

Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 56 – November 2002

A HISTORY OF THE DUBLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PART 1

Like 2002, 1920 was a banner year for history in Dublin. One major event was the long-delayed publication of Leonard and Seward's *History of Dublin*. Another was the founding of the Dublin Historical Society. The two events obviously had some connection in the public mind, and indeed two members of the committee that oversaw the publication of the *History* were among the Society's incorporators and on its first Board of Directors.

Another fortunate circumstance was the availability of space. After construction of the brick Consolidated School in 1916, the Dublin School District had no further use for the old one-room schoolhouse which had long served District No. 1.

Article Ninth of the warrant for the March, 1920, Town Meeting read as follows:

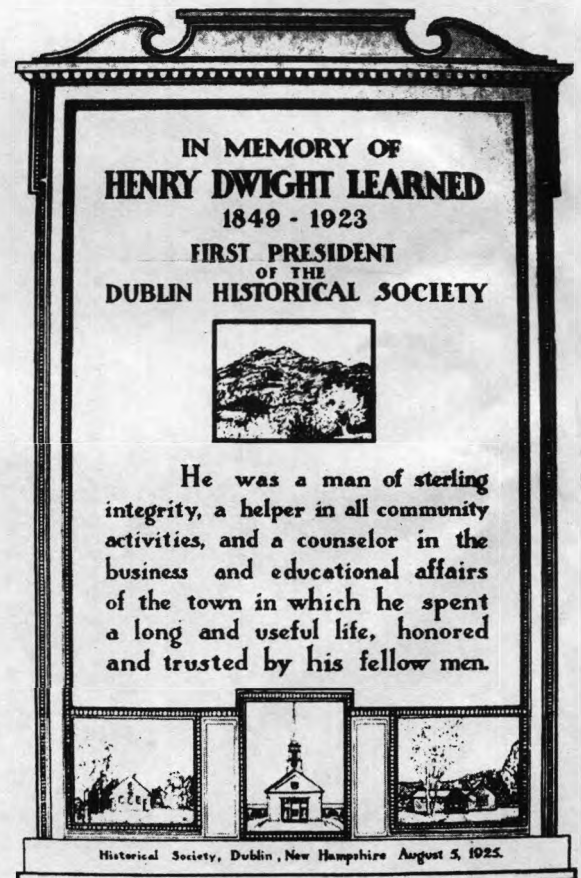
"To see if the town will vote to accept the Gift from the Dublin School District of the old No. 1 Schoolhouse for Historical purposes, appoint necessary officers for the same, and raise and appropriate money for use in this connection, or pass any vote relating thereto."

What the meeting actually voted was a bit different. It was resolved to accept the No. 1 Schoolhouse for historical purposes, appoint a committee of five to organize a Historical Society and appropriate one hundred dollars for the Society's use. Those named to the committee were Henry D. Learned, Emily E. Derby, Milton D. Mason, John A. Gleason and Arthur T. Appleton, and they became the incorporators of the Society, executing its Articles of Agreement. These Articles, filed with the Secretary of State in Concord on May 22 1920, created the Society as a legal body corporate in the State of New Hampshire.

The Articles are a model of brevity and lucidity. The whole document has only four articles and fits on a single page, signatures and all. Article III, stating the Society's purposes and defining its legal powers, is worth quoting in full:

"The objects for which this corporation is established are the collection, preparation and preservation of all

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Memorial to Henry Dwight Learned as first President of the Dublin Historical Society. Ink on paper, drawn by Isabella Brockway, 1925.

historical facts, relics and memorials of all kinds pertaining to the Town of Dublin, including such portions of other towns as may originally have been a part of the Town of Dublin and to hold and manage any real and personal property which may come into the ownership or possession of the society."

That is an accurate description of what the Society was formed to do, and of what we do today.

There is no record of who wrote those words, or who was the moving spirit behind the founding of the Society. Some inferences, however, can be drawn. The name of Henry Dwight Learned was first in the list of the committee to organize a historical society and first among the signatories of the Articles of Agreement. He presided at the first meeting of incorporators and was elected the Society's first President, serving until his death in 1923. He was also one of the two people who served both as members of the Town History Committee and as incorporators of the Society (the other being Milton D. Mason.) It would be hard to find anyone who served the Town of Dublin in more ways or for more years than Henry Dwight Learned. (See box.)



Alice Mary Gowing, President of the Historical Society from 1924 to 1944.

After Dwight Learned's death in 1923, the presidency passed to Miss Alice Gowing. She held the office for twenty years (no term limits then). For much of that period she also served as President of the Ladies Social Circle, Clerk of the First Congregational

Society and Secretary of the Grange.

