

Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 26 – November, 1993

A Dublin Civil War Quilt



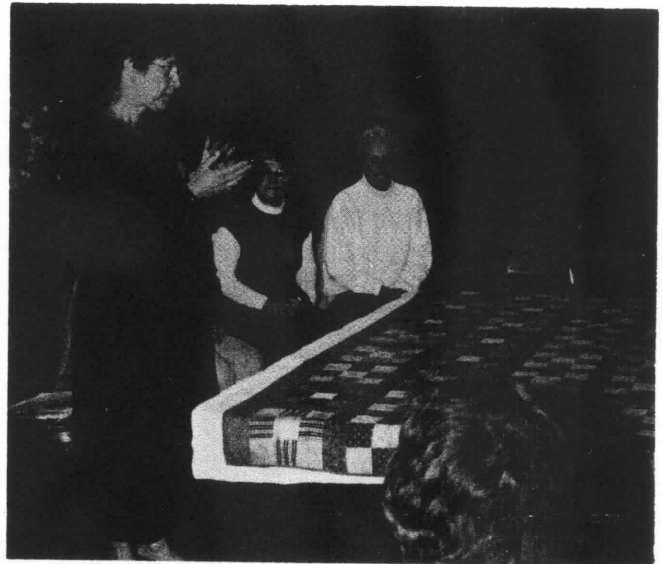
In early September the archives department received a call from Jan Dodge, of Berkeley, California, about a quilt in her possession bearing the date 1863, and a number of Dublin names. Mrs. Dodge was planning a trip East and wanted to come to Dublin to learn what she could about her quilt's makers. Fortunately for us, she was persuaded to show the quilt and discuss its history before an audience of 30-odd interested people at the Peterborough Historical Society on October 12.

In addition to the names of its makers, the quilt bore the stamp of the United States Sanitary Commission (a sort of precursor of the American Red Cross) some patriotic verses and the words, "60 volunteers" and "Dublin Ladies' Soldiers Aid Society".

So far as we know, the Dublin Ladies' Soldiers Aid Society left no records. We do, however, have records from The Ladies' Social Circle, which at the time of the Civil War functioned as the Women's Auxiliary of the Unitarian Church. The Ladies' Social Circle minute book for 1862 mentions a group called the Dublin Ladies' Soldiers Aid Society, which appears to have included members from both the [Unitarian] Ladies' Social Circle and the Trinitarian women's group, the Ladies' Circle of Industry.

It is remarkable that the two organizations were able to work on quilts together, since the Unitarian and Trinitarian Congregational Societies had only recently been engaged in an acrimonious lawsuit over the Rev. Edward Sprague's bequest for the support of "the Christian religion in the Congregational Society . . ." That suit had been decided (in favor of the Unitarians) as recently as 1859, only four years before this quilt was made.

Why then did members from these two ladies groups get together to make the quilt? Perhaps the members of the two Ladies Societies decided to put



Jan Dodge of Berkeley, California discusses her Dublin Civil War quilt.

aside their differences and formed the Soldiers Aid Society for benefit of the Civil War soldiers, of whom a large contingent came from Dublin. From the Dublin Town History, we know that 115 men were credited to Dublin's quota. Of this number, 61 were volunteers, the rest being either draftees or paid substitutes. Twenty-two of the 61 volunteers died of wounds or sickness in the course of the War.

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Of the decipherable names on the quilt, seven were members of the Ladies' Circle of Industry (Trinitarian), and four of Ladies' Social Circle (Unitarian). Some names are not recorded as members of either group.

Two of the Trinitarian names were Richardson and Farwell. Malachi Wilson Richardson and John T. Farwell were among the volunteers from Dublin. Corporal Malachi Richardson's two sisters, Mary E. and Sarah Richardson, were among the quiltmakers. Malachi was killed at Cold Harbor, Virginia, on June 2, 1864.

Another name on the quilt is that of Mary R. Eaton, who later married Luke Felton Richardson and became my great, great grandmother. Among other signers of the quilt were Isabelle Parker, wife of the Dublin doctor of that day, and Alma Bissell, wife of the Trinitarian minister. Still others were Hannah Piper Greenwood (Mrs. Jackson Greenwood), Elizabeth M. Piper (Mrs. Jonas Brooks Piper), and a Mrs. A. Gowing, who may have been either Mrs. Almerin Gowing or Mrs. Asa Gowing.

Not all the names on the quilt are those of experienced quiltmakers. Sarah H. Taggard's name appears as "aged five years". Two male children, George A. Piper, twelve, and Charles E. Piper, six, signed the quilt. It appears that in 1863, as now, ladies had trouble finding babysitters.

