



Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 50 – November, 2000

The Adventures of Raphael Pumpelly

Few if any of Dublin's summer residents have left such a mark on the town as Raphael Pumpelly. His name survives in Pumpelly Hill, the Pumpelly Trail, and "Pompelia", to say nothing of the Pumpelly cave, which only the initiated can find on the mountain's eastern shoulder. And though there is no longer anyone named Pumpelly living in Dublin, there are many, many Pumpelly descendants among the permanent and summer residents.

His life was one of adventurous travel and exploration of a kind rare enough in his time and impossible in ours. His scientific observations made significant contributions to the sciences of geology and anthropology, but he did not neglect the business opportunities that came with the discovery of mineral deposits. He managed to combine commerce with scientific research, and wound up as both a respected scholar and a very wealthy man.

Raphael Pumpelly (1837-1923) was born at Owego, N.Y., a village near the Pennsylvania border, just west of Binghamton. He was the youngest of three children of William and Mary H. (Welles) Pumpelly. William Pumpelly, being rather well-to-do, was able to have young Raphael pri-



Raphael Pumpelly in Freiberg at age nineteen, c. 1857. Note the beginnings of the famous beard.

From Raphael Pumpelly, *My Reminiscences*, New York, 1918

vately educated at boarding schools, first in White Plains and later, between the ages of eleven and seventeen, at General Russell's academy in New Haven, Connecticut, where he was expected to prepare for Yale.

Instead of Yale, however, Pumpelly's mother took him on a two-year tour of Europe, in the course of which he learned French, German and Italian. It was on this tour that Pumpelly became interested in geology and geological exploration, and in 1856 he enrolled in what was then the world's preeminent mining school, the Royal Mining Academy in Freiberg, Saxony.

WITH THE APACHES IN ARIZONA

When Pumpelly returned to the United States in 1860, he wanted to see the American west, so he took a job as mining engineer for the Santa Rita silver mine in what is now

The Society's Annual Potluck Supper will be held at the Community Church Vestry on Friday, February 16, at 6:30 p.m. (Snow date Feb.23)

Further information will be sent to members as the date approaches.

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Raphael Pumpelly and some of his descendants, c. 1916. D.H.S. archives; gift of Mrs George Foote, Sr.

Arizona. In 1860, however, the mine was a part of the Gadsden Purchase, recently bought by the United States from Mexico for \$10,000,000. No American government yet operated in the area, and the Mexican government had not exercised any real authority there for many years.

In addition, the Santa Rita mine was in the heart of Apache country. The Apaches did not care for either Mexico or the United States, both of which were violating their ancestral lands. The Apaches' violent reactions have been the subject of Hollywood westerns since Hollywood westerns began.

In an 1870 book about his work experiences, Raphael Pumpelly paints a vivid portrait of his eight months at the Santa Rita. A contingent of U. S. Army troops was quartered twenty-two miles away at Fort Buchanan. When it became known that this force would be withdrawn to fight in the Civil War, the Apaches took over. Pumpelly's boss, the mine superintendent, was ambushed and killed. Pumpelly himself had several narrow escapes, his horse barely outrunning those of the Indians.

In June, 1861, to salvage what he could from the Santa Rita, Pumpelly smelted ore non-stop for between fifty and sixty hours, producing a pile of lead "planchas" containing the silver, loaded the "planchas" in wagons and headed for the nearest town. He got through, but men fifteen minutes ahead of him were killed. Thus ended Pumpelly's work for the Santa Rita mine.

JAPAN AND CHINA

Pumpelly's next job was to assess the mineral resources of southern Hokkaido at the request of the Japanese government. These explorations occupied him until March, 1863, when he sailed for China.

There Pumpelly had no assignment and no employer. He was motivated purely by curiosity to explore the interior of a country which had hitherto been closed to foreigners. In Shanghai he saw a boatload of very pure anthracite arriving from the Yangtze River. Curious about the source of the coal, and on impulse, he booked passage to Hankow, the last port on the Yangtze reachable by steam navigation, and then continued up the Yangtze in a flat-bottomed houseboat. Pumpelly's observations during eight days of travel through the Lower Gorges led to the preparation of the first geological map of that part of China. His term, "Sinian", for certain granite substrata is still used today. At the same time, he sought and found

coal resources for the Imperial Chinese government

In pursuit of mapping the Asian continent Pumpelly in 1864 began a return to the United States – by crossing Mongolia and Siberia to Europe. On the way he made the first survey of the Gobi Desert. He crossed the Tibetan plateau and speculated on the origins of the rock-rimmed basins of central Asia. Pumpelly reached the United States in 1865, and published "Geological Researches in China, Mongolia, and Japan, during the years 1862-1865" in *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge*, Vol. XV, 1867. He was thirty years old.

