



# The SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society  
Volume 21, Number 2      Summer 2018

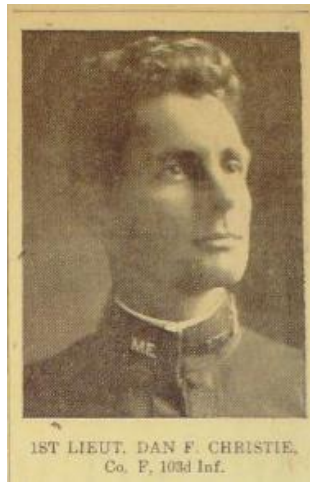
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## Our Hometown Boys Serve

Company F , 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Maine Volunteers

(Part 2)

By Mary Annis



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To commemorate the last year of World War I, and our most intense involvement in the fighting, we present memories of Company F, composed largely of local Piscataquis County men.

The 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment began life in the Civil War as an Army National Guard Regiment made up of men from New England, but most of the soldiers came from Maine. It saw action from 1861-1863 and during World War One and World War Two, being deactivated after service in 1945.

We pick up our story in 1917, when the Company arrived in France      *Mary Annis*

The 103<sup>rd</sup>, including our brave lads from Company F, arrived in France in October 1917 and were quartered in a village named Liffold le Grande, population of about three thousand people. It was five or six days march away from the front. On a still night the rumble of distant guns could be heard. The winter was cold but not as cruel as the Maine winter. Snow was not very deep but the temperature was often 20 degrees below zero.

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## The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

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## From the *Piscataquis Observer*

"OVER THERE."

—1918—

Somebody's mother is sleeping,  
Leaning back in her chair;  
And her dreams are of her only son,  
Who is fighting "over there."

Daring and brave and loyal,  
He answered his country's call;  
And the mother, with equal courage,  
Gave to the flag her all.

In her dreams he's again her baby,  
Leaning over her knee,  
Begging her for some stories  
As he laughs in childish glee.

And she tells him of his daddy  
Who fought across the sea,  
And died beneath his banner,  
That the Cubans might be free.

And he says, "I'll be a soldier  
When I'm a man, you'll see,  
And be as brave and fearless,  
As my daddy used to be."

As he kisses her, she wakens  
To remember he's away  
And is fighting, "like his daddy."  
In the center of the fray.

Then she takes from a shelf two portraits;  
Her husband and her son —  
And though the uniforms are different  
Their expressions are as one.

Purpose and dauntless courage  
And a pride in the flag they bear  
Show that the soldier spirit  
Is a feeling that they share.

Then she kisses the pictured faces,  
"His father is glad, I know,  
That I gave him to his country,  
When it called for him to go.

"And I'll be as brave as they were,  
And try to do my share  
To help in the noble struggle  
For the Victory "over there"

Ina F. Ladd, Dover

**The New Electric Iron**

While hubby works downtown tonight  
I'll do a little pressing.  
I'll hitch this cord into the light—  
But, heavens! how distressing!  
I need the light;  
I need the heat—  
Whatever shall I do?

"I'm Yours For Double Duty"

**BENJAMIN 92**

Screws into present socket  
No extra wiring required

\$1.25 Each  
3 for \$3.50

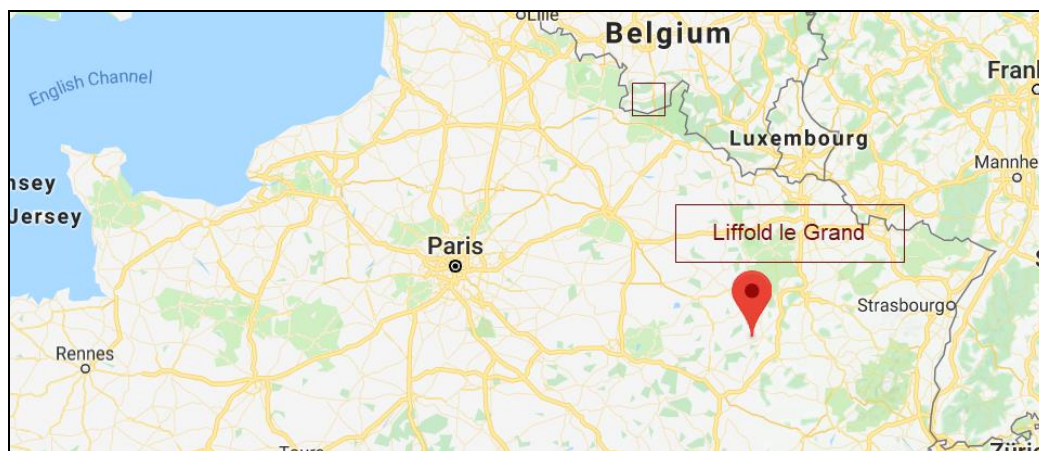
Provides Two Electric Connections From One Socket

