



# Dublin Historical Society

DUBLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03444 • FOUNDED 1920

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## THE RISE OF LOCAL INDUSTRY BEFORE 1850

*When settlers first came to Dublin around 1760, the land would have been predominantly forested. Over the next hundred years improvements in infrastructure and mechanical devices allowed the local economy to shift from strictly an agrarian one to a more diversified, regional one with specialized occupations. (Unless otherwise noted the information below can found in the chapters "Population. Statistics" and "Industries" in The History of Dublin New Hampshire by Leonard and Seward, 1920)*

The initial settlers in Dublin needed to be self sufficient. Since investors called Masonian proprietors owned the land, the settlers were required to make specified improvements to the property - clearing land and building shelter. In return proprietors provided funds to build infrastructure like roads, mills and a meetinghouse. By 1764 they offered financial encouragement to anyone who would build a sawmill. Until then most buildings would have been built of logs, since it was in a saw mill that the logs were ripped into boards to use as dimensional lumber for buildings and bridge planks. To survive, the settlers also needed to plant crops and raise animals. Before 1766 when proprietors offered Eli Morse 50 Pounds to build a grist mill, settlers walked to a Peterborough mill to grind grain into flour.

When the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in the fall of 1774, it adopted a so called association establishing a non-importation, non-consumption agreement banning the purchase of British goods, particularly tea & further to "encourage

frugality, economy and industry and promote agriculture, arts and manufactures of this country, especially that of wool.." The Dublin population of 305 would need all their ingenuity to weather the shortages during the Revolutionary War years. Similar political decisions will influence Dublin's economy in thirty years time, especially as pertains to wool.

### CONTINUITY AND GROWTH

Between 1775 and 1800 Dublin's population had nearly quadrupled to 1184 inhabitants and farming was still the predominant occupation. Land use improvements would create hay meadows, pasture for livestock, some cultivated land for grain production and dooryard gardens for vegetables. In a 1785 reckoning for Dublin the average amount of improved land per lot was 10 acres, but as high as 40 acres.

What isn't quantified is the work by the same farmers who had essential secondary skills to share with the community like grinding grain, sawing timber, carpentry, making barrels, weaving cloth, and forging iron into tools and hardware like hinges and horse and ox shoes. Reciprocity existed in barn raisings and loom use. In fact it was an era when small-scale local industry by and large supplied local needs. Women supplemented the economy by carding and spinning wool and making linen thread from flax. Girls learned to sew and knit at an early age in order to supply family with clothing and bed coverings and to supply piecework for the local merchants.

### 2020 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Thank you to all of those who have already renewed their membership. If you haven't yet submitted your membership dues, please use the enclosed envelope to do so. Dues and additional contributions cover the majority of our operating expenses. *We appreciate your support.*

## EFFECTS OF FOREIGN TRADE

### EMBARGOS

A series of laws passed by Congress during the Napoleonic wars in the first decade of the 19th century forced necessary investment in the local manufacture of goods. In an effort to coerce Great Britain to respect American neutrality and to cease the impressment of American sailors, Congress instituted an import embargo on trade, first in 1806 with Great Britain and France, and later broadened it to both imports and exports with all foreign ports.

The pottery industry in northwest Dublin benefited directly by the lack of competition from British white wares. What is now Chesham was once called Pottersville given the redware pottery production which utilized a natural clay deposit nearby. The first potter commenced production in 1795, and by 1815 there were 8 to 10 potteries making redware, which was widely sold in southwest NH, southern VT and western MA. Pottersville was said by an expert in the 1960s to be “the most important community of clay workers in southwest New Hampshire”. (*Early New England Potters and Their Wares*, by Lura Watkins, 1968)

The industry went into a gradual decline by 1820 with the renewed availability of British white crockery and cheap tinware. Although none of the workshops in Chesham survive, evidence from waster dumps, piles of imperfect pottery shards, reveal that household goods like cups, bowls, milk pans, jugs and flower pots were produced there. (Watkins) Only 2 potters remained by 1850.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOOL

Napoleon’s conquest of Spain broke their monopoly on the ownership of Merino sheep, whose long fibered, soft wool and lanolin rich, heavy fleece would supply the burgeoning mills throughout New England for decades. Edward Jarvis’ importation of 4000 Merinos to Vermont in 1810 coincided with the embargo on woolen goods, ushering in the

A flock of Merino sheep.



so-called Sheep Craze which literally altered the New England landscape. Most of the stone walls threading through the woods were built four to five feet high along property bounds before 1840 to contain the grazing sheep. By 1836 there would be over a million sheep in VT and approximately half that number in NH. (*Reading the Forested Landscape* by Tom Wessels, 1997, p. 58) The sheep craze was over by 1841 when tariffs were lowered allowing imports to compete once again, and when wool could be shipped to New England mills from farmers who had relocated to the fertile Ohio Valley.

The mills used to process wool fiber, long operating in the Nubanusit basin, started to mechanize. In 1822 Bethuel Harris and his son Cyrus erected the Brick Mill on the site of the former Jonas Clark mill and increased their capacity to weave cloth four-fold with power looms. Cyrus’s brother Milan Harris purchased the former Abel Twitchell mills and built the upper mill 1832\33 and produced up to 45,000 yards of “black doeskin” cloth from 50K lb of wool by mid century. In 1852 it sold for \$1.00 per yard.

The lower mill, constructed of granite by J. Colony and Sons in 1851, had 24 looms and soon produced 1000 yards of flannel each day. Operations would continue to expand through the Civil War.

### LARGE-SCALE PRODUCTION

Water power also enabled the development of a multiple industries with specialized machinery producing the goods by mid century. Luther Carlton created potato starch to sell to cotton textile mills, processing up to 15,000 bushels of spuds per year before his death in 1838. Potatoes clearly became





Photo Credit DHS

The DHS collection has shoemaking equipment which was donated to DHS shortly after its founding in 1920. Objects include a shoemaker's bench, tools, wooden lasts around which to wrap the leather for a certain shoe size, as well as examples of birch shoe pegs. Also shown is a pair of child's boots made by Jackson Greenwood (1796-1872) for his son Walter, who was born in Dublin in 1827.

a staple crop in Dublin as over 19,000 bushels are enumerated in an 1850 inventory of crops.

Multiple mills producing woodenware like washboards, clothespins, mop handles operated in Dublin beginning in the late 1830s. A 1850 accounting lists 66,000 gross of clothespins and 4000 dozen washboards. In one case, the annual sales of George Handy's mill which produced the above wares in northeast Dublin at that time amounted to \$8,800, an amount many times the tax value of the average farm with its buildings.

**SHOEMAKING**

The 1850 Federal census lists four different occupations related to the industry in Dublin – the manufacture of shoe pegs, the manufacture of wooden boxes, and the occupations of tanner and shoemaker. The shoe peg mills owned by Joseph Willard Powers and Samuel W. Hale were both located in the southeast corner of town on the Hinds and Mills brooks and near the outlet of what is now called Mud Pond. According to the 1852 town history Hale produced 5000 bushels of tiny birch pegs per year and shipped them as far away as Liverpool and Hamburg. Before the age of cardboard cartons box making supplied businesses with the ability to ship goods like shoes, boots and cloth. 225,000 feet of shoe boxes were produced by a workforce of 22 in 1850.

Twelve shoemakers appear in the 1850 census. Of them John Piper, Joseph F. Hayes and Jackson Greenwood are said to have each produced 2000 pairs per year worth fifty cents a pair. Joseph Morse produced 2500 pairs a year at sixty cents a pair. Unbound shoes were sent to Dublin by the case from places like Lynn, MA, so that local women could “peg on the bottoms” as piecework. The record is silent on the total value and