Meetings were held quarterly in February, May, August and November. The February meetings were held either in someone's house or in the Vestry, but the others were held in the No. 1 Schoolhouse. Attendance varied. In 1929, for example, there were 12 persons at the February meeting, 23 in May, 19 in August and only 10 in November.

Membership was by election, though there is no evidence that anyone was ever turned down. Dues were fifty cents a year, and life memberships were ten dollars. Through 1931, the Town annually voted \$200 to the Society, and there is no record why this subsidy was discontinued. Perhaps it was just an oversight.

In its early days, most of the available funds were spent on maintaining the schoolhouse building and grounds, which became the Society's property by deed of the Dublin School District in 1928. In the same year the Society voted to allow the Town to move the Civil War monument, hitherto at the intersection of Monument Road and Main Street, to the Society's "yard".

The Society also took on some patriotic and historical projects. In 1930 it bought and placed bronze markers for the graves of all veterans in the Dublin cemetery and procured headstones for the previously unmarked graves of Revolutionary War veterans John Knowlton and Benjamin Smith. The following year it appropriated \$75 towards preserving the old Town Pound, a project which has had to be repeated in the present year.

At the same time, the Society was living up to its charter by collecting, or perhaps accumulating, various papers and artifacts. Some of these had a connection with Dublin, some had none, and in many cases there was not enough in the way of documentation to be able to tell. Some items were labeled, some were not. An accessions book was started, but not kept current.

On the other hand, the "literary programs" at the quarterly meetings were well organized and must have been quite lively. Here is a sample from August, 1930.

"Group of three songs, 'Slave Song', 'Love's Sorrow' and 'Peasant's Lullaby'. Mrs Samuel H. Wilkins, accompanied by Mr. Frederick S. Morse.

Address - 'The Life and Influence of John Bunyan' - Rev. William Lawrence Wood, Rector of the Emmanuel (Episcopal) Church, Dublin.

Group of three songs, 'The Nightingale and the Rose', 'The Slumber Boat' and 'My Laddie'. Mrs. Leonard B. Gray, accompanied by Mr. Frederick S. Morse.

Remarks by Dr. Frank Pierce Hill of the Brooklyn, N.Y., Public Library and a native of Concord, N.H., who was introduced by his friend and college classmate, Dr. Henry H. Piper."

A rich, full afternoon. It is frustrating that almost none of the papers read at these meetings have survived.

And so the Society continued, contributing instruction and entertainment and gradually filling the schoolhouse with objects of greater or lesser value, until November 4, 1944. On that afternoon there was a regular meeting at the schoolhouse, at which 12 members were present. The usual sort of program was given, Mrs. Wilfred Fiske talking about the history of her house; Miss Mary

Grimes (now Mrs Mary G. Doyle) read an article on old paper mills. Mr. William Strong played several pieces on the piano.

Then, without explanation, there was silence for fourteen years.

[To be continued.]

— J. W. H.

Henry Dwight Learned (1849-1923), known by his middle name of "Dwight", was the thirteenth child of Hervey and Elvira Derby Learned. His great-grandfather, Deacon Benjamin Learned, belonged to one of the several families that migrated from Sherborn, Mass., in the 1760s, and probably was the builder of what is now David Elder's house. The Learned family farm originally stretched south to the site where Ralph and Nancy Perkins later built their house (and where Dwight's farmhouse was) and west across the Upper Jaffrey Road, well up the slopes of Monadnock.

In 1899 Dwight sold his farmhouse and the easterly part of his land to Franklin MacVeagh and built a new house on the westerly portion. The new Learned house, high on the flank of Monadnock, is now swallowed up in Carol Gebhardt's, but can still be traced in the interior. (An interesting aside is that William Bauhan, later himself President of the Historical Society, lived in the house in 1958.)

Two of Dwight's elder brothers, Lewis and Marion, served in the Civil War with the 14th New Hampshire Volunteers. Lewis was killed in 1864, near Winchester, Virginia, at the Battle of Cedar Creek. This probably explains Dwight's interest in Civil war records. The old Town History credits him with assembling, through "persistent effort", the records and photographs of Dublin's Civil War veterans.

At Dwight's death in 1923, the Historical Society appointed a committee to produce a memorial resolution, which was read at the next meeting, May 7, 1924. Part of the resolution listed his services to the Town:

"He was elected on the board of Selectmen at the age of 23 and served on that board four years. He was a member of the Memorial Day Committee about 45 years, and president of the day for the same time. He was moderator of town meetings for over thirty years, member of school board eleven years, agent of the town funds over twenty years, trustee of Dublin Public Library building from the time it was presented to the town until his death.

"He was Representative to the General Court three terms, State Senator from District number fourteen one term, delegate to Constitutional Convention in 1903.

