



THE SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

Volume XII, Number 2

Summer 2008

One of the Greatest Generation's Sacrifice

By Lowell P. Tyler

We're up in the air in a B-17
And the earth below can plainly be seen,
Pretty mountains and valleys from this plane
I can see

Unfortunately I cannot remember the rest of these words that were written in 1944 while flying several thousand feet over France en route to a bombing raid over Germany. But the writer went on to describe the beauty he observed as he looked down on the landscape and found it difficult to imagine the destruction that war was raining upon the unfortunate population below. And the writer made note of the fact that he was there so that young people, like myself at the time could grow up free.

The words were those of a man named Ora Murch, a first engineer and gunner on that plane. They were written to me when I was still in high school.

Ora Murch was a friend of the family. He and my uncle who lived with us and Ora's brother were all buddies. They all went into the service, serving in different theaters of action. My uncle was wounded in the Philippines and was awarded the Bronze and Silver Stars and a Purple Heart. Ora's brother returned a veteran but luckily without wounds.

Dover-Foxcroft at the time had a population of 4,900 people. It had been about 4,900 when I was born; it was 4,900 at the outbreak of World War II, and it is still about 4,900 people. We hunted, fished, trapped, enjoyed the outdoors and didn't worry too much about the outside world. Our world was nature, the Maine woods, a moose wading into a pond to escape mosquitos, a white tail deer feeding off a farmer's apple

orchard, the sound of the loon echoing across the lake on a quiet moonlit summer night, white capped waves on scenic Sebec Lake, slapping lazily upon rugged rocky shores, a casual laid back life with good down-to-earth people. Our outside world was the sound of the puffing steam engines and the rumble of the Canadian Pacific Railroad that could be heard off in the distant wilderness cutting across central Maine. (Continues on Page 6)



Technical Sergeant Ora W. Murch.
DFHS Collection.

Inside This Issue

New officers	2
First Ever Ornament	2
2008 Summer Schedule	3
Work on the Facade	4
Museum Software	4



The DFHS board & officers for 2008: seated, l-r: Ellen Rainsford, Susan Burleigh, Carmen Smith; 2nd row, l-r: Sylvia Dean, Jim Brown, Mary Annis, Chris Maas, Bob Ladd; 3rd row, l-r: Steve Rainsford, Dave Lockwood, Jack Battick. Not pictured Jim Annis & Nancy Battick. Photo by Nancy Battick.

Changes At the Society

At the Annual Meeting members voted to alter the fiscal year to match the calendar year. This change will begin in January 2009 and your annual dues for 2009 will be due that month.

Members also voted a new dues structure effective January 2009: Seniors \$7; all others \$10 per year.

Society Issues 1st Xmas Ornament

The Society has for sale a limited edition glass ornament featuring the Blacksmith shop museum. The ornament is silver glass with the design in red and our black and white photo doesn't do it justice. Each ornament is \$6 (great gift idea for a low price) and can be shipped to your home for an additional \$4 or a total of \$10. We have 100 ornaments and they are available on a first come, first served basis. Each year we'll be offering a new

ornament with a different historic building on it. To get yours send a check to Mary Annis, 28 Orchard Road, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. You can also phone Mary at 564-0820.



First in a series this ornament shows the Blacksmith Shop museum and is clearly marked 2008.

2008 Will Be A Summer To Remember!!

Along with the much-longed for summer warmth will be some truly great programs and activities at our two museums. Be sure to join us and get your tickets early for limited seating events.

June 14th: Annual Attic & Book Sale & Raffle. DF Fire Station. It's time to look for great bargains at our 3rd annual attic & book sale. Our sale will have something for everyone from a locking gun cabinet to some lovely collectibles. The sale runs from 9 to 2 p.m. this year. You can still donate by contacting Sylvia Dean at 876-3663. Don't forget to volunteer to help!

June 29th: Special Showing of Gettysburg. Come remember the 145th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg at Center Theatre at 1 p.m. Special exhibits; reenactors; surprises. Part of the entrance fee benefits your Society!