Pumpelly's explorations, and his ability to convey his fascination with the way the world was formed, led to his being offered the first Chair of Mining at Harvard. While in that post from 1865 to 1873, he created enormous interest among his students, with his long golden beard and his tales of Asia and the Apache, but he never adjusted to teaching at the University. In the words of a later biographer, "Inspiring as he was as an instructor in the presence of Nature, he was ill fitted for systematic teaching in an institution."

In the 1870's Pumpelly served successively as State Geologist in Michigan and Missouri, identifying commercial mineral deposits in those states. He was subsequently put in charge of organizing the U.S. Geological Survey's analysis of "Mineral Industries" for the 1880 U. S. Census. At the conclusion of his census work, Pumpelly was engaged by Henry Villard, President of the new Northern Pacific Railroad, to inventory the economic assets along the Northern Pacific's rights of way.

EXPLORING CENTRAL ASIA

In 1903-1904 Pumpelly undertook physical, geographical and archaeological explorations in Central Asia, supported by

the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C. Pumpelly was the first foreigner to be granted permission by the Czarist government to explore and excavate in Turkestan. On this first expedition Pumpelly looked for evidences of the ancestors of the European races. A second expedition to Turkestan was undertaken in 1908. For both expeditions an international team of specialists was assembled to work under Pumpelly's direction.

In the course of his work in Turkestan, Pumpelly excavated the ruined city of Anau, near the Iranian border in what is now Turkmenistan. As a result of this excavation, he concluded that, before the dawn of recorded history in Egypt and Babylon, the people of Anau "...already lived in cities, cultivated wheat and barley, began the domestication and breeding of the useful animals which are our inheritance, and possessed the fundamental individual arts, including a certain amount of metallurgical knowledge..." Pumpelly's accounts of his ground-breaking work in Turkestan remain classics in their field today.

THE PUMPELLYS IN DUBLIN

Pumpelly's wife, whom he had married in 1869, was Eliza Shepard, one of a trio of sisters who acquired Dublin connections. Ellen married Harvard Professor Henry B. Hill, builder of the house now owned by the Edmond Kellys. Rebecca married George Haven Putnam and became the mother of the redoubtable Corinna Haven Putnam. It was while visiting her Pumpelly cousins that Corinna met her future husband, Joseph Lindon Smith.

The Pumpellys first saw Dublin on a visit to Eliza's sister, Ellen Shepard Hill, in 1883. As he later remembered, "...we walked through long abandoned roads to a hilltop, and looked out over a tree-bordered lake to the far-away Green Mountains. We had found what we craved." The site was at the top of Snow Hill (today's Pumpelly Hill), and in order to obtain the view they wanted the Pumpellys bought two adjoining farms. They worked with an architect on plans, and asked George Gleason, Dublin's storekeeper and general factotum, to let the contracts for work on their house. When they returned to Dublin the following June, the house had been completed for the agreed price, and dinner was waiting for them on the table.

The Pumpellys called their Dublin summer home, "Auf der Höhe", or "On the Heights". It was an expansive gambrel roofed structure, with five dormers and a screened porch on the second floor, plus an attic for servants' quarters with three double windows. Large stone chimneys marked each end of



Auf der Höhe, the forerunner of "Pompelia". Undated photograph from Raphael Pumpelly, *My Reminiscences*, New York, 1918.

the building, with an additional chimney for the kitchen area. "On-the-Heights" burned down in 1919. In its place the Pumpellys built an Italianate house called "Pompelia", which was burned in 1979. As of this writing, a substantial grape trellis, built for the first structure, and incorporated into the second, still survives in a fragile state.

