feet on the back runners and holding on. Or those more daring would hitch their sleds to the back which was considered very dangerous. In summer we would follow the ice man's wagon to get a small piece of ice to suck on. Very few people had electric refrigerators then, but would use ice boxes in the summer. Every few days the ice man would come by with his wagon and if Mama needed ice she would

put a card in the window. It was printed with 25 to 100 lbs., and she would put the amount needed positioned so the proper number stood at the top of the card. The ice man had a leather piece that covered his back and tied at the neck. He would use ice tongs and lift the block of ice over his shoulder to his back and deposit it into the box for you. Mama knew and chatted with all the tradesmen that came to the house and



The author's brother, Robert, and her grandmother who raised him following the death of Minna Jones.

they would swap news or someone would send a message to Mama through them if they didn't have a phone. Things were so open then. The milkman would walk in and put your milk away for you and at the same time check to see if all was well.

As the kids in our neighborhood grew older our neighborhood became a gathering place for many of our friends from all over town. Hide and Seek became a game where we paired off, sometimes with our current romantic interest. At this time many of us had learned to dance. Walter and Ann Mayo lived above us on Lincoln Street and every Saturday morning was

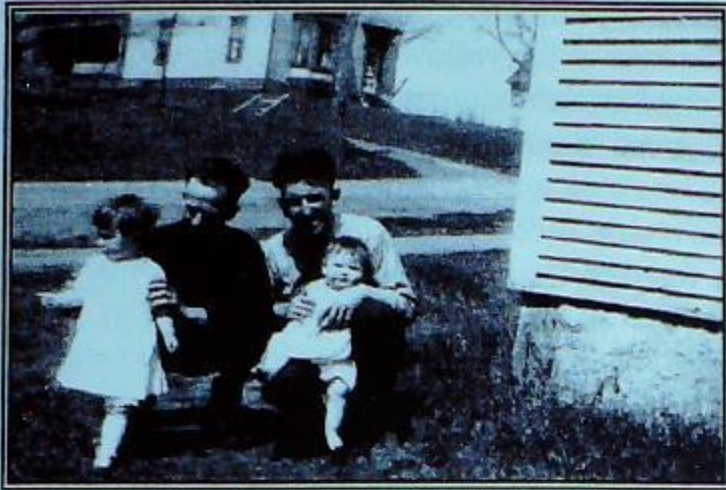
"candy time". We kids would go up and ring the bell and Mrs. Mayo would come with a tray of treats. She had classes for some of us girls to learn to play bridge and there may of us learned to dance while she played the piano. Once she taught us the Virginia Reel. The neighborhood boys each had to partner one of us (come to our house and escort us and bring us home) and bow when they escorted us to the dance circle. Once we performed the Virginia Reel in Central Hall for a local performance.

Central Hall was a focal point for us all in those days. As children we often went to dances there with our parents. Sometimes we would dance with our fathers, then all the kids would give up and go to sleep on the benches and be carried home.

As we grew up Central Hall was a big part of our lives. I still remember the old curtain with the picture of a deer standing in the field and the dances on Saturday night. I still recall my opening words as Marmee in our senior play, "Little Women" and Esther Whitman's great performance as "Jo".



Girls Club, Foxcroft Academy. Front row: Esther Whitman, Phyllis Jones, Marguerite Blood, ?. Back row: Rachel Alden, ?, Kay Myers, Phyllis Johnston.



L-R: Muriel Jones, Harry Severance, Robert Jones (the author's father), Phyllis Jones.

In those days one of the winter sports was ice skating on the river and box socials put on by the church youth groups. I recall a ride in the hay on the back of a big truck that took us out in the country to an old church where we had a songfest and lovely hot oyster stew. We sang all the way home and didn't seem to mind the cold though it was close to zero that night.

At our senior prom we made great decorations out of pink and white paper napkins to go over the main light on the dance floor.

During our last year at Foxcroft Academy we



Foxcroft Academy Debate Team. 1939 First Speakers New England Debates: Alfred Peakes, Phyllis Jones, Lillian Bean, Mared Drinkwater, Roenna Meisner.

were all busy with extra activities and special commitments, but I recall one spring day when many Academy boys rushed to the river and were walking over the log jam. Many of us watched from the bridge until one father came and put an end to the fun.

As I read this over, the memories come back so vividly that I almost feel I am back home again. I imagine I'm walking along Main Street greeting old friends and having one of those great hot dogs at the Greek's.