July 19th: Bus Tour of Old Foxcroft with Lou Stevens. He's back with a new tour of Old Foxcroft beginning at the Soldiers Monument in Monument Square. Tickets are only \$5 but seating is strictly limited to 40. For tickets call Mary Annis at 564-0820 or Nancy Battick at 564-3576.

August 2nd: Homecoming & Book Signing. Come, visit the Observer Building Museum from noon to 4 p.m. Steve Rainsford will be with us to sign copies of his new book, *Around Dover-Foxcroft*, an Images of America publication. Great exhibits including an 1898 log drive, a special summer at Sebec Lake with Foxcroft photographers Sumner & Jenny Chase, World War II, the Grange, and wonderful 1950's clothing. Costumed hostesses add to the fun.

August: TBA. Star Party at the Blacksmith Shop Museum. Watch the papers and our website for more details.

Fall: TBA. Stone laying in memory of *Emma B.* At the Blacksmith Shop Museum.

July: TBA. Unveiling of Historic Building sign. Watch the paper for details.

Please note the Blacksmith Shop museum will reopen this year following the replacement of sills. Watch the local media for the exact date. The Observer Building Museum will open around July 1st because of work to the facade.



Photographer Jennie L. Chase, 1901. DFHS Collection

The Old Observer Office

The old Observer windows
are looking out at me.
The panes above the old front door
are very glad to see
The comings and the goings
in the Village Square
So different from the days of old
with only horses there,
I tell them things will soon be back
for everyone to see
A special plan will make all things
The way they used to be

Phyllis Jones Pelosi

Thank you, Phyllis, our sentiments exactly.
Be sure to watch the work progress on the
Union Square Facade starting in late
May/early June. Labor for the facade has
been generously donated by Peter & Chris
Maas and the financial generosity of our
members and friends made purchasing all
supplies possible. We'll have photos of the
"new" facade in the fall issue.

Shaw's Receipts

Have you heard? The Society is asking its
members and friends to save their Shaw's
and Osco receipts. Thanks to the generosity
of Shaw's Supermarkets we receive a
percentage of each \$5,000 worth of receipts
we are able to turn in. To date we've raised

\$99.61 You can send receipts to Mary
Annis at 28 Orchard Road, Dover-Foxcroft,
ME 04426. And we thank you.

Online Shopping Benefits Society

If you shop online please check out
www.igive.com. The Society is one of its
registered charities and they have a list of
hundreds of online stores including most of
the major brands where a purchase from you
will earn money for the Society. All you'll
have to do is sign up and shop through the
igive portal. Please consider helping us
financially when you shop online.

Community Foundation Grant

The Society is the recipient of a generous
grant from the Community Foundation
which has allowed us to purchase the
museum-only cataloging software Past
Perfect for our computer. Eventually the
museum catalog will contain listings for our
entire collection including artifacts, books,
photos, textiles, etc.

Entering the items, scanning photos, etc. is
an enormous job. If you would like to help
with this project please get in touch with
Chris Maas or Nancy Battick. No prior
experience necessary but catalogers must be
methodical and accurate in their work. You
can reach Chris at 564-2666 or Nancy at
564-3576.

Our Business Sponsors

Again, we want to thank all the businesses whose financial and in-kind donations help the Society survive economically. As you patronize these businesses be sure to thank them for helping your Society:

Friends: (Services, donations to \$49)

Mr. Paperback
Bob's Hardware
Bigelow Travel

Patrons (Donations \$50-\$99)

Brothers Chevrolet
Dover Auto Parts

Sponsors (\$100 and up)

Rowell's Garage
Lary's Funeral Home
Drs. Steinke & Caruso
Dr. Ellen Anderson
Foxcroft Veterinary
Howard Insurance
Maine Highland Credit Union
The Green Door Gallery
The Piscataquis Observer

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members to our group:

Ray Webb	Maine
Dennis & Patti Lyford	Maine
Ralph Gabarro	Maine
Roger Kaufman	Maine
Gary Nelson	Maine

And a sad farewell to members Evelyn Weston & Lois Bigelow. The Society sends its deepest condolences to the families.

Blacksmith Shop needs you!

As most of you know the Blacksmith Shop was closed last season while the rotten sills were replaced and other repairs made.