Raphael Pumpelly died in 1923, and is buried in St. Columbia's churchyard in Middletown, Rhode Island. The tomb was once fairly elaborate, with recumbent bronze figures by Gerome Brush of Pumpelly in full academic dress with Eliza by his side. In recent years, however, the tomb has been vandalized, the effigies having been wrenched off, apparently for the value of the bronze. A sad footnote to a distinguished and fascinating life.

— Rusty Bastedo
N.H. State Curator

Note: In his later years Raphael Pumpelly wrote *My Reminiscences* (1918), which includes an interesting chapter on Dublin. A recent biography, written from a technical point of view, is Champlin, Peggy, *Raphael Pumpelly / Gentleman Geologist of the Gilded Age*, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1994.

Sources for this article include Pumpelly's own accounts in *Across America and Asia; Notes on a Five Years' Journey Around the World, and of Residence in Arizona, Japan and China*, New York, 1870 and *Explorations in Turkestan, Expedition of 1904: Civilizations of Anau: Origins, Growth and Influence of Environment*, 2 vols., Carnegie Institution of Washington Publication no. 73, Washington, D.C., 1908. As usual, an annotated version identifying sources of quotations is on file at the Archives.

Society News

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

On September 6th, Mrs. Oja's third and fourth grade class from Dublin Consolidated School visited the Schoolhouse Museum as part of their studies of Dublin and New Hampshire history.

The children first viewed the Town's Civil War Monument, originally erected in 1870 at the junction of Main Street and Monument Road, and moved to the schoolhouse lawn in 1929.

Inside the old schoolhouse, the children sat at school desks that were used in Schoolhouse No. 1 until 1916, when the Consolidated School was built. Photographs of Schoolhouses Nos. 1, 2 and 3 were on display as well as examples of 19th C. schoolbooks. As usual, the students showed particular interest in the summer and winter hearses and the outhouse.

Earlier this month Nancy Campbell took the third and fourth graders to some of Dublin's historic sites, including the golf club house, which was part of the Thomas Morse house, the first permanent settlement in Dublin (1762). Other places visited were the site of the Leffingwell Hotel, the first free library (the Cavanaugh's house), the old Town pound and the site of the first meetinghouse.

GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM

Augusta and Joseph Petrone have added to our collection of Dublin souvenir china with the gift of a white china plate with a colored picture of Mt. Monadnock and Dublin Lake, made in Austria around the turn of the last century for George W. Gleason. Gleason was proprietor of a store across Church Street from the Town Hall, where the Main Street Supply building now stands.

An especially delightful gift comes from **Anna (Nancy) Foote**. It is a small bust of her sister-in-law, Doris Foote Jackson, done by Gerome Brush about 1927, when the sitter was about twelve years old. (See photo) As a historical society, we do not collect art for art's sake, but we are always grateful to have works where, as here, both artist and subject are Dublin-related.



ACCESSIONS AT THE ARCHIVES

With our new scanning equipment, we are able to make very convincing copies of family photographs, including black-and-white and color snapshots, without detaching them from album pages. On this basis, **Gus and Julie Crocker** have kindly allowed us to make digital copies of photographs from the Schoepf-Crocker family album.

Diana Wolfe Larkin has given us copies of a promo-

tional publication put out by the State early in the last century called "New Hampshire Farms for Summer Homes" (1908 & 1909). These contain much Dublin-related material, including interviews with Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Ethan Allen Hitchcock as to why they chose Dublin for their summer houses.

There are also photographs of Count von Sternburg and Viscount Bryce, the German and British ambassadors respectively, each of whom spent one or more summers in Dublin.

Copies of 58 Thayer family letters have come to us through **Richard Meryman** from **Rosemary Thayer Lyday**, a great-granddaughter of Abbott Thayer. Most of the letters were written between 1906 and 1914 by Thayer's elder daughter, Mary Birch, who was living in Brazil at the time.

Louisa Clark Spencer has arranged for us to have a copy of the detailed catalogue (known in the archives trade as a "finding aid") of Grenville Clark's papers at the Dartmouth College Library.

We have received many other gifts to the Archives – over forty since the Spring Newsletter – which we have not the space to describe. We can only list the generous donors, and express our gratitude to all of them.

Nancy E. Campbell	Luan Hewitt
Josephine Close	Rosemary James
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C R E D I T S

This issue of the Dublin Historical Society Newsletter was
edited by John Harris.

Design & layout by Heidi Thomas of Little House Graphics.