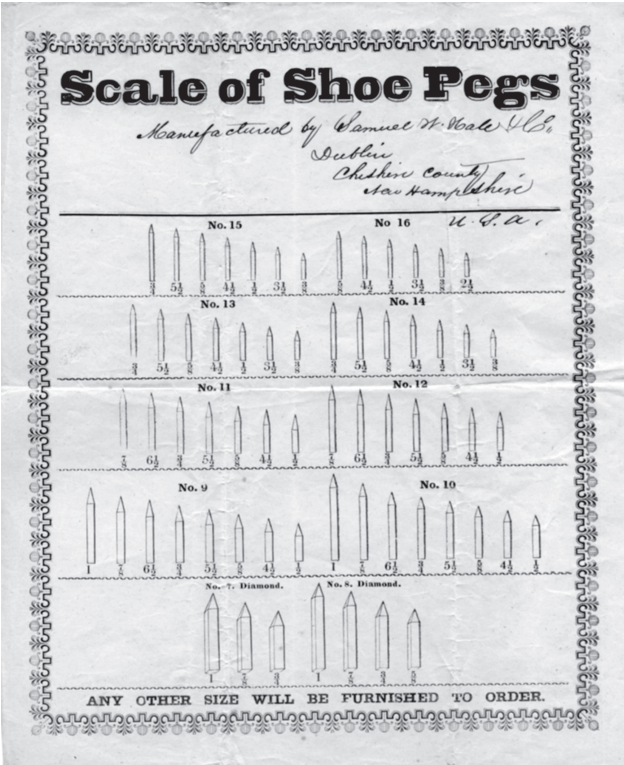


Photo Credit DHS

Broadside showing selection of shoe peg sizes for Samuel W. Hale & Co, circa 1850.

amount of women's shoe finishing and another cottage industry for women - braiding palmleaf and fashioning it into bonnets.

Dublin's population in 1850 was virtually the same as it had been in 1800, while farming as a primary occupation had become less viable. Addresses at the town's centennial celebration on June 17, 1852 were filled with references to absent sons and daughters who had left to find opportunities elsewhere, and speakers attributed the loss of population to "stubborn soil". The opening of the Erie Canal and the expansion railroad lines allowed folks to move west while still being able to ship goods to eastern markets. Urban factories drew more workers to the cities and allowed larger scale production, reducing the viability of local manufacturing. Most Dublin residents who remained adjusted to the changes by making farming their secondary occupation.

*Lisa Foote*

## MY DUBLIN STORY

What better way to honor the 100th year of the Dublin Historical Society than to collect the stories that have woven us together over the years? After all, it is the personal experiences of those who have spent time in Dublin that creates our history. As Jimmy Neil Smith, the Director of the International Storytelling Center, put it, "We are all storytellers. We all live in a network of stories. There isn't a stronger connection between people than storytelling."

All who have a connection with our town - whether your family is 5th generation or new to town, year round or summer residents, young or old - are invited to share a memory. It can be anything that you'd like to share- including memories about a town event, a special place or person or perhaps a bit about your experience here in Dublin. Some of the stories that we've received thus far have recounted memories of playing in a Dublin brook as a child, the hurricane of '38, summers at Dublin Lake, getting lost on horseback and arriving in Dublin for the first time. Displayed

along with a photo of the storyteller's choosing, the stories will be displayed at the Schoolhouse Museum for our Centennial Celebration event on August 8 from 1-3. The exhibition will be available for viewing during Museum open hours through September as well.

Stories must be under 125 words, include a photograph and be submitted to. Photographs can be emailed (1024 x 768 pixels minimum) or brought to the archives for scanning. If you would like to participate, however are not quite sure where to begin, please contact us at (603) 563-8545 and we will arrange for a volunteer to assist you.

## ANNUAL POTLUCK

Our annual potluck will be held on Friday, March 20, 2020 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm at the Dublin Community Church. After enjoying the potluck dishes, we will have a presentation by Jenna Carroll, Director of Education at the Cheshire Historical Society.

Jenna has been teaching oral history techniques in schools, English-as-a-Second Language classes, and historical organizations for 20 years. In her presentation, she will discuss the elements necessary for a good interview, the importance of communicating stories effectively and show examples of oral histories used for exhibits around the state. Jenna will also lead the group in a storytelling activity, which we hope will get our creative juices flowing for the "My Dublin Story" project. This event is open to all!

**The Dublin Historical Society would like to extend its thanks to New Hampshire Humanities for sponsoring the above programs as part of our Centennial Celebration with a Community Project Grant**

## IN MEMORIAM

The Society reports with great sorrow the recent loss of

**Mary Weis**

We extend our condolences to the family

## Dublin Historical Society

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### TRUSTEES

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