In order to accomplish this work all items were removed and many have been shifted to the Observer Building Museum collection because they were actually not items pertaining to the Blacksmith Shop itself. The remaining items were returned to the Shop, but not in any particular order.

Now Curator Dave Lockwood needs help to tidy the Shop, create signage and rearrange exhibits in order to open.

Can you possibly spare some time to help Dave? Those of you who know him realize how much time and effort he gives the Society and the Shop every year with little help.

If you can possibly spare him some time (No Experience necessary!!) Please contact Dave at 564-8618.

Hosts Wanted

The Observer Building's season will be shortened this year due to work on the facade, but we'll still need hosts to give visitors tours and answer questions.

If you'd like to help out, please get in touch with Mary Annis at 564-0820.

We will ask that all hosts attend a brief training session so that we're all operating in the same manner and we can answer your questions, show you our displays and go over a host's duties. Years ago our hosts often "babysat" the museum, but this is no longer the case.

Also, the occasional host will probably be needed at the Blacksmith Shop.

Ora Murch. Ora Murch probably knew little of the outside world. He probably seldom read the newspaper. He wasn't much interested in the problems of the world far removed from his peaceful environment. His problems were outsmarting a white tail deer or hooking a landlocked salmon. He came from a family that were among the early settlers in our area. They were pioneers, a peaceful people who loved their neighbors, loved the tranquility of the Maine outdoors and the simple things in life.

But he was called upon like millions of other young Americans to interrupt his career, to put his life's ambitions on hold for a while, to get behind the flag of our country. Ora Much was shipped halfway around the world to defend his land against a dictator and his mad quest for world domination.

It must have seemed strange that his quiet world on the shores of Sebec Lake was threatened by the evil events so far away in a land with strange dialects, language and customs. But he went, like millions of others. He didn't want to go. He was drafted, like millions of others.

But he knew that a duty called. Other young Americans before him had fought in World War I and other conflicts he read about in the history books. These Americans had passed on to him the freedom that he enjoyed on the shores of Sebec Lake. And he knew that when he inherited that freedom that he also inherited a responsibility, a responsibility that required his generation, his time in the history of events, to preserve what was handed down to him and ensure that these precious freedoms would be passed on to succeeding generations.

Ora Murch didn't question the call. I'm sure he was scared. I'm sure he had his doubts at times, but his devotion to his country, the symbol of the flag, the high moral principles he adhered to, principles dominant in the rugged character of Maine people, the rugged character that was proven by Chamberlain's 20th Maine at Little

Round Top at the Battle of Gettysburg and in the trenches facing attacks in France in WWI, drove him forward into the face of danger.

Within a week of my receiving his letter and that enclosed poem, Ora Murch was killed on April 9, 1944, in a bombing run over Germany. He was 28 years old. I wasn't aware, not at my age of 16, what I held in my hand and threw that letter and poem away. But I have always remembered those opening lines and the thought that he was conveying to a kid who didn't quite understand the true meaning back home in the serenity of my small town and the shores of Sebec Lake. So Ora Murch became a memory lying somewhere in an unknown grave in a faraway land. Now he belonged to the ages.

Wars are not fought by heroes like John Wayne on the movie screens of our theaters. They are fought by loving, breathing people; people like Ora. And if he could speak he would say let us destroy the illusion that war is glory, heroism, and fame. Know that war is mud, blood, and a terrible horror, a living hell. He speaks out fully of the futility of war that sends cathedrals toppling into ruins, leaves wooden crosses where field once grew plentiful harvests, leaves widows and orphans starving, hospitals filled with maimed veterans, piling up mountains of debt on the backs of people, broken hearts in once blossoming love, empty and forlorn. Ora Murch reminds us that war robs us of the talents of our youth.

For me, I thank Ora for making possible the opportunities that I have enjoyed. I thank him that I can still speak freely just because I choose to. I thank him because he succeeded in guaranteeing that young kid back in 1944 that he could grow up free.