Now I don't get home often but Dover-Foxcroft is still special to me. It holds so many memories of the good times when I was young and of all the special people who were so much a part of my life.

Days Remembered is part of the author's book, *Looking Back (the Jones and Gould Family)*. Photos courtesy of Phyllis Jones Pelosi.

New Members

A sincere welcome to our new members:

Martha Schwarz	Dover-Foxcroft
Lawris M. Harvey	Arizona
Annie A. Lee	Georgia
Helen M. Cooper	Maine
M/M George Warren	Dover-Foxcroft
Merrill Ann Clukey	Garland
Janice Boomsma	Abbot
Lynn Dercole	Dover-Foxcroft
Joe Guyotte	Dover-Foxcroft
Dorothy Gray	Dover-Foxcroft
Paul Holmes	Dover-Foxcroft

If you're a new member and we inadvertently missed listing your name, please let us know! We don't want to leave anyone out!

Why We Moved to Maine By Walter Boomsma

Maybe it's a small town thing, but when folks here attend a public event there's a lot of time spent looking around so you don't miss seeing and waving to everyone you know. After living here less than two months it might have seemed pointless, but one of the first people we'd bumped into when we arrived at the fairgrounds greeted us by name.

Admittedly, he was about to sell us raffle tickets. Those raffle tickets are part of the Annual Kiwanis Auction an event that this year raised over \$20,000. Not bad for a Club in a town of some 5000 people, many of whom are considered "unemployed" or "under-employed" by the demographics types. Anyway, we got our number for bidding and climbed on to the bleachers. Lots of smiles and waves some from people we actually knew.

Later, when the bidding started it became apparent that people were there for different reasons. Some merely were supporting the cause. (They bid \$109 for \$110 worth of donated fuel oil). Others truly wanted something (they bid a dining room set up to over \$1100, the last twenty bids in one dollar increments). Everyone paid attention, if only to speculate: "Wonder what Pete's gonna do with that?"

When the auction helpers rolled out the upright piano, a little girl of perhaps 8 or 9 began squirming in her seat and whispered to her Mom. The auctioneer described the piano in glowing terms: "Made right here in Dover-Foxcroft . . . recently tuned and ready to play" His patter didn't find a volunteer to play something but started rapid bidding. When the bids reached \$100 the competition was quickly reduced to "the man in the yellow shirt" and our little girl. The pace slowed some as she looked to her Mom for approval of each bid.

"A hunnert fahty five . . . will you go one fifty?" to the man in the yellow shirt. Those who watched mother and daughter saw a whispered conversation take place and recognized the pleading look a child can give. The man in the yellow shirt didn't go one fifty. But he did go one forty six.

A tear rolled down the little girl's cheek as she looked to her Mom, hand ready to shoot up and agree to \$147. There was more Mom and daughter whispering while the man in the yellow shirt was considering the next dollar. Somewhere between \$147 and \$150 the little girl's tears began flowing copiously. The rest of us just knew what the whispering was. "We can't go more than \$150."

As is often the case at public events, another drama was unfolding. Mother and daughter were seated in the top row of the bleachers. Quietly, and almost unnoticed a small row of people had gathered beneath them. The auctioneer was now pleading with them "don't lose it for a dollar". When mother shook her head "no" a half dozen hands shot up beneath them, each offering a \$5 bill. One of the auctioneer's helpers was waving a \$20 bill and yelling, "Take this! Somebody give her this!"

The story could end here. The question is answered, at least in part. That's why we moved to Maine, a place where people quietly gather round and help. Maybe the story should end here. Most people will want the end to describe Mother and smiling daughter driving off in the traditional Maine pickup truck, piano loaded in the back. But the truthful end of the story is yet another reason we moved to Maine.

Mother wrapped her arms around and hugged that little girl so hard we lost sight of her. Without loosening her grip, her eyes went to each person with an outstretched hand. She mouthed more than said, "No, thank you. Please, no" and the warmth of her smile quickly dissipated any desire to argue. We didn't like it,

but we knew she was right.

We wanted that little girl to have the piano, but her Mom wanted her to know that you have to play fair and your word must be good. In a few short years that little girl will make a great neighbor. She'll have learned to play fair. She'll keep her word and expect others to do the same She'll understand quiet compassion and support. And - somehow - I think she'll play a piano.