**Penobscot Bay Electric Co.**

(1918)

(Hometown Boys Serve, continued from page 1)

The regiment received training from the 163<sup>rd</sup> French regiment. They learned the use of the bayonet, automatic rifle, gas and fire bombs, along with French formations. The regiment remained in Liffold le Grande until February 1918. The boys looked upon this village as their home in France, and their relations with the villagers was pleasant. The villagers gave the unit its nickname “the Yankee Division”.



During February and March 1918, the regiment was brigaded between two French Regiments on the westerly end of the Chemin de Dames. Just at that time the sector was quiet. The men upon taking up this new position passed through Soisson on February 8<sup>th</sup> and marched about eight miles to a point some three miles behind the battle front. Here they took up quarters in an immense cave, or chalk quarry, forty feet underground, capable of holding with ease the entire regiment. The work of the men during this time was to strengthen the barbed wire and dig trenches farther back from the front line in case they were needed. Much of the work was done under artillery fire. Spaulding of H Company and Hunt of Headquarters Co. were killed by shell fire. Trouble also came from gas. Each battalion, made up of four companies, would hold the front trench for sixteen days, four days to a company. The Augusta Company, being quarantined for a time because of scarlet-fever, measles and mumps, had little front line work. Under the guidance of the French, the boys resisted enemy raids, executed raids of their own, captured prisoners and lost very few men.

While the infantry was busy with the above duties, the artillerymen were learning to use the French '75 guns. One night, when an Allied raid was to be made – the purpose to take prisoners – the French allowed the American students to lay the barrage. The French '75 is capable of firing six shots a minute without overheating the gun. When word was received to begin the barrage, the Americans in their “zeal to give the Boche hell”, fired some twenty-three shots a minute, in spite of the “Non, non, non’s” of the French! As a result, some four batteries, numbering sixteen guns, were put out of commission, and had to be sent for repairs. A German officer, captured during the raid, asked to see the new three inch machine gun which they had been using against them. The '75s had been fired so rapidly the Germans thought the French had a new automatic '75.

About the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of March the regiment received word to move out. Before they had all left, the huge German drive on the Chemin de Dames began, and had the regiment remained, would probably have been annihilated, as were the French by the Germans which overran and took the defense system. As it was, companies E, F, G and H, comprised of boys from Skowhegan, Dover, Foxcroft, Bangor and Waterville were harried by enemy aviators. The second battalion and Headquarters Company were subjected to shell fire, and escaped casualties only by good fortune.

The regiment was moved by rail to the southeastern part of France and detrained at Bar sur Aube. From here they marched for five days across country to their original training village, Liffol le Grande. They expected to remain here but, after six days rest, they marched east and took up a position in the Toul sector. The first all day battle between German and American troops took place in this sector and the 103<sup>rd</sup> saw some fierce fighting and won distinction.

(Continued on page 4)

(Our Hometown Boys Serve, continued from page 3)

It was at Xivray, on June 18<sup>th</sup>, that the Maine boys distinguished themselves in an action that should live long in the history of the war. The Germans had made great preparation for an attack on the American lines. From a German officer captured later, it was learned that the Germans planned to take American prisoners for information purposes, and then to push on through Xivray to Toul and Bouoq, their objectives. Nine artillery trains were seen to pull into the German lines on the afternoon preceding the attack, and others were heard to arrive that night. The assault was preceded by an intense bombardment of the town of Xivray and the back areas for a distance of twelve miles. Following the bombardment, the Germans sent forward some six hundred shock-troops. Their engineers came ahead and blew the barbed wire. Then came the liquid-fire men, followed by the machine gun men, the infantry and the pioneers. The supporting American batteries caught sight of the advancing Germans and laid down a barrage behind them, shutting off retreat to the German lines or the bringing up of support. The attack was made on the village of Xivray, held by the Eastport Company. The Skowhegan Company also had some part in the fight. Probably fifty men out of these companies actually participated in the fighting. The artillery and machine guns opened up on the Germans at the same moment. The American barrage was wonderful – not a shot went astray. The liaison work between the fighting men and headquarters, between the infantry and the artillery was perfect, although all wires had been taken down in the initial bombardment. The Germans were literally mown down. Of the six hundred shock-troops sent into battle, all but fifty were killed. The German dead lay four or five deep in places. In front of one machine gun position, forty-five dead Germans were strung along the wire and into the trenches. Not content with waiting, the Maine boys went out and mopped up what was left of the Kaiser's best, who had been told the town was held by but a handful of Americans and to "go and get them".