NOTE: This article is adapted from a speech first given by the author on Flag Day in 1996 to the Lantana/Boynton Elks Club of Lantana, Florida. Lowell Tyler, a member of the Society, is a former President of the Palm (Page 7)

Ora Murch. Beach County Civil War Roundtable Associates, an avid World War II historian, the State Historian for the Florida State Elks Association, and maintains his interest in Dover-Foxcroft and its history.

Ora Murch was born in Foxcroft in 1916, the son of John and Susie E. Murch. He was drafted in 1942 and reached the rank of technical sergeant at the time of his death over Germany. Ora's medals will be on display this summer at the Observer Building Museum's exhibit on World War II.

Annual Treasurer's Report **By James Annis**

To the Members of the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society:

Dear Friends,

As you can see by the annual Historical Society Treasurer's Report, it's been a long and complicated fiscal year. However, we've accomplished many goals with many more to go, as your President will tell you.

I feel that the Society is financially stable and will continue to be with the conservative guidance of your board of directors. We did exceptionally well with our oil purchase at \$2.45 a gallon. I feel very strongly this will never happen again, which will cause us concern as the next oil purchase comes along in July.

I'd like to touch on some points in the Report. Dues were down by \$190 and donations were down by \$229.50. However, gifts were up by \$920 only because our quarterly legacy donation from the Maine Community Foundation has risen from \$685 per quarter to \$1285. Carmen Smith was responsible for the \$2825 in Corporate Donations. It was her tenacity that

brought in this kind of cash. \$1940 was made from the sale of a DVD produced by Carlson Williams; free of charge I might add. The sales have dropped considerably so we can't depend on that kind of income from DVD sales next year. The Civil War supper grossed \$1222.50, but expenses of \$616.56 pretty much cut that revenue in half.

Capital improvements were considerably high this year, but much was done to the buildings to enhance their appearance and functionality which will make you proud of your Society. The expense could have been much higher if it weren't for the volunteers who did the bull work, carpentry, and sweat.

Electricity cost us pretty much the same as last year rising a mere \$12.90. The trailer rental was a one-time expense and was utilized as a storage area for the contents of the Blacksmith Shop while the building was leveled and the roof replaced.

All in all, as a conservative and being accused of treating the treasure as my treasury, I feel that your Society's officers have done very well by you regarding the dispensing of your donations and dues. They are extremely sincere and want very much to provide you the very best of a Society for the very best cost savings possible. You should shower them with praise. They have you and your history in their hands and are providing the very best of care for them.

Sincerely,
Jim Annis, Treasurer

New Logo

Notice anything different about our masthead? The Board of Directors adopted a new logo for the Historical Society. Let us know if you like it.

Annual Treasurer's Report for the Period April 1, 2007 through March 31, 2008

Total Cash as Of March 31, 2008: \$7,888.38

Cash Received

Dues	\$ 1235.00
Donations	2435.00
Interest	48.63
Gifts	3637.50
Society Sales	274.00
Corporate Gifts	2825.00
Grants	1580.22
Trailer Refund	45.60
Civil War Supper	1222.50
Attic Sale	1305.10
Fuel Oil Refund	2548.17
DVD Sales	1940.00
Raffle	409.00
Bus Tour	205.00
Blanket Sales	114.00
Retail Slips (Shaw's)	51.38
IGive	22.57
Facade Donation	100.00

Total	\$19,998.67
Difference	

Grand Total

Bangor Savings Bank

Checking
Savings

Grand Total

Disbursements

Memberships	\$ 130.00
Postage	590.76
Printing	975.60
Insurance	1155.00
Electricity	367.07
Fuel/Service	3957.50
Water/Sewer	485.05
Capitol Improvements	5612.62
Phone	574.89
Supplies	2505.29
Check Purchase	13.75
CW Sup. Cash Advance	200.00
CW Sup. Congo Church	616.56
Radio Ads	3.75
Road Signs	60.00
Parade Wagon	100.00
Trailer Rental	616.40
Rent	125.00

Total	\$18,089.24
Difference	\$ 1909.43

Grand Total

276.71
9521.10

\$9,797.81

Respectfully submitted,
James D. Annis
Treasurer, Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

Annual President's Report

By Mary Annis

As we reflect on the past year we find our Historical Society an active, viable force in the community. This is thanks to the efforts of everyone who is a member of our group coming to our events, working at the museums, and talking about the Society to those we meet.