Stories in Bronze (continued from page 1)

A well-hidden plaque located in Monument Square requires getting down on your hands and knees by the cannon on the right of the Civil War statue. There you find this information:

These granite gun carriages were presented to Dover-Foxcroft in honor of the men who fought to preserve the nation in the great Civil War, 1861-1865, by Osgood Pingree Martin and his wife, Sarah Angelia Lucas.

Who was Mr. Martin? He was a veteran of that war who had the honor of owning a small piece of the apple tree under which Lee and Grant met the day after signing the peace treaty at Appomattox. A half century later he paid for the granite supports that replaced the decaying wood ones.

George Mayo, an excellent athlete at Foxcroft

Academy, especially in baseball, died of pneumonia at age 33 in 1918. When his father, Col. Edward J. Mayo, returned from Florida in the spring of 1922, he paid for the construction of a wooden grandstand to complement the new baseball field at the fairgrounds, and would later help the fair by financing the building of two exhibition halls still in use today. He had placed on the stands this plaque:

Presented to the town of Dover-Foxcroft, Maine, by Col. and Mrs. Edward J. Mayo in memory of their son George E. Mayo on August 7, 1923.

Fortunately, the plaque was saved when the grandstand was taken down and today is on the wall of the reception building at the fairgrounds.

Two plaques can be found inside the office and on the first floor of Foxcroft Academy. One says:

James Stuart Holmes, 1792-1879
Founding Trustee, Foxcroft Academy board member for 56 years. Presented Posthumously by his granddaughter Louise Holmes Steel-Brook, M.D. 1863-1953

And the other:

These grounds, given by Louis Oakes, class of 1892, and this building, made possible by his generous gifts to Foxcroft Academy in memory of his father and mother, William P. Oakes and Edith N. Oakes.

And the bell? It was installed at the old wooden Academy in 1860 where it lived a long life until that building was razed a little over 100 years later. It was fortunately (again that word!) saved and eventually put in its present place on the outside of the gym. A plaque beneath the bell says:

Foxcroft Academy Bell since 1860
Erected by the classes of 1953-4-5-6-7 in

memory of Malcolm Lougee and Gary Bagley

Each autumn the voice of the bell with its clang-clang-clang is as powerful as when it first spoke 143 years ago as the members of the FA football team celebrate a victory by ringing it.

photo memory? Please send submissions to: Nancy Battick, 308 Foxcroft Center Road, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. Photos will be returned unharmed. Remember, to keep the *Conservator* alive we need your help.

Nancy Klimavicz Battick

Officers for 2003-4

President	Mary Annis
Vice President	Helen Kelly
Secretary	Madelyn Betts
Treasurer	Jim Annis

Directors: David Lockwood, Jim Brown
Bob Ladd, Lou Stevens,
Gilman Glover, Nancy Battick

Curator, Blacksmith Shop	Dave Lockwood
Curators, Observer Building	Jack & Nancy Battick

Address Changing?

If your address is changing be sure to let us know. The *Conservator* is mailed at Standard Rate and undeliverable issues are not returned to us. We don't want you to miss your issues, so please notify us as soon as possible.

Editor's Corner

A tip of the hat to our contributors to this issue: Madelyn C. Betts, Walter Boomsma (who just moved to Maine and lives in Abbot), Louis Stevens, Phyllis Jones Pelosi, Mary and Jim Annis, and Jack Battick.

Can we tell your story or share your special



This year's exhibit at the Annual Chamber of Commerce Expo featured information on Dyer & Hughes and Hughes & Son Organ and Piano Makers of Foxcroft. As part of the exhibit a 1880's reed organ was displayed. A revised version of the Dyer & Hughes exhibit will be on view at the Museum this summer along with a parlor organ.

Our Corporate Sponsors

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Message From Mary

Work is starting at the *Observer* Building thanks to Nancy and Jack Battick. The exhibits are being spruced up so we are ready in July to start receiving visitors. We are looking for hosts to help on Sunday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. starting the first Sunday in July and going through the last Sunday in September. If you can help please call 564-0820 to sign up for an afternoon of fun. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Mary Annis, Society President

Upcoming Programs

September 3

The Changing Face of Rural Foxcroft

Jack Battick will talk to us about the earliest settlements in the rural part of Foxcroft and how things have changed.

Message from Madelyn

Membership dues for 2003-2004 were payable on April 1st. Have you paid yours? Review your checkbook, please - did you forget to send your check?