"He was a prominent member and faithful supporter



Henry Dwight Learned

of the Unitarian Society and of Monadnock Grange No. 103. He was influential in forming the Dublin Historical Society and was its President until his death."

He apparently had a lighter side as well. Henry Allison, in *Dublin Days Old and New*, mentions him as one of the Town's talented actors who played in amateur theatricals. Town Meeting day in 1888 happened to coincide with the famous blizzard of that year. As Moderator, Dwight struggled to the Town Hall on snowshoes and rounded up a sufficient quorum to adjourn the meeting to a later date. (Many of us remember Moderator Rob Trowbridge doing much the same exactly a hundred years later, after the ice storm of 1988.)

Henry Dwight Learned died November 10, 1923 and is buried in the Dublin cemetery.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we near the end of Dublin's 250th anniversary year, we can be proud that the Historical Society contributed to the celebration in a number of ways. Bob Weis and others made a float for the parade and Nancy Campbell organized a special Civil War exhibit at the Archives featuring a quilt made by Dublin residents in 1862. On Dublin Day John Harris and I led guided bus tours of historic sites across Dublin.

Following the example of our predecessors 70 years ago, we worked with the Cemetery Trustees to restore the walls of the old Town Pound. On a rainy Saturday in October, we conducted a tour of four Dublin schoolhouses. The hardy souls that made the trip saw the changes that converted schoolhouses Nos. 2, 3 and 4 into homes.

Our annual meeting in August featured a wonderful talk about early schoolhouses in New Hampshire by James Garvin, the State Architectural Historian. During the business session we elected Nancy Cayford, Bill Goodwin and Wendy White as Trustees, in the place of Jane Keough, Barbara Schnabel

and Bob Weis, whose terms had expired. Marsha Whitney has since resigned from the board, citing the press of other commitments.

I was re-elected President and Nick Thacher and Bill Goodwin were elected Vice-President and Treasurer respectively. The Trustees later elected Nancy Cayford as Curator and re-elected John Harris as Archivist. Wendy White has taken over from Jane Keough as Membership Chairman.

Our fund drive to renovate our 1841 schoolhouse museum has raised \$27,045 in donations and pledges to date, which is not quite half the \$60,000 we need. Donors were very generous, but since we are a small town we will have to continue to work hard to reach our goal.

We need you to renew your membership so that we can continue our important work. Your support, moral and financial, is essential to preserving Dublin's rich and interesting history.

I look forward to seeing you all at our winter potluck supper meeting on February 14.

— Paul Tuller

SOCIETY NEWS

A number of very significant gifts have come from **Avis and Gregory Gebert** of Woodstock, New York. Mrs. Gebert, a descendant of the Adams, Mason and Morse families who lived in Dublin in the 19th century, has given us two dresses that belonged to her great-grandmother, Lydia Ann (Morse) Mason (1834-1893). One of these is the dress worn by Lydia Ann at her wedding to James Adams Mason in Dublin on November 14, 1853. With the dresses came a ledger containing the diary of James Adams Mason for the years 1853-1856, as well as storekeeper's accounts for the years 1802-1829, and some early school records.

Jessie Hale has given us the typescripts for a number of autobiographical articles written by her late Mother, Rebecca Smith Bird, for the *Ouray [Colorado] Plain Dealer* in 1995 and 1996.

We are once again indebted to **Gordon Hayes**, this time for permission to make copies of a number of family photographs.

Dick Meryman, who as a member of the Society undertands the importance of these things, very kindly allowed us to ransack seven file boxes of research materials collected for his centennial history of the Dublin Lake Club. Dick's boxes were a treasure trove, and we are enormously grateful to him.

Michael and Barbara Mosher have completed our collection of guest books from Gebauer's Berghof for the period when it was operated as a restaurant.

We are grateful to **Ann Walsh** for about 500 newspaper clippings collected by her mother, the late Dorothy Worcester.

Other generous donors include: Anne Anable, Thomas Blodgett, *The Dublin Advocate*, Eleanor Flynn, The Kingdom,

Inc., Linda Oja, Mary Anne Silva, Paul Tuller, and the Village Improvement Society of Jaffrey.

The Archives recently passed a landmark, when the number of records in our computerized index of people passed the 12,000 mark. There is, in addition, an index of subjects, which stands at 4,780. Are you impressed? We are.

In Memoriam

We record with sadness the death of
Dorothy Emmes Worcester (1907-2002).

As Librarian of the Dublin Public Library for 67 years, during many of which the Historical Society was inactive, she collected and preserved the history of Dublin.

In grateful recognition of this work, the Society elected her an honorary member in 1987.

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.