We had our annual meeting scheduled for April 4, but unfortunately it was snowed out. The May meeting was a video "Don't Fence Me In" about the German POWs who came back to visit Camp Houlton. One of our favorites - Lou Stevens - shared a program "Incidents at the Race Track" in June. Our fall meetings had Jack Battick talking about "Morbidity and Mortality in New England" in September, and in October we were treated to old photos of Dover and Foxcroft from the State Archives. This was presented by Earle Shettleworth, Jr., Commissioner of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

This past summer was a busy one for the Society. In June we held our second annual Attic Sale, led by the efforts of Sylvia Dean and Sharon Phillips. Next came a wonderful bus tour of Dover with Lou Stevens sharing his expert knowledge of places along the route and their past histories. In July we joined forces with the Dover-Foxcroft Congregational Church and held a Civil War Supper with entertainment. Hannibal Hamlin was our guest of honor and we joined Eric Boothroyd in singing

Civil War era songs. Homecoming in August had us marching in the parade with a horse drawn wagon and an old auto. It was the first time we had done this and it was an adventure. We were then open for the day and our Farm Wife, played by Edie Hussey, told people about how it was to live on a farm in the 1940's with no electricity.

The Observer Building now has a new library, an archive room where we store photos, textiles, and documents, and an artifact room where we store large items in our collection. Thanks to the Thompson Free Library who purchased new shelving, we now have their old shelves and it is perfect for our needs. These new rooms are on the second floor and are locked. We also have a new flat file, thanks to a grant, where we can store our oversized documents and photos.

We had new displays in the museum for the summer. In the front room we displayed dresses and gowns from 1890 to 1910 from our collection. The middle room showed an exhibit on schools and in the showcase a display on Central Hall. In the back room our photo exhibit was babies and children and in the cases were items about life on the farm in the 1940's. This is where our farmer's wife told of her life on the farm.

The Blacksmith Shop now sits on new sills. Before that work was done we had to remove all the items and as we put them back they were cataloged. This was a project that needed to be done for several years. We plan to reopen this summer.

Although the Blacksmith Shop was closed last summer due to the replacement of the sills, the Observer Building was open two days a week. A big thank you goes out to all who hosted during those times. Our *Shiretown Conserver* was sent out quarterly with some very interesting and informative articles. A thank you goes to those who contributed to the success of the newsletter and very big thank you to Nancy Battick who is the editor.

A major fundraiser for the Society last year was a DVD "Glimpses of Dover Foxcroft's Past" compiled and produced by member Carlson Williams. It is a wonderful DVD and we thank him for his donation of time, DVDs and expertise.

The Society's enthusiastic friend, Dot Greenlaw, surprised us all with a wonderful donation. We were not aware of this donation until the end of the year when the Maine Community Foundation notified us that there had been over \$80,000 put into our account from her will. We cannot touch the principal but we do get the interest from this account. We certainly thank Dot for remembering us and her generosity.

The Board of Directors voted unanimously at the last meeting to make three members lifetime members. This was due to their tireless efforts and commitment they have given to the Society over many years. They are Madelyn C. Betts, Dave Lockwood, and Lou Stevens.

The town of Dover-Foxcroft has asked that

the Society become involved with overlooking the historic properties in town. In this regard, the Zoning Ordinance Committee has asked us to form a committee from members who would be willing to sit on this board. We have named Jack & Nancy Battick, Chris Maas, Dave Lockwood, and Bob Ladd.

We now look ahead to this season and once again have a full schedule. Plans are being made to change the facade of the Observer Building back to its original configuration and thanks to many donations we are well on the way. This year we also will be selling a Christmas ornament. We hope this will go over well and be an ongoing item with anew, different ornament each year. Our members continue to contribute time, money, and treasures of local history to the Society and we continue to save these treasures for the future generations.

Mary I. Annis,
President

Editor's Corner

A brief word of thanks to all who helped with this issue: Lowell P. Tyler, Jim & Mary Annis, Jack Battick, those who helped prepare *the Conserver* for mailing. Thanks to all of you from the bottom of my heart.