At a critical moment in the attack, a German machine-gun squad had entered a road between the trenches that would have allowed them to make a flank attack and do damage to the Americans. They were met by Verne Boutlier of Houlton. He attacked the advancing Germans with an automatic rifle. The rifle being out of ammunition, he went after the Germans armed only with a bayonet in his hand. He took the machine gun single-handed, and turned it against the attackers, and for a few moments, alone, until his platoon came up, he held the road and prevented what would have been a disastrous flank attack. A liquid-fire squad of three men, succeeded in entering the town. They were seen by Captain Williams, who shot the man carrying the tank with his revolver. The bullet passed through the man's body and into the tank which exploded and destroyed the three flame-throwers.

The Germans took one prisoner, an Eastport boy whose eagerness had carried him too far ahead of his fellow soldiers, and who had been wounded. Lieutenant Irvin E. Doane of the Houlton Company, observing the plight of this boy, called for volunteers from his unit to go to the rescue. Every man stepped forward. Choosing seven, Doane went after the Germans who were in charge of the prisoner. Needless to say, they rescued the Eastport boy. On the way back, this squad took prisoners, a Red Cross man and a German officer. In this battle the Americans suffered but twenty casualties, eight of which were from the Eastport Company. The number included both the killed and wounded. The regiment received special commendation for its actions.

The regiment remained in the Toul sector during April, May and June. As they were leaving on June 27, General Passaga, commander of the 32<sup>nd</sup> army corps, French army, issued a general order "Under the distinguished command of their chief, General Edwards, the high-spirited soldiers of the Yankee division have taught the enemy some bitter lessons, at Bois Brule, at Selcheprey, at Xivray-Marvoisin; they have taught him to realize the staunch vigor of the sons of the great republic fighting for the world's freedom".

After halting the great German offensive our boys took the initiative, and on the evening of July 17<sup>th</sup> the 26<sup>th</sup> Division received orders to advance the next morning. The objective assigned to the 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment was the town of Torcy. The 104<sup>th</sup> Regiment was assigned Belleau Wood lying to the east of Torcy. The attack began with a heavy barrage, and at 4:30 am the Maine boys went over the top. They took Torcy in twenty-two minutes. In forty-five minutes they had overrun Torcy, taken the trenches on both sides of the town, mopped up the village and consolidated their positions – ready for a counter attack. Sergeant Harvey Butler of Whitefield, (recommended for the distinguished service medal) was in charge of a platoon of forty-three men, mostly Augusta boys, who entered the town and in less than a half hour, mopped up some two companies of Germans concealed with machine guns, in dugouts, in the upper stories of the stone dwellings and in the trees. Few prisoners were taken

(Continued on Page 5)

(Our Hometown Boys Serve, continued from page 4)

Meantime the 104<sup>th</sup> Regiment had not fared as well. They failed to take the Belleau Wood plateau under the first barrage. Another was laid at eight o'clock in the morning, but this attack also failed. At ten o'clock however, under cover of a third barrage, the plateau was taken and Germans driven out. During this time the 103<sup>rd</sup> was exposed to artillery fire and had been obliged to protect their flank with machine guns and infantry, in case the Germans should finally hold their positions.

The maneuver being executed by the Allies at this time was a swinging of the whole Soisson-Chateau-Thierry line to the east of the latter city as a pivot. When the 103<sup>rd</sup> went over the top on July 18<sup>th</sup>, General Mangin was launching an attack south of Soisson. The 32<sup>nd</sup> American Division was helping him. The French operating north of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment were held up in their advance by a strong enemy machine gun nest at Monthiers. The third battalion of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, consisting of the Augusta, Eastport, Houlton and Farmington companies, by a well executed flank attack, dislodged the Germans and aided the French in their advance. The French general in command sent a letter to General Edwards in which he stated that his best troops could have done no better.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> the division pushed on with Etrepilly, Chante Merle and Bezuet as its objective, all of which were finally taken. On this day, between four in the afternoon and dark, Company M of Augusta, alone, had five men killed and sixty-six wounded, one of whom died that night.