Editor Edes of the early *Piscataquis Herald* often found it difficult to carry on as per this editorial in March 1842:

"The publication of the *Piscataquis Herald* is suspended for a few weeks. All persons therefore, who are indebted to us for the *Herald* or Advertising are requested to make immediate payment. We are O.P. (out of paper) - O.I. (Out of Ink) - O.C. (Out of Cash) O.C. (Out of Credit) - and shall be soon O.H. (Out of Humor) unless you "fid up" forthwith."

Madelyn C. Betts, Society Secretary

Membership Application & Donation Form

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town/City: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Annual Dues (\$3.00 per person):\$ _____ Donation: \$ _____ (tax deductible)

Please make checks payable to: Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society. Mail to: 11 Harrison Avenue, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. Dues cover April 2003-April 2004.

President's Annual Report 2003

As we review the year past we find our Historical Society on firm ground and growing. We continue to add to our membership list thanks to the diligence of our members and the excellent *Shiretown Conserver*. The articles are very interesting and each one sparks memories and the urge to join and receive more issues. This production is due to the efforts of the many who contribute but most of our thanks goes to Nancy and Jack Battick, the editors.

We held our five business meetings last year and the topics were varied. At our annual meeting in April we elected our officers for the coming year, discussed the state of our society, and Charles Hesketh showed us his marvelous collection of milk bottles from dairies in the state of Maine. At our May meeting we went to sea with Maine seafaring families thanks to our captain, Jack Battick. June found us learning about raising fox, an occupation held by the ancestors of narrator Lou Stevens. In September, Bill and Kathryn Cook came from Bangor dressed in Civil War era costumes complete with their "surgery". Walter MacDougal, author of the *Old Somerset Railroad* spoke to us of railroading at our October meeting.

The Blacksmith Shop Museum was once again open to the public from Memorial Day past Labor Day. Dave Lockwood is a very dedicated curator. We will be replacing part of the roof this year.

The Observer Building now has the back room completed and set up. Dr. Stitham's office is on display along with an exhibit in honor of the Piscataquis Observer and several items donated by the Dow family. We have set up an exhibit in the middle room of Dr. Robbins' Dentistry practice. This office was at the Hinkley Museum for many years and his daughter, Julia Robbins Shamback contacted us to bring it back "home".

The Society had an exhibit at the SPCCC Show in April. Many people stopped to share memories. We focused on the railroad here. We had been given many items pertaining to this subject and this was a perfect opportunity to share them.

We were open at the Observer Building every Sunday afternoon from July through September. We had many visitors from all over the country. We were also open on Homecoming Saturday and thanks to Dot Greenlaw and Lou Stevens many alumni were able to see the Museum. A special thank you goes out to all those who hosted last summer.

We now are ready to go into our next year and we once again have a full schedule of activities. We hope to have two display cases in place soon and some work parties at both the Blacksmith Shop and the Observer Building. Our members continue to contribute time, money, and treasures of local history. We look forward to another busy year of keeping Dover and Foxcroft's history safe for all to enjoy.

Mary Annis
Society President

**Observer Building Museum
April 1, 2002-March 31, 2003**

Total Cash, March 31, 2002: \$11,361.87

Cash Received

Dues	\$ 783.00
Donations	1840.00
Interest	98.84
Gifts	5695.00
Blanket Sales	533.90
Corporate Sponsors	525.00
Book Sales	44.25
D-F Damage Refund	96.17
	<hr/>
	\$9616.16

Disbursements

Memberships	50.00
Postage	262.74
Printing	509.13
Insurance	665.63
Electricity	269.32
Fuel/Service	1368.90
Water/Sewer	362.04
Building Supplies	263.75
Phone	537.27
Programs	50.00
Building Repairs	2907.17
Video Purchase	21.05
Road Signs	60.00
Artifact Purchases	25.00
	<hr/>
	\$7615.87

Total \$2000.29

Grand Total \$13,362.16

Bangor Savings Acct.

Checking	\$ 201.99
Savings	\$ 13,160.17

Grand Total \$ 13,362.16

**Blacksmith Shop Museum
April 1, 2002-March 31, 2003**

Total Cash, March 31, 2002: \$1,078.42

Cash Received

Donations	\$100.30
Interest	6.91
	<hr/>
	\$107.21

Disbursements

Service Charge	\$ 4.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 4.00

Difference: \$103.21

Grand Total \$1,181.63

Bangor Savings Account

Checking	\$ 212.33
Savings	969.30

\$1181.63

Respectfully submitted,

James D. Annis, Treasurer

The Shiretown Conserver

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Can You See the Bronze Plaque - and do you know its story?
See Article beginning Page 1 for details.