



Dublin Historical Society

DUBLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03444 • FOUNDED 1920

Newsletter No. 7 - January, 1988

Notice of Meeting

The next quarterly members' meeting will be on Wednesday, February 10, at 7:30 p.m. in the new Louise Shonk Kelly Recital Hall at the Dublin School.

Michael B. King, head of the Art Department at Brooks School in North Andover, Mass., will speak on "Racism, Sexual Stereotypes and Violence in the Hollywood cartoon, 1932-1945", with excerpts from animated films from the Great Depression through World War II.

Mr. King is a summer resident of Dublin and a member of the Historical Society. We are grateful to the Dublin School for letting us use its new recital hall, where the seats are comfortable and the accoustics excellent.

A reception will follow the program.

Notes from the President

To all the 97 new members who have joined the Society this Fall: thank you and welcome! We are pleased that you have joined us, and hope to see many of you at the February 10 meeting.

1988 is off to a good start. Several members are already working in their areas of interest and expertise, but much still needs doing if we are to carry out the Society's mission of preserving Dublin's history.

One project currently under way is the Oral History Program (see next page), and there are any number of others that could beguile your time and exercise your talents. If you would like to get involved, or if you have ideas for future meeting programs, please let me know.

- Lucy Shonk

The Irish are Coming !

Dublin, Ireland, founded in 988, is celebrating its millenium this year. As part of the festivities, the city is sending over a detachment of its fire brigade to march in New York's St. Patrick's Day parade and to visit all sixteen Dublins in the U.S. They will be accompanied by a television crew to record it all for Irish viewers.

We have corresponded with the organizers in Ireland and spoken to them on the telephone, but don't yet know the exact date of their arrival in Dublin, New Hampshire.

Whenever they come, we shall welcome them with a celebration of our own. If you are interested in helping with the plans, especially if you can claim Irish ancestry, please call Lucy Shonk at 563-8837.

Review of November Meeting

Those who missed the Society's November meeting missed an interesting and informative talk by Hildreth M. Allison. Mr. Allison entertained forty members and guests with facts and anecdotes of life in Dublin in the early years of this century.

For example, did you know that:

☛ Dublin once had a gold mine? The Diamond Ledge Gold Mine Company existed for only about a year. They found gold (on Goldmine Road), but mining it turned out to be unprofitable.

☛ a bear once came to class in School House No. 1? This happened when Mr. Allison was a pupil there. The bear turned out to be Gerald Thayer (son of artist Abbott H. Thayer) dressed up in a bearskin, but the students were suitably scared.

☛ President Taft spent a weekend in Dublin as the guest of his Secretary of the Treasury, Franklin MacVeagh? Mr. Allison and other children greeted the President on his arrival. The following day, President Taft attended services at the Dublin Community Church.

☛ there was once a unique species of trout in Monadnock Lake? This silver trout (Salvalinus Agassizii) is long since extinct.

☛ the stone construction of the Library may have saved the Village from destruction by fire? When the Leffingwell Hotel burned in 1908, the neighboring parsonage also caught fire, but not the stone-built Library, which was next in line downwind.

- Nancy Campbell

Oral History Project Update

Those interested in participating in the Oral History Project should try to attend a meeting on Wednesday, February 3, at 7:30 p.m. in the lower meeting room at the Town Hall. The project entails taping interviews with older residents to record their recollections of growing up in Dublin. This information will be used in updating the Town History.

At the meeting, we will review interviewing techniques and choose the person we each want to interview. If you are interested, but can't be there, please call me at 563-8837.

- Lucy Shonk

Last Call for Dues

A few of our 1987 members have unaccountably forgotten or neglected to send in their 1988 dues. A dues envelope is enclosed as a reminder to them.

Any member whose dues have not been received by the time of the next Newsletter will be scrubbed from the mailing list.

Trustees' Meeting

Trustees and members of the steering committee are reminded of a meeting at Lucy Shonk's house on Monday, January 25, at 7:30 p.m.



Collection of the Dublin Historical Society

A FUNERARY PICTURE IN THE SOCIETY'S COLLECTION

One of the most appealing objects to have survived the rigors of the Old School House is the picture reproduced above. It is a true primitive, done in watercolor and ink, to mark the death of a Mrs. Susan Gibbs.

The picture shows a young man - presumably Mr. Gibbs - dressed in black and leaning on an urn-topped monument, behind which is a green weeping willow. Both urn and willow were popular contemporary symbols of grief.

The inscription reads:

Sacred
To the memory of
Mrs Susan Gibbs
who died in Boston
March 7th 1821
aged 20 years

She must be happy who in God relied,
She liv'd a life of virtue, fearless died,
She has but left a world of conscious cares,
To dwell in heaven among the sainted heirs.

(cont'd on next page)

A cartouche at the lower right identifies the artist as "Susan Piper of Acton" and gives the date, 1821.

The Dublin Connection

Susan Gibbs died in Boston and the artist was "of Acton". Had the picture turned up in an antique shop, there would have been nothing about it to suggest a Dublin connection. How did this picture wind up in the collection of the Dublin Historical Society?

From Dublin's first-rate Town History, it appears that the artist, Susan (Pratt) Piper (1768-1844) and her husband, Solomon Piper (1754-1827), were the parents of Susan Piper Gibbs.

Susan, their seventh child, was born in Dublin in 1800 and married Ira Gibbs of Boston in 1820. Her untimely death the following year (perhaps in childbirth?) is the subject of this picture by her mother.

Solomon Piper

Her father, Solomon Piper was one of the Acton minutemen who fought at Concord in 1775, and later served in the Continental army at Saratoga and elsewhere.

He married Susan Pratt in 1788 and settled in Dublin in 1794, where he built what is now William Pickford's house on Valley Road. He was the founder of a large, energetic and talented family, who were among the Town's leading citizens throughout the 19th century.

Among them was Susan's eldest brother, Solomon Piper, Jr. (1789-1866), who became a successful merchant in Boston and gave the organ for the new Dublin meeting house (the present Community Church) in 1853.

The Real Gravestone

Although she died in Boston, Susan Gibbs was buried in the Dublin cemetery, where her headstone can still be seen. The actual inscription reads:

Erected
In memory of
Mrs. SUSAN GIBBS
wife of Mr. IRA GIBBS
and Dau^r of Mr. Solomon
and Mrs. Susan Piper,
who died in Boston, Mass.,
March 7, 1821,
Aet. 20

Till the last day the dust reposing here
Deserves the moral thought, the moral tear.
She shone in all the tender ties of life,
The exemplary daughter, sister, wife.

Speculations

The difference between the epitaphs is curious. While the picture is more than just a design for a headstone, it presumably reflects Mrs. Piper's views, particularly in the choice of the then obligatory verse. Why are the verses different?

The difference is more than literary. While her mother envisioned Susan as being "in Heaven among the sainted heirs", on the real headstone she is "the dust reposing here" until "the last day."

Was there doctrinal disagreement between Mrs. Piper and Mr. Gibbs? Or were such verses so much a matter of convention that no one noticed the difference?

Sentimental readers will be consoled to hear that Mr. Gibbs later married his deceased wife's younger sister, Emily Piper.

- John Harris