The Skowhegan Company, in this advance, found themselves in an impossible situation, owing to the failure of support not arriving on time. They were forced to retire. They reformed, and pushed forward heroically and attained all their objectives. During eight days our boys fought in the open. They had to face and overcome danger, often advancing across open fields, artillery fire and concealed machine guns. But they fought and advanced during these eight days over 10 miles.

Acts of heroism were too numerous to mention. Every man did his duty unflinchingly. Major Southard of Bangor, wounded through the throat by a machine gun bullet, with his ear torn by shrapnel, continued to lead his men until forced to retire for medical aid, commenting as he left the field of battle that his boys would be all shot up and he would not be there to care for them.

On July 11, 1918, General Edwards issued the following general orders –

<p>“General Orders, No. 60</p>
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- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. At the moment that the 26<sup>th</sup> Division takes up its position on its third sector in three months it is fitting and proper that the division commander should take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the officers and men of the Yankee Division on the record that they have achieved since the Division actively took its place in the fighting line of the Allies for the common cause.</li><li>2. You have been taken from a sector where in three battles you have shown that the blood of New England has not attenuated and that the same spirit and traditions which your forefathers made glorious at Lexington and at Bunker Hill still survive in the generation which at Boil Brule, Seicheprey, Humbert Plantation and Xivray have met and defeated the picked troops of the enemy. His four years of experience in active warfare and the ferocity of his methods have not daunted you, and on every occasion where you have been called upon to face him you have distinguished yourself with notable valor and brought credit upon your division and upon the people of New England from which you have come to engage in this righteous conflict.</li></ol> |
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(Our Hometown Boys Serve, Continued from Page 5)

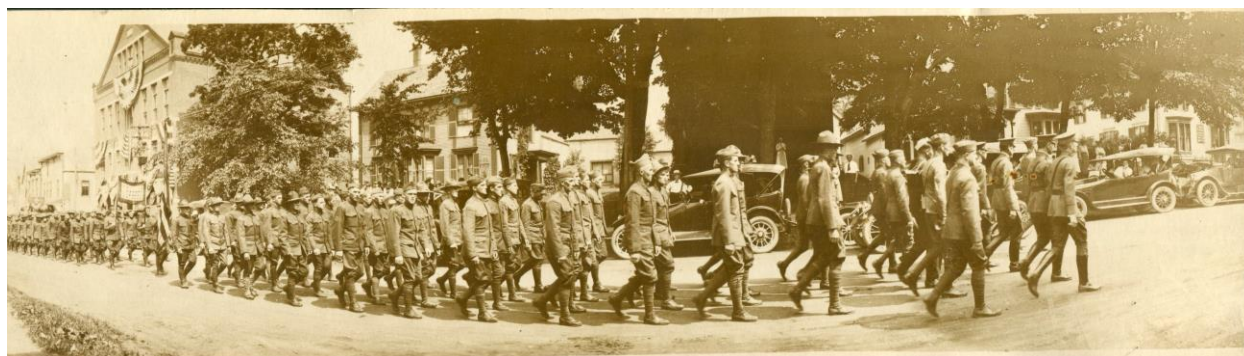
1. A great honor has been conferred upon the whole division in that the French and American High Command has at this time picked your division to come into this critical sector. That you have been so hurried to this sector is the evidence to you all of the opinion of the High Command of the mettle of which this division is constituted.
2. The past months in battle have brought men and officers into that close union of confidence and affection which have resulted in the growing moral of this division. Looking back on the past four months with its spotless record and known achievements which have been recognized by both France and America, it is with unqualified faith in the future and pride of the past that I see the 26<sup>th</sup> Division go into a new sector, certain in my conviction that the men of New England will prove once more that they are capable of every effort and every sacrifice which the future may demand of them.