There are references to quilts – quite possibly including this one – in the minutes of the Ladies' Social Circle for 1863:

Feb. 5, [1863]

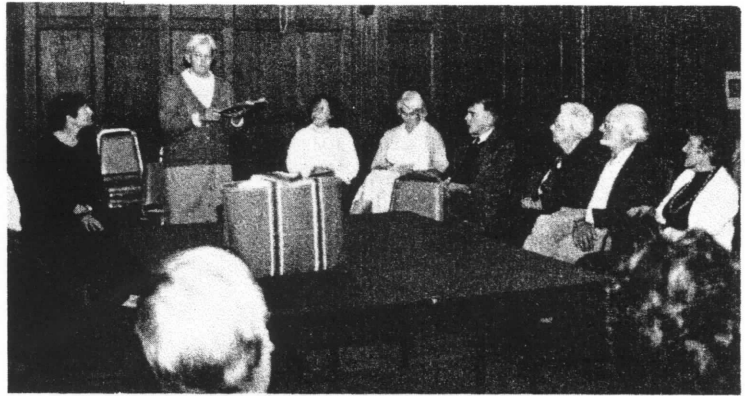
VOTED,

To send the three quilts made for the soldiers to the Hospital of the Fourteenth Reg't.

Also VOTED,

To send what socks the "circle" have on hand, in the box with the quilts, and whatever else individuals choose to give suitable for hospital use. The directors were requested to write to someone in the Reg't. and enquire as to what they most need, to inform them of what we would like to send them, and how and where they shall be sent.

(1) Lt. Jesse Appleton Fisk of the 14th N. H. Volunteers, grew up on the hill where Dan and Moira Burnham's house now stands. Fisk was killed at Winchester, Virginia, September, 1864.



Nancy E. Campbell reads from records of Dublin Ladies' Soldiers Aid Society who worked on quilt. Also pictured (3rd from her rt.) DHS trustee Wm. Bauban; relatives of Dublin volunteer Malachi W. Richardson: Marian Pbelps (nee Richardson) Robert Richardson, Rachel Plimpton.

Two letters received from the 14th Reg't., N.H.V. [New Hampshire Volunteers] – one from Dr. M. Perkins, Assistant Surgeon, the other from J. A. Fisk⁽¹⁾ in regard to the articles we proposed sending them, were subsequently read before the "Circle". Both letters stated that the Hospital was not then in need of our contributions, and it would not be advisable to send them at this time, just as warm weather is approaching.

Consequently at the meeting of the "Circle" April 2, VOTED To reconsider the previous vote to send the articles to the Hospital of the 14th Reg't. N.H.V.

VOTED To keep them on hand for the present and dispose of them as the "Circle" may think best at some future meeting.

Dec. 10.

VOTED To send the three quilts on hand to the Sanitary Commission. They were packed and sent the following morning. The following mail brought a receipt, and this acknowledgement. "The quilts from the Ladies Social Circle arrived yesterday and were most gratefully received. We have been sending off large consignments for the last day or two and everything coming in is most welcome"

Signed S. Williams Ex. Com.

United States Sanitary Commission

22 Summer St. Boston

There is no doubt that this quilt went to the Sanitary Commission, since the Commission's stamp is in the upper right hand corner. The mystery is how, if it was used in army hospitals, it survived in such good condition. A possible explanation is suggested in a book on quilts belonging to

New Hampshire's volunteer militia in the Civil War comprised one regiment, one battalion and 20 companies. During the war, the militia existed solely as independent companies with no higher command. There was no regulation uniform, although volunteers usually placed the roman letters 'NHV' on the top of their forage caps.

The war took a heavy toll among NH. volunteers. In the battle of Fredericksburg, the 5th N.H. Infantry lost 63% of its officers and men. At the battle of Coldwater, Va. where Cpl. Malachi Richardson was killed, Gen. Grant's casualties numbered over 12,000 as opposed to Lee's 1,500.

In the 3rd. battle of Winchester, Va., where Dublin's Lt. Jesse Appleton Fisk of the 14th. N.H. Vols. fell, Gen. Philip H. Sheridan posted a decisive victory over Gen. Jubal ("Jubilee") Early, although Union casualties totaled over 5,000.

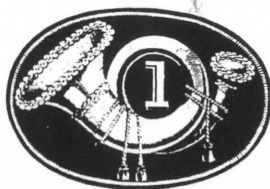
—Dick Friz



Jesse A. Fiske



M. Wilson Richardson



Jan Dodge. It appears that the Sanitary Commission held fund raising fairs in various parts of the country at which it sold fancy needlework, including many quilts⁽²⁾ the Dublin quilt was sold that way, which would help to explain its survival for a hundred and thirty years.

—Nancy E. Campbell

(2) Jenkins, Susan & Seward, Linda, *The American Quilt Story*, Emmaus, Pa. 1992, pp. 57-59

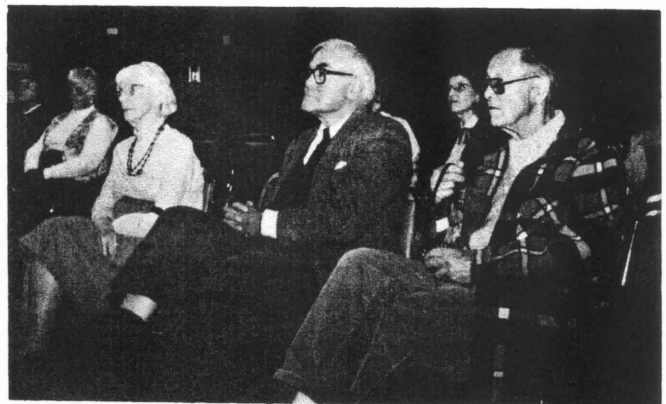
Society Holds Annual Meeting September 18th.