New submissions are always welcome. Send them to me at 308 Foxcroft Cent. Rd, DF 04426 or e-mail them to nbattick@roadrunner.com. Nancy Battick

Message From Mary

Thanks to the generosity of all of our members, we have received nearly \$4,000 toward our facade project. And to add to these donations we have an offer from a member to donate the labor. This is just amazing and we will be putting in our new facade this June. Thank you all!

We are getting the Blacksmith Shp ready to be opened this spring with a special event planned. Stay tuned! The Observer Building will be open this summer, too, we are hoping for the first of July. Lots happening as you can see from reading your Conserver. We have such an awesome membership.

Mary I. Annis, President

Meetings & Programs 2008 Thayer Parkway, 7 p.m.

June 4	"The Race Track" by Lou Stevens
September 3	"Who Killed Sir Harry Oakes?" by Carlson Williams
October 1	"Stereoptican Views of Dover & Foxcroft" by Earle Shettleworth, Jr.

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society Membership Application & Donation Form

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town/City: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Annual Dues (\$5.00 per person):\$ _____ Donation: \$ _____ (tax deductible)

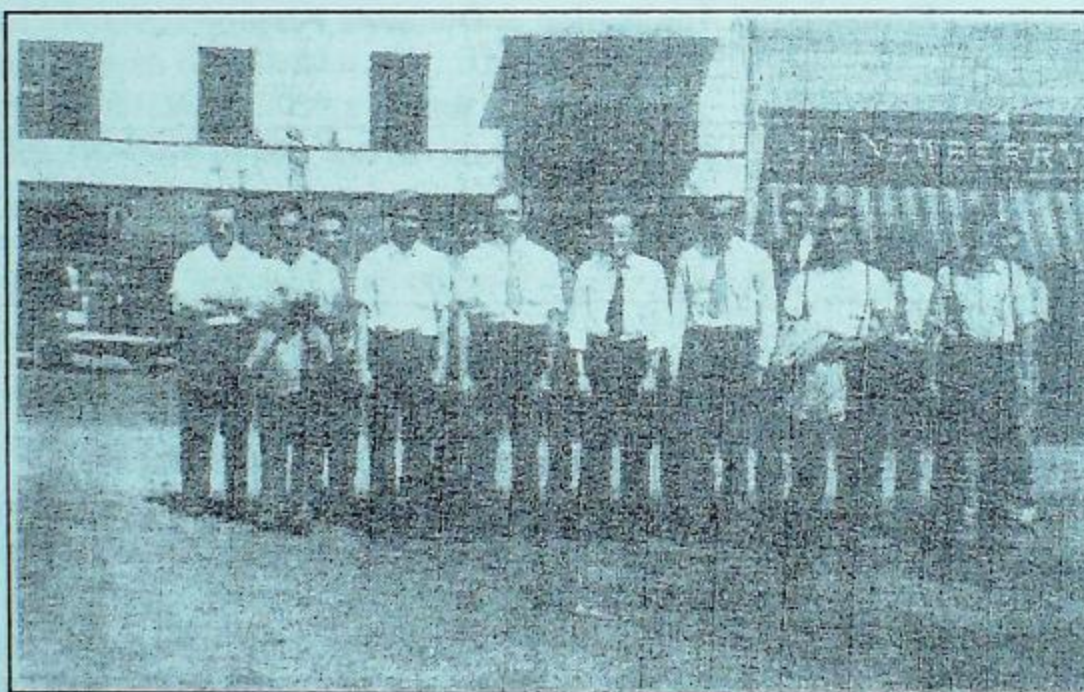
Please make checks payable to: Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society. Mail to: 874 West Main Street, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. Dues cover April to April.

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; e-mail us at dfhistory@yahoo.com

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, Inc.
28 Orchard Road
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426-3706

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 57
DOVER-FOXCROFT
ME.



A common sight in the early stages of WWII, this photo of a group of men off to war includes Ora W. Murch (4th from left). Ora's service is honored in our feature story on page 1.