C. R. Edwards  
Major General, Commanding”

The 26<sup>th</sup> Division, unsupported, pushed on to Epieds and Trugny which were taken. The latter town was taken by the Maine boys, but only after repeated and costly attacks, as the place was full of machine guns and resisted to the death. The division then pushed on the Fere-en-Tardenois where it was relieved by the Rainbow Division. In this drive, as well as in the actions on the Toul sector, great credit is due the artillerymen of the division for the ability, courage and effectiveness with which they handled the guns, both light and heavy. Their wonderful work made the deeds of the infantrymen possible and greatly reduced the number of casualties.

The boys from Maine lead the drive that later resulted in the reduction of the Marne salient, and the great German retreat. They formed the spear head of the great thrust. They were picked for an important service in a critical sector and they justified the confidence of their superiors. Every objective was attained. Not a foot of ground was lost. Not a prisoner taken from their ranks. They delivered the goods and scorned the price. No braver men, no better soldiers stood on the soil of France than the Maine boys of the 103<sup>rd</sup>.

Note: Dominique Babineau and Arthur Chadbourne were both killed in action on July 18, 1918. Several others, including Lt. Christie and Capt. Norton, were wounded.



Homecoming - 1919

## Daylight Saving.

(From the Observer, March 28, 1918)

Every clock and watch in use should be set ahead one hour either Saturday night, March 30<sup>th</sup>, or at 2 the following morning, else the owners may get left. This must be done to comply with the act to save daylight passed by Congress and signed by the President last week.

Section 3 of the act reads as follows:

“That at 2 o’clock antemeridian of the last Sunday in March of each year the standard time of each zone shall be advanced on hour, and at 2 o’clock antemeridian of the last Sunday in October in each year, the standard time of each zone shall, be the retarding of one hour, be returned to the mean astronomical time of the degree of longitude governing said one, so that between the last Sunday in March at 2 o’clock antemeridian and the last Sunday in October at 2 o’clock antemeridian in each year the standard time in each zone shall be one hour in advance of the mean astronomical time of the degree of longitude governing each zone, respectively.

The daylight saving plan has proved very satisfactory in England and must prove so in the United States, for it will give people more daylight for work in their gardens, for using automobiles, or for other purposes.

No time tables will be changed, only the clock will be changed. No engagements will be changed. Banks and other institutions, schools, etc., will continue to use the same clock time but their opening and closing will be one hour earlier in the summer.

(Editor: Could you imagine, if today, a newspaper actually printed the language of an act as in “Section 3” above? – much less a small country weekly, read mostly by farmers and workers with only a grammar school education!)

# K I N E O

## RANGES AND HEATERS



With all latest Improvements  
Including glass oven doors  
Are used everywhere

SOLD BY

**F. F. HANSON, Foxcroft.**

30-42

**Letters from Our Soldiers**  
From Alton C. Shorey, Foxcroft  
(Printed in the *Observer*, October 10, 1918)

In France, August 10, 1918

Dear Mother:

I guess it is about time I was writing to you again. I am back with Co. F again and have been staying in a small French village in the vicinity of the Marne into doing a bit of drilling just the present. I'm getting a quart of milk every night and morning from one of the farmers here and in getting back some of the flesh I lost last month.

Some of the boys who are back from the same hospital say they saw Captain Norton there in he is getting along all right and is nearly as good as new. I think he only got a small piece of shell in the leg. Joe Babineau got hit at about the same time but it just the same as took his leg off and he wasn't got out in time for things were mighty lively about that time.

I have received your letter of July 4 and several *Observers* lately and was pretty glad to hear from home again. I wonder what Dad thinks of the war now and hope he has a better or pinion of the outcome than he used to. We are in one of the most fertile and productive parts of France. There are some great gardens and wheat fields here and they are harvesting their wheat now. I have read a lot about the gleaners and seen pictures of them but suppose to those days were over, but I have seen old ladies going over the fields and picking up the scattering straws one at a time and making little bundles of them with the heads all together.

Well, it is crawling along words September and I suppose the girls are beginning to think of school again. I will it will soon be a year since I left the state's but I trust it will not be as long as that before I get back.

With love to all,  
Alton

Editor: Alton Shorey, lived from 1893 to 1962. He and his wife Doris (Stewart) are buried together in Rural Grove Cemetery.

Joe Babineau was one of two fatalities from Dover and Foxcroft during the war.