The 1992 annual meeting was held at the vestry of the Community Church. After the by-now-traditional french toast breakfast, acting President Elliot Snow called the meeting to order. About 45 members attended.

Among other matters, Elliot Snow reported that the opening of the old schoolhouse has been delayed by continuing problems, including boring beetles and peeling paint. These now appear to have been solved, and Marney Bean is organizing the exhibits, which will include a section showing how the building looked when it was a schoolhouse.

The group voted to instruct Secretary, *pro tem* John Harris to cast one ballot for the slate of officers as nominated. These were: Elliot Snow, *President*, Ann Walsh, *Vice-President*; Tony Anthony, *Treasurer*. Three-year terms for trustees were confirmed for Tony Anthony, John Harris and Ann Walsh; and Thea Sabine for one year, filling the unexpired term of Cornelia Montgomery, who has resigned. Other trustees are: Bernie Vigneault, Marney Bean, William Bauhan, Elliot Snow and Richard Friz.

At the Trustees Meeting on October 4, the following officers were unanimously elected to one-year terms: *Secretary*: John Harris, *Curator*: Marney Bean; *Archivist*: John Harris.



Also at quilt presentation: Jane F. Hawkins, John Harris and Peter Shonk.

C R E D I T S

This issue of the Dublin Historical Society Newsletter has been prepared and edited by Richard Fritz.

Design and Layout by Heidi Thomas of Little House Graphics

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Piper Family Papers

There occurred in September one of those rare strokes of good fortune that keep archivists from giving way to boredom and despair. In remodeling the barn in her new house on Main Street, **Jane Young** came across a wooden box of papers relating to the Piper family, former owners of the property. These papers she has very generously given to the Society.

The box appears to have been untouched for over a hundred years. Unfortunately, it had no top, and so provided convenient quarters for mice and a variety of insects. Some of the papers are consequently damaged, but surprisingly few are wholly destroyed and there has been relatively little loss of information.

Most of the papers in the box had been folded into very narrow strips and fastened into bundles with string or paper tape. (*It was for bundles like these that pigeon holes were built into antique desks.*) There were over seventy of these bundles, containing anywhere from three or four documents to fifty or sixty.

Each document must be unfolded and flattened before it can be read, and since many of them have been folded for 150 years or more, this must be done with some care. The process takes about 48 hours per bundle. At this writing we are about half way through.

The papers we have seen so far range in date from the 1780's to the 1880's. The majority, however, relate to Rufus Piper (1791-1874), and especially to his activity as executor and administrator of decedents' estates in the 1830's, 40's and 50's. (*Rufus was the younger brother of the Solomon Piper whose career was described in the February issue.*)

These estate papers include bills, notes, receipts and other corroboration of an executor's accounts. Many also include detailed inventories and reports of estate sales, in which are listed the price and purchaser of every item. The result is a treasure trove of information about the things people had in their houses and the values attached to them.

We can also discover what various people did besides farming – and in New Hampshire few survived on farming alone. For example, a particular estate may have included shoemaking tools and supplies, so we know that that person made shoes. We

Notice of DHS Meeting...

The next meeting of the **Historical Society** will be on Wednesday, November 17, in the Vestry of the Community Church. The meeting will begin at 7:30, and the usual refreshments will be served.

The speaker will be **Dr. Susan Williams**, until recently Curator of the Barrett House in New Ipswich and now Assistant Professor of History at Fitchburg State College.

She is the author of *Savory Supplies and Fashionable Feasts – Dining in Victorian America*, published in 1985.

Dr. Williams will discuss the work and influence of **Alice Morse Earle** (1851-1911), a popular and prolific (18 books) author – on mainly historical subjects – around the turn of the century. She will focus on Mrs. Earle's Dublin connection as a direct descendant of Captain Thomas Morse, whose house at the Golf Course was the Town's first permanent settlement.

can also infer who the other shoemakers were from the names of those who bought shoemaking equipment at the auction sale.

With the current vogue for social history, there is material in these papers for several dissertations. We are enormously grateful to Jane Young for giving them to the Society's archives.

Other Recent Accessions

As a result of Nancy Campbell's article in the last newsletter, the **Bethel (Maine) Historical Society** has kindly sent us a number of their publications, including an illustrated history of Bethel by that Society's Curator of Collections, **Randall H. Bennett**.

From **Alice Fiske Ellis** has come a photograph, originally belonging to her mother, Mrs. Henry Fiske, of tubs of apple butter made in Dublin during World War I for the American Red Cross.

Books by Dublin authors have been given by **William L. Bauhan**, **Ruth Hammond** and **John Harris**.

—John Harris