**Letters from Our Soldiers**  
From Omar Bartlett, Dover  
(Printed in the *Observer*, September 5, 1918)

In France  
July 26, 1918

Dear Mother:

I am at present in an evacuation station awaiting a trip to the base hospital. You will probably have seen in the papers before you received this letter that I was wounded and perhaps read my letter to six. First, don't worry a bit. It was a clean wound from a machine gun bullet right through my right shoulder from front to back and no bones broken. I think it will be O.K. in a few weeks. Some lucky, what?

Now for a little history of the last six days. They are days of over the top for our bunch and sure some days too. It has been twice Over for me. First with the machine gun company and then with what was left of old company F. We went over both times in daylight with no barrage protection at all. The first time it was from a wood across an open grain fields to a ravine. We encountered a machine gun barrage and some one-pound guns going across, took our objective and routed the Germans. That night, though, they made a strong counter attack and we had to go back to our first position until the next day. That machine-gun company was so badly shot up that they could not go over in the next advance. In the squad I was with only two men and myself got back.

The next time, though the Germans were got on the run and they are still retreating.

The second time Over was much the same as before, only the open field was much longer period this time I was in the very first line to go over but did not get near enough to do any damage. I was about three rods across the field when a bullet from the machine-gun barrage hit me in the shoulder and threw me. I laid low until the barrage let up a little. Then the shells began to come some close and as my legs were O.K. I made a run for the woods. Got there and to the first aid O.K. Made a quick trip by ambulance and here I am with a nice soft bed, plenty to eat and a Red Cross nurse handy by.

I met Waldo by the first aid men as I came out and he was all right then. You will probably see the list of those that you folks know who were there on the casualty list in the home papers before you get this letter.

Well, mother, this will mean a good rest for me and of course the best of care so you can rest easy about it. I only wish I knew Carl was all right. I have not heard anything about his company being in the advance.

This will mean no mail from me again for quite a while, I suppose, but I shall sure keep my letters going home right along and perhaps make it a word about Carl.

Good-bye for this time with lots of love to you all,

Your Loving Son,  
Omar Bartlett

## Annual Dues

Many thanks to all those who have sent in their Historical Society dues for 2018. 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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### A new sidewalk in Union Square

(*Observer*, April 24, 1919)

Several taxpayers who are interested in improving the condition of Union Square met the selectman Tuesday afternoon and arranged to have a sidewalk put in on the north side of the square, running from the brick store occupied by W. E. Barney & Co. (Mr. Paperback) to a point just beyond the bank block. The walk will be of concrete, like that put in on the opposite side. This will give a continuous concrete walk across the river to the corner of North and Summer streets.

The laying of the walk, which will begin very soon, would have been delayed until fall for lack of money in the treasury but for the guarantee of the interested taxpayers that the money will be ready when needed.

The sewers in the square will be looked after this season so there will be no delay in surfacing it next year.

This coming improvement to the square should encourage people generally to improve their premises by cleaning up so that the villages will maintain a reputation for neatness.



### Message from Mary

Here we are at the beginning of summer and ready to open the Observer Building for another season. This year we have a new display. Thanks to the efforts of member, Lew Dow, we have a replica of the village of East Dover. Lew, his wife Leona and daughter-in-law, Debbie Dagnon, spent the winter cutting out and painting the buildings in the village. We set up the display in the middle room and it turned out to be very impressive. Thank you Lew and family. We hope you can come by and check it out.

The Blacksmith Shop is open and we have 3 more demonstrations scheduled – July 14, August 4 (Homecoming) and September 8. Mark your calendars – hopefully we'll see you there. Summer is a busy time of year in Maine. Enjoy it.

## **Automobiles Collide**

(From the *Observer*, July 25, 1918)

As B. A. Peakes was turning his automobile in front of the post office Wednesday forenoon he was run into by Olney L. Higgins' car which had come around the corner by E. E. Whitney's building. The Higgins car struck Mr. Peakes' car squarely and demolished the left rear wheel, broke the right hand rear shock absorber and bent the running board somewhat, besides shaking Mr. Peakes up considerably. The front axle of the Higgins car was cracked and one of the headlights bent.

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### **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  
Steinke and Caruso  
Rowell's Garage  
Mark Stitham, M. D.  
Sean Stitham, M.D.

**Thank you all!**

### **Items Available**

We thank Calico Corner Gift Shop on West Main 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  
2016 – Piscataquis County Court House  
2017 – Brown Mills  
2018 – (Old) Mayo Hospital

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)

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